

cration of both pulpit and pews. There is a vast amount of excellent preaching in almost every town, hamlet, and city in the land, but the word doth not profit many, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it. Before the judgment-seat it will be a poor excuse for having neglected the great salvation that the preacher did not shape his sermons after the most approved

pattern, or did not deliver them in the right tone of voice, or with the right gestures, or from the right kind of pulpit.

Let Christian congregations stop creating a winter about us by their worldliness, and begin to surround us with the atmosphere of earnest, persevering prayer, and the question, "What is to be done?" will be solved.

## EDITORIAL SECTION.

### SERMONIC CRITICISM.

#### Avoid Generalities.

THE dullest of sermons is the sermon made up of generalities. And the more there are packed into it, the duller it is. We once heard a somewhat crude young man descanting on the wonderful eloquence and ability of a sermon of one of the bishops of his denomination. Said he, in his enthusiasm: "Good judges of preaching who were present could detect the substance of twelve of his best sermons all packed into that one!" It reminded one of the criticism suggested by a certain professor of homiletics, in a question asked of a young man who had put all his theology into his first and trial sermon: "Young man, where do you expect to get any material for another sermon?" There are various insuperable objections to such sermons.

Commonly they do not stick to the special point of the text. The loss in this is immense every way. A sermon that brings out sharply such special point usually makes that text a living text, and binds the truth of the sermon inseparably with it, so that the text forever afterward recalls that truth.

Sermons made up of such generalities, unconnected with anything except a motto, are most difficult to remember. Before "thirdly" of this kind, without point or illustration, is reached, the ordinary hearer is already in a comatose condition, from which only the benediction will rouse him.

They leave the soul hungry, to begin

with, and help to keep up a process of spiritual deadening and hardening.

We once heard a sermon of this packed and general kind preached from one of Paul's most startling and incisive utterances:

"But if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."—2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

The words, "the glorious gospel of Christ," were wrested from their context, and used as an *omnium gatherum* for all the commonplaces of theology. There was "the Gospel," with the many reasons why. Then it was "glorious" in a half-dozen or more aspects. Then "Christ" was set forth as the sum and substance, the alpha and omega, the key and epitome of the Gospel and everything else. And in it all there was not one hint of any connection with Paul's awful indictment of human depravity and blindness, or of the relation of these to "the god of this world," or of the object of Satan, in so blinding the minds of men, namely, to prevent "the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ," from shining into them with its illumining power. Such sermons are always hard to listen to, and harder to recall after the occasion.

#### Lodge Truth Firmly in the Mind.

THIS is fundamental in effective preaching. Truth so lodged in the mind is the only rational basis for any