

## Modern Sermons

ONE of the most striking features of modern addresses and sermons is their practical character. The day has gone by when Christianity was thought to be a matter of dogma chiefly. It is being realized more and more clearly that the Christian calling is one to "follow His steps." This is set forth very emphatically in one of the most remarkable books in the religious literature of 1905. Professor F. G. Peabody's "Lyman Beecher" lectures for 1904 at Yale University, under the title of *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*<sup>\*</sup>. In a chapter of clear and reverential argument Professor Peabody shows the close relation between the ethical teaching of the Gospels and the problems of the modern world. Then, after a sketch of the character of Christ which leaves nothing to be desired by a thoughtful Christian, he proceeds to elucidate the roots, the growth, the personal consequences and

<sup>\*</sup> JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.  
By Francis Greenwood Peabody. New York: The  
Macmillan Co. \$1.50.

the social consequences of the Christian character. Finally he closes the volume by showing how the development of Christian ethics leads to a higher and wider outlook of hopefulness for the good of the world and a closer communion with God; while from this closer communion comes the power for daily duty. The lectures are full of power and present a study of Christian ethics which is truly inspiring.

Somewhat of the same idea, that of ascending in personal Christ-like life to fellowship with the Father, and thence deriving the help necessary for the fulfillment of duty, runs thru a series of twenty-nine sermons by the Rev. John Watson, better known as "Ian MacLaren". Each sermon breathes that practical Christianity which has characterized Ian MacLaren's fiction and theological writings alike. Strikingly beautiful as the language is, the volume will be prized by those who desire inspiring and helpful words for their devotional reading. In *God's Choice of Men*<sup>2</sup> the pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church of New York City has approached the subject of Professor Peabody and Dr. Watson from a different side, for, in harmony with the Declaratory Statement accepted at the Revision of the Westminster Confession in 1902 and 1903, he sets forth the call of God to all men to a life of Christian practice. The seventeen chapters into which the volume is divided are logically arranged, and, while not so academic as the first book we have named, nor so beautifully expressed as the second, are full of sound, practical argument and exhortation to Christian faith and duty. *The Unlighted Lustre*<sup>3</sup> is a volume of thirty sermons by G. H. Morrison, M.A., of Glasgow, Scotland. The sermons are on varied subjects, but all are short, practical, pointed, and possess a readable quality not often associated with published pulpit utterances.

Dr. George Matheson, formerly minister of St. Bernard's Parish in the capital of Scotland, has provided a very interesting series of studies of *The Repre-*

*sentative Men of the New Testament*<sup>4</sup>. With each character is associated an idea suggested by the Gospel narrative, and we have thus a series of meditations which are well adapted for private reading. Dr. Samuel H. Virgin, pastor emeritus of the Pilgrim Church of New York, has arranged from his notes nineteen sermons preached during his ministry<sup>5</sup>. They are excellent specimens of the addresses of a dozen years ago, somewhat more lengthy than those of the present decade, well balanced, well illustrated, and full of practical application.

Those who are interested in the literature of the pulpit will find much to arrest the attention in the seventeen sermons by the Rev. Reginald J. Campbell, of the City Temple, London, England, collected under the title of *The Song of the Ages*<sup>6</sup>—the subject of the first in the volume. We have here some very good specimens of the addresses of a preacher very popular in the English capital, and the reason for his popularity will at once be evident, for the discourses are forcible, liberal in tone, eloquent and practical. The range of subjects is wide, and Mr. Campbell does not hesitate to deal with such difficult questions as the silence of Lazarus about the state of the dead. The sermons bear reading, which is a good test, and they reflect strongly the personality of the preacher.

<sup>2</sup> THE INSPIRATION OF OUR FAITH. By John Watson ("Ian MacLaren"). New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. \$1.25.

<sup>3</sup> GOD'S CHOICE OF MEN. By William R. Richards. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.

<sup>4</sup> THE UNLIGHTED LUSTRE. By G. H. Morrison. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. \$1.50.

<sup>5</sup> THE REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By George Matheson. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. \$1.50.

<sup>6</sup> SPIRITUAL SANITY AND OTHER SERMONS. By Samuel H. Virgin. New York: American Tract Society. \$1.00.

<sup>7</sup> THE SONG OF THE AGES. By Reginald J. Campbell. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. \$1.25.