

**SCHOOL IDEALS.  
SERMONS PREACHED  
IN THE CHAPEL  
OF ROSSALL SCHOOL**

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School Ideals. Sermons Preached in the Chapel of Rossall School by Herbert A. James

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**HERBERT A. JAMES**

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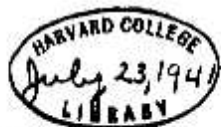
*SERMONS PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL  
OF ROSSALL SCHOOL*

BY  
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*By Exchange*

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## PREFACE.

THESE sermons are published in response to many requests. Written most of them, an hour at a time, in such intervals as a very busy life afforded, they can pretend to no literary merit. They are full, not only of the crudities of thought and expression which these conditions made inevitable, but of repetitions alike of subject and of treatment, which will perhaps appear all the more glaring now that the sermons are collected into a single volume. But in a school chapel a preacher's themes and counsels are dictated to him by the ever-recurring times and seasons of schoolboy life, as well as by its ever-recurring dangers and difficulties. The beginning and the end of a term, confirmation and the preparation for it,—these and the like are the occasions which must be "bought up" as they come, and consequently these sermons will be found full of allusions to them. I have not cared to re-write these discourses. I could not have done so without depriving them of

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much of their meaning and significance for those to whom they were preached and for whose sake mainly they are collected here. For the same reason not a few passages containing matter personal to myself or to the school are allowed to stand. This volume will have no extended circulation in wider circles, and such outside readers as may take it up will doubtless forgive the presence of allusions here and there to persons and institutions in which they have no special interest.

I should like to add a few words on the principles which guided me in preaching to boys, and which I venture to think should not be lost sight of by those to whose lot it falls to address a school congregation.

1. It is all-important that their sermons should deal with the problems of school morality with which every schoolmaster is familiar. It is an incalculable gain if even a few boys can be got to regard their every-day duties from the standpoint of Christianity, instead of marking off religion from life by a broad wall of convention. Schoolboys, like the rest of the world, are far too apt to keep their religion for Sundays and to forget it in the week.

2. Dull sermons are worse than useless: and therefore I have tried, with however imperfect a success, never to be tedious. Even sermons on purely doctrinal subjects, which cannot be wholly excluded from a

school pulpit unless boys are to be left in vague uncertainty or even ignorance about the creed of their Church, may, I am convinced, be rendered interesting by one who addresses himself honestly to the task. But a school preacher must never forget that if he allows himself to drop into conventional platitudes he has no audience at all: his congregation is out in the playground or the class-room. On the other hand I know that any one who will take the pains to illustrate what he has to say from history, from biography, from literature, from poetry, from everyday life, will always be listened to, and may create ineffaceable impressions. It is not necessary to go far afield for such illustrations in speaking to hearers who are only beginning to read for themselves.

3. Archdeacon Farrar (to the memory of whose sermons in Marlborough College Chapel—the best ever preached to boys—both I and this volume owe a debt beyond acknowledgment) has somewhere pointed out that it is necessary for a school preacher to remember how very varied are the capacities of his congregation. He must not preach always to his Sixth Form and forget his Lower School: nor yet must he always creep at the intellectual level of his youngest boys, lest he lose his hold of the older and abler. The problem is only to be solved, in my opinion, by