

her cheek, but did not stay. Her anxious parent well understood the language of those soft, earnest eyes.

"Speak on, my beloved child. You fear to give me pain, but God will give me strength to bear it."

"I do fear to give you pain, my dearest mother. I fear to give you all pain, for you love me more, far more than I deserve. But you will not repine at my happiness. Mother, Marion, Frank, (he had approached the bed) I believe that I am dying."

"Oh Lord, have mercy on me!" cried Marion, frantically, "must all whom I love, die!" She clasped the hand of Helen passionately, "you have been sister, teacher, friend and guide, every thing to me. I cannot endure to part with you, Helen."

"See how you distress her, Marion. My child, you must not do so, said Mr. Laurens, endeavoring to force away his daughter.

"Do not take her away, sir," said Helen, gently, and she placed her hand on the bowed head of the weeping girl. "The Saviour, who enabled me to be of some little use to you, my dearest Marion, who is with me now in my parting hour, whose arms are around and beneath me, and whose smile is gilding to my view the dark valley of Death, will henceforth be himself your guide and teacher. He will console you for our short separation. Marion, you will rejoin me in heaven, will you not?" The last words were uttered in a solemn, unearthly tone.

"I will try," was the sobbing response.

Two other persons had entered the chamber, Mrs. Irvin and her daughter, the former friends of Miss Laurens, whom her step-mother had forbidden her two years before to visit. They had since known affliction, and the interdict had been taken off. Mrs. Laurens had then visited them herself, and her counsel had not been ineffectual. The day of adversity had proved to them a blessing, and they had learned to estimate the woman, who in their prosperity avoided their society as injurious, but in their darker hours sought them to administer sympathy and aid. The example of Helen had not been lost on them. In her they saw religion in all its native beauty, and learned to love the light which made her so attractive.

"You do not feel worse, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Irvin, as she took Helen's hand.

"I shall soon be in a world of spirits," she replied.

"You have no doubt, no fear, my love?" asked Mrs. Laurens in a calm, but anxious voice, and Marion and Frank learned from that moment to understand that lady's real character better. They saw that she was feeling acutely, with all a mother's heart, the approaching parting from her lovely and devoted daughter; and that it required the exercise of all the Christian fortitude she possessed to enable her to command her emotion, yet even in that hour of anguish, selfish feeling was suppressed, and the happiness of her child alone considered! To see her die tranquil, safe, was her chief concern. She repeated the question.

"You have no doubt, no fear?"

"None, beloved mother! I am all unworthiness, but Jesus has become my Redeemer and my surety. I feel He is a sufficient Saviour. His blood hath cancelled all my sins. My title to immortal life, I read as clear as noon-day. You will not mourn for me now, dearest mamma?" and her anxious, affectionate glance met the eyes of Mrs. Laurens.

"Always thinking for others, Helen," she falteringly said, "no, my sweet child, I give you back to God!" She leant down and kissed her, while her tears fell thick and fast upon Helen's face.

"Thanks, dear mother, for all your kind instructions, your efforts to fit your child for the paradise whither she is now going to await your coming. God will comfort you, and Marion will be"—her voice failed her.

Marion understood that last appeal, and springing to the side of her stepmother, fell on her knees before her. "May God help me to keep the vow I now make, and bless me as I endeavour to supply to Helen's mother the place of Helen," she exclaimed, with all the fervor of her nature.

Harriet and Louisa both approached, and knelt beside her. "We too, promise," they said, with tears and sobs, "we are henceforth your children."

Mrs. Laurens was deeply affected, and clasped them all three to her bosom, but her habitual self-possession did not wholly forsake her. She determined not to quit her daughter while life remained.

"I fear you are exhausted by this agitating scene," said Frank, tenderly, as Helen beckoned Granville to her, "you can speak to him some other time."

"No, I feel so happy now, so peaceful. Oh! Frank, my death is a greater blessing than my life. I would not have one circumstance changed in my lot." To Granville she then spoke, sweetly, affectionately and impressively. She thanked Mr. Laurens for all his kindness, and expressed to him an ardent hope that they would all meet in heaven.

"Oh, Helen," exclaimed Marion, "you have taught me to understand the meaning of those important words of our Saviour, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' None can say you ever prejudiced them against the Gospel. You have recommended religion in every step of your progress. What would I not give to be like you."

Helen attempted to reply, but emotion and weakness prevented her. Frank hastily administered a cordial, and she revived to point Marion to the Bible which lay beside her, and to assure her, that the humble and sincere seeker of moral excellence should not be disappointed.

"Have you no word of comfort, or advice for me, Helen?" asked Frank.

She took her Bible from the pillow, and put it in his hand. "Keep it and read it for my sake, and"—the sentence was unfinished. She looked a last farewell on the assembled and weeping group, then raised her eyes to heaven with an expression of hope and truth. A beam from above seemed to descend upon her features, and the seal of death fixed that brightness there. It was a pledge of the spirit's happiness. Helen Lorimer was with her God.

Marion Laurens well performed her promise. She was to her father's wife a devoted and affectionate daughter, and the virtues of Helen Lorimer passed into her future life. She lived to be a wife and mother, and the influence of her early friend lingered round her domestic altar, pointing to duty and its end. Her sisters grew up useful and amiable, and throughout an eventful existence never lost sight of the light on which their brief companionship with our heroine had riveted their gaze. Mr. Laurens became interested in the great truths of revelation beside her bed of death, and found in his chastened and now meek wife an able and faithful counsellor. Granville attached himself to his stepmother from the day of Helen's decease, and when we last heard of him, was writing a tract on the sinfulness of swearing.

And did Frank Laurens turn away from the memory of the fair vision which had dawned on his early manhood, alluring him to virtue and to piety? Did he forget the parting admonition of Helen, her last look? Never. Her memoirs were written in his heart; he read them daily, and in after years only admired those of her sex as their practice resembled hers. For his little sister Helen he entertained the warmest affection, and when the death of both her parents made him her guardian, it was his chief delight to instruct her in those lessons which had shed so soft a radiance on the pathway of Helen Lorimer.

Reader, dost thou walk in the light of scriptural religion? Art thou careful so to strive in thy orbit of duty that all around thee may learn to glorify thy Father who is in heaven, when they see his glory so attractively manifested in a frail creature? It is not enough to possess light; it is important to thee that thy light should be improved for the benefit of others. Thou wilt one day meet thy circle at the bar of God. Let them not accuse thee there of exciting or confirming one prejudice against divine truth. Study carefully the Art of Shining.

POPULAR EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR.

Abstract of the Introductory Lecture.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY? It is important for our purpose to give an intelligible reply to this question. A multitude of sects profess to teach the Christian religion, and yet it is well known that each religious denomination is distinguished by some peculiarity of faith or practice. With such a diversity of expressed views, it may be laid down as a self-evident truth, that all the religious persuasions cannot be right; and as they universally mingle opinions with 'belief of the truth,' unless a church may claim infallibility for its opinions and practices, it is hard to believe that any one of the sects can be right in all things. This argument will at once be admitted by the candid and discerning of all the religious bodies, nor will it be denied by any, unless indeed we must except those who shall present the plea of infallibility for their party, or, to adopt the words of the author of "Mammon," "who belong to a class who persuade themselves that their church is perfect—that Infinite Perfection could not say to it, 'I have somewhat against thee.'" Assuming the correctness of our position, it will be anticipated that it is not our purpose to uphold Christianity as explained by any of the sects, but simply to defend the Christian religion as taught by the Apostles in their own words, and as exemplified in the belief and customs of the communities of Christians which they organized and directed. The doctrines and precepts, etc. of the kingdom of Christ, as delivered by the Apostles in the words which they were taught to employ by the Holy Spirit, we shall ever earnestly contend for; but to those persons who substitute the inferences or explanations of fallible men for the language of the inspired writers, must be left the herculean task of maintaining such substitutions. We purpose to defend only inspired truths as they are revealed in inspired words. And, believing as we do without the shadow of a doubt, that the Apostles were faithful men, and that they fulfilled to the letter the commission given them by their Lord and Master, to teach the believers to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, (and which included every thing which Christ commanded, and excluded every thing else)—and as the New Testament makes known the precise ordinances which they delivered to the churches to observe, and which they inculcated every where in every church—we propose to vindicate the discipline, etc. of modern churches just so far as they keep the apostolic institutions. If they omit to observe any practice or church regulation observed by the churches which were governed by the inspired laws of the Apostles, and for which observances those churches were commended, or were not censured, we shall not be answerable for such omissions: or again, if any of the present churches institute any customs or practices in their discipline which are not commanded by the Apostles, and which the primitive congregations did not keep, we shall not attempt to advocate any such human additions. Unbelievers will not therefore have occasion to taunt us with the differences which exist amongst professors of religion, because we will admit only

the one standard which contains the one faith, etc. Nor shall we experience any difficulty in showing the use or propriety of any of the human dogmas, or any of "the wire-drawn theories" to which unbelievers so strongly object, and indeed upon which many of their objections to the Christian religion are founded, inasmuch as we shall pass by all such dogmas and theories, and make our sole appeal to a book, remarkable for its plainness, and which is intended to make wise the simple. In a word, the divine origin and authority of the whole of the Christian religion, and of nothing but the Christian religion, in every point, whether of faith or of practice, as declared in the New Testament, we undertake to prove in the present course of lectures.

But it may be asked with some show of plausibility—"Why moot the question of the divine authority of Christianity? Have we not already an abundance of valuable treatises on the subject? Is there any thing in literature more common? And is not the market overstocked with them already?" Our reply is, that while we feel deeply grateful for the excellent and irrefutable works of the able defenders of our common Christianity, yet we are puzzled to know the use of books which are seldom or never read. An extensive observation has satisfied us that by Christians generally they are unread, and in a vast majority of instances unknown, beyond their titles. We do not now refer to such an immortal work as that of Lardner's; it is enough if the "Credibility of the Gospel History" be read, and duly appreciated by those who act as teachers of the Christian religion. But the condensed view of Lardner as furnished by Paley, and a hundred other epitomes of the argument for the Christian religion, are neglected by multitudes professing the Christian name. In fact such works are by far too unpopular—a volume of sermons formed of 'half-a-minute texts, and half-an-hour discourses,' shall be read with greediness—a summary of the evidences of Christianity will be considered as a dusty encumbrance on the shelves of a library! But surely it cannot be amiss to address a Christian audience five or six times in the course of a year on the truth of their religion; they will still have the opportunity, if they wish, of listening to nearly one hundred and fifty of their favorite sermons, within the above period.

We may be told that "the truth of the Christian religion is generally admitted, and that it is imprudent by any discussion of its divine claims to cause individuals to look upon it as a thing which yet remains to be proved. The divine origin of Christianity should now be taken for granted." To the above statements we reply: It is far removed from the spirit inculcated in the New Testament to admit the truth of the Christian religion separate from an impartial examination of its evidences—such a stigma does not rest upon it. Did the Saviour of the world require the Jews to receive him as their Messiah without furnishing them with ample proofs of the justice of his claims to that high character? Or did his Apostles ever call upon Jew or Gentile to believe in Christ without submitting to them indubitable evidence that Jesus was both Lord and Christ? And does it become us to slight the very proofs exhibited by our Lord and his servants? The simple fact, however, that God planted Christianity by miraculous interposition, is enough, we should think, to satisfy every unprejudiced person of the imperious necessity of examining those circumstances which are brought before our notice as the manifestations of divine power. And on the plan of our objectors, a man born in a Mohammedan country would be a Mohammedan—if in China he would be a disciple of Confucius—if in Hindostan, a worshipper of Budd or Brahmā. And is it after this fashion that we are to receive Christianity as divine? Are we to be indebted to our nativity or to custom only for our belief in doctrines which are invested with all the importance of eternity? Will any sensible man upon the least reflection advance a notion so derogatory to our holy religion? Such persons there may be, but we are not of the number. It will be unfair, therefore, for any unbeliever, to urge against us the old aphorism that "Christianity is not founded in argument," for we believe and strenuously contend for the fact, that the New Testament calls upon no man to admit the inspiration of its doctrines without rational evidence of their truth. But it matters not to us what are the views of fallible men on the subject of the propriety or impropriety of discussing the evidences of Christianity: if we allowed their views to have the least weight with us, we should at once be convicted of inconsistency in departing from our definition of Christianity. Our one book is our warrant for the present course of lectures, and we desire no other sanction. The Gospels written by the four evangelists contain the history of Christ's life, miracles, etc. and one of the evangelists tells us the design of this history: "These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." According to this declaration, the miracles of Christ are written in a book for the same purpose they were originally performed—that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We see not the miracles, but we have the record. And the record of the miracles, examined and understood, is as competent to convince men that Jesus is the Christ, as if those wonderful works were actually and sensibly exhibited. And in laying stress upon this testimony in order to belief, we are but following the examples of the Apostles. Let the instances be pointed out where the Apostles uttered against any individuals the threatenings of God before the exhibition of the testimony that Jesus was the Christ. That it is common to do so in the present day we know: but the popularity of such a course will not induce us to depart one iota from our sole guide in religious matters. In the details of science we are willing to sit at the feet of men of talent—in the things of God we will have none for our teachers but inspired men. Of course every Protestant will accede to the wisdom of our determination. But is there, can there be the least necessity for entering upon the defence of our conduct in attempting to prove that the Christian record is a genuine, authentic, credible history, when so many doubt it, and when others openly deny it? We look upon unbelievers in the light of strange animals, and yet what is done to convince them of their error? They state their doubts and objections to professed Christians, but the great majority of such persons are unable to remove the difficulties of sceptics—they are not masters of the Christian argument themselves, and cannot give a reason for the hope that is in them. And when unbelievers see so many admitting the divine nature of the Christian religion, who have never been convinced of its truth, is it any wonder that they become confirmed in their scepticism? That the first Christians could exhibit the reasons of their belief in Christ will be admitted by every enlightened student of the New Testament,—whether it redounds to the praise of our modern schemes that religious persons now are not competent to the task, we shall leave to our hearers to determine.

To be Continued.