



# SUNDAY READING

WHERE ANECDOTES TELL.

Some Instances of Their Effect When Used in Sermons.

Suitable anecdote is never in better place than in sermons. Many a man will carry a happily introduced story away with him from church, and moralise it with reference to the discourse into which it is fitted, who might not otherwise remember a single word of the preacher's counsel. Of all sermon-writers Jeremy Taylor least stands in need of such settings, for his sermons are perfect pictures in themselves—scenes, so to speak, containing a central idea, to whose illumination a gorgeous they contributes a thousand splendid and magnificent hues. Yet his sermons and devotional works are filled with fables and stories. The most beautiful fable—or apologue, rather, to be found on the whole range of literature—an apologue to which Sydney Smith could never recur without emotion—is related by Jeremy Taylor. Charity is his theme:—

“When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain visitors, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, I trust him away because he did not worship Thee, God answered him, I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonored Me, and couldst thou not endure him one night when he gave thee no trouble? Upon this (saith the Story) Abraham fetched him back, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

No unworthy pendant to this story is met with in an essay contributed by an unknown hand to the New Monthly Magazine:—

“Our wise ancestors relate that whilst Moses was attending Jethro's flock in the wilderness a lamb strayed from the herd. Moses endeavoured to overtake it, but it ran much faster than he, till it came near a fountain, where it suddenly stopped to take a draught of water. ‘Thou little innocent creature,’ said Moses, ‘I see now why thou didst run away. Had I known thy want, on my shoulders would I have carried thee to the fountain to assuage thy thirst. But come, little innocent, I will make up for my ignorance. Thou art no doubt, fatigued, after so long a journey; thou shalt walk no farther.’ He immediately took the little creature into his arms and carried it back to the flock; the Almighty Father of Mercies, He who diffused those precious drops of pity and kindness over the human heart, approved of the deed, and a heavenly voice was heard to explain—‘Moses! benevolent Moses! if a dumb animal thus excite thy compassion, how much more will the children of men? what wilt thou not do for thine own brethren? Come henceforth thou shalt be shepherd of My chosen flock, and then teach them by thy example that the Lord is good to all, and that His mercies are over all His works.’”

Before passing to recent authors, Swift should be quoted as a writer who has made very happy use of anecdote; but like his writings, his illustrations are usually fierce and defiant, and rarely wanting a certain quality of grim humor. In one of his sermons he speaks of men who decline to be enlightened on spiritual matters, and follow obstinately their own opinions:—

“It is recorded,” says he, “of Mahomet that upon a visit he was going to pay in Paradise he had an offer of several vehicles to conduct him upwards—as fiery chariots, winged horses, and celestial sedans—but he refused them all, and would be borne to heaven upon nothing but his ass. ‘This inclination of Mahomet,’ adds the sour doctor, ‘as singular as it seems, has been since taken up by a great number of devout Christians.’ Here is a smart rap at cupid-ity:—‘An old miser kept a tame jackdaw, that used to steal pieces of money and hide them in a hole, which the cat observing, asked, why he should board up those round shining things that he could make no use of? ‘Why said the jackdaw, my master has a whole chestful, and makes no more use of them than I.’ He has a fable of a wasp with a regular sting in it, which hardly illustrates the truth he wishes to convey better than his own scorn and hatred of his species.—‘A man seeing a wasp creeping into a fruit filled with honey, that was hung on a fruit tree, said thus: ‘Why thou scolding animal, art thou mad? go thou into the vial where you see many hundreds of your kind dying before you?’ ‘The reproach is just,’ answered the wasp, but not for you men, who are so far from taking example by other people's follies that you will not take warning by your own. It after falling several times into this vial, and escaping by chance, I should then but resemble you.’—Selected.

**The Sabbath as It Was.**

In a work entitled “The teaching of Christ; its condition, secret and results,” by the Rt. Rev. T. Moorhouse, Bishop of Manchester, is shown how mighty a spiritual revolution was brought about by Christ's teaching in regard to the Sabbath.

According to the teaching of the Mishna, the collection of Jewish traditions and ex-

planations of scripture, the Sabbath was kept with the most rigid strictness. As it was necessary to avoid any approach to a breach of the law, the question was discussed what a man might do on the evening before the Sabbath. The principle established was that he might begin no work or that evening which could not be finished before the Sabbath began, and the application of this principle was pushed into details so minute as to be ridiculous. A tailor might not go out with his needle, nor a scribe with his reed, lest the Sabbath might come on during his walk, and so he might be tempted to carry a burden on the holy day. Food prepared for the Sabbath might not be put to keep warm in any materials which would increase its heat—for this would be equivalent to baking or boiling—and so oil-dregs, manure, salt, chalk, or sand, might not be used for this purpose. Men might not leave vetches soaking, or nets spread, on the day before the Sabbath, for the work of soaking or of catching birds would thus go on on the Sabbath. On the holy day itself it was forbidden to put an egg near the boiler lest it should be unwittingly boiled, or to hide it in the sand, lest by the heat of the sun it might be accidentally roasted. They might not put a vessel under a lamp to catch the oil—that would be doing work; but they might thus catch the sparks from the lamp to avoid danger; only care was to be taken that no water was in the catch-pan, for then the water would quench the sparks and that would be work. Whoever carried out food on the Sabbath the size of a dried fig was guilty of death. Sailors and camel drivers were forbidden to tie the knots, but guilt was not incurred by reason of a knot which could be untied by one hand, and women were also permitted to tie the strings of their caps and girdles. It will at once be seen to what an extent Christ rose above “the law” of His day.

### IN THE ANGLICAN CALENDAR.

Not the Church's New Year Day—The Feast of the Epiphany.

Tomorrow is the first day of the secular year, but it is not the beginning of the church's year. That came with Advent. With the church, tomorrow will be the feast of the Circumcision and the octave of the Nativity. It is a red letter day in the Anglican church, and a holy day of obligation in the church of Rome. The color in both uses is white, with four altar candles at high mass.

It has been pertinently observed that as this day has its special dignity, the observance of it as New Year's day should not be allowed to eclipse its religious observance as a church festival in honor of our Divine Redeemer.

Friday will be the feast of the Epiphany, but nevertheless a day of abstinence from flesh meat. The vigil of the Epiphany is not a day of fasting.

The Epiphany commemorates the revelation of our Lord's Divine glory to the Gentiles, as represented by the three wise men from the East. The scriptures used on this day beautifully illustrate its object: ‘Arise, shine; for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . And the Gentiles shall come to Thy Light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising.’ A memorial of the offerings made by the wise men is still retained in a custom of our English sovereigns, who make an oblation of gold frankincense and myrrh, at the altar of the Chapel Royal on this festival, either in person or by an officer of the household appointed to represent them.

By the festival and season of Epiphany, the church acknowledges the Holy Child to be their God; and adores the Light of the world, arising to shine upon her from the manger-cradle at Bethlehem.—Blunt.

The color of the day is white, with eight altar candles at high mass. The Athanasian creed “shall be” sung or said at morning prayer on this day.

Marriages may be solemnized after the Epiphany.

The color for Monday and Wednesday, the octaves of St. Stephen and the Holy Innocents, respectively, is red, with two lights.

**Talmage's Habits of Life.**

I finished my education in the city. My hours of mental work differed. I studied hard and persistently. Some days I would spend twelve hours over my books; sometimes ten; and now then very few. I still continued, and am now, in the enjoyment of a full grown appetite. There is not an article of food that I cannot eat with a great deal of satisfaction—except codfish. In all my life, I never missed but one meal; and I would not have missed that if there had been anything to eat within ten miles. I was on top of the Alleghany Mountains, and half a day's tramp from the nearest cabin. So it was not my fault that I missed my meal on that occasion.

I eat at regular hours. My breakfast I always have at 7 o'clock, a light luncheon precisely at noon, and at 6.30 o'clock I enjoy my heartiest meal. I never allow any thing to interfere with the strict observance of this regularity. I eat what I can relish best, but never eat so much that I could not eat something else; hence I always arise from the table in a comfortable state of body and of mind. After my noontide meal I always take an hour's nap. This calls the blood away from the brain and enables the stomach to do in the best possible manner its work of digestion.—Ladies' Home Journal.

### NEWS AND NOTABILLIA.

The Episcopal Church of the United States has 72 Bishops, 3,865 ministers, and 549,250 church members.

The original manuscript of John Bunyan's “Pilgrim's Progress” is said to be in the possession of a family named Bates, living in Lawrence county, Ill.

Mrs. Charles, whose Schonberg-Cotta Family has charmed multitudes and will keep on charming for generations to come, is living in the vicinity of London.

Solemn high mass was celebrated Christmas day at the church of the Redeemer, at Park avenue on eighty-second street, New York, for the first time in its history.

In the belfry of the Unitarian church at Plymouth, Mass., which was burned to the ground a few nights ago, a bell cast by Paul Revere in 1801 and which rang the curfew for many years, was destroyed.

The fear of God turns other fears out of doors; there is no room for them where this great fear is; and being greater than they all, yet it disturbs not as they do; yea, it brings as much quiet as they brought trouble.—Leighton.

The directors of the Canada Revue, which was banned by Archbishop Fabre for its attacks on Catholic clergy, have determined to take proceedings in civil courts against the Archbishop and ecclesiastical authorities for damages.

Tennyson and a friend were walking in his garden, when his friend asked him what he thought of Christ. The poet walked on without reply until they came to a beautiful flower, when he said: ‘What the sun is to that flower, Jesus Christ is to my soul.’

Bishop Hurst says the ninety-two acres bought in Washington for a site for the proposed Methodist University have increased in value until they are worth half a million. He reports also that subscriptions to the ten million dollar fund continue to come in.

Dr. Pentecost, the American preacher, who is to succeed the late Dr. Donald Fraser as minister of Marylebone Presbyterian church, is to be paid £1,500 per year by the congregation, who have also agreed to provide him with a good house, of which they will pay the rent and taxes.

Evils cannot be removed unless they appear. All evil which does not appear kindles itself, and is like fire in wood under ashes, or like corruption in an unopened wound. Hence every one should carefully explore himself, and, when he discovers them, shun and combat them, imploring the help of the Lord—Swedenborg.

A Mr. James Clark, having complained of the Bishop of Chester's statement at Frodsham that undenominational teaching resulted often unconsciously in the denial of the Divinity of our Lord, and said it was a monstrous one, which libelled thousands of Christian ministers and tens of thousands of believers, his lordship in a courteous letter says that he regrets he cannot withdraw or modify it.

When the average human mind becomes imbued with a ruling consciousness that God is love, and that He is our life, that He is not a distant, but an ever-present God, then sin, selfishness, and even bodily infirmities, which hold the world in bondage, will be overcome. If men recognized their life as in God, instead of conceiving it to be self-centred and dependent upon external conditions, how naturally they would turn to Him for additional vitality and refreshment!—Henry Wood.

At a recent missionary meeting in New York, Rev. Mr. Ewing, the lodging house missionary stated that, God uses the Gospel hymns and music more than plain preaching to raise religious interest in lodging houses. Missionaries are often assaulted by “roughs,” but still persevere. In one of these houses the clerk is his friend, and whenever it is necessary to throw a man out of the house because he attacks the missionary, the man he throws goes out faster than any others because the clerk is the strongest man around.

In the late Church Congress at Folkestone, England, one of the clergymen said that the clergy could only fully understand the wants of the working classes by living among them, living as they did, eating the same food, and surrounded by the same influences, and thus acquiring real sympathy and compassion for them. This accords with the practice of the Salvation Army, at home and in heathen lands, and seems like the old times of Bethlehem and Galilee. It is not advisable that every clergyman dwell in a given section, but there should be no section of any city without resident ministers and other Christian workers.

A remarkable and interesting New York missionary is Varsoviak. He is a Russ, a Hebrew, a Christian. He was driven away from his kindred, stripped of his property, even of his wardrobe, forced away from his wife and children by his own people, because he had found and believed the great truth that Jesus is the Messiah. Now, after six years, in answer to his prayers, his wife too, has been converted, and his children. He was written to by his people asking him to go over and tell them about Jesus. He had done so, and now his wife and children are working with him. He wants everyone to take more interest in the Jews. There are about 350,000 of them in this city. Salvation is first for the Jew—“to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.” “They shall prosper that pray for Israel.”

During the last ten years, Ernest Jackson of the American Bible Society, New York, has distributed over a million bibles, chiefly among immigrants arriving at the port. This is remarkable work, but much more surprising is the fact that these Bibles are well printed on good paper, with large, clear type and handsomely bound, that they are in twenty languages and dialects, and yet the average net cost of this production is but 45 cents each. Adding all the expenses of storage and distribution, and still the cost is below 60 cents. Of the million Bibles given away by Mr. Jackson the society records show the largest number to have been in German. Within the year lately closed the record stood 23,259 in that tongue. The Swedish stood next with 19,122, and then came the Danish with 8,846, English 8,212, and so on down to 145 in Welsh, 125 in Dutch, 6 in Polish, 5 in Portuguese and 1 in Hungarian.

**Prayer Without Effort**

At a school near London, one of the pupils was remarked for repeating her lessons well; a schoolfellow, rather idly inclined, said to her one day, “How is it that you always say your lessons so perfectly?” She replied, “I always pray that I may say my lessons well.” “Do you?” said the other: “then I'll pray too.” But, alas! the next morning she could not even repeat a word of her usual task. Very much confounded, she ran to her friend and reproached her as deceitful. “I prayed,” said she, “but I could not say a single word of my lesson.” “Perhaps,” rejoined the other, “you took no pains to learn it!” “Learn it! learn it! answered the first, “I did not learn it at all. I thought I had no occasion to learn it, when I prayed that I might say it.” There are many grown-up persons who have no higher notion of prayer than this poor child had.

**Adam's Footprint.**

Mount Samanala, or Adam's Peak one of the highest mountains on the island of Ceylon, is the scene of a remarkable geological formation and the spot around which many curious legends and superstitions cluster. According to the Mohammedan story, Adam, after the fall and expulsion from the Garden of Eden, was taken by an angel to the top of the mountain, which now bears his name.

From its summit the mind's eye of the first man saw all the ills which in after years should afflict humanity. These harrowing sights were such a weight upon the man, who, notwithstanding his sin in the garden, was yet a good man, that his foot left its imprint upon the solid rock, his tears forming a lake, the footprint and lake being both still visible. The footprint itself is 5½ feet long by 2½ feet wide and shows six perfect toes, the smaller one being as large as a good sized man's fist. For centuries devout Buddhists have made annual pilgrimages to the spot, and tradition says that the chain bridge across the canyon near the sacred footprint was put there by the direction of Alexander the Great.

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