

that are more profane and loose." The natural man might think it strange, but the language of the curse was not to be mistaken. Cursed is every one who has failed to fulfil the whole law. There was not a person in the whole world who had not himself sinned in early life. All had sinned in Adam also, and St. Paul had said in consequence, "'There is none that doeth good, no, not one!' The law was given not that we might be saved by obeying it, but that we might know the holiness of God and our own vileness, and that we might understand that we should not be damned for nothing. God would have no quarrelling at His just condemning of us at that day."

This is Bunyan's notion of the position in which we all naturally stand in this world, and from which the substitution of Christ's perfect fulfilment of the law alone rescues us. It is calculated, no doubt, to impress on us a profound horror of moral evil when the penalty attached to it is so fearful. But it is dangerous to introduce into religion metaphysical conceptions of "law." The cord cracks that is strained too tightly; and it is only for brief periods of high spiritual tension that a theology so merciless can sustain itself. No one with a conscience in him will think of claiming any merit for himself. But we know also that there are degrees of demerit, and, theory or no theory, we fall back on the first verse of the English Liturgy, as containing a more endurable account of things.

For this reason, among others, Bunyan disliked the Liturgy. He thought the doctrine of it false, and he objected to a Liturgy on principle. He has a sermon on Prayer, in which he insists that to be worth anything prayer must be the expression of an inward feeling; and that people cannot feel in lines laid down for them.

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