

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE RECONSTRUCTED PULPIT.

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THE suggestions which I shall make in this paper are in some respects so unfamiliar to the ministerial mind that I shall ask the opinion of my brethren upon them before affirming their accuracy in too positive a tone. I feel that the time has come when we stand face to face with some very startling facts in the development of the Christian ministry. Things are not now what they were in days long gone by. The pulpit stands nearly where it has always stood, and has left the spirit of natural change to work out its own policy without much heed being paid to it. Certainly I am in no mood to recommend sudden and violent changes in pulpit methods; at the same time I am as far as possible from the ignorant idolatry which bows down before a pulpit simply on account of its shape and age. Men who are willing to accept the leading of the Holy Spirit should prove their willingness to work as directed by inspiration and by their disposition to consider all suggested changes in good temper and in a hopeful state of mind. We must never forget that an institution is not good simply because it is old, for then disobedience and self-rule would become the very ornaments of human history. On the other hand, when an institution has vindicated its claim to confidence and attention century after century, the centuries should be counted as constituting a large part of its claim to be permitted to continue any policies and methods which it has proved to be good.

There are two things to be taken into account in estimating the present position and influence of the Christian pulpit. The first of these is that the pulpit has for many centuries had a whole day once a week set apart almost entirely for its own use. Sunday is a holiday. In many Christian countries theaters, galleries, museums, and places of popular recreation are closed, and the millions who are excluded are left to discover some way of making the holiday less intolerable.