

Preachers' Pages.

HOMILETICAL HINTS AND OUTLINES

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

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?"—*St. Matt.* xviii. 21 (Gospel).

In the previous verses our Lord has been indicating the method to be pursued by Christian men in dealing with those who have wronged them (ver. 15). Peter carries the subject a stage further by his inquiry concerning forgiveness which called forth our Lord's parable of the unmerciful servant (verses 23–35) as well as a direct reply to the question of the text (ver. 22).

I. THE INQUIRER. St. Peter is the Celt among the disciples. If there is anything to be said he may be safely trusted to say it. He lacks that reserve which is at once the weak and the strong point in the Anglo-Saxon, but he possesses the ready wit and easy speech which after Pentecost served the cause of Christ so well. A study of his utterances in early days reveals the impetuous, immature disciple who is learning by his mistakes.

II. THE INQUIRY. "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Peter has been brought up under the law "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—to look forward to the opportunity for retaliation. He is now learning the "more excellent way" (1 Cor. xii. 31). Even yet there is the suspicion of a survival of something of the old spirit, for he seems to anticipate a time when he can no longer be expected to forgive the "oft"-repeated injury, but can indulge himself in the sweetness of revenge. But the inquiry is satisfactory in so far as it is in itself a recognition of the supremacy of Jesus in all the affairs of human life and conduct. When we have got so far as this, we have travelled a good way in the path of God-like-ness. See Collect.

III. THE ANSWER. The product of Christ's sum is "not four hundred and ninety, but innumerableness" (Maclaren). In the parable we have further exposition on the subject. Consider the futility of the debtor's plea—"Have patience with me and I will

pay thee all." How long would it take him to gather together so considerable a sum? How can the sinner hope to pay his debt? The pitifulness of his inability excites the Divine compassion. The lessons of the parable lie upon its surface—they throw light upon the lovingkindness of God and the obligations of those who enjoy its pleasant fruits to extend sweet mercy to their fellows.

" It is an attribute to God Himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice."

Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "The enemies of the Cross of Christ."—*Phil.* iii. 18 (Epistle).

The earnest yearning of the Apostle for a high standard of life among the members of the Church is evidenced by his language. He would have them follow the example that he and others have set them. "Even with tears," he describes those whom he terms "enemies of the Cross. We can sum up his message as contained in this paragraph under three heads.

I. THE CROSS OF CHRIST. It had, still has, and ever must have, its antagonists. Observe (1) *Their description*. They are persons governed by their own passions—"Whose God is their belly." They are shameless—"Who glory in their shame." Their interests are here—"Who mind earthly things." Note the juxtaposition and bathos. "Minding earthly things" does not strike us as a very terrible thing. It seems so far removed from "glorying in shame." "The wicked shall be turned into Hell"—that seems very reasonable, but we are hardly prepared for what follows—"all the people that forget God"—there seems such a difference between wickedness and forgetfulness! So here. (2) *Their doom*. A common fate awaits all enemies of the Cross of Christ. "Whose end is destruction." See 1 Thessalonians i. 9. The same word used by our Lord in Matthew vii. 13.

II. THE CITIZENSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN. "Our citizenship is in Heaven." Every Philippian understood St. Paul's meaning well. Philippi was a Roman colony and everything was on the Roman model, while there were special privileges enjoyed by all. It was here that St. Paul asserted his rights as a free-born citizen

of Rome and as such scored a triumph. See Glover's *Jesus of History*, chapter ix. And for the Christian there is the heavenly model and all the advantages and all the responsibilities that attach to heavenly citizenship. See Philippians i, 27 (Gk). (The word rendered elsewhere "conversation" ἀναστροφή, should be distinguished from πολίτευμα.)

III. THE COMING OF CHRIST. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (a) *Here, then, is the constant expectation of the true Christian.* He is in a state of preparedness (Heb. ix. 28; Titus ii. 13). (b) *Here is the final goal of creation so far as man is concerned.* "Who shall change this body of our humiliation." "The redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 23).

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "While Jesus spake these things (unto John's disciples), etc."—*St. Matt.* ix. 18 (Gospel).

This is one of the incidents which enjoy the distinction of being recorded by the synoptists. St. Mark and St. Luke alone give the ruler's name: in each record the woman is nameless. Several thoughts suggest themselves:—

I. OF THE ACCESSIBLE CHRIST. While He was speaking the ruler came upon the scene and, "profoundly bowing," (Weymouth) addressed the Lord. This we may presume interrupted the discourse and may even have aroused the indignation of those who considered that in the circumstances the poor distracted father's appeal to Christ was useless. But Jesus at once responded—"He arose and followed him." Race, creed, age, sex, position made no difference to the Master.

"All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel our need of Him."

Presently comes another interruption when the poor suffering woman came upon the scene. Every moment was precious and the agonized father would probably feel irritated by the delay her intrusion caused. Her cure serves to reveal two facts:—(1) *That Jesus is no respecter of persons.* He recognizes and rewards faith wheresoever He finds it. (2) *That faith is strengthened by every display of His power.* The ruler's confidence must have been confirmed by what he saw and heard. But in each case we are reminded of the accessibility of Jesus (Isa. xxx. 19).

Note that the Divine blessing may come through the solicitude of another as well as through personal effort.

II. OF THE ESSENTIAL CHRIST. We have cause, if we only knew it, to be grateful for those necessities which drive us to Christ. Would these two persons ever have found their way to Christ but for their need? So our misfortunes are blessings in disguise if they prove to us that we cannot do without Christ. (a) *He is essential to the sin-sick, conscious-stricken soul.* "There is none other name, etc." (Acts iv. 12.) Without the at-one-ment of Jesus there is no remission (Heb. ix. 22).

"None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

(b) *He is essential to the soul beset with perplexities.* He is God's everlasting answer to the enigmas of life as well as to the manifold needs of the human heart. (c) *He is essential to the sorrowful soul.* To-day, in this greatly troubled world, hearts are bleeding and torn, and in some lives the flame of hope is almost extinguished. He who trod the Via Dolorosa is absolutely indispensable to the mournful and sad and, thank God, absolutely accessible! (d) *He is essential to the soul as it approaches the river of death.*

"I could not do without Thee,
For years are fleeting fast,
And soon in solemn loneliness
The river must be pass'd;
But Thou wilt never leave me,
And though the waves roll high,
I know Thou wilt be near me,
And whisper, 'It is I.'"

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"
—*St. John* vi. 5 (Gospel. Cf. *Luke* ix).

The circumstances of life supply us with a variety of questions, some of which appear hard to answer. This question put by our Lord Himself to His disciples is one of these. The answer, His miracle, reminds us that He holds the key to all perplexities. When we look into the narratives more closely we see—

I. SOMETHING WANTED. (1) *By the disciples.* They desired the dispersion of the multitude (*Luke* ix. 12). On another occasion they demanded that a poor suppliant should be sent about her

business. "She crieth after us," they said (Matt. xv. 23). As a matter of fact she did nothing of the kind! She only wanted Him.

(2) *By the multitude.* The desire was to be with Jesus (Luke ix. 11). Mr. Moody tells how once, when preparing an address, his little boy looked in through the half-open door. "What do you want?" he asked. "Nothing, father, *only to be with you,*" replied the wee boy.

(3) *By the Saviour.* Bread. Our Lord did not originate as He might have done. The devil knew He could make bread out of stones. The miracle of every day is not the creation of something that a man hath not but the increase of what he has. So at the marriage of Cana He did not fill empty vessels with wine: they were first filled with water. Jesus wants the gift we have to bring.

II. SOMETHING OFFERED. (1) *The gift of a mere child.* The opportunity for serving Christ, and, through Him, humanity, comes to the youngest. Such are not despised by Him (Matt. xviii. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 12). (2) *A gift that cost the donor nothing.* The little lad did not go without his meal. "They did ALL eat."

"We lose what on ourselves we spend."

III. SOMETHING BLESSED. The benediction of Jesus is life's greatest need. Without it our best gifts are worthless. Only in the hand of Jesus can they become what they ought to be. Then the apparently impossible becomes possible.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

(Contributed by the Rev. J. W. W. MOERAN.)

I have just been looking at the copy of a picture in
 Jesus—our
 Brother. crayons, drawn by the Russian artist Widopff. It
 represents one of those awful acts of cruelty perpetrated by German soldiers, a story whose authenticity, unhappily, has been too well-established to admit of any doubt. After the second battle of Ypres a Canadian sergeant was crucified to a tree, and left there, until found dead by his comrades. In the picture he is drawn nailed through his hands and feet to a door. Behind, and leaning over him, with right hand tenderly enfolding the head of the poor sufferer is the "Companion in white," the Lord Himself. Into the ear of the dying man He whispers the one word "Brother." How sublime and exquisitely touching is the truth here symbolized! He who was nailed to the Cross by cruel hands, and died thereon

for the sins of the world is always near us when we are called on to suffer : able and willing to help, to comfort and to strengthen. He does not merely look down with pitying eyes from His throne far above, but He came, and still comes, as one of us, " a Brother born for adversity."

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Among the famous " War Cartoons " by the Dutch artist, Louis Raemaekers, some of which are distinctly intended to be allegorical, is one entitled " Kultur and Calvary." The Cross, with the Saviour affixed, fills up the centre of the picture. A German soldier, who has evidently been cutting his way through the forest, has come to the Cross. It stands in his way ; and so with axe uplifted he begins to hew it down ; he has already cleft the wood at the base of the Cross. Underneath is the inscription, " I crush whatever resists me."¹ The picture is a terrible indictment of Germany's purpose and conduct in the War. A godless Kultur has no respect for Calvary, no room for the Cross, no faith in the Christ. If His Redemption stands in the way of its onward progress, then " Down with it " is the cry, " raze it even to the ground." That is the bald truth, thus boldly pourtrayed by this daring artist from a neutral state. The Cross has always stood in the way of human pride and world-ambition. It is the symbol of Divine Grace and Love, saving sinners through the Atonement made by the Son of God. Satan knows this well ; and he therefore always strives to get the Cross out of his way ; using as his tools for the purpose men who are vain and proud and selfish. The axe may be called " Kultur " or " Humanitarianism " or the " Intellectualism " which substitutes man's reason for a Divine Revelation. But whatever it is, the purpose is the same, viz., to hew down the Cross, which stands in its way, and to put the Crucified out of sight. There is no need ever to doubt the final result. The German soldier in Louis Raemaekers' cartoon has begun his work of destruction with boastful threats of all he means to do. But he has not gone very far in the way of success ; and there the artist leaves him. The picture will always be the same ; and the man, with axe uplifted, will never make any more progress in his act of sacrilege. Nor can the enemies of the Cross of Christ prevail. " Thus far and no

¹ " Him who opposes me I shall crush to pieces " (The Kaiser).

farther " is the Divine fiat. The Cross of Jesus Christ will always stand, to bar the way of Satan, to provide a refuge for the sinner and a song of praise for the ransomed, and by its one perfect Sacrifice to fulfil all the requirements of the law of Eternal Righteousness.

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One of the bright colours on the dark background **Prayer and the Y.M.C.A.** of the war has been the work of the Y.M.C.A. among the soldiers. What would its founder, Sir George Williams, have thought, could he have foreseen the wonderful way in which this outcome of Christian philanthropy would minister to the spiritual, social, and physical needs of the greatest armies that have ever been engaged in warfare? I do not think he would have been greatly surprised; for he was, doubtless, a man of vision, as he was certainly a man mighty in prayer and faith. Some five and twenty or thirty years ago, I went to the house of Hitchcock and Williams, in St. Paul's Churchyard, to settle the indentures of a lad, who was being apprenticed to the firm, by the generosity of a friend whom I represented. To my surprise I found myself shown into the office of the head of the firm—Mr. George Williams, as he then was. The lad was sent for, the papers were signed, and the cheque acknowledged. Mr. Williams addressed a few words of wise counsel to the boy as he stood before his new master. After which, he turned to me and said, "I always kneel down and pray for the Divine blessing on every young man as he enters my employment." In the office we three knelt, while that good and great-hearted man prayed for the humble lad who had undertaken to serve him. The Y.M.C.A. was the child of many prayers from his heart and lips. No wonder the movement prospered and has been so richly blessed by Him Who honours the prayers of those who honour Him.

