

Book Notices.

History of Interpretation. The Bampton Lectures of 1885. By FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S. 8 vo., pp. 553. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Price, \$3.50.

"There are things in the Old Testament," says Professor Drummond, "cast in the teeth of the apologist by skeptics to which he has simply no answer. These are the stock-in-trade of the free-thought platform and the secularist pamphleteer. A new exegesis, a reconsideration of the historic setting, and a clearer view of the moral purposes of God, would change them from barriers into bulwarks of the faith."

"These difficulties vanish," says Canon Farrar, "before the radical change of attitude which has taught us to regard the Bible as the record of a progressive revelation divinely adapted to the hard heart, the dull understanding, and the slow development of mankind." In this volume he addresses himself to the task of robbing of all their force the objections of infidels and free-thinkers to the Scriptures, and to pointing out and eliminating the errors of successive schools of exegesis.

He begins with the exegesis of the Rabbinical school, showing its servile legalism, its casuistry, its sacrifice of the spirit to the letter, its exaltation of tradition, its teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. He treats next the Alexandrian school, showing its allegorical method, its perversion of Scripture, its trifling plays upon words, the falseness of its methods, the emptiness of its results. He discusses, third, Patristic exegesis, and notes its limitations, and, amid many excellences, its deficiencies, its arbitrary methods, its often mistaken assumptions, and, on the whole, the high services rendered by the Fathers.

The next chapter treats the me-

diaeval exegesis of the great schoolmen, Alcuin, Erigena, St. Bernard, Aquinas, William of Occam, and other bright lights amid a dark age. The influence of Aristotle, the servility of scholasticism, the neglect of philology and lack of equipment, the abuse of dialectics, the growth of mysticism, and influence of monastic theology, and of the interests of the papacy, are with great ability and lucidity pointed out. Then comes the great period of the Reformation, the emancipation of the minds of men from the fetters of tradition and superstition, the free study of the unveiled Word of God, the right of final judgment, the acceptance of the final authority and sufficiency of Scripture, the rejection of allegory and recognition of the analogy of the faith, and necessity for spiritual illumination. These are illustrated from the writings of Reuchlin, Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingle and Calvin. Of the latter the greatness and weakness, the intolerance and ruthlessness are pointed out. A chapter sets forth the post-Reformation school, its exorbitant systematization, its multiplication of symbols and formality, its theological bitterness. Then comes the dawn of clearer light, of tolerance and culture, of increased knowledge, the phenomena of pietism and mysticism, and the growth of Arminian interpretation. A last chapter discusses modern exegesis under the influence of Leibnitz, Lessing, Euler, Herder, Kant, Fichte, Schliermacher, Hagel, Strauss, Baur, Neander, Tholuck, Coleridge, and others.

This brief outline will show the wide scope and great importance of this work—one of the most valuable its learned author has prepared. Some may consider that he concedes too much to the opponents of the theory of verbal inspiration; but there can be no question as to the