

relation to modern skepticism, and it is justified alike by a true conception of its work and an intelligent appreciation of the domain of thought and conscience which comes within the sphere of its influence.

There are other departments of thought which may enter into the details of the argument and which may meet and oppose the influence of modern skepticism upon its own ground and in its own way. If it be disseminated by lectures and platform speeches, there is ample room for lectures and platform speeches in reply. If the vulgar platitudes of an exploded atheism are dealt out to ignorant and applauding crowds in theatres on Sunday evenings at 25 cts. per head, there is also the Monday lecture at Music Hall in Boston, to which the culture of our modern Athens gives its most attentive hearing.

If it be disseminated through review and magazine, there are other reviews and magazines which will furnish the fitting vehicle for rejoinder. The scientific difficulties which have been alleged against the truth of the Bible have been abundantly answered—not by the pulpit in its utterances, but by scientific men of reverent faith, speaking through the pages of the very periodicals which have made the assault.

But this is a different department of thought, and a different field of action from that of the Christian pulpit. The literature of an era or a people which is the expression of its highest thought, will be the medium at once of the bane and the antidote—the skepticism of men and the good news of God. While the pulpit will continue its peaceful task of strengthening the faith and cheering the hope of those who accept its ministrations, the battle will be fought in other fields of earnest thought; and the assaults upon the faith, in lyceum or lecture, in magazine or review, will find their fitting answer on the same field of contest and by the same methods of defense.

The first concern of the pulpit must be, not “to banish and drive away strange doctrine,” but to nourish and strengthen the souls committed to its care. The men who listen to its words to-day come to its sacred influence weary with the toil and struggle of the week. They turn away from the din and turmoil of business life through six days of intense and exhausting effort, to find an hour of peaceful quiet in God’s holy house on His own holy day. Tired of the petty meannesses of human nature, as manifested in a thousand unlovely forms in business life, they turn to the sanctuary to find refreshment for their souls by a single hour at least of worship and the thought of a better life. They seek in the calm of God’s holy house, and in the words of his gospel, a peace which the world cannot give. And to this thirsting and expectant faith the pulpit must give its answer, not in words of controversy, nor in the display of dialectics, but in the comforting message of the love of the gospel to all who are weary and heavy-laden. And the faith which is thus strengthened will need no buttress of logic nor argument of apology to counteract the influences of the skepticism of the