

# **OUR THEOLOGY IN ITS DEVELOPMENTS**

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Our theology in its developments by E. P. Humphrey

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**E. P. HUMPHREY**

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ITS DEVELOPMENTS**



Relig.  
Theol.

OUR THEOLOGY  
IN ITS DEVELOPMENTS

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THIS sermon first appeared in some of the religious papers, shortly after it was preached in Charleston, before the General Assembly, in 1852. It was afterwards revised by the author, and the copy-right given to the Rev. Elijah Wilson, that it might appear in a volume of sermons, by distinguished Presbyterian ministers, to be published by Mr. Wilson for his own benefit, he having been laid aside from the ministry, by the entire loss of sight.

By the kindness of Mr. Wilson, the Board has obtained permission to print this admirable discourse, in the present form, in compliance with the wishes of many persons in the church, for its more extensive circulation.

THE EDITOR.



## OUR THEOLOGY IN ITS DEVELOPMENTS.

Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit,  
but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.—  
MATT. vii. 17.

THESE words of our Lord contain a profound and comprehensive truth. As the nature of the tree, whether good or corrupt, is made known by its fruit, even so, the Master observes, false prophets may be detected. They come in sheep's clothing, yet being inwardly ravening wolves, their rapacity invariably betrays itself. Now we may give to this maxim a wider application, and suggest that a religious faith, as well as a religious teacher, whether true or false, will develope,

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by outward and significant marks, all its vital peculiarities. The inner life of Judaism, in its purer days, and then that life in the period of its degeneracy, clearly revealed its nature by many striking phenomena. The same remark applies to Christianity in all the phases which it assumes. These phases are determined by the peculiar theology which, from time to time, is received into the fixed and inward convictions of mankind. The true discovers itself as good, and the false as evil, by inevitable developments. "Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." The text, as thus explained, prescribes to this occasion a discourse of

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The purposes of this argument do

not require a discussion of our theology in its sources and evidences. Nor is it needful, in this presence, to expound its peculiar doctrines. These have been made widely known through its living disciples, its written formularies, its celebrated teachers of former generations, and their powerful adversaries. Few intelligent persons are ignorant of the doctrines which its faithful disciples deduce from the scriptures, even those touching the sovereignty of God and the dependence of the creature; his purpose as foreordaining, and his glory as the end of creation, sin, and redemption; the imputation unto all of the guilt of the first man, our federal head; the utter corruption of human nature; the election unto salvation of a certain and definite number; their redemption by