

professors and preachers, from all parts of the United States, for the last five years, has convinced me that no warning to the American pulpit is more opportune than that which arouses it to a sense of the demands made on it by the weakening or undermining of Gospel Faith. I believe that American students are usually in less danger from the skepticism, to whose influence they may be subject for a short time in a German university, than from that which they bring with them. Young men from our best institutions speak in gloomy terms of the unbelief prevalent in them, hid perhaps from the faculty, but working destructively among the students. An arcanum of the school soon becomes the leaven of the masses, and all classes of society are being affected by unbelief. That infidelity is largely a moral disease, and often serves as a cloak for aversion to spirituality, or as a palliative for a guilty conscience, no one who has studied it can question; but we stultify ourselves if we ignore the intellectual element in unbelief, which may work as a solvent in the most earnest minds. There are as honest inquirers and doubters in the pews, as there are confessors in the pulpit. Mainly through the press and the platform, the former questionings of the few have become the serious doubts of the many. The underlying unbelief removes spiritual objects to an infinite distance and leads to a concentration of the energies on science, political power, wealth, pleasure, art, or whatever desirable object is supposed to be within reach. Thus the skeptical and secular spirit promote each other. Much of the time formerly devoted to sowing and cultivating the seed must now be spent in removing rocks and thorns from the soil.

But even when viewed in this light we see rather a decline in the *influence* than *power* of the Pulpit. Was Jesus less powerful when the unbelief of the people prevented the doing of many mighty works among them? The difference between power or force and energy in natural science, will help us; the power is inherent, while the latter is a manifestation of this inherent power dependent on circumstances. The Pulpit may be more learned, more true, more living, and have more inherent power than ever before, and yet, by force of circumstances, be less influential than formerly. The real power of the Pulpit depends on itself; its influence on this power, and a combination of circumstances.

The inherent power of the Pulpit (distinct from its influence) has no doubt declined in some instances. Unbelief, and with it worldliness, have in some cases entered the pulpit and made its utterances less positive, less emphatic, and less eloquent. But these are exceptional instances. Not only is the Pulpit more extended now than ever, but its voice is, as a rule, clear and emphatic. Never has it had so many aids; never has the preparation for it been more thorough; never has it been more learned; never has it been more intent on the