

WITNESSES TO CHRIST.*

THE Church in the United States has been happily blessed by the munificent and pious wisdom of its laymen having led to the endowment of Lectureships in several Universities, much after the Bampton and Hulsean examples, the principle ones being the Bedell Lectures in the Theological Seminary of the Diocese of Ohio and Kenyon College, and the Baldwin Lectures in the University of Michigan. The latter was founded by "Governor Baldwin and his accomplished wife," whose liberality in gifts has been most honorable to themselves and the Church, but not more so than their liberality of judgment in heartily concurring in the selection of the last lecturer, who had no other claim to their distinction than eminent fitness. But whatever failings our friends across the line may have, the fault is not to be laid to their charge of national jealousy. To a patriotism not excelled by any people, the Americans add a noble readiness to recognize, assimilate, and honor gifts and culture from any outside nation. In one sense they are "Know Nothings" indeed, for where moral force and intellectual power are concerned, they know nothing but the pleasure of hearty and generous recognition.

The lectures of Professor Clark will only confirm his reputation where he is known. They will, however, spread through the Church the judgment of his friends, that he stands with few, very few, peers in wide culture as a scholar, intellectual clearness and force as a thinker, and especially as an exponent of thoughts bred of rich gifts, the widest reading, and large experience. There is now, happily a library of apologetic literature. Every shot from the citadel of infidelity has drawn out a shower of bolts from defenders of the faith, so that by mere weight of metal the fragile forts of the enemy have been crushed into dust. The vaunt of our modern foes is of their mental power. Doubtless in this they have to boast over some predecessors such as the deists of the last century. But there is in this one small book of Professor Clark's more sheer and clear logical and philosophical reasoning than the whole theatre of infidels could jointly show. Its sharply defined, cool, severe argumentation, cuts through the body of opposing sophisms so cleanly that we shall see some still holding on to their delusions, like men whose heads are severed from their bodies, unconscious of the severance because the sword was so swift and so sharp that made the cut!

As a compendium, or summary of such apologies for the faith as are needed to-day, these Lectures occupy the front place in timeliness, completeness, and literary charm. The author winds a garland occasionally on his rapier to hide its stains. They are placed under following heads, No. 1, Phases and phases of Unbelief; No. 2, Civilization and Christianity; No. 3, Personal Culture and reli-

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gion; No. 4, The Unity of the Christian Doctrine; No. 5, The Insufficiency of Materialism; No. 6, The Pessimism of the Age; Nos. 7 and 8, The Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The first lecture is a vivid summary of the phases of unbelief, grouped as the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. The point is made good that infidelity is ever changing its ground, and an interesting passage shows how religion has learnt valuable lessons from conflict with its versatile foes. "Rationalism compelled men to think of God as a Being who governed by law. Pantheism bore witness to the truth that in Him we live and move and have our being, that God is not absent from but ever and everywhere present." Professor Clark's intimate knowledge of German literature helps him to give us a crushing reply to works of German sceptics and other foes of the faith. His exposure of the mythical theory of Strauss is excellent, he makes this author destroy his own work, like a scorpion that commits suicide in despair. The second Lecture will be the popular one, as less close attention is called for to a severe logical argument. It deals with the great social problems that have affected humanity in all times, which are the great questions for the present and future. The lecture opens with the enquiry, "What has the Gospel of Jesus Christ accomplished for the world?" The answer is highly eloquent, though compressed. The contrast between the civilization of heathenism and of christianity is presented with the graphic force of high descriptive skill. The lecturer's warmth of sympathy with the progressively ameliorating work of christianity in softening the hard lot of the weaker classes, shows a deep and rare insight into modern life, with its social tendencies and needs. Had our pulpits learnt and taught this aspect of religion, we should not have had to discuss, "*How to get hold of the masses*"—for they would never have been let go. If we may be allowed to hint an addition to the argument of Lecture II we might suggest an extension to passage, on page 54, where it is asked "are the Christian portions of the world better since they became Christian than when they were heathens? Do the best men among us attribute the good in themselves to the word and the power of Christ, or not?" It seems to us fair to push this argument much further by demanding, "What would the world be if mankind universally acted on the principles of Christianity?" The religion based upon the example and teaching of Christ has, we submit, *the right to be judged not by what it has not accomplished, but by what it would achieve if men gave themselves up to obedience to His precepts, and an imitation of His life.* Mr. Cotter Morrison it is true raises the objection that the Christian ideal is too high for humanity. But what is the value of an ideal that is easily reached? A lower moral standard than perfection stimulates no striving, for men as a rule are content to fall far below a point they could reach by effort, and this moral level average is incomparably higher in Christian lands because the standard is ideal.

The third lecture is a charming treatise on

Culture as affected by religion. Professor Clark takes and defends successfully against all comers, the ground that without religion there cannot be thorough cultivation of the human faculties. His thesis rests upon what seems to us axiomatic, "*In order to any true and complete culture, the whole nature of the thing to be cultivated and not merely a part of it, must be taken into consideration*"; and provision must be made for the whole of that nature and for all the elements of which it is composed." The learned lecturer avows that, "a believer and teacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can of course have no difficulty in declaring that a mere secular culture is altogether insufficient and incapable of producing a complete and harmonious development of our powers, such as is the result of the operation of Christian truth in the hearts and minds of those who receive it." As a fascinating display of the highest literary culture, aiding while adorning sustained reasoning, the lecture on "Personal Culture and Religion" will challenge comparison with any similar effort. "The Unity of Christian Doctrine," is a valuable contribution to Apologetics. The one, too, most characteristic of the author, who is nothing if not judicial and sympathetic towards opponents and contestants, whom he seeks not to conquer so much as to win and convince. This lecture should be richly fruitful in suggesting reconciliatory thoughts to all who are tempted to make much of our divisions. The fifth lecture on "The Insufficiency of Materialism" is a splendid effort. In about forty pages the various phases of materialism are sketched with precision, the arguments in its defence stated fairly, the opinions of scientific writers put clearly, then without a word of offence, the theories of the materialists are dissected, their objection to the existence of a spiritual element in nature knocked on the head, and the most potent of their arguments is used as the pole axe in the operation. The dead are sent to bury the dead. The lecturer with fine scorn asks what man who is and ever was a worshipper is to do with the science substitute for God. "Can we worship thus:—

"We praise thee, O Eternal Force, we acknowledge Thee to be unsearchable. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Absolute, the Unknowable"?

The Pessimism of the Age is a painfully interesting lecture. The greed of the age leads to pessimism, and we hesitate not to say *that life is not worth living, is indeed a contemptible thing, if man has no better work than to pile up money, and find its only enjoyment to be a power to boast over those whose possessions are less, because in many cases they were too refined in mind to stoop to the business of raking up filthy lucre.* We need hardly do more than allude to the final lectures on the Resurrection. It goes without saying that every argument possible to sustain this fact is put with that singularly effective lucidity which is Professor Clark's highest charm as a preacher and author, when dealing with topics that demand completest mastery shall be shown by a clear exposition of abstruse arguments.

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