

of it but grains of sand on the shore, flecks of foam on the water? Aye, and we have come in also from the city and the night, with eyes and ears that have felt the moral miseries of human life. The streets have shown us the mysteries of vice and violence. We have heard hopeless cries and yet more hopeless laughter in the gloom. Our own hearts have felt all too often the deadly stress of temptation, not without failure. And they have known losses and sorrows which have chilled and shadowed earth and sky for us, withering the bloom of yesterday and of to-day. So we enter the sanctuary of the Great Prayer, so we approach the Intercessor, and overhear His utterance as He looks up to the invisible. What comes to us as we listen? No reasoned solution of one single problem either of intellect or heart. No, but the power of a Personality which asserts itself as wholly good, wholly wise, and which invites the whole weight of us men's absolute reliance; on the eve, as we know now so well, of a suffering and a victory which bespeak Him Redeemer and Lord of the dead and living. He knows all that we know, and immensely more, of both material and moral mystery. He knows it immeasurably better than we. And through it all He says, looking up to heaven, with a certainty immediate and absolute, "Father, Holy Father, Righteous Father." In Him, and in His vision, we rest, we live, we overcome.

HANDLEY DUNELM.

STUDIES IN TEXTS.

Suggestions for Sermons from Current Literature.

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

VIII. FOUR PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS.

Texts.—"I was like the mother that lovingly nurses her own children."—I Thess. ii. 7 (A.S. Way).

"As a father with his own children."—ii. 11. R.V.

"We were babes in the midst of you."—ii. 7. R.V.M.

"Ye remember, brothers, our labour."—ii. 9.

[Book of the Month: Plummer's "First Thessalonians"¹ = P.

¹ Published by Robert Scott, 6s. Clear, illuminating, spiritual, like all Dr. Plummer's Commentaries. These notes, too full for a sermon, might well form basis for clerical Quiet Day, or Ruridecanal Chapter devotional study.

Other Commentaries, Milligan = M. Moffatt in Expos. Gr. Test = E.G.T.⁴ H. C. Lees in "Bible Hour Series" = H.C.L. Deissmann, Bible Studies = D. Hastings' Dictionary of Bible = D.B. Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and Gospels = D.C.G.]

"Here alone in the Pauline writings we are brought face to face with a young Christian community in all the freshness and bloom of its first faith" (M. xlvi). Note "the closeness of the bonds between St. Paul and his Thessalonian converts: to be parted from them was to suffer 'bereavement' (ii. 71) of the acutest kind" (M. xlv), to be an 'orphan.' "The striking expression occurs nowhere else in New Testament. The three teachers felt like orphans" (P. 38). "In Greek may apply to loss of friends and of children as well as to loss of parents. The parental relationship is probably in the writer's mind" (P. 38). We see him "with the authority of a father, and the tenderness of a mother, dealing with their individual needs" (M. xlv). "A mother's affection and a father's thought, in both as 'their own children'" (P. 26). "Exceptionally affectionate in tone: has the address 'Brethren' more frequently in proportion than any other Epistle of St. Paul" (P. 24). "The minister of God will try to be *father* (ver. 11), *mother* (ver. 7), and *brother* (ver. 9) to his flock" (H.C.L. 31). And we may add with Plummer 'child' as well among children (v. 7).

I. A MOTHER IN TENDERNESS (v. 7).

"'As if a nurse were cherishing her own children.' The attitude is described as that of a 'nurse,' or rather a 'nursing-mother' towards her children" (M. 22). "In the love of a brave and faithful man there is always a strain of maternal tenderness; he gives out again those beams of protecting fondness which were shed on him as he lay on his mother's knee" (George Eliot; quoted E.G.T. 27). The Minister of Christ like his Master (Matt. xxiii. 37) longs to "mother" the souls he has brought to new birth. "Three thoughts are implied in the words used here, sacrifice (*children*, 'things born') sustenance ('*nurse*,') and tenderness ('*cherishes*')" (H.C.L. 31).

(a) **Sacrifice for their well-being** (v. 8). "His letters were, indeed, the life-blood of a noble spirit, ever ready to be poured forth to nourish its spiritual offspring" (D.B. i. 730).

(b) **Sustenance** (v. 8). "He must find them the strong meat, and the milk of the word" (Heb. v. 12).

(c) **Tenderness** (v. 8). "With all a mother's yearning" (P. 23).

2. A FATHER IN WISDOM (v. II).

"Every individual was an object of paternal care; not one was overlooked or neglected. This would not be difficult. The number of converts was probably only a few hundreds" (P. 26). "An appropriate change from the figure of the nursing-mother in view of the thought of instruction" (M. 25). "If the mother furnishes the tenderness, the father gives the counsel, and with that, too, this many-sided minister of Christ is equipped" (H.C.L. 32).

"*'We exhorted.'* The word means to encourage to further effort one whose record is satisfactory.

'We comforted.' This implies rather a stirring up to spiritual ambition one who has rather lagged in the Christian walk. Addressed to the feelings rather than to the will.

'We charged.' This is the solemn appeal, sometimes the protest and warning given to the stumbler" (H.C.L. 32).

"Macedonians were always eager to maintain their prestige. He bids them remember their heavenly stock, and live worthily of their Royal parentage" v. 12 (H.C.L. 33).

3. A BROTHER IN HELPFULNESS (frequently, see ii. 9).

"The affectionate address, 'Brethren,' is remarkably frequent in this letter" (P. 9): "eighteen times in the first epistle and nine times in the second" (H.C.L. 33).

"Brother, also occurs in the usage of religious associations of the imperial period as applied to the members" (D. 88). "Was probably taken over from Judaism (Ac. ii. 29, 37; iii. 17, etc.), and from the practice of the Lord Himself (cf. Mt. xii. 48, xxiii. 8); but it can also be illustrated from the ordinary language of the Apostles' time (M. 8). According to Harnack, fell into general disuse in the course of the third cent." (M. 8).

Note "its fervent tone in the New Testament, its importance as suggesting a fulfilment of such words of Jesus as John xiii. 35 concerning mutual love" (D.C.G. 160). "Even the man who is showing signs of setting aside his authority is still a 'brother.'" Paul never starts a new line of thought without reminding them of the term (M. xlv). Certain features of all brotherhood traceable:

(a) **Independence**: "We would not be chargeable," v. 9.

(b) **Helpfulness** : ' We preached the Gospel ' (9). (c) **Example** : ' Ye are witnesses how we behaved,' ver. 10. A *holy* life Godward, a *just* life manward, and a walk *unblamed* by his own conscience " (H.C.L. 33, 34). " The man of God then gives the service of his *heart*, his *head*, and his hands in his threefold relationship to the souls he tends " (H.C.L. 34).

4. A CHILD IN SIMPLICITY, v. 7. R.V.M.

It is only fair to note that there is a slight variety in reading here, but this is adopted by R.V.M. " ' Nay, we went further, for to establish a sure bond of sympathy with you we showed ourselves ready to act the part of children in your midst ' " (M. 31).

" ' Children, like a mother ' looks incongruous, but is beautifully correct. A mother fondling her children comes down to their level, uses their language, and plays their games. The Apostle compares himself to a mother in Galatians iv. 19 " (P. 23). " Rutherford happily renders : ' On the contrary, we carried ourselves among you with a childish simplicity, as a mother becomes a child again when she fondles her children ' " (Quoted E.G.T. 27). " As children to children, speaking what St. Augustine describes as ' *decurtata et mutilata verba*, ' baby-language to those who were still babes in the faith " (M. 21).

But as mother or father, brother or child St. Paul never forgets the main aim and fact. Faith, Hope, Love abide, but the greatest is Love, maternal, paternal, fraternal, filial, many-sided, but always Love.

" Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father, or of son,
Lone on the land, and homeless on the water,
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

" Hearts I have won of sister or of brother,
Quick on the earth, or hidden in the sod,
Lo, every heart awaiteth me, another
Friend in the blameless family of God.

Myers, St. Paul.

