

Preachers' Pages.

HOMILETICAL HINTS AND OUTLINES

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

Septuagesima.

Text: "So run, that ye may obtain."—1 Cor. ix. 24 (Ep.).

Graphic imagery derived from the Olympic and Isthmian games is frequently used with effect by St. Paul (Phil. iii. 12, 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Gal. ii. 2, v. 7; Acts xx. 24). This suggests the following considerations:—

I. AN APPOINTED COURSE. For the runner bounds are fixed and rules prescribed. These have to be observed. "Yet is he not crowned except he strive *lawfully*" (2 Tim. ii. 5).

II. AN APPLAUDING CROWD. The runner has the encouragement that comes from the cheers of interested spectators. "We also are compassed about with so great a crowd of witnesses" (Heb. xii. 1).

III. AN APPETITE UNDER CONTROL. "Temperate in all things" (verse 25). For ten months those who were to take part in the Isthmian games subjected themselves to rigid discipline, diet and training. St. Paul could say—"I keep under my body" (verse 27).

IV. APPROPRIATE CLOTHING. Lightly clad. Nothing to impede progress. "Let us lay aside every weight" (Heb. xii. 1).

V. AN APPRECIATED CROWN. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown" (of Grecian pine leaves). Notice St. Paul's different "crowns" and their significance. Not even the Minister's crown is for him alone.

Still forget the things behind,
Follow Christ in heart and mind,
Toward the mark unwearied press,
Seize the crown of righteousness.

Sexagesima.

Text: "Whereinsoever any is bold . . . I am bold also."—2 Cor. ix. 21 (Ep.).

The Apostle recounts his privileges and reviews his experiences. What a record the latter form! There is enough material here,

if worked up, to fill volumes! "It represents a life hitherto without precedent in the history of the world. Self-devotion at particular moments, if for some special national cause, had been often seen before; but a self-devotion, involving sacrifices like those here described, and extending through a period of at least fourteen years, and in behalf of no local or family interest, but for the interest of mankind in general, was up to this time a thing unknown."—*Stanley*.

I. HE IS CONSCIOUS OF PRIVILEGES OF WHICH HE MIGHT BE JUSTLY PROUD. "Are they Hebrews: so am I, etc." (verse 22). But these are not the things in which he now glories (verse 30) as he used to do (see Phil. iii. 4-8). The only advantage he sees in them is such assistance as they may be to him in proclaiming the Gospel.

II. HE IS CONSCIOUS OF EXPERIENCES OF WHICH HE HAS NO CAUSE TO BE ASHAMED. "In labours: in stripes: in prisons: in deaths, etc." (verse 23). He wears on his breast no decorations, but he bears honourable scars. He calls them "the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). This is the Christian's only cause for glorying. Even *then* "let him glorify GOD on this behalf" (1 Pet. iv. 16).

III. HE IS CONSCIOUS OF A WATCHFUL SOLICITUDE FOR THE WELFARE OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD. "The care of all the Churches" (verse 28). This anxiety—(a) Exercised him constantly. "Cometh upon me *daily*." (b) Exhibited itself in (1) Intercessions (Col. i. 9, etc.). (2) Instructions, e.g. Pastoral letters.

IV. HE IS CONSCIOUS OF FEELINGS OF RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION AT THE WAY TRAPS ARE SET FOR THE SAINTS. "Who is led astray (*lit. tripped up*), and I am not aflame with indignation?" (verse 29 Weymouth). Woe be to him who puts "an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. xiv. 13). "It is the duty of the Godly to remove every stumbling-block" (Isa. lvii. 14).

Ash-Wednesday.

Text: "Shew My people their transgression."—*Isa. lviii. 1.*

These opening words, together with the message that follows, remind us of him who modestly spoke of himself as a mere "voice crying." The Baptist's mission was to call men to repentance and to show its real nature as contrasted with the formality which

largely characterized it (see Isa. xxix. 13 and Matt. xv. 8, 9). Such appeals are by no means out of date.

I. A DISAGREEABLE TASK. "Show My people their transgression." One of the special functions of the Ministry. But not confined thereto (2 Cor. v. 18-20; Jas. v. 20; Eph. v. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 2). No one will pretend that this is a pleasant task. Nor do transgressors welcome correction. Often men (*a*) resent it (Isa. xxx. 12), or (*b*) reject it (Jer. v. 3). But note that the Hebrew word rendered "trumpet" is that used in Leviticus xxv. 9 (cf. Josh. vi. 4) and is connected with the proclamation of Glad Tidings (see Luke iv. 18). It is "an instrument, which, with whatever variety of music its upper notes may indulge our ears, never suffers its main tone of authority to drop, never slacks its imperative appeal to the wills of the hearers."—*G. Adam Smith*.

II. A DISTRESSING PICTURE. "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness," etc. (verses 4, 5). We are invited to contemplate an unseemly union—"formal religion and unlovely life."—*G. Adam Smith*. "There may be much outward show of religion in daily approaches to God in His house, while there is no vital piety."—*Wordsworth*. "Ye find pleasure," etc. "They had, in fact, a great greed for ordinances and functions." They were punctilious in their observance of the ritual of their religion but there was an absence of spirituality. It was defective (*a*) on its Godward side—it was an empty formality: and (*b*) on its manward side, there was an absence of that charity which is so plainly set forth (verses 6, 7) as an obligation. "Character grows rich and life joyful, not by the performance of ordinances with the cold conscience of duty, but by acts of service with the warm heart of love."—*G. Adam Smith*.

[Various kinds of formalists (2 Tim. iii. 5):—

1. *The Aboriginal formalist*. Isaiah describes his superstitious idolatry in chapter xlv. 16 *et seq.*

2. *The Philosophic formalist*. St. Paul came in contact with him at Athens.

3. *The Jewish formalist*. The palmiest days of Jewish ceremonialism were the ungodliest. Then came the Pharisees.

4. *Christian formalists*. Described and warned in the letter to Laodicea.

5. *Non-Christian formalists*. Multitudes who comply with all

the requirements of the civic law and are blameless in their outward life.—*D. J. Burrell, D.D.* (adapted).]

Quinquagesima.

Text : " Up to Jerusalem."—*Luke* xviii. 31 (Gospel).

Considerations preliminary to Lent. Up from Jericho—the city of the curse (see *Josh.* vi. 26 and *1 Kings* xvi. 34) up to Jerusalem, the city of blessing (see *Neh.* i. 9, etc.). Compare parable of Good Samaritan " down from Jerusalem to Jericho : the facility and perils of descent. The Lord's call is ' Excelsior ! ' " UP to Jerusalem. This involves time, trust, toil, tenacity. It was on this road the Samaritan came across the wounded man and displayed the true Charity. Behind all Lenten sacrifices and ministries should be, as their motive, holy heavenly Love. It is a supernatural grace. See Collect " Pour into our hearts." In the Epistle (*1 Cor.* xiii.) St. Paul gives us its constituent parts. In the Gospel we have an example of it in the restoration of sight to the blind. In the case of Bartimaeus we see—

I. POVERTY. In addition to the dire calamity of blindness, so common in the East (one in every thousand) are added distressing circumstances. He was driven to live by begging. The sinner is in a condition of moral bankruptcy, though he frequently considers himself solvent.

II. PRAYER. " He cried saying, Jesus, etc." One of our airmen lay dying after a terrible fall. He was too severely injured to be moved and his comrades knelt by him as his life slowly ebbed. His lips were seen to move and they asked him if there was anything he wished to say. His reply was, " The angel asked for my pass-word and I answered JESUS." The officer who told the story added, " I have no doubt he got through with his pass-word."

III. PERSEVERANCE. " He cried so much the more." How many things " put us off " the prayer-life. They would silence Bartimaeus. But his earnestness issued in perseverance.

IV. PITY. " Jesus stood." The people looked at one another inquiringly. Why? Because one word had fallen upon His ear and reached His heart of compassion—Mercy! " Who asked for mercy? " " He commanded him to be brought unto Him." Penitence, a sense of need, brings an instant response.

V. POWER. " Immediately he received his sight." Mere pity,

where more is possible, is not enough. But if we can give nothing but compassion let us not withhold it. Jesus displayed His sympathy and extended His succour. God "immediately" recognizes and rewards faith.

VI. PIETY. "He followed Jesus in the way." Jericho was forsaken, for the cry was "up to Jerusalem." Presently he was found among those who thronged the Temple-courts. The way of piety is uphill (see Ps. xxiv. 3). Presently all the redeemed will reach the House on High.

First Sunday in Lent.

Text: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil."—*Matt. iv. 1* (Gospel).

We may consider our Lord's temptation as—

I. INDICATING THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT OF TEMPTATION.

"We sometimes speak of temptation as if it were an accident of life: we forget the words 'led up.' Temptation is part of a plan, it is a step in the succession to a better life."—*Joseph Parker*.

II. INDICATING THE EXISTENCE OF A MALEVOLENT BEING—THE AUTHOR AND AGENT OF EVIL. Observe Jesus holds him responsible. "An enemy hath done this. The enemy . . . is the Devil" (*Matt. xiii. 28, 29*). Consider

(1) His PERSONALITY. No abstraction or influence. Scripture throughout implies a conscious, intelligent personality. He incited Judas (*John xiii. 2*), prompted Ananias (*Acts v. 3*), obstructed St. Paul (*1 Thess. ii. 18*), instigated persecutions (*Rev. ii. 10*). etc., etc.

(2) His POTENTIALITY. His power is manifest and is exercised (a) Over the world in general (*John xii. 31; xiv. 30*). (b) Over man in particular (*Luke xi. 31; 2 Cor. xii. 1*).

(3) His PAST HISTORY and future PUNISHMENT. His past is veiled in obscurity. Many of our ideas concerning it are drawn from Milton. We need to be cautious. *1 Timothy iii. 6* throws light upon it. His punishment (*Rev. xx. 10; Matt. xxv. 41*).

III. INDICATING THE METHODS OF THE ADVERSARY. "We are not ignorant of his devices" (*2 Cor. ii. 11*). His plans are worn threadbare but this is to our advantage. They run on three lines: "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life." To be forewarned is to be forearmed. "He frequently disguises himself" (*2 Cor. xi. 14*). Often there is nothing seemingly devilish about

him. Here he poses as a friend full of solicitude for our Lord's welfare. This is a trick as old as the days of Adam and Eve!

IV. INDICATING THE POSSIBLE PLACE AND PROBABLE TIME OF HIS ATTACK. *Where?* "In the wilderness" (verse 1). Solitude affords no immunity. *When?* "Then" (verse 1), i.e., after a special revelation from Heaven. After some signal deliverance we may find ourselves, like Israel, "right against Jericho" (Josh. iii. 16). First teaching, the testing: first instruction, then examination.

V. INDICATING THE WEAPON WITH WHICH WE MAY SLAY THE FOE. "The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). Jesus knew how to handle it. His Bible was the Old Testament, but even this is enough. It is written *again*. Truth is nowhere embodied completely in one verse.

[The matter in this Outline might provide matter for two sermons.]

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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

Mr. Ben Tillett, the Labour leader, was describing
Equality. at a meeting in London a visit he paid to the trenches.

He had witnessed out there some things that were very touching. He had seen men and officers absolutely worn out, sleeping side by side. "No matter whether men come from Eton and Oxford, or whether they are Bethnal-Greeners, when they come to face hell they are just one man." He meant, of course, the hell of shrapnel-fire and machine guns and all the horrors of suffering, death and destruction, in the presence of which class-prejudices and social differences find their level. It is also true that when men see with clear vision the great realities of sin and judgment and of the Life beyond, with its two alternatives of happiness or woe, then the barriers that human customs have raised crumble into dust, and the equality of souls before God is made clear, for "He is no respecter of persons."

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In the *Scotsman* (June 5, 1916) appeared a narrative
Helpless. by one who had been in the naval battle of Jutland, in which he said, "One of the many sad sights seen that day was that of a destroyer half-a-mile away. She had been

badly hit, and she gave a message which a sailor does not like to see: 'I am in a sinking condition.' It was pitiful; but there was none to help. It is war; and the sailors on a doomed ship, bred in the school of chance, are the last to complain." It is indeed one of the sad things about human suffering, that, with all the will and sympathy in the world, there are times when we are powerless to do anything in the way of real help for those who greatly need it. And we can only believe that such experiences are allowed to befall us so that we may learn to look to Him Who is able to help because He is "mighty to save." None ever called on Him in vain. Unfurl the flag of your distress in the name of Jesus. Keep it flying and you shall not sink. Before the cold waters of despair and death close over your head, some lifeboat will come alongside, and the hands of Divine Love will be stretched out and will carry you safely from danger into security.

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"I spoke to a wounded man just back from the firing trench. He had lost his right hand, and I consoled with him on his bad luck. 'That is nothing,' he replied cheerfully; 'I offered my life to France, and she has only taken my hand; so there I gain'" (H. Warner Allen, special correspondent of the British Press with the French Armies). Yes, he had gained more than he had lost. He had lost his hand certainly; but he had gained the satisfaction of serving his beloved country, and of suffering for her sake; he had gained the joy of knowing that he had done his duty; he had gained immeasurably what he would have lost irremediably were it possible for him to have held back while others pressed forward—he had gained self-respect. The loss of his hand was but material; the gain of all these things was far more. The man who becomes a true Christian gives his life to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Outsiders, irreligious people who do not understand, see him renouncing the world with its alluring pleasures and unspiritual influences; and they say, "See what a lot he has had to give up! how much he has lost!" "No, indeed," he learns to answer, "you are greatly mistaken, and so was I at one time. In surrendering my life to Him Who gave His life for me, I have lost very little; something, it is true, because self-denial is a condition of Heavenly citizenship. But I have gained far more than I have lost. These losses have

**Loss and
Gain.**

been few and slight ; the things gained have been many and great. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

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During the night of May 31 to June 1, 1916, the **Help Near.** Danish steamer *Vidar*, on her way to England, was passing part of the scene of the battle of Jutland. She was commanded by Captain O. C. Christiansen, a brave and humane man, who dared the risk of floating mines (several being observed) to cruise along in search of any who might have outlived the battle. Through the darkness a large black object came into view. It was a buoy, to which were clinging five men, the only survivors of the Destroyer *Shark*. From one of these could be heard a faint and plaintive cry. As the *Vidar* drew nearer, its words were gradually distinguished by those on board. It was "We are alive! We are alive! We are alive!" They were alive in that sea of dead! The plaintive cry caused a thrill of emotion in the breasts of those on board. A small boat was lowered, and these poor wrecked sailors, with limbs frozen, and eyes staring, and teeth chattering, were taken in to her, and carried up the gangway and laid on the saloon floor, then with kind hands and restoratives brought back to life. In the struggle for existence, on the sea of human experience, are many waifs, drifting on its cold waste of waters ; others beside them have sunk beneath the waves. They are just clinging, helpless, but not hopeless, to some promise of God's care and love. They can only just cry pitifully for help as they become conscious of the nearness of some Divine Presence. To such poor wretched souls we say, "Hold on. Cease not to pray and trust. You shall not cry in vain. God has His own ways and means of bringing help. The time will come when you shall be able to say, 'He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy.'"

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In the Cathedral Church of St. Sofia, Constantinople, on the inner side of its vast dome, traced in golden mosaic, is the Figure of our Lord on the Cross. When the Turks took Constantinople, they plastered this over

with a thick layer of whitewash, so as to leave only its shadowy outline discernible in the dim light of the building. The Christians of the Orthodox Church in the East have a tradition that when this picture of the Crucifixion becomes plainly visible, it will be a sign that the reign of the Sultans of Turkey is coming to an end. Since the war began it is stated that the picture is, week by week, becoming more and more distinct to the eye of the observer. The face and figure of Christ and the lines of the Cross may now be traced with ease. So the hearts of the faithful beat high with expectation. Whatever be the value of the tradition and the claim that is now being made for its fulfilment, we may certainly use it in the spirit of hope, as an allegory of that which our hearts long for and believe. "The old, old story" of man's redemption through the offering of the Son of God upon the Cross has been too much obscured in recent years by human philosophy and "science falsely so called." The war is making men realize how little these two have done, or ever can do, to save us from sin and sorrow. And the eyes of many are being opened to see that the only hope of the world from man's own cruelty and folly is to be found in the Saviour Who died on Calvary's Cross. So the picture in the Church of St. Sofia, for centuries desecrated by Moslem fanaticism, bids us look for the Coming of the Lord in the hearts of men and in the Glory of His promised return.

THE STUDY TABLE.

A very useful Manual has just been issued with the title *The Creed of a Churchman* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1s. net). It is a composite production, being the work of the Bishops of Peterborough and Barrow-in-Furness, and the Revs. Cyril C. B. Bardsley, E. A. Burroughs and Edward S. Woods, who "regard themselves as unitedly responsible for the whole book." We are not in the secrets of the authors, but we presume that their object has been to produce for use by Evangelical and Moderate Churchmen a Manual similar to those published in the interests of another School of Thought by the Bishop of Oxford and the Rev. W. J. Carey respectively. How far, however, it will be acceptable to the older school of Evangelicals we cannot say. It sets out views on the Divine Society, the Ministry, the Bible and the Sacramental Life which

carry us much farther than many of the older men would care to go, and we should not be surprised if a counterblast from that quarter were shortly to be issued. Although only a small pamphlet it covers a wide range. The earlier chapters deal with "God, Nature and Man" and "The Christian Revelation of God," and the treatment is admirable. The chapter on Sin and Forgiveness lacks the definiteness we should like to see, but the truth that "the Cross was the vent of pent-up love; the love that hates sin, yet hungers to forgive the sinner," is strongly insisted upon. The chapter on "Membership" of the Church calls attention to many points, e.g. Baptism, Confirmation, the Forgiveness of Sins, etc., and sets out clearly and well what is the modern Evangelical rule in regard to them. Perhaps the two finest chapters are those on "The Kingdom of God" and Missionary Service. The Manual contains much that is helpful, but the treatment in general strikes us as being too philosophical. A more practical treatise and one with more "grip" about it would have met the need better. In a work of this kind "grip" is essential. The Bishop of Oxford and Mr. Carey know where they are, and their readers know where they are. Nevertheless, we are glad *The Creed of a Churchman* has been written; it will help many, and if it had been stronger it would have helped many more.

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No preacher's study shelves are complete without a volume or two of addresses for Children's Services. Many such are issued, and among the very best must be classed those of the Rev. Will Reason, M.A. In his new volume of talks to boys and girls, *The Wonderful Sword* (Robert Scott, 2s. net), preachers to children will find everything they require. These "talks" are founded on stories such as children love to hear, and there is a quiet dignity about them which lifts them out of the rut of such productions. The writer adapts himself pleasantly and easily to the level of the children's intelligence, and preachers who take him and his book as their companion and guide will find the power of arresting and retaining the interest and attention of their young hearers.

