

Contributed Articles.

WHAT IS NEW IN APOLOGETICS ?

CHRISTIAN Apologetics may be defined as the science of the defense and vindication of the Christian system of doctrine, worship, and duty, as the only true and adequate religion for mankind. This science undertakes not only to defend the Christian system against opposing views and theories, but also to show its inherent and essential sufficiency as the only true religion for man. Sometimes, perhaps, too much stress has been laid on the former aspect of the science, and not enough on the latter, in the work of the apologetists. It is a waste of strength to engage in mere defense when vindication may serve a better purpose. In some respects, the positive vindication of the Christian system is the best work the apologete can perform.

The place and function of Apologetics in the Theological cyclopædia has not always been well defined nor clearly understood. It is sometimes treated as a part of Theology, and not as a distinct department of Theological study. The elder Hodge seems to take this view in his great work on Theology. Others have regarded Apologetics as introduction to Theology, and have discussed its questions along with others as a mere preliminary. In other cases Apologetics has been largely merged with historical Theology ; and by some writers it has not been clearly separated from Polemics.

In more recent times the science of Apologetics has had its sphere and work more clearly defined. German writers, such as Sach, Delitzsch, Baumstark, and Elbrard have done excellent work in this way ; and English writers are just beginning to understand the place of Apologetics better than a generation ago. It now has its place assigned as one of the great departments of sacred learning, and as distinct in its scope from Biblical criticism, Exegetics, Dogmatics, &c. In most Divinity Schools this is now clearly recognized, and provision is made for its teaching.

The form of the defense, and the materials used therein will vary