

## THE BALDWIN LECTURES.\*

PROFESSOR CLARK.

The Baldwin Lectureship for the establishment and defence of the Christian faith, was founded in 1886. These lectures are delivered under the auspices of the Hobart Guild, before the State University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. They were inaugurated by Bishop Coxe in 1886. Professor Clark was chosen to succeed him in 1887, and is to be followed by Bishop Potter in 1888.

To many of our readers who are wont to listen to Professor Clark with keen enjoyment, this volume will be a new delight. Written in an easy popular style, this book is a valuable contribution to Christian apologetics entitled "Witnesses to Christ." It is an attempt, as the author tells us in his Preface, "to extort testimonies to the power of the Cross from foes as well as from friends." The material out of which this work is constructed, is furnished by the History of the Christian Era.

Christianity is presented as a great objective fact in the history of the world, as a great reconstructive power in the fabric of our civilization, as a regenerating leaven which has cleansed and renovated our social and domestic life. It lives and moves, and has its being among us, not like the spirit of dead Cæsar, but as the embodied power of ten thousand living Cæsars. "Account for it then," cries our author; if it cannot stand the light of the Nineteenth Century upon it, show us why it cannot; if it fails to satisfy the intellect, or to engage the heart, show where and how it fails. Christianity claims to be divine, it is built on historic facts culminating in the resurrection. These facts have never been disproved, results have flowed from them unaccounted for by any hypothesis yet made known to the world, except the supposition that they actually took place. Until it is proved otherwise, we are justified in believing that divine results have flowed from a divine power, rather than in believing in the monstrous miracle that the eternal laws have given "blessing to an hallucination, and triumph to a lie."

As a necessary consequence this volume possesses the rare virtue of being positive in character. Its avoidance of mere argument is remarkable. One rises from its perusal feeling that the author has not left the Agnostic to slip between the horns of a logical dilemma, but face to face, with four blank walls, too high to be scaled, too strong to be pierced, built out of stones quarried from history, and ordered at the dictation of reason and sense. While many apologetic works leave the reader with the impression that the conclusions of an intricate chain of reasoning seem *probable*, here the facts of Christianity are set forth, and the attacks against it passed in review; history, not the writer, being in the witness box; facts, not the writer's opinions, stating the issue. The trial is conducted on the stubborn ground of the actual, and not in the cloud-land of dialectics. Consequently the attempts to show that

Christianity is built upon myth, or owes its existence to the fantasies of disordered brains, fall to the ground, before the array of facts produced on the other side.

The spirit in which Prof. Clark conducts his case is very engaging, and calculated to draw his opponents over to his side. On one occasion Bradlaugh, the notorious Secularist, chanced to see the reports of a lecture delivered in St. James's, Picadilly, he filled three columns of his paper with extracts and comments from the reports, eulogizing the candour and fairness of his opponent, and offering to publish the whole lecture if furnished with the manuscript. That lecture was delivered by Prof. Clark on the relation of religion to personal culture, and forms the ground-work of the third lecture in the work before us. If any one is disposed to think that Bradlaugh admired it as an involuntary tribute to the Secularist position, we only ask him to read it.

Our author's daring plan of calling foes to witness in favour of his cause, is powerfully carried out in his treatment of unbelief. "To the statement that religion has had its day, and must now pass away, and give place to natural knowledge, we oppose," he says, "the assertion that unbelief has had its day; that it has tried one weapon after another against the walls of the city of God, and that not one of them has prospered; that they have so visibly failed, that one after another has been cast away, and that there remains nothing for those who would continue the assault, but the use of arms which have already been found ineffectual, and which have already been rejected as useless by the soldiers of the army of unbelief." This position is supported by an appeal to history. For the sake of convenience the history of unbelief during the last hundred years is dealt with, but as our author remarks: "It is by no means intended to be implied that the same lessons are not deducible from other periods of Christian history. The whole history of unbelief in all ages partakes of the same changing and uncertain character." What clearer proof of the strength of the Christian position can we have, than the knowledge that after eighteen hundred years unbelief is still shifting its point of attack, thereby admitting that the Christian lines are still unpierced.

Civilization is next adduced as a witness, and it is shown that our modern civilization in its prevailing ideas and sentiments, in its beneficial legislation, in its general spirit, of mercy and compassion is the creation of Christianity; that it is infinitely superior to the civilization of Pre-Christian times, differing from that not merely in degree, but in kind, and that we have therefore in this very civilization a standing evidence of the beneficial effects of the gospel.

The next lecture to which we have already alluded, contrasts the results of the different systems of culture abroad in the world—Social, Scientific, Literary, Positivist, and Christian. The exponents of each pourtray their ideal in their own words, and history is ransacked for the highest types of each. The play of contrast and historical association combine to make this one of the most interesting

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