

*Faith and Freedom.* Sermons by Stopford A. Brooke. [Geo. H. Ellis. \$1.50.]

This American collection of sermons by Stopford Brooke was directly occasioned by the author's withdrawal from the Church of England. It has been compiled mainly from his later volumes, and is designed to set forth "his general doctrinal position and the prominent characteristics of his preaching." The last sermon of all is that which followed his separation from the English Church, and was preached in October of last year. Of the rest, fully one third belong to the year 1871, and all were written between 1867 and 1876. It is easy to see that the change in his views has been slow. There seems to be, indeed, but a single step between his denial of miracles in general, in the sermon on *The Naturalness of God's Judgments* (1867), and that rejection of the miracle of the Incarnation which led him to his present position. But his course through all these years has been manly and Christian. He has never concealed his honest opinions, nor spoken with mental reservation, nor retreated behind an ambiguous formula. Not cowardice, and not compromise, but Christian conservatism has prolonged his stay in the Anglican communion; and as soon as his position became in his view equivocal and inconsistent, he resigned his office and trust. The first of the two sermons, entitled "*God is Spirit*" (1873), in other respects one of the noblest in the volume, explains clearly his feeling and action. We quote a few lines:

Neither in the Church of England nor in the Church of Rome, neither in Theism nor Evangelicalism, neither in High Church nor Broad Church, do we now worship the Father. We take up for the outward vehicle of a life that worships in spirit and truth whatever form of creed suits us best, whatever seems to our careful judgment to be the truest, and to hold, on the whole, truths in the best way for the world. And we never dream of considering the form of creed we hold as final or as containing the whole of truth. It is, for the time, relatively truer to us than others; and we make use of it.

Of the other sermons we can only mention "*The Light of God in Man*," "*The Atonement*," and two upon "*The Fitness of Christianity for Mankind*," as among the most suggestive from the theological point of view. The literary qual-

ity of Mr. Brooke's work, as American readers already know, needs no words of praise. His style has a freshness, a simplicity, and a grace peculiarly his own. The subtlest themes become clear and impressive under his touch. Metaphor and simile are introduced rarely, and always for use; never for barren ornament. He writes and speaks with the earnestness of a man with a message, and with no touch of cant, or dogmatism, or self-assertion. Above all, his spirit has much of the love and helpful sympathy of Robertson, with nothing of Robertson's occasional bitterness and despair. The introduction to the volume might easily be spared. A short footnote gives almost all the information about Mr. Brooke that it contains, the twenty-three pages being largely filled with platitudes and impertinences. We feel sure that Mr. Brooke would disapprove both the taste and the judgment shown in the opening sentence, which pronounces him the greatest preacher of the English Church since Robertson.