

**JEREMY TAYLOR: A SKETCH
OF HIS LIFE AND
TIMES, WITH A POPULAR
EXPOSITION OF HIS WORKS**

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Jeremy Taylor: a sketch of his life and times, with a popular exposition of his works by George Worley

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GEORGE WORLEY

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*A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES,
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OF HIS WORKS*

BY

GEORGE WORLEY

Diocés. Roffen, Lector

"Such delights
As float to earth, permitted visitants!
When in some hour of solemn jubilee
The massive gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open: and forth come in fragments wild
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatched from beds of Amaranth,
And they that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales."

—S. T. COLERIDGE.

Religious Musings.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE

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1904

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
EDWARD,
LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,
THIS ESSAY IS INSCRIBED,
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS FAITHFUL AND IMPARTIAL
ADMINISTRATION OF A LARGE DIOCESE,
OF HIS AFFECTIONATE INTEREST IN THE
ORDER OF LAY-READERS,
WHICH PROMISES TO BE ONE OF ITS MOST POTENT AGENCIES,
AND OF HIS PERSONAL KINDNESS TO ONE OF ITS
MEMBERS.

P R E F A C E.

THE popularity which Jeremy Taylor's works once enjoyed is shown in the following extract from an author, born less than four years after Taylor's death: "We see the Reverend Doctor's Treatises standing, as it were, in the front of this order of authors, and as the foremost of those Good Books used by the politest and most refined Devotees of either sex. They maintain the principal place in the study of almost every elegant and high Divine. They stand in folios and other volumes, adorned with variety of pictures, gildings, and other decorations, on the advanced shelves in glass cupboards of the lady's closets. They are in use at all seasons, and for all places; as well for Church Service as Closet Preparation; and, in short, may vie with any devotional books in British Christendom."¹

¹ Earl of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, iii., 327.

From the high estate here described they have fallen into a condition of undeserved neglect, and that chiefly among the people to whom such reading would be most useful, *viz.*, the lay members of the Church of England.

It is mainly to my fellow laymen that the following pages are addressed. They are the result of a great deal of reading in Taylor's own works, as well as in the writings of his contemporaries and commentators, whether friendly or otherwise; and they aim at presenting the subject in an easy and popular form, in the hope that some may be attracted to it, and perhaps induced to complete for themselves a study to which they are here introduced. In other words, I simply desire to create an appetite to be gratified elsewhere, or to point out the way which the traveller may pursue alone at his leisure. To this end I have appended a Bibliography to the volume, containing a list of Jeremy Taylor's works, and a selection of other books and papers which may be usefully consulted as throwing light upon them, in addition to those referred to in the text.

The special object of this essay will explain why certain matters, with which the regular student is already well acquainted, are here dwelt on at length, while others (*e.g.*, the Bishop's career in

Ireland) are lightly touched on as less interesting, or less useful at present, to the reader immediately addressed.

While preparing my notes for the press I was gratified at the appearance of Mr. Edmund Gosse's admirable biography, which I thought would more than answer my own purpose, and, as the work of an expert, would render the publication of anything else unnecessary or injudicious. It has been pointed out to me, however, that the scope of the series to which the distinguished writer had contributed would preclude the consideration of Taylor's theology, which was quite as necessary to a full understanding of the great divine as the literary aspect on which his biographer was bound to dwell, and even more necessary for the particular readers I hoped to secure. In short, it seemed clear that there was plenty of room for two works, in which the same subject was treated so differently, and whose objects were far enough apart to prevent anything like a collision between them. Further than this, although I am conscious of the apparent act of presumption in entering a field already so well occupied, I am encouraged to go on with the publication by this very coincidence, inasmuch as it is most likely that Mr. Gosse's work will have helped to revive a general

interest in the neglected author, to which I am hoping to contribute in a special direction.

As regards Taylor's theology, I have confined myself to an exposition of it as deduced from his own statements, neither qualifying nor suppressing anything to accommodate his opinions to those of any particular school or party within or without the Church of England. If I have misinterpreted him in any doctrinal point, as is not unlikely when dealing with an author of his known ambiguity, I shall be only too glad to be set right.

In conclusion, I have to express my grateful acknowledgments to my friends Messrs. W. A. Kalk, A. W. Nott and A. F. Tait, for their valuable help and counsel; also to Dr. J. Venn, the Historian, and Dr. J. S. Reid, the Librarian of Gonville and Caius College, for their courteous readiness to give information and facilities during the preparation of this little work.

GEORGE WORLEY.