

who united the whole island under his sway, and whom the Mahāvamsa transforms into a warrior saint, a champion and patron of the Church. The composition of the Dipavaṃsa the author places in the fourth century, the true Mahāvamsa towards the close of the fifth, and the addition or supplement, the 'Duṭṭhagāmini epic' in the second half of the thirteenth.

In these various stages and developments Dr. Geiger claims that there is afforded a unique opportunity of watching the normal evolution of the epic poem, and of tracing the course which it followed not only in India, but probably in other parts of the world. The process was carried a step farther in a second or enlarged Mahāvamsa, contained in a Kambodian manuscript at Paris, which is nearly double the length of the original. Its date is set down as probably the latter part of the twelfth century.

The original sources, so far as they are literary, are then traced back to the collections of commentaries preserved in the monasteries, especially the Mahāvihāra and the Uttaravihāra of the great city of Anurādhapura. In the Mahāvamsa itself, and in a late commentary upon or expansion of it, the Mahāvamsa Ṭikā, these are variously referred to as the commentaries (*aṭṭhakathū*), the Siṃhalese commentaries, etc. They or part of them were known also as the 'Mahāvamsa of the ancients'; and Dr. Geiger maintains against Oldenberg that this work was not merely a historical introduction to the commentaries on the canonical scriptures, but a genuine chronicle of events kept by the monks, and carried down to the time of the destruction and abandonment of the Mahāvihāra. These compositions were written in prose in Siṃhalese, with occasional verses in Pāli.

The author of the Dipavaṃsa, therefore, was the first to attempt to give to this material poetical form and shape, using Pāli, the ecclesiastical language, instead of the popular Siṃhalese. He was, however, less at home in the latter than in the former tongue, and therefore followed and reproduced those parts especially of the original *aṭṭhakathū* which were written in Pāli. A century or more later the author of the Mahāvamsa traversed the same ground with greater knowledge and skill, and produced a real epic, in which much new material was embodied drawn from a wider field, but preserving the same framework of monastic tradition. In the interval, moreover, at the commencement of the fifth century, the influence of Buddhaghosha had given a great impulse to literary activity, and Pāli had become more definitely the classical language of literature and of the Church.

It should be added that in an appendix Dr. Geiger presents a careful and detailed analysis of the Dipavaṃsa and Mahāvamsa, with references to the parallel passages in the other Pāli and Siṃhalese records.

Enough has been said to indicate the wealth of information in this book, and the stores of knowledge which the author has at his command. The style is no less admirable and lucid than the thought. It is a work for which all students of the history of Ceylon or Buddhism will be grateful, and to which they will find themselves indebted at every turn for a clearer insight into the problems and relationships of the literary documents in which that history has been conserved.

We have noticed only one apparent misprint. 'About the middle of the fifth century,' p. 76, line 25, should surely read 'fourth.'

Richmond.

A. S. GEDEN.

## The Use of Dante as an Illustrator of Scripture.

BY THE REV. CANON SIR JOHN C. HAWKINS, BART., M.A., OXFORD.

### III.

WE are in the course of considering the treatment, upon the seven *cornici*, or terraces, of Dante's Purgatory, of those who had in life been guilty of the so-called 'Seven Deadly' or 'Capital Sins.' The plan adopted, now as before, is 'in each case,

first to collect a few of the most salient and instructive texts which are likely to suggest the subject of the particular sin to the preacher or teacher, and then to show how, in trying to enforce the need and the nature of due penitence for that

sin in this life, he may be helped by illustrations drawn from Dante's projection of such penitence into another sphere.'

FOURTH TERRACE: THE SLOTHFUL.

CANTOS XVII. 76—XIX. 51.

Besides several well-known passages in Proverbs, Mt 25<sup>26</sup>, Ro 12<sup>11</sup>, He 6<sup>12</sup> are important texts in point.

Dante uses for this sin the common mediæval name of *accidia* ('the rotten-hearted sin of accidie,' as Chaucer calls it in his vigorous English). But we need not here enter into the elements of gloom and irritability which that name sometimes suggested; for they are aspects of the sin which seem to have chiefly affected members of the monastic orders, and Dante, if he deals with them at all in connexion with the guilt of the *accidiosi*,<sup>1</sup> does so in *Inferno* vii., and not in the *Purgatorio*. Here, where *accidia* is being exhibited as a curable sin under disciplinary castigation, it seems to be merely equivalent to sloth. It is thus the fault that is directly opposed to the cardinal virtue of Fortitude, which has been well described as the virtue, or grace, 'that makes men willingly do hard things.' And, since we shall be seeing directly that Dante incidentally defines this fault as remissness 'in the love of good,' we may be sure that it was moral and spiritual sloth that was primarily meant by him, as it is also in all the three texts from the New Testament above referred to, although the A.V. of Ro 12<sup>11</sup> has unfortunately seemed to limit the precept to worldly 'business,' as if it were hardly more than parallel to the passages in Pr 6<sup>6-10</sup> 20<sup>4</sup>, etc.

i. It is to be observed that in this class of penitents alone among the seven, the fault to be corrected is not any wrong aim, either in the direction of malice (as on the three lower terraces) or in the direction of self-indulgence (as on the three that have yet to be reached), but a slackness in pursuit of right aims. Accordingly, Virgil thus describes to Dante the failing that is here dealt with—

The love of good, remiss  
In what it should have done, is here restored;  
Here plied again the ill-belated oar.

*Purg.* xvii. 85-87.

<sup>1</sup> A full treatment of this difficult question will be found in Moore's *Studies in Dante*, ii. 173 ff. There is a particularly interesting and practical discussion of the sin of 'accidie' in Bishop Paget's volume, *The Spirit of Discipline* (Introductory Essay and Sermon, i.).

That last line will be made more clear if Mr. Tozer's translation and comment are added, 'Here the too laggard oar is plied anew; *i.e.* previous apathy is made up for.'

And this is Virgil's address to the penitents themselves—

O folk in whom an eager fervour now  
Supplies perhaps delay and negligence  
Shown by you in well-doing by lukewarmness.  
*Purg.* xviii. 106-108.

The word 'lukewarmness' there is the rendering of the Italian *tepidezza*, and, of course, reminds us of the rebuke of the Laodiceans (Rev 3<sup>15-19</sup>).

ii. But it is no slight and perfunctory purgation that is required even by this negative fault—this sin of an enfeebled rather than of a distorted will. The corrective penalty of those who have given way to it consists in being hurried on unrestingly round the terrace—

Full soon they were upon us, because running  
Moved onward all that mighty multitude.  
*Purg.* xviii. 97 f.

And, as they run, the leaders among them stir up their followers by proclaiming examples of activity, taken both from sacred and profane story, to which the response is given—

'Quick! quick! so that the time may not be lost  
By little love!' forthwith the others cried,  
'For ardour in well doing freshens grace.'

*Purg.* xviii. 103-105.

And it is not merely effort, but actual suffering, that is entailed by this supersession of sloth by enforced activity. (a) The leaders just spoken of are 'lamenting' (*piangendo*, *Purg.* xviii. 19)—so sadly do they feel the contrast between themselves and those whose timely and voluntary activities they proclaim. (b) At leaving this terrace, the Beatitude chosen to set forth the accomplishment of its particular process of chastisement is 'Blessed are they that mourn' (*Purg.* xix. 50). (c) We see, again, the sharpness of the revulsion against this failing which is required in its former victims, when we read, in one of Dante's most vivid images, of Virgil thus describing those two penitents who have to proclaim as warnings certain specially contemptible examples of the loss of great opportunities through sluggishness—

Turn thee hitherward; see two of them  
Come fastening upon slothfulness their teeth.

*Purg.* xviii. 131 f.

Their repugnance to it has become so painfully intense that they seem as if they were biting at it.

Such illustrations may be helps in reminding men how determined and sustained and intense must be the effort by which alone dawdling and procrastinating habits of mind and soul can be shaken off by any who have fallen into them. Those who have become enslaved, however gradually and unobservedly, to such habits, should be forewarned that they have no easy task before them. If, fortunately for themselves, they have some form of activity forced upon them by some change of circumstances in their lives (perhaps as the result of their own past indolent mismanagement of their affairs), they should welcome it, as did the spirits whom Dante pictures as refusing to be made to linger as they ran (*Purg.* xviii. 115-117).<sup>1</sup> If they have the yet more difficult task of finding out for themselves spheres and opportunities of prompt and laborious action, they cannot set about it too quickly and too earnestly if they would resist that slothful 'deterioration' of will and energy, of which it has been truly said that among our spiritual foes there is 'none more fatal and more subtle,' and that 'the only way of fighting it is by the resolute and habitual doing of things that cost us trouble, and steadily compel us to be at our best. Years do not bring decay half so fast as the baseness of facile, self-chosen tasks' (Bp. Thorold, *The Yoke of Christ*, p. 154).

#### FIFTH TERRACE: THE AVARICIOUS AND THE PRODIGAL.

##### CANTOS XIX. 70-XXII. 54.

Some obvious texts on avarice are Pr 15<sup>27</sup> 23<sup>4</sup> 28<sup>20</sup>, Mt 6<sup>19ff.</sup>, Lk 12<sup>15ff.</sup> and many other sayings in the Third Gospel, 1 Ti 6<sup>of.</sup> 17-19 He 13<sup>5</sup>. There are fewer passages bearing on prodigality, doubtless because opportunities for lavish expenditure must have been rare in Palestine, but Pr 5<sup>10</sup> (where 'strength' in R.V. probably means wealth), 6<sup>26</sup> and 29<sup>3</sup> belong to the subject, besides Lk 15<sup>13</sup>.

i. The apostle tells us that 'the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil' (1 Ti 6<sup>10</sup> R.V.), not, of course, meaning that every sin which men commit is directly caused by love of money, but that their nature is so debased and darkened by it as to be ready to give way to any kind of evil influence. Similarly Dante makes Pope Adrian v.,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the first of these Articles, p. 396.

who is suffering the penalty for such cupidity, say of himself and of his fellow-penitents—

Avarice had extinguished our affection  
For every good, whereby was action lost ;

(i.e. the power or faculty for all good action was lost).

*Purg.* xix. 121 f.

And the cause of this general demoralization of soul is further explained by the same speaker, as he tells of his life before his late conversion—

Until that time a wretched soul and parted  
From God was I, and wholly avaricious ;  
Now, as thou seest, I here am punished for it.

*Purg.* xix. 112-114.

'Parted from God'—those are the words to be noticed as explaining the widely disastrous and degrading effects of avarice upon the soul. Such 'covetousness is idolatry' (Col 3<sup>5</sup>), in that it draws away the interests and affections from God to money or money's worth, and thus, for all practical intents and purposes, parts or separates man from God. And so those two sayings of the repentant Pope Adrian may usefully illustrate the preacher's attempts to show that avarice, in all its numerous and sometimes deceitful forms, is a sin against which we are warned by the spirit of the First and Second Commandments, and again by that emphatic final caution of the aged apostle, 'My little children, guard yourselves from idols' (1 Jn 5<sup>21</sup> R.V.).

ii. Dante seems to have felt a peculiarly strong contempt for avarice, as being both a foolish and a degrading sin. Naturally, the senseless and profitless *folly* of it comes out most distinctly in the *Inferno*—

All the gold that is beneath the moon  
Or ever hath been, of these weary souls  
Could never make a single one repose.

O creatures imbecile,  
What ignorance is this that doth beset you?  
*Inf.* vii. 64-71 ; cf. also xii. 49-51.

There we are reminded of the *Ἀφρον*, 'thou foolish one,' in Lk 12<sup>20</sup>, and of the more detailed utterance to the same effect in Jer 17<sup>11</sup>.

But the *degradation* of human nature which results from such cupidity comes out strongly in the *Purgatorio* also. This appears most clearly in the nature of the punishment inflicted upon the avaricious, for here, as generally in Dante, the

penalty is closely appropriate to the sin. So he tells us in this case—

On the fifth circle when I had come forth,  
 People I saw upon it who were weeping,  
 Stretched prone upon the ground, all downward turned.  
*Adhasit pavimento anima mea,*  
 I heard them say with sighings so profound  
 That hardly could the words be understood.  
*Purg. xix. 70-75.*

And the exact fitness of such enforced prostration, and 'cleaving to the dust,' as the penance for this sin is thus brought out by Pope Adrian v.—

What avarice does is here made manifest  
 In the purgation of these souls converted,  
 And no more bitter pain the Mountain has.  
 Even as our eye did not uplift itself  
 Aloft, being fastened upon earthly things,  
 So justice here has merged it in the earth.  
*Purg. xix. 115-120.*

With this reference to the habitually downward looks and aims and interests which had characterized the covetous in life, and the long and painful purgation from which upon this terrace is needed in order to prepare them for the enjoyment of the Divine presence, it is interesting to compare Milton's personification of unpurged and unrepentant avarice—

Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell  
 From heaven; for e'en in heaven his looks and thoughts  
 Were always downward bent, admiring more  
 The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,  
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed  
 In vision beatific.  
*Par. Lost, i. 679-684.*

So do the two great poets, Italian and English, illustrate in their different ways the incompatibility of the love of earthly gain and wealth with setting the 'affections on things above' (Col 3<sup>2</sup>).

iii. So far avarice has been discussed as if it were the only sin punished and corrected upon this terrace. But that is not the case. It is a surprising, but, as we shall see, an instructive feature in Dante's *Purgatorio* (as also in *Inferno* vii.) that together with that sin—which of course includes undue parsimony as well as undue rapacity—is also punished the sin which seems most directly opposed to it, namely, Prodigality or Extravagance. This is represented (though apparently without any historical ground) as having been the chief failing of the poet Statius, who is so prominent a figure upon this terrace, and who says of himself—

Know thou that avarice was removed  
 Too far from me; and this extravagance  
 Thousands of lunar periods have punished.  
*Purg. xxii. 34-36.*

And again, after showing by what means he was brought to see his fault—

Then I perceived the hands could spread too wide  
 Their wings in spending, and repented me  
 As well of that as of my other sins.  
*Purg. xxii. 43-45.*

These two bands of penitents, then, are alike suffering sorely for their seemingly contrary faults, for as the once avaricious Adrian speaks of his 'bitter pain,' so does Statius, the type of the prodigal, speak of having been 'long lying in this pain' (*doglia*, *Purg. xxi. 67*). And the point of essential union between these two kinds of sin lies of course in this, that both are failures in one and the same duty—that of right expenditure. How difficult that duty is has been often and widely recognized. It is that very difficulty, says Aristotle, which causes excellence in this matter to be 'rare and praiseworthy and honourable' (*Eth. Nic. II. ix. 2*). Seneca has the noble resolve, 'I will so live as to remember that I was born for others. . . . Whatever I have, I will neither hoard it stingily (*sordide*) nor squander it recklessly (*prodige*). I will think that I have no possessions more real than those which I have given away in right directions' (*De Vita Beata*, xx.). But twice in that same chapter he admits that he is giving counsels of perfection, very hard to be fulfilled. And indeed, if they are to be fulfilled, they must be placed upon the highest of all grounds—as resting upon the supreme Christian grace of charity. This is equally, or almost equally, true of both the sins which are punished on this fifth terrace—the sin of the too tightly closed fist, and the sin of the too easily opened hand. Each of those sins is the outcome of selfishness. Of course that is most obviously true of miserliness; of course where money is hoarded which might be helpfully spent upon family or friends, or on the bodies or souls of the literally or spiritually needy, there must be a lack of the charity which 'seeketh not its own' (1 Co 13<sup>5</sup>), and which prompts us to 'look to the things of others' (Phil 2<sup>4</sup>). But the same is essentially true of extravagance. No doubt it is outwardly a less unlovely and less contemptible sin than avarice, and we, unlike Dante in his arrangement

of this fifth terrace, are apt to speak of it in gentler terms. We may recall, for instance, Pope's fine lines—

Oh teach us, Bathurst, yet unspoiled by wealth !  
That secret rare, between the extremes to move  
Of mad good-nature and of mean self-love.

There the second of those extremes is expressed in terms more odious than the first of them. But the reckless and senseless use of money, which is the least that 'mad' can imply, is surely inconsistent with anything that can be reasonably called 'good-nature,' unless a self-regarding indifference to the real well-being of others is good. The ordinary prodigal, whether it is to the love of mere self-indulgence or of easily won popularity that he gives way, is often at least as harmful as any miser can be to his family, to those who might inherit from him, to the poor who live on his estates, and not seldom also to those who share in his pleasures, and to those who minister to them.

#### SIXTH TERRACE: THE GLUTTONOUS.

##### CANTOS XXII. 130-XXIV.

Scriptural references to the vice here punished may be found in Dt 21<sup>20</sup> (A.V. and so in Driver's Commentary), Pr 23<sup>20</sup>, and 28<sup>7</sup> (R.V.), it being coupled in all those three places with drunkenness (as it is also in Mt 11<sup>19</sup>, Lk 7<sup>34</sup>); see also Tit 1<sup>12</sup>, where *γαστρίδες ἀργαί* is paraphrased in R.V. by 'idle gluttons.' That last ugly word has in the past been most familiar to English readers of the Bible from its use in the summary prefixed to Lk 16 in A.V., but it is hardly justified by the words applied to the rich man in the parable itself.

Those are the only cases in which the word 'gluttonous,' and the substantives akin to it, are found in our Bibles. Nor are those words likely to be used often in our pulpits, for they convey to modern ears the idea of a grosser and more repulsive kind of excess than is likely to constitute a practically serious temptation in our days. And indeed, the whole subject of the dangers of over-eating has among ourselves, and probably in other northern countries also, been thrown into the background by the more prominent and glaring evils caused by excesses in drink, which in Dante's view, living as he did in a land of wine and not

of ardent spirits and easily adulterated beer, would not bulk so largely as they do in our view. That he did not ignore those evils appears in his sarcastic description of one penitent on this sixth terrace (*Purg.* xxiv. 31-33; see also line 24); but certainly he would not have entered into the feeling which has for us almost limited the use of the scriptural terms 'sobriety' and 'temperance' to a single one of the several kinds of self-restraint or abstinence. He grouped together (as is done in the first three of the texts above referred to) both sins of the palate, while, unlike ourselves, he evidently regarded over-eating as the more frequent, and certainly as the more contemptible, of them. And we now cannot safely regard that sin as obsolete, at least among the wealthier and more leisured classes, though we must use for it some name of less unpleasant sound than gluttony, if we are to be attended to when we try to warn men against it in books or sermons. In a recent memoir of Sydney Smith, he is recorded to have said of the society of his times, 'I never yet saw any gentleman who ate and drank as little as was reasonable.'<sup>1</sup> And in our times it would be easy to quote high medical authorities in favour of sparseness and simplicity of diet as helpful towards the increase of active usefulness in life, and also towards promotion of the good temper and freedom from irritability which go so far towards causing happiness in homes, but in which the over-fed and therefore dyspeptic are apt to be lacking. Now if on such grounds as these, with the view of helping people to make themselves by every possible means 'meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work' (2 Ti 2<sup>21</sup>), it should seem right to attempt the somewhat difficult and delicate task of commending moderation in diet, especially to those who have daily opportunities of faring sumptuously, perhaps some assistance may be found in illustrations drawn from Dante's pictures of those who had neglected such self-restraint in their earthly lives, and were now at once paying the penalty, and working out the cure, of that neglect.

i. We observe specially that strict restraint in eating and drinking is now *forced* upon them—and that to an extremely painful extent, while they are tantalized by what is most attractive in

<sup>1</sup> *Sydney Smith*, by G. W. E. Russell, p. 213, on which page and on the next there are some other sensible cautions 'against excess of stimulus and of nourishment.'

food and drink being within their sight and smell, but beyond their reach—

All of this people who lamenting sing,  
For following beyond measure appetite,  
In hunger and thirst are here re-sanctified.  
To eat and drink the fragrance doth invite  
Which issues from the fruit, and from the spray  
That far and wide bedews the verdure bright.  
*Purg.* xxiii. 64-69.

(For the last three lines, Dean Plumptre's translation has been used, as being, in this case, clearer than Longfellow's, and hardly less literal.)

ii. We observe, further, that this painful and tantalizing penalty, though enforced, is welcomed by them. We cannot think of it as being what they would have chosen for themselves, and yet it is willingly accepted as needful and wholesome discipline for them, and so the very 'pain' becomes 'a solace' to them (*Purg.* xxiii. 72). Nay more, it is accepted by them with such completely filial obedience to the Father's will that they even venture to compare these sufferings by which they are being perfected (cf. He 2<sup>10</sup>) with the last sufferings of Christ Himself—

The same wish doth lead us to the tree  
Which led the Christ rejoicing to say *Eli*,  
When with his veins [*i.e.* his life-blood] he liberated us.  
*Purg.* xxiii. 73-75.

iii. The religious and spiritual use which they make of their sufferings is further brought out by them in their application to themselves (a somewhat strained application, as it appears to us) of the words of Ps 51<sup>15</sup>, 'O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise'—

And lo! were heard a song and a lament  
'*Labia mea, Domine,*' in fashion  
Such that delight and dolence brought it forth.  
*Purg.* xxiii. 10-12.

That is to say, the well-known words of the penitential Psalm are used by them in hopeful confidence (and therefore with 'delight,' and not only with 'dolence' for the past), to express the prayer that the lips which had hitherto served the purposes of gluttony may henceforth be devoted to the praise of God, which is the noblest and most worthy 'fruit of the lips' (He 13<sup>15</sup>).

iv. And so the penitents are at last brought to that complete purification of appetite, concern- ing which the angel, as he dismisses Dante and

Virgil and Statius from the terrace, proclaims, amid surroundings which form a singularly beautiful 'symbol of the clear brightness and sweetness of the temperate life' (Plumptre on lines 145-150)—

'Blessed are they whom grace  
So much illumines, that the love of taste  
Excites not in their breasts too great desire,  
Hungering at all times so far as is just.'  
*Purg.* xxiv. 151-154.

Of course, self-discipline, in this as in all other kinds of temperance, is at once most valuable and least painful, if it is adopted by free and timely choice in early life, so that there is but slight and rare need for it to be *enforced*. But if, on account of past self-indulgence or neglectfulness, such enforcement becomes a necessity, *i.e.*, in this case, if bodily infirmities require restrictions in food which interfere in various trying and tedious and even humiliating ways with the accustomed pleasures and pursuits of life, then we are reminded by Dante that even such compulsory self-restraint need not be without its moral, and even spiritual, value if only it is *accepted* as a just and needful and deserved chastisement. For that is what it almost always is in some degree, though, no doubt, it often is also, to no small extent, an exemplification of the law that 'the sins of the fathers' are 'visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.' Now such discipline of the appetite may, if thus willingly accepted, be found of immense value as a discipline of the general character, because the opportunities for the practice of it are so incessant—for what is here referred to is not the observance of special seasons of abstinence, but the practice of healthful (or, if need be, even valetudinarian) moderation at all times, even on the part of those who 'appear not unto men to fast.' On the absence of the self-control which may be thus acquired or strengthened, Bishop Hall strikingly says, in a comment on the greediness of Hophni and Phinehas (see 1 S 2<sup>13-16</sup>), 'He that makes himself a servant to his tooth, shall easily become a slave to all inordinate affections' (*Contemplations*, xi. 7). We may find help, then, in a judicious application of the suggestions of this sixth terrace, when we are trying to insist, even in a general and comprehensive way, upon that cardinal virtue which, from the religious as well as moral point of view, has been thus broadly defined: 'Temperance is the holding of the reins of conduct in

the hand of the will, and the regulating of that will itself by the ordinance of reason and of God.'

## SEVENTH TERRACE: THE INCONTINENT.

## CANTOS XXV. 109-XXVII.

It is needless to refer to passages in the early chapters of Proverbs and elsewhere in the Old Testament. It is enough to say that the New Testament supplies many strongly-worded texts bearing on the painful subject here presented to us, such as Mt 5<sup>28</sup>, Ro 1<sup>24-27</sup>, 1 Co 6<sup>13-20</sup>, 2 Co 12<sup>21</sup>, Eph 4<sup>19</sup> 5<sup>3-5</sup>, 1 Th 4<sup>3-8</sup>, and the list of 'the works of the flesh' in Gal 5<sup>19</sup>.

Such texts must, as a rule, be left to teach their stern and solemn lesson for themselves. It is but very rarely, and only under specially arranged conditions, that it is seemly and profitable to dwell upon the sins to which those passages refer—sins to which we now usually apply the terms 'incontinence' and 'sensuality,' in the narrowed modern senses of those words, but which in Dante's time were generally summed up under the Latin name of *luxuria* (in Italian, *lussuria*, as in *Inf.* v. 55, *Purg.* xxvi. 42). And if there is to be but little preaching and writing on the subject, it would be superfluous to offer much in the way of illustration from Dante or any other writer. But it is possible sometimes, by means of brief allusions and warnings which shall be consistent with due and wise reticence, to remind men gravely and seriously of the deep degradation that is caused by such sins, and of the intense difficulty of cleansing the soul from them when once their influence has been allowed to infect it. And in so doing, some reference to Dante's imagery may, in this as in the previous cases, have its use.

i. It is quite true that there are certain passages in the *Divina Commedia*, especially in *Inf.* v., xv., xvi., which look as if Dante may have been somewhat deficient in that personal abhorrence of such sins and of everything connected with them which we see to be inseparable from the highest type of character. But, if so, it is all the more remarkable that he seems to represent the purification from those sins, which has to be undergone upon this seventh terrace, as more

penetrating and more agonizing than any of the means of purgation from the six preceding sins. For he describes it as a passing through *fire*<sup>1</sup>—

And spirits saw I walking through that flame.  
*Purg.* xxv. 124.

And concerning that flame we may note these three points—

(a) So terrible did the prospect of it appear to Dante, that he writes of his entrance into it—for in this one case he seems to describe himself as sharing in the punishment that he witnessed (see Moore's *Studies*, iii. 245)—

When I was in it, into molten glass  
I would have cast me to refresh myself,  
So without measure was the burning there.  
*Purg.* xxvii. 49-51.

(b) But in its efficacy it was as 'a refiner's fire' (Mal 3<sup>2</sup>), for it is said of Arnaut Daniel, that he, after addressing Dante in his own Provençal tongue—

Then hid him in the fire that purifies (*affina*) them.  
*Purg.* xxvi. 148.

(c) So complete was that efficacy that it brought to shame even those who had been most shameless in their sins, for of some of the most debased of sensualists we are told that they were—

Themselves reproving, even as thou hast heard,  
And add unto their burning by their shame.  
*Purg.* xxvi. 80f.

For reasons given at the commencement of the first of these Articles,<sup>2</sup> three of them have been devoted to the *Purgatorio*, as being the part of Dante's great poem which is most likely to supply practically useful illustrations to Christian teachers; but a few similar suggestions as to the *Inferno* and the *Paradiso* will be added in a fourth paper.

<sup>1</sup> We shall remember that one of our Lord's references to Gehenna follows upon, and appears to be connected with, His emphatic warning against incontinence (Mt 5<sup>27-30</sup>), and that He elsewhere connects Gehenna with fire as its most essential characteristic (*γέεννα τοῦ πυρός*, Mt 5<sup>22</sup> 18<sup>9</sup>; see also the parallel, Mk 9<sup>43, 47</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, p. 393 ff. of the present volume.