

Preachers' Pages.

HOMILETICAL HINTS AND OUTLINES.

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The Sunday next Before Easter.

Text: He "made Himself of no reputation."—*Phil.* ii. 7 (Epistle).

Though the day is known to us as Palm Sunday there is no reference in the services to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, it being reserved for reading in Holy week as forming part of the story of the Passion. But the epistle reminds us that there was even in this passing triumph another element—"meek and sitting upon an ass"—that of lowliness. The Saviour's humiliation was

I. AN ACT OF HIS VOLITION. "He made Himself of no reputation." Nothing of all that He endured was imposed upon Him. From first to last it was His own act and deed (*John* x. 11, 15).

II. AN ACT THAT INVOLVED: (a) *The Incarnation*. "Made in the likeness of men. He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham" (*Heb.* ii. 16). (b) *Obedience*. Whatever else the Kenosis involved it at least necessitated His subjection to earthly authorities—e.g. to His parents (*Luke* ii. 51); to His Church, observance of the Passover, etc.; to the law of the land (*Matt.* xxii. 19). (c) *The Crucifixion*. "Even the death of the Cross." The ignominy of it was terrible: to a sensitive nature the suffering would be intense. Gethsemane shows that He was fully aware of what it would cost.¹

III. AN ACT NECESSARILY ANTECEDENT TO HIS EXALTATION. He more than once enunciated the principle. He did more—He exemplified it. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (*Matt.* xviii. 4; xxiii. 12). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him."

IV. AN ACT THAT CONSTITUTES HIM FOR EVER A PATTERN TO US—*1 Peter* v. 6. "Let this mind be in YOU."

Be Thou exalted Lord,

The highest name in earth or heaven:
Let angels sing Thy glorious love,

And bless the name to sinners given;
All earth and heaven their King proclaim;
Bow every knee to Jesu's name!

Good Friday.

Text : " He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—*Phil.* ii. 8.

The Cross of Christ is at once the greatest tragedy and the greatest triumph of the ages. It has inspired poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, and much of the best that these have produced has been a setting forth of the Glory of the Crucified. Once more, in full sight of Calvary, let us gather together some of the more significant lessons it teaches.

I. THE CROSS REVEALS AN EVERLASTING ANTIPATHY. This is the intense hatred cherished by evil towards moral goodness. (a) *It had its genesis in hell.* Here, in the nether world, dwells one who kept not his first estate and who cherishes a malign hatred of righteousness. Early in human history he set himself to dethrone it, and seemingly with some measure of success. (b) *This hatred soon found expression in human life.* It was Abel's goodness that incensed Cain and incited him to murder his brother. This is distinctly stated in 1 John iii. 12. (c) *At the Cross this hatred secured but a passing triumph.* The enemies of Christ rejoiced, but their joy was destined to be shortlived. Christ is not vanquished, He is the Victor! When we are tempted to wonder if after all evil is more powerful than goodness, we find our answer in the Cross.

II. IT REVEALS THE DIVINE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HUMAN SIN. Here, again, is an everlasting antipathy—God hates sin. Text. If it were something of which He thought lightly or could condone, the Son of His Love would never have hung on the tree (Gal. iii. 13, Exod. xxxiv. 7).

III. IT REVEALS THE THOUGHTS OF GOD TOWARDS THE SINNER. True, His antipathy to sin is eternal, but so is His love for the sinner. He is "loved with everlasting love." (a) *Redemptive processes have been at work "from the foundation of the world"* (Rev. xiii. 8). These were freely and fully typified under the old covenant. See Genesis xxii., etc. (b) *The efficacy of the Cross operates in both directions—backward as well as forward.* It covers "the transgressions that were under the old covenant" (Heb. ix. 15), and reaches on to generations yet unborn.

Easter Day.

Text : " Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."—1 Cor. v. 7.
We read to-day the account of the Passover in Exodus, and unite

in the Easter anthem in which St. Paul connects these two Sacraments of Redemption. [On the subject of the Passover and its significance Trumbull's *Threshold Covenant* will be found to contain much that is suggestive.]

Let us consider—

I. THE HEBREW PASSOVER. (a) A Feast of *Redemption*. The basis is atonement. The token of it is blood (Heb. ix. 22; 1 Peter i. 19). (b) A Feast of *Resurrection*. Egypt is not to be the grave of Israel: she came out of it in fulfilment of many promises (Ezek. xxx. 15; Hos. xiii. 14; Ps. xlix. 15). (c) A Feast of *Repentance and Renewal*. "With bitter herbs shall ye eat it" (xii. 8). "With unleavened bread" (1 Cor. v. 8). (d) A Feast of *Recollection*. "Ye shall keep it . . . for ever" (xii. 14, 17, 24, 26-7).

II. THE CHRISTIAN PASSOVER. "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. v. 7). (a) *A Picture*. The scene on Calvary is enacted again. The Passover Lamb appears again (Isa. liii. 7). See Exod. xii. 46; John xix. 33, 36; cf. Ps. xxxiv. 20. (b) *A Partaking*. The flesh of the Pascal Lamb was to be eaten (John vi. 53). When the conditions are fulfilled—"rightly, worthily and with faith," Art. XXVIII)—there is "verily and indeed" (Catechism) a true partaking. (c) *A Prophecy*. (1) Of the Lord's return. "Till He come." (2) Of our own Home-coming (John xiv. 3). Every Eucharist points *back* to the Cross and on to the great feast on High.

Sweet memorials till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board:
Some from Earth, from Glory some,
Severed only "Till He Come."

First Sunday After Easter.

Text: "Peace be unto you."—*John* xx. 19-23 (Gospel).

A strangely eventful day was drawing to a close—"the same day at evening"—and the disciples are assembled, or at least ten of them (St. Mark says "the eleven," but St. John notes the absence of Thomas). Possibly there were present, too, others. They would want to hear the experiences of the holy women and of the two disciples from Emmaus, as well as those of Simon Peter. We can hardly doubt that there was a good deal of anxious discussion. We notice—

I. THE COMING OF THE RISEN LORD. His presence was revealed to them. It was by a miracle. This is probably one of the reasons why St. John recorded the fact that "the doors were shut."

Thus our Lord reveals the potentiality of the "spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 46). It is free from the limitations to which the "natural body" is subject under existing conditions. But beyond this nothing is revealed. Observe the conditions under which He appeared. (a) *When their human hearts fainted within them.* The malignity of the foe had been demonstrated. It was little wonder that "fear of the Jews" (v. 19) helped to draw them together. Jesus knows when the flesh is weak, when courage is at a low ebb, and in such an hour is "at hand." (b) *When the doors were shut.* The outside world was shut off by the closed doors. It was probably an accustomed place for meeting "in His name." See Matthew vi. 7; xviii. 20.

II. THE COMMISSION OF THE RISEN LORD. "As . . . so send I you" (v. 21). This would not always mean recognition or acceptance (John xv. 20). There is power conferred for service. "He breathed on them." This symbolic act the Church has never adopted, but has substituted the laying on of hands. "What Jesus gives them is not a simple promise, but neither is it the fullness of the Spirit; it is an earnest. . . . By breathing on them now He associates them with His life as the Risen One" (*Godet*).

Second Sunday After Easter.

Text: "Ye were as sheep going astray."—1 *Pet.* ii. 25 (Epistle).

St. Peter has been addressing himself to persons set under authority—servants—and has been enjoining the duties of *obedience to all* (v. 18) and *patience through all* (vv. 19-20). The incentive is the example of Christ in Whose steps we are to follow (v. 21). He finally reminds them of the purpose of the Lord's death—to redeem men so that they might "live unto righteousness" (v. 24); they are to be "dead to sins"—a phrase which he most probably caught from St. Paul. He concludes with a comparison between the past and the present experience. Observe—

I. THE GRACELESS PAST OF THE UNCONVERTED. (a) A statement of fact. "Ye were . . . astray." (b) A similitude. "As sheep." Sheep going astray serve to illustrate (1) *The sheer stupidity of sin.* To be unmindful of privilege is to be guilty of folly. See Psalm xxiii. (2) *The evil influence of sin.* Watch a flock of sheep "going astray." The whole will blindly follow one wanderer: so great is the power of example.

II. THE SHEEP GATHERED IN BY THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS.

"Now returned" (v. 25). The methods of the Shepherd are described in John x. and Psalm xxiii.

And I ever hear Him say,
As He goes along His way,
O silly souls! come near Me,
My sheep should never fear Me;
I am the Shepherd true.

III. THE SHEEP GUIDED AND GOVERNED BY THE BISHOP OF SOULS. He is the Overseer and Guardian. He Who is the Saviour must be recognized as the LORD of the life.

Third Sunday After Easter.

Text: "Strangers and pilgrims."—I *Pet.* ii. 11 (Epistle).

The Apostle in the context enjoins purity of life. "All those three, which St. John speaks of (1 John ii. 16), the world's accursed trinity, are included under this name of 'fleshly lusts'" (*Archbishop Leighton*).

He invites them to consider their position, not citizens of this world, but "sojourners" (R.V.). See Genesis xxiii. 4 and Psalm xxxix. 12. And yet lest they should on this account consider themselves entitled to reject or disregard constituted authority, he enjoins on them the duty of obedience—"submit yourselves," etc. (vv. 13-17). The imagery of the text is both familiar and suggestive. We have—

I. A DEFINITE EXODUS. Every pilgrim life must have its starting-point. Abraham's exodus affords an example of this (Gen. xii. 4; cf. Heb. xi. 8-10). Such an exodus involves sacrifice, and only those who walk by faith rather than sight are ever likely to make the adventure and sing—

Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

II. A DEFINITE OBJECTIVE. Exodus vi. 4. These Old Testament worthies were not mindful of the country whence they came out. "The loom of the land of God" was no mirage in the desert, but a glorious reality of which they never lost sight (Heb. xi. 13-16). The expectation of the "better country" is a powerful incentive to holy living (1 John iii. 3). No "fleshly lusts" are there (Rev. xxi. 27).

Pilgrims here on earth and strangers,
Dwelling in the midst of foes,
Us and ours preserve from dangers,
In Thine arms may we repose:
And when life's short day is past,
Rest with Thee in heaven at last.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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

The Danger Zone. In the autumn of 1915, an American liner was crossing the Atlantic, bound for England. As she approached the danger zone, where enemy submarines might be expected to appear, looks of anxiety were plainly depicted on the faces of those on board. But there was one man who betrayed no fear, who felt no anxiety. He was the Lord Chief Justice of England. He explained the reason of this in his speech at the Guildhall Banquet in London, when he told the story of his voyage home. He said : " There was a place appointed where, I had been told by telegram, Mr. Balfour (as First Lord of the Admiralty), in his kind solicitude for me, had arranged for me to be met and escorted by British destroyers ; and where they are to be seen, no German submarine is known. We approached the place, and about ten minutes before we were due, I went for'ard to see whether any signs were to be descried of a British ship. I saw nothing. But such was my confidence in the British Navy, that it did not cause me even the slightest trepidation. Within a moment or two I saw on the horizon far away two little specks appearing. I shall not easily forget the scene on board that liner, when men, women and children, recognizing they were warships, rejoiced and congratulated each other, never doubting for one moment that on that vast expanse of sea the vessels approaching were British warships. And so they were." A promise of security in the place of danger had been given to the Lord Chief Justice by Mr. Balfour, on behalf of the British Admiralty. He believed the promise would be kept, and his experience proved that his faith was justified. In our voyage across the ocean of life there are places where the soul will be exposed to the perils of temptation, in some form threatening its salvation. The wise man knows that he must pass through that danger-zone. He is fully aware of the craft and subtle cruelty of the spiritual foe that will meet him there, and also of his own powerlessness to avert the shaft of unbelief or the deadly strength of some overmastering passion. But if he commits himself to the keeping of Jesus Christ as his Almighty and loving Saviour, he carries in his heart the promise of being met when the hour of trial comes. And if his faith is strong enough, he will pass through the danger-zone

without fear, because he will be safeguarded by a Divine escort. Yea, the Presence of God Himself will be his shield of defence.

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The Failure of Civilization. In the German Peace Note sent to the Allied nations in December, 1916, the Imperial Chancellor described the War as "a catastrophe which the bonds of a common civilization more than a thousand years old could not stop." We are not as a rule able to accept as true any statements made by Herr von Bethmann-Holwegg. But here he certainly uttered a truth which no one would think of controverting. These words of his are the confession of a great failure—the most colossal failure that has overtaken the human race since the Fall of our first parents. Civilization indeed has failed—or, we may put it otherwise and say that German Kultur, boastfully asserted to be the acme of civilization, has produced a ghastly and hideous failure, the cause of which is that civilization has been made to rely on the moral sense that is in man regardless of Divine Grace ; and so it has become the tool of a brutal materialism. Something else, something better and higher, is needed to save civilization itself from eventual suicide. There is one thing only which can do this. It is the full acceptance by nations and men of the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ—obedience to the Gospel of the Love of God. There alone can security be found for civilization to withstand the selfish ambitions and diplomatic mistakes and mutual misunderstandings by which nations are lured or driven to fight against one another.

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The Bible "Anywhere." After the battle was over, among the slain on the field lay a dead officer. He was found there by a Chaplain to the Forces.¹ In his hand was a copy of the New Testament. On the front page were printed these familiar words "Appointed to be read in Churches." The word "Churches" had been crossed out, and above it was written the word "Anywhere." Yes, "anywhere" this book may be read : in the home as well as in the Church ; not only in public worship, but in solitude ; alike in the study of the scholar and the cottage of the poor ; by the mother training her children in purity of heart and strength of character ; by the broken-hearted in days of bereavement ; by the bedside of the sick and dying. That officer had learned

¹ The Rev. C. L. Perry.

this much before he went into battle ; and there in the hour of his greatest need he found comfort and hope in that Word of Life which is appointed by the Lord of Life to be read " Anywhere."

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Original Sin. In a speech he made in London,¹ Viscount Grey said to his audience²: " I would ask you to recall that

we must never forget how the war came about. If we are to approach the subject in a proper spirit it can only be by recalling, and never forgetting for one moment, what was the real cause of the war. Some people say, ' You need not go back on the old ground now ; everybody knows it.' You cannot go back on it too often. It affects the conditions of peace." Would that every preacher were inspired by a similar conviction ! Nothing can be more important than to know the cause which originally brought so much suffering into the world. This unceasing struggle between good and evil—the stern battles being fought in every age between right and wrong—how did they commence at first in a world otherwise fair and beautiful ? They arose from one cause only, namely sin. Never has it been more necessary to recall this fact of human history than it is at the present time. People say " You need not go over the old ground now ; everybody knows it." Do they ? or is there not a serious danger, continually increasing, of its being forgotten ? Let not the preacher be misled by the spirit of the age. That spirit is antagonistic to the doctrine of original sin. Nothing would better serve the purpose of Satan than that the preacher should miss out of his message this cardinal fact that " sin entered into the world, and death by sin." ³ The purpose of the Incarnation was to save men from sin. If there had been no sin there would have been no need of a Saviour. The birth and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were all parts of the divine plan to save us from the original cause of the warring elements in our human nature. " You cannot go back on the old ground too often ; it affects the conditions of peace."

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A Parable from Nature. In the midst of a bare and turfless plain stands a lonely rock—itsself covered with verdure. Ferns and lichens and moss are growing all over it, concealing from the casual passer-by the seams and crevices by which its sides

¹ October 23, 1916. ² The Foreign Press Association. ³ Romans v. 12.

are rent. What is the reason of this? What is the secret of that young life which thrives and blossoms on the old rock? Years ago the plain was devastated by a storm of great fury. The big rock, standing high above the ground, attracted to itself the vivid lightning flashes. Again and again it was struck by bolts charged with electric fluid, which opened deep fissures in its top and sides. These formed cavities for soil and seeds blown into them by subsequent gales and watered by constant showers of rain. It was the great storm which really broke open the hard surface and lay bare the heart of the rock, and so made possible the life springing from within and covering it outside with a raiment of verdure. Like that rock England has been exposed to a storm of surpassing and unprecedented fury. The lightning flashes of this cruel war have struck at the heart of the nation, tearing open great seams of sorrow and suffering. What shall the future be? May the great rock with verdure clad be a parable in prophecy! If the lessons of the war are accepted in a right spirit, God will impart the soil of a new character and give us freely the seeds of Divine Truth, and water them with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then our England of the future will be more glorious than ever she has been in the past, beautiful with the new life that shall spring out of her stricken heart.

THE STUDY TABLE.

Dr. Figgis is a writer who always commands attention. He is a vigorous thinker and expresses his thoughts in a clear and trenchant style. His new volume, *Some Defects in English Religion* (Robert Scott, 2s. 6d. net), consists of fourteen sermons. A course of four on "some defects of English religion"—sentimentalism, legalism, cowardice, complacency—was preached in August, 1916, at Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair, and is reprinted from the *Church Times*. There is also a course of six Lenten sermons on the "Mysteries of Love"—helpless, contemplative, active, transfigured, acclaimed, triumphant—which have not been printed before. The bulk of the sermons is practical. For that reason let us quote an interesting passage from page 99 on the subject of "Love transfigured."

"Bishop Westcott made everything of the *Logos* doctrine. He was fundamentally Alexandrine, assimilative in his method. His Epistle to the Hebrew lays more stress in the life than the death of Christ, to say the least. Many followed this line. Crudities of expression and an undue emphasis on the Evangelical side led to a reaction which went too far. Now, however, the era which culminated in Moberly's book on the Atonement is at an end. Westcott and Moberly and McLeod Campbell and others will continue to make their contribution to religious thought. Some of their work is permanent. We need the other side no less. A stronger and more vital hold on the Cross will be the note of all effective religion in the age now beginning. His death marks not the close of a series, but the meaning and purpose of His life on earth."

This is very well said on the doctrinal side, and the practical teaching is also of real value. Dr. Sparrow Simpson has done well to secure these sermons for his series.

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The object of *The Prayer of Consecration*, by Dr. W. J. Sparrow Simpson, with Preface by the Bishop of Oxford (Robert Scott, 2s. 6d. net), is to secure the permissive alteration of the order of the prayers in the Communion Service; in other words, to plead for an optional use of the Liturgy of 1549. The method is to state the essentials of the Eucharist and then to print a long catena of criticisms from Anglican writers during the centuries since the Reformation. We do not think Dr. Simpson is quite fair to the Greek text of the narratives of the Institution. He seems over anxious to read his own ideas into them, and too little disposed to go only as far as the evidence will take him. The catena of quotations will be extremely useful to any student of the subject, but we cannot help thinking that the selection has been unconsciously influenced by the doctrinal position of the author. For instance, it would have been fairer if Cranmer and others had been allowed to state their reasons for altering the 1549 order to that of 1552.

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In *Notes and Addresses to Confirmation Candidates*, by a Country Clergyman (Elliot Stock, 2s. 6d. net, 18s. per dozen), we have a manual which includes the Catechism, the Confirmation Service and the Communion Office all in clear type with red rubrics. The instructions are sound and simple. It is just the book for which many are looking. Our only fear is that the price may place it beyond the reach of those who have to pay for such gifts out of their own slender purse, which no clergyman ought to have to do, but it is well worth the money, and where it can be afforded it will be found useful and will constitute a valued remembrance of Confirmation.

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An excellent book is *Scripture Thoughts*, by Adeline Campbell (Elliot Stock, 2s. 6d. net). These "notes made in preparation for addresses" will be found most useful. There is no subject matter—only the headings—and many of these striking and suggestive—together with the passages to which they refer printed in full, so that the appropriateness can be seen at a glance.

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Other Little Ships, by the Rev. Stuart Robertson (R.T.S., 2s. 6d. net), contains excellent story-sermons for children, simple in construction, pleasant in exposition and appealing in illustration. A veritable treasury for preachers to young people.—*A Book for Little Soldiers*, by Lady Cunliffe (S.P.C.K., 1s. 6d. net), has readings for a month intended for young children. Parents will find this little book a real aid in their endeavour to train their children in the way they should go.—*Twelve Services of Family Prayer*, by a Layman (S.P.C.K., 1s. net), has much to commend it.

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It is not often that works of fiction come our way! Probably we are invited to express an opinion on *A Bishop's Unbending*, by Lester Everson (Robert Scott, 3s. 6d. net), because it is "for Bishops and Curates and all congregations committed to their charge." It is certainly both clever and entertaining. If any Bishop finds time to read it he will put it down no sadder but possibly a little wiser! The Curate—be he Incumbent or assistant—will most likely have a hearty laugh, and as for the congregation—laugh or no laugh, it will do them good.