

# ANECDOTES, INCIDENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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## Wanted—A New Song!

There was a Wesleyan preacher in England, Peter Mackenzie, full of native humor, a most godly man. He was once preaching from the text: "And They Sang a New Song," and he said:

"Yes, there will be singing in heaven, and when I get there I will want to have David with his harp, and Paul, and Peter and other saints gather around for a sing. And I will announce a hymn from the Wesleyan Hymnal. 'Let us sing hymn No. 749—'

My God, my Father, while I stray—

"But some one will say, 'That won't do. You are in heaven, Peter; there's no straying here.' And I will say, 'Yes, that's so. Let us sing No. 651—'

Though waves and storms go o'er my head,  
Though friends be gone and hopes be dead—

"But another saint will interrupt, 'Peter, you forget you are in heaven now; there are no storms here.' 'Well, I will try again, No. 536—'

Into a world of ruffians sent—

"'Peter! Peter!' some one will say, 'we will put you out unless you stop giving out inappropriate hymns.' I will ask—what can we sing? And they will all say:

"'Sing the new song, the song of Moses and the Lamb.'"

### Nothing to Hold On To

It is related of an atheist who was dying that he appeared very uncomfortable, very unhappy and frightened. Another atheist who stood at his bedside said to him:

“Don’t be afraid. Hold on, man, hold on to the last.”

The dying man said: “That is what I want to do, but tell me what to hold on to?”

### What Could the King Do?

In the second century they brought a Christian before a king, who wanted him to recant and give up Christ and Christianity, but the man spurned the proposition. But the king said:

“If you don’t do it, I will banish you.”

The man smiled and answered, “You can’t banish me from Christ, for He says He will never leave me nor forsake me.”

The king got angry, and said: “Well, I will confiscate your property and take it all from you.”

And the man replied: “My treasures are laid up on high; you cannot get them.”

The king became still more angry, and said: “I will kill you.”

“Why,” the man answered, “I have been dead forty years; I have been dead with Christ, dead to the world, and my life is hid with Christ in God, and you cannot touch it.”

“What are you going to do with such a fanatic?” said the king.

### Always Praising

A man was converted some years ago, and he was just full of praise. He was living in the light all the

time. He used to preface everything he said in the meeting with "Praise God!"

One night he came to the meeting with his finger all bound up. He had cut it, and cut it pretty bad, too. Well, I wondered how he would praise God for this; but he got up and said:

"I have cut my finger, but, praise God, I didn't cut it off!"

If things go against you, just remember they might be a good deal worse.

#### Not at all Absurd

A man said to me some time ago, "Moody, the doctrine you preach is most absurd: you preach that men have only to *believe* to change the whole course of their life. A man will not change his course by simply believing."

I said—"I think I can make you believe that in less than two minutes."

"No, you can't," he said; "I'll never believe it."

I said, "Let us make sure that we understand each other. You say a man is not affected by what he believes, that it will not change the course of his actions?"

"I do."

"Supposing," I said, "a man should put his head in at that door and say the house was on fire, what would you do? You would get out by the window if you believed it, wouldn't you?"

"Oh," he replied, "I didn't think of that!"

"No," I said, "I guess you didn't."

Belief is the foundation of all society, of commerce, and of everything else.

### Not Too Great for Cæsar

It is said that on one occasion when Cæsar gave a very valuable present, the receiver replied that it was too costly a gift. The Emperor answered that it was not too great for Cæsar to give.

Our God is a great King, and He delights to give gifts to us: so let us delight to ask Him for great things.

### A Good Samaritan

I remember the first good Samaritan I ever saw. I had been in this world only three or four years when my father died a bankrupt, and the creditors came and swept away about everything we had. My widow mother had a cow and a few things, and it was a hard struggle to keep the wolf from the door. My brother went to Greenfield, and secured work in a store for his board, and went to school. It was so lonely there that he wanted me to get a place so as to be with him, but I didn't want to leave home. One cold day in November my brother came home and said he had a place for me. I said that I wouldn't go, but after it was talked over they decided I should go. I didn't want my brothers to know that I hadn't the courage to go, but that night was a long one.

The next morning we started. We went up on the hill, and had a last sight of the old house. We sat down there and cried. I thought that would be the last time I should ever see that old home. I cried all the way down to Greenfield. There my brother introduced me to an old man who was so old he couldn't milk his cows and do the chores, so I was to do his errands, milk his cows and go to school. I looked at the old man and saw he was cross. I took a good look at the wife and thought she was crosser than the old man. I stayed

there an hour and it seemed like a week. I went around then to my brother and said:

"I am going home."

"What are you going home for?"

"I am homesick," I said.

"Oh well, you will get over it in a few days."

"I never will," I said. "I don't want to."

He said, "You will get lost if you start for home now; it is getting dark."

I was frightened then, as I was only about ten years old, and I said, "I will go at daybreak to-morrow morning."

He took me to a shop window, where they had some jackknives and other things, and tried to divert my mind. What did I care for those old jackknives? I wanted to get back home to my mother and brothers; it seemed as if my heart was breaking.

All at once my brother said, "Dwight, there comes a man that will give you a cent."

"How do you know he will?" I asked.

"Oh! he gives every new boy that comes to town a cent."

I brushed away the tears, for I wouldn't have him see me crying, and I got right in the middle of the sidewalk, where he couldn't help but see me, and kept my eyes right upon him. I remember how that old man looked as he came tottering down the sidewalk. Oh, such a bright, cheerful, sunny face he had! When he came opposite to where I was he stopped, took my hat off, put his hand on my head, and said to my brother:

"This is a new boy in town, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, he is; just came to-day."

I watched to see if he would put his hand into his

pocket. I was thinking of that cent. He began to talk to me so kindly that I forgot all about it. He told me that God had an only Son, and He sent Him down here, and wicked men killed Him, and he said He died for me. He only talked five minutes, but he took me captive. After he had given me this little talk, he put his hand in his pocket and took out a brand new cent, a copper that looked just like gold. He gave me that; I thought it was gold, and didn't I hold it tight! I never felt so rich before or since. I don't know what became of that cent; I have always regretted that I didn't keep it; but I can feel the pressure of the old man's hand on my head to-day. Fifty years have rolled away, and I can hear those kind words ringing yet. I never shall forget that act. He put the money at usury; that cent has cost me a great many dollars. I have never walked up the streets of this country or the old country but down into my pocket goes my hand, and I take out some money and give it to every forlorn, miserable child I see. I think how the old man lifted a load from me, and I want to lift a load from some one else.

Do you want to be like Christ? Go and find some one who has fallen, and get your arm under him, and lift him up toward heaven. The Lord will bless you in the very act. May God help us to go and do like the good Samaritan!

#### Covetous Till Death

An English clergyman was called to the death-bed of a wealthy parishioner. Kneeling beside the dying man the pastor asked him to take his hand as he prayed for his upholding in that solemn hour, but he declined to give it. After the end had come, and they turned down

the coverlet, the rigid hands were found holding the safe-key in their death-grip. Heart and hand, to the last, clinging to his possessions, but he could not take them with him.

#### He Had his Eyes Opened

The story is told of a boy whose parents took him to Florida to spend the winter. He returned to his city home, disgusted with the country he had been in. It was dull, stupid, and uninteresting, he said. During the next few months, however, he was in charge of a tutor who was an enthusiastic botanist, and he kindled the boy's interest in his favorite study. The boy learned about orchids, and their strange life. His tutor took him to a conservatory that he might see some of them growing.

"You should see them in Florida," the tutor said, "they are much better there; but these will give you an idea."

The boy looked at him in amazement.

"I have been in Florida," he said, "but I never noticed any of them."

"Perhaps you did not look for them," the tutor answered; "but they will not escape you the next time."

That is often the way with the Bible. A person sees no beauty in it, but the Holy Spirit is ready to open the eyes of our understanding and teach us. It may be by some sermon or book which will lift a truth out of its hiding-place, and give it an application to our life it never had before.

#### A True Proverb

An Arab proverb runs thus: "The neck is bent by the sword, but heart is only bent by heart." Love is irresistible.

**Are You Seeking Rest?**

A lady in Wales told me this little story: An English friend of hers, a mother, had a child that was sick. At first they considered there was no danger, until one day the doctor came in and said that the symptoms were very unfavorable. He took the mother out of the room, and told her that the child could not live. It came like a thunderbolt. After the doctor had gone the mother went into the room where the child lay and began to talk to the child, and tried to divert its mind.

“Darling, do you know you will soon hear the music of heaven? You will hear a sweeter song than you have ever heard on earth. You will hear them sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. You are very fond of music. Won't it be sweet, darling?”

And the little tired, sick child turned its head away, and said, “Oh, mamma, I am so tired and so sick that I think it would make me worse to hear all that music.”

“Well,” the mother said, “you will soon see Jesus. You will see the seraphim and cherubim and the streets all paved with gold”; and she went on picturing heaven as it is described in Revelation.

The little tired child again turned its head away, and said, “Oh, mamma, I am so tired that I think it would make me worse to see all those beautiful things!”

At last the mother took the child up in her arms, and pressed her to her loving heart. And the little sick one whispered:

“Oh, mamma, that is what I want. If Jesus will only take me in His arms and let me rest!”

Dear friend, are you not tired and weary of sin? Are you not weary of the turmoil of life? You can find rest on the bosom of the Son of God.

### Humility

Some years ago I saw what is called a sensitive plant. I happened to breathe on it, and suddenly it drooped its head; I touched it, and it withered away. Humility is as sensitive as that; it cannot safely be brought out on exhibition. A man who is flattering himself that he is humble and is walking close to the Master, is self-deceived. It consists not in thinking meanly of ourselves, but in not thinking of ourselves at all. Moses wist not that his face shone. If humility speaks of itself, it is gone.

### A New Man in Old Clothes

A man got up in one of our meetings in New York some years ago, who had been pretty far down, but a wonderful change had taken place, and he said he hardly knew himself. He said the fact was, he was a new man in his old clothes.

That was just it. Not a man in new clothes, but a new man in old clothes.

I saw an advertisement which read like this: "If you want people to respect you, wear good clothes." That is the world's idea of getting the world's respect. Why! A leper may put on good clothes, but he is a leper still. Mere profession doesn't transform a man. It is the new nature spoken of in 2d Corinthians, 5th chapter, 17th verse, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

### Proud of Their False Religions

I do not believe there is any false religion in the world that men are not proud of. The only religion of which I have ever heard, that men were ashamed of,

is the religion of Jesus Christ. Some time ago I preached two weeks in Salt Lake City, and I did not find a Mormon that was not proud of his religion. When I came within forty miles of Salt Lake City, the engineer came into the car and wanted to know if I wouldn't like to ride on the engine. I went with him, and in that forty mile ride he talked Mormonism to me the whole time, and tried to convert me so that I would not preach against the Mormons. I never met an unconverted Chinaman who wasn't proud of being a disciple of Confucius; and I never met a Mohammedan who wasn't proud of the fact that he was a follower of Mohammed; but how many, many times I have found men ashamed of the religion of Jesus Christ, the only religion that gives men the power over their affections and lusts and sins. If there was some back-door by which men could slip into heaven, there would be a great many who would want to enter it, but they don't like to make public confession.

#### This is Our Hope

A bright young girl of fifteen was suddenly cast upon a bed of suffering, completely paralyzed on one side and nearly blind. She heard the family doctor say to her parents as they stood by the bedside—

“She has seen her best days, poor child!”

“No, doctor,” she exclaimed, “my best days are yet to come, when I shall see the King in His beauty.”

That is our hope. We shall not sink into annihilation. Christ rose from the dead to give us a pledge of our own rising. The resurrection is the great antidote for fear of death. Nothing else can take its place. Riches, genius, worldly pleasures or pursuits, none can bring us consolation in the dying hour. “All my possessions for a mo-

ment of time," cried Queen Elizabeth, when dying. "I have provided in the course of my life for everything except death, and now, alas! I am to die unprepared," were the last words of Cardinal Borgia. Compare with these the last words of one of the early disciples: "I am weary. I will now go to sleep. Good night!" He had the sure hope of awaking in a brighter land.

### The Blind Man and the Lantern

I remember reading of a blind man who was found sitting at the corner of a street in a great city with a lantern beside him. Some one **went up to him and** asked what he had the lantern there **for**, seeing that **he** was blind, and the light was the same to him as the darkness. The blind man replied:

"I have it so that no one may stumble over me."

Dear friends, let us think of that. Where one man reads the Bible, a hundred read you and me. That is what Paul meant when he said we were to be "living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men." I would not give much for all that can be done by sermons, if we do not preach Christ by our lives. If we do not commend the Gospel to people by our holy walk and conversation, we shall not win them to Christ.

### How Prophecy is Fulfilled

Dr. Cyrus Hamlin tells the following story. While he was in Constantinople soon after the Crimean War, a colonel in the Turkish army called to see him, and said:

"I want to ask you one question. What proof **can** you give me that the Bible is what you claim it to be—the word of God?"

Dr. Hamlin evaded the question, and drew him into

conversation, during which he learned that his visitor had traveled a great deal, especially in the East in the region of the Euphrates.

“Were you ever in Babylon?” asked the doctor.

“Yes, and that reminds me of a curious experience I had there. I am very fond of sport, and having heard that the ruins of Babylon abound in game, I determined to go there for a week’s shooting. Knowing that it was not considered safe for a man to be there except in the company of several others—and money being no object to me—I engaged a sheik with his followers to accompany me for a large sum. We reached Babylon and pitched our tents. A little before sundown I took my gun and strolled out to have a look around. The holes and caverns among the mounds which cover the ruins are infested with game, which, however, is rarely seen except at night. I caught sight of one or two animals in the distance, and then turned my steps toward our encampment, intending to begin my sport as soon as the sun had set. What was my surprise to find the men striking the tents! I went to the sheik and protested most strongly. I had engaged him for a week, and was paying him handsomely, and here he was starting off before our contract had scarcely begun. Nothing I could say, however, would induce him to remain. ‘It isn’t safe,’ he said. ‘No mortal flesh dare stay here after sunset. In the dark ghosts, goblins, ghouls, and all sorts of things come out of the holes and caverns and whoever is found here is taken off by them and becomes one of themselves.’ Finding that I could not persuade him, I said, ‘Well, as it is I’m paying you more than I ought to, but if you’ll stay I’ll double it.’ ‘No,’ he said, ‘I couldn’t

stay for all the money in the world. No Arab has ever seen the sun go down on Babylon. But I want to do what is right by you. We'll go off to a place about an hour distant and come back at daybreak.' And go they did. And my sport had to be given up."

"As soon as he had finished," said Dr. Hamlin, "I took my Bible and read from it the 13th chapter of Isaiah: 'And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures: and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.'"

"That's it exactly," said the Turk when I had finished, "but that's history you've been reading."

"No," answered Dr. Hamlin, "it's prophecy. Come, you're an educated man. You know that the Old Testament was translated into Greek about three hundred years before Christ." He acknowledged that it was. "And the Hebrew was given at least two hundred years before that?" "Yes." "Well, wasn't this written when Babylon was in its glory, and isn't it prophecy?"

"I'm not prepared to give you an answer now," he replied. "I must have time to think it over."

"Very well," Dr. Hamlin said, "Do so, and come back when you're ready and give me your answer."