

Preachers' Pages.

HOMILETICAL HINTS AND OUTLINES.

[Contributed by the Rev. S. R. CAMBIE, B.D., B.Litt., Rector of Otley, Ipswich.]

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "Neither tempt Christ," etc.—1 Cor. x. 9 (Epistle).

St. Paul's object is to demonstrate the fact that the Church is the true Israel and that all the past is its inheritance, even though it be in part Gentile. Even the past had sacraments and the ministry of the second person of the Trinity—e.g., Christ (v. 9) cf. "the reproach of Christ" Heb. xi. 26. His opening words—"I would not that ye should be ignorant"—is a favourite expression. See Rom. i. 13, xi. 25, 1 Cor. xii. 1, 2 Cor. i. 8, 1 Thess. iv. 13. He proceeds to speak of temptation under different aspects.

I. THE SON OF GOD TEMPTED, UNDER THE OLD COVENANT, BY THE SONS OF GOD. Think of the way in which God's children try His patience and take Israel in the wilderness as an illustration. There is something startling in the suggestion that Christ was tempted by the Israelites in the wilderness. But in the face of our Lord's own statement, "Before Abraham was, I AM," and again, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," it is not so surprising. He who is *the* word in which God has expressed His thoughts and feelings towards mankind, has made Himself felt through all the ages. (a) *He has revealed the essential character of God—love.* "The only begotten Son . . . hath revealed Him." (b) *He has demanded of mankind, homage, trust and obedience.* St. Paul's argument is that the sin of tempting and rejecting Him is the same in every age.

II. THE SONS OF GOD TEMPTED. This reminds us of the different senses in which the word temptation is used. We notice—(a) *That there are temptations "common to man."* This being so, not even the faithful can hope to escape. Even the Lord must endure the attack of Satan. But while we are not compelled to be good, we are not obliged to be bad. Satan has no power but to tempt, he cannot force us to yield. (b) *That the Sons of God are so equipped as to be able to conquer.* "Not . . . above that ye are able." We need not be among the vanquished but among the

victors. For the needful strength we may count on the faithfulness of God. We can say with St. Paul that His grace is "sufficient."

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "Ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols," etc. *I Cor.* xii. 1 (Epistle).

In this section of his letters St. Paul is answering questions which have been addressed to him on points of faith and morals. He has already dealt with (1) marriage, (2) meats offered to idols, (3) Christian worship—the position of women and the observance of the Sacrament. He now proceeds to deal with the questions which have been asked concerning spiritual gifts. Later on he deals with the doctrine of the Resurrection and the subject of Almsgiving. We have here plenty of subject matter. The following points are suggested as affording scope for homiletic treatment.

I. AN INGLORIOUS PAST. "Ye were Gentiles," etc. St. Paul not infrequently reminds his converts of the terrible depths of depravity out of which they have been lifted; *e.g.*, "Such were some of you," *I Cor.* vi. 11. The man who has made his way in the world often finds it convenient to forget what he once was, and sometimes slights his former acquaintances. St. Paul's object is not to taunt these Christians with their past, but rather—(1) To break down all false pride and self-complacency. (2) To incite them to deeper penitence. (3) To stimulate their gratitude.

II. AN INSPIRED CONFESSION. "No man can say . . . except by the Holy Ghost." Here is one of several proofs that a man is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For another proof of this, see *I John* ii. 1-3. There is need to-day for clear witness of faith in the Divinity of our Blessed Lord. This confession not only involves the recognition of His Godhead but of His Sovereignty. He is our Lord. As such His precepts are not to be regarded as wishes but as commands. None of them are "grievous" (*I John* v. 3). [On "calling Jesus Anathema"—consult any good commentary.]

III. THE CONCEPTION OF THE CORPORATE LIFE. St. Paul is fond of metaphors which illustrate this. We have, for instance, the following:—(a) *Civic life*. The duties and responsibilities of the Christian citizen (*Eph.* ii. 19). (b) *Family life*. The household of faith (*Eph.* ii. 19, iii. 15). (c) *The material structure*. The

building fitly framed together . . . builded together (Eph. ii. 22). (d) *Military life*. The army, the equipment, training and duty of the Christian soldier (Eph. vi. 11-16). (e) *Here, as in Eph. iv. 16, 17, we have the human body*. The different functions of its various members and their inter-relation illustrate Church life.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you." 1 Cor. xv. 1 (Epistle).

St. Paul continues to deal with questions which have been raised by the Corinthians. The passage introduces the elaborate argument into which he enters to prove the Resurrection. He sets forth (1) the nature and (2) the effects of the Glad Tidings. We are sometimes told that the Cross of Christ was merely a human accident and had nothing to do with the redemption of mankind, and this even by Christian teachers. But, if it be so, then the Apostle must have been mistaken. He very distinctly teaches otherwise and, further, sets forth the Cross as the fulfilment of prophecy—"according to the Scriptures."

I. HE RECALLS MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES. (a) *The vision of the Risen Christ*. "Last of all He was seen of me also." He gives an important list of persons who were chosen as witnesses, but his own experience is to him the most valuable—"seeing is believing." He has a sense of personal unworthiness: "Not meet . . . because I persecuted the Church." (b) *The Commission to him of the Gospel as a sacred trust*. "That which I also received." He was entrusted with a task and he has been mindful of the obligation. With the Psalmist he can say, "I have not kept back Thy mercy and Truth." Cf. 2 Cor. v. 11, 17, 19.

II. HE REVIEWS AN ARDUOUS BUT HAPPY MINISTRY. He is not conscious of unfaithfulness, but can say that what he received he delivered, and that he laboured strenuously (v. 10). He has also the joy of being able to add, "Ye received." Every preacher who reads these words must surely be driven to ask himself whether or not he possesses the necessary qualifications,—not a place in an ordered succession, be that succession unbroken or not, but personal experience which alone qualifies for witness. In a court of law no one is heard whose evidence is not based on experience. But there is also a message here for the man in the pew! The preacher may be

able to say "I delivered." He can do no more. Have you "received"? ["Believed in vain." For various interpretations consult a commentary.]

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "Jehoshaphat . . . came down to the king of Israel."
—I *Kings* xxii. 2. (First lesson, mg.)

A strange "affinity" (see 2 Chron. xviii. 2). Politically nothing can be urged against it, but religiously it was a grave error, fraught with unforeseen and disastrous results. It nearly cost poor Jehoshaphat his life (I *Kings* xxi. 32, 33), but there were other consequences which did not immediately appear, and which did not enter into his calculations. But it is a great art to be able to discern the ultimate and perceive the tendency of things. The episode related in this chapter constitutes the first act in a life-tragedy. Let us look at the three acts.

I. ACT ONE. A ROYAL FEAST. Scene, the banqueting hall of the royal palace in Samaria. A great feast is spread in honour of Jehoshaphat's visit. Wine and wit are flowing freely. But what undesirable surroundings for a godly man! After the feast Ahab "showed his hand." He cared nothing for the society of such as Jehoshaphat: his only object was to make use of him, and unfortunately Jehoshaphat lent himself too easily to his host and pledged himself and his people with surprising readiness to the enterprise. See 2 Chron. xviii. 3. One can only put it down to deplorable weakness.

II. ACT TWO. A ROYAL WEDDING. The bridegroom, Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram, who succeeded him, and the bride, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. A desirable "match" people called it,—the union of two royal houses! If Jehoshaphat had seen this when he associated himself with Ahab how would he have felt? Would he have gone? Can one doubt that it was through the friendship that sprung up between these royal houses that this marriage came about?

III. ACT THREE. A ROYAL FUNERAL. The last act in this terrible tragedy. See 2 Chron. xxi. 19, 20. No tears are shed over the grave of this man who passed away in the prime of life (2 Chron. xxi. 5). Unhonoured and unsung they laid him to rest in the city of his fathers, but "not in the sepulchre of the kings." His down-

fall is distinctly attributed to the evil influence of his wife. See 2 Chron. xxi. 6.

How many lessons come crowding in upon us as we read this dramatic story! Evil communications corrupt good manners. Those who are coming behind us will very likely tread in our foot-prints. Marriage makes or mars a man. Many men are what women make them. How great, then, is woman's influence for good or ill.

Notes for a Harvest Sermon on Psalm lxxv.

Introductory notes. In this psalm all nature, animate and inanimate, lifts up her voice in song. The valleys, thick with corn, join in chorus with man (v. 2) to offer a hymn of praise. Consider—

I. THE VASTNESS OF THE DIVINE RESOURCES. What demands are made upon the Creator! He would be a sorry creator who proved himself unequal to such demands. But to God belong the silver and the gold and the cattle upon a thousand hills. The river of God is "full." The valleys are "thick" with corn. The very "clouds drop fatness."

II. THE VARIETY OF THE DIVINE GIFTS. He giveth food to all flesh: and just the meat appropriate to the needs of each.

III. THE CONTINUITY OF SUPPLY. The ancient promise, "seed time and harvest shall not fail," is remembered by Him Who is ever faithful to the covenant that He made with a thousand generations.

IV. THE VOW THAT IS TO BE PERFORMED. See Psalms, lxi. 8, and lxvi. 13-14. Every grateful heart utters a vow and every faithful heart rests not content with vowing but "daily performs."

ILLUSTRATIONS.

[Contributed by the Rev. J. W. W. MOERAN.]

In a speech he made in the City Hall of Cardiff Little Nations
—and People. (Oct. 27, 1916), Mr. Lloyd George said: "Little nations were never more alive, never more important than they are to-day in this conflict of gigantic Empires. If I were to pass a criticism upon the Allies, I should say that, whilst fighting for little nations, they have never fully recognized and realized their value and their potential strength. They have never quite realized the value of Belgium, or Serbia, or Montenegro, or

Bulgaria, or Greece, or Roumania. When the time comes to write the story of this conflict, it will be found that the cardinal blunder of the Allies was not to understand the power—the potential power of the little nations. Britain is now at the full strength of an Imperial tide ; and yet, whilst the tide is high and will get still higher, it will never submerge the joy of the little nation in its past, in its present, in the future which it can see plain to its gaze. The small nation is like the spring ; it does not cease to have a separate existence even when its waters are merged in the great river, it still runs along the same valley, under the same name, draining the same watershed. And if it ceased to flow and to gather the waters of its own glen, the great river would shrink, would lose part of its impetus and part of the purity of its waters."

What is true of nations is true also of men. This War has brought into greater prominence the gifts and qualities of some few great men ; but it has in a far higher degree shown the value of little men—yes, and of little women too—people whose position in life was hitherto obscure, even despised by the haughty. Yet the touchstone of war has revealed their nobility of character. The splendid patriotism, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the cheerful devotion to duty, however irksome and distasteful, shown in the trenches, in the air-service, on board battleships and mine-sweepers, and in the munition factories, have been among the greatest wonders of the age. How much England—aye and the whole civilized world—owes to these little people—these brave humble lads and patient women—we have begun to learn.

May the teaching and the lessons of their faithful lives never be forgotten. And may the least esteemed among us all take fresh courage, believing with a new joy in the potential power for good and useful service possessed by every soul that draws its individual strength and purity of motive from Him Who "is no respecter of persons."

Zeppelins had crossed the North Sea during the night, and, probably not knowing where they were, had dropped scores of bombs on a country district along the east coast. Happily there were no casualties, as nearly all these deadly missiles had fallen on the open fields. But the noise of their explosions had naturally alarmed the people living in adjacent villages. For these poor country-folk it was indeed a night of

God stronger
than the Devil.

terror. The next morning I went to see an old man lying on his bed of sickness, from which he was never to recover. His wife was dead, and he lived with his daughter, a widow. The cottage was spotlessly clean and tidy. The daughter seemed shaken after her experience of the night; she owned to having been badly frightened, but she added, "Father wasn't worried the least bit; his faith is so wonderful." I went into the bedroom where the old man was; and when I asked him how he felt and what he thought about it all, he replied, "I haven't felt disturbed in mind the whole night. Sir, what I think is this: the devil is very strong on earth to-day; but (with energy in his failing voice) the Lord God Almighty is stronger than the devil, and He'll make everything right in the end." The sublime philosophy of these words from the lips of an old farm-labourer have often come back to my mind since I heard them spoken, and I pass them on to those whose faith is being tried by any trouble or perplexing doubt. The evil that is wrought in the world to-day is the devil's work. Where he came from or why he is allowed to exist and work mischief I know not. But you may have this sure confidence, that the devil is only being let loose for a season.¹ And, however strong he is, the Lord on high is a great deal stronger. Sin and suffering shall all come to nothing in their appointed time; and the Lord will make everything right in the end.

THE STUDY TABLE.

The study of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament is unduly neglected by a large number of the clergy; yet some of these books are very important, if not for anything else, at least for their presentation of the social life, popular beliefs and religious aspirations of the Jews during the centuries which immediately preceded the advent of our Lord. This lack of interest has probably been due to the lack of a cheap and handy translation of these books. Prof. Charles' excellent and monumental edition is too costly for the general reader. Dr. Oesterley and Canon Box are, therefore, rendering a real service to Biblical students by their edition of a faithful and scholarly translation of these books in a handy form and at a reasonable cost.² Each volume is furnished with a short but adequate introduction discussing the date, authorship, etc.

¹ Rev. xx. 3.

² *Translations of Early Documents*, edited by the Rev. W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D., and the Rev. Canon G. H. Box. *The Book of Enoch*, by R. H. Charles, D.Litt., D.D. *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, by R. H. Charles, D.Litt. *The Wisdom of Ben-Sira* (Ecclesiasticus), by W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D. *The Apocalypse of Ezra* (4 Esdras), by the Rev. Canon Box—all published by S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d. net each.

Of the four volumes before us the *Book of Enoch* and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* are translated by Dr. Charles with introductions by Dr. Oosterley. The book of Enoch, considerable parts of which, according to Charles, are pre-Maccabæan, was written by a Jew who lived in Northern Palestine. "The influence of 1 Enoch on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books put together" (Charles). Enoch is of special interest on account of its discussion of the problem of evil; the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom; the title of the Son of Man; and the Resurrection.

The *Testaments* in its original form belongs to the reign of John Hyrcanus (B.C. 135-104), but has been added to during the middle of the last century B.C. It has been further augmented by Christian interpolators. "It reaches an astonishingly high ethical standard" and must have been known to the writers of the New Testament.

The translation of the *Wisdom of Ben-Sira* (or Ecclesiasticus) is from the pen of Dr. Oosterley. The book was originally written in Hebrew, and was later translated into Greek by the author's grandson. Fragments of the lost Hebrew MS. were discovered by different scholars during the years 1896-1900. These cover nearly two-thirds of the whole book. Dr. Oosterley's translation is based on Smend's Hebrew text, wherever the Hebrew is extant, otherwise Sweet's Greek text is followed. This is one of the most valuable of apocryphal books, and seems to have been so much used in the early Church as to become an ecclesiastical or Church book. Hence the title "Ecclesiasticus" given to it by Jerome. No other book gives us such a clear glimpse of the social life and religious teaching of the Jews of the time. Dr. Oosterley, in agreement with most recent scholars, assigns B.C. 190-180 as the approximate date of the composition of the original Hebrew. Other scholars, including Westcott, place the original Hebrew about a century earlier. We must confess that the later date has not convinced us.

Canon Box's *Apocalypse of Ezra* is excellent. Besides critical notes, he gives brief and valuable explanatory notes. It is to be hoped that other translators will follow Canon Box's example in this respect. This "Apocalypse" consists of 2 Esdras iii.-xiv. of the English Apocrypha. It is extant only in Latin. Both the Hebrew original and the Greek from which the Latin version was made are completely lost. It seems to have been composed about 100 A.D. The theological value of this book is great, as it lays much stress on the doctrine of the original sin; the future life; the Heavenly Messiah, the Son of Man; the impotency of the Law to save. From the Latin MS., from which our authorized version was made, a long passage of some seventy verses had been cut out, evidently for dogmatic reasons, but is extant in all Oriental versions. In 1875, Prof. R. L. Bensly discovered this famous Missing Fragment, which is now included in the R.V. between verses 35 and 36 of chap. vii. Canon Box also gives us these valuable verses, from which we gather that "the soul enters at once into a state of blessedness or the reverse, according as it is righteous or wicked" (Box). As man's future destiny is fixed in this life, and cannot be changed after death, no prayer for the dead is of any avail (ch. vii. 104-5).

May we suggest to the Editors that an index will greatly enhance the value of these volumes? These books are thoroughly scholarly, handy in form, and reasonable in price. We wish them wide circulation.

KHODADAD E. KEITH.

"Mrs. Nankivell," we are told in *A Scheme of Teaching for the Church's Year*, and *A Year's Course of Lessons for Sunday School Classes* (by Constance Nankivell. R. H. Allenson, Ltd. 2s. 6d. net) "has been preparing

this book for several years. Its plan has been put to the practical test in Bournemouth with real success and appreciation. As now completed it affords very useful material for a year's course of sermons, and also, in the last portion of the book, provides a fine scheme of Sunday school teaching for a whole year." The authoress is much impressed with the "chain of ordered thought and teaching" contained in the Prayer Book, a sequence often lost, because broken into. Thus from Advent to Trinity we have laid before us what God has done for us, while from Trinity to Advent our thoughts are rather led to what we may do for God. The two portions of the work indicated by the double title are practically two distinct volumes bound together, each with a Preface or Introductory Note of its own. In the one prefixed to the latter portion of the book it is pointed out that the experience of army chaplains and hospital visitors goes to shew that many "who know so well how to serve, and how to suffer for their country, do not know their way to the Presence of their King, Who remaineth a King for ever." Hence the intense importance of Sunday school work of the best kind. "We are," says the writer, "verily guilty concerning these lads, if we let them go forth to the Great Adventure without making sure that they know where to get what God alone can give." Preachers and teachers will find many useful hints in this work.

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A collection of remarkable answers to prayer will be found in *The Answer Came* (edited by J. Kennedy Maclean. Marshall Brothers. 3s. 6d. net). These were originally contributed by readers of *The Life of Faith* under the heading "To His Praise." In this collected form they constitute a remarkable witness to the Divine faithfulness, and preachers will find here not only encouragement in their work but illustrative material for use in the pulpit or prayer meeting.

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My Ideals of Religion, by the Rev. Walter J. Carey, R.N. (Longmans, Green & Co., 1s. net), is an admirably planned little volume, designed to appeal to "the class of men and women who deny neither God nor their conscience," whose "intention is to do right, but they are so confused." Such magnificent material he has seen in the Navy, and he would gladly die with a *nunc dimittis* "if they were one and all the friends and servants of Jesus Christ." It is to help these Mr. Carey has written. His ideals, if not very new, are presented with freshness and a certain degree of unconventionality, and the book will be appreciated by many. He belongs, as every one knows, to the "Catholic" school, but he is out to win souls rather than proselytes.

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A book such as *The People's Missal* (compiled by the Rev. E. A. L. Clarke, sometime Curate of the Church of the Ascension, Lavender Hill; H. R. Allenson, Ltd., 5s. net) has no practical interest for us, whatever may be its historical value. We are old-fashioned enough to believe that clergy who have solemnly pledged themselves to use at all times of their ministrations the Book of Common Prayer and no other, are bound by that pledge, and we cannot see how it helps the loyalty of the people to put into their hands a "Missal" which enables them to follow the so-called secret devotions of the celebrant, even when, as in this case, the compilation is based on the Sarum rather than the Roman use. The volume contains sixteen illustrations, reproductions of the beautiful paintings of the late Frederic Shields to be seen in the Chapel of the Ascension, Bayswater.