

WHAT THEN, LET ME ASK, IS THE PURPOSE OF ALL EDUCATION ?

Whether it be given in a public or private school to our children ; or in the University to our young men, who are preparing themselves for the various arts and professions of life ; or in the Theological Seminary, to students who are preparing for the special work of the ministry ? What is the broad, general and fundamental purpose of this education ? Is it to fill the mind with an accumulation of facts ; to heap up a vast and multifarious knowledge of things ? Or is it not rather to educate the mind and heart ? That is, to draw out and exercise the spiritual and mental forces which are in the scholars ; and, so exercising, make them grow ? I think we shall all admit that this is the true purpose of education—the development of the man himself. And if this be so, it follows that the best educated man, is not the one who has stored in his memory the greatest number of facts, but the one who has his mind best trained to see, and appreciate, and use the truth.

Now for the purpose of training the mind to this masterful condition, a variety of studies is necessary ; studies, some of them, that at first sight seem to have no relation to the special work of the minister. For instance, what relation does the study of mathematics sustain to the preaching of the gospel ? It has this relation that it disciplines the mind to concentration and continuity of thought ; it enables a man to objectify his own thinking to himself, and see it as a thing tangible and positive ; to build up idea upon idea, in continuous succession, until he has a perfect and harmonious whole. So it gives strength and vigor to his intellect, just as the exercises of the gymnasium develop muscular energy. What, it may be asked, has the leaping and vaulting of the gymnasium to do with the practical work of life ; the student does not expect to make his living by these exercises. No, certainly not ; but he will, by these things, have developed bodily health and muscular strength, that shall be a permanent possession, fitting him more perfectly for whatever work he may eventually undertake, whether it be mental or manual.

So in every true system of education, the chief purpose is, and must always be, to produce *muscularity* of mind ; strength and vigor of intellect and heart. Without this, you may have fanatics, men of fiery zeal, who in their narrow limits may do either a vast amount of good, or a vast amount of evil, as their inclination and prejudices may lead them—but broad-minded, safe, reliable leaders of men, you cannot expect to have.

Let us, then, not make the mistake of supposing that every item of education is lost, unless it

has to do directly with the interpretation of the Bible.

But while I thus speak, I will also state most emphatically, that in every well-conducted theological seminary,

THE BIBLE IS MADE THE CENTRE

around which all its studies are arranged. Every branch of study in the theological department, deals expressly with some phase of Bible truth.

What are the studies usually included in the curriculum of a theological college ? They may be briefly summarized as follows : The original language of the sacred scriptures ; investigations into the development of the canon, that is, an endeavor to find how, and when, and why, these scriptures were accepted in the Church of Christ, as our supreme revelation of God, and authoritative for our faith and conduct. Studies in textual criticism—that is, an endeavor to find out, so far as we can, what is the original and true text of the sacred word, the exact words of holy writ, and their true literary meaning ;

STUDIES IN HIGHER CRITICISM,

that is, an examination of the Bible in its true character, as a holy literature expressive of the life of men, under the governmental providence of God ; and as God revealed Himself in that life, as it developed through successive ages ; in other words, an examination of the Bible, as it is illustrated by every phase of the life of the people, by whom, and to whom, its truths were first revealed.

THEN COMES EXEGESIS,

or the more particular study of some selected portion of sacred scripture, in its original tongue ; endeavoring to get at the precise meaning and force of the words themselves, as they are found in that particular portion.

When all this has been done, the basis has been laid for the study of what is known as

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY ;

that is, the development of the truth, as it grew in the minds of individual writers, and advanced from age to age. It recognizes the fact, that God gave to men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little ; that He revealed Himself as they were able to bear it, speaking “by divers portions,” as well as “in divers manners ;” and it endeavors to trace these growing lines upon lines—to see where God gave here a little, and there a little, and how He gave it ; to distinguish the divers portions, and the divers manners, that it may be able to form a true conception of the whole, and to appreciate the fulness of that reve-