

best essay that will answer the question, "Should the State, as such, recognize its relation to Jesus Christ, the Divine Ruler and Lawgiver? Why? How?" Matthew xxii. 21 is suggested as a suitable basis. The essay, which must not contain more than eight thousand words, shall have been recently preached to a congregation or read before a society, may be sent in at any time before May 31, 1888, and must be signed with

a pseudonym, the real name and pseudonym to be sent in sealed envelope to Rev. R. H. McCready at above address.

President J. Seelye of Amherst, Rev. David Gregg, Boston, Mass., and Gen. Clinton B. Fisk have consented to act as judges. The successful essay will appear in THE HOMILETIC REVIEW, the *Christian Statesman*, and the *Christian Nation* at the earliest date.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

### The Popular Preachers.

I AM bothered not a little. There is a preacher here who has little or no education—not enough to enable him to frame a sentence grammatically. He is awkward in gesture, ungainly in person, with few of the graces of good manners. Yet this man is a most popular preacher. The common people hear him gladly. That is not so surprising, but even the refined and the educated are drawn by his preaching. How are we to account for all this? Can it be that education and good manners and the graces of oratory are of no avail in preaching? Are we pursuing the wrong methods to reach souls? Must there be a degree of foolishness in preaching in order to get and hold the attention of the people? I confess that I am puzzled. H—— L——.

——, Ohio.

There are two essential elements in the ideal sermon: the truth uttered and the personality of the preacher. We are prone to forget the one and magnify the other; to give all our attention to the messenger and none of it to the message. In Jesus Christ, whom the "common people . . . heard gladly," and at whose feet sat the doctors of the law, we find the perfect blending of these two elements—truth and personality—a perfect message and an ideal messenger.

Now we believe that the reason why the preacher who is described above is so popular is that with him the truth he weekly proclaims so satisfies the soul-hunger of his hearers that the minor defects of the mere mechanical portion of the message and the personal peculiarities of delivery are either not noticed or if noticed are willingly endured for the sake of the message. Yet having said this, it now follows that, given all he

now possesses plus education, "good manners and graces of oratory," this preacher would be even more potent and popular. The world too often judges a man by the clothes he wears. Thought and truth are similarly misjudged. There is always the danger of making clothes more than the man. There are primary and secondary elements in a preparation for the ministry. Of the former is the cultivation of an overwhelming desire to know the truth and to lead others to a knowledge of it. Of the latter, and down upon a far lower plane, are acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew, expertness in rhetoric and in oratory.

"Foolishness" is not a necessary ingredient in a popular sermon; simplicity is, *childlikeness* is, used in the New Testament sense of that word; but there are always those who will make "foolishness" synonymous with simplicity, childishness with *childlikeness*.

### The Best Six Books.

IN response to a suggestion made by the Rev. Wm. Bryant in the November issue of THE HOMILETIC REVIEW, and also in response to a letter sent to some of our leading clergymen, we have received replies to the question, "What six books on the Bible do you find most helpful to you, as a general rule, in preparing for the pulpit?"

Some of them will be found below. Others will be published in later issues.

The following books are full of