

CHAPTER II.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

The Pilgrim's Progress is the history of the struggle of human nature to overcome temptation and shake off the bondage of sin, under the convictions which prevailed among serious men in England in the seventeenth century. The allegory is the life of its author cast in an imaginative form. Every step in Christian's journey had been first trodden by Bunyan himself; every pang of fear and shame, every spasm of despair, every breath of hope and consolation, which is there described, is but a reflexion as on a mirror from personal experience. It has spoken to the hearts of all later generations of Englishmen because it came from the heart; because it is the true record of the genuine emotions of a human soul; and to such a record the emotions of other men will respond, as one stringed instrument vibrates responsively to another. The poet's power lies in creating sympathy; but he cannot, however richly gifted, stir feelings which he has not himself known in all their intensity.

"Ut ridentibus arident ita flentibus adflent
Humani vultus. Si vis me flere dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi."

The religious history of man is essentially the same in all ages. It takes its rise in the duality of his nature. He

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