

# THE CONTINENT

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## Inspiration

### V. THE COMPILATION OF THE BOOK

GOD CHOSE the materials that make up the Bible. By what standards of judgment did he prefer the contents thus preserved above the mass of now unknown manuscript which in the age-long process of compilation he must have discarded? No just human rating of the book in its entirety or in its several parts is possible without some appreciation at least of the viewpoint from which God, as we may say, edited it. Definite reasons must have led to the use of each particular document accepted; it is impossible to suppose that for such a result ancient writings were poured at random into a collection of unstudied miscellany. Is it possible then to infer from the pages of Scripture why God took for his perpetual library of sacred things just the subject matter which today is found in it?

This at all events may be said with assurance—that God's reasons in these premises must all refer to the objects for which by his providence the book was intended. Among these objects, however, one minor factor may be supposed to have reacted negatively on many a possible choice. A Bible which was to serve as a religious handbook for the general host of men, must be saved from too great bulk. Encyclopaedic tomes are studied in libraries by professional scholars; a book for everybody to read at home must be a small and condensed volume. What the Bible might have been in size is suggested by the later Jewish Talmuds. Produced in a garrulous age of dogmatism when Hebrew rabbis talked lifetimes away in vain debate over paltry casuistries, the Talmuds grew to ponderous proportions, over which none but a few plodding specialists in any generation have ever achieved even a half-understanding mastery.

For illumination to the common people all this mammoth Talmudic literature has therefore amounted to nothing from its beginning until now. An unrestricted Bible would have come to the same useless fate. A Hand to prune it, to cut away thickets of words that would have darkened its rich fruits from the sight of ordinary men, was necessary in order to bestow on the modern world a book which a child may handle unburdened and which every believer can carry whole to his secret place of meditation and prayer. Many instances of economical restraint may be traced in the order of the universe; the comparative brevity of the Bible is one instance more.

However, the Bible is what it is by God's inclusions, not by his exclusions. The vital decisions were the affirmative choices, of course. And naturally the first question to be settled about a Bible writing—or a writing appearing available for the Bible—must be whether it conspires with the book's first purpose. What is that purpose? We have already tried to express it; briefly, the Bible is intended above all else to persuade men that they can have and ought to have fellowship with God. No composition of any human pen therefore could be suitable to form a part of the divine Scriptures if it did not tend to this fundamental conviction. Whatever author gains the honor of appearing among the producers of the Bible must, like all others who please God, "believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." It must moreover be a belief on experience—experience of a man's own, keen enough and clear enough to make him eager to help others to realize the same practical faith. Such were in fact the

building stones out of which inspiration erected the imposing and time-defying structure of God's supreme book.

To be sure, the God-consciousness of some of the authors whose work is preserved in our Bible does not seem as clear and spiritually pure as this definition would appear to require. The writer of Esther, for example, was a person so little accustomed to a pious expression of his thoughts that he wrote his whole story without even the mention of God—a circumstance which has led certain strict conservative scholars to question whether the production ever possessed any inspiration at all. Yet a study of its atmosphere rather than its text exposes qualities in the rehearsal of Queen Esther's heroism which leave but small difficulty in understanding why this brief history was chosen by the Spirit of inspiration to be bound up in the Bible volume. Possibly such a section as this was brought into the compass of Scripture with a very particular thought for men who find it hard to get deeper in their talk than a few oblique hints at the religious faith which they carry hidden in their hearts. At all events it is evident that the author of Esther was one worshiping the God who, as Lowell says, stands behind the shadows "keeping watch above his own."

It was, then, with the diffident restraint that usually characterizes men of his temperament, but with a faith that would not let him be wholly silent, that this now nameless historian used his pen on a record by which he hoped he could nerve men and women to depend on the sureness of God even in the darkest of adversities—and live up to their best sense of duty no matter what dangers threatened. He had too a clairvoyant persuasion that "every man's life is a plan of God"—that nobody is born into the world "whose work is not born with him"—and he put that consecrating idea into words that youth at least will not forget: "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Should not then the everyday modern Christian, to whom such clear confidence in the providential ordering of man's life is vastly rich in both comfort and stimulus, give thanks that the Spirit of God never established any arbitrary rule requiring God's name to appear in each separate contribution to Scripture. That would have left out Esther entirely. What is requisite everywhere is a message that points and leads to God. And that Esther surely has despite its secular-sounding text.

More dubious under this criterion is the right of the Song of Solomon to be reckoned among the sacred writings of true religion. It does contain once the divine Name. But there is in it far less consciousness of living and moving beneath the eye of God than in the heroic romance of the Persian queen. Besides, the "song" (which is really a drama) has suffered in repute from the meddling of doctrinaires who have foolishly tried to save it as canonical by pretending that it is something which it never was or could be. Not content to let its literary character stand as the Holy Spirit left it, these meddlers have tried to venerate the drama with a fictitious interpretation expected to make it look religious. By fantastic allegorizing they would exhibit it as a picture of the love of Christ and his church—a violent manipulation without a shred of reason in the poem itself but alleged to be necessary in order to make its tone sanctimonious enough to accord with an inspired Bible. As

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# Books for Pastor and Layman

## Religion from Pulpit and Platform

SIX REVIEWS BY CLELAND B. McAFEE

**CHRISTIAN UNITY MOVEMENT IN AMERICA (THE)**, by Frederick Lynch. Pilgrim Press, Boston. \$1.25.

This little book of ninety-three pages contains a series of lectures delivered by Dr. Lynch at Uppsala University last May and repeated at various places in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. They have special interest to Americans because they were prepared for a foreign audience and discuss facts so familiar as to be easily overlooked. One-third of the book is devoted to fourteen obstacles yet to be overcome, but Dr. Lynch carefully avoids calling any names of the men who constitute in many places the chief obstacles! However, it will be a delightful surprise for American readers to stand off and see how much has been done and how many agencies are at work to do more still.

**GRAIN OF WHEAT (A), AND OTHER SERMONS**, by W. B. Hinson. Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago. \$1.

Dr. Hinson's ministry in the East Side Baptist church, Portland, Ore., has been a notable one. These sermons help to explain the fact. They are earnest, evangelical, evangelistic. There is a fearlessness about them that might well be emulated even by ministers who do not agree with some of the points he makes. There is nothing indefinite about his meaning. The sermons appear to be stenographic reports with personal touches left unchanged. "The great curse of this year of our Lord is the lost sense of God. Most of us are atheists in practice all the time, and God is not in all our thoughts; many of us are atheists in practice most of the time; and all of us are atheists in practice some of the time." "The old fervor is gone, and the old flame has died!" "I told you people on Wednesday night we are heading up into a great revival of religion in this church. We are. And I think it is a revival that will put some of you out. I hope it will, unless you change." An occasional note of condemnation for his brother ministers does not add strength to the sermons, but it is only occasional.

**GOSPEL TRUTHS**, by J. E. Whitteker. United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia.

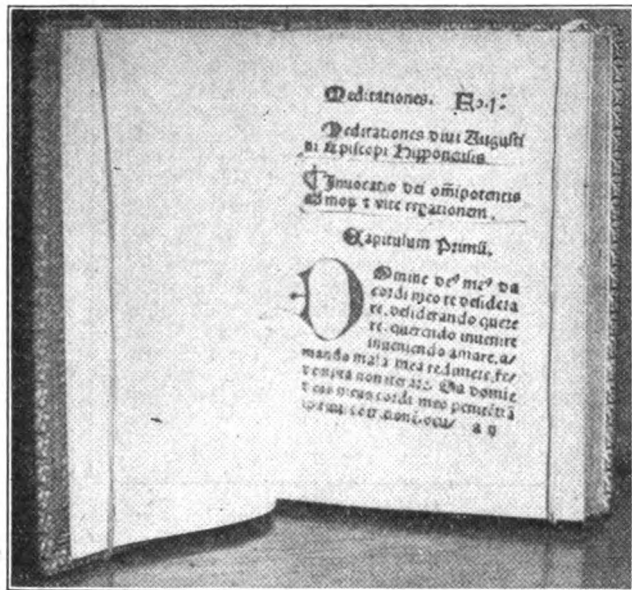
President Whitteker has recently come to the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Chicago from a pastorate of much power in Lancaster Pa. At the request of the people he has gathered thirty-two sermons together, covering a wide range of Christian teaching. They are well calculated for indoctrinating a congregation. Dr. Whitteker has the courage of his Lutheran convictions. He is strong on the sacraments, and objects to any legal restriction on the use of fermented wine or any sanitary provision against a single cup at the communion. "Both go back to Christ and what he institutes the state has no right to change." The calls to church union or cooperation are not logical, in his judgment. Moreover, it is to the credit of the Roman Church that it will bury nobody who is not a baptized member of that church. He thinks all churches ought to take the same position, refusing to be a mere annex to an undertaking shop. All this is said in the kindest spirit and with a good literary style. It helps one to realize, however, that the young brethren of the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary are not liable to go out into their ministry eager to find and apply methods of cooperation with their brethren but thoroughly indoctrinated instead in the principles of their own denomination.

**CROSS AND THE GARDEN (THE)**, by F. W. Norwood. G. H. Doran Company, New York. \$1.50 net. **COUNTRY FAITH (THE)**, by F. F. Shannon. Macmillan Company, New York. \$1. **GOSPEL FOR TODAY (THE)**, by R. A. Torrey. F. H. Revell Company, New York. \$1.50 net. **SERMONS FOR DAYS WE OBSERVE**, by F. F. Shannon. G. H. Doran Company, New York. \$1.50 net. **UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY (THE)**, by G. G. Atkins. F. H. Revell Company, New York. \$1.50.

There are two opinions about the average of preaching, whether it is rising or not. Cer-

tainly the pulpit is no hidebound place where men are reduced to a standard. For example, here are five volumes of sermons by four preachers of the present who are about as different as men can be and yet each commands the hearing of great audiences and is a recognized master in his field. Dr. R. A. Torrey, head of the Los Angeles Bible Institute, calls his volume "The Gospel for Today" and gathers into it thirteen evangelistic sermons which he has used in the church connected with the institute. They are strongly biblical and also full of Dr. Torrey's experiences with converts and others. He speaks of an unusual number of Jews and Roman Catholics who have been converted there recently and of "former skeptics, agnostics, infidels and atheists and quite a number of Christian Scientists" who have united with the church. Sermons which have been blessed in this fashion cannot be disregarded.

Then here is Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins of Detroit with a volume called "The Undiscovered Country," with eleven sermons that have been preached to his people and are published in response to "that ancient and deeply-rooted



### Rare Book Is 430 Years Old

The Newberry Library in Chicago has recently added a copy of St. Augustine's "Meditations," printed in Latin about 1490, to its collection. The illustration is approximately the actual size of the volume, which is 2½ by 1½ inches. Photo, Underwood and Underwood.

passion which urges those whose wares are immaterial to see them given a sensible form." They are all rooted in Scripture but make wide use of literature, history and current knowledge, generally setting out from an unexpected passage of Scripture. Elijah's experience at Horeb suggests a sermon on "The Ultimate God"; Job's outbursts suggests "The Shared Morsel"; similar hints are found for beginning what proves in every case an inspiring meditation, utterly different from Dr. Torrey's, but true to gospel all the while.

A volume of sixteen sermons by Dr. F. W. Norwood of City Temple, London, has been given the title, "The Cross and the Garden" and reveals the power of this newly arrived English leader. He sounds the kind of note that Joseph Parker would have welcomed, whenever he touches on the work or person of Christ. No doubt London needs such sermons; certainly every city in America needs them. They find most of their illumination in Scripture, with fresh insights into familiar pas-

sages, dramatic presentation of old stories and with a constant virility which makes soft preaching tame. An English custom of using the first personal pronoun frequently emerges here rather markedly. On one page, opening at random, it appears nineteen times, on another seven, and so on.

Then, last in the handful but in some ways richest, are Dr. F. F. Shannon's two volumes, "Sermons for Days We Observe" and "The Country Faith," which are in his fine English and revelatory of his fine spirit. The former volume covers more than the staple days. There are sermons for Grant's birthday, St. John Baptist's day, Whitsunday, All Saints' day and others, beside a characteristic funeral address. It is worth any layman's reading and any minister's careful study. The latter volume of ten sermons is one of Dr. Shannon's best, bright with touches of humor and tender with love for nature, little children and Christ above all. The outlines are clear and the lessons unmistakable. If audiences are getting this kind of thing, something worth while is going on.

**RELIGION AND THE FUTURE LIFE**, edited by E. H. Sneath. F. H. Revell Company, New York. \$3.

If one were to raise the query why four out of the ten scholars who contribute to this volume were chosen from the Yale faculty, the answer is that the contributions were originally prepared as lectures before a seminar conducted by the editor, himself a professor in the Yale Divinity School. The contributors to the volume are all distinguished scholars and specialists. The list, together with the subjects treated by each, includes the names of Professors Franz Boas of Columbia on "The Idea of the Future Life Among Primitive Tribes"; J. H. Breasted of the University of Chicago, on "Ancient Egyptian Ideas of the Life Hereafter"; E. Washburn Hopkins of Yale, on "Immortality in India"; Morris Jastrow, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania, on "Immortality Among the Babylonians and Assyrians"; A. V. Williams Jackson of Columbia, on "The Ancient Persian Doctrine of a Future Life"; Lewis Bayles Paton of Hartford Theological Seminary, on "Immortality in the Hebrew Religion"; Arthur Fairbanks, formerly of Michigan University, on "Immortality in Greek Religion"; Benjamin Wisner Bacon of Yale, on "Immortality in the Synoptic Gospels"; Frank Chamberlain Porter, on "Paul's View of Life After Death"; and Duncan B. MacDonald of Hartford Theological Seminary on "Immortality in Mohammedanism." Surely we have here a rich symposium on a vital subject.

**FREEDOM OF THE PREACHER (THE)**, by W. P. Merrill. Macmillan Company, New York. \$1.25. **PREACHING AS A FINE ART**, by R. C. Smita. Macmillan Company, New York. 75 cents. **PREACHING THE SOCIAL GOSPEL**, by O. S. Davis. F. H. Revell Company, New York. \$1.50.

The preacher-makers have been doing some helpful work lately, as the columns of The Continent have revealed. Three volumes must now be added to the list. The 1922 Yale lectures on preaching were delivered by Dr. William Pierson Merrill, of Brick Presbyterian church, New York, and have now appeared under the title, "The Freedom of the Preacher." The vital elements of the delivered lectures are remarkably preserved in the published form. The present reviewer maintains that Sylvester Horne's lectures are the most inspiring in the later history of the lectureship and he would place Dr. Merrill's lectures beside them for constructive and safeguarding thought. They cover the pulpit work and much of the parish work of the minister from a definite point of view. The lecturer discusses the freedom of the preacher as prophet, as priest, as churchman, as administrator, in the social order, in the world order and in Christ, as well as in his distinctive place as preacher. The line between slavish uniformity and reckless laxity is not an easy one either to discover or to observe, and the fact that Dr. Merrill finds it will appear in the criticism of the uniformists that he is encouraging laxity and the criticism of the lax brethren that

he is encouraging uniformity. Neither is right, of course, but why be right when one has a chance to be critical? Two book covers do not often contain more sound, sagacious counsel, itself the issue of experience. Buy it if you are a minister; give it to your minister if you are a layman and love your minister!

A tiny little book of forty-six pages by Dr. Roland Cotton Smith is called, "Preaching as a Fine Art," and contains two talks which he gave to the students at Alexandria Seminary. Literature is frequently used and probably the delivery made the connection of parts a little more obvious than in the printed page. Just why Gerald Stanley Lee wrote the introductory pages is not quite clear; the upshot of them is that Dr. Smith is not dead, when nobody said he was, and that Mr. Lee is afraid he will not hear him again as much as he would like. The lectures themselves carry the fragrance of Dr. Smith's rich ministry.

Some time ago President Ozora S. Davis published his book on evangelistic preaching, and it was known that there would be a complementary volume on social preaching. It now appears under the title, "Preaching the Social Gospel" and reveals the same clear thinking and passion for the gospel and for men that marked the other volume. President Davis is a natural homilete and his mind moves directly to texts for the ground of his teaching and as readily from texts to their deeper meaning for life. He cannot conceive the gospel as a small thing to be dismissed or comprehended in a sentence. It proves to be whatever word of God a soul or a social group may need to bring out its largest possibilities and it all issues from the heart of God in Christ. So his chapters range over family, national, industrial, international life, closing with a stirring chapter on the influences that issue from such preaching for minister and church. It is a book of first order for ministers, but it is barely less important for Christian laymen.

### The Religion of Jesus

**CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS (THE), AN ELEMENTARY STUDY,** by W. Chapman. Pilgrim Press, Boston.

This small book of 127 pages attempts to get at the thought of Jesus, not merely about himself but also about his mission and the purpose of God for the enterprise which he was inaugurating. He discovers that there was in Jesus' mind a vision of a divinely inspired and ordered human life possible to every man and perfected only in a kingdom of righteousness of which God is both King and Father. This leads to a study of the words of Jesus and an analysis of the meaning of his life and death. The cross is both a demonstration and an achievement, vicarious but not punitive. The little book is meant to start the mind on new lines. It will serve that purpose for many minds.

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MASTER,** by J. H. B. Masterman. Macmillan Company, New York.

Canon Masterman has several volumes of this same type, containing sermon outlines for various occasions. Here he gives a year's material, 104 sermon outlines, on the gospel of Mark. They will be suggestive to practiced preachers, almost dangerously so for novices and exceedingly useful to lay preachers and speakers in finding a start for addresses. The entire volume is only 125 pages, so that each outline is quite condensed. Much Scripture is indicated. The outlines start with mere clauses, but the introduction ordinarily discusses the place of the text in the whole gospel. Most of the illustrative material for a full outline is omitted.

**MASTER'S METHOD OF WINNING MEN (THE),** by D. M. Pratt. F. H. Revell Company, New York. \$1 net.

Twenty brief chapters make up the 128 pages of this plea for personal evangelism. "The religion of Jesus will become popular when it shines forth from regal lives and is witnessed by manly lips," but "a man cannot shed light until he has it." "Jesus' entire ministry was spent in gaining access to souls." His contacts were personal, according to the need of the soul. Dr. Pratt studies his dealings with individuals, with small groups and with the multitudes. The little paper on "Storming the Citadel of the Will" contains incidents which any pastor or personal worker can match. The pith of the matter is here—getting at the will with a message which is convincing enough to the intellect.

**SHINING HIGHWAY (THE), AN ANSWER TO LIFE'S PROBLEMS,** by E. G. Miles. Pilgrim Press, Boston. \$1.25.

Here the minister of Crouch Hill Presby-

terian church, London, gathers together fifteen brief chapters of wise counsel on life and its difficulties. The book might be a comment on the saying of Royce that every man has a sense that there is some one great goal which life ought to reach and a correlated sense that he may entirely or partly miss it. Mr. Miles makes life difficult enough to be worth while. Men to whom it is simple and easy will not make of it what it is intended to be. To get the best out of life one must put the best into it. Getting acquainted with one's self, getting on with other people, doing without things and making life worth what it costs are all part of his counsel, familiarly stated and well illustrated. "Get into the way of accepting the Christian doctrine of immortality as though it were the most firmly established of all the tenets of a man's faith. Liberate the doctrine into your conduct and live with your eye on the life that has no ending." It is a soundly practical little volume.

### Missionary Romance

**MIDST VOLCANIC FIRES,** by Maurice Frater. Pilgrim Press, Boston. \$2.25.

Who said the days of missionary romance were over? Down in the New Hebrides they are walking in the footsteps of John G. Paton and finding many of the same adventures. Some of the experiences of this book are quite as thrilling and as providential as anything in Paton's record. A chief's resistance was entirely broken by seeing the missionaries take

### Remember Religious Book Week

The annual religious book week will be observed throughout the nation for the third time March 4-10. Here is a campaign that seems destined to quicken interest in religious literature on the part of the sincere layman and to remove the false notion that such volumes are for the exclusive use of theologians. The lenten date has been chosen in order that booksellers, public libraries, churches, church organizations and other cooperating associations may hold exhibits, book talks and discussions in the weeks preceding Easter. The Continent offers these four pages of reviews of religious books of recent date as a first step in its cooperation in the national movement.

out their false teeth! The taking of a census of an island was resented sharply. The fact that a bullet barely grazed a Christian speaker was taken as evidence that his God was protecting him and many believers appeared. But the book is not filled with such stories. It tells chiefly of the evangelistic work which is still going on among the islands. The opening account of the great volcanic outburst of December, 1913, is of large scientific value. The outburst elevated new islands, depressed others, and changed many until entirely new coastlines were established. Meanwhile, the book is a good antidote for the travelers' literature which is now abundant in which the simple naturalness of heathen life is lauded. "It is of no use to talk of South Sea island natives as children of the sun, children of nature and what not. Missionaries who live in the islands and are going out and in among the natives see quite another side. They dwell in darkness and the shadow of death and the still more awful shadow of life." The closing chapter on "The Humorous Side of Mission Work" will strike a responsive chord in many missionary hearts. But the whole book stirs the blood. Here is Christianity beginning at the bottom and showing in one generation the advance that requires other influences a dozen generations to produce.

### Old Testament Studies

**HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (THE),** by J. R. Sampey. G. H. Doran Company, New York. \$1.75 net.

This is a second edition, somewhat revised. It constitutes a manual for Christian students, divided into 182 sections according to periods and special interests. Dr. Sampey's long connection with the International Sunday School Lesson Committee helps him to realize the needs of nonprofessional students of the Bible. Without undue dogmatism he lays the founda-

tion for an understanding of the main currents and purposes of the Old Testament. He follows the outline of the books as they appear, assigning Deuteronomy to Moses, placing Job very early but denying the importance of date, discussing Ecclesiastes in his Solomon chapter, but explaining its probable later date, and preferring to "treat the roll of Isaiah as a unity." It is a helpful book for the Bible shelf.

**OLD TESTAMENT LAW FOR BIBLE STUDENTS, CLASSIFIED AND ARRANGED AS IN MODERN LEGAL SYSTEMS,** by R. S. Galer. Macmillan Company, New York. \$1.25.

This is unique both in its field of study and in its form. Ministers frequently quote legal authorities as declaring that modern law is rooted in the Mosaic law. Here is a little volume that collates the statutes and legal practices of the Old Testament in approved form so that even a legal layman can determine for himself the attitude which it took toward offences against persons and property, government and social order. It is the outcome of a course of Bible study which the author pursued with an adult class and may be suggestive to other lawyer-teachers who may wish to come at the familiar material from a new angle. Mr. Galer accepts the theory of the debt of the Jews to Babylonian influences a little more enthusiastically than some scholars, and his work is postulated on the document theory of the Pentateuch. "The Deuteronomic Code was compiled or at least written down in its present form about 621 B. C., the Priestly Code in the fifth century B. C." Only the germs of the later codes are to be found in the time of Moses. This judgment affects the codification, but the little book has an immense amount of material in it, carefully arranged.

**SYLLABUS FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY,** by J. R. Sampey. G. H. Doran Company, New York. \$2 net.

This is the fourth revised and enlarged edition of a work first issued nearly twenty years ago by the veteran Old Testament scholar of Louisville. Originally prepared for the use of his classes in Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the book may profitably be adopted by groups desirous of a guide to the study of the Old Testament. The point of view is conservative, and the outlines and suggestions of literature to use are very helpful.

### Problems of the Modern Church

**COUNTRY CHURCH IN INDUSTRIAL ZONES (THE),** by H. N. Morse. G. H. Doran Company, New York.

This is the ninth volume of the committee on social and religious surveys of the town and country department organized to complete certain work of the Interchurch World Movement. This one discusses the effects of industrialism upon the church life of adjacent rural areas and is illustrated by surveys of two counties—Columbia in Pennsylvania, and Harford in Maryland. They have a long historic background and the condition of religion in them is affected by the marked industrial developments which have occurred at their edges. Pictures showing the work are frequent, and tables bringing the distributed facts together are supplied. The large outcome is a renewed accent on the necessity for cooperation among churches, for a settled pastorate and for an intensive evangelism together with an earnest social spirit. All this seems somewhat commonplace, but it is so vitally illustrated that the book has large value.

**INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON MODERN PROBLEMS (THE),** by various writers. Macmillan Company, New York.

The Episcopal Church Congress at Baltimore in April, 1922, brought together a notable group of students of present life. Some of their papers are here presented, deserving the attention of thoughtful people of all ages. They discuss the needs of young people, church requirements and reunion, the second coming of Christ, psychoanalysis, labor demands, the hesitancy of young men to enter the ministry and the guidance of the church in the revival of interest in prayer. Could there be a more distinctly modern set of problems? Mrs. Trowbridge in her paper blames the people of her own generation for the failure of standards among the young people. Dr. Drury is most troubled over the fact that "they are not seeking anything, this pathetic minority about whom we speak. They are neither revolting nor seeking. They are just drifting and greedily grasping whatever immediate pleasure presents itself." Dr. Bell urges: "Let us take youth's