

fectly self-consistent tale. Whether the essayist is correct in these conclusions or no, he deserves much credit for bringing into notice points that are usually slurred over. Assuming the unity of the

narrative, the tone of Jonah's confession in 1^o is a psychological curiosity. And the king's orders in 3^{7.8} are unnecessary after 3⁵. JOHN TAYLOR.

Winchcombe.

The Pilgrim's Progress.

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Worldly Wiseman's Directions.

IT is always easy for the conscienceless to give complacent advice to the conscience-stricken. The vacant houses, cheap living, and fashionable neighbours of the Town of Morality sound irresistible, but the conscience of Christian has to be reckoned with.

Mount Sinai, for all these thousands of years, has been the commanding metaphor for conscience and the law of God. Geographically, the mountain stands like an iron peak shot up by the desert, from its masses of hard and pitiless red rock. Historically, this mountain has been the platform from which the world has received its laws. Disraeli introduces it into his *Tancred* as the mount of moral vision for the dreamer who is his hero. Bunyan's Pilgrim has it thrust upon his path, precipitous and overhanging, threatening him with its crushing rocks and its deadly flashes of fire. His burden, too, becomes heavier as he goes, but the reason for that seems to be that he is out of the way. This is not a universal experience. To some, as in the story of Christoferus, the weight of the burden appears to increase when they are in the direct and difficult line of their task. To these the increased heaviness is the forerunner and signal of a blessed vision of the full-grown Christ. To this man also, the heavier burden is a signal of something coming to him from God; but how different the vision shall be! It is perhaps true that an increased sense of burden may be taken as a precursor of spiritual crisis of one sort or another. The whole incident shows at least this, that Mr. Worldly Wiseman can be a comfortable friend only to those who can find their own devices for getting past Mount Sinai. There is a point in most lives when it needs an obstinate and perverse courage to silence conscience, by deliberately choosing the world and

forsaking Christ. Those may thank God who find that attempt a failure, to whom Worldly Wiseman's promises are broken, and who find instead of ease, safety and friendship, the increasing burden and terror, and the deepening loneliness which these promises bring.

Evangelist Again.

This and the still later appearance of Evangelist were added after the first edition. John Gifford had been John Bunyan's Evangelist, and it is an awful thing to evangelize a man whose conscience and imagination are 'taking notes' like his. Besides, Bunyan himself had been doing much evangelizing. Compare the vivid account of this in Browning's 'Ned Bratts.' It may be noted that here, as elsewhere, there is neither word nor hint as to what denomination Evangelist belongs to; we are dealing with matters far above and far below all that.

Evangelist comes to meet him, drawing nearer and nearer. His coming is deliberate, for he has been watching the man growing worldly in his own pitiful fashion. His services are unsought, and in such cases they are often unwelcome, but that is none of his business. Erring Christians have been known to answer such approaches by resenting the intrusion and joining another church, but Christian is too far in among realities for that. The question is asked, 'What doest thou here?'—the very question which Elijah heard on the road to the same mountain. But here, in a later edition, the word *Christian* is added, evidently for emphasis. A Christian should never be cowering under Mount Sinai. As before, Evangelist is strong in questioning. He will not shoot his arrows in the dark, but must have clearness. The whole passage shows us the spiritual hunter stalking a human soul.

When the case has been set in clear light, he

begins his terrible address. He has nothing personal to say, there is no resentment for Christian's treatment of himself. He thinks neither of possible offence, nor consequences, nor misjudged motives. He has the words of God to speak to the man, and so absorbing is that conviction that he seems to have lost consciousness of himself altogether. The first of these words are the terrible ones that echo through *Grace Abounding* from the deathbed of the apostate Francis Spira. They are words from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which killed Spira and haunted Bunyan. They are followed by a quotation from the Prophet Nathan, 'Thou art the man.' This direct personal attack is characteristic. It reminds us of John Knox's words in his liturgy (*Visitation of the Sicke*); the visitor 'may lift him up with the sweete promises of God's mercie through Christ if he perceive him to be much afraid of God's threatenings. Or, contrariwise, if the patient be not touched with the feeling of his sinnes, he must be beaten downe with God's justice.' Bengel, writing on the Rich Young Ruler, has the similar sentence, 'Christ sends the secure back to the Law; the penitent He consoles with the Gospel.' This 'beating down' is the process which R. L. Stevenson describes with such power in the *Celestial Surgeon*. It is like the beating of a man fallen asleep in the snow, or the blow of the rescuer which stuns the drowning man when he would cling to him and drown both. The one unpardonable sin with Bunyan is that of drawing back. Those who are treated most harshly in his whole allegory are all sinners of this sort, like Turnaway, Pliable, etc. It is because Christian has begun this backward course that he is so sharply dealt with; and here, in such a phrase as 'begun to reject,' we notice the exactness of Puritan speech. Every word is weighed and intended.

The Effect of Evangelist.

The authority of a man who can make another man fall down at his feet as dead is a dangerous gift. In a presumptuous man, or one of small nature, it is apt to be abused. The slightest touch of vanity or love of power renders it an evil influence; but here it is justified because the man is essentially the prophet—he is the mere voice in which words of God are spoken, the mouthpiece of truth and duty.

To that authority Christian capitulates without

a struggle. Of all sound natures the words of Augusta Webster's 'Circe' are true—

Why am I given pride

That yet longs to be broken? . . . Why am I who I am?
But for the sake of him whom Fate will send
One day to be my master utterly?

Those are happy over whom this mastery is effected, not by mere personal fascination, but, as in this case, by the recognition of the voice of conscience.

In the sequel Evangelist proceeds to explain Christian to himself. For his criticism of Morality compare Butler, quoted by Dr. Whyte, pp. 16, 17. The heart of the accusation of Worldly Wiseman is his turning Christian *from the Cross*. Cf. Cheever, 158, 'The cross of Christ is foolishness unto them except to make signs with it, and put it on the roofs of their houses and the outsides of their churches.' As for Evangelist, 'where'er he goes there stands a cross.' The cross interprets life to him, and all views of life which omit the cross are merely shallow and deceitful imaginations. In this instance Evangelist sees one labouring to persuade a man that the means of Eternal Life will be his death. To believe that is to fall into the most hopeless of all conditions, described in Browning's 'Death in the Desert'—

For I say, this is death and the sole death,
When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,
Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
And lack of love from love made manifest.

From this extreme danger he points him back to the Cross against which he had been warned. It is actually the less dangerous course; and now, like John Butterworth, Christian will go to Christ 'though He had a drawn sword in His hand to slay me.'

The wickedness of the Deceiver is concentrated in the words 'how unable.' To take the responsibility of handling a human soul and guiding its destiny is a crime for the unable. Efficiency is the test of everything that calls itself Salvation. Is it *able* to deliver, to keep, to save to the uttermost? Cf. Heine's bitter words about the Greek culture he had lived for; when he was dying the poor Venus he had loved could not save him—*her arms were broken*.

Thus far Evangelist has been explaining the situation to Christian rather in a criticism of his tempter than of himself, but from the outset he has

made the man responsible for it all, by his own *consenting thereto*. In such cases men blame everything but themselves—their friend, the devil, circumstances, temperament. And within these there lurk still subtler excuses. Here there was the argument of natural affection for his wife and family; there was also the desire of greater liberty. All of these are cut through by this incisive Evangelist. The root of the evil had been his own consenting. As for natural affection, when it comes to a choice between that and conscience, a man must hate his father and mother, etc. As for liberty, Legality is the son of the bondwoman, and the mere attempt at morality unlit by the light of faith is but lifelong futile drudgery in the prison-house. Finally comes the curse pronounced upon everyone that *continueth not*, reminding us once again of the great lesson of the book. It is a big contract to be a Christian—a matter in which men are working for the long result.

The effect upon Christian is immediate. 'Words and fire' come out of the mountain. The phrase might seem impossible for artistic narrative, but Bunyan's art instinctively constructs so good a tale that it is able to bear many such violent strains. This is a fine example of that characteristic of the *Pilgrim's Progress* which R. L. Stevenson points out in his remarkable essay upon it—the narrative losing itself in the spiritual significance. Nothing could more exactly describe the situation when conscience, that has been silent while we were tempted, speaks when we have fallen, and the story of our defections is told in words of flame.

The close of the incident is very beautiful. Christian's words, *Is there hope?* remind us of the same question at the close of Tennyson's 'Vision of Sin.' But the answer here is plainer. Tennyson's words are—

At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, Is there any hope?
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

Evangelist has more definite things to say than this. But the best thing recorded is that *one smile* he gave him. Worldly Wiseman has plenty of smiles; so, for that matter, sometimes has Help. But this is the 'tenderness of the austere man,' the most inspiring smile on earth.

Two Guides.

It is instructive to contrast the characters of Worldly Wiseman and Evangelist regarded as advisers. The first is hail-fellow-well-met, slight, and hypothetical; the second dignified and even official, but thorough and imperative. The first has no horizons (the sure sign of a false kind of breadth), and in consequence there is no real clearness of vision in him even for things near; the horizons of the second are Heaven and Hell, which he sees as tremendous ramparts of the Universe, and within the space between, his insight and his outlook are pitilessly clear. The first, with all his show of friendliness, is hard, cold, and untender; his comfort is a mere narcotic, and he lacks the manly virtues of chivalry and a sense of honour. The second is tender and compassionate; his healing is by surgery which wounds in order to cure, and his bearing is that of the soldier of Jesus Christ. Finally, the first is mistaken in his dealing with a burdened man; the second is correct. Both are there to help the man off with his burden, and they have at least this much in common, that neither of them attempts himself to take it off. The difference lies in the fact that the former sends him for relief to certain inconsiderable and helpless persons; the latter passes him over to God and the Christ of God.

The combination of manliness and tenderness in Evangelist makes him an excellent mirror for ministers. His *manliness* stands in contrast to Sydney Smith's famous saying that there are three sexes—the male, the female, and the clerical. Here there are no mannerisms or cheap sentiment, but that higher common sense which deals among facts and reasons, and leaves the impression that it is a stupid thing not to be a Christian. His *tenderness* appears in the gradual relenting to forgiveness, when severity has done its work. He has felt the misery of the hour as much as Christian, and he does not spare himself while he wounds the other. He knows the need to be extreme, and the moment to be critical. And yet he never lapses into brutality, as earnest men are apt to do. He is a man essentially kind, and not severe—which is perhaps the testing point for good or bad Evangelists. In this it will be seen that he reflects the character of God, whose 'strange work' is severity, and whose heart is revealed in the tender promise that a bruised reed shall He not break.