

not a belief in a future life sustain me in my difficulties and trials in this world?"

Yes, brethren. The earnest sceptic bewails his fate. What comfort has he in his sorrows? He is stricken down with disease, and he can only curse the blind fate which has afflicted him; he loses his loved ones by death, and they are gone from him for ever—he has no hope of meeting them in another world; they have ceased to exist.

Yes, Christianity is worth retaining, if we still hold it—it is worth a little labor to regain if we have lost it. Unbelief may be all very well while the world smiles on us, and we are light-hearted and joyful, but when trouble comes, when sickness seizes us, when loved ones die, when our own death is near—then we feel the need of a belief, a reasonable and intelligent belief in a God, a Saviour and a heaven. Let us see, then, whether we cannot so rationally, and without bias, weigh the evidence in favor of Christianity, that we may be able to say, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief"—"Increase my faith."

In conclusion, I would refer to one specious argument of sceptics. They point to some unbeliever and say, "See what a good life he leads—so upright in his dealings with his fellows; so generous to the poor; such a devoted husband, and such a model parent. and then look at your professing Christians and see how many of them are utterly unprincipled, selfish and inconsistent. Is he not much better than they?" Now, this, of course, is really no argument at all, because, in reply, you might point to some earnest, conscientious Christian, and compare him with a number of profane, scoffing and immoral infidels, much to the credit of the former. In the same way you might argue that Americans are more honest than Canadians, by selecting some particularly upright American and comparing him with Canadian criminals. All bad men are in a sense unbelievers, since, though they may acknowledge Jesus Christ with their lips, by their works they deny him. Undoubtedly there are good moral men among atheists and agnostics, but how much of that goodness and morality is the result of Christian influences and surroundings? Suppose a colony of unbelievers could be formed and entirely cut off from all contact with Christians and Christian literature. Suppose they made their own laws and at the

same time taught their families and descendants that there was no God, or a God who cared not for man; no sin, no Saviour, no hereafter, what would be the moral and spiritual condition of that colony in a hundred years' time? Would not the Christian virtues of love, and meekness, and forgiveness, and faith, and patience have entirely disappeared, and the standard of right and wrong have sadly deteriorated?

God forbid that the time should ever come when the influences of Christianity are no longer exerted over the race, even, who do not believe in Christianity itself, for then, alas, there would be little worth living for in this world, since the powerful, the rich, the cruel would prevail in all things, and the poor and needy and weak would go to the wall.

Next Sunday evening I purpose to consider the question "Is there a God?" and to produce what evidence we have for affirming that there is. And in doing so I at once disclaim all idea of originality in the subject matter or in the way of putting it. I shall for the most part reproduce the thoughts of others more capable of dealing with this subject than myself, and if in any place their words are more suitable than my own, I shall have no hesitation in using them, since my desire is to strengthen your faith rather than display my own learning. And that this effort may redound to the glory of God and the establishing of His church, I ask the prayers of the faithful.

II. "IS THERE A GOD."

It is evident that the first task in these lectures on the Truth of Christianity must be to prove the existence of a personal God, who is the moral governor of the universe. For if a person begins by asking "Why am I a Christian?" he is forced back on the question, "Why am I a Theist?" since Christianity presupposes the existence of a God, and declares that He has revealed Himself in redemptive action. So, then, to-night we will produce what proof we have for answering in the affirmative the question, "Is there a Being of infinite intelligence, and power, and benevolence and holiness, who made the world and all that it contains?"

The chief arguments from which the existence of a personal God may be confidently inferred are four in number:—