

grace of God. In himself he was a child of the devil; and hell, not in metaphor, but in hard and palpable fact, inevitably waited for him. This belief, or the affectation of this belief, continues to be professed, but without a realisation of its tremendous meaning. The form of words is repeated by multitudes who do not care to think what they are saying. Who can measure the effect of such a conviction upon men who were in earnest about their souls, who were assured that this account of their situation was actually true, and on whom, therefore, it bore with increasing weight in proportion to their sincerity?

With these few prefatory words, I now return to Bunyan. He had begun to go regularly to church, and by church he meant the Church of England. The change in the constitution of it, even when it came, did not much alter its practical character in the country districts. At Elstow, as we have seen, there was still a high place; there was still a liturgy; there was still a surplice. The Church of England is a compromise between the old theology and the new. The Bishops have the apostolical succession, but many of them disbelieve that they derive any virtue from it. The clergyman is either a priest who can absolve men from sins, or he is a minister, as in other Protestant communions. The sacraments are either means of grace or mere outward signs. A Christian is either saved by baptism or saved by faith, as he pleases to believe. In either case he may be a member of the Church of England. The effect of such uncertain utterances is to leave an impression that, in defining such points closely, theologians are laying down lines of doctrines about subjects of which they know nothing, that the real truth of religion lies in what is common to the two theories, the obligation to lead a moral life; and to this sensible view of their functions

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