

Preachers' Pages.

HOMILETICAL HINTS AND OUTLINES

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

Second Sunday in Lent.

Text : "For this is the will of God even your sanctification."
—I *Thess.* iv. 3 (Epistle).

When the Crusaders went forth to rescue the Tomb of the Saviour from the hands of the infidel, they took as their motto these words : *Volonté de Dieu*, "It is God's Will." With this they met every objection—God wills it! We may have our doubts if it really was so, but we dare not hide from ourselves the fact that God wills our Sanctification.

Consider what this means—

I. POSITIVELY. (a) The Activity of the Spirit within us. This we may encourage or hinder by our own volition (I *Thess.* v. 19). When we will what God wills, the Spirit takes possession of us and works in us (Luke xi. 13). "Our wills are *ours* to make them *Thine*."

(b) The Activity of the Life quickened by the Spirit. "How ye ought to *walk*." This implies power and progress. The results are—(1) *So far as God is concerned*. It is a life of "pleasing Him." "To please God" (verse 1). (2) *So far as self is concerned*. It is a life of "purity." "Not unto uncleanness" (verse 6). (3) *So far as others are concerned*. It is a life of "probity." "That no man go beyond and defraud" (verse 6). [*Note.* This may have the widest possible application. Look at the Old Testament lesson (morning) for a terrible example of overreaching. Consider, too, the significance of our Lord's words in the Gospel : "It is not meet to take the children's bread," etc. The woman of Canaan defrauded no one!]

II. NEGATIVELY. It is the avoidance of those lusts which war against the soul. The activity of the flesh (Rom. vii. 18) is checked by the more potent activity of the Spirit. We should be influenced powerfully by two final considerations : (1) *By the fact of the judgment of God*. "He is the avenger in all such cases" (verse 6, Weymouth). Of this we are "solemnly warned." A

defiant spirit in such a case provokes not man but GOD." (2) *By the fact of the mercy of God.* He supplies not only the motive for right-doing but the power. Other systems provide us with precepts, Christianity alone supplies the inward power. God "hath given us His Holy Spirit" (verse 8). Here are moral injunctions *and* the Glad News of how they may be obeyed in the strength God gives (Rom. viii. 2).

Third Sunday in Lent.

Text: "Be ye therefore imitators (lit.) of God as dear children."
—*Eph. v. 1* (Epistle).

"Christ has translated the unimaginable Godhead into terms of our own well-known human nature. . . . For the Christian henceforth in quite a new sense God is imitable: He can become a pattern for actual human life. As children partly consciously and partly unconsciously imitate their parents, so we Christians as 'beloved children' are to become imitators of God" (*Gore*).
General subject—the walk of God's children. Consider—

I. ITS DEFINITE OBJECTIVE. Thoughts and steps instinctively turn in the direction of the Father's Home (John xiv. 1; Matt. vi. 21). "He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. xi. 16; Rev. xxi. 2).

II. ITS DIVINE INSPIRATION. The love and life of Christ. "As Christ hath loved and given." Love is "its conscious motive" (*Gore*).

III. ITS DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS. Often, even in the distance, we recognize our friend "by his walk." So God and man recognize the Holy Walk. Notice: (a) It is according to the Divine pattern. "Imitators of GOD." (b) It is according to Apostolic example. "Walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. iii. 17). Moreover it is: (1) A walk in LOVE. It moves in and creates an atmosphere of love "Walk in love" (verse 2). (2) A walk in GRATITUDE. It becometh well the just to be thankful. "Giving of thanks" (verse 4). (3) A walk in PURITY. "Let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints" (verse 3). (4) A walk in the LIGHT. It has nothing to be ashamed of, but it exposes wrong-doing by contrast, and shames the evil-doer (verses 8-13). Light is essential to growth. The works of darkness are unfruitful—the conditions are unfavourable (see 1 John i. 7).

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Text: "Corn in Egypt" (Gen. xlii. 1). (First morning lesson.)

In all literature there will be found no more romantic story than that of Joseph, nor does Scripture anywhere contain a more vivid and typical portrait of Jesus. Here tragedy and triumph are strangely intermingled. We see—

I. WHAT BECAME OF THE DREAMER (see chap. xxxvii. 20). In this and the preceding chapters we are allowed to follow the fortunes and misfortunes of Joseph, subsequent to the disgraceful transaction recorded in xxxvii. 36. We see that a watchful Providence guided his destinies. This he himself felt. "He hath made me" (chap. xlv. 8, 9). His strict integrity (xxxix. 21, 22), won for him favour, and his fine abilities were recognized (xli. 38-44; 48-56). The eye of his royal master rests upon him approvingly; but this is not what matters most: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous" (Ps. xxxiv. 15).

II. THE RESURRECTION OF THE FORGOTTEN PAST. Time may dull our recollection, but the lapse of years makes no difference—it cannot wipe out the terrible stains of sin or atone for our misdeeds. Now the mention of Egypt brings it all back, and these guilty souls may well "look one upon another." Who can tell how much they suffered? They would gladly have gone in any other direction rather than be confronted again by a past they had striven to forget. Their treachery to their brother, their base deception of their father, the remembrance of their heartless cruelty rises out of the grave in which it had long been buried. What a solemn warning we have here! Out of the dim shadows the spectre of the past will rise unbidden to shame and accuse us. There is no possibility of escape. Every foot of the path of penitence we must traverse with bleeding feet till we hear words of mercy from the lips of Him Who suffered by reason of our transgressions (chap. xlv. 16-20; Isa. liii. 6-8).

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

Text: "The angel of the Lord appeared to him (Moses)."

—*Exod.* iii. 2. (First lesson.)

To-day we commence to read a series of chapters in the life of Moses and the story of redemption. Joseph fell asleep in his hieroglyphed chamber in Egypt, not unmindful of whence he came, but fully sensible of the fact that he was a stranger in a strange

land, and that the promises of the Almighty could not fail (Gen. 1. 25 ; Heb. xi. 22). But though Joseph passes, the good succession cannot die, and Moses comes in the hour of need, specially fitted by the strange circumstances of his early life for the task assigned to him. Here see—

I. GOD'S GENTLEMAN. What a pleasing story is briefly told in chapter ii. 16–20. The courtier Moses demands fair play. He appears a gentleman in the best sense. Brought to Jethro's home he was "content" with humble fare, and here he won his Gentile bride. From that time Jethro's daughters seem to have handed over the care of their father's flock to Moses, and life was thenceforward occupied in the trivial round and the common task of a shepherd's uneventful life; but it was a task that, though he knew it not, was fitting him for the more important one of shepherding the people of Jehovah. The impetuous man who slew the Egyptian was turned into the tactful, quiet man who, as lawgiver, statesman, soldier and prophet, so long presided over the destinies of Israel.

II. GOD'S TIME. We are sometimes told that a man is too old at forty! So this story may serve as an inspiration to those who are approaching or have already reached that period which has been described as "the neglected period" of human life—middle age. It may not yet be too late to accomplish the task you dreamt of years ago. To learn the lesson that all work done in one's own strength and without the help of God is labour lost, is not easy (chap. ii. 11–14). As we look at Moses he cuts a pathetic figure—nurtured in a palace-home, waited upon hand and foot by devoted courtiers—he is now at "the back of the wilderness" (R.V.), tending a few sheep. Few who saw him knew of his romantic past, and those who *did*, probably pronounced him to be a man who had "missed it." But there are many classes in the School of Grace. John B. Gough, asked at a dinner-table at what University he took his degree, replied: "I graduated, sir, in the University of Adversity." So it was with Moses, and so has it been with many of the world's worthies. Such have no cause to be ashamed (1 Peter iv. 16).

III. GOD'S REVELATION. (a) *The Vision of the Burning Bush* (verses 1–12). As the acacia bush was preserved intact so would Israel be kept: she would come out of the furnace of Egypt preserving her national identity. (b) *The Revelation of the essential*

character of God. This is conveyed in the human terms by which He has made Himself known (verses 13, 14).

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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

Misunderstandings—Cleared Away. "EVERY great man must have critics and enemies, even in the Parliament of his country; and just before Lord Kitchener sailed (on H.M.S. *Hampshire*, sunk off the Orkneys, June 5, 1916) he sent for the members of the House of Commons and invited them to ask him any questions with regard to his policy, and to hear his explanations. The result of it was that he cleared up every doubt and left that room full of the confidence of Parliament, as he always possessed the confidence of the country" (Lord Rosebery). So then Lord Kitchener's last act was to remove the misunderstandings and differences that had arisen in public life between himself and his fellow-countrymen. This must have been a great source of satisfaction to him; it has also sweetened his memory in the minds of colleagues and critics alike. How do we stand in regard to those who know us? We have all made mistakes, and have perhaps been harshly judged for them. Unintentionally we have wronged others by misunderstanding them. It would be a great thing to remove all misconceptions while there is yet time, to break down any barrier of prejudice that has arisen between us and our friends, or those we do business with, or the members of our family. A few words spoken judiciously in the spirit of love and humility will nearly always succeed in dispersing these clouds of misunderstanding. And then our influence for good and happiness would be increased, and we should be better prepared with a mind at ease and a conscience at rest to meet death when it comes.

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After many long and weary months of internment in Germany, as prisoners of war, a limited number of invalid soldiers, French and British, were allowed to accept the hospitality generously offered by the Swiss Government, and to sojourn in Switzerland until the war is over. Several convoys of British soldiers were in this way taken to that delightful retreat among the mountains—Chateau d'Oex.

The reception they met with from the moment they crossed the

frontier is said to baffle all powers of description. The kindly Swiss and English visitors lined the route in thousands, welcoming these broken warriors with shouts of joy and tears of sympathy. Fruit and cakes and flowers were pressed on them at every place where their train stopped. The men themselves were so overcome with emotion that few could help crying, and some of them even fainted. It was such a glorious surprise to them, after all the sufferings they had gone through. Chateau d'Oex itself seemed like a little bit of England, only much more beautiful—a land flowing with milk and honey. Much more wonderful and far more glorious will be the reception accorded to the children of the One Heavenly Father, when the frontier between this life and the life beyond is crossed. Through the gates of pearl angels and saints will come forth to welcome those "which came out of great tribulation" and have bravely fought and won the victory of Faith here below. In Chateau d'Oex there will [still be invalids, suffering from the effect of harsh treatment, men still walking on crutches, with no prospect of recovering their lost limbs, blind men unable to see the beauties of their surroundings; but in heaven all infirmities will have been left behind. "God Himself shall be with them and be their God." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

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In *Land and Water* (March 30, 1916) appeared a **Humanity**. cartoon by Louis Raemackers which, like many other pictures by the famous Dutch artist, is allegorical. On the open sea are two boats: one a German submarine "U52"; the other unarmed, with her name painted on her side—*Humanity*. On board the latter is a group of men, in whose midst stands a figure of lofty stature, clothed in white, with an aureole of light around His head—evidently the Son of God. The hands of those on board are uplifted towards Him in supplication, as they plead with Him to save them in their hour of danger. His face is turned towards the pirate-ship with an expression of stern, dignified reproof. In the conning-tower of the submarine is an officer, examining the unarmed ship through his binoculars, and saying to a sailor beside him, "Seems to be a neutral; send him down." The design of the artist is seen at a glance. Germany is now the enemy of humanity.

God, in the Person of His Son, is the Friend and Saviour of men. But Germany can only see things through a distorted vision. Blinded by national pride and ambition, she fails to understand that in her war with Humanity she is fighting against the Lord. We may see here, as so often elsewhere, a parallel between nations and individuals. After long persistence in an evil course, the will and conscience become so perverted that a man fails to see how, in doing what is wrong towards his fellow-men, he is fighting against God. But there is something far more than this in Louis Ræmackers' picture. God has not left humanity to sink beneath the cold waves of sin and suffering. Through the mystery of the Incarnation His beloved Son entered our human nature, making Himself one with us. Jesus said, "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It is for us to see Him with the eye of faith, as those men in the boat saw the Divine Figure standing among them. And if we cry out to Him, "Lord, save us, we perish," we shall not cry in vain, "for He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him."

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Early in August, 1914, an English liner steamed up the St. Lawrence River. The news that war had broken out was first conveyed to those on board by the bands and cheering with which their arrival at Quebec was greeted. Among the passengers was a young man who had just started on a great world-tour, every detail of which had been carefully arranged for months before. Life was opening out for him with golden promises of great things. Endowed with mental gifts and a forceful character he had become Prefect and head of his house at Winchester, and afterwards President of the Union at Oxford. His personal friendships and family connexions would also have helped to make his future career a certain success. But within six hours of landing at Quebec, Gilbert Talbot had taken his passage on the first homeward-bound steamer and was on his way back to England again. He had bravely accepted the new problem which had so unexpectedly confronted him, and without hesitation he had made the great renunciation. Putting aside all the alluring prospects of his old plans and ambitions, he responded at once to the call of duty, giving up everything for country, honour

The Eternal
Choice.

and freedom. After the necessary course of training in a Rifle Brigade he went out to France and, when leading his platoon into action at Hooge, was mortally wounded by a bullet, and died with a smile on his lips. In a very different way, perhaps, but none the less clearly, comes the call to most of us at some time to decide between the cherished hopes and ambitions of years on the one side and on the other some place, perhaps very humble, in the ranks of those who have enlisted under the banner of the King of kings. It is really a choice between God and self, between Christ and the world. Where do we stand, each one, to-day? Perhaps at this very time the eternal choice is before some of you. And it may seem very hard to do the right thing, very unwise to make the great sacrifice demanded. We must not think that bright young lives like Gilbert Talbot's were thrown away. They were not wasted, even though they were cut short, their example and influence weigh heavily on the side of right and truth. In some cases they have been saved from temptation or disappointment. And He Who calls upon all His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him, will not forget to find some higher service for them—one part of His reward hereafter for faithfulness in this life.

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The story of a memorable Cabinet meeting at the White House was told by a church official and transmitted from Washington by a "Reuter's" telegram (Oct. 6, 1915). Thus it ran: "When President Wilson arrived at the Cabinet meeting his face wore a solemn look. It was evident that serious affairs of the nation were on his mind. He said to the Cabinet members, 'I don't know whether you gentlemen believe in prayer or not; I do. Let us pray and ask the help of God.' And right there the President of the United States fell upon his knees, and the members of the Cabinet did the same, and the President offered up a prayer to God." Why should such an act as that be accounted a strange and unusual thing? We call ourselves a Christian nation. Have we any right to do so? If our public men had more of the faith and courage that flows from strong personal convictions, prayer even at Cabinet meetings would be felt to be a necessity, and the nation would reap the blessing.

[For "The Study Table," see over.]

THE STUDY TABLE.

The coming of Lent has brought with it several new books of devotion. The Bishop of Durham gives us a beautiful volume, *The Call of Lent to Penitence, Discipline and Christ* (S.P.C.K., 2s. net), the steady perusal of which will be most helpful. There is a reading for every one of the forty days, but the Bishop does not stop there; he wisely carries his plea right into Easter Day, for assuredly without "the power of His Resurrection" much of the previous counsel would be impossible of fulfilment. The first reading is on Lent itself: "forty days annually of persistent appeal to think and to kneel down and to rise with the Cross upon our shoulder, are none too many." Then follow nineteen readings on sin and sins. The Bishop describes sin as "the discord of our will with the pure and perfect will of God," and from this point of view he leads us on in a succession of penetrating chapters to consider this "discord" as it manifests itself in the individual, in the community, in private life and in personal life. The book is addressed to "the Christian believer," and the need for penitence for all that is out of harmony with the Divine Will is pointed out. The repentant life will be the disciplined life, and the Bishop devotes nine very solemn chapters to questions of discipline, giving much loving counsel in regard to Bible-study, Prayer and Holy Communion. Thus the believer is brought on to consider the Passion which gives "a new inspiration" to "all acts and methods of sane and resolute discipline." The succeeding chapters—eight in number—treat of the Cross, and here indeed we are made to feel that we "are on the holiest ground." "The primary aspect of the Cross" is "its atoning efficacy," and when we have grasped with a living faith what atonement and redemption mean for us, we see how powerful is the claim which the Cross makes upon our self-surrender. We are shown on Good Friday how we may have "heart-communion with the Crucified," and on Easter Even we are brought "in worshipping love" to "the grave of our dear Lord Jesus Christ" and taught what it means to us. The forty-first reading—that on "the Power of His Resurrection"—is the most uplifting of all; it rings with the note of joyous triumph. The Bishop of Durham's contributions to devotional literature are very many, but never has he given us a more precious treasure than the *Call of Lent*.

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The Bishop of London has made it a custom to recommend to his diocese a new book for Lenten reading. This year it is *Before the Morning Watch*, by the Rev. F. A. Iremonger (Longmans, Green & Co., 2s. 6d. net). We have read it with profound interest and profit. It is a study at once sympathetic, illuminating and powerful, of Psalm cxxx., and in a series of twelve chapters he draws from each verse the lessons for to-day. The teaching is as richly spiritual as it is severely practical. Let the concluding passage of the chapter on "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared" speak to us: "It were best to kneel as we meditate upon this verse: to think, upon our knees, of the sin of the world as it is in God's sight: and, while we wonder at the love which can forgive and forgive again, to let our thoughts pass with this prayer; that alike in the hatefulness of sin, in the blessedness of forgiveness, and in the joy of worship, we may be filled with the spirit of Holy Fear." Again the chapter on the verse "With Him is plenteous redemption" is not only happily phrased but sets out with admirable clearness the truth of our redemption through Christ crucified. Mr. Iremonger utters a salutary warning: "We cannot separate either Christ from His

Cross or His Cross from Christ"; and he rightly insists that "our redemption is to be found in Christ on the Cross, in Christ crucified." The chapter also brings out most clearly four great truths of the character of God—God is Holy: God is Righteous: God is Love: God is Life—and their bearing upon the work of redemption. The book is one for careful reading, and it will bring light and strength to many hearts.

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A book which will amply repay much meditation is *Discipleship*, by A. H. McNeile, D.D., C.F. (S.P.C.K., 2s. net). It contains addresses given at various Quiet Days and Retreats, and its purpose is to take the experiences of the disciples who followed Christ and apply them to the Christians of to-day. Dr. McNeile's keen analysis and power of application make this little book a valuable companion.—Another very helpful book is *The Call to Prayer*, by the Rev. M. G. Archibald (Robert Scott, 6d.). The author writes with wisdom and sympathy, and the difficulties of souls anxious about prayer are smoothed away. There are six eloquent and suggestive chapters dealing first with the Call to Prayer, then with Prayer as a means of communion with God, of co-operation with God, of influence, of appropriating God's gifts, and finally with Prayer and Prayers—a distinction which is not always sufficiently recognized. The book is full of beautiful thoughts.—Canon Morrow's little book, *Christ Magnified* (Marshall Brothers, Ltd., 1s. net), is very refreshing reading. In days of much haziness it is a comfort to come upon a work which is so clear upon the great central fact of Christ. The volume is as suggestive for exposition as it is for devotional reading, and we cordially commend it.—*The Cross of Job*, by H. Wheeler Robinson (Student Christian Movement, 1s. 6d. net), is frankly critical, but the devotional spirit is tender and true, and as the writer deals with the problem of suffering in the light of the Cross of Christ we learn afresh the lessons of patience, faith, assurance and rest.

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The "Three Hours" Service on Good Friday is more and more widely observed, and to clergy who are looking for some fresh treatment of the great theme we heartily commend *Thoughts on the Seven Words from the Cross*, by the Rev. W. Hendy Cock, L.C.P. (Robert Scott, 1s. net). The author has adopted quite an original line: he has put forward his ideas in forms cast by the poets, with the result that each sermon contains a large collection of quotations from standard authors, the verses being linked together by the slenderest chain. The general effect is impressive, and preachers will derive much help from these "Thoughts."

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Dr. Oesterley's volume, *Studies in Isaiah xl.-lxvi.* (Robert Scott, 3s. 6d. net), will appeal strongly to theological students. In a succession of brilliantly written chapters he discusses "the composite character" of the book; the component parts of Isaiah xl.-lxvi.; their contents and date; their historical background; and the doctrinal standpoint of Isaiah xl.-lv., the Ebed-Jahwe Songs and Isaiah lvi.-lxvi. A collection of Exegetical, Archaeological and other studies follows. Like all Dr. Oesterley's work these "Studies" are marked by great reverence of tone, and although we may differ from him in his treatment of some of the problems of this remarkable book, we gladly recognize the strength and ability of his work.—*Isaiah: the Prophet and the Book* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1s. net), is the title also of the volume containing the lectures given by Canon Nairne in connexion with the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Divinity. The lectures are three in number, viz. (1) Isaiah of Jerusalem, (2) The Great Unnamed, and (3) The Servant of

the Lord. Canon Nairne assumes the accuracy of the Critical position, but in regard to the passage lii. 13-14. it is interesting to note that he says "Nothing is more certain than that we read here a prophecy concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. A friend of mine, not inclined to orthodoxy in these matters, told me how he heard Isaiah lii. 13-14. read in a country church, in that quiet, self-forgetting way which is happily frequent among our English clergy. And he said he felt that the upholders of verbal inspiration had a good deal to say for themselves." Assuredly they have.

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Canon J. M. Wilson, of Worcester, is well known as a thoughtful and scholarly preacher, and his volume of seven sermons, *God's Progressive Revelations of Himself to Men* (S.P.C.K., 1s. net), is full of quiet suggestive teaching. If we cannot always follow his conclusions, we have nothing but admiration for the spirituality of his exposition and the earnestness of his appeals. —The Rev. T. E. Miller, of Dunfermline, has given us a delightful series of studies, *Portraits of Women of the New Testament* (H. R. Allenson, Ltd., 3s. 6d. net), and preachers will be glad to have the volume on their study table for frequent reference. Incidentally we notice that he combats the view that the woman in Simon's house, Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany were one and the same person. "There is a measure of likeness," he concludes, "in these three women, not because they were one and the same individual, and not because they had similar experiences; but because they each came under the spell of the love of Jesus, and surrendered to it and to Him." —Canon Lancelot's volume, *Faith and Creed* (Howell, Liverpool, 1s. net), is well worth reading, for its clear expositions. "Intellectually in earnest you must be," he says in one of the lectures and this little volume will help to that end.

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Dr. Oesterley and Canon Box are joint editors of an important series of textbooks which scholars will be glad to have, "Translations of Early Documents." Two volumes are before us, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and *The Book of Enoch* (S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d. net each). Both are by Canon Charles, of Westminster, who prefaces the translation in each case with a learned introduction, dealing with date, authorship, language and contents of the book translated. The series promises to be a valuable one.

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The papers which appeared in the later numbers of last year's *Churchman* on various questions of Church Reform have been collected into a handy volume with the title, *Religious Reconstruction after the War: A Cambridge Programme* (Robert Scott, 2s. 6d. net). The contributors are the Revs. James Plowden-Wardlaw (General Editor), C. T. Wood, J. F. Bethune-Baker, S. C. Carpenter, F. Conquest Clare, A. H. F. Boughey, A. H. M'Neile, W. Emery Barnes, J. K. Mozley, F. J. Foakes Jackson, J. R. S. Taylor, Arthur J. Tait, T. G. Bonney and the Master of Corpus. The volume is one that demands the attention of all who are anxious to see the Church grapple effectually with the many problems, which, even now, are beginning to be felt. For the breadth of its outlook, the boldness of its treatment, and the reasonableness of its proposals this Cambridge Programme is unequalled.

