

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XIII.—JUNE, 1887.—No. 6.

## REVIEW SECTION.

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

NO. IV.

BY A. J. GORDON, D.D., BOSTON, MASS.

OF "sturdy doubts and boisterous objections," says Sir Thomas Brown in his *Religio Medici*, "more of these hath no man known than myself, which I confess I conquered *not in a martial vesture but on my knees.*"

Is this drill manual of kneeling studied and practiced as thoroughly as it was wont to be? Or is it so, as this quaint philosopher confesses, that while we are diligently strengthening the outposts of reason, Satan is often undermining the edifice of our faith, leading us to philosophize much, while we pray little? Certain it is that against much of the current unbelief, nothing is accomplished by the martial posture of argumentation and disputation. One can hardly be theologically dissuaded from that of which he has never been logically persuaded, or reasoned out of that which was never reasoned into him. And the fact which impresses us concerning most of the infidelity which we encounter, is just this; that it is thoroughly superficial—the result of intellectual ease and indolence, rather than of intellectual acumen. Of what use then is a syllogism against those who never syllogize? The unripe skepticism which denies before it has ever taken the trouble to doubt, cannot be shaken by argument. If such skepticism should come to maturity, developing into a strong disbelief, instead of resting in a weak and unfortified no-belief, then it will be time enough to bring up the heavy artillery of logic; but until then, we are persuaded of the thorough futility of reasoning in the case.

We remember the candid confession of a convert from infidelity, that his denial of God began with his wanton indulgence in sin; and that impurity of heart and atheism of the head progressed henceforth side by side with equal footstep in his life. It would be uncharitable