
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

LIFE AND WORSHIP IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

SIDELIGHTS FROM ADDISON'S "*SPECTATOR*."

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ADVISEDLY I write *Sidelights*, for it was no part of the *Spectator's* intention to supply his readers with a treatise on the life and practices of the Church. There is much which is not even alluded to on which we should like to know the opinion of Addison and Steele. How glad we should be to know what Addison thought of the use of the Athanasian Creed in public worship! We may surmise that he would have anticipated King George the Third, who forbade its use in the Royal Chapels; but we do not know. We may wish that there were essays on Church discipline, or on Church patronage, and its manifold abuses, which were rapidly reaching a climax when the *Spectator* was written. The writers might have enlightened us with respect to the Societies connected with the Church of England, especially the Propagation Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which were then starting on their beneficent careers; how we should have appreciated an essay on the relations of clergy and laity! And surely Addison missed his opportunity of affording his readers both good sense and entertainment in ignoring the wrangles of the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation, whose voice was so soon to be silenced for nearly a century and a half. On Church architecture, indeed, Addison's view is well known, for he has given us very good reason for believing that he followed the fashion in thinking with Sir Christopher Wren that the great cathedrals of the middle ages were "vast and gigantic buildings, but not worthy of the name of architecture"; for we cannot forget that many of his contributions to the *Spectator* are disfigured by sneering allusions to the Gothic style of building.

The business of the *Spectator* was that of the critical observer. He went about with his eyes and ears wide open to report what he saw and heard. Church-life, like every other branch of life, was the subject of observation and criticism; and, from what we read in the

pages of the *Spectator*, we gain some insight into the ecclesiastical and religious life of the period.

It may be well to start with the thought that in the pages of the *Spectator* we are listening to the voice of confirmed, though not violent, Whigs. The days of Richard Steele's fanatical Whiggism were yet in the future; Addison could not have been violent if he had tried. As Whigs, then, we find them expressing a very cordial aversion from popery, which, in those days of the Pretender, was of necessity bound up with the hopes and intrigues of the Jacobite. Accordingly, we must not be surprised to find that Addison is inclined to make the worst rather than the best of the papist. Thus, he condemns the Roman Catholic religion as "one huge, overgrown body of childish and idle superstitions." Having made this sweeping statement, he proceeds to pour ridicule on the Roman priest's love of dress. The Jesuits in more than one of his essays have to bear the full weight of his ridicule and displeasure.

The Act of Toleration (1689) had to a great extent removed the disgrace of persecution and intolerance from our statute book, but the day of full toleration was still somewhat distant when Addison wrote, for there were Acts still in force against Roman Catholic and Unitarian, and it is pleasant to find him supporting with his powerful pen a liberal policy towards those from whom he differed. "In that disputable point of persecuting men for conscience' sake, besides the imbittering their minds with hatred, indignation, and all the vehemence of resentment, and insnaring them to profess what they do not believe, we cut them off from the pleasures and advantages of society, afflict their bodies, distress their fortunes, hurt their reputations, ruin their families, make their lives painful, or put an end to them. Sure, when I see such dreadful consequences rising from a principle, I would be as fully convinced of the truth of it, as of a mathematical demonstration, before I would venture to act upon it, or make it a part of my religion."

Addison leaves us in no doubt as to his attachment to the Church of England as by law established. "I look upon it as a peculiar happiness, that were I to choose of what religion I would be, and under what government I would live, I should most certainly give the preference to that form of religion and government which is established in my own country. In this point I think I am determined by reason and conviction; but if I shall be told that I am

actuated by prejudice, I am sure it is an honest prejudice; it is a prejudice that arises from the love of my country, and therefore such a one as I will always indulge." In the mind of Addison the union of Church and State was a sacred thing fraught with blessing to the whole community.

By the time that the *Spectator* was given to the world the Puritan regard for the Lord's Day had, in theory at least, and in a modified form, triumphed over the laxity encouraged by authority in the earlier part of the seventeenth century. Sunday wakes had been abolished, the Book of Sports was a dead letter, and no one seemed to regret the disappearance of the Laudean Sunday. If, in the fashionable world, the disregard for the Lord's Day was undisguised, a better example was set by the large and influential middle class. Addison's thoughts on Sunday are very pleasant, if not deeply spiritual: "I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the Churchyard as a citizen does upon the change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place, either after sermon, or before the bell rings."

Addison proceeds to take us inside the sacred building, and places before us the entertaining picture of Sir Roger de Coverley in his parish church. Sir Roger, who has already evinced his interest in the spiritual welfare of his neighbours by gifts of hassocks and books, and by hiring an itinerant musician to train the village choir, is the central figure of the worshipping people. He keeps the congregation in good order: "he will suffer no one to sleep but himself, and if by any chance he has been surprised into a short nap at ser-

mon, upon recovering out of it, he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. The sermon ended, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The Knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side, and every now and then he enquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see in church, which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent." This and much more that is amusing: it may be that there is a spice of exaggeration and caricature in the sketch that Addison draws; but the picture admirably illustrates Mr. Courthope's remark, " the features of surviving feudalism have been inimitably preserved for us in the character of Sir Roger de Coverley."

We are naturally interested to hear what *Spectator* has to say about the preaching of his day. We have not read far before finding that Archbishop Tillotson is his ideal. Preaching was never the power in the eighteenth that it had been in the seventeenth century. The written discourse had taken the place of the spoken sermon, and a philosophy of morality was superseding the Gospel of redemption. From Addison's hearty approval of Sir Roger's practice we may infer that he had spent weary hours in listening to sermons that did not commend themselves to his critical faculty. Sir Roger's own practice is described in one of the Coverley papers. " ' At his (i.e., the domestic chaplain's) first settling with me,' says Sir Roger, ' I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday he would pronounce one from the pulpit.' As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the Knight's asking him who preached to-morrow (for it was Saturday night) told us the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year; where I saw with a great deal of pleasure Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity." After listening, on the following day, to the words of the Bishop of St. Asaph and Dr. South, Addison thus delivers himself: " I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example,

and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by great masters. This would be not only more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people." *Spectator's* most serious criticism of the preaching he hears relates to its lack of animation and emotion. He institutes a comparison, or rather contrast, between the English and the foreign preacher. "Our orators are observed to make use of less gesture or action than those of other countries. Our preachers stand stock still in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermons in the world." This lack of vivacity and accompanying gesture, it is urged, mars the effect of the best sentiments on the ignorant and illiterate. Voltaire passes much the same judgment on English preaching. "Discourses," he says, "aiming at the pathetic, and accompanied with violent gestures, would excite laughter in an English congregation. In the pulpit they affect the most unornamented simplicity. In England a sermon is a solid, but sometimes a dry dissertation, which a man reads to the people without gesture, and without any particular exaltation of voice."

And if you go to Westminster Hall (where the judges then sat) and listen to the rhetorical efforts of the bar, you will find the same characteristics. "How cold and dead a figure in comparison of these two men (*Spectator* has been alluding to Demosthenes and Cicero) does an orator make at the British bar, holding up his head with the most insipid serenity, and stroking the sides of a long wig that reaches down to his middle! The truth of it is there is often nothing more ridiculous than the gestures of an English speaker; you see some of them running their hands into their pockets as far as ever they can thrust them, and others looking with great attention on a piece of paper that has nothing written in it; you may see many a smart rhetorician turning his hat in his hands, moulding it into several different cocks, examining sometimes the lining of it, and sometimes the button during the whole course of his harangue. A deaf man would think he was cheapening a beaver, when perhaps he is talking of the fate of the British nation. I remember when I was a young man, and used to frequent Westminster Hall, there was a counsellor, who never pleaded without a piece of pack-thread in his hand, which he used to twist about a

thumb or a finger all the while he was speaking: the wags of those days used to call it the thread of his discourse, for he was unable to utter a word without it. One of his clients, who was more merry than wise, stole it one day from him in the midst of his pleading, but he had better have left it alone, for he lost his cause by his jest."

Addison has a characteristic allusion to the fashionable practice of introducing tags of Latin and Greek into the sermon. Such quotations were held to distinguish the scholarly from the illiterate preacher. "I have heard of a couple of preachers in a country town who endeavoured which should outshine the other, and draw together the greatest congregation. One of them being well versed in the Fathers, used to quote every now and then a Latin sentence to his illiterate hearers, who, it seems, found themselves so edified by it that they flocked in greater numbers to this learned man than to his rival. The other, finding his congregation mouldering every Sunday, and hearing at length what was the occasion of it, resolved to give his parish a little Latin in his turn, but being unacquainted with any of the Fathers, he digested into his sermons the whole book of *Quæ genus*, adding, however, such explications to it as he thought might be for the benefit of his people. He afterwards entered upon *As in præsenti*, which he converted in the same manner to the use of his parishioners. This, in a very little time, thickened his audience, filled his church, and routed his antagonist."[1]

In No. 539 *Spectator* vents his indignation against a juvenile cleric who had ventured, in the pulpit, to improve upon Tillotson, an unpardonable offence in the eyes of Addison, in whose judgment Tillotson stood for all that was sound, rational and edifying. A correspondent of the *Spectator* has been to church, and has heard a sermon preached by "a young gentleman that looked as if he was just come to the gown and a scarf." The sermon was Tillotson's well-known composition on evil speaking, but was so altered that it was difficult to recognize the Archbishop's handiwork. The young gentleman "made so many pretty additions, and he could never give us a paragraph of the sermon, but he introduced it with something which, methought, looked more like a design to show his own

[1] *Quæ genus* and *As in præsenti* were the first words in collections of rules in the Latin Grammar then in use, compiled by William Lilye, to which Erasmus and Dean Colet contributed, and of which Cardinal Wolsey wrote the preface.

ingenuity, than to instruct the people. In short he added and curtailed in such a manner that he vexed me; insomuch that I could not forbear thinking that this young spark was as justly blameable as Bullock or Penkethman, when they mend a noble play of Shakespeare or Jonson." [1]

Spectator is greatly dissatisfied with the reading that he hears in church. This dissatisfaction is expressed in a long and circumstantial letter from an imaginary correspondent, who suggests that the inability of the clergy to read as they should proceeds from " the little care that is taken of their reading while boys and at school, where, when they are got into Latin, they are looked upon as above English, the reading of which is wholly neglected." It would be well if the clergy would attend a reading class, and the writer advises that an instructor might be found in the Vicar of St. James's, Garlick Hill. This was one Philip Stubbs, afterwards Archdeacon of St. Albans.[2] If the clergy will only take him for their model, " those who are afraid of stretching their mouths, and spoiling their soft voices, will learn to read with clearness, loudness and strength. Others that affect a rakish, negligent air by folding their arms, and lolling on their book will be taught decent behaviour, and comely erection of body. Those who read so fast, as if impatient of their work, may learn to speak deliberately. There is another sort of persons whom I call Pindaric readers, as being confined to no set measure; these pronounce five or six words with great deliberation, and the five or six subsequent ones with as great celerity: the first part of a sentence with a very exalted voice, and the latter part with a submissive one: sometimes again, with one sort of tone, and immediately after with a very different one." These various types of readers will do well to receive instruction from the Rev. Philip Stubbs, and so may learn the " art of reading movingly and fervently, how to place the emphasis, and give the proper accent to each word, and how to vary the voice according to the nature of the sentence."

[1] William Bullock, b. 1657 (?) d. 1740 (?); William Penkethman, d. 1725, popular actors of the day.

[2] Philip Stubbs, born 1665, died 1738, began his public career as Rector of Woolwich. For some years he held the combined benefices of St. James's, Garlick Hill, and St. Alphege, London Wall. In 1710 he became Rector of Launton, near Bicester, and, in 1715, Archdeacon of St Albans. He drew up the first Report of the S.P.G., was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a competent antiquary.

Spectator has but little to say as to the structure of the liturgy, but he gives as his reason for perferring set forms of prayer to extemporaneous utterance, or "conceived prayer," as it was termed, that the worshipper is thus saved from the extravagance of fanaticism and the vagaries of eccentricity.

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(*To be concluded.*)

STUDIES IN TEXTS.

Suggestions for Sermons from Current Literature.

By the Rev. Harrington C. Lees, M.A.

IX. LABOUR PROBLEMS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Texts: "Whatsoever is right I will give."
"Thou hast made them equal unto us" (St. Matt. xx. 4, 12).

[Book of the Month: Parables of the Kingdom,[1] by Swete=S. Other reff. Plummer's *St. Matthew*=P. Bruce's *Training of the Twelve* =B. David Smith's *In the Days of His Flesh*=DS. *Expositor' Greek Test.*=EGT.]

Odd to hear labour criticizing an employer for overpayment, and declaring against equality. But unless something bigger than Law and better than contracts animates either employer or employed, there will always be trouble. This was St. Peter's fundamental mistake in xix. 27. It is dealt with in xix. 30; xx. 8, 12, 16. The subject of St. Matthew's Gospel is God's Kingdom as ushered in and made possible by Christ. But this is full of possibilities of misunderstanding. "*The Kingdom of God* is the *imperium* of God, and not the area or the people over which it is exercised" (S. 6). "It is purely spiritual and ethical, a sovereignty exerted over men's hearts and lives by the Divine Spirit swaying the human spirit and co operating with it" (S. 7). "It is really complex in

[1] Prof. H. B. Swete's *Parables of the Kingdom*, published by Macmillan, 7/6 net. All Dr. Swete's work carries the mark of industry, reverence and insight. This book is excellent, and expository preachers will be glad to have it and to utilize it.