

selection and discussion of matters as this of Hopkins. While it is not altogether easy reading, owing to the somewhat labored style of the writer, and while the arrangement of material is not always the happiest, yet we cannot but believe that it will be a long time before a better book will be produced on this subject. G. S. G.

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**The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy.** By F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S., Dean of Canterbury. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. xviii + 359, 8vo, cloth.

In this volume Canon Farrar seeks to do for the doctrine of inspiration what he did for the doctrine of hell in his *Eternal Hope and Mercy and Judgment*, viz., to present clearly the actual teaching of Christianity stripped of all unessential and eccentric opinion. Incidentally, as if to prove to his readers that he has not displaced the Bible from its proper position, he adds—one cannot help feeling to the weakening of the book—a collection of quotations in which various men of various or no creeds pay testimony to Scripture. In none of his works does the author write with greater feeling and earnestness, reaching at times an almost controversial fervor that will hardly aid the book's popularity among those whose opinions its author combats. Canon Farrar makes, if not an impartial student, at least an excellent advocate.

The main purpose of the book is to show the true character of the Bible by defending it from its over-zealous friends. In these friends' theories of verbal inerrancy and plenary inspiration, to say nothing of their casuistical harmonizations and allegorical explanations, Canon Farrar finds the chief explanation of the jeers of skeptics. His method is as follows: After having shown the varied character of the Bible, and the falseness of many current doctrines of inspiration, he proceeds to discuss the effect of the higher criticism upon the worth of Scripture, and thereupon to construct and defend a theory of inspiration which may be summed up in the formula "the Bible contains, not is the word of God." As such it is not infallible in all matters, and "nothing but casuistry and incongruity have resulted from the attempt to transfer it from the region of religious faith to that of exact science (p. xiv). This position naturally leads to a discussion of instances of unjustifiable use of the Scriptures and resulting difficulties.

So general is this treatment, and so prodigal is the author's use of example and quotation, that it is impossible to do much more than consider his general positions as to inspiration. These may be stated

something as follows: (1) The Bible is not infallible outside the sphere of religion, nor is the morality of all its historical characters either perfect or a basis of authority. (2) Many things are mistakenly ascribed to God through a habit or form of speech among the Jews. Much of the morality recorded in the Old Testament cannot be defended, although the teaching of the Old Testament as a whole is noble. (3) The "verbal dictation" theory of inspiration is hopelessly disproved by the character of the various writers of Scripture, and the discrepancies and errors it contains. (4) "Plenary inspiration" is an undefined and undefinable expression, being read by different writers in widely differing senses. A right view of inspiration involves neither inerrancy or exclusiveness. God is always revealing himself to earnest souls. (5) The higher criticism is necessary, and its results do not affect the fundamental truths of religion. (6) The Bible contains the word of God, but is only one of the means of revelation. (7) "*In everything which is requisite for man's salvation the lessons contained in Scripture—with the coördinate help of that Spirit by whom its writers were moved to aid us in our discrimination—are an infallible guide to us in things necessary*" (p. 150). "The plain teachings of Christ are the sole, infallible guide" (p. 154).

It is hardly possible that all readers will agree with Canon Farrar in his conclusions, but it cannot be questioned that he represents fairly a growing school of intelligent Christians who have realized that Christianity is not a worship of a book but of a God, and that the true Word of God is not printed but alive. There is nothing more needed in popular theology than a clear understanding of the limitations of any theory of inspiration. So long as men confuse "inspiration" with "infallibility" so long will any true study of the Scriptures be difficult. For our own part, although we should not subscribe to all the views of the book and would question whether the author's conception of inspiration is altogether satisfactory, we welcome every attempt like this of Canon Farrar's at a statement of a rational teaching in regard to the subject. There are stronger books in the same line, but none more readable or better fitted for popular use.

Two incidental slips as to statement may perhaps be noted in the book. Is it true that "the Pilgrim Fathers and their earliest descendants tortured harmless old women whom they called witches, and treated saintly, if misguided Quakers with remorseless fury?" (p. 100), and that Baptists believe that in baptism true believers should go under the water "as adults?" (p. 155).

S. M.