

**THE ULTIMATE PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIANITY.** Eight Lectures Delivered in 1906, at Regent's Park College, London.

By John Clifford, M.A., LL.B., B.Sc. (London Univ.), D.D., LL.D. (Hon.). London. The Kingsgate Press, and James Clarke & Co.

These lectures constitute the fifth course of the Angus Lectureship.

Dr. Clifford does not agree with Goldwin Smith that "Never before has there been such a crisis in the history of belief", but holds that "undoubtedly the strain is very severe now; and on the fundamental questions discussed in these lectures, that severity is likely to increase very much during the next twenty or thirty years." For this no regret. It is "one of the good omens of the day that our beliefs are being tested in the fierce fires of thought and experience. It is apathy that is to be dreaded, not inquiry." "Better face the facts, the whole facts. No discussion moves an inch unless there is absolute candour." "Facts are of God." These quotations from the *Preface* indicate the mental attitude of approach. Add this for the vital element: "These lectures, I may add, are my witness to the Christianity of the New Testament as I know it; a record of my faith and experience, and I hope they may, at least, conduct the inquirer a few paces along the right road, and help him in walking towards the desired goal." To say that Dr. Clifford has been true to the principles and positions indicated in these words of his is to say what all who know him will have no need to see affirmed. Because he speaks his own experience of the religion of Jesus there will not be found much that is new or absolutely original, for the Christian experience is common. The richness and depth of the author's experience give a fervor and an enthusiastic vigor to his every word that are sometimes thrilling. He takes the sane, balanced view of things as they are. So here again the seeker after novelty will find scant reward. But, again, the broad learning, the quiet, comprehensive thought, the clear grasp, yield a style and progress in dis-

cussion that make fresh every word. The originality of independence is always seen. One does not need to agree with every position to recognize this as a highly valuable contribution to the practical apologetics of the day.

The "Introductory" lecture sets forth the nature and range of the course. "The two questions of religion which are pressing upon the mind of this generation are — (1) As to what the Christianity of Christ is in its essence, permanent contents, and forces, and what it is not. (2) As to how we can make ourselves sure of what Christianity is and what it is not." It is necessary to discuss these questions because "so many men \* \* \* are alienated from" Christianity, Christ, the churches "by the palpable misrepresentation of Christ's spirit and laws, ideas and ideals dominant in the Christendom of to-day; because many men Christian in spirit will turn to Christianity presented in "its original simplicity and strength; because Christianity must be distinguished from the forms it bears in variant sects; because of the missionary character of Christianity, calling for an essential message; because Christian theology needs to be "brought into accurate relations with its historical basis"; because, in a word, our deepest need is the actual exact truth.

Next we have an outline of the method with an examination of the final court of appeal, where the reviewer finds some confusion of thought, of the place of Christianity in Comparative Religion and in the History of Religion. The questions as to Christianity have been stated as two. The course of lectures falls into two parts. "The First Problem" is that of "The Sources" which are investigated in three lectures on "The Ideals of Jesus", "The Impression Made by Jesus on the Men of His Age", "The Consciousness of Jesus." One can see at once how all the "problems" of Christian "sources" may be included under this fresh and interesting analysis. And it has the merit of making Jesus in his own person, work and teaching, the center of all the questions

that arise—their center and solution. He is the Source.

The second part has to do with the content of Christianity. The four lectures have for their subjects: "Christianity and the Scheme of Things"; "The Christian Conception of God"; "Man as Seen in the Christian Religion"; "The Ultimate Religion".

Here again is room for complete discussion. The one serious omission is in reference to the matter of sin and its place in the redeemed outcome of the mission of the Christ.

W. O. CARVER.

**SPINOZA AND RELIGION.** A study of Spinoza's Metaphysics and of his particular utterances in regard to religion, with a view to determining the significance of his thought for religion and incidentally his personal attitude toward it.

By Elmer Ellsworth Powell, A.M., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy in Miami University. Chicago. The Open Court Publishing Company. London. Kegan Paul, French, Trübner & Co. 1906. XIII. 344 pages.

This is a carefully wrought out and original study of Spinoza in relation to religion. The author finds not only that this specific subject has never had thorough and "*candid*" investigation but that it is quite generally misapprehended by those who devote any attention to it. That the author has the type and furnishings of mind requisite for a scientific and scholarly study of his subject becomes at once manifest. He arranges his material in orderly and logical fashion, cites freely and fully from the writings of Spinoza at each step. He perceives that not only in direct statements on religious subjects but in implication in metaphysical views as well are the religious teachings to be found. Spinoza occupies so significant a relation to modern monistic thought that his views must be of interest to any philosophical student of religion. That he really counts for little in religion is known by our author as well as to other students. That he will ever signify much in this sphere again does not become evident from the discussion here. The reviewer does not