

sistent they would return to the worship of Woden and Thor; for certain it is that our ancestors worshipped these deities before they became Christians, and our first ancestor who embraced Christianity must, in their eyes, have been an implacable revolt-er from the religion of his forefathers. What else had he to guide him in embracing Christianity but his reason? Our reason is not infallible; nor do our artificial lights equal the brightness of the sun; but we shall not improve our position by extinguishing them and living during his absence in the darkness of night. Equally absurd is it to refuse to walk by our reason, when it is the only light that God has given us to guide our steps."

I have said elsewhere that it is a mistake to enter unprepared into religious discussions with unbelievers, and that you should refuse to do so, since it will in all probability shake your faith and fill your mind with doubts. Lest I should appear to contradict myself, I would point out that an unprepared-for discussion is one thing; a defence of Christianity by one who understands why he is a Christian is quite another. A person who professes to be a protectionist, but understands none of the principles of protection, would stand little chance in a debate with a free trader who was well up in his subject; but if they were equally matched each would be able to hold his own; even if no good came of the controversy. So it is with Christianity, and this renders it imperative that each Christian should be acquainted with at least the general outlines of the arguments in defence of the faith he holds; that he may be able to speak out boldly when that faith is assailed.

Nor is it necessary for one to devote much time to intricate study in order to have his acceptance of Christianity on rational conviction, for this would prevent those engaged in the active duties of life from entering into these questions. God does not require impossible things from us. He has endowed us with common sense, which is an adequate guide on all practical subjects, and religion is pre-eminently practical. Profound inquiry is a luxury, not a necessity. If we could not conduct our practical matters until we could solve all the profound problems that lie at their foundation, human life would come to a standstill. Yet we do conduct them, and for the most part successfully. I propose, therefore, in these lectures, to

avoid all profound and learned questions—in fact, all such as require a special study to enable us to estimate the evidence on which they rest, and to lay before you those aspects of the evidence of Christianity which will commend themselves to the general intelligence of those members of the Christian Church, and to those honest doubters whom God, in His providence, has called to spend their energies in the discharge of the duties of active life. There are branches of those evidences of which such persons are as adequate judges as the most scientific thinkers."

And at the outset let us understand clearly that the subject we intend to investigate is Christianity not any special system of theology. The difference is fundamental and vital. "Christianity, if true, is a divine revelation." Theology is a science, and, like all other sciences, is progressive. Christianity is a definite deposit of revealed facts and truths once for all delivered, and it is the same to-day as it was 19 centuries ago."

"Our inquiry pertains to the evidence of that revelation, not of the doctrinal systems deduced from it. We want to convince others, or we want to assure ourselves, as the case may be, that Jesus Christ did, indeed, come in the flesh, that he did, indeed, reveal God's will, that he was, indeed, the Saviour of the world."

We want simply to be able to say, and to teach others to say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"; and if we can so marshal the evidences of Christianity as to bring any to the great confession of the central truth and the central revelation, we shall have accomplished the chief aim of our endeavors, for we must remember that to be a disciple in the Church of Christ, it is enough that a man believe the elements of the Christian religion—the articles of the Apostles' Creed. And is it not worth a little trouble, a little effort on our part, to be able to attain or to hold this profession? If the declarations of the better class of Agnostics be true,—and there is no reason why we should doubt them—they would much rather believe, if they could conscientiously do so. Over and over again I have heard them say, "Do you think I would not willingly accept Christianity, if I could only convince myself of its truth? Is not a firm faith better than a system of negation?" "Would