---

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

the Philistines (Jer $7^{12}$ $26^{6}$), is shown by the loss of the names of the high priests between Phinehas and Eli, the list in 1 Ch $6^{4\text{-}15}$ $^{50\text{-}53}$ being taken from the genealogy of Ezra (Ezr $7^{1\text{-}5}$) combined with some other genealogy. With the new *régime* under Samuel we may therefore conjecture that the new alphabet, and probably also the use of the native language, were introduced among the Israelites as they seem to have been at Tyre under Abibal and Hiram I. Samuel himself bears a name of the Khammu-rabi period, Śamu-ilu.

A. H. Sayce.

# The Pilgrim's Progress.

By the Rev. John Kelman, Jun., M.A., Edinburgh.

## Prudence.

In Prudence we meet with a very different questioner indeed. Clever, knowing the world and the heart of man, she searches into Christian's character in a fashion that gives us the assurance that he is dealing now with a practised cross-examiner. He is not facing here mere outward questions of conduct or speech. The inquisition is running its search deep into the secret motives of the life, its imaginations, and desires.

This examination is significant, for, on the one hand, the Church of Christ ought to have a place for Prudence, and a large place. Any public society so influential as the Church still is, can only be a public danger and menace to society if it allows itself to become, through a mistaken charity, the cloak and guarantee for dangerous men. On the other hand, the function of Prudence is not solely exclusive. It is a huge mistake to imagine that moral perfection is expected in Church members, or is the guarantee of their worthiness to be such. Bunyan knew well to the end the evil of his own heart. Once, we are told, when in the disguise of a waggoner he was overtaken by a constable, the latter asked him if he knew 'that devil of a fellow, Bunyan.' 'Know him!' Bunyan said. 'You might call him a devil if you knew him as well as I once did.' The true worthiness lies in the heart, far below the surface of the outward life. It would be difficult to find a more perfect definition of it than that which is contained in these sentences of John Knox's Communion Service: 'For the ende of our comming thither is not to make Protestation, that we are upright or just in our lyves; but contrarywise, we come to seeke our Lyfe and Perfection in Jesus Christ.' 'Let us consider, then, that this Sacrament is a singular *Medicine* for all poore sicke creatures; a comfortable *Helpe* to weake soules; and that our Lord reqyreth none other worthinesse on our part, but that we unfeignedly acknowledge our naughtinesse and imperfection.'

It is a curious fact and a touching one, that Protestantism cannot escape the need which created the confessional in the Church of Rome. Something deep as human nature itself—the loneliness of sin, or the desire to face the worst—drives men to confession in all Churches and outside of them. Only it is well to remember that while confession to a friend gives a relief which is legitimate and has warrant in Scripture, yet the practice is a delicate one and beset with dangers. There are only very few among even our most trusted friends whose natures are wise and fine enough for the office of confessor. Again, the act of confession must never be allowed in itself to satisfy the sinful conscience; indeed, when it ceases to humiliate a man and to give him real pain and shame, it has become dangerous, and should at once be stopped. The luxury of confession may develop easily into the disease of confession, than which there is no more unwholesome and morbid condition of the human spirit.

The list of questions addressed to him is extraordinarily well chosen:—(1) His longing after the past evil life. What she really asks is whether he thinks of it, and he is able to answer that he does so only with shame and detestation—a declaration which, made honestly, shows a very considerable and, indeed, unusual reach of attainment in the spiritual life.

(2) Carnal cogitations, however, still linger in memory and imagination. They are, indeed, his

grief, and if he had his choice he would never think of them again. Bunyan knew by experience this strange battle with his own imagination which both haunted and disgusted him. In more than one paragraph of the most violent language he describes the battle between fascination and repulsion in *Grace Abounding*. It is the same battle which St. Paul describes as that between the living body and the dead which are chained together. It is pathetic to think of men so long dead who were troubled with this constant and discouraging human warfare, and it is interesting in the present instance to note how sore and evil such memories appear when the eyes of a pure woman are looking into the pilgrim's eyes. This is for many of the young their sorest battle, and if Bunyan shall in this conversation give us any hint as to how it may be won, he will indeed be a benefactor to the generations. Meanwhile it may be noted that we may learn to hate even an attractive sin, if we have learned sufficiently to fear it. One commentator quotes from an anonymous writer a curious passage which is relevant here. He gives the test by which you may know a sheep from a swine when both have fallen into a slough and are indistinguishably bemired. 'How, then, distinguish them? Nothing more easy. The unclean animal, in circumstances agreeable to its nature, wallows in the mire; but the sheep fills the air with its bleating, nor ceases its struggle to get out.'

(3) Unaccountable changes of experience give him sometimes a lucid interval. It is a terrible confession for a Christian man that such intervals are but seldom, and are to him golden hours; yet there is great comfort in this for those whom Abbott has described as 'often falling into sin yet always struggling against sin.' Evidently life is meant to be a battlefield. Human nature will keep the battle at the gates, and God will have it so.

(4) But how to conquer? The man who can tell us this will be the greatest of all God's gifts to us. Most men find that the more they fight the hotter the battle becomes. The drift of objectionable imagination is often trifling, unpleasant, and in every way unworthy of regard, yet sometimes the more one tries to forget, the more surely he remembers. Bunyan's plan is simple and in every way wise. It is contained in the one sentence that one set of thoughts must be fought by another set of thoughts. There is no possibility of fighting this battle *in vacuo*, for idleness and vacancy of mind are the opportunities for every unworthy thing. Only when mind and body are kept actively engaged is there any chance of victory.

It is important to note that the thoughts which drive out the evil ones are in a totally different line. They are the Cross, the robe, the roll, and that heaven which is the end of the journey. These are all subjects into which nothing that defileth can enter. They are God's blessed distractions by whose means the feet that have been in miry ways may find clean paths. The one thing essential to this means of victory or escape is that these subjects shall be so presented to the mind as to be vitally interesting. The roll, the question of one's assurance, has the interest which attaches to all study of one's self. The robe has the interest of a spiritual *amour propre*, reminding us of the dignity and self-respect due to the Christian life. The Cross has its own eternal interest. On a rustic crucifix above Zermatt there is the following inscription in badly spelt German:—'Look up to Me, child of humanity, before thou goest further, for I have suffered and died for thy sins which thou so lightly committest. Ah! repent and bewail thy sins and say, O Jesus have compassion! God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for our sins.'

(5) The mention of heaven as a distraction from unworthy thoughts suggests her last question to this shrewd examiner. Why does he wish for heaven so much? It is an interesting question, for one of Bunyan's characteristics is the surprising delight in the spectacular which throws up often a heaven of almost barbaric splendour against his grey earth. This passage, however, is singularly free from all that side of things. It is ethical from first to last, and is prompted, point by point, by the confessions he has just made. It is one of the most exquisite passages in the book, and the sigh of weariness and longing that breathes in it is the most authentic proof of the genuine thirst of his soul for purity.

## Charity.

We are approaching the table of the sacrament, and in order to complete his preparation for that, one more element is necessary. The Lord's table is a place for human affection, where family love and remembrance should share the thoughts with self-examination. The passage is an afterthought

of Bunyan's, appearing only in a later edition. Charity is the pure heart of affection, which does not concern itself with any other interest than that of friendship. Charity begins at home; how about his wife and children? Mr. Froude and others have accused Bunyan of the selfishness of his conception, sending his pilgrim forth to find his own salvation, and leaving his family behind him. This passage is Bunyan's vindication. No one knew better than he that Christianity demands not only earnestness and pity for those who are outside a man's own circle, but 'affection for those that are within.' If proof of this be needed, it may be found very abundantly in his account of the 'Discourse between my Wife and the Judges' and 'Reflections upon my Imprisonment.' In the latter he speaks most sadly of the parting from his wife and children and their hardships in his absence, 'especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all besides. Oh! the thoughts of the hardship I thought my poor blind one might go under would break my heart to pieces. . . . Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee. But yet recalling myself, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you.' The bitterness of this separation reminds us of some of the saddest words in English poetry where the Blessed Damozel realizes that her lover will not come to her home in heaven—

> And then she cast her arms along
> The golden barriers,
> And laid her face between her hands,
> And wept. (I heard her tears.)

The older Wolfram's *Parsifal*, which has very many points in common with the *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells of the heathen knight who at his conversion exclaimed—

> . . . 'If thou speakest, Lady, the thing that indeed shall be,
> If God as His knight doth claim me, and they are elect with me,
> My wife and my child, then I wot well, tho' a sinful man am I,
> God looketh with favour on me, and hath dealt with me wondrously!'

Charity, in the capacity of advocate for the man's wife and children, examines him as to what he had done to induce them to follow him. Three things are especially inquired into: (1) how far he had talked with them (*N.B.* not talked *at* them); (2) how far his relation with them had been the subject of his prayers; (3) how far his conversation with them had been confidential and personal, relating his own experience instead of discoursing on generalities. Bunyan's ideas on the subject are strangely mingled. In one passage he says, 'My judgment is that men go the wrong way to learn their children to pray. It seems to me a better way for people to tell their children betimes what cursed creatures they are, how they are under the wrath of God by reason of original and actual sin,' etc. In another passage, however, he asserts, 'I tell you that if parents carry it lovingly towards their children, mixing their mercies with loving rebukes, and their loving rebukes with fatherly and motherly compassions, they are more likely to save their children than by being churlish and severe to them.' With so strange a combination of sentiments as this in our mind—the inevitable result of the blend in Bunyan of Puritan professor and human man—we cannot help feeling that perhaps the wife and children may have had something to say for themselves. The *Book of Sports* had called forth a Puritan reaction, and we can see in John Bunyan's soul-searchings about bell-ringing the inflamed state of the religious conscience of the time. Perhaps it is just to suggest that if this man had been as wary to gain their friendship and confidence as he was to check their amusements, he might have had more influence with his family. If a man be found with four sons, and all of them mocking his religion, the chances are that there is something wrong with the way in which that man had dealt with his four sons. Dr. Whyte's commentary on this passage is peculiarly rich in insight and genius. One of the driest of the old commentators at this point breaks into unwonted vivacity: 'Though, like an angel, you talk of Christ, of the gospel, or of the doctrines of grace and of heaven, yet, if you indulge devilish tempers and live under the power of any sinful lusts and passions, you will hereby harden others against the things of God, and prevent their setting out in the ways of God.'

Yet even Charity is convinced that in this case it was not the man's fault. Four cruel children had behind them a woman whose heart was set upon the world, and her worldliness had eaten out whatever love she may have ever had for her

husband. Charity is not easily provoked, yet she can be provoked. Indeed, without the power of anger, Charity is but one of those thin sentimentalities on which Meredith pours out his scorn in *Sandra Belloni*. Charity is not easily provoked, but her indignation, when it appears, is that dreadfullest of things—'the wrath of the Lamb.'

*Note.*—Much in these conversations reminds one of passages from Bunyan's *Christian Behaviour*, and from the *Plain Man's Pathway* and the *Practice of Piety*, all of which are well worth consulting at this point.

## The Supper Table.

This passage ranks with that describing Christian at the Cross as one of the most perfect of Bunyan's writings. It is a model for all who celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and its literary and devotional qualities give it a very high place in the literature of England. For delicacy of touch, for unconscious art and exquisite simplicity, for fulness of religious meaning and wealth of spiritual imagination, it would be difficult to find its equal.

The most noticeable feature of the passage is the sense that Christ is with us as we read it, supplying without superstition the Real Presence in the Sacrament. No part of the Allegory recalls so vividly the words of Cheever's preface—'In all things we are brought to Christ, and thrown upon him; and this is the sweet voice of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, as of the Gospel, Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Mr. Froude, in his superior fashion, patronizes Bunyan for his credulity in the matter of dogma. Here we have a signal example of what is characteristic of the whole allegory, the absence of dogma except such as is involved in the absorbing sense of a Personal Presence full of power and love.

Four points may be noted in the description of the Supper Table, all of which give the aspects under which the writer presents Christ here.

1. *A Warrior.*—It is a masculine view of Christ's death, which is regarded not as a doom nor in any pitiful light, but as a thing of blood deliberately shed at an hour which the warrior himself had fixed. The stern facts of life may be brought to this place, and the most anxious conscience finds peace in the assurance that they will be sternly dealt with here.

2. *Love.*—This is the key to the meaning of the three moments mentioned, before, at, and after the Cross. None of these can be understood until we realize that every one of them was done out of a 'pure love to his country.' It is not the mere 'loss of much blood,' but the pure love that was in it which gives that 'glory of grace' for which Bunyan has so happily found the phrase, to all the events commemorated at this table.

3. *Resurrection.*—The element of love in the Resurrection, as here presented, is of the deepest significance. The witnesses to the Risen Christ are summoned—Mary, Peter, Thomas, the men of Emmaus, and the rest. But it is that we may realize that we are near them not merely in our common faith, but also in a great and unceasing love. They bore witness not to the mere fact that Christ was risen, but also that He was a 'lover of poor pilgrims.' That was why He rose from the dead, and Bunyan's interpretation of the Resurrection as an act of love is one of the most illuminative and far-reaching of all his gifts to religious thought.

4. *He would not dwell alone.*—'Father, I will that they . . . be with me.' It is a simple touch, but it presents a whole aspect of the soul and character of God. Many of us have been struck by the daring presentation of God's loneliness, which Coulson Kernahan has given us in *A Book of Strange Sins*. Many of us have felt in the negations familiar to all students of dogmatic Unitarianism an irresistible feeling of dreariness. The demand for a social aspect in our conception of God lies at the back of all wise doctrines of the Trinity, Creation, and Redemption. These things we believe, because our souls have discovered that 'He would not dwell alone.'

## Peace.

The sleeping chamber closes, in a few simple and choice words, the delightful story of this day. In the second part Bunyan adds a sidenote, 'Christ's bosom is for all pilgrims.' It would be impossible to promise peace to all pilgrims after the first sacrament. Sometimes disappointments and anxieties mar that memory. Yet it is the normal experience, and no communicant should be content until he has gained it.

So the night falls and memory is lost in sleep. Many, like the poet, have written of the awfulness of 'that sad, obscure sequestered state,' and we

may well wonder how we or any dare lie down in peace, unless it be in the full assurance that in it 'God unmakes but to remake the soul.' It is to be noted that this sweet sleep comes to Christian on the eve of his most terrible battle, and we are reminded of the great words of St. Paul, 'The peace of God shall guard your heart and mind.'

The chamber window opened towards the sunrising, giving us for the last word of the night a promise of hope that reaches beyond the morrow's battlefield. Cheever (pp. 120, 121) quotes two very remarkable poems written by Bunyan upon the sunrise. These are so brilliant in their way, and so full of the naïve genius of the dreamer as to excuse and almost justify Cheever's comparison of them with lines in *Comus* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

# The Great Text Commentary.

## THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

LUKE 1[76-79].

**'Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High:**
**For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways;**
**To give knowledge of salvation unto his people**
**In the remission of their sins,**
**Because of the tender mercy of our God,**
**Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us,**
**To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death;**
**To guide our feet into the way of peace.'**—R.V.

### EXPOSITION.

**'Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High.'**—Here the second part of the hymn, and the distinctively predictive portion of it, begins. The Prophet turns from the bounty of Jehovah in sending the Messiah to the work of the forerunner. '*But* thou also, child,' or 'yea and thou, child' (R.V.). Neither the καί nor the δέ must be neglected. There is combination, but there is also contrast. Not '*my* child': the personal relation is lost in the high calling.—PLUMMER.

**'To give knowledge of salvation unto his people.'**—The true meaning of salvation had been lost, and had to be restored ere the Messiah's work could take effect. It had come to mean temporary emancipation, not freedom from the guilt and power of sin. The preacher of repentance was the forerunner of the Saviour. John's baptism meant that Jews were as sinful as Gentiles, and needed to repent and to show their repentance.—LINDSAY.

**'Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us.'**—The English word expresses the force of the Greek very beautifully. The dawn is seen in the east rising upward, breaking through the darkness. We must remember, however, that the word had acquired another specially Messianic association, through its use in the LXX version as the equivalent for the 'Branch,' 'that which springs upward' of Jer 23[5], Zec 3[8]. Here the thought of the sunrise is prominent, and it connects itself with such predictions as, 'The glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee' (Is 60[1]), 'The sun of righteousness shall rise' (Mal 4[2]). What had become a Messianic name is taken in its primary sense, and turned into a parable.—PLUMPTRE.

**'To guide our feet into the way of peace.'**—Those who sat in darkness did not use their feet: the light enables them to do so, and to use them profitably. The 'ἡμῶν,' '*our*,' shows that Jews as well as Gentiles are regarded as being in darkness until the Messianic dawn. The 'way of peace' is the way that leads to peace, especially peace between God and His people (Ps 29[11] 85[9] 119[165], Jer 14[13]).

### THE SERMON.

**Christ the Light of Men (Lk 1[79]).**

*By the Rev. T. Lloyd Williams, B.A.*

Darkness is dreaded by all honest men. It is instinct with uncertainty. It is a type of, and foreshadows, the unknown future. Appalling accidents by land and sea occur in the dark, and it is selected as the best cloak for crimes. Nevertheless, this darkness is kind and congenial compared to that which Christ came to remove. Night brings the blessing of sleep, and calls down the precious dew. But the darkness of which Zecharias spoke is darkness without one redeeming feature. It is not transitory. It clings to man like his shadow. It was beyond the power of the angels to deliver man from this darkness. Christ alone could do it.

I. The *darkness* manifests itself in various forms.

(*a*) *Ignorance.*—Ignorance is the offspring of darkness, and 'it is the curse of God.' Through it great armies have been lost, cities have been made desolate by the raging plague, and ruthless wars by the thousand have been waged.

(*b*) *Superstition and Cruelty.*—These two are