

*Dr. George A. Gordon's
Sermons*

This volume of
sermons is well
worth reading by

thoughtful laymen and well worth study by thoughtful preachers. Dr. Gordon easily ranks among the first dozen preachers in America. In this book certain secrets of his power are easily discernible. He is both philosopher and poet—not a philosopher who, having reached conclusions, clothes them in poetic form in order to commend them to those who are less philosophically-minded than himself, but a philosopher who sees truth in images, who thinks in poetic forms, a philosopher of the type of Plato rather than that of Aristotle. His mind is characterized by another contrast: it is thoroughly modern but not critical. He is sympathetic rather than analytic, constructive not negative, and therefore at once a man of free thought and of positive faith. He is always rational but never a rationalist. There is yet another characteristic to his preaching as it is exemplified in this volume of sermons. The logical preacher has been much praised in the schools, and "he is not logical" has been counted in certain quarters the final word of

condemnation. Dr. Emmons was a fine specimen of the logical preacher, with nine-tenths of his discourse devoted to proving certain propositions and one-tenth to pointing out certain practical conclusions or "applications." At the other extreme is the hortatory preacher, the extreme being found in the Salvation Army exhorter. There may be a slight basis of fact or philosophy or Scripture as a pedestal, but the exhortation is the statue, and sometimes there is no pedestal. Between these two is the preacher who sets forth certain truth, but always with the moral purpose animating him. He does not exhort, but the truth is so presented as to exhort for him. Of this type Phillips Brooks is the finest of modern examples. To this type belongs George A. Gordon. His preaching carries with it a moral impulse. Clearer in definition, he is less powerful in impulse than Phillips Brooks; his enthusiasm is more intellectual, less human, more an enthusiasm for truth, less an enthusiasm for humanity. But they both belong to the same school, the school that uses truth for moral ends, and whose sermons therefore are warm with a suggested rather than an expressed emotion. For all these reasons—for their philosophic grasp, their modern view, their poetic vision, their vigorous faith, and their sane and tender feeling—we commend this volume of sermons both to the thoughtful reader and to the homiletical student. (Through Man to God. By George A. Gordon. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. \$1.50.)