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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—REALITY IN PULPIT SPEECH.

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THE world has not always held to a high estimate of the pulpit, and there are not a few to-day who doubt its value. The Church even shows no little indifference to it at times. Elaborate service, formalism, on the one hand, minimizes the preaching of the Word. On the other hand, church organizations exhaust time and strength by their endless details of direction and work. A score of agencies to attract and instruct have come into modern life. Shall they crowd out the preacher? Looking beyond the Church, multitudes struggling with the very problem of existence say, "We have no need of the sermon."

To give motive to the existing movements of society; to sanctify the worship and the work of the Church to the supreme end of soul-winning and soul-building; to make men in their dim and misty strivings stop and listen for God's voice; this is the problem of the Christian ministry. How shall we deal with it? Shall we resort to expedients that express and satisfy some personal peculiarity, that have the momentary virtue of novelty? Shall we let a bustling activity take the place of that high and severe commerce of spiritual things, that hard and stern mastery of great truth, that patient and thorough discipline of speech, that shall make the pulpit a commanding and uplifting force? There are diversities of gifts, and nothing shall be called trivial or undignified or unworthy that voices a truth or wins a life; but there is need to emphasize the purpose and power of preaching. The faith of the Church needs strengthening in the essential manliness and the eternal worth of the pulpit.

What is the defect of preaching, the weakness of the sermon? Think of the thousands and the tens of thousands of pulpits in our own land—to paraphrase the words of Robertson—that echo each Lord's Day with what is supposed to be the truth of God. Has God changed His purpose? Has He forgotten to be gracious? Does He no longer will that His words