

SERMONIC CRITICISM.

A READER OF THE HOMILETIC REVIEW sends us the following :

"Is the following synopsis in accord with the purport of the parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, found in Matt. xiii. 45, 46?

"I. All men are seeking treasure.

"II. Christ is a treasure whose value is above all earthly riches.

"III. We should search for this pearl in Scripture until we comprehend its superlative excellence.

"IV. We must be willing to part with everything incompatible with its acquisition.

"V. Our whole joy and felicity should center in Christ.

"Recently I heard an evangelist dispose of the parable in the following manner :

"I. Man is the pearl.

"II. Christ is the merchantman.

"III. Christ gave all to purchase the pearl."

While we think there can be no question that the evangelist referred to has missed the point of the Saviour's parable, we also think the synopsis given by the inquirer deficient in several particulars. First of all, it is lacking in unity. The various divisions are too independent of each other.

They are like separate links of different chains. In the next place, there is a lack of continuity in the thoughts. They are fragmentary, wanting not only in unity, but also in consecutiveness. Again, the synopsis or analysis is lacking in the characteristic of progressiveness. Each preceding thought should bear within it the germ of that which succeeds. A sermon should be a growth. The closing truths presented in it ought to be the supreme truths, bearing the relation to what goes before of the fruit to the vine, that has developed from a seed. The second and the fifth divisions in the analysis are too closely affiliated for such a separation as the writer has compelled them to know, while the third contains the erroneous suggestion that what is really the inspiration of the "search" is rather a consequence of it. There is here a manifest confusion of ideas. Might not the essential thought of the parable be better presented by some such analysis as this :

I. The soul's craving and quest for good.

II. The supreme good—the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

III. The sacrifice demanded for the acquisition of this supreme good—"We have forsaken all."

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Sunday Opening of the Saloon.

At the present writing there are before the Senate and Assembly of the State of New York seven bills, differing from one another in minor particulars, but all of them favoring the opening of the saloon on Sunday. When it is remembered that these bodies are overwhelmingly Republican and that this party claims for itself the title of the temperance party, the fact stated has something alarming about it. The indications are that pledges must have been given previous to the last

election by those who conducted the campaign, or by those who sought office, that in the event of success every effort would be made to secure that which has been the demand of liquor-dealers for some time past, the abrogation of the present Sunday laws bearing upon this business, or such a change in them that the sale of liquor shall be legalized during certain hours on the first day of the week. The Mayor of New York City has already declared his sympathy with such measures, and in his position has the support of some who profess to have the interests of