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REVIEW SECTION.

I—SYMPOSIUM ON THE PULPIT: "IS THE PULPIT DECLINING IN POWER? IF SO, WHAT IS THE REMEDY?"

NO. IV.

By PROF. J. H. W. STUCKENBERG, D.D., BERLIN, GERMANY.

"Is the pulpit declining in power?" Yes, and no. In some respects, in some churches, yes. The ritual may take the place assigned by the Reformation to the Word, and the pulpit may even be abolished in order to get more room for the altar. When tradition becomes the law and the gospel; when some magic transforms the form into the substance; when the authority of the abstract Church robs the conscience of its prerogatives; when a special order of men destroys instead of promoting the universal priesthood of believers; when this order is ashamed to be called Evangelical because it is Catholic; when the liturgical and sacramental are made substitutes for the living Word; when churches are built for architectural impression, rather than for hearing the truth; and when mysticism, with its symbolism of lights and vestments and movements, takes the place of the simpler worship of God in spirit and in truth—then the sermon, unless altogether omitted, will be treated as subordinate; and when it begins, the worship being over, worshipers can perhaps withdraw without serious loss. The entrance of the priest may mean the exit of the preacher. For fifty years there have been in Europe and America, in various churches, tendencies which, in the name of deeper devotion and purer religion, have promoted the decline of the pulpit.

Other circumstances have affected its relative, if not its absolute, power. Subjects of which it once had almost a monopoly, are now discussed in legislative halls, on the platform, and by the press; and thus it is brought into competition with agencies which formerly did not exist, or were not so potent. The fact, however, that new forces have been introduced into the organism of society, does not imply