

RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

PHILOSOPHY OF THEISM; being the Gifford Lectures, delivered before the University of Edinburgh in 1895-6. By ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FRASER, LL.D. Second series. Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood & Sons; New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1896. Pp. 304, 8vo. \$2.

THE second volume of Professor Fraser's lectures is marked by the same maturity of thought, sobriety of statement, and perspicuity of style which we remarked upon in our review of the first. There the three theories of atheism, theism, and pantheism were set in contrast with one another as different solutions of the problem of the universe. The question was proposed, Which of these three is the most reasonable answer to be rendered to the fundamental question of our relation to the universe? Is man only a thing, or is he also a person? Do we stand in a moral relation to an Infinite Personality? It was contended that conscience enables us to answer this inquiry in the affirmative. We belong to a "morally principled universe" and so "may everywhere recognize and rest in God." This conclusion is not shaken by the fact of the existence of crude forms of religion, of fetichism and polytheism, any more than the calculus is overthrown by the circumstance that some tribes know nothing of distinction of number. The true interpretation of nature is the moral and theistic one; and in this position Kant was right. Even physical faith in natural order presupposes moral trust in the universal power. It is implied in the trustworthiness of experience. It is thus a necessary postulate. "Manifested power," Herbert Spencer's own phrase, cannot be unknown or unknowable power. His philosophy oscillates between universal nescience and non-moral power, Pyrrhonism and pantheism. "The eternal divine gospel that God is love may be taken as another expression for that perfect moral trustworthiness of the final principle of existence," which is the essential principle of theistic faith. The present volume carries out these propositions by an exposition of the relations of the theological problem to man. The titles of the chapters, viz., Causation Theistically Interpreted; Cosmical Adaptation and Divine Design:

Teleological, Divine Necessity: Ontological, and Philosophical, Faith indicate the course of the discussion in the first 120 pages. Then follow five chapters in which the doubts and queries suggested by the existence of evil, optimism and progress, miracle and its real nature, the mystery of death and the question of immortality, are handled with equal candor and ability. Objections and difficulties are fairly stated, and whatever weight can be justly conceded to them is conceded. The issue of the inquiries is the conclusion that faith in the supreme moral personality is not undermined by the fact of moral evil or by the fact of death, or by what is left of unfathomed mystery in the moral and providential administration of the world. To the pages (142-240) in which this luminous discussion is conducted we must refer the reader who would gain an adequate knowledge of its contents and a due impression of its soundness and value.

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ESQUISSE D'UNE PHILOSOPHIE DE LA RELIGION D'APRÈS LA PSYCHOLOGIE ET L'HISTOIRE. Par AUGUSTE SABATIER, Professeur de l'Université de Paris, Doyen de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante. Paris: Fischbacher, 1897. Pp. xvi + 415, 8vo. Fr. 7.50.

THIS is not by any means a great book, nevertheless it is a supremely interesting one. For the production of a work of the former class the times must be ripe, the age must coöperate with the author. A period of transition favors the appearance of a suggestive book, especially in so far as it induces a writer to reproduce semi-consciously the prevailing conflict of opinion or absence of clear constructive tendency.

Philosophy of religion is at present passing through that kind of change which commonly accompanies growth. This department of inquiry numbers today little more than sixty years. With the appearance of Hegel's Lectures, in 1832, it may be said to have finally dispossessed its ancestor, natural theology. For rather more than a generation thereafter Hegelian ideas and methods practically usurped the field; and one might say that the publication of Professor Otto Pfleiderer's classical work, in 1868, marked the beginning of the end of this epoch. Since then Hegelian principles have doubtless passed over into Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, and, in this new environment, have contrived to preserve their authority till within the last decade. But during this generation, which may be termed the