

and Christian civilization. In all ages the cry of easy-going conventionalism has been, "Prophecy to us smooth things!" and he who glosses over or ignores evils that strike at the heart of individual rectitude or national health has little to fear from the powers that be. The forces that make for egoism have no quarrel with the prophet who denounces evil in a general way while striving to make the people see that all is well and that there is no need of earnest, persistent agitation to correct specific evils of the time and place. But the man who, like Nathan, faces the sinning Davids in high places and says to each: "Thou art the man"; the man who shows just how injustice is working the impoverishment of bread-winners and the enrichment of an ever-narrowing feudalism of privileged wealth; the man who shows how the attempt to centralize power in irresponsible individuals or to invest office with a power from which there is no appeal, no matter how unjust or despotic the exercise of that power, strikes at the vitals of free government; the man who shows the essential criminality of war and the barbarism of a social order that permits child slavery—that man is sure to be denounced and in a thousand ways assailed. And as a result of this condition many earnest men become timid. They go so far, and then pause. They strive to quiet their consciences by indulging in 'glittering generalities and by placing special emphasis on the good that is present. Now the result is that they drug the conscience of the reader when it should be aroused, and what is equally unfortunate, they confuse the public mind in regard to fundamentals of right and wrong, of democracy and class-rule, of justice and injustice.

We believe most profoundly that ultimately the right will win, but we are more and more convinced that unless each man earnestly agitates and does the duty that lies nearest him, as did the olden prophets and the Great Nazarene, the night of reaction, militarism and commercial materialism will be prolonged and dark and terrible days will come ere the people come into the kingdom of justice and equity; while if we all unite in a determined educational agitation and dauntlessly persist in battling for the fundamentals of justice, freedom and fraternity, progress will be achieved without the shock of force and at an early day.

Modern Poets and Christian Teaching. By David G. Downey. Cloth. Pp. 184. Price, \$1.00 net. New York: Eaton & Mains.

THIS little volume contains brief and sympathetic studies of the lives and the message, together with indications of the Christian influence, in the writings of three well-known conscience poets of our time,—Edwin Markham, Richard Watson Gilder and Edward Rowland Sill. The writer is a Methodist clergyman, and though he naturally gives special emphasis to the religious side of his subject's message, the sketches of the lives and his interpretation of the message, accompanied as they are by liberal quotations from their writings, are marked by breadth of spirit and fine insight or ethical perception.

We hardly think that Mr. Downey does full justice to Edwin Markham; not that he criticizes his life or work unfavorably, but he does not seem to appreciate the essential greatness of Markham as a poet and his unique and preëminent position as the master living poet of democracy.

The sketch of Richard Watson Gilder, and especially the study of Mr. Gilder's verse, is charming.

We were, however, especially pleased with the consideration given by the author to the poetry of Edward Rowland Sill, one of America's fine conscience poets who left us all too soon and whose work is too little known to the public.

The volume is written in simple language, intended as a message to Christian people, and it cannot fail to be helpful and inspiring. We think the author, especially in his closing pages on "The Supremacy of the Spiritual," falls into an error which is common to many clergymen and public teachers and writers,—that of placing undue emphasis on the optimistic signs of the times and ignoring the sinister and ominous evils that strike at the heart of free institutions, pure government