

ness to dovetail discussions into each other, nor does it suggest perfect liberty of investigation when the conclusion is obviously a foregone one. The old arrangement can plead a good deal in its favour still and is hardly likely to be altogether discarded.

In another respect Prof. Stearns' arrangement is wholly to be commended. He everywhere makes a clear line of demarcation in his discussions between the Christian facts together with their relations as these are plainly set forth in the Scriptures, and the theological speculations or theories which have been offered to explain these relations. It is not that he discards speculation as illegitimate. No thinking man can avoid it. But he everywhere treats it as speculation having none of the dogmatic authority attaching to the plain teaching of Scripture. He is not afraid or ashamed to acknowledge that there are a good many things which he does not know and cannot understand as well as a good many more things about which he is not sure. He is always respectful to the views of those from whom he differs and candidly states their strong points as well as their weak ones. The *odium theologicum* is entirely wanting. His whole aim is irenic and if he is ever unfair it is rather to the predecessors of his own school of thought than to his opponents. And to tell the truth one

cannot help feeling that just here he is occasionally a little bit unfair. Though he is willing to be called a Calvinist and sometimes glories in the history of Calvinism, he so far sympathizes with the vulgar prejudice against it as to attribute positions and tendencies to typical Calvinists which they would have repudiated as heartily as he does himself. No Calvinistic theologian for example ever formally denied the freedom of the human will and if they have all felt difficulty in maintaining a mode of statement that was always quite consistent with their teaching on other points, this same difficulty has been felt by every school of thought in some form and is not escaped by Prof. Stearns himself according to his own confession. The fact is we here come upon a mystery that baffles all our analysis and probably will always continue to do so. Our author, while strongly asserting the fact of human freedom, frankly acknowledges the incomprehensibility of it and therefore refuses to draw the inferences which Arminian theologians commonly deduce from it, by which they are landed in antagonism both to the statements of Scripture and to the evidence of their own Christian consciousness. The style of Prof. Stearns is simple, clear and natural. For the most part he avoids the technical phrases of scientific theology as is fitting in a popular work. The book is therefore well adapted for gene