

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XII.—OCTOBER, 1886.—No. 4.

## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—SYMPOSIUM ON THE "NEW THEOLOGY."

WHAT ARE ITS ESSENTIAL FEATURES? IS IT BETTER THAN THE OLD?

NO. VII.

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It seems to be agreed that "The New Theology" does not yet exhibit any fully or clearly formed system. What has received this name, or prefers to style itself "Progressive Orthodoxy," stands for a "tendency" in present thought, a sentiment belonging to the *Zeit Geist*, seeking larger freedom of view, and what seems to it broader and better horizons. Unquestionably, it is largely a rebellion against doctrinal conclusions as formulated in the orthodox creeds inherited from the Church of the past. It longs for a Church of the future less trammelled by defining dogmas, or, at least, with dogmas more rationally molded. It is breaking the old bottles, in the desire of more elastic ones for the reception of the fresh vintage of religious insight and truth gained by modern progress. It shows a strongly naturalistic temper, much inspired by the scientific theories and culture of the day, which, in some respects, it seeks to express in theological accommodations. It aims to harmonize, if not to identify, natural law with spiritual grace, to unite redemption and evolution, broadening the basis of the Christian verities by viewing them as part of the primeval order of creation.

It has not, however, shown any genius for constructive theology, and to a great degree its work has been that of chafing against dogmatic conceptions which heretofore have been held as expressing and limiting the Christian doctrines. Assuming that the true grasp and repose of faith come properly out of the questionings of doubt, the "New Theology" has indulged largely in the critical function. But, for the quiet theological revolution which it proposes, it is seeking to connect the new with the old by returning beyond the Latin or Western theology to the earlier Greek theology of the Schools of