

PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

Agnosticism and Religion. JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896. 16°. Pp. 181.

Two addresses (one being to the students of Cornell University) and an essay, all written in the broad rich oratorical style of which President Schurman is a master. He defends theistic religion against agnostic denials, on the one hand, and against the dogmatism of theologians, on the other. Since Kant this attitude, which is unquestionably that of wisdom, has been gaining strength; but so ardent is man's love for sharp conceptions that such vague belief as this little book expresses will, so far from being universally greeted as a happy *via media*, probably gain for its author the reprobation of influential circles on both sides. The theologians will doubtless express themselves most strongly, and in these days of wariness in official position President Schurman is to be praised for the courage with which he exposes himself to their ire. The work makes little pretence to originality of argument. The first essay is an interesting account of Huxley's career. The author yields him hearty praise, but complains, first, that he never treated religion as if it too could be a positively evolving thing; second, that he failed to see through the absurdity of the Kant-Hamilton dogma that God must be essentially unknowable to man; and third, that he too trustingly assumed that the scientific investigator as such must be the chief authority in all things, even those of the spirit. The second essay is a defence of man's knowledge of the Divinity that expresses itself in the Universe, as against what the writer calls 'the farce of nescience playing the part of omniscience in setting the bounds of science.' The last paper eloquently rejoices in the evolution of our Christian churches towards non-doctrinal theism. "If a true Christian discovers that the creed of his church is no longer tenable, his plain duty * * * * is not to leave the church, but to let his light so shine that others may come to a knowledge of the fact that the church is not the mere embodiment of a creed, but the plastic organization of a life which is spiritual. His insight into the real situation of affairs forbids desertion, even though he is aware that fidelity may be rewarded by banishment or persecution" (p. 170). The little book deserves a wide success. W. J.