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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—HOW CAN THE PULPIT BEST COUNTERACT THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN SKEPTICISM?

NO. VI.

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THE subject of this symposium has already been so ably and exhaustively treated that but little remains to be said. At the same time, the idea of a symposium is that a single theme should be discussed by a variety of minds, each one occupying a different standpoint and looking upon it at a different angle of vision; thus making the total result equivalent to the effect of a manifold stereopticon which exhibits all sides and views of the object before it.

The answer to the question which embodies the theme will depend, first of all, upon our conception of what the specific function of the Christian pulpit is. Undoubtedly there is a great variety of sentiment in the Christian world to-day upon this point. The theories range from the level of the lyceum platform, with its discussion of the current topics of the day, finding its themes in telegraphic items and police reports, up to the highest sacerdotal conception of the ministry, in which the duty of the pulpit becomes the simplest homily of ethical or evangelical truth, as a merely incidental—possibly an integral—part of the highest sacramental function known to the Christian church.

At whatever point in this ascending or descending scale we choose to take our stand, it will be generally conceded to-day that the business of the pulpit is not to be a teacher of philosophy, and in the impatience of the average congregation with what is known as doctrinal teaching, that it is scarcely to be a teacher even of theology.

There was a conception of the function of the pulpit prevalent a hundred years ago in New England, in which every man who undertook to be thoroughly furnished for its work, deemed it necessary first to master and assimilate some existing philosophic system as the foundation upon which to build in safety the superstructure of his theological system. If that necessity be a real one and the details of metaphysi-