

than ours ; but it was carefully punctuated by intervals of retirement for prayer and communion with the Father. How much greater is our need for this source of spiritual strength. It is too fatally easy to become immersed in busy activity, in religious work, in multiplied calls, till the spiritual life, deprived of its proper nourishment, sinks lower and lower, and the spiritual force is no longer powerful for good. The teacher must seek inspiration for his teaching, holiness for his life, and power for his weakness from the Holy Spirit, who alone can teach, sanctify, and strengthen.



### Studies in Texts :

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

#### V.—DIVINE STANDARDS.

*Text* :—"The ark of the covenant, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and above it the cherubim of glory."—Heb. ix. 4.

[Book of the Month: "EGYPT AND ISRAEL"<sup>1</sup>=E. Other references: Hastings' Dictionary = HDB.; Conder's "Bible and East" = C.; Kellogg's "Leviticus" = K.; Macalister's "Civilization in Ancient Palestine" = M.]

"WE read that contents of ark were a rod, a vase of one omer, and two stones. These might well be used as standards of length, capacity, and weight" (E. 62). "Hebrew weights of stone" (HDB. iv. 904 and Heb. in Lev. xix. 36, etc.). Rods used for measurements (Ezek. xl. 3). The rod must have been fairly long, said to be comparable to a serpent (Exod. vii. 12; Num. xvii. 10). "Vase stated to be an omer. Ten commandments easily engraved on even one stone size of hand" (E. 62 and *cf.* C. 64, confirmatory). Business

<sup>1</sup> "Egypt and Israel." By Professor Flinders Petrie, D.C.L., F.R.S., etc. Published by S.P.C.K. Suggestive, illuminating, sane, and on the whole conservative.

standards must be Divine (Lev. xix. 35, 36; Prov. xi. 1, xvi. 11). "In Syria, weights preserved in temples; in Egypt (Roman times), in the Serapeum at Alexandria (E. 62). "Not improbable that Jewish standards kept in Ark under guardianship of figures of Truth" (E. 62). (Petrie thinks cherubim known popularly as "Mercy" and "Truth," on analogy of Egyptian arks, were both figures called "Truth" (E. 61), and passages like Ps. lvii. 1, 3; lxxxiv. 14; *cf.* lxxxv. 10). Necessary to insist on business honesty in religious people (Deut. xxv. 13-15; Prov. xx. 10; Hos. xii. 7; Amos viii. 5; Micah. vi. 10; Ezek. xlv. 9-11). "A weight which is correct multiple of any standard is one of rarest things to excavator" (M. 44). "It is of no account, therefore, to keep the Sabbath (in a way) and reverence (outwardly) the sanctuary, and then on the weekday water milk, adulterate medicines, sugars, and other foods, slip the yard-stick in measuring, tip the balance in weight or measure and sell with another, 'water' stocks, and gamble in 'margins,' as the manner of many is. God hates, and even honest atheists despise, religion of this kind" (K. 415).

Suggestive sidelight in above for spiritual life. Here three Divine demands supplied by three manifestations of God—Heaven's fulness in earth's emptiness (Exod. xvi. 33); Heaven's blossom on earth's barrenness (Num. xvii. 8); Heaven's message on earth's hardness (Exod. xxxi. 18).

I. STANDARD OF CAPACITY.—Measure of fulness (*a*) received, Matt. vii. 7; (*b*) given, Luke vi. 38; and *cf.* Exod. xvi. 18, 21, 22; John vi. 11, 32-35; Eph. iv. 7.

II. STANDARD OF LENGTH.—Measure of growth, Rev. xxi. 15; Matt. vi. 41 (compliance); xviii. 21 (forbearance); 1 Cor. i. 8 (strength); 2 Cor. x. 13-15 (RVM); Phil. iii. 16 (Gk.); Gal. vi. 16 (Gk.); Heb. iii. 6, 14 (service).

III. STANDARD OF WEIGHT.—Measure of obedience, Matt. xxii. 37, 39; Ps. xv. 4 (PBV); Acts v. 2. In 2 Chron. xxv. 2, "not perfect" = "short weight." Same word in Deut. xxv. 15.

Fulness realized; growth maintained; obedience possible under the shadow of His wings.