

illogical that a Sunday-school child could answer him sometimes. But the very difficulty of answering him is in the easiness of it, and that without any paradox. For first of all, one has to read him, read a great deal of him, and that is difficult enough. Next, one has to keep one's amazement within bounds. And then one has to show seriously and repeatedly that statements are untrue and exaggerated on the very face of them. Mr. Lee is very frank with Mr. Blatchford, but he does not return railing for railing. He wisely confines himself to facts. Mr. Blatchford may be an infidel if he pleases. His opinions are his own. Mr. Lee declines to accept the abundant distortion of fact with which he seeks to propagate them.

Sir Oliver Lodge is not altogether satisfactory as a Christian apologist, but he is a good ally in the warfare with Materialism. He holds his hand too soon to satisfy the ardent follower of the Lord Jesus Christ; sometimes the blow of his arm is felt even by his comrade in the battle. But believers in Christ are willing in these days to suffer in things that are dear to them because of the pressure of the open and irreconcilable enemy. It is very likely, therefore, that Sir Oliver Lodge's new book, *Life and Matter* (Williams & Norgate; 2s. 6d. net), will find a ready and unprotesting welcome among the orthodox. It goes just as far as they would be able to go with it, and as far as it goes it is excellent.

The Pilgrim's Progress.

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The Interpreter's House—The Scenes in Detail.

I. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

FOR Bunyan, this introductory picture was inevitable in any passage concerning spiritual illumination. His own debt to Mr. Gifford was so great as to ensure that, and there can be no doubt that the face which Bunyan saw in this picture was that of his old friend. His Evangelist and many other helpers represent various aspects of the ideal ministry; this is a general conception rather than a specific, telling us in a few words the main points which Bunyan considers essential in the Christian minister. With this conception may be compared Cowper's in *The Task* ('The Timepiece'), and also Herbert's in *The Temple*, and Keble's in *The Christian Year*. The words 'very grave person' remind us that this is a minister of the Puritan times; yet it is not implied that his visage is so forbidding as those in the pictures of ministers on the walls of Hawthorne's *Old Manse*; rather must 'grave' be understood in the richer sense of the Latin word *gravitas*.

Bunyan's respect for the office of the ministry is here stated with startling emphasis. This is the 'only man' whom the Lord has authorized as guide—a strong statement, and one which would surprise us less if it came from the pen of one who believed in sacerdotalism and apostolic succession.

Yet so catholic is this minister that no hint enables us to guess to what church or denomination he belongs. His only authority is truth which he knows, character which he has attained, and the urgency of an inner calling to proclaim his truth and to enforce his character.

1. *His eyes are lifted up to heaven.* The first requisite for a Christian minister or man is that he be looking in the right direction. This is not a mere pose, as in some old-fashioned photograph or engraving. We are saved by what we see, and it is equally true that by what we see we are also saviours. This passage reminds us with curious frequency of Hawthorne's work, and here the *Great Stone Face* comes to mind. Compare also the Stigmata of St. Francis and a very remarkable scene in the *Knight Errant*, in which the robber, carving a crucifix, unconsciously reproduces the face of his prisoner. These are but various ways in which the old story of St. Stephen is told again. Those grow like Christ who see Him as He is, and this must be the first task of every minister. The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth—on his salary, his ritual, politics, or the faces in the pews; this man 'looks beyond the world for truth and beauty.'

2. *The best of books.* The Bible is and will be for ever the only thing that will permanently preach. The hunger and weariness of humanity will to the end of time refuse with indignation any other food

and rest than this. It is true that there is an un-intelligent way of preaching the Scriptures which is deadly dull, and to be uninteresting is the last vice of the pulpit, as Sydney Smith has it. Yet there is no need for this. Within the Bible the field is rich and varied, if one will only be at pains to study it intelligently. This, however, involves study in other fields, and Matthew Arnold is undoubtedly right when he says that he who knows only his Bible does not know that. Compare the wider interpretation of the phrase 'word of God' ably expounded in Horton's *Verbum Dei*.

3. *The law of truth upon his lips.* In the whole range of personal character nothing is so vital as this. Speech is the special instrument of his service, and it is in regard to speech that the cleansing of character is most indispensable. Compare Is 6⁵⁻⁷. The minister must be a sincere man, which means not only fearless but accurate in speech. He will not as a rule be tempted to any deliberate statement which he knows to be false, but rather to the exaggeration of feeling and experience. Compare Walter Pater upon Flaubert, in his essay on *Style*, where it is insisted that the essential element of style is not the forcible word, but the exact word.

4. *The world was behind his back.* Hawthorne again interprets Bunyan's meaning in the happy phrase, 'not estranged from human life, and yet enveloped in the midst of it with a veil woven of intermingled gloom and brightness.' The compromise has always been a difficult one to define, and the true definition will depend partly upon the conditions of the age, partly upon the circumstances of the individual. It is in the midst of the bright spectacle of life that the minister has to live and speak, and he will certainly do his work better if he feels its brightness. At the same time, he who has once gazed on the things beyond the world ought to be fascinated by them; and thenceforth, in comparison with them, the world will be behind his back. An interesting contrast suggests itself between this and two other ways of contempt for the world—(a) that of Meredith's *Egoist*, to whom the world is but a foil for the selfish enjoyment of love, and (b) Leonardo da Vinci's *La Joconda*, who has been through all experience and whose smile expresses the cynical conclusion that she has found out the world (seen in the background of the picture), and, like the Preacher, pronounced it vanity.

4. *Pleaded with men.* There are many things that go to make up the work of the ministry, but its essential use is practical. More now than then, perhaps, a many-sided interest and a wide acquaintance with human affairs is involved in its work. All the more necessary is it to remember that the essential reason of this profession is to persuade people to do certain things, and especially one great thing. However wide may be the horizon of its interest, evangelism is at the heart and centre of the ministry.

II. THE DUSTY ROOM.

Here again we have the Law and the Gospel, but this time under a new aspect and with a lighter touch. Formerly the law kills, here it only irritates; producing that condition of confusion, turmoil, darkness, dirtiness, which is just the thing known as dustiness—a thing by itself. 'I have had enough,' as Cheever makes Christian say, 'of that fierce sweeper, the Law. The Lord deliver me from his besom!' The only thing which can remedy this morbidly irritated condition is the gospel in its sweet, clean, and allaying power. When a man finds its peace, the mirrors of the soul are clear again, and reflect the face of God and the things of the world.

One may push the parable a very little farther and find in it yet another suggestion regarding the 'ethics of the dust.' What is this dust of life, which the Law does not create but stirs up? The answer is given by this very dusty world of ours, so full of the wreckage and debris of things. Upon everything under the sun falls constantly the deposit of everyday wear and tear. Silently and insensibly it settles till bright things lose their brightness and clean things their cleanness. So, in the inner world, apart from deliberate acts of sin, the dust of life unconsciously falls. The fragments of broken attempts, the wear and tear of temper, the momentary desires and thoughts that are unworthy, form a kind of spiritual and moral debris, whose minute deposit has dulled the soul. We have never known how much life was injuring us until conscience wakens to the fact that the finer purity of an earlier day is gone.

III. PASSION AND PATIENCE.

Dr. Whyte's treatment of these is one of the most striking parts of his book and as suggestive a piece of psychological analysis as could be found

anywhere. This passage, one of the most familiar in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, is a child-piece; and such sentences as 'where sat two little children, each one on his chair,' and 'first must give place to last,' etc., are perfect as parts of such a piece. The picture of Passion is extraordinarily vivid, considering the few words in which it is expressed. You feel that this little autocrat and egoist monopolizes the whole room. Patience, on the other hand, is statuesque—'very quiet,' like Patience on a monument. Contrasting the fury of Passion with the stillness of Patience, we might easily imagine that the former was the more forceful and energetic, while the latter, with its excessive repose, was a picturesque rather than a practical virtue. This, however, would be wrong, for in actual life the task that is set to men is that of combining activity with patience—perhaps the most difficult undertaking in the world.

The scene might be understood of individual passions, and it would be easy to point out what particular bag of treasure it is that each is raging for, and what the corresponding exercise of patience. But it is obvious that here we are dealing rather with general symbols which represent aspects of life as a whole. Passion is the selfish life, and the bag of treasure is life's opportunities of gratifying self. Passion thus understood is never satisfied. When it gets its treasure, you have the selfish rich man; when it fails to get it, you have the selfish poor man. But to both cases alike the closing words of *Vanity Fair* apply: 'Ah, Vanitas Vanitatum! which of us is happy in this world? which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?' These are the rags in which Passion is left—rags of respectability and a moral and spiritual nature in tatters. There, in the feebleness of reaction, and amid the ashes of Passion's burned-out fires, many a life discovers its folly only when too late. Often, too, there are others round about Passion who are left in rags—wives, children, or friends. Thackeray has given us many pictures of such ragged souls, like those of George or of Miss Crawley in *Vanity Fair*. In his 'Vision of Sin' Tennyson has vividly portrayed the same situation, 'I was envious at the foolish,' says the writer of the 73rd Psalm, . . . 'then understood I their end.'

On the other hand, Patience is here understood as the comprehensive virtue in which are included all others which go to make a right life. It

involves on the one hand self-discipline and the denial of indulgence in a thousand forms; on the other hand that faith which endures as seeing the invisible, and in consequence of that vision forms a proper estimate of the relative values of things here. There is indeed a way of canonizing Patience as the one virtue, which is deadening to the higher energies of life, and sets for the ideal a merely passive and negative character. Nothing could be farther from John Bunyan's view, and this picture must be taken along with that of the Fighter of the Palace.

IV. THE FIRE AT THE WALL.

Here life is seen in a new aspect, chosen in order to bring out the spiritual forces of good and evil which are at work upon it. The scientific definition of life as the 'sum total of the functions which resist death' is strikingly applicable here. This view, which Professor Henry Drummond expounds so eloquently in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, is exactly that of this scene of Bunyan's. Life is a wasting thing, a waning lamp, a dying fire. And just as, in the natural world, there are many agencies which threaten to hasten the decay and violently end the resistance to it (such as diseases, accidents, etc.), so there are in the spiritual world agencies such as temptation, discouragement, etc., which tend to extinguish the inner fire. These are all summed up in the figure of Satan casting water upon the flame. Yet the wonderful fact is that the flame is not extinguished. There are lives known to us all which seem to have everything against their spiritual victory—heredity, disposition, circumstances, companions,—yet in spite of fate their flame burns on. The secret is that Christ is at the back of the wall, and there is no proof so wonderful as this of the reality of Jesus Christ as an agent in human life.

Besides the two main agents there are plenty of human ones at work for both these ends. Some people are for ever throwing cold water upon the fires of the soul, devil's firemen whose trade seems to be that of discouraging. Others, and these are the blessed ones of the world, pour in upon the flagging spirit the oil of good cheer and hope.

V. THE FIGHTER FOR THE PALACE.

This passage is a masterpiece of compression and vividness, told in the spirit and with something of the atmosphere of the old French

romances, which, in Bunyan's day, were still popular and familiar to the general public through the medium of chap-books. First of all, one is struck by the great company round the door, the hesitating crowd of would-be heroes. All the open doors of life have this crowd around them, because at each there are enemies making entrance dangerous. We have already seen that this is so at the Wicket Gate, and here again we find, as Peyton says, 'that God is hard on man.' Every opportunity in life demands some courage to enter it. Bunyan himself knew well from experience both the hesitation and the sense of enemies, and others before and since have hesitated to face the difficulties of this great situation. Two instances, of very different types of men, may illustrate the situation in various aspects:—Professor Romanes tells us that 'Even the simplest act of will in regard to religion—that of prayer—has not been performed by me for at least a quarter of a century, simply because it has seemed so impossible to pray, as it were, hypothetically, that much as I have always desired to be able to pray, I cannot will the attempt' (*Thoughts on Religion*, p. 133). Mr. Snell writes of Petrarch: 'Only his capacity for religious emotion is allied with moral infirmity, and that is one of the reasons why his character is apparently so complex. This, however, is a familiar experience. St. Paul himself confesses, "That which I do, I allow not"; and Ovid observes in a similar strain: "Video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor." Petrarch shares their inconsistency. Pitying himself, he would gladly flee from his earthly prison-house to the arms of the Crucified, but doubts and fears hold him back. The desire for fame which has clung to him from boyhood, he cannot give it up' (*The Fourteenth Century*, p. 260). The saddest figures to be seen about such gates are those who have allowed their hesitation to run on until the gate is closed, and who now stand like the foolish virgins, willing when it is too late.

Nothing could exceed the effectiveness of the clear image of the man with the ink-horn, taken from Ezekiel 9, to bring to sharpness the real point of the story. The group has all the edge of some such old steel engraving as *Rent Day*. It is the strenuousness of Christianity, shown as usual in a clear decision, that is here portrayed. We can see that *stout* countenance (German *stolz*, proud—the right sort of pride). He goes 'as a man going to

claim an inheritance.' Sam Jones, the Georgian preacher, says, 'God despises a coward . . . God entrusts all the noble causes on earth to men who are game.' Meredith makes his Victor say, 'I cannot consent to fail when my mind is set on a thing.' Yet it must be remembered that more is needed than a stout countenance, and that many say, 'Set down my name,' who never go into the fight.

The strenuousness of Christianity is a congenial theme with Bunyan. He believes that it is always safest as well as most joyous to fight one's way through. He would rather sing in the bare old Puritan churches, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' than, in the new luxurious ones, 'Art thou weary, art thou languid.' He certainly saw no necessity for being 'carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize.' For him, 'the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' In his *On Greenhow Hill*, Kipling has a passage well worth the consideration of those who name themselves fighters of the good fight of faith. The whole passage has much in common with Robert Browning's typical view of life as expressed in such poems as *Prospice* and *The Epilogue to Asolando*.

The couplet at the end curiously haunts the memory. Compare Shakespeare's rhymed lines at the close of passages, such as (*Henry VI.*):—

Come side by side, together live or die,
And soul with soul from France to Heaven fly.

VI. THE MAN OF DESPAIR.

This is the darkest of all Bunyan's pictures. The very title of it, 'A Man of Despair,' ranks itself with such other titles as 'The Man with the Iron Mask,' etc., and lays hold upon the imagination. A similar iron cage appears in his later description of Vanity Fair; it was a familiar object in those days. For an interesting description, compare Hugo's *Notre Dame*, bk. v. ch. 2. The picture is drawn largely from Bunyan's own experience, but it is as old as the religious life. Psalm 88 and similar passages of Scripture should be compared with this. In Bunyan's case, however, this desperate condition was largely induced by his reading a book containing the deathbed confession of an Italian apostate, Francis Spira. It is a very dreadful book, now fortunately out of print. Morbid in the last degree, it tells how the friends of that poor wretch hovered round his

deathbed, deriving what they took to be profit for their own souls from what were obviously the results of an unhinged reason. The book produced a terrible effect upon Bunyan, as he tells us in *Grace Abounding*, and planted in his soul, to rankle there like a poisoned arrow, those words, detached from the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the repentance of Esau, which had already slain Spira. It is said that certain savages poison their arrows by dipping them in a corpse; here certainly is a spiritual parallel. It is very striking that the dreadful phrase, 'O now I cannot,' in which the bitterness of the passage reaches its climax, is taken verbatim from Spira's book.

It is a morbid picture, such as is produced by an age of extremes whose intense black and white is relieved by no shading. For an interesting historical account of the times in this light, see the first two pages of Cheever's first essay. We can recognize in the picture elements of that hallucination which goes with religious melancholia in all ages, yet we have not dismissed the subject when we have said that. Mental pathology is as real a branch of science as any other, and these phenomena are facts which must be reckoned with as real possibilities in any life. They are the tragedy of Christianity; and however little one sympathizes with the onlooking friends of Francis Spira, yet a talk with one in despair may be a lifetime's education. Remorse, alas, is a perpetual phenomenon, appearing as the latter end of the story of *Passion*.

One or two of the details of this narration are well worthy of notice.

'*I am what I was not once.*' This is the very essence of despair, touching even a lower depth than 'might have been.' Compare Mrs. Browning's 'Loved Once,' and A. L. Gordon's 'Voice from the Bush'—

They used to be glad to see me once,
They might have been to-day,
But we never know the worth of a thing
Until we have thrown it away.

'*I left off.*' This has been supposed to teach Arminian doctrine, but there does not appear to be any theological intention in it whatever. It is simply a piece of human experience terribly true to life. Behind the sense of God's departure and the devil's coming there stands the memory that one has chosen it to be so, and no stoicism can stand out against that. It is the 'burning worm' of remorse—a phrase whose combination of the

two elements of the New Testament Gehenna recalls Edgar Allan Poe's lurid poem, 'Conqueror Worm.' In connexion with the phrase, 'I tempted the devil,' it is interesting to contrast the two *Fausts*—Goethe's and Marlowe's. Goethe's Mephistopheles tempts his victim; but the older Mephistopheles is a sad and reluctant figure, unwillingly forced into his work of temptation by Faust's passionate insistence. This leaving off is but one more form of that pet aversion of Bunyan's which he so constantly scourges. Here it is seen all the more vividly in contrast with the strenuousness and thoroughness of the Fighter of the Palace. Fatalistic despair is the natural doom of spiritual indolence.

The centre of all this passage is found in the fact that the whole matter turns upon the treatment of Christ. This was Bunyan's own experience, for the black heart of his despair was, 'this one consideration would always kill my heart, my sin was point blank against my Saviour; . . . I had in my heart said of him, Let Him go if He will.' It is striking that Christ should just here be called the Son of the Blessed. God is himself happy, and is the fountain of all happiness for man. All our reserves of happiness and the sources from which it can be ultimately drawn, lie with Him who is to us the revelation of that God. Thus on our relation to Christ hangs our whole chance of joy. To count Him as our adversary who is the Eternal Friend of man is to court despair. It is a solemn thought that for each man there is only one Christ—*his* Christ—who stands for all that ideal of faith and truth and life and joy which shines before each man as his highest goal. When the Jews had crucified Jesus, their world was as empty of Him as Herod's world was of the murdered Mariamne. For him who crucifies his own Christ there is no other, and his world is empty.

It is certain that Bunyan did not believe that such a state of mind as this represented the truth of the case as a necessary and final doom. His own experience had shown him escape from it, such as he portrays in *Doubting Castle*. Even the driest and most rigid of his commentators confess that it is difficult to draw the line here, and that 'many have written the same bitter things as here, but to them they have in no wise belonged.' One thing may be taken as certain, that no one whose heart is in the least degree troubled about it has committed any unpardonable crime.

VII. THE VISION OF JUDGMENT.

This vision, into which are woven parts of the gospel prophecies of Judgment, along with other elements, such as appear in the classic pictures of the Judgment Day, gives Bunyan an opportunity for a final assault upon conscience with the full force of his extraordinary spectacular imagination. For an interesting note regarding the central figure seated upon a cloud, see Lessing's *Laocoon*, chap. xii. Browning's 'Easter Day' gives the finest modern parallel to the whole picture.

It is characteristic of Bunyan that in this final vision he should revert to the form of a dream which was always to him peculiarly impressive. For interesting notes upon Bunyan's dreams compare Cheever's words upon this passage, and Froude's *Bunyan*, chap. i. No doubt much must be discounted from any such impression, especially in the case of imaginative natures like his, yet it is often true that dreams do reveal with appalling frankness the real bent of the soul. When we wake we check our frankness even with ourselves.

There are two striking points in the vision. The first is the opening of the pit *just whereabouts I*

stood. That has the note of true conviction. The hell of many people gapes just whereabouts someone else stands. Second, there is the haunting conception of him that *still kept his eye upon me*. This is the shattering of all privacy. He who has once realized it shall never be alone again. According to a man's relation with the great Onlooker, it is the greatest fear or the greatest hope of life.

Yet the picture as a whole is unsatisfactory. When the man is asked why he is afraid, he simply recounts again some of the details of the spectacle. Conviction has not gone deep enough yet, for there is no real thought here, and especially no real thought of sin. The time of the vision is the first moment of waking in the morning, when the imagination indeed may be excited, but the intellect is not collected. Then, when the lights of life are low, conscience stalks forth like a spectre, with imagination behind her; but the result is mere hysteria and not a rational view of life and sin at all. Very often such experiences pass away, leaving harm rather than good behind them, and on the whole the man in the iron cage is nearer salvation than this man.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH XXIII. 5, 6.

'Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute judgement and justice in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD is our righteousness.'—R.V.

EXPOSITION.

'Behold, the days come.'—The phrase, according to Jeremiah's employment of it (compare v. 7, chap. 30⁹ 31^{27, 31, 38} 33¹⁴), implies a special call to note the announcement thus introduced. In spite of the troubles which were now gathering round them, there are none the less surely days of deliverance coming.—STREANE.

'A righteous Branch.'—Not the same word as in Is 11¹ (nétser). The word here used (tsemach) is the one that occurs in Is 4², Zec 3⁸ 6¹² of King Messiah. It denotes a budding or springing plant; a *sprout*. A tree has many

branches, and these can be pruned away without killing the tree, but the sprout is that in which the root springs up and grows, and which, if it be destroyed, makes the root perish also. For its use, see Gn 19²⁹, Is 61¹¹, in both of which places it springs directly out of the ground; also Ezk 16⁷ 17⁹, Hos 8⁷, where it is translated either *bud* or *spring*. A branch never does grow out of a root, but only from the trunk.—COOK.

THIS is the first time in which the title 'the Plant' is unmistakably applied to the Messianic king (possibly, but less probably, to the Messianic kings). It indicates that this great personage stands in connexion with the divinely ordained and ancient royal family, but that he is in some way unique, and far surpasses his human ancestors. He 'springs forth'; therefore he is not a sort of meteoric appearance, without any natural home among men, but rather the blossom of the Jewish nation, the embodiment of its highest qualities. And yet there is something extraordinary about him, for it is needful that Jehovah himself should 'raise' this Plant from the almost worn-out stock of David.—CHEYNE.