

First in the series of lectures ought to have stood one on the authorship of the Gospels and the sufficiency of their authors as witnesses to the miraculous facts. But this topic is hardly touched on in any part of the volume. Consequently the work will be read by those for whose benefit it is chiefly designed with little profit and probably with little attention.

The best of the lectures appears to us to be that on Positivism by the Rev. W. Jackson, who at all events grapples with his subject vigorously and effectively, though his tone in parts is not so judicial as might be desired. The weakest, strange to say, is that by an ex-professor of Theology at Oxford, Dr. Payne Smith, whose paper on Science and Revelation, besides being extremely weak and vague in its reasonings, is defaced by some very poor attempts at wit. The Archbishop of York (on Design in Nature) displays a general acquaintance with science rare as well as laudable among clergymen, but he does not do much more. Dr. Rigg (on Pantheism) runs into pulpit declamation, and he is betrayed, in an evil moment, into an endorsement of the proposition that "all we ask is that we may be allowed to believe in a God and a real Divine Providence, as powerful and wise and good as Mr. Darwin's Natural Selection;" as though the heart, craving for a God of goodness and mercy, would be satisfied by belief in a force, the leading characteristic of which is the ruthless cruelty of its operations. In the papers of Dr. Stoughton (on the Nature and Value of the Miraculous Testimony to Christianity), and of the Bishop of Carlisle (on the Gradual Development of Revelation) we see nothing calling for particular notice; though Dr. Stoughton is to be commended, in our humble judgment, for opening with a reference to the words of our Lord to St. Thomas as showing that honest doubt ought to be removed by proofs and not to be denounced as a crime. Professor Rawlinson (on the Alleged Historical Difficulties of the Old and New Testament) cannot fail to display learning when dealing with questions of Oriental history; but he also shows bias to an extent which will be fatal to the acceptance of his conclusions by any who are not overpowered by his erudition, and his assertion that he has exhausted the alleged historical difficulties either of the Old Testament or of the New would by no means be admitted by his opponents. Mr. Row (on Mythical Theories of Christianity) puts with much force the difficulty of explaining the production of such a character as that of Christ by any known process of the human imagination. Mr. Leathes (on the Evidential Value of St. Paul's Epistles) is able and striking, though deficient in that judicial impartiality without which no reasonings will find admission into a doubting mind. The Bishop of Ely (on Christ's Teachings and Influence on the World) is comprehensive, erudite and suggestive; but in his survey of the moral history of Christendom he ignores such adverse facts as the Crusades, the Extermination of the Albigenses, the Religious Wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, the Inquisition, the Penal Code; and he claims Roger Bacon as one of the scientific glories of the Christian Church, omitting to mention that he was persecuted for his scientific pursuits by the ecclesiastical authorities of the day. Canon Cook (on the Completeness and Adequacy of the Evidences of Christianity) is fatally weakened by the omission in the commencement of the volume of that portion of the evidences which

as we have already pointed out is the foundation of the whole. The explanatory paper by Bishop Ellicott pleases us by its tone of candour and of charitable sympathy with serious doubt, a tone of which we feel the want in the papers of some of his coadjutors.

A volume of lectures written by such men could not fail to contain much that must be acceptable to believing Christians and worthy of the attention of all; but we cannot persuade ourselves that it will have much influence in turning the current of adverse opinion or bringing Modern Scepticism back to faith in Christ.

THE DIVINE TRAGEDY. By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.

Mr. Longfellow has not vouchsafed, by any kind of preface, to explain to us the aim or meaning of this singular production of his muse. "The Divine Tragedy" is a metrical abridgement of the Gospel narrative, mostly in the very words of the Evangelists, a little distorted or diluted to meet the exigencies of verse. The warning call of the Baptist, with which the piece opens, is rendered thus,—

"Repent! repent! repent!
For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,
And all the land
Full of the knowledge of the Lord shall be
As the waters cover the sea
And encircle the continent!"

The simple question, "Art thou that prophet?" is done into poetry thus,—

"Art thou that prophet, then,
Of lamentation and woe,
Who, as a symbol and sign
Of impending wrath divine
Upon unbelieving men,
Shattered the Vessel of Clay
In the Valley of Slaughter?"

Exegetical but undramatic!

In the narrative of the miraculous draught of fishes, instead of "the net brake," we have,—

"Our nets like spider's webs were snapped
asunder."

This, no doubt, appears much more poetical to Mr. Longfellow; but if the nets had been snapped like spider's webs instead of simply breaking, a second miracle would have been required to prevent all the fish from falling back into the water.

In the same style is,—

"Upon this rock
I build my Church and all the gates of Hell
Shall not prevail against it."

A singular notion Mr. Longfellow must have formed of the expression "The Gates of Hell."

The dire exigencies of verse compel the poet to substitute "children sitting in the markets" (which is nonsense) for "sitting in the market place," and "made a clay" for "made clay;" unless it be that he thinks "made a clay" more poetical.