

**SOME LIGHTS OF SCIENCE ON  
THE FAITH: EIGHT LECTURES  
PREACHED BEFORE THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN THE  
YEAR 1892**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649742677

Some Lights of Science on the Faith: Eight Lectures Preached Before the University of Oxford in the Year 1892 by Alfred Barry

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**ALFRED BARRY**

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*Some Lights of Science  
on the Faith*

EIGHT LECTURES

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
IN THE YEAR 1892

*On the Foundation of the late Rev. John Bampton, M.A.,  
Canon of Salisbury,*

BY

ALFRED BARRY, D.D., D.C.L.,  
CANON OF WINDSOR, LATE PRIMATE OF AUSTRALIA,

26055-  
20/2/93.

**London**

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
AND NEW YORK: 15 EAST 16TH STREET

1892

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EXTRACT  
FROM THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT  
OF THE LATE  
REV. JOHN BAMPTON,  
CANON OF SALISBURY.

— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates to the  
“ Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Oxford  
“ for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the said Lands or  
“ Estates upon trust, and to the intents and purposes hereinafter  
“ mentioned ; that is to say, I will and appoint that the Vice-  
“ Chancellor of the University of Oxford for the time being shall  
“ take and receive all the rents, issues, and profits thereof, and  
“ (after all taxes, reparations, and necessary deductions made)  
“ that he pay all the remainder to the endowment of eight  
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be established for ever in the  
“ said University, and to be performed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in Easter  
“ Term, a Lecturer may be yearly chosen by the Heads of Col-  
“ leges only, and by no others, in the room adjoining to the  
“ Printing-House, between the hours of ten in the morning and  
“ two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity Lecture  
“ Sermons, the year following, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between  
“ the commencement of the last month in Lent Term, and the  
“ end of the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity Lecture  
 “ Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following  
 “ Subjects—to confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and  
 “ to confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the divine  
 “ authority of the holy Scriptures—upon the authority of the  
 “ writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice  
 “ of the primitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and  
 “ Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost—  
 “ upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in  
 “ the Apostles’ and Nicene Creed.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity Lec-  
 “ ture Sermons shall be always printed, within two months after  
 “ they are preached ; and one copy shall be given to the Chan-  
 “ cellor of the University, and one copy to the Head of every  
 “ College, and one copy to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and  
 “ one copy to be put into the Bodleian Library ; and the  
 “ expense of printing them shall be paid out of the revenue of  
 “ the Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity Lecture  
 “ Sermons ; and the Preacher shall not be paid, nor be entitled  
 “ to the revenue, before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified  
 “ to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken  
 “ the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two Uni-  
 “ versities of Oxford or Cambridge ; and that the same person  
 “ shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”

## P R E F A C E



THE Lectures, as here printed, are substantially those actually delivered, with some additional passages, either omitted in delivery for the sake of brevity, or subsequently inserted, where clearness seemed to require it.

I have only two prefatory remarks to make upon them.

First, that they embody an attempt to take some general view of the present relation of Science in its largest sense to the Christian Faith; as illustrated by examples of its bearing, confirmatory, elucidatory, or critical, on the substance of the Creed of Christendom, witnessing of Christ Himself. It is only too obvious that such an attempt, necessarily involving brevity of treatment, is liable also to the danger of superficiality. For it must indicate lines of thought, which it is impossible to follow out with anything like exhaustive completeness; it will probably touch on important controversies without ability to discuss them fully and thoroughly. Perhaps it may seem to savour of too great self-confidence, as dealing with a vast question



as a whole, while men of high ability and learning have thought it enough to devote themselves to the study of single parts. But I venture to think that there is in our own days some danger of over-specialization, losing in the elaborate examination of each part the general proportion and cumulative force of the whole. In regard to these special studies, while we listen respectfully to the teaching of experts, there is still some value in what is in this aspect a lay opinion—standing (so to speak) further back from the picture, on which various hands are employed, and thus able to gain some conception of the general idea, and the mutual relation and proportion of the various parts. Perhaps what is true of all subjects is especially true of the Christian Faith, which necessarily has points of contact on all sides with the various forms of human knowledge, and of the Christian Evidence, which depends so largely upon a cumulative strength of combined witness, infinitely greater than the mere sum of the forces of its various elements. How far the attempt may have been successfully made is another question. No one is (I suppose) so keenly alive to the defects of a work, and its failure to reach even his own ideal, as the author. But I am convinced that the general idea itself is sound, and perhaps not without some special appropriateness to present conditions of thought.

Next, I can well understand that the view here taken of the relation of Science to Religion may seem too Optimistic. But there are two kinds of Optimism

—the Optimism which ignores difficulties, and the Optimism, which, seeing difficulties, yet sees, or trusts to see, through them. It should be impossible for any thinking man in days like our own to fall into the first. If I have unwittingly done so, and cried, 'Peace, where there is no peace,' it is a serious error. Certainly our Lord Himself seems to foretell the continuing, perhaps the increasing, existence of stumbling-blocks in the way of faith, as the world grows older. We seem to see already what He foreshadows to us—a growing intensity of conflict of first principles of good and evil, of truth and error, in proportion as old barriers of law and convention give way before modern boldness and exuberance of energy. But the higher form of Optimism is surely implied in Christianity itself. The Cross, while it is the symbol of conflict, is the symbol also of victory. If Christ is Himself the Truth, then, sooner or later, all real discoveries of truth must harmonize themselves with His Word; as all phases of intellectual and moral vitality must be taken up into His indwelling Life.

It appears to me—whether rightly I know not—that this principle is now being recognised more fully on both sides of the great antithesis. Science, while it pursues its special developments more exhaustively than ever, yet seems more and more alive to the need of correlating them all in some large philosophy of Being; more inclined to acknowledge that the moral insight of the soul, whatever may have been its origin

and course of development, has a co-ordinate function with pure intellectual research, in discovering the inner secret of that philosophy; perhaps more deeply sensible that the search brings us into the presence of mystery, and forces upon us the alternative of Agnosticism or Faith. Theology, clearing and simplifying her fundamental principles, not that she may relax her grasp of them, but that she may hold them more firmly, is thus able to be more receptive of other forms of Truth, to enter into the harmony of what we ordinarily call the Natural and the Supernatural, and to understand that the Spirit of Truth, who is, according to our Lord's promise, to 'abide with us for ever,' has His witness to the world in all that tells it of truth and righteousness, as well as His higher witness to the faith of the Church, guiding it more and more into all the Truth of God in Christ.

In that conviction these pages are written, as a humble contribution to this larger idea of the Revelation of God. May He, through their imperfection, grant to some minds a glimpse of His perfect Truth!

A. B.

WINDSOR,  
October 24, 1892.