

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH WITH REFERENCE TO THE SPECULATIVE TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES.

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IN considering the duty of the Church in respect to current skepticism, I shall not attempt to discuss any department of speculative philosophy or criticism, but shall simply deal with certain practical questions which arise in this age of intellectual conflict.

The forms and methods of unbelief which have been encountered from first to last have been legion. Blasphemous denunciation, scathing ridicule, travesties and burlesques in literature and art, wild ravings of communism, thin and vapid theosophies, have all done their utmost to overthrow the Christian faith, and yet it has not only survived these besetments, but has even gained strength in spite of them.

It will not be necessary, therefore, to assume any apologetic grounds. Christianity is not beleaguered; it is out upon the field with advancing columns. Yet, like all armies of conquest, it should make thorough reconnoissance of the enemy's position and forces.

There are just now three general lines of skeptical attack. First, in science, particularly in biology and metaphysics. By wide inductions of selected facts and the skillful grouping of certain principles supposed to control all activity and all life, science claims to have reasoned out a universe without Creator, Ruler, or Judge. Consciousness becomes simply a molecular movement of the brain fibre; intuition is but the garnered experience of former stages of our animal history. Every man's destiny is written upon his nerve tissues; the human soul itself is a development of the ages. Beholding our faces in a glass, we see no longer the image of God, but instead, there are shown in the cornea of the eye and in the rim of the ear slight traces of bygone types of animal life. Looking up longingly for an infinite Father, we see only a "death's head" of Agnosticism in the blank heavens, and the only providence is "a stream of tendency not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." Instead of anticipating an eternal kingdom in which we shall be like our divine pattern, we are told that our im-