

BOSTON MONDAY LECTURE.

BY REV. JOSEPH COOK.

The lecture delivered January 12th, was on "Christ's Character the Supreme Miracle." After considerable attention to the sublimity of Jesus' character, to the presence of God in natural forces, and the many facts which uphold the supernatural origin of the New Testament history and record, Mr. Cook took up the Mythical Theory of Strauss, which denies the real existence of Christ.

Investigations conducted by the acutest experts in ecclesiastical history, rationalists and infidels, have carried back the date of the earliest New Testament literature to about the last third of the first century, and the disputed facts to which that literature refers, are supposed to have occurred in the second third of the same century. It is a question whether between the upper blade of these shears and the lower there is room for the mythical theory. When that precious explanation was first put forth by Strauss, its author, it was supposed that there were two or three hundred years for the myths to grow up in. But the shears have been shut little by little upon this audacious scheme of scepticism. The shears close upon the mythical theory until it has left to it only the years between A.D. 34 and A.D. 60 to account for the growing up of these myths and legends! Strauss himself, in his last book, said that the critical mythical theory had all run to leaves. He himself changed the shape of it and finally abandoned it for a materialistic and substantially atheistic view of the world. He never pretended for an instant that the New Testament literature could be explained by the Old.

Webster's oration at the dedication of Bunker Hill monument was further off from the battle than the acknowledged date of Paul's Epistles is distant from the chief facts they assume. The New Testament literature came into existence just before and after the end of the first century, and those who wrote it asserted that they had been eye witnesses of the things which they recorded. They founded a Church on their testimony. They sealed their testimony with their lives.

How are you to account for the coming into existence of the great Christian wave sweeping over Greek and Roman culture, toppling down the throne of the Cæsars, spreading itself over barbaric tribes, and across the Balkans and the Alps and the Rhine and the howling North Sea and England, rolling across the Atlantic itself, and advancing from side to side of this new world, and beyond it to the islands of the western sea, and again into Asia, accumulating force all the way? This wave seems likely to end its course only by the enswathment of the entire planet. You are to explain how that wave was started. It is going past you; you hear the surge of its tremendous torrents. What force heaved this earthquake wave out of the first century? The fishermen of Galilee! Myths! That is the best infidelity has ever said on the subject. If I were a lawyer, if I were simply a teacher of the legal profession like Professor Norton (see his volume on the Authenticity of the Gospel), who years ago wrote at Harvard University a book on the Christian evidences, wholly from a legal point of view, I should be obliged to walk backward on this old pavement. But the historical evidence he employed has grown brighter under research since his day. You say that this topic is worn. Well, it is worn by battle and victories. I placed my hand in old Pompeii in the ruts worn by chariot wheels; ruts so deep that my whole hand went out of sight in one of them. I can lie down bodily on these historic flagstones and find the ruts deep enough indeed to cover my whole person; but the deeper they are, the more I trust them. The law of the survival of the fittest has application here. Under eighteen centuries of the most malignant battle, under the fiercest attack, Christianity has maintained the integrity of these lines of historical defence; and I suppose that the historical attack on Christianity is more hopeless to-day than in any previous age of the world since the second century. There is infidelity in Germany, I know; with the average shopman there is a bold rationalism of speculation in fashion; but with the experts familiar with the facts which the latest research has brought to the front, you cannot find a single strong man who leans for support on this mythical theory. The only explanation of the New Testament that infidelity has ever made half probable has been cut into shreds by the shutting of the shears

of chronology, until only thirty years are between their blades.

The historical character of the Christian literature has been vindicated by a mass of evidence more overwhelming than can be adduced in support of the claims of any other mass of documents of equal extent and age.

The adequate explanation of the coming into existence of the Christian literature and the Church, is found only in the historical reality of the character represented by the picture of Christ in the Gospels.

The revered preacher to Harvard University I once heard exclaim: "The coming into existence of such a picture as this under the unskilled pencils of such limners is sufficient proof of its reality; and its reality is sufficient proof of its divinity." By divinity he did not mean Deity; but divinity in the sense of Channing's Arianism, and Channing used to treat with the most lofty disdain those who cannot see in Christ our Lord more than a man. So, too, does Thomas Hill, the profoundest mind now representing Unitarianism on this continent. Even Theodore Parker said "It would require a Jesus to forge a Jesus."

Christ's character was more than human in that it was sinless. Christ never repents.

He teaches a religion based on repentance, but himself never feels the need of repentance. Who convinces him of sin? This picture! What was it drawn from? (See in Bushnell's "Nature and the Supernatural" the famous chapter entitled: "The Character of Jesus forbids his possible Classification with Men." See also Ulmann's classical treatise on "The Sinlessness of Jesus;" and especially Dörner's unsurpassed volumes on "The Person of Christ.")

His teaching was more than human, in that it has satisfied, and it only has satisfied, the deepest human wants.

His character was more than human, in that he made astounding claims of unity with the Deity, and yet shewed no want of humanity or balance of soul.

If Christ's character was more than human, it is natural to expect something more than human in His works.

The miracles He is said to have performed were to be expected from one whose own character is itself the supreme miracle.

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

All praise to Him of Nazareth,
The holy One who came
For love of man, to die a death
Of agony and shame.

Dark was the grave; but since He lay
Within its dreary cell,
The beams of heaven's eternal day
Upon its threshold dwell.

He grasped the iron veil; He drew
Its gloomy folds aside,
And opened to His followers' view
The glorious world they hide.

In tender memory of His grave
The mystic bread we take,
And muse upon the life He gave
So freely for our sake.

A boundless love He bore mankind;
O may at least a part
Of that strong love descend and find
A place in every heart!

—William Cullen Bryant.

SCOTLAND IN THE OLDEN TIMES.

Among the reminiscences to be found in Dr. Duff's "Life," the following, though not flattering to Scotland, may be truly spoken of as a "reminiscence" not likely to be found in any memoir of the future, for such a state of things as described could not now be met with in the most outlying and least civilized parish in that country:

"But for reminiscences such as those of Dr. Duff it would be incredible to what extent not only heterodoxy but profanity, intemperance, and other immorality found a place among the moderate ministers in rural districts, especially in the Highlands and Islands, to which public opinion never penetrated. Many of them among themselves avowed theological opinions contrary to the Confession of Faith, the contract on which they claimed to hold their livings. At the upper end of a long strath in the Highlands lived a parish minister who was scarcely ever known to be sober. Business took him frequently to the other end of the

valley, where he had to pass a distillery. It was the frequent sport of the owner to tempt the poor wretch, and then placing him on his pony with his head to the tail send him back amid the derision of the whole people, a man supporting him on either side. Another parish was a preserve of smugglers, whose rendezvous was the kirk, where the little barrels of Highland whisky were concentrated before despatch to the south. The isolated spot was the terror of the gaugers, for whom the hardy inhabitants, banded together, were long more than a match. A new minister was presented to the parish—a man of great promise and considerable scholarship. His one weakness was a passion for the violin. Through that he fell so low that when his parishioners assembled at the inn they sent for the minister to play to them, and even carried him off when well drunk to a house of doubtful repute, where the revelry was continued. On one occasion he fell into the peat fire, where his limbs became so roasted that for six months he was laid aside, and he was lamed for life. His brethren resented the scandal only by refusing to allow him to attend the Presbytery dinner, and by denying him all help at communion seasons. Brooding over these insults, he resolved to adopt that form of retaliation which would be most disagreeable to colleagues, some of whom differed from himself only by being greater hypocrites. He sent to the neighbouring cities for the most evangelical Gaelic ministers to assist him on fast and sacrament days. The result was that the smuggling parish became not only a new place, such as all the success of the Excise could never have made it, but the centre of light to the whole Presbytery. The people flocked from a great distance to hear the grand preaching in their own tongue. The drunkard's successor appointed under the Veto Act was a godly man, and when the Disruption came the whole parish left the Established Church.

A POLICEMAN'S TESTIMONY.

A number of young men were one day sitting round the fire in the waiting-room at the Normanton station of the Midland Railway, talking about total abstinence societies. Just then a policeman came in with a prisoner in handcuffs. He listened to the young men's conversation, but did not give any opinion. There was also in the room Mr. Macdonald, a minister of the gospel, who, hearing what the young men were saying, stepped up to the policeman and said:

"Pray, sir, what have you got to say about temperance?"

The policeman replied:

"Why, all I've got to say is that I never took a teetotaler to York Castle (prison) in my life, nor to Wakefield House of Correction either."—*End of Hope Review.*

PRAYER is the pulse of the renewed soul; and the constancy of its beat is the test and measure of the spiritual life.

THE need of a wider diffusion of missionary intelligence is more and more felt by those engaged in this work. Men cannot be expected to give to or pay for a work of which they are ignorant. As the Rev. Dr. Noble, of Chicago, well said at the recent meeting at Syracuse: "It is for pastors and deacons and all good men and women who love missions and who appreciate the vital relations between missionary knowledge and missionary interest, to enter upon systematic and determined efforts to instruct, and to supply the means of instruction in missionary methods and movements. This point is fundamental and vital. We shall limp by the way; we shall lag in our giving; and we shall make but a sorry exhibition of missionary zeal, if the interest of our people is not inspired and kept alive by regular and reliable information." And Dr. Bacon, speaking to the ministers, said:—"Whatever else you neglect, do not neglect to keep yourselves and your people informed about the progress of the Kingdom of God." The setting apart of one Wednesday evening in each month for prayer and contributions for missions, when missionary information is given, will be a blessing to the Church and a great help to the cause at large. By this means the missionary spirit will be kept alive and active. They who remain at home should be interested in the labours of those who have gone to the uttermost parts, and we should follow them with our sympathies and prayers, and support them with our wealth.