

ON TESTIMONY.

WE have lately been reminded that the whole question of allegiance to or rejection of the Christian faith is simply one of the value of testimony. It is implied, for example, that no amount of testimony can make certain things credible which science on the ground of experience has pronounced to be impossible. If, therefore, these things—such, for instance, as our Lord's treatment of the Gadarene demoniacs—are an essential part of the Christian faith, it must be given up, and with it so much deference to the Gospel narrative as has hitherto sufficed to secure our belief in various matters which can hardly fail to include the feeding of the five thousand, the raising of Lazarus, and our Lord's own resurrection from the dead. So far as these things depend upon the testimony of the evangelists, they depend upon the *value* of that testimony. If the testimony can be invalidated, our belief in these things must go, unless it can be shown that they depend also upon other considerations unaffected by any distrust of testimony. It may be well, therefore, to investigate the nature of testimony generally, and that of the Christian testimony in particular, because if there is really any reason to discredit the Christian testimony, as so many persons in the present day assume and affirm, there can be no advantage in continuing to accept it. If it is really unsound it had better be given up, for there can be no merit in believing a lie; and above all things we must bear in mind that the tenacity of our own belief can in no way compensate for deficiency in the truth of that which we believe.

What, then, is testimony? It is the witness that is given by A, B, or C to that of which D would not otherwise have knowledge. It is the ground on which action of the most important kind, involving the sacrifice of life and liberty, is constantly taken. In one form or other it is the only means we have of enlarging our knowledge, so far as it does not depend upon