

many of us are apt to be—who will each start anew to think the world out, wavering and shifting as to truth and the criteria by which it may be judged—there is something awful, something wonderful, in the great spectacle of the Church in its solidarity standing one great witness to a faith which the individual, with his short range, working on preconceptions imposed on him by his day, would pronounce impossible and incredible. It is something to realize that in every age men have found it impossible and incredible, and have committed themselves to a faith that went beyond their understanding and been justified.’

The third doctrine is the doctrine of the Judgment. That the doctrine of the Judgment has held a place in the history of the Church, and has held it so prominently and so long, is one of the puzzles of this time. There is no doubt, be it ever so puzzling now, that our fathers believed in the Last Judgment. But how did they believe in it? Here is the marvel. The doctrine

of the Judgment became to them a mighty force for righteousness. That a Judgment there would be, and that the Judge would be Christ their Saviour, gave them a standard of righteousness of the loftiest kind. So lofty was the standard that in every age it was found to be unapproachable. The reach, in Browning’s phrase, ever exceeded the grasp. And yet its height has been justified by history. There are those who explain the progress of human morality by the use of the word Evolution. It is merely a word to juggle with. ‘Historically,’ says Mr. GLOVER, ‘nothing has helped mankind forward so uniformly and so steadily as the concentration of the Church’s thought on its Master and its Judge.’

‘We believe that He will come to be our Judge.’ The belief is our inheritance from the Christian Society. Let us repeat it to such good purpose that for each one of us this most difficult doctrine of the Last Judgment may be a power making for righteousness.

The Pilgrim’s Progress.

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The Second Part.

WE have now reached the last section of the journey, from the Delectable Mountains to the end. The special feature of this portion is indeed that which more or less characterizes the whole of the Second Part of the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the comfort and welcome that there are in Christianity for the weak. It is peculiarly interesting to notice the emphasis laid upon this by so robust a man as John Bunyan. The tenderness of such characters as his need not, however, surprise us. In the midst of his rough strength there is an extraordinary sensitiveness and an imaginative delicacy which may well prepare us for such compassion and understanding of those who are not strong like himself; and if at times the weak brother becomes troublesome, or even allows

himself to trade upon his weakness, Bunyan will answer your remonstrance by a reminder that he himself and all his stronger readers have also much in them that needs toleration.

The Delectable Mountains.

Here we are met at the outset by the usual care of the weak. This is the place of spiritual vision and understanding, and here the strong must choose and find their spirituality for themselves, while the shepherds will need to give all their attention to the feeble. ‘So the feeble and the weak went on, and Mr. Great-heart and the rest did follow.’

On the whole the passage is not quite so open-air and breezy as the corresponding passage in the

First Part, and the scenes are rather of the nature of tableaux than of landscape. Yet, on the other hand, the tone is more cheerful and the thoughts more exhilarating than those depressing visions of doom which formed the greater part of the story of the Delectable Mountains in the earlier part. There are in all four new scenes.

1. 'MOUNT MARVEL, where they looked and beheld a man at a distance, that tumbled the hills about with words.' This was the son of Great-grace, and he was 'set there to teach pilgrims how to believe down, and so tumble out of their way, what difficulties they shall meet with, by faith.' This is another of those little glimpses, such as that which we have had of Great-grace himself, which show us the sort of men and types of character upon which the heart of Bunyan loved to dwell. It is in curious and almost violent contrast to that growing company of weaklings with whom we are journeying, and doubtless it was meant to be so. Here is a man who neither makes nor feels difficulties, and to whom nothing is impossible. So vivid is his faith, and so unquestioning and whole-hearted, that all difficulties vanish before its bright advent. This is your true Christian Scientist, who, taking Christ literally, believes that faith can remove mountains. Such men were D. L. Moody and Gordon of Khartoum; and if indeed the material and visible world did not miraculously go down before them on all occasions, yet they were able, by faith, to overleap and ignore such instances of failure, and through unquenchable confidence they did actually achieve many impossibilities. One would have thought that for Mr. Ready-to-halt and for Mr. Fearing such a vision might be almost too bracing; but Bunyan believes in strength, although he pities weakness, and insists upon the glory of the strong and competent spirit, thus giving his answer to any who might have felt that the weak brother was being spoilt.

2. MOUNT INNOCENCE,—with Godly-man walking in white upon it. It is interesting to remember that we have already met Innocence in the person of the damsel at the house of the Interpreter. There, the lesson was that of the lowliness of Innocence; here, it is of its loftiness. The thought reminds us of Mrs. Browning's poem of the *Lessons from the Gorse*, which so beautifully expresses it:

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us
From that academic chair
Canopied with azure air,
That the wisest word man reaches
Is the humblest he can speak?
Ye, who live on mountain peak,

Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek!

Godly-man is in white, and Prejudice and Ill-will are throwing dirt at him, but the dirt falls off in a little time, and his white garments shine more brightly than ever. This, no doubt, is true in the end of all slander of the innocent; yet, unfortunately, the dirt does not always fall off in a little time, and if Prejudice and Ill-will know their business well enough, they can generally manage to dim the brightness of the character they assault. The dirt which they throw directly in the form of definite accusations may indeed fall off at once, but if they are experts they will do little of that. They will merely go about in a vague way saying what a pity it is that the man has such a dirty coat; and in spite of its glittering whiteness they will be believed, for generality is the soul of slander, as all clever slanderers know only too well.

3. MOUNT CHARITY.—Here Bunyan falls back upon the simplest and most conventional form and doctrine of charity. We have met with it already in the story of Mercy and Mr. Brisk, and in the riddle which Mr. Honest gave his host as a nut to crack in the House of Gaius. The undiminished roll of cloth adds nothing to these former instances, and the moral is of course as old as the world. Every reader must observe how entirely we are losing sight of the scenery here, and the high mountain land might be anywhere for aught that we can see of it.

4. In the ETHIOPIAN we have not even a new mountain, but only a 'place' where Fool and one Want-wit are washing an Ethiopian and only succeeding in making him blacker. This is a natural counterpart to the lesson of Mount Innocent, and it is true within the same limitations. Unfortunately, log-rolling and Mutual Praise Associations can for a time, and sometimes for a long time, delude the public only too well; and there is a curious tendency to exercise this false charity upon every mention of a really bad character. The late Professor A. B. Davidson used to say that 'there are some critics who prefer Esau to Jacob, and Saul to David, and Judas Iscariot to the Apostle

John.' The case of Judas Iscariot is the extreme instance of such whitewashing. Perhaps the barbarous severity with which his name was treated by earlier writers, such as Dante, may have been a temptation to later ones, among whom may be named Ruskin and De Quincey; but the verdict of history does not easily accept the glosses with which kind-hearted literary men or perverse interpreters have tried to reverse the only historical estimate of the traitor which we possess. In general, we are here facing the great and constant question of our attitude to sin. R. L. Stevenson tells how he upheld the doctrine that there are thoroughly bad men in the world against the more kindly judgment of his friend Fleeming Jenkin, and how, when he had narrated the case of one thoroughly bad man, the Professor still said that it was a dangerous way of thinking.¹ No one can fail to admire the spirit of charity that breathes in such views, and yet there is another side to it. Black is black, and facts are the only safe things we have to deal with in this world. It is just as bad to call black white as it is to throw mud; and to persist in it, so as to ignore the presence and the reality and the danger of evil, is to do what Stevenson has spoken of as the work of a wrecker, deranging the beacons upon a dangerous coast.

When Bunyan is upon this line at any rate, he seems to feel it incumbent upon him to go a little further. The two fools would have pled mercy as their reason for attempting to whitewash the Ethiopian, so Mercy shall pronounce upon the case. She desires to be shown the door that opens upon the By-Way to Hell from these mountains. Harkening at the open door she hears the cries of three distinct types of the damned. One has been lost because of the evil of the home life for which his father has been responsible. A second, like Francis Spira, has lost his soul to save his life; and a third represents those who through indulgence have come to that place. Mercy is terrified, turns pale and trembles, and comes away saying, 'Blessed be he and she that are delivered from this place.' It is all that puritan Mercy can say, and Bunyan leaves it at that.

¹ *Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin.*

The introduction of Mercy suggests one of the most curious incidents in the whole story. In the Shepherds' Palace she has seen a wonderful looking-glass, and she longs for it violently. They ask the shepherds to give it to her, and the request is granted. What this glass stands for is a question of some interest. It is a kind of combination of a natural looking-glass which reflects the person who looks upon it, and a magic mirror which shows the face of the Prince. Its magical powers are such that it will show the Prince in whatever way you want to see him, either with the Crown of Thorns and the marks of the Cross, or in the glory of Heaven. It is, of course, a subject which has been treated in literature and folk-lore from time immemorial, and it is one peculiarly tempting to the imaginative. Nathaniel Hawthorne uses it in his brilliant account of the *Glass of Fancy*. In this passage we may be sure that Bunyan is thinking especially of the Epistle of St. James; together, no doubt, with a half-remembered sense of many a magic song and story he had heard. If that be so, the glass is undoubtedly the Word of God, and it is extremely interesting to notice how, as Bunyan comes near the end of his work, he closes in upon the thought of the Word. Metaphor after metaphor is used to indicate it. It is the Sword in the hand of Valiant and the Crutches of Mr. Ready-to-halt, a map, a light struck suddenly, and here a magic mirror, which, if held in one way, will show a pilgrim the uttermost truth about himself, but held in another way will reveal Christ to him. To complete the story, the other women receive corresponding presents such as ear-rings, jewels and bracelets, but there is nothing to indicate any particular significance in these. Once again it is interesting to notice how entirely the allegory is at every point breaking down. The glass which Mercy carries away with her is not a little portable mirror, but a 'great glass that hangs up in the dining-room.' We are far beyond the region now where consistency matters at all. There is a gale upon the spirit of the dreamer as he approaches the glories of the Celestial City, and Mercy might have carried the dining-room itself away with her, had it suited John Bunyan's purpose.