

The army of Shaddai, with its captains clad in armor, its forces marching, counter-marching, opening to the right and left, . . . all these were reminiscences of Cromwell's army, of the new model and of the military manœuvres in which he himself had taken part under Sir Samuel Luke. So, again, Diabolus new-modelling the corporation, changing mayor, recorder, aldermen and burgesses at pleasure, was simply doing the same thing the king and Lord Ailesbury were doing at Bedford about the time 'The Holy War' was written." More, indeed, than this of suggestion from characters and scenes in that stirring time of English history might be traced. An allegory so written, and of so unquestioned power, could not fail of being rich in homiletical teaching for ministers. And this, because Bunyan has so well analyzed the forces of temptation, and has urged with so much power the perils environing the Christian soul. A preacher has learned a great lesson in dealing with certain themes, such as temptation to evil, when he has learned *how not to be abstract*. This and kindred themes demand concrete treatment and living illustrations. And while the preacher may not adopt Bunyan's line in allegory, yet he will catch suggestions and imports to a mode of exhibiting such truths which will be Bunyan-like. There are scores of texts in the New Testament, like the following: "Fight the good fight of faith," "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith," "I have fought a good fight," "That thou mightest war a good warfare," "Lusts which war against the soul"; and for treating which in sermons the best possible preparation would be a fresh perusal of this grand old allegory, which came glowing hot from the soul of a man to whom this contest with evil was the most real thing in life, and the spirit of whose allegory is contagious.

As a picture of the perils by which Christian souls are environed, the allegory is not less impressive. The latter portion is "occupied with two perils which loomed large to Bunyan's thought as besetting the Christian soul: that of being again seduced from the right by the world's blandishments, and that of being forced from it by the world's persecutors." The latter of these was intensely real in Bunyan's times. He had faced them in all their power. Twelve years' imprisonment in Bedford Jail attested what they had been to him. But for the men of our day this peril no longer exists. If possible, however, the first of these dangers is more imminent and more baleful in our time than his. It has become one of the common phases of pulpit discussion, the absorbing power of worldliness in such a growth of material progress as the present age contains. And preachers do well to study Bunyan's ways of dealing with it. The danger comes upon Mansoul, though Lucifer counsels are that "Mansoul is a market town and a town that delights in commerce." . . . "Let Mansoul be taken up in much business, and let them grow full and rich." . . . "Yea, may we