

to quote. We would heartily commend Dr. Bigg's little book to students of philosophy and historical theology; for while not brilliant, yet it is the product of patient thought as well as of much and carefully digested learning.

THE BAMPTON LECTURES FOR 1886.*

WE have learned to expect from the Bampton lecture foundation works not only of scholarship and learning, but of general interest and value. To be sure, not every Bampton lecturer is a Mansel, a Mozley, a Farrar, a Liddon, a Row or a Temple; but because men such as these have given us books of unusual importance, it does not follow that their less distinguished fellows have not been worthy to preach in the historic series from the pulpit of St. Mary's. The lectures for 1886, are in no way extraordinary, but the interest of the subject and the thorough, if condensed, treatment it has received at the hands of Dr. Bigg, mark them as deserving more than a passing notice.

Early Christianity is interesting in all its phases, but in none more so than in that which it presents during the three historic centuries of Alexandria's importance, when in its struggles to attain a definite and dogmatic foundation, it came under the direct influence of the traditional theology of the Jew and the historic, if decaying, philosophy of the Greek. Three intellectual currents met then which had never met before and could never meet again, and the tracing of the Hebraic and Hellenic influences upon the Christianity of the ante-Nicene period, is a task requiring almost limitless patience and profound scholarship. Such master minds as Neander, Ritter and Zeller are our authorities for the philosophy of the period.

As Dr. Bigg himself confesses, a Bampton lecturer labors under some peculiar difficulties. "His eight discourses," he says, "eight *Stromateis*, or carpet-bags, if I may use the quaint phrase of Clement, will not pack away more than a limited, if somewhat elastic number of articles." Therefore we are not to look for the following out of each minute point that arises in the discussion, but only for an indication of the direct lines of thought. As the title of the book indicates it is a study of the influence of neo-Platonism upon Christianity as formulated and developed at Alexandria, this one topic being selected from among the many which the period in question affords. The personages about whom the discussion is centered are Philo, Clement and Origen. Of these the treatment of Origen seems to us the most interesting, though it suffers by comparison from a literary point of view, with Mr. Froude's well-known essay. Origen's use of allegorism is characterized as unsound, particularly on its apologetic side. "His [Origen's] rules of procedure, his playing with words and numbers and proper names, his boundless extravagance, are learned not from the New Testament, but through Philo from the puerile Rabbinical schools" (p. 146). Dr. Bigg accepts the general opinion, of special interest just now because of pending theological controversies, that Clement allowed the possibility of repentance and amendment until the Last Day. This is, however, as the writer points out, the effect of Clement's Platonism, he very seldom quoting Scripture at all on the subject.

As respects Philo, Dr. Bigg traces an influence emanating from him both upon the New Testament itself and upon the after development of Christian doctrine. It is from Alexandria, though not necessarily from Philo himself, that St. John acquired his conception of the Logos or Word, which formed the first point of contact between Christian theology and metaphysics. Dr. Bigg combats vigorously the charges of ignorance and credulity so often leveled at the early Christians. He calls the catechetical school at Alexandria as noble a scheme of Christian education as has ever been projected (p. 43), and continues: "So far as the Church differed from the rest of the society of the time, it differed for the better. Whatever treasures of knowledge belonged to the ancient world lay at its command, and were freely employed in its service; and it possessed besides the inestimable advantage of purer morals and a more reasonable creed." Other passages which we had marked for mention lack of space forbids us

* THE CHRISTIAN PLATONISTS OF ALEXANDRIA; eight lectures, preached before the University of Oxford, being the Bampton Lectures for 1886. By CHARLES BIGG, D.D., assistant chaplain of Corpus Christi College. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1886. 12mo, pp. xxvii, 204.