

When preparing his sermons, he used to open and station all about him on table and floor all the discourses and articles his library contained on his chosen text or theme. With their help, by careful selection and dovetailing, the original (?) homily was created.

I have not access at present to any number of British papers, but there lies before me a collection made by another, twenty-eight years ago, of thirteen advertisements offering sermonic wares of all sorts, manuscript, lithographed, and printed, and at all prices. Thirteen sermons (a quarter's supply) for 13s. 6d.; five hundred sermons (of all three kinds named above) for £5, which is certainly cheap enough; manuscript sermons, "original, striking, and eloquent," for 10s. per quarter. One offers to "sound Evangelical churchmen," "the use of the sermons of an incumbent of known ability, clearly lithographed, and confidentially supplied on very reasonable terms."

Appended to this baker's dozen of advertisements is a fascicle of thirteen circulars, one offering "brilliant discourses on all subjects at 5s. each, strict secrecy promised." Two advertisers will write sermons, "eloquent or simple, High or Low," for a guinea apiece (no competent man could work for less); others will write on any text, one sermon for 10s., or two for 15s.; another charges three guineas a dozen. A reputable British writer of the year 1868 says: "The wholesale traffic in so-called lithographed manuscript discourses is now going on to an almost incredible extent."

"Confidentially supplied," "secrecy promised!" Must, then, so high and sacred a business as the composing and distributing of sermons be conducted clandestinely, like that of certain medical practitioners? *In occulto nihil.*—John xviii. 20.

A certain town in Ohio, which shall not be named, is notorious for an essay or oration factory, which is continually sending its circulars to college sophomores and seniors. College essays and

orations are quoted at from \$3 to \$15; political speeches, \$10 to \$30; but sermons at 50 cents (!) to \$25. The low-priced sermons, however, are not guaranteed to be original, as everything else is. I wonder if, when these seniors get to be preachers, they have occasion to seek the aid of their quondam benefactors. Their "increasing business" has now, the company says, after sixteen years, reached "the limits of the English-speaking world." They pride themselves on "honest, conscientious work." Then comes a significant clause: "We do not ask you to speculate upon the question of our honesty." Indeed! That question could hardly be raised by the purchaser of their wares! No fears for their clients, the boys and the clergymen. They have reason enough to keep their side of the secret. The traffic is clandestine, and the use of the smuggled goods is studiously concealed, and questions regarding the matter are evasively and disingenuously, rather than "humily,"* answered. Why?

The commandment is read, as in old Sparta, "Thou shalt not get found out." That would damage your reputation and so diminish the confidence of the people and your usefulness (read rather, "your ability to fill a post and draw a salary").

If one modestly think Robertson's, or Spurgeon's, or Phillips Brooks's, or Holland's discourses better than his own, there is certainly no objection to his telling his congregation so, and proving his view correct by openly and frankly preaching one of their sermons as well and as vigorously as he can. That would be an honest way of using material not his own. And it need not reduce his services to the level of "deacons' sermons," for he should be able to preach the discourse—not merely to read it in a dry, monotonous, lifeless way.

Some men get into the ministry who

* See HOMILETIC REVIEW, August, 1896, p. 188, col. 2.