

THE CASE OF JOHN BUNYAN. (II.)

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III.

"Now you must know," says Bunyan, "that before this I had taken much delight in Ringing,* but my *Conscience* beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered. Wherefore I should go to the Steeple-house, and look on it, though I durst not ring. . . . But quickly after, I began to think, *How if one of the Bells should fall?* Then I chose to stand under a main Beam, that lay overthwart the Steeple, from side to side, thinking there I might stand sure. But then I should think again, Should the Bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this Beam. This made me stand in the Steeple-door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough; for, if a Bell should then fall I can slip out behind these thick Walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding. So after this I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go further than the Steeple-door. But then it came into my Head, How if the Steeple itself should fall? And this thought, it may fall for aught I know, when I stood and looked on, did continually so shake my mind that I durst not stand at the Steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee for fear the Steeple should fall on my head."

The parallel between Bunyan's case and that of Dr. Cowles's patient, whose experience is so fully described in the

* I.e., of course, in ringing the chimes of the village church. Venables has skilfully pointed out, in various passages of Bunyan's writings, how deep a train of associations this practice later involved for the poet.

remarkable paper before cited, will from this point onwards become interesting to us. It is noteworthy that Dr. Cowles's patient, after some history of childhood fears, beginning at about ten years of age, became, for a time, 'well of these morbid experiences,'* but afterwards, in youth, experienced a fresh form of her previous disorder, and met this relapse at first in the form of 'feelings of hesitation in performing simple acts,' with a consequent necessity of repeating many such acts to be sure that they were right. 'From this point,' says Dr. Cowles of his patient, 'all the rest follows in its morbid train.' The fortunes of Bunyan were to be, up to a certain point, decidedly similar. The childhood period, with its warning terrors, had given place for a time to a healthy youth. But the elementary conscientious fears which now appeared, and which forced the lately reckless Bunyan to outward acts of unreasonable timidity, were soon to give place, as in Dr. Cowles's patient, to far more insistent and systematized impulses. In both of these cases the topics about which the insistent impulses finally systematized were matters of inner conscientious scruples. In both cases the general outward bearing and conduct long remained as far as possible normal, except where the inner sufferings of the patient must perforce break through and show themselves. In Bunyan's case it is interesting that these first signs of the coming storm were motor reflexes of a timid and partly of a morbidly inhibitory sort, produced irresistibly at the sound of those bells which he had so much loved to hear, and which, as Venables has shown by quotations from his later works, he never afterwards learned to forget.

The conversation of certain poor and godly people, about this time, revealed to Bunyan that, with all his legality, he had not yet learned what the true spiritual life is; and herewith began a second stage of his conversion. The consequence was much continuous meditation upon this higher religious life, and 'a softness and tenderness of Heart,' whereby his mind became 'fixed on Eternity,' and, for the time, refused 'to be taken from Heaven to Earth.' Theologi-

* Cowles, *loc. cit.* p. 238.

cal controversy with companions added itself to the foregoing to intensify Bunyan's interest in the secret of true faith. He now constantly read the Bible, which, however, to him, in his environment, seemed rather a collection of texts than of connected treatises. Henceforth his inner life was full of a not uncommon, but in his case especially significant, associative process, whereby he was largely at the mercy of any single text of his now well-thumbed Bible that at any moment might chance to occur to him, wholly separated, of course, from its context. He might be depressed. At such a time a threatening or discouraging text would come to mind; this or that Scripture would 'creep into his soul,' and wound him, or chill him all through. He could in but very small degree resist the effect of chance association by recalling the original relations or the meaning of this text as determined by its actual setting at the place where it occurs. No, this 'word' had come to him alone; alone he must interpret it and apply it to his case. Did its serious import overwhelm him? Then there was no way but to hunt at random, either in his Bible, or in the recesses of his chance associations, for some other 'word' to set over against the first. Then would follow very possibly long processes of this mere balancing of texts. One 'word' must be set against another, one set of texts must be neutralized by texts whose immediate emotional effects were more comforting. Bunyan also developed in connection with such tasks a peculiarly skilful sort of inner dialectic whereby he estimated the force of each text. He reasoned very subtly with these his own shadows. The decision of nearly every such crisis was determined in the end, however, less by the conscious dialectic itself than by the chances of association. At last, perhaps after days, in the later stages of his malady after months, of conflict, some decisive word would come to mind, would more or less irresistibly 'dart' into his soul, would even half seem to be spoken within him (a few times with the force of a pseudo-hallucination, and only once or twice with almost complete hallucinatory vigor). The 'word' that association thus made victorious might by its very clearness, or by the strength of its emotional setting, banish all the former

'words' from mind, and for the time doubts would leave him. Or again 'two Scriptures' would 'meet' in his heart, and one of them would triumph. This process is frequently exemplified in the *Grace Abounding*, and was of course largely determined, apart from the abnormal capriciousness of his associative processes, by Bunyan's religious opinions and companionships. But this method of thinking was of course an inconvenient complication in view of his now imminent disorder.

At the stage of his pilgrimage now reached, he began to read Paul's epistles with eagerness. They did not decrease his dialectical tendencies. One day, when alone on the road, he found himself wondering gloomily, as he had been doing for some time, whether he really had saving faith or no. Whereupon the 'Tempter,' who of course, in our author's account, has to bear the responsibility for many of Bunyan's insistent impulses, and for a large part of his associative processes, suggested, as he had several times done before, that there was no way for Bunyan to prove that he had faith save by trying to work some miracle; "which Miracle at that time was this, I must say to the Puddles that were in the horse-pads, *Be dry*, and to the dry places, *Be you the Puddles*. And truly, one time I was going to say so indeed; but just as I was about to speak, this thought came into my mind, *But go under yonder Hedge and pray first that God would make you able*. But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, That if I prayed, and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then be sure I had no Faith, but was a Cast-away and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try yet, but will stay a little longer."

In this account it is of course the hesitancy and the brooding, questioning attitude that is symptomatic, and not the logic of the quaint reasoning process, which, in view of Bunyan's presuppositions, is normal enough in form. To such broodings the dreamer added about this time one very elaborate symbolic inner vision of his unhappy state as related to the state of the godly people whose faith he envied. The vision, which, as reported, is a fine instance of the automatic visualizing process already characterized, need detain us here no

further. It is noteworthy that Bunyan reports it without any surprise, as an incident of a type very familiar in his inner life. The striving with chance Scripture passages continued, and now often drove him to his 'wit's end.' The comforting passages were occasionally hit upon, but only to give way soon to doubts. His questions as to what faith is, and whether he was of the elect, had already reached the limits of the normal. He was "greatly assaulted and perplexed, and was often," he says, "when I have been walking, ready to sink where I went with faintness in my mind." This is one of the few hints that we get of Bunyan's physical state at this time. The 'Tempter' was meanwhile quite capable of suggesting, as regards Bunyan's relation to his fellows in the faith, that these [viz., the known 'godly people' aforesaid] being converted already, "they were all that God would save in those parts; and that I came too late, for these had got the Blessing before I came." This thought was insistent enough to cause Bunyan great distress, and even anger at himself for having lost so much time in the past. After really desperate and lonely struggles with such wavering hopes, gloomy fears as to his salvation, and insistent questions and doubts on the whole subject, he at length forsook his solitude, and appealed for help to the 'godly people' themselves, who took him to their pastor, Mr. Gifford.

But herewith Gifford only made Bunyan's case for he time worse, by assuring him that he was a very grievous sinner, and by drawing his attention away from the universal problems about faith and election, back to the particular facts concerning the vanity of his wicked heart. The result was a new stage, wherein all the elements present in the two previous stages of his experience were morbidly combined, and the associative processes so inimical to his peace were rendered more automatic and systematic than ever. The first stage, it will be remembered, had been one of systematically insistent scrupulosity as to the details of his conduct, with elementary inhibitions and fears. The second stage had been one of large and more 'tender' emotional states, and of generalized broodings and doubts as to faith and election, accompanied with occasional feelings of general physical weakness

and faintness. But now this elaborate process of morbid training came to combine both generalized and specialized elements. The first effect was that instead of the 'longing after God' which had characterized the immediately previous state of mind, Bunyan now found in himself a perfect chaos of 'Lusts and Corruptions,' 'wicked thoughts and desires which I did not regard before.' He must 'hanker after every foolish vanity.' His heart "began to be careless both of my Soul and Heaven; it would now continually hang back, both to and in every duty; and was as a Clog to the Leg of a Bird to hinder her from flying. Nay, thought I, now I grow worse and worse; now am I further from Conversion than ever I was before. Wherefore I began to sink greatly in my Soul, and began to entertain such discouragement in my Heart as laid me low as Hell. If now I should have burned at the stake, I could not believe that Christ had love for me: alas, I could neither hear him, nor see him, nor feel him, nor savour any of his things. I was driven as with a Tempest; my Heart would be unclean; the Canaanites would dwell in the land." To this fairly classic description of his general state, Bunyan now adds for the first time a mention of the presence of insistent 'unbelief,' whereof we shall soon hear more. Meanwhile, however, as he adds in a most characteristic fashion: "As to the act of sinning, I was never more tender than now. I durst not take a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch; I could not now tell how to speak my words, for fear I should misplace them. Oh, how gingerly did I then go in all I did or said! I found myself as on a miry Bog that shook if I did but stir; and was as there left both of God and Christ and the Spirit, and all good things."

When a man has once got so far into the 'Slough of Despond' as this, there is indeed no way but to go on. Such insistent trains of morbid association cannot be mended until they first have grown worse. The process of systematization continued in this case, much as in that of Dr. Cowles's patient.* There were for Bunyan, to be sure, the occasional

* Cowles, *loc. cit.* pp. 240-45.

remissions due to the temporary success of this or that Scripture passage. So in one instance the effective suggestion came from without, through a sermon on the text, *Behold, thou art fair, my Love; behold, thou art fair*—a sermon whose pedantically multiplied headings Bunyan years later remembered with perfect clearness. As he was going home after the sermon the two words, *My Love*, came into his thoughts, and “I said thus in my heart, *What shall I get by thinking on these two words?*” Whereupon “the words began thus to kindle in my spirit, *Thou art my Love, thou art my Love*, twenty times together, and still as they ran thus in my mind, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up. But being as yet between hope and fear, I replied in my heart, *But is it true?* At which that Sentence fell in upon me, *He wist not that it was true which was done by the angel.* Then I began to give place to the Word, which with power did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul, *Thou art my Love, thou art my Love; and nothing shall separate me from my Love;* and with that Romans eight, thirty-nine, came into my mind. Now was my heart full of comfort and hope, . . . yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God that I could not tell how to contain till I got Home.” But this mood of course proved to be unstable, and Bunyan soon “lost much of the life and savour of it.”

“About a Week or a Fortnight after this,” continues Bunyan, “I was much followed by this Scripture, *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you.* And sometimes it would sound so loud within me, yea, and as it were call so strongly after me, that once above all the rest, I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some Man had, behind me, called to me; being at a great distance, methought he called so loud.” This pseudo-hallucination of hearing, secondary, be it noted, to the now frequent and insistent automatic motor process of internal speech, whereby Bunyan obviously found such texts forced upon his attention, concluded this special episode, and this particular text, as he expressly tells us, came no more. Hallucinations of hearing form no part of this case in any but this secondary, transient, and ‘borderland’ form—a fact, of course, which has to be clearly borne in mind in

estimating the phenomena. Later reflection, of a sort perfectly normal upon Bunyan's presuppositions, convinced him afterwards that this visitation was a heavenly warning that a 'cloud and a storm was coming down' upon him; but at the time he 'understood it not.' The minuteness of the account hereabouts is evidence both of the depth of the experiences, and of the remarkable intactness of Bunyan's memory amidst all this condition of irritable nervous instability of mood on the one hand, and of morbidly persistent brooding on the other.

IV.

But now for the culmination of the disorder,—a culmination which appeared in three successive and intensely interesting periods or stages, each one of which Bunyan narrates to us with extraordinary skill and vigor.

"About the space of a month after," he continues, "a very great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse than all I had met with before." Of this 'storm' the primary element, as we should now say, was a melancholic mood, of a depth and origin to him unaccountable. Former moods had been largely secondary, as would appear, to his doubts, although primary states of depression had also played their part. But this time the insistent impulses appeared as obviously quite secondary to the mood. The latter "came stealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another; first all my comfort was taken from me, then darkness seized upon me, after which" (the order is noteworthy) "whole floods of blasphemies, both against God, Christ, and the Scriptures, were poured upon my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment. These blasphemous thoughts were such as also stirred up questions in me, against the very Being of God, and of his only beloved Son; as, whether there were, in truth, a God, or Christ, or no? And whether the holy Scriptures were not rather a fable, and cunning story, than the holy and pure Word of God? The tempter would also much assault me with this: *How can you tell but that the Turks had as good Scriptures to prove their Mahomet the Saviour as we have to prove*

our Jesus is? And could I think that so many ten thousands in so many Countries and Kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to Heaven (if indeed there were a heaven), and that we only who live in a corner of the Earth should alone be blessed therewith. Every one doth think his own religion rightest, both Jews and Moors and Pagans! And how if all our Faith, and Christ, and Scriptures should be but a Think-so too?"

Bunyan of course sought to argue with these doubts, but this expert in the dialectics of the inner life now very naturally found all the weapons in the enemy's hands. He would try using the 'sentences of blessed Paul' against the 'tempter.' But alas! it was Paul who had taught both Bunyan and the 'tempter' how to argue with subtlety, and now the reply at once came, in interrogative form: How if Paul too were a cunning deceiver, who had taken 'pains and travail to undo and destroy his fellows'? Bunyan's only remaining comfort was at this point the usual one of the patients afflicted with such harassing enemies. He was aware, namely, that he hated his own doubts, and was so, in a way, better than they. But, as he expressively words it: "This consideration I then only had when God gave me leave to swallow my Spittle; otherwise the noise and strength and force of these temptations would drown and overflow and as it were bury all such thoughts." Meanwhile insistent motor impulses of a still more specific sort occurred. Bunyan frequently felt himself tempted 'to curse and swear, or speak some grievous thing against God.' He compares his state to that of a child whom a gipsy is stealing and carrying away, 'under her apron,' 'from friend and country.' "Kick sometimes I did, and also shriek and cry; but yet I was bound in the wings of the temptation, and the wind would carry me away." Nor were the fears of hopeless insanity, so common in such patients, absent from Bunyan's mind, so far as his knowledge permitted him to formulate them. "I thought also of Saul, and of the evil spirit that did possess him; and did greatly fear that my condition was the same with that of his." The sin against the Holy Ghost was of course suggested to Bunyan's mind amongst other possible crimes, and it seemed at once, of course, as if he 'could not, must not, neither should be quiet' until he had

committed that. "Now, no sin would serve but that; if it were to be committed by speaking of such a word, then I have been as if my Mouth would have spoken that word, whether I would or no; and in so strong a measure was this temptation upon me, that often I have been ready to clasp my hand under my Chin, to hold my Mouth from opening; and to that end also I have had thoughts at other times, to leap downward into some muck-hill hole or other to keep my mouth from speaking."

But to follow further this chaos of motor processes is, for our purposes, hardly necessary. A system there indeed was amidst the chaos, but this system is now manifest enough. Suffice it that the whole race had now to be run. At prayer Bunyan was tempted to blaspheme, or the 'tempter' moved him with the thought, *Fall down and worship me*. At the sacraments of the church, which, although not yet a member of the church, he attended as spectator, in hope of comfort, he was also 'distressed with blasphemies.' There were still no true hallucinations, but "sometimes I have thoughts I should see the devil, nay, thought I have felt him, behind me, pluck my Clothes." As to mood, Bunyan was now usually 'hard of heart.' "If I would have given thousands of pounds for a Tear, I could not shed one; no, nor sometimes scarce desire to shed one." Others 'could mourn and lament their sin.' But he was, as he saw, alone among men, in this hardness of heart, as in the rest of his troubles. The unclean thoughts and blasphemies aforesaid were likely, as is obvious, to appear as reflexes, of an inhibitory type and meaning interestingly analogous to his earlier conscientious scruples themselves. For these blasphemies were excited by and opposed to any pious activity, precisely as the old conscientious fears had been excited by and inhibitory of any activity which his natural heart had most loved. Hearing or reading the Word would be sure, for instance, to bring to pass the blasphemous temptations. The 'tempter' was a sort of inverted conscience, busily insisting upon whatever was opposed to the pious intention. Meanwhile Bunyan of course complains of that general confusion of head of which all such sufferers are likely to speak. When he was reading, "sometimes my mind

would be so strangely snatched away and possessed with other things, that I have neither known, nor regarded, nor remembered so much as that sentence that but now I have read." This 'distraction' was often at prayer-time associated with insistent inner visual images, as of a 'Bull, a Besom, or the like,' to which Bunyan was tempted to pray.

Bunyan attributes to this condition an endurance of about a year. Detailed and obviously trustworthy as his psychological memory is, his chronology seems to suffer, very naturally, with a tendency to lengthen in memory the successive stages of his affliction. One can hardly find room, in the known period occupied by the entire experience, for such lengthy separate stages as the writer assumes. The present, or first culminating period of the malady, finally passed off by a gradual decline of the insistent symptoms,—a decline assisted, as would appear, by a controversial interest which Bunyan was just then led to take in the 'errors of the Quakers,' to whose condemnation he devotes a paragraph of his text, hereabouts, in his Autobiography. The objective turn which such controversial thoughts gave his mind was used, as he himself feels, by the Lord, to 'confirm' him.

One would suppose that the foregoing story, written with the most moving pathos by Bunyan, ought of itself to be a sufficiently obvious confession, even to readers of comparatively little psychological knowledge. The long-trained habits of verbal and emotional association which are exemplified in these repeated experiences with the remembered passages of Scripture, the systematized attitudes of conscientious fear and inhibition which date back to the beginning of our author's conversion, the obvious essential identity between all these mental habits, and those which Bunyan's 'tempter,' his inverted conscience,—equally fear-compelling, equally inhibitory of his present ardent desires,—represented, whenever this 'tempter' disturbed him at prayer, even as his conscience had in former days learned to disturb him at bell-ringing,—all these phenomena give us a most instructive object-lesson concerning the familiar processes by which the human brain, whether in health or in disorder, gets moulded. The emotional instability that lies at the basis of this particular morbid

process,—an instability without which, of course, just these habits could never have become such formidable enemies, is perfectly clear before us. Of the precise physical basis of this instability we can indeed only form conjectures; but we know that this was an extremely sensitive brain, and that the childhood dreams and terrors had been of a type such as to furnish obvious warnings that this mind needed especial care. We know too that such care was in so far lacking, as this still very young man had now to suffer the anxieties of providing for his family at a moment when his troubles about his soul were intense, and when his poverty was great. Meanwhile, one aspect of the symptoms, which we have already noticed, is as obvious as it has been, in the past, neglected by Bunyan's readers. This man, a born genius as to his whole range of language-functions, had been from the start a ready speaker, had developed in boyhood an abounding wealth of skilfully bad language, and had then, in terror-stricken repentance, suddenly devoted himself for many months to a merciless inhibition of every doubtful word. We observe now that insistent motor speech-functions were the most marked and distressing of his mental enemies, and that both the tempter, and that comforter whose strangely suggested Scripture passages occasionally consoled Bunyan's heart, tended to speak, 'as it were,' within the suffering soul. When one considers, still further, the careful way in which, by his own description, Bunyan excludes from his case all hallucinatory elements except the few pseudo-hallucinations, how can one doubt the type of patient with whom one has to deal? Memory, as one sees, is remarkably intact. Any tendency to pathological delusion is obviously lacking; for that Bunyan is beset by the 'tempter' is for him a mere statement of the obvious facts in the light of his accepted faith, and is, from his point of view, a strictly normal and inevitable hypothesis, which he never in any morbid fashion misuses. For the rest, he retains throughout as clearly critical an attitude towards his case as the situation in any wise permits; otherwise we should never have come to get this beautiful confession.

And yet, as said, the biographers have repeatedly missed nearly all these psychological aspects of the case, and that,

too, whatever their theory of the poet's experiences. Some, as pointed out, have endeavored to conceive all this as merely the deep religious experience of an untutored genius. Religious experience it indeed was; nor does its deep human interest suffer from our recognition of its pathological character. Genius there also, indeed, is in every word of the written story. But the specific sequence of the symptoms thus recorded, and the striking parallel with such modern cases as that of Dr. Cowles's patient (who was surely no genius, and whose morbid conscience busied itself with far more earthly matters than the religious issues central in Bunyan's mind)—these things forbid us to doubt that the phenomena are characteristic of a pretty typical morbid process, which has certainly gone on in very many less exalted brains than was that of Bunyan. Other biographers have spoken, as Macaulay did, of 'fearful disorder,' but have had no sense of the clear difference between an hallucinatory delirium, which could only develop either in a very deeply intoxicated or exhausted, or else in a hopelessly wrecked brain, and a disorder such as this of Bunyan's, which could get thus dramatically systematized only in a sensitive but nevertheless extremely tough and highly organized brain, whose general functions were still largely intact. So sympathetic an observer as Froude, on the other hand, almost wholly ignoring the pathological aspect of the case, can actually suppose that Bunyan's 'doubts and misgivings' were 'suggested by a desire for truth'; because, forsooth, from the point of view of a nineteenth-century thinker: "No honest soul can look out upon the world, and see it as it really is, without the question rising in him whether there be any God that governs it all." Froude imagines, therefore, that Bunyan later went no further in doubt largely because 'critical investigation had not yet analyzed the historical construction of the sacred books.' But surely thus to argue is wholly to miss what it is that makes a given sort of questioning, or of other impulse, normal or morbid, for a given man, and under given circumstances. And here is perhaps the place to define more precisely this very matter in our own way.

Morbidly insistent impulses, of whatever sort, are, oddly enough, never morbid merely because they insist. For all our most normal impulses are, or may become, insistent. One has a constantly insistent impulse to breathe, a frequently insistent impulse to eat; and one's life depends upon just such insistences. Insistent desires keep us in love with our work, take us daily about our duties, guide our steps back to our homes, seat us in our chairs to rest, are with us, in their due order, from morning to night, whether we bathe, dress, walk, speak, write, or go to bed. To run counter to such normally insistent impulses pains, and may in extreme cases very greatly distress, or even in the end quite demoralize us. Insistence of will-functions is, then, so far, a sign of health, and means only the kindly might of sound habit. An 'imperative impulse' of the morbid sort is therefore, in the first place, one that, under the circumstances, opposes instead of helping our normal process of 'adjustment to our environment.' But herewith we have still only defined, so far, that element of the morbid impulse which the latter shares in common with all defective mental processes. The peculiar *differentia*, however, of all the various forms of morbidly insistent thoughts, fears, temptations, etc., is that their tendency to bring one out of 'harmony with his environment' is subjectively expressed, for the sufferer himself, in the form of a sense that the fear, thought, or other impulse in question is opposed to his fitting relation to his environment *as he himself conceives that relation*. The hallucination or the delusion gives one a pathologically falsified environment, and then one's adjustment objectively fails, because one knows not rightly the truth to which one ought to be adjusted. Confusedness, or mere incoherence of ideas and impulses, or other such general alteration of consciousness, equally means failure, but here also without any completer subjective sense of what one's failure objectively involves. But the sufferer from morbidly insistent impulses, whether or no he conceives his environment rightly, still knows how he conceives it, and has his general plans of thought and will; but he himself, meanwhile, finds, within himself, 'in his members,' 'another law warring against the law' which he has accepted as his own. Without pretty defi-

nite plans, then, there can be no morbidly insistent impulses. Failure, or strong tendency to failure, in the adjustment, as conceived and planned by the sufferer himself,—such failure being due to this inner conflict,—this it is alone that makes us speak of morbidly insistent impulses.

But not even thus do we define all that it is necessary to bear in mind in judging such cases. Impulses, feelings, thoughts, more or less inimical to our deliberate plans, are constantly, if but faintly, suggested to us, by our normal overwealth of perceptions and of associations. Without such overwealth of offered perceptions and associations, we should not have sufficient material for mental selection; yet such overwealth is necessarily full of solicitations, tempting us, with greater or less clearness, to abandon or to interrupt our chosen plans of action. Nor is there any fixed limit to the range of those 'imagination as one would,' that, as Hobbes already pointed out, may at any moment be initiated in a man's inner life by chance experience and association. Therefore, mere opposition between our chance impulses and our plans is a perfectly normal experience.

Normal impulses then are insistent. And normal trains of impulse, or plans of conduct, are constantly besieged by the faint but more or less inimical distractions of normal experience. When, then, is any single impulse, as such, abnormal? When it insists? No, for breathing is an insistent impulse. When it opposes the current trains of coherent thought or volition? No, for every momentary inner or outer distraction tends to do that; and there is hardly any known impulse or thought or feeling of which a normal man may not at almost any moment be reminded, through the chances of perception and of association. What then is the subjective test of the abnormal in impulse? One can only find it in this: Association chances to suggest any impulse inimical to one's actually chosen plans for 'adjustment to the environment.' So far there is no essential defect. This happens to anybody. But normally the coherence of one's series of healthily insistent or of voluntary impulses is so great, or the strength of the intruder soon becomes, under the influence of the opposed ruling interests,

so faint, that this intruder is ere long sent below the level of consciousness, or harmlessly 'segmented,' and that with an ease and a speed proportioned to the incongruity and to the felt inconvenience of this enemy itself. But, in the abnormal cases, things go otherwise. Perhaps the intruding impulse is not a chance one, but is itself part of a previously established system of inhibitory habits. Or perhaps it is supported by numerous now partly or wholly unconscious motives, say by masses of internal bodily sensations (as in case of pathological fears or of certain physical temptations of abnormal vigor). In all such cases it may prove too strong to be controlled. Or again, the general condition of the sufferer is one of irritable weakness. The sustained coherence of normal functions is then already impaired by nervous exhaustion; the main trains of association hang weakly together; their general power of resistance, so to speak, is lowered. The intruding impulse, on the contrary, is then the mental aspect of a suggested nervous excitement that, beginning at one point, quickly spreads to others, and for the time takes possession of the functions of this unstable brain. And now, in any of these cases, we have a failure to resist the intruder, a failure which the sufferer himself bitterly feels. Objectively the failing adjustment appears as hesitation, or as useless repetition of acts, or as unaccountable impulsive 'queerness' of conduct, or even as helpless inactivity, with various quasi-melancholic symptoms,—silence, hiding, self-reproach, lamentation. Within, the sufferer, who, to suffer decidedly from this sort of malady must be a person of highly organized plans and of self-observant intelligence, feels a prodigious struggle going on. All seems to him activity, warfare, self-division, tumult.

In judging of such a case, one must therefore carefully avoid being deceived either by the imperativeness or by the quaintness of the particular impulses involved. All depends upon their relations in a man's mental life. The intense interests of the inventor, of the man of science, of the rapt public speaker, are not necessarily at all analogous to the 'obsessions' of the sufferer from insistent impulses, although the former are, like breathing, imperative. Nor are the

merrily absurd impulses of a gay party of young people at a picnic abnormal, merely because they are for the time incoherent, and are thus opposed to serious thought and conduct. No, it is the *union* of a tendency towards incoherence in feeling and conduct, with an imperative resistance to the actual and conscious plans, whereby the sufferer deliberately intends to be in some chosen fashion coherent,—it is this union of incongruity with insistence that constitutes the subjective note of the morbidly insistent impulse.

These are commonplace considerations. I should not introduce them here, were not the literature of this whole topic so often affected by confusions of conception. In the light of such obvious considerations, Froude's refusal to see the abnormality of Bunyan's insistent questions or 'blasphemies' as to the being of God, and the like, becomes sufficiently insignificant as affecting our present judgment. Any man may by chance, in his mind, come momentarily to question anything. That is so far a matter of passing association, and involves nothing suspicious. A modern or, for that matter, an ancient thinker may moreover persistently question God's existence. If the thinker is a philosopher, or other theoretical inquirer, such doubts may form part of his general plans, and may so be as healthy in character as any other forms of intellectual considerateness. But if a man's whole inner life, in so far as it is coherent, is built upon a system of plans and of faiths which involve as part of themselves the steadfast principle that to doubt God's existence is horrible blasphemy, and if, nevertheless, after a fearful fit of darkness, such a man finds, amidst 'whole floods' of other 'blasphemies,' doubts about God not only suddenly forced upon him, but persistent despite his horror and his struggles, then it is vain for a trained sceptic of another age to pretend an enlightened sympathy, and to say to this agonized nervous patient: 'Doubt? Why, I have doubted God's existence too.' The ducklings can safely swim, but that does not make their conduct more congruous with the plans and the feelings of the hen. The professional doubters may normally doubt. But that does not make doubt less a malady in those who suffer from it, and strive, and cry out, but cannot get free.

This observation, that the symptomatic value of these insistent impulses lies solely in the *relation* between the impulses themselves and the organized mental life, the plans, insight, and chosen habits of the patient, reminds us also in this case that Bunyan's experiences clearly indicate the essential psychological equivalence of several of the various sorts of *manias* and *phobias* which some authors, imagining that the content rather than the relations of the impulses concerned is important, have so needlessly chosen to distinguish. Bunyan was tempted to doubt, fear, question, blaspheme, curse, swear, pray to the devil, or to do whatever else conscientious inhibition and irritably weak speech functions had prepared him to find peculiarly fascinating and horrible. There was no importance in the mere variety of the wicked ideas that the one 'tempter' suggested. The evil lay in the systematized character of the morbid habits involved, and in the exhausting multitude of the tempter's assaults.

(To be concluded.)