

A SUNDAY MORNING ESSAY ON NOTHING

By REV. R. H. WHITAKER.



Dr. R. H. Whitaker.

No, I haven't an idea. Can't think of an incident nor an anecdote, nor of anything else to write about for next Sunday, and, were it not for the fact that some fifty thousand readers, more or less, would be disappointed, when they open their Sunday papers, I think I'd snip. But that won't do. I must not admit that I can't write. Without a subject. Some people wouldn't believe that. They have an idea that all a writer has to do is to take the pencil in hand and let it have its way, and it will go right ahead, just as naturally as if pencil, pad and writer were a piece of machinery, run by electricity. Having made a sort of reputation for writing, I must keep it up; or, to put the matter in another way, I'm on exhibition every Sunday, and the children, of whom I look out for my picture when the paper is received, must not be disappointed; nor must I fail to give the reader something that is readable.

As nothing presents itself for a theme, I believe I'll write about nothing. A very poor theme I admit, for there is nothing in nothing. Nothing added to nothing makes nothing, and nothing taken from nothing leaves nothing. Anything is a nothing that fails to do what it is intended to do, and anybody is a nothing who fails to do what he might do.

The barren fig tree was a nothing, because, failing to bear fruit, it could do nothing else. Everybody must admit that a fruitless fig tree is not only worthless, but, in its rankness of growth, it keeps something else from growing in its place, which might be a blessing.

The Saviour said "If the salt have lost its savor it is thenceforth good for nothing, and it only to be trodden under foot of men."

Taking this as a definition of nothing, it is easy to see that nothing is to be found everywhere, and, being nothing, they cannot be made greater nor smaller—better nor worse. Nothing is and nothing is not, and nothing is not to remain.

Among metals there are a great many nothings, like the fig tree, are barren and are cumberers of the ground, and, not being likely to improve, are doomed to be cut down, or like the salt which has lost its savor, must, sooner or later, be trodden under foot.

Some of the nothings of this world are very deceptive in appearance. They are the best dressed people—men and women; and seen at a distance, they seem to be all right; but on closer view, they are very disappointing—they are thinking nothing, consequently doing nothing to better the world. Like Hoses said of Israel, many a promising looking mortal, but "an empty vessel bearing no fruit—not even a bloom."

The Saviour said: "Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit, and bearing it, shall glorify the Father, doing what one can to make the world better, which of course means to glorify God."

In a society there are thousands of nothings—men and women, too, who do not, in any wise, contribute to the general good. They have talent, and time and opportunity; but the world has never been better by their having lived in it. Thousands—no, may I not say millions—live through the day and sleep through the night, without doing anything more than gratifying their own desires and appetites. They are unappetizing empty vines—or salt that has no savor—therefore nothing.

It might surprise one to know how many nothings there are in the church. Of course I do not presume to know any of them; but that there are many we are all bound to admit, because of the slow progress the church is making.

If I understand the meaning of the parable of the talents, I am sure the talent ones are nothings, and, so far as making mankind better they had as well be out of the world, as to be in it. From the teaching of that parable, it is very clear that every mortal is expected to multiply himself—that is to say—every one is to use the talent he has received as to make another, beside himself, wiser, better and happier.

Te Lord commended those who received two and five talents, because they multiplied them; but, the one who received one talent, and hid it, was condemned and cast out.

To ascertain how many nothings there are in the church, let one enquire of the pastors, as to how many new members come in each year. It is safe to assume that each Christian can prevail with and bring into the church one person, in the course of a life time. Better than that, it is safe to say, that each Christian can bring in a new man every year. If that were done, what might not the millions and hundreds of millions, who profess to love Christ, accomplish? But the trouble is in the "nothings" who are in the majority; consequently the work is hard upon those who are endeavoring to conquer the world for Christ.

Let us then, think over the matter and each decide for himself and herself whether he or she is salt without savor—a nothing doing nothing—or a live wire full of life and light and heat serving the Lord.

A quarter of a million of dollars is what the newspapers say, is the cost of the wedding of Miss Marion Fish, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, who is to be married to Mr. Albert Zabriskie Gray in June.

This wonderful trousseau, one gown alone, cost \$50,000, the reason for which is, that it is trimmed with some rare old laces worn in the coronation robes of Empress Catherine of Russia.

People of ordinary intelligence—especially those who have been reared

sure I have been very low in spirits and imagined I was looking as badly as I had been feeling. But, when I walked out on the streets of Kenly with my new clothes on, everybody said I was looking splendid. My coat fitted so nicely and made me look so clerical, that I felt like to like to marry again and have me for the person. Another lady said I looked "real good," while another said, she never saw me look half so well.

I had been getting all the spring and didn't think I was growing any better, if indeed, I was holding my own; but strange to say I had not gone half way from the depot to Edgerton's store before I began to feel a slight better, and I improved all the time I was there.

I was the guest of Miss Emma Matthews, who, daughter-like, did all she could to make me comfortable and pleasant, not forgetting to lay in a supply of cigars for my use while there. I went to see as many of the good people as I could, made a talk before the Epworth League Friday night, and preached on Sunday in brother Ormond's church, and took dinner with him on Monday.

He is in high favor with his people, and I am sure he is fond of them. Monday I came home a little tired, but otherwise much improved.

I could truthfully say something complimentary of all the people, and wish I could; but, lack of space puts it out of the question to allude, by name, to all of them. Kenly has as good people as to be found in any town. And still they come and, all the time the town is growing.

I don't like goats and I must acknowledge, I don't like, when plucked for a quarter of lamb, for the butcher to send me a quarter of goat; though when properly cooked goat eats very much like lamb.

When I meet a billy goat—one with a long beard—I generally let him take his choice of ways, and I go the other. I don't think goats like me, though I can't remember that I ever did one any harm. One reason why I do not like goats is because they are not particular enough about their diet. When I see one eating old shoes and tin cans, and looking as impudent as that other old fellow with horns and hoofs that we read about, can't help disliking him.

Ex-Governor John P. St. John said, he and an Irishman who owned a goat and who also owned a red flannel shirt. One day Pat came home to get his red flannel but his wife told him that she hung it on the line to dry, and the goat ate it.

"It'll kill that goat," said Pat running for his axe.

"Don't kill him with an axe," pleaded the wife. "He'll run on the railroad track and let the train run over and kill him."

Pat soon had him roped and tied on the track; and pretty soon a long freight train came thundering along, but just before it reached the goat it came to a dead halt.

A few minutes later Pat reached the house leading the goat.

"Ain't that goat dead yet?" asked the wife.

"No, he is as alive as I am," said Pat.

"How's that?" asked the wife.

"Why," said Pat, "when the goat saw the train coming he coughed up the red shirt and flagged the train."

I don't ask any of my readers to believe that I did, but they who know much about goats, will admit that a long bearded Billy can come as near flagging a train as any other animal of his size and weight.

The reason I happened to think of goats, I passed a farm not long since and counted seventy-five, of various colors, ages, and sizes. The farmer told me that he furnished the chest and best meat he could raise, and according to what he said about them I guess it is so. Still I don't like goats; though I sometimes think I like to have one or two "old billys" to eat all the old empty tin cans, boxes and broken crockery that are thrown into my garden by some unknown persons. I am sure that two or three would keep fat on them.

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THE SOUTHERN CANDIDATE

(THE COMMONER.)

There is considerable talk just now of a Southern candidate for the Presidency, and there is no reason why a Southern candidate should not be considered upon the same basis as candidates from the Northern States. The time has passed when the sectional arguments of the St. Louis convention of 1894 Mr. Bryan insisted that Senator Cockrell, though a Confederate soldier, would poll more votes than the Northern candidates whose positions upon public questions are in doubt or whose position, if known, was out of harmony with the opinions of the members of his party.

By all means let the Southern statesman be considered; let them stand side by side with their Northern brethren and let the choice fall upon the man who, no matter where he lives, best represents the aspirations of the party and best reflects the desires of Democratic voters. No candidate should be urged merely because he comes from the North or the South, or from the East or from the West. Local pride is a very much overestimated asset in a campaign. Comparatively few decide public questions on that basis. New York and Indiana being doubtful States, for many years claimed the candidates on the ground that local popularity would turn the elections, but it has been found that the movements which elect or defeat candidates are wider than State boundaries.

The New York Sun is the latest champion of a Southern man and its desire for a Southern candidate is based not upon its fitness to serve the people but upon his conservatism, and the meaning which the Sun gives to the word conservatism is well understood. It insists that the South should present a candidate who is opposed to Rooseveltism. Roosevelt having acquired popularity by the endorsement of several Democratic doctrines—such as railroad, trust, protection and an income tax—the Democratic party should at once repudiate these things which have given the President popularity and seek the sup-

port of the financiers whom the President has offended. This was the very argument that was made at St. Louis in 1904. We were told that the President was very unpopular with Wall street and that a safe and sane candidate who had the confidence of the business element would be able to finance his campaign in Wall street and win an easy victory. The party tried it and that bait will not serve again.

Let Southern candidates be presented upon their merits. Let them be brought forward as champions of Democratic ideas and they will find the North ready to listen. Papers like the Sun have overworked the conservatism of the South. Gov. Hoke Smith of Georgia, won his campaign by attacking railroad influence in politics and by demanding regulation. Governor Cromer won his fight in Alabama along the same lines. Governor Campbell, of Texas, made speeches in favor of railroad regulation which would brand him as an anarchist according to the South and an anarchist according to the North. Here are three recent victories in three prominent Southern States which tend to show that the masses of the South are more willing to be ridden by the corporations than are the masses of the North. There are many Democrats in the South who would poll the full Democratic strength of the North, but papers like the Sun do not mention them, for such papers have no more interest in a Southern man who is really democratic than they have in a Northern man who is Democratic. Because such papers are the organs of predatory wealth. Their praise dawns any man upon whom they lavish it and their opposition commitments those who are honored with it.

The South furnishes most of the electoral votes of the Democratic party, but it does not furnish a majority of the Democratic voters. In 1896 New York cast 51,000 Democratic votes, more than Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi combined. Pennsylvania cast

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