

Notes on John Bunyan



By
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**A Letter to The Gentlemen's Magazine
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(From a Letter in The Gentlemen's Magazine)

IT is stated in the Life of Bunyan by the late Mr. Southey, that the first edition of the Pilgrim's Progress had not then been discovered, although much search had been made after it. I therefore about twelve years ago wrote to Mr. Southey stating that I would procure a copy if possible, and I sent him some information relative to a supposed signet ring of Bunyan's, (which was found on taking down the old bridge at Bedford, upon which the toll-house stood in which Bunyan was imprisoned,) and also some anecdotes respecting him, and a drawing of the bridge and toll house, all which Mr. Southey said he would avail himself of should he ever publish a second edition of the life.

Since that time I have frequently endeavoured to procure the first edition as a literary curiosity, and an elderly lady of this city has lately presented me with an old duodecimo copy of the work, which, if not the first, is one of the early editions. The following are the particulars of it. The title-page and also part of "the Author's Apology for his Book," are lost. It begins with:-

“Why, what's the matter? It is dark; what tho'?”
But it is feigned; what of that?
I tro some men by feigned words,” &c. &c.

After the Apology the book commences at page 1 thus:

“The Pilgrim's Progress: in the similitude of a Dream”

Page 5 contains a very rude woodcut representing Evangelist with a scroll in his hand, meeting Christian. The scroll contains the words "fly from ye wroth to come" Christian has an open Bible in his hand contain-

ing clasps, and there is a burden on his back. In the back-ground there are the beams of the eye of Providence, and at the foot of the picture the following lines are printed:

“Christian no sooner leaves the world but meets Evangelist, who lovingly greets him with tydings of another: and doth show Him how to mount to that from this below.”

Page 17 contains the second picture representing Evangelist meeting Christian in his way to Legality House (whither he was going by the advice of Worldly Wise man). Mount Sinai is impending over his head, and the following lines are at the foot of the picture

“When Christians unto carnal men give ear,
Out of their way they do go. and nay for’t dear.
For master Worldly Wise man can but show
A saint the way to bondage and to woe.”

Page 23 contains the third picture representing Christian knocking, at the Wicket Gate The Celestial City is in the distance, and two persons are crossing towards the road without entering at Wicket Gate There is written on the door of the gate, “Knock and it shall be opened.” The following lines are at the foot of this picture:

“He that will enter in, must first without
Stand knocking at the gate; nor need he doubt,
That is a knocker, but to enter in:
For God can love him and forgive his sin.”

Page 40 contains the fourth picture, representing Christian coining to the cross with a fine robe on. His burden has fallen from off his back into the sepulchre, and old rags are lying about, but, curious enough, the cross is either not represented, or it is lost in the confused back-ground of the hill.

The following lines are at the foot of this picture:
Who’s this? The Pilgrim. How! ’tis very true,
Old things are past away; all’s become new

Strange! He's another man, upon my word;
They be fine feathers that make a hoe bird."

Page 45 contains the fifth picture, security of Pilgrims/' and the porter representing Christian passing the "Watchful" is standing at the door, lions at the Hill Difficulty, with the The following lines are under this palace in the back ground, built by picture: the lord of the hill for the relief and security of Pilgrims and the porter "Watchful" is standing at the door.

The following lines are under this picture:

"Difficulty is behind, Fear is before,
Tho' he's got on the hill the lions roar;
A Christian man is never long at ease,
When one fright's gone, another doth he seize"

Page 53 contains the sixth picture, representing Christian retracing his steps to the arbour on the side of the hill Difficulty, where he recovered his roll again which he had lost. Over the arbour is written "Here Christian slept and dropt his roll". Beneath this picture are the following lines:

"Shall they who wrong begin yet rightly end?
Shall they at all have safety for their friend?
No, no ; in head-strong manner they set out,
And headlong will they fall at last, no doubt".

Page 70 contains the seventh picture, representing the conclusion of Christian's battle with Apollyon. The following lines are at the foot of it.

"A more unequal match can hardly be,
Christian must fight an angel; but you see
The valiant man, by handling sword and shield,
Doth make him, tho' a dragon, quit the field.

Page 75 contains the eighth picture, representing the Valley of the Shadow of Death, with Christian passing through it. The following lines are under this picture:

“Poor man! where art thou now? Thy day is night.
Good man, be not cast down, thou yet art right.
Thy way to Heaven lies by the gates of Hell:
Cheer up, hold out, with thee it shall be well.”

Page 108 contains the ninth picture, representing Vanity Fair, with Christian and Faithful in chains. The following lines are under it.

“Behold **Vanity-fair!** The Pilgrims there
Are chain’d, and ston’d beside;
Even so it was our **Lord** past here,
And on Mount Calvary dy’d”

Page 117 contains the tenth picture, representing Christian and Faithful arraigned at the bar of Judge Hate-good, with the following lines under it:

“Now, Faithful, play the man, speak for thy God:
Fear not the wicked’s malice nor their rod:
Speak boldly, man, the truth is on thy side,
Die for it, and to life in triumph ride.”

Page 121 contains the eleventh picture, representing Faithful in flames at the stake, and also ascending in a chariot of fire. The following lines are under this picture:

“Brave Faithful! bravely done in word and deed.
Judge, witnesses, and jury, have, instead
Of overcoming thee, but shewn their rage;
When they are dead thou’lt live from age to age.”

Page 142 contains the twelfth picture, which represents Doubting Castle, and Christian and Hopeful imprisoned in it (for having wandered into a more easy road); and Giant Despair is standing at the door with a club in his hand. The following lines are under this picture:

“The Pilgrims now to gratifie the flesh,

Will seek its ease, but, oh! How they afresh
Do thereby plunge themselves new griefs into!
Who seek to please the flesh, themselves undo."

Page 150 contains the thirteenth picture representing the Pilgrims on the Delectable mountains, greeted by the shepherds. The following lines are under it:

"Mountains delectable they now ascend,
Where shepherds be, which to them do commend
Alluring things, and things that cautious are;
Pilgrims are steady, kept by faith and fear."

Page 196 contains the fourteenth or last picture, representing Christian and Hopeful passing the river of Death, with two angels standing on the shore to receive them. The following lines are under the picture:

"Now, now look how the holy Pilgrims ride,
Clouds are their chariots, angels are their guide!
Who would not here for him all hazards run,
That thus provides for his when this world's done."

The narrative then goes on to the end of the 204th page to the concluding words, "So I awoke, and behold it was a dream but the last leaf is torn out, which, I presume, contained the Epilogue, which the author wrote on the conclusion of the first part of the work, commencing with:

"Now, reader, I have told my dream to thee," &c. &c.

I am led to this belief because the word "The" is printed at the bottom of the last page, indicating a continuance on the next page.

The back of each picture is covered with the letter-press, and the book was evidently bound in leather, but it was torn off some time or other, leaving only the boards.

The loss of the leaves at the beginning of the book appears to be as follows : first the title page, and also the page on the back of it, which I

presume contained the words "The Author's Apology for his book[1]," and thirty-two lines of the Apology. The second leaf is also gone, each page of which, I presume, contained thirty-four lines of the Apology, and this brings us to the words, "Why, what 's the matter?" &c. as before stated.

Here then we have an old book, containing only the first part of the Pilgrim's Progress, and the question is, What edition is it? Now, in endeavouring to throw some light upon the subject, I shall first quote a passage from p. LXXVI of Mr. Southey's life of Bunyan, which is as follows:

"It is not known in what year the Pilgrim's Progress was first published, no copy of the first edition having as yet been discovered; the second is in the British Museum; it is with additions, and its date is 1678; but as the book is known to have been written during Bunyan's imprisonment, which terminated in 1672, it was probably published before his release, or at latest immediately after it.

The earliest with which Mr. Major has been able to supply me, either by means of his own diligent inquiries or the kindness of his friends, is that "eighth edition," so humorously introduced by Gay, and printed, not for Nicholas Boddington[2], but for Nathanael Ponder, at the Peacock in the Poultry, near the church, 1682; for whom also the ninth was published in 1684, and the tenth in 1685. All these no doubt were large impressions.

This noted eighth edition is with additions but there is no reason to suppose that they were new ones, never made before, for the ninth and tenth bear the same promise, and contain no alteration whatever. One passage, of considerable length, was added after the second edition,—the whole scene between old By-ends and his three friends, and their subsequent discourse with Christian and Faithful[3]. It appears to have been written with reference to some particular case, and in Bunyan's circle the name of the person intended was probably well known.

Perhaps it was first inserted in the fourth impression, which had many additions, more than any preceding; this is stated in an advertisement on the back of the frontispiece to the eighth, where it is also said, The publisher, observing that many persons desired to have it illustrated with

pictures, hath endeavoured to gratify them therein; and, besides those that are ordinarily printed to the fifth impression, hath provided thirteen copper cuts, curiously engraven, for such as desire them. This notice is repeated in the next edition, with this alteration, that the seventh instead of the fourth is named as having the additions, and the eighth as that which had the ordinary prints.

I can only say with certainty that no additions have been made subsequently to the eighth, and no other alterations than such verbal ones as an editor has sometimes thought proper to make, or as creep into all books which are reprinted without a careful collation of the text.

Now if the above-mentioned discourse did not at all appear until the fourth impression, it follows that the copy in question in my possession could not have been of prior date to that impression, as it does contain the conversation alluded to; but it is possible that the first impression may have contained it, and that it was suppressed in the second for political reasons. I give this however, merely as a surmise, not at all relying upon it.

Mr. Ivimey, in his edition of the work, published in 1822, writes upon the subject as follows:

It is not known at what period of Mr. Bunyan's confinement the Pilgrim's Progress was published. The second edition of the first part was printed in 1678, and therefore it is probable the work was first published soon after his release from prison, 1673. I conjecture it was written during the latter part of his imprisonment, when he had an opportunity of reviewing the times which had gone over the Nonconformists throughout the hottest period of their persecution.

This view of the subject will account for the great difference of opinion which prevailed among the friends of Mr. Bunyan, to whom he submitted his manuscript, respecting the propriety of publishing it to the world. The objectors might think it unsafe to publish those parts of the work which too severely satirize the persecutors of the Nonconformists; for instance, the account of what the pilgrims suffered at Vanity Fair, &c. It is quite

characteristic that Mr. Bunyan should resolve to do it, even though it might expose him to danger, as it appears he never consulted his own safety, but how he might best serve the cause of truth and righteousness.

This opinion respecting the supposed danger which might attend its publication is rendered probable, if not confirmed, by the circumstance of the whole of that beautiful satirical episode, the conversation between Mr. By-ends, Mr. Money-love, &c. and the reply of Christian, not being found in the second edition, printed in 1678. In what later edition it was first introduced I have not been able to discover; it bears, however, visible marks of Mr. Bunyan's original genius.

Mr. Ivimey added the following note to the above, relative to the second edition:

This curious book, which the editor has examined, is in the possession of Mrs. Gurney, of Walworth; it was published in London, by Nathanael Ponder, at the Peacock in the Poultry, near Cornhill, 1678. The ninth edition of the first part was published 1684.

The most remarkable parts of the edition in question, in my possession, are the explanatory verses printed under the pictures[4], as before set forth. I should think there can be no doubt that they were written by Bunyan, and if so they prove that the pictures in question were either designed by him or under his superintendance.

The above extract from the life by Mr. Southey traces the pictures as far back as the fifth edition, and the question is whether they were also in the first, second[5], third, or fourth edition.

Mr. Southey also refers to the lines under the pictures in p. XXXII of the life, where he, in dwelling upon another point, speaks of the verses that were printed under the illustrations to the Pilgrim's Progress when that work was first adorned with cuts; but he does not give them in his edition, nor are they set forth in any of the modern editions, that I am aware of.

With respect to the time when the second part of the work was first published, Mr. Southey says, in p. LXXVIII of the Life, that it appeared in 1684, with this notice on the back of the title-page, "I appoint Mr.

Nathaniel Ponder, but no other, to print this book. John Bunyan, January 1, 1684". And Mr. Southey added, that "no additions or alterations were made in this part, though the author lived more than four years after its publication".

Now this goes to show that the second part was not published before the ninth edition of the first part, which took place in 1684, as before stated. Should these observations tend to throw any additional light relative to the early editions of the Pilgrim's Progress, and be deemed worthy of insertion in your excellent Magazine, they are much at your service.

Yours, &c. Jabez Allies.

Notes

1. These words are at the top of each page of the Apology.
2. This immortal name appears to the sixth edition of the second part, "printed for Robert Ponder, and sold by Nicholas Boddington in Duck Lane, 1693".
3. It should be Hopeful, J. A.
4. All the pictures are rude woodcuts. It will be observed that the verse under the picture of Vanity Fair is the only one in alternate rhyme.
5. The book in the British Museum would prove this point so far as relates to the second edition.



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