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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—APOLOGETICS IN THE PULPIT: ARE THEY NOT MORE HURTFUL THAN USEFUL AT THE PRESENT TIME?

NO. III.

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DEFINITION before discussion is hardly less important than diagnosis before prescription. Hap-hazard work, in dealing either with truth or life, involves too great risks to be allowed place anywhere. Let us know the ground we are to stand on. What is apologetics?

Apologetics is, in brief, the defense of the faith. It is the vindication of Christianity by the presentation of its evidences. Surely this is a good thing, and not open to reasonable challenge. The faith that asks anything but an open field; that cannot itself challenge attack, and meet it, and shiver the lances of assaulting unbelief; that is not ready to welcome investigation and to prove its right to be, is a faith of darkness and not of light, a faith of superstition and not of intelligent trust. If Christianity is not defensible, let us find a faith that is. That upon which we hang our dearest hopes should give us something surer than a "perhaps." Apologetic, falsely so-called, begging pardon for Christianity's presence and claims—this is a thing Christianity does not wish, and will not brook, but turns its back upon with a feeling of infinite dignity and calm. Apologetic, in the sense of vindicating its right to be, Christianity welcomes and glories in as the answer of a reasonable faith to the demands of an intelligent reason.

But granting the desirableness, and even necessity, of Christian evidences in the general field of debate, are they ever even desirable in the pulpit? Let us here again begin with exact definition, and understand by "the pulpit," any place occupied by a minister of Jesus Christ for the public oral proclamation of God's truth to men. It is not, therefore, the pulpit as indicating a profession, but as indicating a locality and a function, that we are concerned with in the present discussion. This, then, is the question before us: Christian evidences, as