

THE BIBLICAL SCHEME OF NATURE AND OF MAN. By Rev. A. MACKEN-
NAL, B. A. 8vo, pp. 126. London : Simpkin, Marshall & Co. 1885.

FOUR useful lectures on Biblical Theology for laymen. The first sets forth the Genesis poem of creation, as a confession of faith in God, as real and as good, and in God's care for a people. Such a confession-theory is, indeed, the clew to Biblical theology, and to the Bible. And God's yearning for a people is one of the most touching traits, and therefore one of the truest, in old Hebrew theology. The second lecture sees in the story of the fall utterance of faith in God's perfection as well as in man's sin. But it is in Lectures III. and IV. that the finest feast is spread. They expound New Testament theology, a field where material has been prepared far more abundantly than on Old Testament domains; although, indeed, as yet few have put out the hand to turn the sheaves into bread for the people. Lecture III., on "Adam a Figure of Christ," exhibits the early Christians' faith in the solidarity of mankind. That central fact of life is found to be a central declaration of the Gospel; and the importance and preciousness of the Person of Christ lies largely in his personal manifestation of that great fact of life. The last lecture, "On the Consummation of Human History," rises at times to singular beauty and power. Full of inspiration for the reader who knows life's conflicts are the words of pages 78, 79, concerning the triumph for which Jesus ever strove : —

"An enforced homage was never grateful to Him. He was pained at any

profession of attachment to Him which lacked profound moral perception of and sympathy with his character and mission. He warned his disciples that to call Him 'Lord, Lord,' gave Him no satisfaction apart from that true understanding of Him, which fellowship with Him alone could inspire. It is in the name of 'Jesus' that every knee is to bow ; such homage means the recognition of his glory in condescension and sacrifice."

Again there is winsome truth in such a forecast as this, page 86 : —

"Christ is the ideal to which humanity shall attain, and the risen Christ is the image of what we shall be when we have reached our perfection. The world is glorified by such a possibility. It is no longer the prison-house of souls ; it is a noble sphere for the sweetest affections and the loftiest powers. To come and go at the bidding of sympathy, unhindered by restrictions of space ; to find the seas no longer severing us, and doors ceasing to bar us from the place where good work is to be done, or a kind word said ; to find the forces of nature obedient to saintly desire, to be able to multiply bread for the hungry, and charm sickness and frailty and death away by a word — the thought of such possibilities sets Creation in a new light."

And again, page 93, it is well said that the Biblical scheme of nature and of man contains a doctrine of which all other schemes know nothing : —

"Man is not intended to be merely a saint, . . . nor a comforter merely, . . . nor to be a sacrifice merely, ever laying himself down, and finding no issue for all his devotion, leaving to others to carry on the same weary round of toil, dissatisfaction, manful struggle, and endless self-renouncing. That view of man's lot, however it might exalt humanity, dishonours God. . . . All these — pious fortitude, courage, sacrifice — are but steps in recovering our lost royalty, . . . the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The argument of "Occasion for Jesus's Miracles" is finely and powerfully expressed on page 87.

May Mr. Mackennal's book suggest to many a preacher how fruitful for the pastor is study of the theology of the Old and New Testaments.

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