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Twenty years ago, the newspapers tell us, Dr. R. F. Horton was asked to cancel a promise to preach at the Annual Conference of a certain denomination because he had published a book called *Inspiration of the Bible*, and it was not supposed to be sound. This year Dr. Horton has been invited again, and he will not be asked to cancel the engagement. This year also he has issued a new edition of *Inspiration of the Bible* (Fisher Unwin; 1s. net).

The Pilgrim's Progress.

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

The House Beautiful—(*continued*).

On the second and third days the Pilgrim receives from the Church three different kinds of preparation for the journey of the Christian life that lies before him. The three are, like so many of Bunyan's symbols, admirably chosen, and together they present a very complete view of 'the preparation of the Gospel of Peace' with which the apostles would have the feet of all pilgrims shod. The three are—(1) Intellectual study; (2) Spiritual realization; (3) Armour.

Study.

The Protestant Church has always laid great stress on this. However earnest and whole-hearted in his devotion a man may be, however rich in spiritual experience, however quick with those instincts which go to make what is called religious genius, yet this further preparation is required. Religion is and ought to be a thing of knowledge, and the more thorough the intellectual labour of faith is, the more effective will the believer be in the world. Consequently the Church must ever put in the forefront of her responsibilities the question of religious instruction both for her ministers and for laymen.

Naturally, the great subject of such study is the Bible—those 'records of the greatest antiquity,' which are the first things shown to Christian. In *Grace Abounding* we read in one place: 'The Bible was precious to me in those days. And now methought I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never read before; . . . and, indeed, then I was never out of the Bible.' Every reader of that book will remember the recurring phrase, 'to be set down in the Scriptures by the Spirit of God.' Bunyan's was a simple way of Bible study. At times, indeed, we find the suggestion of modern questions which have perplexed the student, but these are generally brushed aside as temptations of Satan, and the spirit of the study is that of childlike simplicity of faith.

The order in which the various subjects are taken is not without significance. First comes the person of Christ; second, the saints and heroes of the faith; third, the message of the Gospel, confirmed by prophecy. It is not until the next day, and then not until after he has seen the weapons of defence and attack with which a man must be endued, that he looks into those curiosities which too often have a more important place assigned to them.

Christ is first, and in that we have John Bunyan's great secret. There is a royalist ring in the first words of this passage, as of one appealing from the cruel and perverse government of the English kings of his day, not to a republic, but to the King of kings. It is probable that Bunyan's fighting was done on the royalist side of the English struggles, and certainly there is in all his views of Christ the feeling of hereditary and exultant allegiance. It may be that this partly explains the fact which he shares with all contemporary theologians, that the study of the doctrine of the person of Christ precedes that of his 'recorded acts.' No change is more significant than this, that while the older theology came down upon the record of Christ's words and deeds from a doctrine of His person found in the region bordering upon Metaphysics, the modern order is from the human Christ to the divine.

The Saints and Heroes come next for consideration. The order of the Roman Missal, closing the Church year with the singularly beautiful services of Commemoration of All Saints and All Souls, brings this into equally close connexion with Advent, which immediately follows. It is a subject which, with the decay of reverence and the greater independence and self-assertion of these later times, is apt to receive scant justice. Those who have thrown off the yoke of Authority because it has become tyrannous, should beware of ignoring the value of history, and losing the immense gains won by the experience of holy and brave men. Similarly for the individual, while there is a slavish use of biography, there is also a wise and necessary use. It is foolish to imitate the experience of even the noblest, by forcing one's own life into the grooves which fitted another; but it is equally foolish to repeat experiments already made, and with open eyes blunder exactly as others have blundered, or miss the right paths which they have found and pointed out.

Having seen the goal of life in Christ, and heard the call of the mighty dead who urge the living to follow in their footsteps, it is natural that the Gospel message, the willingness of the Lord to receive sinners, should next impress itself upon the pilgrim. This is but the personal application to himself of all that he has heard and seen. It will be observed, too, that it is only now that there is any mention of fulfilment of prophecy. As a set of curious and puzzling problems in history, the prophecies are of little use, and the study of them, diverting the minds of the earnest from more practical and intelligible thoughts, has done great harm. As the guarantees and buttresses of faith, encouraging the wavering spirit and assuring it of God's power and love enlisted on the side of all who believe, they are among the highest of the means of grace.

Last comes the list of curiosities, which the museum instinct of Bunyan finds so congenial. These are not, however, speculative curiosities such as distract the mind with idle attention to side issues. Rather are they a continuation of the remembrance of saints and heroes—relics of stories drawn mostly from those rough and heroic ancient days of Israel which the Puritan times in many ways resembled. In his *House of Lebanon*, Bunyan writes in a similar vein: 'There' (in the porch of the church) 'are hung up the shields that the old warriors used, and on the walls are painted the brave achievements they have done. There also are such encouragements that one would think that none who came thither would ever attempt to go back. Yet some forsake the place.' The whole trend of both passages show the characteristic horror of backsliding, and the urgency of the pilgrim and warrior spirit. Everything is leading up to the coming fight with Apollyon.

The Delectable Mountains.

Yet there is another kind of preparation for the dangerous way. It is to be a battle between earth and heaven, between the spiritual life and its great enemy. Consequently nothing is more necessary than a quickening vision of some sort, which will confirm upon the pilgrim his sense of the reality of spiritual things. As yet it can be only a glimpse, for high and steady spiritual vision belongs generally to a riper age than his. Each period of the religious life has its own appropriate phase of spiritual experience, and much has to be learned and unlearned before this will be the characteristic phase for Christian. In 'Rabbi ben Ezra,' Browning's great verses well describe the contrast between the normal moods of youth and age.

Yet sometimes we are permitted to feel what an experience will be like which is far beyond our present attainment. The Church, and especially some of its choicest and most experienced spirits, has the power and the duty of making such disclosures. In this way, through his very wistfulness, many a man is led to live worthily not merely of his present condition, but of that platform of the ideal which is still far ahead of him. When, even in a glimpse, 'it *doth* now appear what we shall be,' and we know that we shall be like Him, life inevitably throws off its baser things, and attains in some measure to that which it has seen beyond the present.

Also, such foresights 'make the journey manageable to a man's mind, and conquer in him the sense of remoteness' that clings about all spiritual things. 'From the Palace Beautiful the Delectable Mountains may be seen in the distance; and by and by, from those Delectable Mountains will the Pilgrim see the gates of the Celestial City.' Thus is the way to heaven divided into stages, which gives new meaning to the words, 'A day's march nearer home.'

It is interesting to compare this passage with Wordsworth's lines from his 'Ode on Immortality':—

> Hence, in a season of calm weather
> Though inland far we be,
> Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the Children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

But Wordsworth looks *back* for that vision; his Golden Age, like Virgil's, lies behind. Christianity alone looks forward for the best. Both visions, however, have this in common, that they are only occasional. Wordsworth's is 'in a season of calm weather,' Bunyan's is 'if the day be clear.' Such experiences cannot, in most lives, be protracted until they are continuous. Those are wise who make the most of them when they come; and who, when they have faded, brace themselves for the journey by dimmer light, but without forgetting the vision they have seen.

The phrase 'Immanuel's Land' is borrowed from Is 8^8. It is a curious fact that here, as in many other instances, words first spoken in threatening have been sweetened by the Christian thought which took them over. Samuel Rutherford's use of this phrase is familiar to every one, embodied and reiterated in the almost too realistic verses of one of our hymns.

The Armoury.

Bunyan's interest in all that concerns battle reminds us of his own fighting days at the siege of Leicester and elsewhere. For him the Church Militant was no mere form of words, but a very plain reality. The effect of the Church on Christian was to transform him from a civilian into a soldier, and we have to change entirely our imagination of the pilgrim from this time forth. He becomes, as Dr. Kerr Bain says, 'at once more serious and more competent'; but, besides that, there is about him something of the 'first-class fighting-man' which cannot be mistaken. It is that difference which Shakespeare describes in *Henry V.* between the 'modest stillness and humility' which are becoming in peace, to the 'terrible aspect' which comes upon the eyes of the warrior. 'Armour is,' as has been finely said, 'a heavy burden, but an honourable, and a man standeth upright in it.'

It is worn openly and without concealment. Readers of *Romola* will remember the tragic results of wearing concealed armour there recorded; and every Christian who is ashamed of being on his guard is liable to bring upon himself like troubles. In *Israel's Hope*, Bunyan puts this very plainly: 'Should you see a man that did not go from door to door, but he must be clad in a coat of mail, and have a helmet of brass upon his head, and for his life-guard not so few as a thousand men to wait on him, would you not say, "Surely this man hath store of enemies at hand"? If Solomon used to have about his bed no less than threescore of the valiantest of Israel holding swords, and being expert in war, what guard and safeguard doth God's people need, who are night and day roared on by the unmerciful fallen angels? Why, they lie in wait for poor Israel in every hole, and he is for ever in danger of being either stabbed or destroyed.' However far we may have travelled from the point of view which these words indicate, we have certainly not yet reached a place where any man need be ashamed of armour!

But this is not the only armour which a man may put on, nor is the House Beautiful the only armoury. There is the brazen armour of cynicism and effrontery that is forged in hell. There is the armour of cowardice which the world forges—compromise and casuistry and conformity. But by far the commonest kind is that which we and our friends make for ourselves. Every Australian boy has heard of Ned Kelly's home-made armour, and some have seen those curious iron cylinders from which so many revolver bullets glanced off harmless. There are many men and women who know too well this secret. They encase themselves in mail of reserve, self-centredness, and the keeping up of appearances, and so go through the world. Mary Wilkins, in *A Far Away Melody*, speaks of a girl who, after she had put on her wedding-dress, found herself forsaken: 'She girded on that pearl-coloured silk as if it were chain armour, and went to merry-makings.' Such armour is apt to fail its wearers at the critical hour, proving like those 'leaden' bayonets which stain the records of certain great wars. And even if it does not fail, such self-made armour is dangerous, and may be deadly. Some one has described a ceremony which used to take place at the funerals of the Czars of Russia. Two soldiers rode in the cortege as Black Knight and White Knight, representing Death and Life.

The Black Knight's armour was an old, heavy suit, and the strongest guardsman was selected to wear it. At the funeral of one Czar the man dropped dead on the way, and at that of another he died after reaching his destination. So it is with many hearts that have encased themselves against the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' in armour of hardness, coldness, or indifference. Their armour kills them while it seems to protect.

The Arming of Christian.

For the detail of the armour, cf. Eph 6. Bunyan might have found, in any of the Romances of Chivalry, abundant material for this part of his writing: yet the list already given of weapons exhibited in the armoury shows clearly that it is St. Paul's inventory to which he refers. The list is familiar:—

The Sword is 'the Word of God' — the only offensive weapon included. Men of high spirit and temper like John Bunyan must have been glad of this restriction. Such men, fighting with any weapon which passionate earnestness might suddenly suggest, may have to repent of many of their strokes. It is true that there are portions of the Old Testament Scripture which, regarded as they were in those days, offer certainly great latitude for vigorous fighting. Yet it is wonderful how restrained and how skilful Bunyan himself was in his controversial use of Scripture. In his answers to his enemies, whether human judges or evil spirits from the pit, he stays closely, and with infinite readiness and address, to the words of the sacred writings.

'The Shield of Faith' is one of the happiest figures in literature. The doubter stands naked to the darts of all enemies. He whose faith is lost finds the battle ever doubly sore upon him. No one who has not tried both ways, can have the least idea of the safety and protection given by a faith at once strong and not too heavy for his hand.

The Helmet protects the vital and most assailable part which gives direction and guidance to the limbs. *'Salvation'* is the Christian's helmet. He who is assured absolutely of his salvation can bear any suffering and undergo any length of conflict. That grand assurance gives coolness and skill in rush of battle, and wins on many a hard-pressed field.

The Breastplate is Righteousness. 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.' To question the rightness of the cause is to have the heart exposed, and many a man has lost the keenest conflicts of his life through a sudden touch of conscience making him a coward.

The Shoes are the 'Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.' The gospel is always and essentially a thing that moves. It urges forward those whom it saves, to all their spiritual adventures. The missionary spirit is in it, if it be true gospel at all. But yet it is the Gospel of *Peace*. Peace goes, in the long run, further than aggression. Its journeys and its victories are those fraught with the most permanent results. Those who would be successful pilgrims in the great pilgrimage should look well to the quality of their Gospel Peace: upon that will depend much of their success as pilgrims. One of Zola's heroes, describing the lame and footsore army of the French in 1871, says: 'A soldier who can't depend on his feet may just as well be thrown upon a rubbish-heap. My captain was always saying out in Italy that battles are won with men's legs.'

All-prayer is a word coined from Eph 6^{18}. In the Romances it was usual for heroes to have one weapon to which magic power was attributed. Just as the Arabian stories revel in magic lamps, rings, and carpets, so those of Teutonic and Celtic nations introduce a magic sword, like the 'Blood-drinker' of Frithjof's Saga, or Arthur's Excalibur. Here, however, the mystic weapon is not a sword, but something whereby a man lays hold on heaven. Scott's picture suggestively introduces gauntlets, by which All-prayer may be intended. It is significant, too, that the 'girdle of truth' mentioned in Ephesians is here omitted. Possibly Bunyan had intended All-prayer for the girdle, and, if so, he has certainly chosen a figure very true to fact. Nothing girds the day's life together and braces the man to face it without entanglement so much as prayer. The change, which is evidently intentional, reminds us of Dante's girdle thrown down into the abyss in the Inferno. That was the emblem of the Franciscan vow, of which he felt he had no further need. Possibly Bunyan may have felt his struggle for truth over, and truth become so intimate a part of himself as to no longer require to be girded on.

The whole armour is simply equivalent to the command, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.' Elsewhere Bunyan writes: 'Christ himself is the Christian's armoury. When he puts on Christ he

is then completely armed from head to foot. Are his loins girt about with truth? Christ is the Truth. Has he on the breastplate of Righteousness? Christ is our Righteousness. [Similarly, Christ is Shield and Salvation and Word of God —the shield, helmet, and sword of the Christian.] Thus he puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, by His spirit fights the fight of faith; and in spite of men, of devils, and his own evil heart, lays hold of Eternal Life. Thus Christ is all in all.'

The Departure.

Grateful for the somewhat austere but helpful kindness of the Porter, the Pilgrim blesses him as he passes out of the gate. The Porter will be better for that blessing. His is a lonely post, watching pilgrim after pilgrim depart for the excitements of battle and the adventures of the road. Every genuinely uttered blessing of this sort keeps the heart alive in the minister of the church and preserves him from losing his human attachments in the routine of office.

So the guest departs. The very meaning of pilgrimage is that he shall feel continually the need for going on. 'Man's spiritual existence,' says Froude, 'is like the flight of a bird in the air; he is sustained only by effort, and when he ceases to exert himself, he falls.' One remembers Chaucer's great lines—

> Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
> Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
> Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
> Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede:
> And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

For a certain distance friends may accompany us, and the sisters who convoy Christian do so not as symbolic virtues, but as human friends. Yet all the chief crises of the journey must be faced alone. These friends warn him of coming danger, and yet show him clearly that they believe in him and in his future success. Such trust is the best of parting gifts.

Descent is always dangerous. High spiritual experience entails this subsequent danger unknown to commonplace travel along the level plain. Spiritual pride, temper on edge, and other 'slips' of character worse than these, are the dangers of descent. There are few pilgrims who do not 'catch a slip or two' at such times.

So closes the story of the House Beautiful. Mr. Froude reminds us of a passage which seems to indicate that Bunyan had read the Romance of Sir Bevis of Southampton, and states that recollections of that Romance 'furnished him with his framework' for this part of the allegory. 'Lions guard the court. Fair ladies entertain him as if he had been a knight-errant in quest of the Holy Grail,' etc. It is an interesting statement. How far it is an accurate one we shall see in our next article.

Contributions and Comments.

A Winter in Rome.

No one in these days questions the deep and widespread interest existing among us as to the early history of Christianity. The actual conditions in which the new faith took its rise, the essential elements that entered into its first presentation, the personal history of its chief witnesses, the sites and scenes of their labours, the dates and distinctive qualities of their writings, occupy more intensely than ever the minds of Christian men of all creeds as well as in all lands. The invaluable writings of Lightfoot, Mommsen, De Rossi, Harnack, Ramsay, Lanciani, not to speak of many others, have only to be named in confirmation of the exceptional interest now taken in these historical studies. Materials have thus been rapidly accumulating of late years for a fresh presentation of the history of the origin and development of the Christian Church. Without doubt we are in possession of fresh facts that go far to complete our available knowledge of those times, and which may also serve to modify some of our cherished beliefs without touching that which is of the essence of the evangelical faith.

The testimony of the Catacombs, for example, has been brought up to date through the labours of Monsignor Wilpert by the addition of a fourth volume to the world-famed work of De Rossi.