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Studies in Texts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

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

Suggestive book: "Sermons in Syntax," by J. Adams (= A.), published by T. and T. Clark. Others quoted: A. T. Pierson's "Key Words of the Bible" (= P.); Trench's "Synonyms" (= T.); "Speaker's Commentary" (= S.).

I. SOUND COUNSELS: "*That the wise man . . .*," Prov. i. 5 (R.V.).

THE Book of Proverbs is "pithiness in parallelism." "Like the forceps, it holds truth firmly between opposing points of antithesis" (P., 46, 47). Ancients called it "The wisdom which includes all the virtues" (S., iv. 513). Terms almost exhausted to express this inclusiveness; twelve different words in vv. 2-5.

Four stages are indicated:

1. INFORMATION.—"*To know*," v. 2. Wisdom in the Mind.

The word for instruction implies correction or discipline (LXX *παιδεία*); for as T. remarks (p. 105), "All effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening." But it also means education; only the disobedient scholar feels the rod. "How important, then, must early husbandry be! The sooner it is commenced, the less correction will be required" (A., 104).

2. DISCRIMINATION.—"*To discern*," v. 2 (A.V., "perceive"). Wisdom in the Eye.

Sight without discernment is a calamity. Paul's companions had only a view: Paul had a vision (Acts xxii. 9, 11, 14). The disciples saw: the Master perceived (Mark v. 30, 31, R.V.; cf. Matt. xiii. 14).

3. APPROPRIATION.—"*To receive*" (v. 3). Wisdom in the Heart.

"Wisdom welcomed, as well as heard and discerned, produces "righteousness"—*i.e.*, the inner principle that regulates the whole course of action; "judgment"—*i.e.*, the principle embodied in actual life—and equity (Heb., equities), the same principle wrought out in particular cases" (A., 104, 105).

4. APPLICATION.—"*To give*," v. 4. Wisdom in the Hand.

This is the result of absorbing, that we begin to give out. The sowing of good seed into prepared soil (A., 103). The fruit of our sowing is subtlety to the simple. Both simple and subtle here used in a good sense. The simple are single-hearted, not double-minded (Jas. i. 8); the Nathanaels (John i. 47). Lest an unscrupulous world should take advantage, they need the wisdom of the serpent—*i.e.*, subtlety; cf. Matt. x. 16; Gen. iii. 1 (A., 105). The apex of this pyramid of four tiers already named is indicated in v. 5, R.V., which is "undoubtedly correct in treating the verbs as subjunctive" (A., 103).

The capstone crowning the whole is "sound counsels," which in Hebrew has reference to the right steering of a ship (from *khevel*, a rope; cf. *khovel*, a sailor—*i.e.*, a rope-puller). Lange renders, "skill and facility in the management of life" (A., 104).

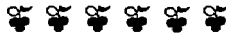
II. SATISFYING VISION: "Let me be satisfied" (optative use), Psa. xvii. 15.

1. Satisfaction by spiritual communion here (15 a).
2. Satisfaction by beatific vision hereafter (15 b).
3. Satisfaction by a profound reverence (outcome of both above) "let me" instead of "I shall" (A., 148-150).

III. FULL CONSECRATION: "Consecrate yourselves," Ex. xxxii. 29.

True consecration makes us—

1. Soldiers (v. 27).
2. Priests (v. 29). "Fill the hand" is a priestly term; cf. xxix. 9.
3. Intercessors (v. 30-33). (A., 182-183.)



The Missionary World.

BY THE REV. C. D. SNELL, M.A.

THIS is the day of opportunity in Persia. In the past, as the *C.M.S. Gazette* points out, the missionaries have had to cope with continual opposition and obstruction on the part of the mullahs, though of late years their power has sensibly diminished. Now that power seems to be rapidly waning. Three of the chief mullahs in Teheran have been publicly executed, and in Ispahan the two chief mullahs have been ordered to leave. Moreover, the Bakhtiari, a tribe who have rapidly come to the front in the Government of the country, have in the past gladly welcomed visits from medical missionaries, and four years ago begged that a lady might be sent out to teach their girls. Although nominally Mohammedans, these people seem to be really destitute of religion—the men rarely engage in prayer; and they have said: "The Gospel will go forward with us; we are not afraid of the mullahs."



The special correspondent of the *Times*, lately in the Far East, has followed up his reference to Christian Missions in China by one to those in Japan. He points out that while Christianity has not made many converts in the latter country, they are to be met with among members of every class of the community. "Christians hold some of the highest offices in the State, and there are ten Christian members of the Imperial Diet, all men of high character, and enjoying the respect of their fellow-countrymen, for there is no constituency in Japan which would elect a Christian *qua* Christian." He proceeds to quote a missionary as saying: "If there are less than 200,000 professing Christians in Japan, there are more than a million educated Japanese who think in terms of Christian ethics, and who try to live up to them more truly than many millions of professing Christians in the West."



In this connection it is interesting to read in the *Mission Field* the translation of portions of an article on "The New Buddhism," from the pen of a