

Have we not had enough of Cryptograms? Perhaps they have still a fascination. Mr. Elliot Stock has published an anonymous book called *The Cryptogram and its Key in the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (2s. 6d. net). The epistles are taken in the reverse order, and then they are found to be an exposition of the spiritual life, expressing severally Repentance, Faith, Prayer, Good Works, Sound Doctrine, Patience and Tribulation, and Love.

The centre of interest in the Higher Criticism of the Bible is now shifted from the north of the land to the south. It is almost a generation since Robertson Smith convulsed Scotland. And Scotland has never gone to sleep since that first rough awakening. It looked at one time as if Gore and Liddon had convulsed England. But it takes long time and much shaking to move the country clergyman. Now, however, he seems to be awake all over the country. One evidence is the meetings of the Church Congress, another the letters in the newspapers, a third the books on Higher Criticism that are written and read so numerous. The latest is a popular introduction to the subject, entitled *Criticism and the Old Testament*. It is written by the Rev. H. Theodore Knight, M.A. (Elliot Stock; 3s. 6d. net).

The readers of Shakespeare are of all kinds and capacities, and therefore commentaries on Shakespeare must be of every variety of penetration and superficiality. The Hon. A. S. G. Canning is content to run lightly over the story of the plays, without allowing himself to be hindered with problems of any kind, whether of text or of character. The play is a story in verse, and he tells it—not in his own language, however; very wisely he uses the language of Shakespeare freely—Shakespeare's 'noble language,' as he likes to call it. And so, whether we get anything out of Mr. Canning or not, we get something out of Shakespeare, though not so much as we should get if we were studying the plays for ourselves. But Mr. Canning writes for those who do not study the plays for themselves, for those who do not study anything, who are content to read and skip, and skip and read. He hopes to catch them unawares, and lodge something in their minds. And he may do it, the more likely that he does not attempt to lodge very much there. The volume is entitled *Shakespeare Studied in Six Plays* (Fisher Unwin; 16s. net). The six plays are Othello, Macbeth, King John, Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, and the Merry Wives of Windsor.

## The Pilgrim's Progress.

BY THE REV. JOHN KELMAN, JUN., M.A., EDINBURGH.

### Faithful's Temptations.

#### I. WANTON.

THE reticence and chaste delicacy of this passage is remarkable in the age of Bunyan, and is in strong contrast to the treatment of the same subject in Part III. In a curious passage in his account of his *Call to the Ministry*, Bunyan writes: 'And in this I admire the wisdom of God that He made me shy of women from my first conversion until now. . . . It is a rare thing to see me carry it pleasantly towards a woman: the common salutation of women I abhor; it is odious to me in whomsoever I see it. Their company alone I cannot away with; I seldom so much as touch a woman's hand.'

Faithful, however, is a man of a quite different stamp. His flesh is hard on him, and its appetites are strong. While Christian wrestles with spiritual enemies for the most part, Faithful's first two temptations are of an opposite sort. It is in keeping with this that even after his escape he is still troubled. 'I know not,' he says, 'whether I did wholly escape her or no.' He is not, as we have seen, an imaginative person. But the unimaginative are perhaps all the more subject to this kind of imagination, which needs not any great amount of finesse and subtlety, but assaults them with crude and gross thoughts. On the coarsening effect of such imaginations there is a remarkable and weighty passage in the first of Matthew Arnold's *Discourses in America*.

The character of this forceful man, blunt almost to roughness, is the result of such conflicts. He hates lust because he fears it, and because he knows that he has good reason to fear it. It is that hatred, with fear behind it, which keeps him braced and ever on the strain. The easy good-nature which might be safe for some is not safe for him, and he makes no attempt to risk it. He is austere, and graver than untempted men see any reason for. Such men are apt to be harshly judged. Their asceticism appears sour, and their strictness and straitlaced severity appear inhuman. Yet if we knew their inner life we should often find that they are but choosing the only way in which it is possible for them to keep themselves pure. Their 'choice between faith and sense must be decisive and exclusive.' If lust has to be fought, there is no use of striking gently. Pleasures, genialities, even friendships otherwise helpful, must be sacrificed, and the sacrifice is well worth while.

The refuge which Faithful found is the best and indeed the only way of escape. The text which he remembered in the Book of Proverbs is an uncompromising and ungentle one. Yet, where argument and dalliance of any kind are so dangerous, this is the only kind of answer that is wise or safe. The rough blow that clubs down an evil imagination with the word 'hell,' shows a finer skill than any moral discussion would do. And the following words are still wiser: 'I shut my eyes . . . and I went my way.' The sudden change from sweetness to railing was only to be expected. It is characteristic of that cruelty and coarseness which falsely calls itself love. The railing does not matter. The important thing is to shut the eyes and go away. Get, perforce, into another region of interests, and out of this. It is the old story of Ulysses stopping his sailors' ears with wax as they passed the Islands of the Sirens. There is no combating such suggestions. They must be gone away from; and the keener and more manifold a man's general and innocent interests in life are, the easier will be his chance of escape.

It is curious that the six remedies against this kind of sin, given in Bunyan's favourite 'Plain Man's Pathway,' are 'Labour, abstinence, temperance, prayer, restraint of senses, shunning of women's company.' As to the last, its wisdom may be questioned. It may well be, that if Faithful had

dwelt in the Palace Beautiful for a time he would have had less trouble from the recurrences of such temptation.

## 2. ADAM THE FIRST.

Mr. Froude has, in the second chapter of his 'Bunyan,' an interesting and able résumé of the course of Christian thought regarding the Platonic theory of the inherent evil of material substance and the body. John Bunyan approaches the subject from the point of view, not of philosophy, but of experience; and while his Adam is the Adam of Paul rather than of Genesis, he is yet a very human figure. His bluff entrance almost suggests the coming of the unrespected old man on the comic stage. He is the most distinctly drawn of all Bunyan's pictures of tempters, loathsome as the elderly sensualist always is—a man like him of Tennyson's 'Vision of Sin,' in whom all ideals are dead. He is an extension of the idea of Wanton; representing an appeal not to any one appetite, but to the entire sensuous side of a man—to all that is of the earth, earthy. Easy-going, luxurious, conscienceless, he stands for the natural man that is in us all, with his clamant senses and his indifference to questions of sin and goodness. His daughters are the Lust of the flesh, the Lust of the eyes, and the Pride of life.

To a full-blooded man like Faithful the appeal of this old Adam must ever be strong. And the time at which that appeal comes is significant. After the first impulses of pilgrimage begin to flag and to give place to the discouraging sense of difficulty, a reaction is inevitable. This episode corresponds to Christian's sleep in the arbour on that same Hill Difficulty, and the difference of experience is determined simply by the different natures of the two men. It was natural for Faithful to take his relaxation in a broader and more voluptuous form than Christian. Yet the temptation is the same.

This temptation, in one form or another, 'comes to every Christian, and always from Deceit.' There is only one way of successfully meeting it. Faithful for a time combats it with questioning, but all the time a soul spends in arguing with him, the old Adam is winning. He can be monstrously specious, and the strictest of men know only too well that there is much that can be said for him. But at last Faithful looks him straight in the face and sees the truth. The flesh ever

wins by side glances and suggestions. Looked at directly, with an unclouded eye, it only disgusts; for the spiritual eye is sensitive to broad effects, though it can easily be bewitched by things seen only sidelong.

This temptation has found beautiful and daring language in every generation. In our own time Swinburne and Rossetti have sometimes pled its cause. Kipling has made us feel its power in his *Mandalay*, Fiona Macleod in *Green Fire*, Fitzgerald in his revival of *Omar Kayyam*. As records of phases of human life, these have their unquestioned place in Art. But if any of them aspires to the prophetic place, and claims a serious place among the spiritual counsellors of our time, that is a different matter. If we have to make a choice, it must be wiser to be merciless to the flesh in order to save the spirit, than to be merciless to the spirit for the sake of the flesh.

### Moses.

This very characteristic passage has for its side-note in the first edition 'the temper of Moses,' which yields in later editions to 'the thunder of Moses.' Really they mean the same thing, Moses' temper being always (when he is allegorical at least) more or less of the thundery order. This episode corresponds with Christian's experiences at Mount Sinai, only that here we see more clearly the thoroughness of that Law, which reaches to the heart's desires and buffets a man even for inclining to the flesh. No more illuminative commentary has ever been written on Ro 7<sup>7-11</sup>. It was when the law said to Paul's conscience, 'Thou shalt not *covet*,' that sin revived and slew him. And John Bunyan was the very man to write this commentary. Here are two of his own experiences of the Law: 'There is no middle way in the Law. It hath not ears to hear, nor heart to pity its penitent ones.' 'Also the law, that can shoot a great way, have a care thou keep out of the reach of those great guns, the Ten Commandments.' Cheever, catching well the spirit of the older writers, cries, 'but I have had enough of that fierce sweeper, the Law. The Lord deliver me from his besom!' The biographer of the wretched Spira, in words which well represented the sufferings of that poor soul whose tortures had so deeply impressed Bunyan, spoke of 'the continual butchery of his conscience.'

Luther advises sinners to 'Hit conscience on

the snout,' by faith in Christ. But how much finer is the account of deliverance which this ardent disciple of Luther gives. 'One came by and bid him forbear,' and that one had holes in his hands and in his side. We instinctively remember the *stigmata* of Francis of Assisi. Thomas à Kempis, too, is with Bunyan here: 'Oh, if Jesus crucified would come into our hearts, how quickly and fully should we be instructed in all truth.' 'If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest thyself in the passion of Christ, and dwell willingly within His sacred wounds.'

There can be no doubt that here the wounds of Christ are set over against the old Adam as well as over against Moses. True, the realization of the crucified is primarily introduced as the man's salvation from an accusing conscience. Bunyan himself often found that it is 'the object of the threatenings to make the promises shine.' The most brilliant visions and illuminations of *Grace Abounding* usually break through passages of the blackest despair. Yet in this place there is an unusually subtle touch of spiritual art in setting Christ's wounds over against the fleshly appetites—the bleeding body of the Lord in controversy with the lusting flesh of His poor pilgrim. This contrast is exactly expressed in Christina Rossetti's poem of 'The Three Enemies,' in which the first part relates to the Flesh—

'Sweet, thou art pale.' 'More pale to see  
Christ hung upon the cruel tree,  
And bore His Father's wrath for me.'

'Sweet, thou art sad.' 'Beneath a rod  
More heavy, Christ for my sake trod  
The winepress of the wrath of God.'

'Sweet, thou art footsore.' 'If I bleed,  
His feet have bled; yea, in my need  
His heart once bled for mine indeed.'

### Discontent.

At this point we come to the second group of Faithful's temptations. He had been preserved from yielding to the lower ones of the first group, and now those very qualities of pride and self-respect which help a man to resist the flesh become the means of a new order of temptation. The man of high spirit is attacked by Discontent and Shame. There is a further connexion between the groups, just as Wanton is a herald and foreshadow of Adam, so Discontent is of Shame.

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Indeed, a sufficiently drastic and final dealing with Wanton and Discontent may obviate any encounter with the larger sins.

Discontent is not always and wholly an evil thing. There is indeed not only a right discontent, but it is from a divine discontent that all Christian life springs. Nothing is more un-Christian than that silly kind of optimism which is satisfied with anything that comes, good, bad, or indifferent—like some courageous but futile weathercock, fixedly pointing south through a north-westerly gale. Lasalle, in the early days of Socialism, bitterly accused the Alsatian peasants of an 'accursed want of needs.' One of Matthew Arnold's most telling passages in his *Essays in Criticism* is directed against the fallacy that 'excellence is common and abundant.'

This, however, is a different sort of Discontent. The difficult path of Christ, when it leads through the valley of Humility, is apt to present the double aspect of lost chances and lost friends. There is no honour in it which the world can recognize, and

it is very lonely. These are rather wafts of sentiment that play for a moment upon the pilgrim's heart than definite and clearly stated arguments. He brushes them aside by the answer that the loneliness is there already, and there is no use in lingering over any pathetic aspect it may present; as to the honour, that is a matter of standards, and he has chosen another code of honour than the world's.

Yet upon many a pilgrim, Discontent makes the heavier assault of a grumbling spirit about things in general. That ancient sin of Accidia which mediæval saints found so sore upon them, is ever with us. It is an exhilarating reflexion that its evil has wrought out so much good as it has done in literature, setting Chaucer and Dante, and so many others of the greatest, to sound the bugle-note of the Duty of Joy. In our own time Browning has enriched that literature by much of his noblest poetry, and R. L. Stevenson will be remembered for this more than for all his other gifts to posterity.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

LUKE IX. 23.

**'And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.'**—R. V.

#### EXPOSITION.

**'And he said to them all.'**—The word 'all' implies the fact mentioned by St. Mark (8<sup>34</sup>), that before continuing His discourse He called up to Him the multitudes who were at a little distance. St. Luke here omits the presumption and rebuke of St. Peter, which is alone sufficient to dispose of the unworthy theory of some German theologians that he writes with an *animus* against St. Peter, or with some desire to disparage his position.—FARRAR.

**'To all'** is not to be taken as *in reference to* all, nor is it said in contrast to Peter, so that what Matthew relates (16<sup>22</sup>) may be unconsciously presupposed.—MEYER.

**'Any man.'**—The principle is of universal application, not merely for an elect few, saints and ascetics.—ADENEY.

**'Let him deny himself.'**—Renounce self.—ADENEY.

**'And take up his cross daily.'**—This is the first mention of the cross in Luke and Mark. Its associations were such that this declaration must have been startling. The Jews,

especially in Galilee, knew well what the cross meant. Hundreds of the followers of Judas and Simon had been crucified. It represents, therefore, not so much a burden as an instrument of death, and it was mentioned because of its familiar associations. Cf. Lk 14<sup>27</sup>, Mt 10<sup>38</sup>.—PLUMMER.

**'Daily.'**—'For thy sake we are killed all the day long' (Ro 8<sup>36</sup>); 'I die daily' (1 Co 15<sup>31</sup>).—FARRAR.

#### THE SERMON.

##### On following Christ.

By the Rev. E. H. Higgins.

When He said these words, Christ was tired—tired by the harassment of a great crowd. He came apart and prayed, and then He talked with the disciples of the subject uppermost in His thoughts—His own death, and showed them their relationship to Him. As there was a cross and death for Him, so there was a cross and death for them.

i. Let us look at the form in which Jesus throws