

hundred and fifty years!)—meet and “counteract the influence” of that ancient skepticism? How did Christ counteract the Sadducee and Pharisee? How did Paul counteract the Agnostic and Materialist, the Stoic and the Epicure, the Athenian mocker, the Corinthian doubter and denier, the Ephesian votary of the Great Diana? How did Peter counteract the scientific scoffer, or Jude the Gnostic dreamer? How did John counteract the Oriental and the Alexandrian schemes of science and philosophy? Their pages are a light to us. Their method was victorious. They were not orators, nor pensioned lecturers, nor apes of pagan literati. They were *teachers* of the truth, and *preachers* of the gospel of the Son of God. Humble, worthless in themselves, the *τὰ μὴ ὄντα* “things that *are not*,” “base,” “despised,” “foolish” in human eyes, and “nothing,” they yet brought crumbling to the dust the proud *τὰ ὄντα*, “the things *that are*,” the towering Greek and Oriental systems of speculation, the Roman power, the Jewish hate! How did they do it? *They did it simply by the “Word of God.”* The “weapons” of their warfare were spiritual, “mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.” They spurned the technics of the schools and the tricks of rhetoricians; coming to the people, “not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring the testimony of God,” “preaching not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” the blessed result of which was “faith,” on the part of the hearers in that divine message, a faith that had its roots, “not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” That was the way they “counteracted the influence” of skepticism in all its subtle forms. Nothing could stand before it. The Jew was confounded. Ephesian sorcerers burn their books. The school of Tyrannus is robbed of its power. Dionysius the Areopagite believes. The Corinthian unbelief is overthrown.

Can we do better, to-day? Assuredly not. What we are to avoid, and what do, in seeking to counteract the influence of prevailing error, they who have fought the battle in early times, tell us in unambiguous language. “Avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” It is not necessary to discuss Kant’s “antinomies,” or the merits of Neptunist and Plutonist, from the pulpit. “Avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is heretical, after the first and second admonition, reject.” “Avoid foolish and ignorant questionings, knowing that they do gender strife.” “Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and they will eat as does a gangrene, of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus, who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already, and overthrow the faith of some.” “Strive not about words to no profit, which are only subverting to the hearers.” “Give no heed to Jewish fables and human commandments that turn