

The night when God got Oysters

Written by Calvin Fox

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The early Methodist meetings were often led by lay preachers with very limited education. On one occasion, such a preacher took as his text Luke 19:21, "Lord, I feared thee, because thou art an austere man." Not knowing the word "austere," he thought that the text spoke of "an oyster man." He spoke about the work of those who retrieve oysters from the sea-bed. The diver plunges down from the surface, cut off from his natural environment, into bone-chilling water. He gropes in the dark, cutting his hands on the sharp edges of the shells. Now he has the oyster, and kicks back up to the surface, up to the warmth and light and air, clutching in his torn and bleeding hands the object of his search. So Christ descended from the glory of heaven into the squalor of earth, into sinful human society, in order to retrieve humans and bring them back up with Him to the glory of heaven, His torn and bleeding hands a sign of the value He has placed on the object of His quest. Twelve men were converted that evening. Afterwards, someone complained to Wesley about the inappropriateness of allowing preachers who were too ignorant to know the meaning of the texts they were preaching on. Wesley, simply said, "Never mind, the Lord got a dozen oysters tonight."

written by James Kiefer in today's Morning Prayer (Mission of St Clare)