

.... We are puzzled to decide where to place Professor J. H. Allen's *Fragments of Christian History to the Foundation of the Holy Roman Empire* (Roberts Brothers, Boston). Sometimes he repudiates the rationalistic method, as, for example, when speaking of gnosticism, he charges it very justly with making sin a matter whose evil was to be detected by *thought*, rather than by *conscience*. He manifests on all occasions great love of historic candor, and is extremely anxious to strip himself of misleading predispositions; but when he comes to the resurrection of Christ, he says that "no amount of testimony would be enough, to the mind of the present day, to convince men as a *new fact* that a body once really dead had been restored to life" (p. 24). How much is intended to be reserved from the full force of the rationalistic position by the words "as a new fact" we cannot decide. In fact, the book leaves us in doubt whether the author is clear on that point in his own mind. He seems to hesitate to go upon the bold ground of Paulus, or upon that of Comte or of Renan. He leaves his position as indefinite as if it were drawn for him in the cloudy outline of some painter of the recent French School. Possibly, he would accept the resurrection, but propose a new definition of it, which should refine away what seem to him its gross elements. So as to the growth of the Messianic idea, it is impossible to say whether Professor Allen's view of the matter is that ordinary natural events laid the foundation in the Israelitish mind of an expectation of a Messiah, and that a similar movement, carried on, ripened that expectation of a Messiah into the doctrine of a Christ, or whether the Messianic hope grew out of a definite divine factor in Jewish history and was ripened into faith in the Christ by the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh.