

Modern skeptics claim that their objections to Christianity rest on grounds of which science alone is competent to treat; that their distrust pertains to matters of fact and not of sentiment, that what they want is evidence of the divine authority of Christianity that will stand the scrutiny and test of science, by science meaning only and always that which deals with the facts of the senses. But they forget that the real and decisive evidences of Christianity are not such as physical science is in any way competent to deal with. These evidences are not at all matters of the senses, but of the moral nature of man. And yet they are not a matter of mere sentiment, but of reason and logic as well. There is a logic of the heart and the conscience, as well as of the understanding, and if these be divorced in questions of religion and morality, the result to both must be disastrous. Christianity, accordingly, alike in its evidences, its commands and its promises, addresses itself directly to the moral intuitions and not to the sense-organs. Miracles may have authenticated the claims of the divine messengers, but were never intended to, nor can beyond this, authenticate the divine authority of the messages. The gospel is its own evidence of its divine authority, when once its voice has been heard, and its light seen, within the inner chambers of the soul. But for its voice to be heard the "deaf ears" must be "unstopped," and "the eyes of the heart" must be "enlightened." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Thus all preaching, whether apologetic or assertory, should always be a direct appeal to the moral convictions, because it is only within the moral consciousness that the full evidence of the divine authority of Christianity can be fully displayed or appreciated. The gospel discloses to the soul its inner necessities, and in disclosing makes plain the fullness of its provisions for supplying them. Every human heart, consciously or unconsciously, yearns for something better than it possesses; that better something the gospel clearly points out and declares to be attainable; for the attainment, it prompts the soul to bestir itself; and what it prompts to be done it enables to do.

Of the pulpit's best method of counteracting the influence of skepticism the present century has furnished two or three illustrious examples. The first of these was at the very beginning of the century in the person of Schleiermacher. It was a dismal day of doubt and irreligion in Germany. Rationalism reigned in the Universities, and the common people had settled into indifference to all religion. Schleiermacher's *Discourses on Religion*, published in 1799, arrested the attention of the thoughtful like a voice from the unseen world. They made it plain to all who would hear that the gospel was not the invention of man but a message from the Father of all souls. They carried conviction to the hearts of men, because their appeal was di-