

**EUTYCHUS AND HIS  
RELATIONS: PULPIT  
AND PEW PAPERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649578405

Eutychus and His Relations: Pulpit and Pew Papers by Brooke Herford

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**BROOKE HERFORD**

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# EUTYCHUS

AND HIS RELATIONS

**Pulpit and Pew Papers**

BY

BROOKE HERFORD

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
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BOSTON  
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

1905

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I.

A 'LAY' VIEW OF SLEEPING  
IN CHURCH.

FOR my part I pity Eutychus. He has been held up as a warning to sleepy congregations, and his falling down set forth as a judgment, by grave old divines of the precise Puritanical school, who could not appreciate the difficulty of keeping the attention fixed through long sermons, especially such sermons as their own. The clerical mind has a curious faculty of exaggerating small ecclesiastical offences, and while on most subjects entertaining very enlarged views and charitable feelings, has no sympathy with the little difficulties of the laity in these matters. I wish, therefore, to present a *lay* view of the subject.

It has a strange attraction for me. I have read those few verses in the twentieth chapter of Acts, again and again, and I love to touch



## A 'LAY' VIEW OF

and retouch the quaint little picture of the early church which they have left upon my mind. I seem to sit among the eager people grouped together in that little upper-room at Troas. Paul is on his way to Jerusalem, and the foreboding is strong upon his spirit that he shall never see them again. We do not know what he said,—Luke had taken ship and gone on before to Assos, so he was not there to tell us—but there are no more touching words in all the Acts than his farewell to the elders of Ephesus, given at the end of the same chapter; and it would be in much the same strain that he would speak to these poor folk at Troas, that last Sabbath-night of his brief stay. Have you never seen a crowded little preaching-room, away in some back street or country place,—a small, low room over a couple of cottages, with many lights stuck here and there against the walls, and homely long-headed weavers and poor women eagerly crowding to hear, and children sleeping heavily in the close hot air, and many faces peering in at the door. I think of such sights which I have seen many a time among the Methodists, when I was a young man, as often as I read of



## SLEEPING IN CHURCH

Eutychus. Poor young man, who has not seen him sitting, 'fallen in a deep sleep.' I dare say he was as fond of Paul as any of them, and listened lovingly at first. But 'Paul was long preaching,' and 'continued his speech until midnight'; and so at last, what with the heat, and the lights, and some of the apostle's longer points about the Judaizing teachers and the dead works of the law, gradually the words began to melt into a pleasant dreamy flow of sound, and his head bowed down in that 'deep sleep.'

What a break in the midst of his touching words, when at last poor Eutychus over-balanced as he sat on the window-ledge, and suddenly his feet flew up and he disappeared with a heavy fall! How the people would rush out with lights and crowd about him, till Paul came down and knelt bending over him, with such a deep, longing prayer that he might be spared, and soon could say, to the great joy of the wondering friends, 'Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him.'

What a lesson for poor Eutychus! I don't think he would go to sleep in chapel again for a long time, and when he did, he would take care *not to sit in a window!*

## A 'LAY' VIEW OF

It would have been well, indeed, if he had impressed more care on that head upon his relations and descendants. History affords some remarkable illustrations of the hereditary descent of family peculiarities. It is said that slave-hunters could detect the slightest taint of 'colour' by looking at the thumb-nail of suspected persons who to all appearance were of pure European blood. So indications, more or less marked, of descent from Eutychus have been from time to time discovered in some modern families. And it were to be wished that their respectable ancestor had cautioned his descendants to be careful to choose places where, if the family-failing should overtake them, they will neither injure themselves nor inconvenience others, nor cause scandal to the minds of weak brethren.

Of *themselves*, perhaps, they are sufficiently careful. They do not sit in windows,—perhaps because these are inconveniently built now-a-days; but how often, in such little preaching-rooms as I have mentioned have I seen a man, evidently lineally descended from Eutychus, after vainly trying to sit upright in the middle of a narrow fo