

**THE MODERN PULPIT.** By Lewis O. Brastow, D.D., Professor of Practical Theology in Yale University. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1906. Price \$1.50.

Were one asked to recommend *the* book of the season of greatest practical importance for ministerial candidates to purchase and master by painstaking study, no mistake would be made in naming this remarkably fresh and stimulating treatise on homiletics as that book. It is not an unusual experience for young men starting out in their ministry, to discover themselves less adequately equipped with insight and method as to the preparation and delivery of sermons, than as to any other department of their professional duties. In the way of providing the wider information and surer guidance needed to make up for such a realized lack, it is questionable whether there is in the English language any work of equal or corresponding importance and serviceableness, as compared with that which Professor Brastow has here given to the public. An office of inestimable value to the churches of the land could be performed by some one financially able and generously disposed, were he to place a copy of this book into the hands of every theological student and preacher of the Gospel in the country. Is it too much to hope that this suggestion may induce some one, say a prosperous Elder, to present with his compliments, a copy to every young man about to be graduated from the several theological institutions of our Reformed Church?

The volume before us is not a repetition of the customary trifles or commonplaces which too generally have received almost sole attention in books and lectures on this subject. Its author realizes the deeper value attaching, not only to a thorough acquaintance with the methods and examples of those who are recognized masters of pulpit effort and power, but, even more so, to a clear apprehension of the environing spirit and tendencies of thought by which such preachers are affected, and their methods inspired and directed. Hence he undertakes the analysis and classification of the influences which for a century or two have been active in revolutionizing preaching, summarizes the qualities that are prominent in it, distinctive of it, common to it, and from a large and instructive field, gathers most suggestive and helpful concrete illustrations. In his studies and expositions, one discovers his familiarity with the German and British scholars who have cultivated the same field before him. Rothe and Christlieb and Ker and other authorities are quoted, but what is especially impressive throughout his chapters is the comprehensive grasp, the keen analysis, and the discriminating skill with which he handles the subject-matter of his treatise.

After devoting a hundred and forty pages to what may be

called a history and philosophy of preaching during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he takes up for consideration modern preaching as represented by different nationalities and religious communions. The German pulpit, the Anglican pulpit, the Free Church pulpit of England, the Scottish preaching, and the preaching of the United States, are examined in order in the remaining three hundred pages. The sermons of their leading pulpit exponents are instanced and analyzed, their dominant qualities pointed out, their significance interpreted in the light of the prevailing conditions and characteristics of the times, and their meaning for the religious life of to-day suggested and enforced. Under this method one comes to see, for instance, the significance of such men as Tholuck, Müller, Ullmann, and Rothe, in Germany; Newman, Robertson, Mozley, Dale, and Martineau, in England; Bushnell, Channing, Finney, Beecher, and Brooks, in America, with new appreciation and in clearer light. They are not merely individual makers of sermons, but organic parts of the activities and movements of current intellectual and religious life, at once the product and the molders of the thought-life of their generation. If there is any other book in our literature that along these lines has equal homiletical inspiration and assistance to offer, one should be thankful to have his attention called to it.

A. S. WEBER.