

Preachers' Pages.

HOMILETICAL HINTS AND OUTLINES.

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

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "Take thee a roll of a book and write."—*Jer.* xxxvi. 2 (Morning Lesson).

With this chapter begins the section which runs on to the end of chapter xlv, and which constitutes a record covering a period from the fourth year of Jehoiakim up to the close of the prophet's ministry. The first three chapters relate to events preceding the capture of Jerusalem, the remaining chapters deal with subsequent events.

I. HERE WE HAVE THE PERMANENT RECORD OF A FAITHFUL MINISTRY. Of Jeremiah it might be said, as of another: "The Lord let none of his words fall to the ground." Notice (1) *Its contents*. It contains the substance of a witness that had extended over a period of twenty-three years—almost a quarter of a century of faithfulness under trying conditions. (2) *Its authority*. It was not merely by Divine permission that it was compiled but by Divine command, "This word came from the Lord, saying . . . write." So there was a very real sense in which, like the tables of the law, "this writing was the writing of God" (*Exod.* xxxii. 16). So, too, with the rest of Scripture (*Jer.* xxx. 2; *Deut.* xvii. 18, 19; *Isa.* xxx. 8, etc.). (3) *Its purpose*. The written message reaches a larger audience. The object is to stir up the people to repentance (verses 3, 7), expressing itself in supplication and amendment of life. And the Divine requirements remain from age to age the same, hence *Romans* xv. 4.

II. HERE AGAIN WE WITNESS THE PASSING TRIUMPH OF A FUTILE HOSTILITY. "He cut it with a penknife and cast it into the fire." Thus he displayed his petty animosity. But the triumph of human pride is short-lived and the decrees of Heaven cannot be thus summarily disposed of. "The Scripture cannot be broken." Another roll is prepared and it contains all the "former words" and, in addition, a terrible pronouncement concerning the presumptuous

Jehoiakim and his posterity. Verily "the evil that men do lives after them." Observe that there are different ways of treating the messages and the messengers of the Almighty. Jehoiakim was deliberately hostile—Jehoiachin was calmly indifferent. These two attitudes are only too sadly common. The inevitable consequences are in either case the same. Jehoiakim has not been the last man who has attempted to destroy the Scriptures in this foolish way. It can never succeed.

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "Put off . . . the old man. Put on the new man."
—*Eph. iv. 22, 24* (Epistle).

St. Paul has been accused of being purely theological to the exclusion of practical considerations and ethical teaching. This passage disposes of that baseless contention. Here and elsewhere will be found teaching as practical as anything that St. James has given us. Here are the two tables of the law—our duty to God—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (note the title)—and our duty to our neighbour. The injunctions contained in these few verses touch human life at almost every point. Commercial morality, honesty, charity, etc., are among the subjects dealt with.

I. THE DIVESTMENT. "Put off . . . the old man." A definite act with direct consequences. It is our "original evil nature." This old life is:—(a) *A darkened life*. "The understanding darkened" (ver. 18). The capacity for seeing things in their true perspective is dulled. Consequently there are false views of God, sin, etc. (b) *A degraded life*. "Abandoned . . . to impurity, greedily indulging in every kind of profligacy" (*Weymouth*). (c) *A doomed life*. "Which is being corrupted" (*Alford*), or "which is doomed to perish" (*Weymouth*).

II. THE INVESTITURE. "Put on the new man." This is not the natural but the supernatural. It is spoken of here as an act of our own volition. There is a whole range of passages which speak of man saving himself, and though redemption is the work of God, its benefits can only be enjoyed by those who are willing to be what God wills they should be (*Ezek. xviii. 27, etc.*). Observe that the results of which the Apostle writes are mainly those which affect other people. Even dishonesty is to give place to "honest industry" (*Weymouth*), so that the man may be able to "give the

needy a share." No "unwholesome words" are to be spoken, but only such as may be "a means of blessing to the hearers," and so on.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

Text: "What the will of the Lord is."—*Eph.* iv. 17 (Epistle).

The blessed results of "doing the will of God" are *illumination* (see *John* vii. 17); *realization*,—"Having done the will of God you may receive the promised blessing" (*Heb.* x. 36; *Weymouth*); *continuation*,—"He that doeth the will of God continues for ever" (1 *John* ii. 17; *Weymouth*). Notice some revealed purposes.

I. THE REDEMPTION OF ALL, EVEN THE WEAKEST. "It is not the will of your Father . . . that one of these . . . should perish" (*Matt.* xviii. 14). Thus our Lord has declared the infinite value of a human soul.

II. THE CIRCUMSPECTION OF HIS CHILDREN. See that ye walk circumspectly (ver. 15). *Retrospect!* "Beloved . . . be mindful" (2 *Pet.* iii. 1, 2; cf. *Isa.* li. 1). Observe the utility of both Testaments. *Aspice!* "Beloved . . . be not ignorant: the day of the Lord will come" (2 *Pet.* iii. 8, 10). Observe the same expression as that of St. Paul,— "be not ignorant," "not as fools," "be ye not unwise." *Introspect!* "Beloved . . . be diligent" (2 *Pet.* iii. 14). The personal life as well as the doctrine must be looked to (1 *Tim.* iv. 16). *Circumspect!* "Beloved . . . beware lest ye also" (2 *Pet.* iii. 17). See the human wreckage on the shores of time.

III. THE SANCTIFICATION OF EACH BELIEVER. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 *Thess.* iv. 3). There is a Pentecost possible in the experience of all who are willing in the day of God's power.

IV. THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD. *Acts.* i. 8 is not only the key-word of that book but an outline of the Divine plan for the Missionary work of the Church. It also states the qualification of the Evangelist,—he must be a "witness," able to give evidence based on experience.

V. THE GLORIFICATION OF HIS OWN. "I will that . . . they be with Me" (*John* xvii. 24). He had promised this,— "Where I am, there ye may be" (*John* xiv. 3; cf. 1 *Thess.* iv. 17).

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

Text : " Put on the whole (*Weymouth*, complete) armour of God." —*Eph.* vi. 11, 13 (Epistle).

For most folk life is, more or less, a keen conflict. *Physically* it is frequently for the greater part of life, a painful fight against some inherited tendency or actual disease. *Spiritually and morally* it is a constant struggle against the forces of evil within. *In the realm of commerce*—in which the average man finds himself engaged—life resolves itself into a fierce fight for bare existence. *Nations* retain their independence by the force of arms. At least they must needs keep a standing army unless they are to fall a prey to the cupidity of their neighbours. It is, of course, the spiritual and moral aspect with which the Apostle is concerned. Let us consider—

I. THE STANDING ORDERS FOR THE DAY. " Put on the whole armour " (verses 11, 13). Observe—(a) *The various parts of " the panoply of God "* (verses 14–18). These are of two orders. Some are for personal protection and some are for aggressive action. (b) *The nature of the conflict.* " Ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world " (ver. 12, *Weymouth*). It is no imaginary foe against whom we wage unceasing war. It was of " mere flesh and blood " that St. Paul was thinking when he said— " So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." The subjugation of the body is no easy task. But there are also external foes of great potentiality to be reckoned with.

II. THE ISSUES OF THE DAY OF BATTLE. In these days the word conflict has assumed a terrible significance and proportion. To the young at least, battles were, until the other day, only things they read about in their history books. How eagerly we turn day by day to our papers and yet we hardly dare open them ! How anxiously we ask ourselves,— " How and when will it all end ? " So in the protracted moral conflict. We know what the result must be. Listen—" Having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field " (ver. 13, *Weymouth*). There can be no conquest without conflict, no palm without pain, no crown without a cross.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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

Want of Vision. When the landing of our troops was made at Suvla Bay (Gallipoli), Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett was allowed to go, as a special correspondent, on board the s.s. *Minneapolis*, which sailed from Kephalos Bay on the night of August 6, 1915. She was a huge Atlantic transport with first-class accommodation. Mr. Bartlett was shown into a cabin fitted up with every luxury and comfort. At 6.30 the following morning, on his way to the saloon for breakfast, he saw an ancient steward busily engaged in carefully removing the dust from the carpets with a vacuum-cleaner. Through the open portholes beside him could be seen the action going on ashore—the bursting shells, the enemy replying, our own infantry advancing to the attack. One of the most momentous events in the history of the Empire at that time was taking place; but as for forty years that old steward had cleaned the gaudy carpets at the head of the stairs at that hour, so he continued doing so, without paying any regard to what was going on. “The war outside was no affair of this man; and, like all the other stewards on board, he took not the smallest interest in it.” There are many people like that steward, all unmindful of the struggle going on in the world outside between the armies of Jesus Christ and the forces of Satan, between good and evil, between suffering and the efforts that are made to combat its pain and sorrow: they have their own little narrow interests, their selfish habits, their petty ambitions; they care nothing for the eternal issues that are being fought out by others on the side of good against the powers of evil. That old steward acted mainly from the habit that was born of duty and a certain kind of humble philosophy. But that excuse will not avail for those of whom I am speaking. They may—and they ought to—enlarge their mental horizon and extend the borders of their sympathy, yea and go out themselves to take their share in the world-wide war that is going on. For each one who will realize it, there is a place waiting in the ranks of those who are fighting beneath the banner of Christ our Lord against the legions of death and hell.

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A young officer whom I knew was invalided home from France. His mother came up from Scotland to be near the hospital where

he was in London. Conveniently situated for this was a boarding-house where she had stayed before. She asked for a room there, but was told by the lady who kept the house that it was full. A bedroom was at her disposal for one night only. A servant-girl overheard the conversation, and afterwards came to her mistress and said, "We mustn't let Mrs. — go out hunting for a room when she wants to be near her son; she shall have my bedroom." "But what will you do?" said the mistress. "Well," said the girl, "I've been thinking it all over; I'll make up a bed for myself in the passage, and Mrs. — shall have my room." "I couldn't let you do that, Martha," said the lady. "It would be so miserably uncomfortable for you." "Miserable! and uncomfortable!" replied the girl. And then, with deep feeling and vehemence, stretching out her right arm as if towards France, she exclaimed, "What about them out in the trenches? If they can put up with all they have to go through, why shouldn't I sleep in the passage, so as Mrs. — can be near her son? She isn't going out of this house, ma'am." That girl was only a humble order of boarding-house servant, but she had the fine instinct of a true woman. For a whole month she slept on a make-shift bed in the passage, while the mother went to and from the hospital. When the time for leaving came, the lady felt she could not offer the girl money, so she bought a present for her; and when she put this into her hand, the girl just looked at her and said, "What's this for, ma'am? I want nothing. I'm only too glad to do my bit in helping you to be near your boy." Truly there are hearts of gold throbbing beneath the plain exterior of many a humble toiler among the English working-classes.

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"What must Britain do to be saved?—that is the question. She must be born again." These are the words of Australia's Prime Minister, Mr. D. M. Hughes. They were spoken in Cardiff, not at a religious meeting, but on the occasion when the freedom of the city was presented to him (March 24, 1916). He was appealing to the patriotic instincts of his countrymen. Several passages elsewhere in his speech, however, in which God's power is recognized, indicate that with him religion and true patriotism are found together in close alliance. If Britain is "to be saved"—saved from the deadening influences of

materialism and party strife and class feuds and social corruption—"she must be born again." She must receive the impulse of a new life in the power of a spiritual birth. No naval or military victories, however brilliant and decisive, will be sufficient. Neither domestic legislation on party lines, nor commercial treaties with the allied or neutral nations can save our country from decline. Only one thing can lift her up and keep her in that exalted place in the world designed for her by the loving will of Him to Whom she owes all her past greatness—"She must be born again." She must go back to the first principles of true religion. She must make a fresh start, on the old lines of that Gospel preached in these Islands by the early missionaries of the Cross. The humble confession of her dependence on God, repentance from the sins which have lately been corrupting her national life, a living faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world—these are the elements of that new birth so greatly needed by the England of our day to make her what all true patriots fervently desire to see her become.

THE STUDY TABLE.

The Rev. Harrington C. Lees, Vicar of Christ Church, Beckenham, has written nothing better than *St. Paul's Friends* (R.T.S., 3s. 6d. net). It is a book happily conceived, compiled with infinite pains, and marked by deep insight. Round the figure of Christ are clustered the forms of twelve disciples, of whom one alone completely failed. In this volume is presented a group of twelve men who companied with St. Paul, and of these also only one was a total disappointment. In the choice of these twelve friends, as well as in *sobriquets* which he attaches to them, the writer has shown much skill. These are the twelve—"The First Friend, Barnabas"; "Silas: the Second String"; "Prisca and Aquila: a Double Star"; "Apollos: the Water-Bearer"; "Titus: the Bridge-BUILDER"; "Mark: the Bruised Reed"; "Timothy: the Understudy"; "Epaphras: the Lord's Remembrancer"; "Luke: the Friend closer than a Brother"; "Demas: the False Friend"; "Epaphroditus: the Ironside"; "Tychicus: the King's Messenger." Each biography is presented as a charming miniature, and an inspiring or warning example. The writer has been at great pains to possess himself of much of the available material, and has shown himself abreast of modern scholarship. He has wisely avoided stating as facts theories that are not proved or doubtful; and while he takes the reader to other levels than the bare prosaic, he never gives unchecked flight to fancy. Mr. Lees has sat at the feet of such masters of biographical exposition as Dr. Alexander Whyte, and has learnt his lesson so well, that he is able to present his characters with a grace no less charming, and with a power that will appeal to a wider circle of more sober Bible students. The result is that the Apostle to the Gentiles is revealed in a yet new and attractive light—as a kind of central luminary about whom the lesser lights move in harmony to do their appointed service: while each character is stamped with a distinct

personality and familiar names now become real, living persons. There is much to learn in the 224 pages of this book. There is fresh thought, deep research, patient "piecing together" of scattered material and disjointed reference; and with felicitous illustration and pointed application the truths are driven home. There are, of course, details upon which opinions may differ; for example, the romantic love story of Prisca and Aquila; or the close kinship between Titus and St. Luke, who are declared to be brothers; but such trifling matters do not diminish the power and value of the book. Bible students of all degrees should read this volume. It will refresh, stimulate and instruct. When we say that in its pages Mr. Harrington Lees is at his best, no more need be said.

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The Bishop of Truro contributes a Foreword to *The Christian Warrior's Home* (by the Rev. A. A. C. N. Vawdrey, M.A., Vicar of St. Budock, Falmouth. Robert Scott, 2s. 6d. net). It is a volume of short, plain sermons in which the Church is set forth as the Home of the Soul. It will be found useful for lending to those who are unable to attend the House of Prayer, and they will furnish those who have to minister to rural congregations with models of sermons well within the capacity of the hearers.

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Thoughts on the Epistle to the Romans, for Laymen, by one of them (Elliott Stock, 2s. net), is something a little out of the ordinary. There are many commentaries by clergy, for clergy and others, on St. Paul's great Epistle. The author disclaims authority beyond that which the intrinsic force of his words carry. As one who had the ordinary training of an average layman, and the ordinary experiences of the average member of a Christian family, he endeavours to present the outcome of his general and non-specialized study. There are sixteen chapters in the little volume, which more or less correspond to the divisions of the Epistle. This little work is marked by considerable freshness. It is very simple—but this is what the writer designs.

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The Rev. Archibald Alexander's volume, *A Day at a Time, and Other Talks on Life and Religion* (H. R. Allenson, Ltd., 2s. 6d. net), is dedicated by permission to Sir John Jellicoe. "Written in war-time to minister comfort and if it may be to reinforce hope and faith," it is made up of thirty meditations, or sermonettes, and the title is that of the first which is on the text, "As thy days so shall thy strength be" (Deut. xxxiii. 25). As may be expected, much of the application in these addresses has reference to the exigencies of the war, and there is appropriately one on "The Art of Doing Without," taken from Philippians iv. 12, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound." There is also a very suggestive meditation on "The Unreturning Brave," preached (or written) on Easter Sunday, 1915. There is a tone of cheerful courage about the whole, and it is written in that manly, interesting style which Scotchmen know so well how to employ. (The writer of this notice is not Scotch, but wishes to pay his tribute to the authors of North Britain.)

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On the lighter side we may mention *Why?* by E. de Vere Bartlett (Elliott Stock, 2s. 6d.), which at the very outset arrests attention, and the interest is sustained to the very last page. We are not sure of the author's sex, nor do we know if this be his or her first novel. If it be, then we hope this will not be the last from the same pen. Those who appreciate startling situations and dramatic incidents will not be disappointed.