

Looks into Books.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE: by George G. Fisher D.D., L.L.D., Price 2.50. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 1896. Toronto, William Briggs.

This is the fourth issue of the "Theological International Library"; the preceding volumes being Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," "Christian Ethics" by Newman Smith and "Apologetics" by Professor Bruce. The "Library" is designed to cover the whole field of Christian Theology, and to furnish a record of theological inquiry up to date. The volumes of the Library will all be prepared by able scholars, and will treat theology—it is promised—in a Catholic spirit and in the interests of Theological Science.

In addition to the four volumes issued, fifteen are already provided for. Some of the writers are *advanced* theologians, a few are conservative, and some like the distinguished author of this volume, hold an intermediate position.

Those who are acquainted with the Historical and Apologetical writings of Dr. Fisher are prepared to expect from his hand a valuable treatise on the History of Christian Doctrine. He acknowledges special obligations to Neander and Baur and to Harnack, Loofs and Thomasius. The history of Christian thought is brought forward to the present day, and does not stop at the Reformation, which is the terminus of so many works of a similar kind; and it differs from Shedd's well-known treatise in not limiting itself to leading topics, which are made the subject of somewhat extended discussion. Hagenbach's work is rather a repository of facts than a history, and is of the nature of a conglomerate.

This work is divided into three parts: of which the First treats of Ancient Theology and of Patriotic Theology in the East and the West; the Second Part of Medieval Theology, and the Third Part of Modern Theology. This last begins with the Theology of the Reformation. As would be expected, much more relative prominence is given to England and America than Dörner gives in his valuable History of Protestant Theology; though the Eastern Part is brief in comparison with Dörner's work.

Reference may fitly be made to Fisher's account of Jonathan Edwards, which is written with great insight and sympathy and is a just tribute to that remarkable man.

Perhaps no part of Dr. Fisher's work will prove more interesting to most readers than the last five chapters, in which we have an account of Theology as affected by Modern Philosophy and Scientific research.

We can commend this book as an important contribution to the History of Doctrine. In a field so wide it is impossible to have minute and detailed statement in regard to the several doctrines as these have been presented from age to age, and in the various ecclesiastical organizations. Nor is it to be expected that any class of readers should be able to endorse, without qualifications, all the views and opinions expressed. But there will be nearly a consensus of opinion that this instalment of the International Library is the product of an able and upright mind, that it constantly aims at preserving accuracy and impartiality, and that it ever seeks to keep the function of the historian distinct and apart from that of the advocate.

The spirit of the book is scientific, and yet always reverent and devout.

THE PREACHER'S COMPLETE HOMILETIC COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT (with critical and exegetical notes,) by many distinguished Biblical scholars. Vol. I., Matthew. By Rev. W. Sunderland Lewis, M.A., and Rev. Henry M. Booth. Cloth, 8vo, 679 pp. \$3. New York, London and Toronto: Funk & Wagnall's Company.

This is the first volume of an extensive work of eleven volumes on the New Testament, printed from imported plates obtained from the publishers in London, where the entire work has been issued after years of preparation. The present work is a companion to the Complete Homiletic Commentary on the Old Testament which received such a substantial welcome. More than 8,000 subscribers for the latter (in all denominations) have anxiously awaited the completion of the New Testament portion of this valuable work. The expressions of satisfaction that have come to the publishers from thousands of preachers who are using the Old Testament portion are remarkable, and an equally hearty welcome for the New Testament volumes is confidently expected. In this Commentary, by various authors, is found a sermon outline or homiletic suggestion on every paragraph or verse of the New Testament that can be turned to use in the preparation of a sermon. Abundant choice selections of illustrations, etc., from many eminent sources other than the authors of the volumes, are also given. Except in some introductory, critical, and explanatory

notes proceeding each chapter, no foreign words, such as Hebrew or Greek, are used. The type is large and clear, and the books convenient to handle.

Considering the exhaustive character of this Commentary, inasmuch as it opens up for homiletic use every available verse or paragraph of the New Testament that can be turned into use for homiletical purposes, it is impossible to overestimate its importance. It is a great granary of seed for homiletic thought and illustration.

The clergyman of the highest culture is most familiar with the fact that many of the rich deposits of truth are hidden even from the most diligent workman, that he must use all means possible to discover these; and how often there comes to the devoted cultured mind an illumination that shows the treasures lying in a text or passage hitherto regarded as almost barren. The most happily constituted individual has but limited powers of insight and interpretation; but in this Homiletical Commentary we have the united labors of the great workers in the field.

The clergyman need not fear that he will sacrifice his own independence of research by examining a text in the light reflected by others, the texts are not depleted by elucidations, but on the contrary, the elucidations serve to suggest trains of thought which, in the subtle play of action, other minds will frequently lead up to ideas which eluded even the commentators. Moreover, this work furnishes a digest of the best commentaries. It has a great variety of suggestive hints and outlines.

This work is not of the nature of a labor-saving machine. Its purpose is to furnish fructifying germs, calling for abundance of labor, but designed to render the labor in the highest degree fruitful. It develops and stimulates originally in those who use it, but is no resting-place for mental indolence.

"THE MEETING-PLACE OF GEOLOGY AND HISTORY," by Sir J. W. Dawson, LL.D., F.R.S. London. The Religious Tract Society, pp. 223. Price \$1.25.

In these days of "higher criticism," and startling scientific discovery, the unlearned often find themselves bewildered between the desire to retain old and cherished scriptural beliefs, and at the same time, dispose of the apparent contradiction of recent research. To such the writings of our honored Canadian author, Sir Wm. Dawson, come like the visit of a wise friend in a day of trouble. At once a Scientist of acknowledged eminence, a Hebrew scholar, and a devout believer in inspiration, it is a relief and delight to see how he can read the pages of the books of nature and revelation in the full light of modern critical research and find no irreconcilable conflict, but instead an abundance of helpful harmony, while many a presumptuous difficulty is relegated to the limbo of exploded theories, or unproved speculations. These processes are strikingly illustrated in our author's treatment, in the above recent issue from his pen, of the Noachic deluge. Modern science now recognizes a corresponding cataclysm in the history of our world, with the help of such an interpreter, shows us how to read the Genesis narrative more intelligently than ever, if only we be willing to part with really groundless traditionalism. So too with the dispersion and confusion of tongues which followed. With much satisfaction we learn that it has begun—the tendency of modern Geological and Archaeological discovery to attach more and more value and importance to the ancient records of the human race, and especially to those previous documents which have been preserved to our time in the book of Genesis. The Tract Society has given us a good book, free from needless technicalities and helpfully illustrated with numerous cuts and tabular summaries of received results.

THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION. Large Octavo, boards, pp. 258. New York, The Baker & Taylor Co. Price \$1.50.

This Conference, the authorized record of which is contained in this beautifully printed volume, was convened at Washington in April last, and was attended by hundreds of representative men who had come from all parts of the Union. Its purpose was to promote the establishment of a permanent system of arbitration between the United States and Great Britain, and the addresses delivered by Hon. John W. Foster, Hon. Carl Schurz, President Patton, President Angell, President Gates, President Eliot, Bishop Keane, etc., etc., are well worth preserving. The volume contains, in addition, a valuable Appendix, wherein are found much suggestive correspondence on the subject, and an elaborate survey of the employment of tribunals of arbitration in ancient and modern times. In a word: this book is a perfect thesaurus of information touching the theme of which it treats, and cannot fail to aid greatly in securing,—not for the United States and Great Britain only, but for the civilized world,—some competent and permanent system of International Arbitration.