

Biblical Allusions in Reading Class Texts: Help or Hindrance?

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1. Introduction

The phrases of the Bible, particularly those of the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible, pervade English language and literature. This may be true even of children's literature beyond the elementary stage. Just as English literature frequently contains references to the Classics, Shakespeare and other famous authors, which the educated reader is expected to recognise for what they are, so in the case of the Authorized Version of the Bible: "Our literature is threaded through and through with references to it. The authors take it for granted that their readers will understand" (Selby-Lowndes 47). Biblical literacy is declining in the English speaking world, but for native speakers who recognise biblical quotation for what it is, there is an enrichment of the text. However, for non-native speakers of English, particularly those from a non-Christian background, this is not likely to be the case.

This paper will consider the use of biblical phrases and allusions in two works studied in the Second Year Reading course at Kwassui Women's College, *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea* by L. M. Montgomery (hereafter abbreviated as AGG and AA respectively). It will discuss the extent to which such allusions are accessible to students who may not be

very familiar with the biblical background involved, and may not recognize biblical phrases in English even when they do know, in Japanese, the story which is being referred to.

If the biblical background is completely unknown, whether an allusion can be understood or not will depend to some extent on the difficulty of the vocabulary it contains, and to a great extent on the students' understanding of the context in which it occurs. First we will consider cases where, even though a biblical phrase is being quoted, meaning is clear from context. Secondly, we will look at cases where the general idea can be understood from context, but an understanding of the quoted biblical phrase adds depth to the meaning. Such cases will be divided into two categories: those examples which contain a proper name, and more general examples which do not. Thirdly we will consider cases where meaning is obscure unless the biblical phrase being quoted is recognized and understood. Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotations are from the Authorized Version, as this would seem to be the version that L. M. Montgomery knew and was quoting from.

2. Cases where meaning is clear from context

The following are three examples of biblical quotation which makes sense in its own right without background knowledge.

2. 1. "Rejoicing as a strong man to run a race"

In *Anne of Green Gables*, before her final year of study for entrance examinations, Anne has spent the summer relaxing and enjoying herself. By September she is enthusiastic about resuming her studies.

“I feel just like studying with might and main,” she declared as she brought her books down from the attic . . . “I’ve had a perfectly beautiful summer, Marilla, and now I’m rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, as Mr Allan said last Sunday. Doesn’t Mr Allan preach magnificent sermons?” (AGG 207, my underline)

Although the reference to a sermon suggests that this could be a biblical image, the comparison between a strong man’s readiness to run a race and Anne’s readiness to return to her studies is clear without knowledge that this is a quotation from Psalm 19:5, and not helped by the awareness that the original comparison is describing the sun.

2. 2. “A prophet has no honour in his own country”

The second example of this type is in *Anne of Avonlea*, where we find the following description of Uncle Abe Andrews.

The said ‘Uncle Abe’, it may be mentioned, was at least like other prophets in that he had small honour in his own country. He was, in fact, considered in the light of a standing joke, for few of his weather predicitions were ever fulfilled. (AA 101, my underline).

This last sentence is reinforced by the suggestion that Avonlea people forecast the weather by asking Uncle Abe for his predictions and expecting the opposite. It is clear, then, that the underlined portion above refers to the fact that Uncle Abe is not respected for his weather predictions in his home town, and that the rest of the sentence means that such lack of local

respect is true of all prophets. It is not necessary for understanding to know that the reference is to Jesus' words about himself in John 4:44, "A prophet hath no honour in his own country," which we can see in parallel verses in Matthew and Mark to have been occasioned by the incredulity of the people of his home town when confronted by the idea that he was something special. If a student chooses to look, however, Kenkyusha's New English Japanese Dictionary lists, under 'prophet', Luke's rendition of the phrase, "No prophet is accepted in his own country," with the explanation "yogensha wa ono ga sato ni te yorokobaruru koto nashi."

2. 3. "Times and seasons"

The third example comes when Anne has, yet again, had to put up with discouraging comments from her classmate, Josie Pye. She writes to Diana, "There are times and seasons even yet when I don't feel that I've made any great headway in learning to like Josie Pye!" (AGG 214, my underline). Various expressions using the words 'times' and 'seasons' occur throughout the Bible, one of them in 1 Thessalonians 5:1: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write to you." This itself is a reference back to Jesus' answer to his disciples' question concerning whether or not he intends to make Israel a kingdom again immediately: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). Without knowing this, however, the students can probably understand that 'times and seasons' can be taken as an emphatic way of saying 'times'. Even if they misunderstand 'seasons' as referring to the four seasons, there is no serious interference with general understanding. In any case, knowledge of the biblical phrase is not directly

helpful for understanding, as the English translation does not capture the full sense of the original Greek. In the phrase as it appears in Thessalonians, “times” translates the Greek “chronos” – “duration, or time viewed in its extension”, whereas “seasons” translates “kairos” – “fit time” or “the right moment” (Rienecker 600). This distinction has been lost in the phrase as Montgomery uses it, and is not relevant to the point that Anne wishes to make about her feelings toward Josie.

3. Cases where general meaning can be ascertained from context

In many cases where there is a reference to or from the Bible it is possible to get a general idea of what is meant from the context. However, an understanding of the biblical background will add to appreciation of the text. We will discuss such examples under two headings: first, those cases where the biblical reference includes mention of the name of a person or a place, and second, more general references which do not contain mention of a proper name.

3. 1. References containing proper names

There are a number of allusions which mention a proper name from the Bible, but we note here references to Eden, Eve, Gabriel, Gilead, Job, Jonah and Nazareth. In the cases discussed, even if the proper name means nothing to the students, the general sense of what is being said can probably be understood.

3. 1. 1. The Garden of Eden and Eve

The first reference to Eden is made when Anne and Diana are driving in the hills on a beautiful September day. We are told that there is:

. . . a plump brown pony ambling along the road; two girls behind him, full to the lips with the simple, priceless joy of youth and life. “Oh, this is a day left over from Eden, isn’t it, Diana?” and Anne sighed for sheer happiness. (AA 40, my underline)

Without knowing anything about Eden, it is clear in context that it must have been somewhere pleasant and beautiful, somewhere which had wonderful, happy days like the one Anne and Diana are experiencing. Knowledge that Eden is the name of the garden where, according to the biblical narrative, the ancestors of mankind, Adam and Eve, were first placed (Genesis 2:8), merely emphasises the idea that this is a truly wonderful day.

The second reference to Eden is made on a spring evening in Avonlea. Anne and Marilla are sitting talking on the front doorstep, and Anne is happy and appreciative of the beauty around her. “[I]n May one simply can’t help being thankful ... that they are alive, if for nothing else. I feel exactly as Eve must have felt in the garden of Eden before the trouble began” (AA 180, my underline). This reference is a little more difficult, but it can be understood to be about a person who was surrounded by beauty and glad to be alive, although later experiencing difficulties. In the biblical account, Eve, the first woman created by God (Genesis 3:20), and her husband, Adam, started life in the beautiful Garden of Eden where they had everything they needed and no troubles. This blissful state was not to last, however, and “the trouble began” when Eve was tempted by the

serpent to eat fruit from a tree which God had forbidden her even to touch, and then to give some to Adam, actions which resulted in both of them being expelled from Eden (Genesis 3). Thereafter they were to know pain and toil and hardships, so that Anne's reference to Eve's feelings "before the trouble began" suggests a state of perfect happiness and oneness with nature normally unknown to humankind. Therefore, although it is possible to work out something general about Eve's situation from the context of Anne's situation and her conversation with Marilla, to someone familiar with the story of Adam and Eve, the reference is emphasising Anne's happiness at being alive.

3. 1. 2. The Angel Gabriel

In our next example, Marilla is talking to herself about Anne, who is nowhere to be seen when she should be in the kitchen preparing tea.

"Just as she grows out of one freak she takes up with another. But there! Here I am saying the very thing I was so riled with Rachel Lynde for saying at the Aid today. . . . Anne's got plenty of faults, goodness knows, and far be it from me to deny it. But I'm bringing her up and not Rachel Lynde, who'd pick faults in the Angel Gabriel himself if he lived in Avonlea." (AGG 178, my underline)

Here, even if the name Gabriel is unknown, it is clear that it is the name of an angel, and that the point of the reference is that Rachel Lynde is so critical of everyone that even an angel would not be able to satisfy her. Knowing the name might help to strengthen this point, in that although in

the New Testament Gabriel is only referred to as an angel, in the Apocrypha (1 Enoch 20:7) he is named as one of the seven archangels (Metzger and Coogan 238), and he is considered as an important angel in Christian tradition generally. In fact, our students might recognize his name from the Christmas story in which it is Gabriel who brings Mary the news that she will give birth to the Messiah (Luke 1:19).

3. 1. 3. “Balm in Gilead”

The reference to “balm in Gilead” occurs at a point in the story when Prince Edward Island has just experienced the worst hailstorm in living memory, and suffered widespread damage. After the storm Davy, one of the children living with Anne and Marilla, is commenting on how the damage has affected him personally. “My garden was all squashed flat,” he continued mournfully, “but so was Dora’s,” he added in a tone which indicated that there was yet balm in Gilead” (AA 186, my underline). This phrase is somewhat obscure if the Biblical reference is not known, as the word “balm” is not particularly common in modern English, and if used usually refers to a kind of resin or healing ointment. In context, Davy would not seem to be talking about ointment. However, if a sufficiently large dictionary is used, it can be found that another meaning of “balm” is “a thing that calms the mind” (OALD, balm 2), or, “a soothing restorative agency” (Webster’s, balm 5). Davy, then, can find comfort in the fact that his sister’s garden has suffered just as much damage as his own.

In fact, the original biblical idea of balm in Gilead did refer to ointment, and has come by extension to refer to anything restorative. Perhaps the most notable reference to it is the prophet Jeremiah’s cry bewailing the

continuing misery of his people: “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of . . . my people recovered?” (Jeremiah 8: 22). Gilead was an area, now part of Jordan, where the balsam tree grew, and it was from the resin of this tree that the ointment which Jeremiah appears to have in mind was made. This ointment, or balm, is associated with Gilead from early in the Old Testament stories. When Joseph’s brothers sell him to a party of Ishmaelite traders, the traders are carrying spices and balm and myrrh from Gilead down to Egypt to sell (Genesis 37:25). Jeremiah’s question “Is there no balm in Gilead?” is “asking whether any remedy could be found, any consolation offered, to ease the pain of a people in deep spiritual trouble” (Ehrlich and Scott 19), but it is a rhetorical question as Jeremiah sees no remedy for the situation. As the balm of Gilead was considered to be particularly effective (NIV Study Bible 64), the question is really a suggestion that even the most effective relief known will not provide any comfort; i.e. nothing can have any positive effect on the terrible situation being experienced by Jeremiah’s people. In *Anne of Avonlea*, then, when Davy thinks that there is still balm in Gilead, it means that there is still comfort to be found.

3. 1. 4. Job’s comforting

The “Job’s comforting” referred to is done by Rachel Lynde. Marilla has just told Rachel that she and Matthew are about to adopt an orphan boy. Mrs Rachel, who “pride[s] herself on always speaking her mind” does not think that this is a wise, or safe, thing to do. She cites two cases she knows of where adoptions have caused problems. In one case the adopted child purposely set fire to the house, and in the other the child could not be

broken of the habit of sucking the eggs. Perhaps what troubles her most is that she herself has not been consulted.

“If you had asked my advice in the matter — which you didn’t do, Marilla — I’d have said for mercy’s sake not to think of such a thing, that’s what.”

This Job’s comforting seemed neither to offend nor alarm Marilla. She knitted steadily on. (AGG 12, my underline)

Here “Job’s comforting” evidently refers to what Mrs Lynde is saying, which is clearly a prediction of trouble ahead and no comfort to Marilla at all. It is not clear from the reference here, however, if Job is the subject or the object of the comforting. In fact, Job, the hero of the Old Testament book of the same name, is a righteous man who endures many afflictions, not the least of which is having his friends tell him that only the wicked suffer, so that all of his troubles must be deserved. Job tells his friends: “Miserable comforters are ye all” (Job 16:2). The term “Job’s comforter” therefore means: “One who discourages or depresses while seemingly giving comfort and consolation” (Webster’s). Rachel’s comments are certainly negative, but it can hardly be said that she intends to give comfort. She is a “Job’s comforter” in a very general sense in that she is a friend offering discouragement instead of support, and this much can be understood from the context of the story.

3. 1. 5. A Jonah Day

Chapter 12 of *Anne of Avonlea* is entitled “A Jonah Day.” The chapter

relates how Anne wakes up with toothache and at odds with the world in general. She is bad-tempered with her pupils, and makes a fool of herself when she notices one boy passing a package to another boy and insists that he throw it into the fire. She believes the package to contain cakes, but actually it contains fireworks, and chaos results as the fireworks all explode together. Then her most uncooperative pupil, Anthony Pye, puts a mouse in her desk, and she loses her temper and hits him with the blackboard pointer, in spite of previous declarations that she would never use physical punishment in her classroom. Later, at home, she talks about her day. “‘Oh, this has been such a Jonah day, Marilla. I’m so ashamed of myself. I lost my temper and whipped Anthony Pye.’” Marilla thinks that this is no bad thing, but is sympathetic. “‘You take things too much to heart, Anne. We all make mistakes . . . but people forget them. And Jonah days come to everybody’” (AA 89, my underline).

Reading this chapter with no knowledge of the Biblical character Jonah, one might come to the conclusion that a “Jonah day” was a day when you did something you were ashamed of, a day when you made a mistake, or, more generally, a day when everything went wrong. Such interpretations are in fact sufficient, but understanding is deepened by a knowledge of Jonah’s story, in which things do go very wrong for the protagonist. The Old Testament book of Jonah tells how the prophet of the same name, when told by God to go and preach against Nineveh, instead boarded a ship bound in the opposite direction. However, he was cast overboard during a fierce storm sent by God because of his disobedience, swallowed by a great fish, and vomited up again after three days inside it (Jonah 1–2). Neither Anne’s errors of judgment nor the unpleasantness of

her experiences quite compare with those of Jonah, but we can see why she refers to her day as a “Jonah day”

3. 1. 6. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

Anne and Mrs Lynde are discussing the new children who will be attending the Avonlea school where Anne is to teach. One, although the son of an Avonlea native, has been born and brought up in the United States, and so Mrs Lynde is not sure that he will be a desirable pupil.

“You can never tell about those Yankees.”

Mrs Lynde looked upon all people who had the misfortune to be born or brought up elsewhere than in Prince Edward Island with a decided can – any – good – thing – come – out – of – Nazareth air. They might be good people, of course; but you were on the safe side in doubting it. She had a special prejudice against ‘Yankees’. Her husband had been cheated out of ten dollars by an employer for whom he had once worked in Boston, and neither angels nor principalities nor powers could have convinced Mrs Rachel that the whole United States was not responsible for it. (AA 16, my underline)

Whether or not the reader knows anything about Nazareth, it is clear that for Mrs Lynde, with her suspicions about people not from her own island and her “special prejudice against ‘Yankees,’” the answer to “Can any good thing come from outside Prince Edward Island?” in general, and to, “Can any good thing come from the United States?” in particular, is likely to be, “No!” Nazareth in the quotation must therefore be being used

to suggest somewhere which is unlikely to produce anything, or anyone, good. The reference is actually to a conversation in which Philip and Nathanael, later to become Jesus' disciples, are talking about him.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46)

Clearly Nathanael has a low opinion of Nazareth, the rather obscure village which was Jesus' home town. Matthew suggests that it has been prophesied of the Messiah, "He will be called a Nazarene," but Nazareth is never mentioned in the Old Testament, and neither is this exact prophesy to be found there. It is suggested that, "In Jesus' day 'Nazarene' was virtually a synonym for 'despised'" (NIVSB 1414). For Nathanael, himself from Cana, a neighbouring village (John 21:2), it may have been a case of familiarity breeding contempt.

With the second underlined portion in the quotation above, we turn from biblical citations which contain proper names to more general references.

3. 2. More general references

We deal here with biblical allusions which do not involve a proper name. In the following cases, the general idea can mostly be understood from the context, but familiarity with the quoted biblical phrase may deepen understanding. The quotations discussed are: "Neither angels nor

principalities nor powers”; “children of light”; “lovely and of good report”; “Blessed are they who . . .”; “my own vine and fig tree”; “cumbered with much serving”; “clothed and in her right mind”; and “her eyes were holden.

3. 2. 1. “Neither angels nor principalities nor powers”

In the passage discussed in Section 3. 1. 6. above, it is stated of Mrs Lynde that “neither angels nor principalities nor powers would have convinced her that the whole United States was not responsible” for the fact that her husband was once cheated by an American employer (AA 16, my underline). Even if the word “principalities” is not understood, it is clear that Mrs Lynde’s mind will not be changed even by the strength of influence of angels and powers. The Biblical passage being quoted here reads:

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8: 38-39, my underline)

These verses are a statement of faith in the fact that nothing is strong enough to come between a believer and God’s love. Reference to these verses in connection with Mrs Lynde’s opinion of Americans reinforces the idea that nothing is strong enough to change her low opinion of them.

3. 2. 2. “Children of light”

The reference to “children of light” comes in the author’s comment in support of Gilbert’s opinion that Anne is every day fulfilling her ambition to add beauty to life and to make other people’s lives more pleasant. It has been suggested that here the Bible is being invoked to “applaud” the fact that “Anne’s life ambitions have become quiet and small and harmless” (Epperly 43). Such an interpretation is not likely to occur to our students; they should, however, have little difficulty in understanding the general sense of what is being said.

Anne was one of the children of light by birthright. After she had passed through a life with a smile or a word thrown across it like a gleam of sunshine the owner of that life saw it, for the time being at least, as hopeful and lovely and of good report.

(AA 52, my underline).

There is clearly a connection here between the description of Anne as a child of light and the use of the image of sunshine to talk about her smiles and words and the effect they have. In this sense Anne is being described positively as bright and cheerful, with a good effect on others. The expression “children of light” is used in a number of places in the New Testament; for example, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8), or, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thessalonians 5:5). For this second verse, both the RSV and the NIV have “sons of light” rather than “children of light”, and the

NIV Study Bible adds the note that: “In Semitic languages (such as Hebrew) to be the “son of” a quality meant to be characterised by that quality. Christians do not simply live in the light; they are characterised by light.” Anne, then, is characterised by light and all the positive attributes that that implies.

3. 2. 3. “Lovely and of good report”

This idea is reinforced by the second biblical phrase underlined in the quotation from Anne of Avonlea above. It is explained that when Anne has influenced someone, for a while at least that person sees life as “hopeful and lovely and of good report.” Whereas the phrase “of good report”, meaning “with a good reputation”, is a little difficult, the words “hopeful” and “lovely” make clear that the person concerned sees life positively. Indeed, the phrase “lovely and of good report” is a reference to a biblical injunction to focus on the positive.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

(Philippians 4:8, my underline)

Anne, as a “child of light” herself, is therefore seen to create, at least temporarily, the same positive outlook in others.

3. 2. 4. “Blessed are they who...”

When Anne and Marilla are discussing Anne’s tendency to experience extremes of both anticipation and disappointment, Anne comments that: “Mrs Lynde says, ‘Blessed are they who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed’” (AGG 81, my underline). Mrs Lynde’s opinion, that it is better not to look forward to anything in case it does not come up to expectations, can be clearly understood here, especially as Anne goes on to say: “But I think it would be worse to expect nothing than to be disappointed.” However, to understand the humour here it is necessary to understand that Mrs Lynde is parodying the Beatitudes, where Jesus lists people who are “blessed.” For example:

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
 for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:3-6)

Although not all of the Beatitudes begin, “Blessed are they . . .” the phrase occurs often enough to be recognizable as a pattern, and one which Mrs Lynde is following, even though the Bible verses use “that” or “which” as the next word and Mrs Lynde uses the more natural (to modern ears) “who.” Similarly, “for they shall . . .” follows the Biblical pattern exactly, though the Bible’s consequences are always a positive good, whereas Mrs Lynde’s consequence is the avoidance of something undesirable. Herein lies the humour.

3. 2. 5. “My own vine and fig tree”

The reference to “my own vine and fig tree” occurs when Anne thinks that one of her friends, Miss Lavendar, should go on a trip, and Miss Lavendar’s maid, Charlotta, is explaining why she does not think her employer will go.

“Miss Lavendar hates visiting. She’s only got three relations she ever visits and she says she just goes to see them as a family duty. Last time when she come home she said she wasn’t going to visit for family duty no more. ‘I’ve come home in love with loneliness, Charlotta,’ she says to me, ‘and I never want to stray from my own vine and fig-tree again. My relations try so hard to make an old lady of me and it has a bad effect on me.” (AA 216, my underline)

Here it is clear that Miss Lavendar is emphasizing her wish to stay at home and not go visiting. It would not really matter if the reader thought that Miss Lavendar actually grew vines and fig trees and was announcing her intention not to wander away from her own garden. However, “To dwell under one’s own vine, or fig tree, represents in scripture a time of happiness and prosperity, safety and security” (Cruden 217). The expression is used, for example, when the peace and prosperity that was enjoyed during the reign of King Solomon is being described: “And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:25). Another instance is found in Micah’s prophecy of the peace that is to come in the last days. Micah 4:3, which promises that “[strong nations] shall beat their

swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more,” is the better known verse, but Micah continues: “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it” (Micah 4:4). By referring to her vine and fig tree, then, Miss Lavendar is emphasising her contentment with her own home, and thus her reluctance to leave it.

3. 2. 6. “Cumbered with much serving”

Anne has made great preparations for lunch for guests who, at the last minute, are unable to come. Then the next day they arrive, totally unexpectedly, when Anne is in the middle of housework and has nothing special to give them. However, Anne and Diana between them are able to serve a simple meal, and Anne later comes to think that this may have been better. “I believe we had a nicer time than if we’d known they were coming and been cumbered with much serving” (AA 157, my underline).

Here the reader, even without knowing the rather old-fashioned word “cumbered”, can probably work out from the reference to “much serving” that Anne means that if she and Diana had known that their guests were coming and been able to make full preparations for them there would have been a lot of serving involved. “Cumbered” actually means “burdened needlessly: cluttered up” (Webster’s), thus reinforcing the fact that a lot of work, of questionable value, would have been involved in preparing and serving an elaborate meal. The expression “cumbered with much serving” originates in Luke’s account of Jesus’ visit to the home of two sisters, Martha and Mary. Mary settles down at Jesus’ feet to listen to what he has

to say; Martha is concerned about her role as hostess.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:40-42)

By quoting the description of Martha, who was effectively told not to worry so much about the serving, Anne not only emphasises that “much serving” would have been burdensome, but also implies that it would have been unnecessary. This is especially true considering that what Anne and Diana actually did instead of worrying about the food – listening to their guests and participating in delightful conversation with them – corresponds to “that good part”, chosen by Mary, of sitting and listening.

3. 2. 7. “Clothed and in her right mind”

For the following example, some sense can be made of the biblical phrase from the context of the story, but how much is questionable. In the same chapter as the quotation above, when Anne is caught unawares by the arrival of her guests, she is upset because they seem to be staring at her in a puzzled way. Although she is wearing a very old dress, has a handkerchief tied around her head and is covered in feathers, she thinks that it

should be obvious to anyone that she is in the middle of changing a feather bed, and so there is no need to stare. However, Diana, who arrives by chance just after the guests do, also looks at Anne strangely, and explains that the reason is not the feathers, but Anne's nose, which is bright red. Anne realises that she must have rubbed dye on to it instead of freckle lotion, and is afraid that it will be hard to remove it. Diana goes home briefly to put on more formal clothes and see if she can bring something for lunch, while Anne tries to repair the damage to her nose.

Fortunately the dye washed off easily and Anne, somewhat consoled, betook herself to the east gable while Diana ran home. Presently Anne came down again, clothed and in her right mind. The muslin dress she had fondly hoped to wear was bobbing merrily about on the line outside, so she was forced to content herself with her black lawn.

(AA 155, my underline).

It is clear that "clothed" is related to the fact that Anne has changed her clothes, and we can understand that it makes a contrast with her previous dishevelled state rather than with the possibility of being unclothed. The "in her right mind" part is less obvious; the contrast should be with "not in her right mind", i.e. crazy, whereas she was only somewhat at a loss as to how to proceed. In fact the two expressions go together, and have come to signify a person's orderly appearance and calm state of mind, especially after they have been distressed or in turmoil. The original biblical story portrays an extreme example of such a change. Jesus meets a man who has been possessed by unclean spirits for a long time. The man

wears no clothes, and lives among the tombs. He is violent, and breaks out of any restraints which are used in an attempt to control him. When Jesus commands the spirits to leave, they ask for permission to enter a nearby herd of pigs. As a result the man is healed, but the pigs rush off the edge of a cliff into a lake and are drowned. A report of these events quickly spreads to the people in the surrounding area.

Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. (Luke 8:35)

“Clothed and in one’s right mind”, then, originally refers to a miraculous restoration to normalcy. In Anne’s case, it serves to emphasize the difference between Anne’s former appearance and state of mind – covered with feathers, shocked by the appearance of guests, and despairing over a bright red nose, and her appearance and state of mind when she has changed her clothes, has discovered that the colour of her nose is not permanent, and has got over her initial shock.

3. 2. 8. Her eyes were holden

The last example of biblical reference which we will discuss is fairly obscure. It occurs near the end of *Anne of Avonlea*, when Anne has realised that Diana is in love with Fred and is at a loss to understand the attraction. “And what *can* she see in Fred?” she asks herself. The author goes on to

comment:

It is always a very puzzling question . . . what can somebody see in somebody else? But how fortunate after all that it is so, for if everybody saw alike . . . well, in that case, as the old Indian said, “Everybody would want my squaw.” It was plain that Diana *did* see something in Fred Wright, however Anne’s eyes might be holden.

(AA 231, my underline)

We can work out from context that Anne does not “see” in the same way as Diana; that, in contrast with the fact that Diana *did* see, “her eyes were holden” must mean that Anne was unable to see. This expression, “her eyes were holden,” may well look like a misprint, even to native speakers. It makes sense only if the biblical reference is recognized, and then only if the story referred to is known in an older translation. “Holden” is an old form of past participle of the verb “hold” so that in modern English the phrase would be “her eyes were held.” This much can be ascertained by using a sufficiently large dictionary. However, this is not very helpful, as to say “her eyes were held” does not make any sense. The reference comes from the story told in Luke 24 of how, on the day of Jesus’ resurrection, two of his disciples were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three score furlongs.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass, that while they communed together and rea-

soned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

(Luke 24:13-16, my underline)

The English expression comes from the fact that it is a translation of the original Greek form meaning “were laid hold of, were taken possession of, were held, were restrained.” The implication is that “they were blocked or restrained by supernatural power” (Rienecker 214). More recent English translations say that “Their eyes were kept from recognising him” (RSV), or “They were kept from recognising him” (NIV). The meaning in Anne’s case is therefore that she is prevented from recognising the qualities that make Fred attractive as a prospective husband to Diana.

4. Conclusion

The instances of biblical allusion in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea* presented in this paper, while not exhaustive, are a representative example of the way that L. M. Montgomery uses Scripture to enrich her text. We have seen that a few of these allusions are very easy to understand without any biblical knowledge, and that, indeed, in some cases, trying to relate the biblical background of the quotation to Montgomery’s text is not useful. In most cases, however, an acquaintance with the biblical source of a quoted phrase adds to appreciation of Montgomery’s writing. The same, of course, holds true for recognition of the sources of the many literary allusions that Montgomery makes. Failing to recognize allusions means that a dimension is lost from the reading, but whereas the ease with which biblical allusions in the works discussed can be understood varies con-

siderably, there do not seem to be any cases where a general sense of the allusion's meaning cannot be guessed at in context. The accuracy of the guess, of course, will depend on the vocabulary level and comprehension skills of the reader.

We have made a distinction between biblical allusions which contain proper names and those which do not. Where there is no proper name, the students will probably not realise that an allusion is being made. Therefore, so long as they can understand the general sense of a passage, they can continue reading undisturbed. Where there is an unknown proper name, however, it is more immediately obvious that knowledge is lacking. It is also easier to know what to look up in the dictionary, although whether this will be helpful or not will depend on the size of the dictionary being used. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, for example, does not cite any of the biblical names discussed in this paper. The largest of Kenkyusha's English–Japanese dictionaries, on the other hand, contains all of them, explains them in detail, and gives the biblical reference. This is not to suggest that the students should look up everything they do not know; indeed, one of the aims of the Second Year Reading course is to encourage them to read without recourse to the dictionary wherever possible. We merely point out that help is available should the students wish to avail themselves of it.

This study set out to investigate whether biblical allusions in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne or Avonlea* would be a help or a hindrance to our second year Kwassui Women's College students. We conclude that unless the biblical background is specifically pointed out, these allusions are not a help, as the context of the story must shed light on the allusion, instead of

the allusion adding depth to the story, as was originally intended. However, neither are the biblical allusions a hindrance, in that at least their general meaning, and occasionally the full meaning, can always be ascertained in context. Although it would be more enriching for the students to recognise the allusions, they will be able to read the books quite happily without being able to do so.

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