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

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

SOME MEMORIES OF MY YOUTH.

By the Rev. J. D. Mullins, D.D.

MY earliest recollection of a church is of a vast corrugated-iron structure which stood on the site of the present St. Matthew's Church, Cheltenham. At some previous date the ancient parish church of St. Mary had been closed for repairs, including the removal of its galleries, which had perhaps become dangerous. The "Temporary Church," as it was called, could hold considerably over a thousand people, and continued to be used long after the repairs were finished because the reduced accommodation of St. Mary's was not nearly sufficient for the congregations which crowded the other. It had a two-decker pulpit, the prayers being read from the lower and the sermon preached from the upper "deck." The preachers always wore the black gown and bands.

The face I most remember is that of the benign and venerable-looking Dr. Walker. He had succeeded the famous Francis Close in 1857, being then only thirty-four, and became Rector instead of Perpetual Curate when the chancel was purchased six years later. I have called him venerable looking; he was not really old, for he died at the age of forty-nine.

I have no hesitation in saying that no succeeding rector has been worshipped as was Dr. Walker. The long inscription to his memory in the old Parish Church is evidently the tribute not of conventional respect but of ardent love struggling to find words strong enough to express itself. It speaks of him as:

> "A Pastor to whom a sweet and powerful character, an active and penetrating mind and many eminent gifts and graces gave a rare and abiding influence and whose work, carried on with unsparing self-denial and unwearied zeal, in conscientious adherence to the doctrine and discipline of the Reformed Church of England, was marked in a special manner by the presence of power from on high.
>
> "This tablet is erected by attached parishioners and friends who glorify God for his holy life and peaceful death."

Then follow a long string of texts to the same effect. The inscription continues:

> "His remains were followed to the grave by thousands of his mourning fellow-townsmen."

This was literally true. I believe that all denominations and institutions were represented in that great procession. I myself was one of the followers, probably as one of the representatives of the Sunday School. I remember that about that time I was kept behind one Sunday afternoon and presented with a framed portrait of the Rector; why, I have forgotten, but the choice was a small but significant evidence of the honour in which the teachers held him.

As a small boy—he died when I had just entered my teens—I could not of course know at first hand of all his manifold activities, but I remember some. For instance, he conducted schoolroom

lectures on such subjects as the Miracles and the Parables, to which I was taken by my mother. I got into sad disgrace by complaining that whatever was the subject with which the lecture began, it always came round to the same thing in the end, and that was some presentation of "the plan of salvation" as it used to be called. In those days it was considered essential that every address should contain the gospel message of salvation.

I also remember a wooden pulpit being carried out in the summer evenings to one or other of the poorer streets in turn, when great crowds would assemble to hear the Rector preach.

He was a staunch Protestant, too, and the Roman controversy was much studied under him. Withal he stoutly defended the Irish Church against the assaults of the local Dissenters, for Gladstone was in process of disestablishing it, and the Rector had debates with the leading Congregationalist minister on the subject.

Dr. Walker must have had a touch of humour, for years afterwards the Rev. William Gray, the India Secretary of the C.M.S., told me that when the C.M.S. Committee, searching for a successor to the great Henry Venn, sent round to their leading supporters a description of the qualities they desired in an honorary secretary, Dr. Walker replied that they had better apply to the Archangel Gabriel, for nowhere on earth would they find a man with such a combination of gifts.

The shock of his death at the early age of forty-nine was intensified by the fact that his eldest son, a promising young clergyman, had died only a month before. The affection of the townsfolk took the practical form of a subscription of about £3,000 for the Rector's widow. This sum James Walker, the surviving son, very honourably returned to the town authorities after his mother's death, and it became a fund for charitable objects.

I came to know James Walker quite well in later years. He was a strange character. At Oxford he had swept the board of all the University prizes in the theological school except the Kennicott Hebrew Scholarship, which a flaw in its statutes enabled a middle-aged Presbyterian minister to carry off. Walker was so profound a Hebrew scholar that when, as I struggled with the Hebrew text of the early chapters of Genesis for my ordination examination, I took my difficulties to him, he was quite unable to see what those difficulties were. With all his learning his critical powers must have been weak, for he once produced for my inspection a trumpery paper-backed book of American "spook" stories and spoke of it with gravity as if it had been a work of authentic narratives. Under the influence of his friend Henry Bazely, whom I mentioned in a previous article, Walker left the Church of England and joined the Established Church of Scotland. He had a little tin tabernacle on the Prestbury Road, and used also to hold services in one of the Cotswold villages, travelling over lonely roads at night with his dog. In addition to this he was for years the chaplain to the local fever hospital, which he visited fearlessly. With this inherited devotion he combined some curious idiosyncrasies. Thus he told me that he esteemed it a favour

to be allowed to go and sit beside the dead. He continued his unobtrusive labours for many years and died so recently as 1911.

THE REV. ARTHUR HOSKINS.

Sometime after the great Rector's death, my father went to live in the parish of St. Peter, one of the poorest in the town. Thus, first as a school boy and a young Sunday School teacher, and more intimately as I grew older, I came to know the Rev. Arthur Hoskins, its vicar. He was a character who might have belonged to a former generation. He never wore a collar but always a soft white neck-cloth or cravat wound twice round the neck and the ends tied in the ordinary clerical white tie. Anyone can see the like in clerical portraits of about a hundred years ago. His deeply lined, clean-shaven face was grave in repose, but lighted up with a whimsical smile as he told one of his numerous old-time stories. He lived alone in a large vicarage, so large that he could have separate rooms for use in summer and in winter. He had been Curate to old Canon Linton at St. Peter-le-Bailey, Oxford, where his fame as a preacher was such that, as Bishop Chavasse told me later, heads of colleges would attend his afternoon sermons. He was in terror of women; but I often thought there must have been a tragedy in his life, for when showing me a family group of the Lintons, naming each in turn, he paused at one face and said, "And she was a very charming person, and she died."

He showed me many kindnesses. When I was to go up to Oxford to sit for my scholarship he offered to take me, telling my father that as he knew Oxford he could make arrangements for me more easily than my father could. So he went up with me, and quartered me on the Rev. Sidney Linton, the son of his own old rector and now himself Rector of Holy Trinity, one of the poor parishes of the city. Sidney Linton was a fine, upstanding, athletic man, and I remember my astonishment at seeing a football in a corner of the sitting-room, for a sport-loving parson was a species previously unknown to me. A year afterwards he was appointed Bishop of Riverina, New South Wales, a most trying bush diocese.

When at home during my undergraduate life I saw a good deal of Mr. Hoskins, for Oxford and the classics gave us many topics in common. Whilst that intercourse gave me great pleasure, I have no doubt that he on his side enjoyed being able to discuss literature with some one, and tell his old classical stories, for his parishioners were all uneducated folk and he saw very few others. It was he who first introduced me to George Herbert and who lent me Quarles' *Emblems*. As I write that name, two little quotations come back to my mind:

> Man is man's A B C. There's none that can
> Read God aright, unless he first spell man.

and

> Man is the stairs by which his knowledge climbs
> To God although it often-times
> Stumbles for want of light.

The quotations may be inaccurate, for I have never met the book since then.

Mr. Hoskins was at Oxford about the year 1850, but he could tell of still older days. He mentioned a man who had been scholar of Balliol, when Balliol was unimportant, and Fellow of Worcester when Worcester was the leading college of the university: but times changed, and the good man lived to boast of having been scholar of Balliol and to drop allusions to his Fellowship of Worcester.

He told me legends of the centenarian Vice-Chancellor Routh, who was said to have married a lady born in the very year in which he became President of Magdalen. Towards the end of his life the old man was asked by some admirer—was it Burgon or Rigaud?—for an aphorism:

"Could you tell me, sir, of any maxim which in the course of your life you have found to be a guiding principle?"

The old man replied, "Verify your references."

The same story, I understand, is told of Bentley. Perhaps Dr. Routh merely passed it on.

Less valuable was Dr. Routh's reply to another question: "How, sir, would you recommend anyone to begin the study of theology?"

"I think," he answered, "yes—I think I should advise him to begin with the study of St. Matthew's Gospel."

"And then, sir?"

"Well, after that I think—yes, I certainly think—he should proceed to study St. Mark."

And so on to the other Gospels. Elementary, of course, but perhaps some of our modern theologians would have benefited by a deeper study of those works. *Bonus textuarius, bonus theologus* was an ancient proverb.

This reminds me that my friend himself laid strong emphasis on Bible study. I remember his quoting to me the lines:

> This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
> Towards a third, which ten leaves off doth lie.

The services at St. Peter's were of the simplest kind. The choir, of course unsurpliced, sat in the chancel, going straight to their places as they came in, for I do not think there was then a choir vestry. I fancy the psalms were read. As was usual in those days, besides Morning Prayer and the Ante-Communion, the Litany always formed part of the morning service. It is curious that I remember Mr. Hoskins making a slip in reading it for several Sundays in succession, saying, "From all *civy consprivacy* and rebellion." No one noticed the slip but my unregenerate self. Of course it would now be called a "Spoonerism," which is really an unconscious mental process to which everyone is liable.

His preaching was always in simple language. Years afterwards, when he had left St. Peter's for St. James' Church, where there was a more well-to-do and educated congregation, this character of his sermons was remarked upon. Old Mr. Thomas Mozley, a famous

Times correspondent of a former day, said to him, "They tell me that your sermons are full of Saxon English." That was true, and the Saxon English, due to Mr. Hoskins' anxiety to be understood by his humbler hearers Sunday after Sunday for seventeen years, had become an ingrained characteristic.

My intercourse with Mr. Hoskins continued throughout my undergraduate life, but after I took my degree I lived in London, and my visits to Cheltenham became fewer. His removal to a church nearly two miles away from my home made it difficult to see much of him even during those visits. After I became ordained in 1886 I was seldom in Cheltenham, though I remember having once read the service for my old friend. Thus I gradually lost touch with him, and we had never corresponded. In 1895 he gave up his living and I hardly heard of him again. He was always a reserved and solitary man, and I never heard of his having any relatives. Also he used to express his horror at the idea of a clergyman's dying rich, and I sometimes fear that his generosity may have left him in poor circumstances before the end. He died in a boarding house at Alsager in Cheshire about 1904. But he lives in my memory as a devout, scholarly, courteous, quietly humorous and generous soul.

I have jotted down some of my old friend's classical stories at the close of this article.

A Scene in St. Peter's.

Soon after Mr. Hoskins had been preferred to a distant church as above mentioned, I happened to be in Cheltenham on a Sunday and to witness a curious scene at St. Peter's. It must have been the first "Communion Sunday" after the arrival of the new vicar.

It had been Mr. Hoskins' old-fashioned custom to pronounce the Benediction from the pulpit and thus close the service. The non-communicating congregation then left. Collections then and at all other times were made at the church door, the churchwardens standing on either side, plate in hand. The doorway being a broad one, it was easy for the economically minded to keep in the middle with their eyes straight in front of them and fail to see either plate. When all of them had gone, the service of Holy Communion began with the Prayer for the Church Militant.

The new vicar proposed to alter all this. He explained in his sermon that morning that collections would in future be made from pew to pew, and that the morning service would be ended with the Church Militant Prayer. Alas! the congregation failed to take in the news, which seemed to have been sprung on them thus for the first time. The sermon over, a hymn was given out, and behold! there were the churchwardens beginning to pass round the plates from pew to pew! Some persons, struck with panic, gathered up their belongings and fled before the plate could reach them. Others, hardier souls, awaited the shock, passed the plate firmly, and then made their way to the doors. The hymn being finished, the vicar was seen to be at the Holy Table and was heard beginning the Church

Militant Prayer. At once the remainder of the congregation became convinced that they were being let in for Holy Communion! With one accord they streamed out of the church, choir and all. I can still see in my mind's eye the startled face of the vicar as he looked up at the tramp of the feet and saw the exodus. By the time he had finished the prayer hardly a soul besides myself was left in the church: they were all in the churchyard excitedly discussing the—doubtless Popish—innovations of the vicar. I fear it took the poor man a long time to recover from the effects of that unfortunate sermon.

Mr. Hoskins' Stories.

In former times, it seems "Moderations" consisted in a formal debate in the presence of a don known as a moderator, who sat to listen to a pair of examinees arguing before him in Latin on some given topic, and passed or ploughed them according to their proficiency. A certain pair were thus debating when they observed that the moderator was nodding. So one, having exhausted the topic in hand, to keep up the conversation, said:

"*Video quosdam homines longos nasos habentes.*"

Whereupon the other replied:

"*At ego, quosdam shortos nasos habentes.*"

At which very unfamiliar word the old don woke up. I think this must have been a venerable chestnut of a much earlier generation.

Dean Gaisford of Christ Church, to whom Oxford owes the Gaisford Greek Prize, was a man to whose favour Greek scholarship was a sure passport. This bias led him to urge his daughter Ann to accept a suitor whom she did not like.

"But, my dear," said the Dean, "he has a perfect knowledge of the particle '*an*.'"

"No doubt, sir," replied his daughter, "but I may claim to have a knowledge of the particle '*men*.'"

Here is a story based on the old Latin Grammar, written itself in Latin:

In the early part of the last century there was a member of the Cabinet named Colonel Sibthorp, who was conspicuous in a clean-shaven House of Commons for his "walrus" or "Old Bill" moustache. A fatuous M.P. one day accosted him:

"I say, Sibthorp, do you know—of course, one can't help one's thoughts, can one?—but you always remind me of *propria quæ maribus*."

"Indeed," replied Sibthorp. "Well, as you say, one can't help one's thoughts. Whenever I see you I can't help thinking of *as in presenti*."

Here is another. A doctor and a clergyman had met at a funeral, and the doctor, to improve the occasion and perhaps also to show that he had not forgotten his Latin, remarked, "Ah, well! *Favet fortuna fortibus*."

" Don't you mean," replied the clergyman, " the next example in the Latin Grammar, ' *Mors est communis omnibus* ' ? "

In those days every educated person was supposed to be acquainted with Horace and Virgil, not to say the other classical authors. They were quoted frequently, and a false quantity was a crime unpardonable. It was, I think, in an Irish law court that an unfortunate man mispronounced the word *nimirum*, to the horror of all who heard him. But Curran good naturedly came to his aid :

" Don't you remember, my lud," he said to the judge, " that even in Rome only one person understood the word, for Horace says ' Septimius, Claudi, nimirum intelligit unus ' ? "

[In Horace's *Epp.* i. 9, the words " Quanti me facias," which follow, make all the difference to the meaning.]

Another Horatian story. Lord North, one of George the Third's ministers, had a rather extravagant son who was trying to get an additional allowance out of his father :

" Do you know, sir," said he, " I'm so hard up that I have had to sell my mare."

" You shouldn't have done that," replied his father. " Don't you remember what Horace says : ' *Equam* memento rebus in arduis servare ' ? "

Readers who have not the second book of Horace's *Odes* at hand may be reminded that the actual text is :

" *Aequam* memento rebus in arduis servare *mentem*."

No doubt this was the Lord North before whom a cleric had to preach who wanted to get a vacant bishopric. So by way of a broad hint the preacher took for his text, " Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south."

ETERNAL TRUTH IN THE ETERNAL CITY. By the Rev. J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D. *London : Foyle's Welsh Press, Charing Cross Road, W.C.* 5*s*.

A few weeks after the publication of this volume, the gifted author " passed over." Born in 1841 and called to the ministry in 1865 he had for many years occupied a front-rank position among Welsh preachers. For a time he ministered in London at Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury, but he returned to Wales eventually. It is significant that Dr. T. T. Lucius Morgan, who contributes the Foreword to this volume of sermons, tells us that " the Welsh Renaissance, symbolized by the founding of the University of Wales, has affected the Welsh pulpit adversely . . . the New Learning has deprived the pulpit of much of its distinctive Celtic expression—the intensity of which was an element of power ; and the theological position in Wales has changed." He says again : " These pages present the sunset splendours of a great ministry, unclouded by shadows of Modernism." They certainly ring true to the old Evangel and will be welcomed by many preachers.