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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—HOW CAN THE PULPIT BEST COUNTERACT THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN SKEPTICISM?

NO. I.

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"SKEPTICISM" is a wide term, embracing in its scope all forms of unbelief, philosophical and scientific, moral and religious, critical and practical. And "modern" is no small expression. It includes, at least, the period of the last two centuries, or, if limited still more, our present age. It covers not merely the shallow, coarse, and flippant infidelity of a Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll, but that deeper, far more dangerous, more imposing academic infidelity of Spinoza and Hume, Hegel and Comte, Huxley, Spenser and Clifford, together with all that the so-called "Higher Criticism" has accomplished in disparagement of the authority of God's Word as ages have received it. The whole phrase means, in short, the result of the recent "Time-Spirit," or "Spirit of the age," the so-called advanced "Culture," which seeks in our days to do for Christianity what the Reformation of the sixteenth century did for Popery—viz., break its back!

The subject is a comprehensive one. In one word, it invites us to consider how best the minister of Christ, the preacher of the gospel, may meet successfully and "counteract" the various forms of Naturalism, so current in our times. Clearly, the refutation of error, not less than the impartation of truth, falls within the legitimate province of the pulpit. Apologetic and polemic, not less than didactic, are a true homiletic discipline. The "good seed" must be distinguished from the "tares," the "wheat" from the "chaff," the "birds of the air" from the "branches of the mustard-tree," the "leaven" from the "meal." The great "Teacher sent from God," the Apostles, the Apologists standing next them in the sub-Apostolic Church, and history, both sacred and profane, have taught us this. The student of the past knows full well that there is not a heresy, now rife in

THE DOUBTER.

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Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.—John xx: 29.

Of the personal history of Thomas but little is known. The office rather than the personality of the Apostles looms up. Judas is remembered by his crime, and Peter by his work and teachings. Passing allusions in Scripture, and dim traditions are found, but the authentic record of each apostle is scanty. The reason of this silence of Scripture is plain. Christ is the supreme and central personality to which all else is subordinate. Yet we are desirous of knowing what we may of these men. "The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles" is regarded by some scholars as the most important discovery of modern times. This is an age of unsettled belief, and we may profitably examine some of the characteristics of the "Doubter," as Thomas has been called. Brief utterances often reveal character, as where Judas murmured about the expenditure involved in the ointment, or where Peter rebuked his Master, "Be it far from thee." There are three utterances of Thomas which are noteworthy. The first is where the Savior proposes to go to Bethany, when there was an overshadowing peril in the journey, because of the murderous hate of the Jews. "Goesst thou hither again?" It seemed as if the Messianic plan was to be overthrown and their Lord was to be slain. Then Thomas heroically added, "Let us go, and die with him." John and Peter are silent, but the heart of Thomas is revealed.

1. Loyal affection is here shown. Thomas was not cold and phlegmatic in his love. He could not live if Jesus died. He would die with him.

2. There was, moreover, revealed here a desponding temperament. He looked on the dark side. Jesus assured them that one need not stumble in day, but Thomas saw no light. He was loyal to the core, but he had, as it were, a double nature. To this it is supposed

that John alludes when he calls him Didymus, or twin. There was, with loyalty to Christ, united an obstinate doubt.

3. Another significant utterance of Thomas was at the last interview of Christ and his disciples. Judas had made his bargain and got his money. The passover had been kept, and Christ had spoken in hopeful, ringing, uplifting words, "Whither I go ye know the way," when Thomas interposed his sad query, "How know we the way?" Still desponding, he was walking by sight. He wished to see the way to heaven, just as he could see the road to Bethany.

4. A fourth utterance was made at the meeting of the disciples after their declaration that Christ had arisen. The week between those two gatherings must have been a joyless one. His faith had received a shock. He was restless, moody, and disheartened. He doubtless felt that he could get no help from the disciples. He was absent, for he preferred to be alone, solitary and brooding. The Hope of Israel was slain, the strong staff and beautiful rod broken! When told that they had seen and handled the risen Lord, he rejoined, "Except I, too, see and handle, I will not believe." He wished exact and tangible proofs. Thorwaldsen has carved the figure of the apostle at St. Thomas' Church, Copenhagen, with a measuring rule and a pair of compasses in his hands. He still was walking by sight. Now there are three lessons which this portraiture should teach us:

1. Faith is endangered by false tests.

God does not ask for blind confidence or mere credulity. Nor would he have us substitute a romantic religion for the reality, as where Peter asked for power to walk on water. Thomas ran a fearful risk in substituting sight for faith. But Jesus showed his pity and condescension by granting ocular proof, while he blessed those who made no such requisition. We ought not to demand degrees of evidence which God has not chosen to give.

2. We learn a lesson of stronger confidence in Christianity when we see

Thomas emerging into a stronger faith. The Prayer-Book well says that God suffered him to doubt the resurrection "for the greater confirmation of the faith." The belief of Thomas came to be as deep as it was enrapturing, beholding his Lord and God. Once more we have a glimpse of him ere he fades away from our knowledge. He is there waiting with the others for the descent of the promised Pentecostal blessing. Thus has Christianity been sifted by friends as well as by foes. Its certification is complete. Let us not be harsh with the sincere and candid doubter, so long as he, like Thomas, is thoroughly loyal to the Redeemer. Many a man has been kept from skepticism by the abiding influence of truths learned at a mother's knee or in the Sunday-school. In this history we may see ourselves, as Keble intimates, when he says:

"Read and confess the Hand Divine,
That drew thy likeness here, so true in every
line.

Though vexing thoughts may seem to last,
Let not thy soul be quite o'ercast:
Soon will He show thee all his wounds, and say,
'Long have I known thy name, know thou my
face alway.'"

Finally, we find here the point and power of Christ's ninth beatitude. He not only gave a new command, but a new blessing: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." We fancy that we could trust the Lord more fully if we could go to him in bodily form and talk with him face to face, but we do not know of what spirit we are. Our faith might not really receive any help. Better is the spiritual apprehension which rests on his testimony without wavering.

The morning of the day on which that great educator, Dr. Arnold, died, lying still with upturned eyes and with a voice clear and firm, he repeated the beatitude we have been studying.—Thomas Arnold had, with Thomas of old, known what doubt was, and he had known the joy of victory too. His sympathy with and his love for his Savior had given him the victory, and filled his dying eyes with the light of heaven! So in your dying hour only

this simple faith in an unseen Redeemer will fill your eyes with brightness, your heart with peace, and introduce you joyfully to the vision of the unveiled glory of the Lamb!

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"VERILY! VERILY!"

By S. H. KELLOGG, D. D. [CONGREGATIONAL], TORONTO, CANADA.
And in seventy-six other places in New Testament.—John iii: 11.

THE word in the original, "Amen"; transferred from the Greek in all the "verily" passages in Douay version, as in ours after doxologies, etc. Derived from Hebrew *aman*, "to support," hence, "firmness," "faithfulness," "certitude"; God called "Lord God of Amen," Isaiah lxxv: 16; (R. V. marg.) connected with Hebrew word rendered "trust," "believe in," Gen. xv: 22; Mic. vii: 5, *et passim*.

These "amens," or "verilies," of Christ, the foundation of faith.

This word, as thus used, is peculiar to Christ, and occurs seventy-six times. In John always doubled: is reason of this in the deeper mystery of truths therein declared?

The epistolary use of the Amen, the echo of the Amen of Christ in the believer's heart.

Interest attaching to a book marked, e.g., by a departed parent, by a Luther. If we only had a New Testament marked by Christ!

But *these Amens are Christ's own marks* in the New Testament; like watermark in bank-note cannot be rubbed out.

I. Why has our Lord marked such and such passages? To call our attention to three facts respecting declarations thus emphasized, viz:

- (1) That the words marked are *sure*.
- (2) That they are of *special consequence*.
- (3) That yet *men are slow to believe them*.

II. What, then, has our Lord thus marked?

Passages marked may be classified as, 1. The "verilies" of Law and Warning.