

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES VERSUS TRADITIONALISM.

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A QUESTION requiring special consideration in this age is, "Shall we give up the Divine authority of the Scriptures as our rule of faith and life?" The position uniformly taken by the Protestant churches has been that the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and infallible rule of faith and practice.

Says Knapp of Halle: "If any doctrine of religion can be clearly shown to be taught in them, it must be received as true, and needs no further evidence, according to the maxim, '*sensus hermeneuticè verus, est etiam dogmaticè verus.*'" It is also held that, if anything can be clearly shown to be commanded in the Holy Scriptures, that is binding upon human conduct. The authority of the Scriptures has been distinguished as twofold: (1) *Auctoritas normativa*, or *canonica, i. e.*, "the authority of the Bible to bind men to believe and do what it teaches and prescribes;" and (2) *Auctoritas judicialis, i. e.*, its authority as the final appeal in matters of faith and practice, so that "no doctrine opposed to the Bible can be admitted as true by those who receive it as an inspired book."

Protestants likewise affirm that the Scriptures constitute a plain and perspicuous rule, so that private and unlearned Christians can safely be allowed to interpret them for themselves. By this they mean, not that all the doctrines of the Bible come within the grasp of the common man's mind, for there are innumerable mysteries confessedly beyond all human understanding; but that "every essential article of faith and rule of practice is clearly revealed in Scripture or may certainly be deduced therefrom." While, therefore, the Church, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, with the advance of historical, critical and scientific knowledge, and by means of controversies, is constantly enlarging its apprehension of the truths and its comprehension of the system of Divine revelation, the least instructed Chris-