

itself a deepening *sincerity*, in both thinking and utterance, on theological questions. No one can be familiar with the inner life of the Christian ministry of to-day without being impressed by the strong and pathetic longing for reality which characterizes an increasing number of those whose function it is to interpret the great spiritual facts of divine revelation to the masses. Many of the propositions of the older theology are apart from real life. They are the product of abstract processes of thought, and they ring hollow to the touch. They cannot be preached. There is a cry from many quarters: "We care nothing about orthodoxy or heterodoxy; we want to hear what is true, what fits close to the needs of every-day life, what commends itself by inherent force of reality to the heart and conscience." To this cry there is a growing response.

(3) It is but natural, then, that the theological thinking which is in revolt against the bonds and bans of antique systems, is characterized by a deepening *spirituality*. Men have come into an enlarged sense of the reality and pre-eminence of the spirit, and of the universality and equity and imperativeness of moral law. The "absentee-God," who assumes fictitious and unethical relations with His creatures, has given place to the Infinite Spirit who is in the world—the ground and source of all being, the principle of all life, the energy of all motion—and who is the Father of the soul of man. There is less of "piety," in the conventional sense, but more of real reverence and spiritual feeling. A fresh emphasis is put on the ethical and spiritual elements of Christianity, and these are seen to be pre-eminent in the Gospel. That which is formal and ritual receives little consideration; that which is vital rises into new authority. In its spirituality lies the key to the fact that the "New Theology" is so little polemical. Its aim is not to destroy, save as destruction is necessary to reconstruction. It is seeking a helpful interpretation of Scripture and history and a positive construction of thought on God and His relations to the world, rather than the demolition of established systems. Dr. Ludlow justly observes that "this new movement received its first popular impulse, and now derives its main support, not from the fact that it antagonizes this or that tenet of the old thought, but that it insists upon regarding the faith as wider than its formulas, however true the formulas may be."* But the help which the "New Theology" seeks to give to men is less along the line of rationalism—the forging of a logic-chain, such as pre-eminently characterizes Calvinism—than along the line of the spiritual life. It seeks righteousness in life; therefore it seeks a system of thought that shall be tributary to righteousness, and not a righteousness that shall subserve a system. It holds that obedience to God—obedience of reason as well as of

* HOM. REVIEW for JANUARY, p. 18.