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father give life and bring healing. In Pr 6¹⁶ we read: 'Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; on a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy.' A better translation would be: 'Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken, and there shall be no healing.' Disaster may overtake a worthless and iniquitous man so suddenly that there is no opportunity for healing.

In Pr 12¹⁸ we read: 'There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.' A better translation would be: 'There are those who speak rash words (which cut) like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of a wise man brings healing.' A wise man or woman speaks healing words of divine wisdom. Pr 13¹⁷ reads: 'A wicked messenger falleth into evil; but a faithful ambassador is health.' A better translation would be: 'A wicked envoy falls into evil; but a faithful ambassador brings healing.' The word translated 'envoy' often means 'angel.' The passage, therefore, perhaps amounts to saying: 'A bad angel falls into evil; but a good angel brings healing.' In Pr 14³⁰ we read: 'A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy is the rottenness of the bones.' A better translation would be: 'A healing mind gives life to the body:

but jealousy corrodes the bones.' 'Heart' in Hebrew commonly means 'mind.' In Pr 15⁴ we read: 'A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit.' A better translation would be: 'A healing tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is destructive of the breath (*i.e.* of the breath of life).' In Pr 16²⁴ we read: 'Pleasant words are as a honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.' A better translation would be: 'Pleasant words are a honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and healing to the body.' 'Bone' in Hebrew often means 'body.'

Lastly, in Pr 29¹ we read: 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be broken, and that without remedy.' A better translation would be: 'A man of reproofs who stiffens his neck shall be broken suddenly, and there shall be no healing.' In other words, a man who is always reproving others, or a man who is continually subject to reproof, and who obstinately refuses to amend his ways, may suddenly be overtaken by calamity without hope of healing.

Thus, the translators, not understanding the use of the word 'healing' in these passages, seem to have gone out of their way to find meaningless substitutes.

MAURICE A. CANNEY.

London.

Entre Nous.

Church of England Doctrine.

As we go to press, the Report of the Commission, appointed in 1922, is published. In his Introduction the Archbishop of York, the Chairman, says: 'The Commission was appointed because the tensions between different schools of thought in the Church of England were imperilling its unity and impairing its effectiveness.' In a number of cases the Report expresses the view that varieties of doctrine should be tolerated. In his Introduction, Dr. Temple emphasizes the distinction 'between the judgment that such-and-such an opinion is incompatible with the Christian faith or the Anglican tradition, and the judgment that such-and-such a person, who holds an opinion thus condemned, should be excluded from the exercise of office or of membership in the Church.'

The Virgin Birth.

'Many of us hold that belief in the Word made flesh is integrally bound up with belief in the Virgin Birth, and that this will increasingly be recognized. There are, however, some among us who hold that a full belief in the historical Incarnation is more consistent with the supposition that our Lord's birth took place under the normal conditions of human generation.'

In his Introduction Dr. Temple says: 'I think it right here to affirm that I wholeheartedly accept as historical facts the Birth of our Lord from a Virgin Mother, and the Resurrection of His physical body from death and the tomb. And I anticipate, though with less assurance, that these events will appear to be intrinsically bound up with His Deity when the relations between the spiritual and physical

elements in our nature are more completely understood.'

The Bible.

Its inspiration is inferred from the character of its contents, all of which do not stand on the same spiritual level. The Bible is the chief source of guidance for spiritual life.

Dr. Temple says :

'We fully acknowledge the supremacy of Scripture as supplying the standard of doctrine ; and we try to indicate how Scripture should be regarded in this connexion : every one knows that it is possible to quote texts which, torn from their context, may be presented as supporting entirely unchristian opinions. Short of that, every one knows that most heretics have been convinced that they were conscientiously following and interpreting Scripture. Our attention must be fastened on the trend of Scripture as a whole and upon its climax in the record of the Word made flesh, by the light of which all the rest is to be interpreted ; in that concentration of attention and in that interpretation our best guide is the continuous stream of universal Christian tradition.'

What is a Good Sermon?

Principal Wheeler Robinson answers the question in *The Baptist Quarterly* (January 1938). A good sermon, he says, is that which utters 'the personal conviction of a great truth, intelligibly expressed and applied, and imparted with the dignity of a Word of God.' Four points then are made :

(1) Vital religion needs the vitamin of conviction, and most of all does the vital religion of one who would be an ambassador of Christ. Emerson, in a 'Lecture to Divinity Students,' recalls how he once entered a church whilst the snow was falling. 'The snow-storm was real : the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived or acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession—namely, to convert life into truth—he had not learned.'

(2) Good preaching must deal with great truths, and not with mere trivialities. This generation thirsts for something better than it is getting.

As Mr. J. B. Priestley writes in *They Walk in the City* : 'They are no longer children of God and

are not yet contented and unwondering big bees and ants . . . they still feel that there are mysteries, vast unfathomable gulfs in which birth, love, death are created out of darkness and inexplicable light, but now they are out of touch with any possible explanation of these mysteries, any explorations of these gulfs ; the old accounts of these things they instinctively reject, the new have not arrived ; and no sooner does anything of real importance happen, something that a dynamo or an internal combustion engine cannot work, than they are back in the wilderness with only the bleached bones of prophets to comfort them.'

(3) The third feature of a good sermon is intelligible expression. Stopford Brooke, writing to one of his children with literary ambitions, said : 'What you children need to learn is that when you have an idea you must shape it, shape it, SHAPE IT.' When we listen to a wireless talk by Sir James Jeans on astronomy, or by Sir William Bragg on physics, we may easily forget that the apparent simplicity is a work of great art, partly in the selection of illustration, partly in the choice of language. How the great masters have toiled over their language to get the exact expression of what they would give to others !

(4) The sermon belongs to that unity we call worship, and must have the fitness and dignity which characterize true worship. Neither preachers nor hearers always sufficiently remember what worship really is. It is 'worth-ship,' the humble and grateful recognition of God's worth. It depends, therefore, on what we give rather than on what we get. If the thoughts of the congregation, as it individually bows the head on entering a church, could be flashed on a great screen, we should have a test of the worship-value of that congregation. All the elements of the religious service ought to be subdued to the one central fact—that something is being offered to God.

Bantu Vignettes.

In *Children of the Veld* (James Clarke ; 6s. net), Mr. Robert H. W. Shepherd, M.A., of Lovedale, says little about himself, but the reader is drawn to Mr. Shepherd, cannot help liking him. 'Over thirty years before, after a long and arduous school and university career that left him with the tastes of a scholar, he had found himself dumped on a rocky hill to start his life-work, living in uncouth and primitive quarters the life of a bachelor missionary among heathen hordes. It had all been his own choice and he never, even in the first raw days, looked back, but there were times when the

contrast between what had been and what was now lit up his face with a rueful smile, and he would sigh for just a little of the comfort he had known.'

Children of the Veld consists of a number of short studies of Bantu life and customs—vignettes, Mr. Shepherd calls them, and very charming they are. Mr. Shepherd has the gift of making simple things interesting, and there is humour and pathos in plenty in the sketches. There is, for example, the story of Johnson, a Bantu teacher, who gained at Blythwood Institution a fine reputation for scholarship. He lived in the home village with his illiterate father and mother, and was in charge of the school there. One day Mr. Shepherd had a letter thrust into his hand. The handwriting was Johnson's. 'I give it just as it was written, for of translation there is no need :

' "REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I report that I did not attend school three days owing to sickness that fell at my home. Nobody is sick now. I do not know then whether I should stay away from school, but I am well.

" "This sickness has been the cause of my utmost misery, for it took both my parents.—Your obedient servant,
JOHNSON TINISE."

" "This sickness has been the cause of my utmost misery, for it took both my parents." In the hour of its extremity, the heart, the world over, utters the self-same cry.'

In the chapter on Modern Contacts there is a paragraph on church divisions. It would be difficult to find one that would put this mission difficulty more forcibly.

'The telephone bell rings. It is a call from the local mission hospital. "There is a patient here," the matron is heard saying, "whose religious denomination we cannot fathom. All that we can get from her is that she belongs to 'Ama-Twenty-four'" (the Twenty-four).

" "That is easy," I reply. "She is a member of the Free Church of Scotland—the 'Wee Frees' as they are commonly called—whose original membership was some twenty-four ministers and elders who objected to church union in Scotland in the year 1900."

'I lay down the receiver, thinking of the folly that has brought the melancholy divisions of European Christendom into Africa, and stamped them on the minds of one of the most imitative races on earth. It is calculated that in the Union of South Africa there are now some three hundred different Bantu denominations. Numbers of them bear the most fantastic designations, such as "The Church of God on the Slopes of Mount Zion."

The Same Sermon.

" "The people at the out-stations are complaining," he [an old Bantu Evangelist] announced as the two crossed the veld early one Sunday morning.

" "What is the matter?"

" "They say you don't give them the same food as you give to those at the main station."

"And so it came to the novice that what would be deemed a shortcoming in another country was in Tembuland a sign of grace—in sermons he must treat the same theme all round.'

Self-Deification.

Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Christian Century* says :

'It must be admitted, of course, that our Protestant inheritance disintegrates into secularism much more easily than Catholicism does. It must also be admitted that many of our Protestant radical minorities allow themselves to be used as cats-paws and allies of anti-religious radicals without any sense of responsibility toward their religious inheritance and with no sure hold upon the truth which divides them from secularists. They stand against Roman Catholicism but are in danger of becoming enmeshed in Stalin's catholicism. For Stalin is but a secularized version of the Pope. . . . The danger that radical Protestantism may become a too servile ally of secular radicals can be avoided only if our criticism of the Catholic heresy is made, not from the standpoint of secular cynics but from the standpoint of Protestant Christian faith. We will resist all temporal divinities, whether they call themselves popes, kings by divine right or commissars. We will not be under the illusion that we can get rid of this tendency toward self-deification by getting rid of the Catholic faith or the Christian religion. We recognize in it the very quintessence of sin, the tendency of man to make himself God. That we should discover the Christian Church itself as a potential vehicle of this sin will make us the more circumspect in our claims and the more certain that the majesty of God may reveal itself in the destruction of historic Christian Churches as well as in their preservation.'