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the day be prepared to act on its information or recommendations or not? The Ritual Commission of 1867 formally recommended that the use of vestments and of lights and incense should be restrained, and that for this purpose "a speedy, inexpensive remedy should be provided for parishioners aggrieved by their introduction." Nothing effectual has been done, and at this moment the number of churches in which vestments, lights, and incense are used has increased from hundreds to thousands. When the facts are ascertained, the main problem will remain to be dealt with, and it will be for the Government to discover a solution. However, it will be a great thing to know the facts, and it only remains to await with patience the report of the Commission.

Notices of Books.

The Religious Life of London. Edited by RICHARD MUDIE SMITH.
London: Hodder and Stoughton. Pp. xv+518. 6s.

The portly volume published under the above title contains full statistics of the census undertaken by the *Daily News*. Mr. Mudie Smith claims that the results it records represent "the first scientific attempt in the history of this country to discover the number of those who attend places of worship in the Metropolis." In the census of 1851, instituted by the Government of that day, the Churches themselves furnished the returns. In 1886 another enumeration of attendances was made through the enterprise of Dr. Robertson Nicoll, and the first issues of the *British Weekly* gave the figures. But this enumeration took place on a single Sunday. There were serious omissions in it, and the sexes were not differentiated, nor were children distinguished from adults. In the present instance the investigation extended over a whole year—from November, 1902, to November, 1903—the month of August being regarded as a holiday, and an interesting account is given of the methods adopted. The total number of places of worship visited in the twenty-nine boroughs forming London was 2,688, besides 1,338 in the urban districts of Greater London lying wholly or partly within a twelve-mile radius of Charing Cross, with the exception of Barking, Erith, and Bexley. Statistics relating to the urban districts are very properly tabulated separately at the end, and are not mixed up with the main part of the volume, making a convenient supplement for the purposes of comparison. Two fine maps of London and its suburbs much enhance the value of the book, which also contains a number of illustrative diagrams and articles on various problems that presented themselves in the course of the inquiry. We could wish that all the contributors of these essays wrote as thoughtfully

and sensibly as the editor or Mr. Watts Ditchfield. Some of them indulge in lucubrations reminding us of what Matthew Arnold called "the magnificent roaring of the young lions." Others, happily for their readers, are content to indicate in a matter-of-fact way the general features of the situation in the districts they describe.

The population of the London boroughs is 4,536,541; and Mr. Mudie Smith calculates that out of this total the number of people who could go to a place of worship if they would, excluding the sick and those too young or too old, may be reckoned as 2,235,152. The attendances recorded amounted to 1,003,361. But, since many of these were double attendances of the same persons, an ingenious plan was tried for ascertaining the approximate percentage of such cases, with the result of reducing the total of worshippers to 832,051. There may, of course, be errors; but the census probably gives a fair idea of the general state of things, and so many precautions were taken in carrying it out that we see no reason for distrusting its comparative correctness. The details it brings to light cannot be considered satisfactory. Since the year 1886 the population of London has increased by half a million, yet attendance at public worship has declined in an alarming degree. It is startling to discover that in the Church of England the figures show a falling off of nearly 140,000, while Nonconformist attendances have diminished to the extent of 36,000. The only religious body that contrives to hold its own, with the exception of Roman Catholics and Jews, appears to be the Baptist denomination, which goes on growing in poor and crowded neighbourhoods, and the statistics supply a remarkable confirmation of Mr. Charles Booth's opinion. Readers of Mr. Booth's work will remember that he was much impressed by the steady progress of the Baptists, attributing it to the strength and intensity of their doctrinal convictions and the absence of anything approaching to flabbiness in their teaching. It would be impossible, within the limited space at our disposal, to summarize adequately the contents of the census tables. They will well repay close and careful study. One thing that may be learnt from them is the signal failure of the various substitutes which have been devised in place of the old-fashioned system of preaching the Gospel. It is in our conceptions of the work of the ministry that a reform is needed, and no remedy for the evils laid bare in this volume would seem to be possible until there is a return to Gospel principles and the faithful delivery of the Gospel message.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. Sermons preached by C. H. SPURGEON. Revised and published during the year 1903. Vol. xlix. London: Passmore and Alabaster. Pp. xii + 624. 7s. 6d.

A tattered copy of a sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, marked "Very good. —D. L.," was one of the few things Livingstone had with him when he died. The regular publication of the great Nonconformist preacher's discourses began in the New Year's week of 1855, and has been continued week by week ever since without intermission. Several hundred still

remain unpublished, insuring a weekly supply for some years to come. The fifty-two contained in the present volume are of various dates, comprising some delivered by the author in his later life. We have long entertained a warm admiration for Mr. Spurgeon's preaching. Eloquence in the ordinary sense of the word was not his characteristic. He was not a Melvill or a Liddon. There is scarcely any single passage in his works, so far as we know, that could be selected as an example of oratorical art or fine prose. But in force and directness, in the mastery of terse and vigorous English, and in the skilful arrangement of the divisions of his subject, he had few equals. Many young clergymen and ordination candidates would profit by studying him. Such sermons as those on Isaiah xxxiii. 2 and Hebrews xii. 13, both of which will be found in this volume, are models of exposition, especially the latter. We may notice also three on our Lord's Passion and another on "The Sower." All these may be marked as Livingstone marked his. They speak to the heart of a reader no less effectively than they appealed to the hearts of their hearers when first preached.

Temptation and Escape: Short Chapters for Beginners in the Christian Life. By H. C. G. MOULE, D.D., Bishop of Durham. London: Seeley and Co., Ltd. Pp. 120. 1s.

The Bishop of Durham's chapters will strike a responsive chord in many hearts. He deals in a homely and sympathetic way with trials to which all classes of people are alike subject, and the contents of his book are rendered the more effective by their brevity. Various incidents in Holy Scripture are selected as illustrating common forms of temptation, the lessons drawn from them being practically applied to present-day circumstances. We would note particularly the author's remarks on the temptation in paradise and the temptation of our Lord, which will be found most helpful, in view of objections often urged against those narratives. The suggestions in the tenth chapter are also calculated to benefit older readers no less than the young persons for whose guidance they are mainly designed. It would be well if the book could be put into the hands of every Confirmation candidate, in place of the noxious, not to say maudlin, manuals so frequently circulated.

Some Elements of Religion. Lent Lectures, 1870. By H. P. LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., late Chancellor and Canon of St. Paul's. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Pp. xxiii+240. 6d.

These lectures are so familiar to our readers that we need only mention their publication in a sixpenny edition. It is printed in clear type, and contains all the notes, together with Dr. Liddon's answer to a writer in the *Spectator*. Messrs. Longmans will have earned the thanks of many by making so valuable a work available for general distribution.

