

disinterested preaching the faith which he once destroyed. The town turned out to hear, and thought there was some mockery, many were deeply moved. His own account of it is:—"At first I could not believe that God should speak by me to the heart of any man, still counting myself unworthy; yet those who were thus touched, would love me, and have a particular respect for me; and though I did put it from me, that they should be awakened by me, still they would confess it and affirm it before the saints of God. . . . Wherefore, seeing them in both their words and deeds to be so constant, and also in their hearts so earnestly pressing after the knowledge of Jesus Christ, rejoicing that ever God did send me where they were, then I began to conclude it might be so, that God had owned in his work such a foolish one as I; and then came that word of God to my heart with such sweet refreshment. 'The blessing of them that were ready to perish is come upon me; yea, I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.' At this, therefore, I rejoiced, yea, the tears of those whom God had awakened by my preaching would be both solace and encouragement to me. I thought on those sayings, 'Who is he that maketh me glad, but the same that is made sorry by me?' And again, 'Though I be an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am unto you: for the seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord.'"

There was a solemnizing and subduing power in Bunyan's ministry, because it was heart-felt. So far as the truths he uttered were capable of becoming subjects of personal consciousness, he had experienced them; and so far as they were subjects of intellectual conviction, he was not fully persuaded of them, but saw them so clear and evident, that his reasonings were continually quickening into sensations. He thus began with a John-Baptist ministry, to which succeeded a Pentecostal evangel; and at last it grew into the Pauline amplitude and completeness, "the whole counsel of God." "In my preaching of the word, I took special notice of this one thing, namely, that the Lord did lead me to begin where the word begins with sinners; that is, to condemn all flesh, and to open and allege that the curse of God by the law doth belong to and lay hold on all men as they come into all the world, because of sin. Now this part of my work I fulfilled with great sense, for the terrors of the law, and guilt for my transgressions, lay heavy on my conscience. I preached what I felt what I smartingly did feel; even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment. Indeed I have been as one sent to them from the dead; I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains; and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to be aware of. . . . Thus I went on for the space of two years, crying out against men's sins, and their fearful state because of them. After which the Lord came in upon my soul with some sure peace and comfort through Christ; for he did give me many sweet discoveries of his blessed grace through him. Wherefore now I altered in my preaching (for still I preached what I saw and felt.) Now, therefore, I did much labour to hold forth Jesus Christ in all his offices, relations, and benefits, unto the world, and strive also to discover, to condemn, and remove those false supports and props on which the world doth both lean, and by them fall and perish. On these things also I staid as long as on the other. After this, God led me into something of the mystery of union with Christ;—wherefore, that I discovered and shewed to them also. And when I had travelled through these three chief points of the word of God, I was caught in my present practice, and cast into prison, where I have lain alone as long again to confirm the truth by way of suffering, as I was before testifying of it, according to the scriptures, in a way of preaching."

Bunyan's preaching was no incoherent rant. Words of truth and soberness formed the staple of each sermon; and his burning words and startling images were only the electric scintillations along the chain of his scriptural eloquence. Though the common people heard him most gladly, he had occasional hearers of a higher class. Once on a week-day he was expected to preach in a parish church at Cambridge, and a concourse of people had already collected in the churchyard. A gay student was riding past, when he noticed the crowd, and asked what had brought them together. He was told that the people had come out to hear one Bunyan, a tinker preach. He instantly dismounted, and gave a boy twopenny to hold his horse, for he declared he was determined to hear the tinker *prate*. So he went into the church, and heard the tinker; but so deep was the impression which that sermon made on the scholar, that he took every subsequent opportunity to attend Bunyan's ministry, and himself became a renowned preacher of the Gospel in Cambridgeshire.—Still he felt that his errand was to the multitude, and his great anxiety was to penetrate the darkest places of the land, and preach to the most abandoned people. In these labours of unostentatious heroism, he sometimes excited the jealousy of the regular parish ministers, and even under the tolerant rule of the Protector, was in some danger of imprisonment. However, it was not till the Restoration that he was in serious jeopardy; but thereafter he was among the first victims of the grand combination betwixt priests and rulers to exterminate the gospel in England.

On the 12th of November 1660, he had promised to meet a little congregation in a private house at Samsell in Bedfordshire. Before the hour of meeting he was apprised that a warrant was out to seize him; but he felt that he owed it to the gospel not to run away at such a time. Accordingly when the people were assembled with no weapons but their Bibles, the constable entered and arrested the preacher. He had only time to speak a few words of counsel and encouragement to his hearers, "You see we are prevented of our opportunity to speak and hear the word of God, and are likely to suffer for the same. But be not discouraged. It is a mercy to suffer for so good a cause. We might have been

apprehended as thieves or murderers, or for other wickedness; but blessed be God, it is not so. We suffer as Christians for well doing; and better be the persecuted than the persecutors." Having been taken before a justice, he was committed to gaol till the ensuing sessions should be held at Bedford. There an indictment was preferred—"That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, labourer, being a person of such and such conditions, he hath since such a time devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service; and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the King," &c. Of course he was convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment, with certification, that if he did not conform within a given period, he would be banished out of the kingdom.

After Bunyan ceases to be his own biographer, our materials becoming exceedingly scanty. This is the less to be lamented when we reflect that the history of his "hidden life" is already told. The processes have now been related which formed and developed the inner man; and the few external events that befel him, and the few important things that he did, during the remaining eighteen and twenty years of his mortal pilgrimage, may be recorded in a single page.

His imprisonment was protracted from sessions to sessions, till he had measured out twelve weary years in Bedford gaol. Perhaps we should not call them weary. They had their alleviations. His wife and children were allowed to visit him. His blind and most beloved daughter was permitted to cheer his solicitude and her own. He had his Bible, and his "Book of Martyrs." He had imagination, and his pen. Above all, he had a good conscience. He felt it a blessed exchange to quit the "iron cage" of despair for a "den" oft visited by a celestial comforter; and which, however cheerless, did not lack a door to heaven.

Whether it was the man's own humanity, or whether it was that God who assuaged Joseph's captivity, gave Bunyan special favour in the eyes of the keeper of his prison, the fact is certain, that he met with singular indulgence at the least likely hands. Not only was he allowed many a little indulgence in his cell, but he was suffered to go and come with a freedom which could hardly have been exceeded had the county gaol been his own hired house. For months together he was a constant attendant of the church-meetings of his brethren in Bedford, and was actually chosen pastor during the period of his incarceration. On one occasion some of the Bishops who had heard of a rumour of the unusual liberty conceded to him, sent a messenger from London to Bedford to ascertain the truth. The officer was instructed to call at the prison during the night. It was a night when Bunyan had received permission to stay at home with his family; but so uneasy did he feel, that he told his wife he must go back to his old quarters. So late was it that the gaoler blamed him for coming at such an untimely hour; but a little afterwards the messenger arrived. "Are all the prisoners safe?" "Yes." "Is John Bunyan safe?" "Yes." "Let me see him." Bunyan was called, and the messenger went his way; and when he was gone the gaoler told him,— "Well, you may go out again just when you think proper; for you know when to return better than I can tell you."

But the best alleviations of his captivity were those wonderful works which he there projected or composed. Some of these were controversial; but one of them was his own life, under the title, "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners," and another was the "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

In 1672 he obtained his liberty, and his friends immediately built for him a large meeting-house, where he continued to preach with little interruption till his death. Once a year he visited London, and was there so popular, that twelve hundred people would gather together at seven in the morning of a winter's working-day to hear him. Amongst their admiring listeners, Dr. Owen was frequently found; and once when Charles the Second asked how a learned man like him could sit down to hear a tinker prate, the great theologian is said to have answered, "May it please your Majesty, could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning." But popular as he was, he was not fond of praise. One day after he had concluded an impressive discourse, his friends pressed round to thank him for his "sweet sermon." "Aye," he bluntly answered, "you need not remind me of that; for the devil told me as much before I left the pulpit."

He had numbered sixty years, and written as many books, when he was released from his abundant labours. A young gentleman, his neighbour, had fallen under his father's displeasure, and was much concerned at his father's estrangement as well as at the prospect of being disinherited. He begged Mr. Bunyan's friendly interposition to propitiate his father, and prepare the way for his return to parental favour and affection. The kind-hearted man undertook the task, and having successfully achieved it, was returning from Reading to London on horseback, when he was thoroughly drenched with excessive rains. He arrived cold and wet at the house of Mr. Strudwick, a grocer on Snow Hill. Here he was seized with fits of shivering, which passed off in violent fever, and after ten days' sickness, on the 31st of August, 1688, his pilgrimage ended, and he went in by the gate into the city.

"THE KILLING TYME."

The persecutions in Scotland which commenced in 1660, and terminated in 1688, comprehended a period of as much suffering, perhaps, as has fallen to the lot of any nation in the world. It is now nearly one hundred and sixty years since that dismal period passed away, and we are in danger of forgetting what our honored forefathers endured in main-