

et, powerful as sustained by a is not in all understanding, or at faith is open- persons of some e able to give a o to shew, that son when it as- an can neither th, nor clearly gh a good man. is silence or ab- is infidel in his h of others who ated man ought nt, the lead- vealed religion. must be done, l enable Chris- new forms in

ay invent many least wonderful stries and dog- eds. In former bedded in a bul- few read and nd. In our day ch as ever of pretend to press tion of modern ow of dissemi- mular forms, so the passions of ng high preten- sions records raw conclusive hnology, and pose appealing ns, or merely stitution and hu- have in their ds, become all y adapt their and especially smattering of o think to any chief source of er succeed so vanity in their tion of know- earlessly boast osophy in any not be denied, ted Christians ophy falsely so g and painful d and honest pt to be sadly with that so- ever employs. Christian men with a clear ealed religion, contemptible ptics seek to e many books admirably ans-

wer both these ends. Still it is obvious, that on this, as well as on other matters, the pulpit must not only give the note of warning so as to lead men to read and think, but to the bulk of men, must furnish the arguments that shall conduct to safe conclusions on this matter. In a word, men must not only be taught from the pulpit what their faith is, and the evidence on which it rests, but they must also be taught how to stop the mouths of gainsayers.

Every minister should not attempt this—in fact no one should do so, until he has thoroughly studied the whole question. Indeed, few things are more perilous to a people, than to be frequently addressed on the points in dispute between Christians and infidels, by a man of little information and hazy perceptions—whose defence is chiefly made up of bitter and vulgar vituperations, or very silly declamation. Nothing can be worse than this—the thoughtless remain uninstructed, sceptics sneer and triumph, while the wise are mortified to think that their minister should have nothing better to advance, when professedly engaged in defending the foundations of their faith. Nor will it do now, to be merely well versed in the arguments of Warburton or Paley and others of the old masters of reasoning on this subject. These were indeed great men, and they have left us a noble store of defensive armour. But while no young minister can safely overlook the weapons which these masters of sacred dialectics have prepared for him, yet neither will it be safe for him solely to depend on this sort of armour in the conflicts which he has now to wage with infidelity. As the enemies of truth have adopted new methods of assault, so its friends must employ new means of defence or, at least, employ the old arguments with that new skill, which modern research, improved criticism, and a better logic have furnished.

All this is true when the conflict is with avowed sceptics from without, but you need to know that some of the most dangerous enemies are now at work within the Church. Socinian divines had long held loose and pernicious notions on the inspiration of scripture. No one wonders at this, as every Biblical scholar knows that some of their peculiar views can only be sustained by destroying the claims of the Bible to a true inspiration. But one has now to confess, with shame, that some clergymen within the pale of Trinitarian churches are giving to the world, such views of the inspiration of the Bible, and of the want of genuineness of large portions of it, as cannot fail to shake the faith of those who believe their teachings. The danger from this quarter is at present all the greater, that some of these men make high pretensions, to a certain kind of learning now much in vogue. They generally get the credit of being able German scholars, and this, with many is supposed to be synonymous with great erudition and extensive theological acquirements. German learning if wisely employed may assuredly do good, but much of it appears to have made some of our learned men not only insufferably vain, but almost mad in scepticism. To defend Christian-

ity now, you really require to understand how to defend it against certain learned clerical persons. Those who know what these men are doing to undermine the walls from within, can entertain no doubt that they are doing more mischief than the open enemies from without. I do not speak of the monstrous inconsistency of these men, and their loathsome dishonesty—but I take leave to say, that no enemies of the truth are more dangerous than those, who, while they avow Christianity to be from God, yet, labour to awaken suspicions in the public mind as to the genuineness and inspiration of the sacred volume. They tell you, that reason and enlightened criticism demand this at their hands—well, meet them with enlightened criticism and with a clear logic, so that you may be able to shew that their Philological pratings, hypothetical surmises and groundless inferences are the very opposite of enlightened criticism, or profound reasoning. But mark it—and I beseech you ponder it well—if you are to be successful in meeting the avowed sceptic, whether he comes forth with his mystical Pantheism, or is the subtle doubter with his metaphysical quibbles, or the philosophical doubter with his false inferences from science, or the clerical sceptic with his new readings and his new canons of criticism on the sacred text:—you must yourselves be men with a fair share of learning, of patient research and varied and extensive information, of clear apprehension, of sound reasoning of good sense and healthy piety.

Without even touching on the prophetic view of the question, yet I cannot but think, that they are in the right who suppose, that the last terrible conflict that the church is to have will be the deadly conflict with infidelity, unfolded in some form of well-defined atheism. Now, one cannot but ask with anxiety, is the church prepared for this?—are her ministers fully armed for the conflict? I know well, that this battle is not to be fought and won by mere logic, even when a sanctified logic employs all legitimate appliances. Yet, if God is to give the victory, as he assuredly will, the friends of truth and especially the leaders of the Lord's host should be prepared for going into this conflict, not only "with the armour of righteousness," but with all the means by which this armour can be made most effective. It is pleasing to think, that the armoury was never so well furnished with weapons, both of offence and defence as at present. From this then, arm yourselves—or to drop the figure, endeavour to acquire all that knowledge and all that varied mental culture, by which you may be enabled to repel the assaults of those who are attacking the foundations of our faith and hopes.

It were mischievous to teach those, who are looking forward to the ministry, that all before them is full of difficulty and discouragement. If the Lord hath sent you into the field, if the Lord goeth before you, if the mighty God be at your right hand, you have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope. This joyfully admitted—still, to understand the nature of the