

the special truth that this generation needs.

Now there is here no casting of cold water on little offerings of whatever sort. They are never to be neglected, never despised—when they brag not. They may be as great as the greatest, as great even as the widow's mite—when they happen to be all that one has—but in no case otherwise are they to be at all spoken of. When they are a mean dole out of abundance; when a sugar plum is offered, where eternal life might be brought to the perishing; when "kind

words" and "smiles" are luxuriously scattered right and left, as one pursues his own business and pleasure, in place of all serious and self-denying work for the highest interest of mankind—and especially when instead of all direct tribute of love and duty to God—these things are sheer insults both to man and his Maker. But when we add yet this above all, that we boast and glorify them, then their hypocrisy becomes the rankest kind that ever affronted Heaven in Jerusalem or elsewhere.

W. C. CONANT.

NEW YORK.

EDITORIAL SECTION.

HINTS AT THE MEANING OF TEXTS.

[In the Feb. number, 1887 (p. 183) we made an offer for the best three Skeletons of Sermons. In response to this offer nearly one thousand outlines of sermons were sent in. The editors promised to "print from month to month those briefs which they deemed worthy of publication in the 'Hints' department, signed with the pseudonym and a *." After all the selected briefs are published, we shall request a vote of our clergymen subscribers as to the best three. This vote to be final." We have now published as many of them as, in our best judgment, is desirable. Hence we respectfully request our clerical readers to send us on or before Feb. 1 their critical judgment in the matter. The simple point to decide is: *Which three briefs among all we have published, from March to January inclusive, are entitled, in their opinion, to the preference?* And on this vote the award will be made. Some have complained to us, as if our course had been unfair, because we made the selections from the whole; but this was inevitable; who else could do it? And we have literally adhered to the conditions of our "offer."—Eds.]

Revival Service.

The Wisdom of Soul Winning.

He that winneth souls is wise.—Prov. xi : 30.

INTRODUCTION. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts about wisdom, as revealed in the text, higher than man's thoughts.

I. WHAT IS IT TO WIN SOULS?

(a) To win is to gain in face of opposition.

(b) To win a soul is to enter the con-

test of forces which strive for mastery in the soul, and gain it for God.

II. ON WHAT GROUND IS HE THAT WINNETH SOULS CALLED WISE?

(a) On the ground of his just appreciation of the value of the soul.

(b) He enters intelligently into God's plan for the world's redemption.

(c) He has respect unto the recompense of reward. See John iv : 36, and Daniel xii : 3.

III. HOW MAY WE WIN SOULS?

(a) By the attractive power of a godly life.

(b) By constant use of God-given powers.

(c) By watching for opportunities to speak a word in season.

ALPHABET.*

The Back Thrusts of Sin.

Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him [Asahel] under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him, and he fell down there and died.—II Sam. ii : 21.

THE deadly spear-handle a figure of sin. Asahel's death an illustration of the sinner's disaster.

I. Satan turns the point of a sin away from us. He fishes with a baited hook. The sting of transgression is concealed.

II. As much danger in the handle as in the point of a sin. We think we hold sin, when it holds us.