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The Pilgrim's Progress.

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

Shame.

This Section has a peculiar importance in view of the fact that, as Cheever says, 'the delineation of this character by Bunyan is a masterly grouping together of the arguments used by men of this world against religion, in ridicule and contempt of it, and of their feelings and habits of opinion in regard to it.' It is peculiarly significant in view of the conditions of Bunyan's time, when shame entered very largely into the controversy between Cavalier and Roundhead. Of course, there were many whose whole pride was enlisted on the side of plain living and high thinking; but there must have been many also who felt the glamour of that brilliant world from which they excluded themselves by espousing the cause of the people and their form of Faith. Even in dress this temptation was widely felt. In the *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* there are ten pages in regard to the pride of dress which show the height to which feeling ran at the time. We hear much of starching and steeling, busks and whalebones, supporters and rebatoes, full moons and hobby-horses, etc., and are told that 'to be proud of apparel is, as if a thief should be proud of his halter, a beggar of his clouts, a child of his gay toys, or a fool of his bauble.'

It is 'proof of our having lost the image of God that we are ashamed of the things of God.' So says the old commentator Scott, and in this chapter we see the curious reversal of a great and valuable natural instinct. Shame has its uses. Dr. Whyte (whose chapter of 'Shame' is one of the most suggestive in his book) points out that it is 'an original instinct planted by God to act as a check on dishonourable action.' It is meant to be a 'social conscience,' adding, as it were, a more popular appeal, to the great language of the moral sense herein. Unfortunately that very fact of its lower moral elevation has attached more shame to the discovery than to the commission of sin, and in this code of judgment the great commandment is, not to be found out.

The arguments of Shame (to borrow Dr. Kerr Bain's division of them) are as follow:—

1. *The Spiritlessness of Religion.* This is the old Greek and Roman stumbling-block against Christianity—the offence of the Cross. Faithful is a gentleman and an aristocrat who cannot help a keen regard for the world. His experience reminds one of passages from the biographies of great soldiers, who have often had to endure a severe conflict of this kind. In Bunyan's time Puritans had much to bear, but the most trying part of it all to sensitive natures must have been the shame and contempt which was cast upon them. Offor tells us that it was then safer to commit a felony than to become a dissenter, and Bunyan himself, in one of his clever swinging verses, writes:

> Though you may crack a coward's crown,
> And quarrel for a pin,
> You dare not on the wicked frown,
> Nor speak against their sin.

When ridicule becomes mixed up with shame the situation becomes still more difficult; it takes a very big man to bear being laughed at, and a very commanding faith to enable him to bear it. To be treated as one who has no claim to respect, who is unmanly and undignified, and whose place in society is that of the butt for caricature, must put a strain upon all that is sensitive in feeling and fine in character. As one reads *Hudibras* and feels, even after all the years, how gibe after gibe must have

cut home, alike by their cleverness and injustice, one realizes how vital a character this Shame was then. To a considerable extent he has retreated now within the four walls of homes where dear friends ply the rack and thumbscrew as only dear friends can; and although in many an office, shop, and factory the battle is open enough, yet there is something to thank God for in the change of times.

2. *The Worldly Worth of the Irreligious.* This is an argument as old as the days of the Psalmist, who was puzzled and grieved at the prosperity of the wicked, in their great power spreading themselves like a green bay tree. Like the Psalmist, many a man has been led into the House of God, where he has considered their end; and, judging them by their death instead of by their life, has escaped the snares of Shame. But the sting of this argument is in the tail of it. The Christian has cut himself off from the strong and prosperous life of the irreligious, venturing the loss of all 'for nobody else knows what.' Once again we are brought back to Faith, the absolute essential in our conflict with Shame. Whether anybody else knows or not, we *must* know what we are venturing everything for. There is no hope against Shame but clear Faith that can withstand the whole brilliance of the world by the simple assertion, 'I know whom I have believed.'

3. *The Worthlessness of the Religious.* Judged from the world's point of view this has always been a stumbling-block to those who were tempted by the pride of life. From the early days of Christianity, when so many of the converts were slaves, the sincerest piety has often been found among many who counted for nothing in the great world. Browning, in his 'Grammarian's Funeral,' has struck a true note when he speaks of going on with pride 'over men's pity.' On the whole, pitableness is more galling and worse to bear than ridicule itself.

4. *The Shamefulness of Religious Ways.* In this part of his argument Shame has more to say for himself than in any other part of it. When religion presents for its chief outward appearance a spectacle of 'whining,' 'mourning,' 'sighing,' and 'groaning,' it is not only false shame, but true shame that may rebel. No doubt there were elements in the Puritan worship which justified this assertion, and as these elements have been caricatured in many accounts of Puritanism, we may thankfully admit that a religion which lays emphasis upon the healthier side of things may also be, and has actually been, a great gift of God; and yet after all, though the best repenting is generally done in secret, it is permanently true that the really shameful thing is our *not repenting*; and however exaggerated the expressions of repentance may be, it is the most honourable act of which a man is capable. The same sort of thing may be said in regard to asking forgiveness. Nothing is more unworthy than to be always making apologies, and there are no more irritating people than those over-sensitive souls who go about with an air of apologizing for their very existence, and are oppressed with a chronic sense of having offended somebody. Yet, the real shamefulness of such an attitude is due to the very sacredness and honour of the difficult task of asking forgiveness. The blessed moment of frank confession is far too sacred to be thus vulgarized. To many natures it is indeed a bitter thing to have to ask forgiveness, and the apology is not always generously received; yet there is something sacramental and cleansing in the humiliation, and he who takes it so may find it a great means of grace.

5. *Social Degradation.* This is practically the same as the third argument of Shame, the new point being that subtle blending of moral and social estimates by which the vices of the great assume finer names, and the virtues of the base seem to share in their lowliness.

Such was and still is shame—that 'final effort of unspirituality' which makes its appeal to an attractive infirmity of noble minds. So far as this is concerned, it is easier for a dull and humble life to be a Christian than for one tempted by the brightness and welcome of the open doors of the world. It clings persistently through a lifetime, if it be not very resolutely and deliberately fought. It can be overcome, and Faithful shows us the way.

Being a sin of the imagination, it, like Faithful's other temptations, depends upon the adroit and immediate guidance of the imagination towards other and more commanding realities than those which it has been aware of. The sight of God, the Word of God, the day of doom, the love of Christ, the soul's salvation, the coming of the King—these are the facts with which Faithful confronts the men of his time and the hectoring spirits of the world. Shame speaks only of men

and their opinion, but there is God and His judgment to reckon with. The shrinking mind must be forced up to that, and in the strength of that vision of great certainties Shame can be thrown off. It is a case of the rivalry and conflict of the seen with the unseen, the present with the future, the human with the divine. Every day we are accustomed between man and man to find it a great privilege and delight to bear reproach out of loyal affection to those we love. Let but love find in the eternal region images equally clear and sweet, and the same loyalty will gain an easy victory over Shame. It is but another instance of the victory of Faith.

So Faithful sings his only song, as well he may. He is a considerably worse poet than Christian is, but he is a *man*, conspicuous through the centuries. Dr. Kerr Bain sees his 'broad shoulders, well-set head, and military walk,' and we see them. His is no smart virtue ready with words, cocksure and light-hearted. He has hesitated twice, but he has overcome.

Talkative.

We come now to the longest and not the best managed of the dialogues. The first part of it is in Bunyan's best vein, but the second is somewhat dull and long drawn out. He has taken much time and space in exhibiting this type of character, and doubtless there must have been a reason for it.

Talkative is 'a fellow of infinite discourse.' The rounded style of his first sentences proves this, with its lack of the familiar abruptness of these conversations. Bunyan's own plain style is part both of his attraction and his greatness. His own words about it are: 'I could have stepped into a style much higher than this in which I have discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than I have seemed to do; but I dare not. God did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play when the pangs of Hell caught hold upon me, therefore I may not play in relating of them; but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was. He that liketh it, let him receive it; and he that doth not, let him produce a better.' As we read the rolling periods of Talkative, this tall and somewhat comely man 'walking at a distance besides them,' we cannot but be thankful that Bunyan's style bears the marks of God's earnest in it. When we read Part III. we are still more thankful for Parts I. and II. There is something about Talkative that reminds us at times of Shakespeare's ancient Pistol, and suggests a man whose conversation is always that of one addressing a public meeting, and receiving frequent applause from his imaginary auditors.

This lengthy and scathing satire gains a special interest from the fact that Talkative was the very type of Puritan singled out by the enemies of Puritanism for their scorn. What poor wretch was it, we wonder, that sat for this portrait? For certainly Talkative is drawn from life, and some long-haired and leather-jerkined man talks again in him after the silence of two hundred years in an unknown grave. It is characteristic of the fidelity of Bunyan that he has drawn this portrait. He is no partisan who is afraid of any truth, even against his own side, any more than the frank writers of the Bible are, who have told the stories of Jacob and of Peter. Here is a Puritan writing of what he knows. He has seen the evil excesses of some of the prophets, lunatic preachers, and loquacious hypocrites of his day, and he exposes it ruthlessly. The whole picture is a protest that this is not the true type of Puritan, and he has sent it down for the benefit of those who in every age are tempted to a religion of speech instead of deed. It has been well remarked that this kind of type has become an almost traditional figure with light and thoughtless writers. There is a limit beyond which such caricatures cease to be even interesting, and to-day they are perhaps less necessary than they may have been in the past. There have been in our country generations of great talkers, and these were sure to have their followers who talked without having their great things to say. Our age appears to have lost the art of conversation, and Talkative nowadays would be voted a dull fellow. Indeed, the abruptness of our modern 'Telegraphese' has cost literature and life a heavy price, and we are tempted at times to feel that we would take the risk of being bored a little, for the wealth and finish of the style of former days. All the more honour should be given to Bunyan for attacking and satirizing a fashionable excess of his own time.

Of course, fluency in the gift of speech is still to be found, though it takes more courage to exercise it nowadays. It is largely a matter of temperament, and one is apt to judge wrongly in regard to it. On the one hand, Offor's note is wise, 'Reader, be careful not to judge harshly, or

despise a real believer, who is blest with fluency of utterance on divine subjects.' On the other hand, one must be equally careful not to characterize all silent Christianity as the work of a 'dumb devil,' or to attempt to force either in ourselves or others the fluent expression of private experience. Silence is better than unreality or exaggeration. There is in fact a golden mean in this as in other matters, and those who can talk upon religion naturally and without any verbiage, are its most valuable advocates.

The permanent warning of this passage is that fluency is always a dangerous gift. Faithful has already told us how in the City of Destruction there was great talk that came to nothing, and any reader of the Epistle of St. James may see by the frequent and striking metaphors for the tongue, how great a danger this was in his day. Dr. Whyte has told a story of a Carthusian, which Browning tells in another form in his *Pambo*. It is the tale of a young man going to a teacher, whose first word to him was, 'I said that I would take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.' The student broke off the lesson, and found that enough for a lifetime. It is not so much particular sins such as profanity, or foulness, or backbiting that are here rebuked; but simple excess of language. He who talks too much is sure to exaggerate his experience, and to use words without meanings. In this way the blight of unreality comes across the whole field of conversation. Speech ceases to be expressive or persuasive; and, worst of all, it becomes a substitute for the very things about which it discourses.

Literature.

CONGREGATIONALISM.

History of English Congregationalism. By R. W. Dale, D.D., LL.D. Completed and Edited by A. W. W. Dale. (*Hodder & Stoughton.* 12s. net.)

It is a rare thing now for a great denominational history to be published in this country. The thing is done often enough in America. Why has it ceased to be done here? There is no other way of getting at the history of religion in our land. For the secular historians ignore religion. Ecclesiasticism they may touch, but that which moves the mass of the people more than anything else, that which is the most unmistakable expression of their character and the most powerful motive in their life, is left contemptuously alone. Each denomination must therefore write its own religious history, and write it often. It is to be hoped that this History of Congregationalism will set the fashion.

The work has been long looked for, but the delay need not be deplored. It has given the editor time to make the necessary verifications. And without the verification of every item of evidence the book would have lost nearly all its value. The time is gone when the people preferred the most violent partisanship and would have all the facts twisted to their own glory. They say that the French peasant still believes that Napoleon gained a glorious victory at Waterloo. But the English peasant no longer denies that Presbyterianism was once the profession of the realm of England, and the Scotch peasant no longer demands that it be proved to be the religion of the redeemed in Paradise.

Even a denominational history must now be accurate. The name of the editor is the best guarantee for the accuracy of this book. Until we have had time to use it, we cannot tell what approximation has been made to the ideal. It is enough that Dr. A. W. W. Dale has the scholar's ideal always before him, the ideal that no date or definition is trivial enough to escape scrutiny, and that he has taken time to come as close as possible to his own standard. [Let us note the single misprint as yet discovered. On p. 270, vi. should be vii.]

But the book will make its way, not because it is A. W. W. Dale's, but because it is R. W. Dale's. For his are the broad masculine judgments expressed, and his is the almost incomparable clearness of its English style.

Even had Dr. R. W. Dale been alone, the book would have been greatly read and relished. His knowledge of the heart of Congregationalism was unique. He was not surpassed in knowledge of