

can read prayers fairly well, and yet can not preach acceptably. Possibly they were never "called of God as was Aaron," of whom, by the way, it was said: "I know that he can speak well"; "he shall be thy spokesman unto the people" (Exodus iv. 14, 16). Of the watchmen it should never be possible to say: "They are dumb dogs, they can not bark" (Isaiah lvi. 10). It would doubtless be gain, and not loss, if some who are now preachers should become farmers or carpenters. But the square pegs not seldom get into the round holes, and the fact is not rec-

ognized until it is wellnigh impossible to change them.

The question under discussion is really very simple. Divested of its accessories, it is simply, Is it right for a clergyman to deceive? Does deception of any sort consist with our ideal of the clerical character? So stated, it answers itself.

Whoso is tempted by sermons lithographed or in type, let him sit down and honestly write an honest sermon on Common or Commercial Honesty, preaching it first, as he studies or writes, to himself.

## EDITORIAL SECTION.

### SERMONIC CRITICISM.

#### Some Essentials in Effective Sermons.

Doubtless no little stupidity has resulted from the unintelligent study of the so-called masters of pulpit eloquence. Bossuet, Massillon, Saurin, Barrow, and all the rest have been indiscriminately recommended and have gone into the library of the young preacher to furnish him with models for sermons to be preached to plain people perhaps in the country. Had he been taught to discriminate, some profit might have come of his study. He might have been taught by any of them to look for great themes for his discourses. From Barrow he might have brought a lesson of logical consecutiveness. Massillon might have taught him a lesson in speech-organization to be learned in its perfection from no other orator but Demosthenes. But left without wise direction, the preacher has perhaps brought nothing from his models save rhetorical trick and stateliness with the turgid and swollen periods of the court oration, or the would-be profundity of thought that with the small man and the different occasion becomes insufferable heaviness and dulness. Just because of his models he has missed the essential qualities of effectiveness in preaching.

Turn by way of contrast to one of the sermons of Robertson of Brighton, that entitled (insufficiently) "The Irreparable Past," from Mark xiv. 41, 42:

"And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

1. The first quality of effectiveness to be noted is that the subject and sermon come naturally and easily out of the text.

However ingenious a preacher may be in hitching a theme and sermon to a text to which they do not belong, he is likely to break connection with the interest of many of his audience and with the memory of most of them in doing it. How naturally and easily Robertson passes to his subject in answering the question, "What did our Redeemer mean?"

"Safety was out of the question: but they might meet their fate, instead of being overwhelmed by it: and so, as respected what was gone by, Christ said, 'Sleep, what is done can not be undone'; but as respected the duties that were lying before them still, He said, 'We must make the best of it that can be made: rouse yourselves to dare the worst: on to enact your parts like men. Rise, let us be going—we have something still left to do.' Here then we have two