

Six Gems from Bunyan

A LOOKING GLASS

by John Bunyan

In this see thou thy beauty, hast thou any,
Or thy defects, should they be few or many.
Thou may'st, too, here thy spots and freckles see,
Hast thou but eyes, and what their numbers be.
But art thou blind? There is no looking-glass
Can show thee thy defects, thy spots, or face.

Comparison.

Unto this glass we may compare the Word,
For that to man advantage doth afford
(Has he a mind to know himself and state),
To see what will be his eternal fate.
But without eyes, alas! how can he see?
Many that seem to look here, blind men be.
This is the reason they so often read
Their judgment there, and do it nothing dread.

THE ROSE BUSH

By John Bunyan

This homely bush doth to mine eyes expose
A very fair, yea, comely ruddy rose.
This rose doth also bow its head to me,
Saying, Come, pluck me, I thy rose will be;
Yet offer I to gather rose or bud,
Ten to one but the bush will have my blood.
This looks like a trap or a decoy,
To offer, and yet snap, who would enjoy;
Yea, the more eager on't, the more in danger,
Be he the master of it, or a stranger.
Bush, why dost bear a rose if none must have it.
Who dost expose it, yet claw those that crave it?
Art become freakish? dost the wanton play,
Or doth thy testy humour tend its way?

Comparison.

This rose God's Son is, with his ruddy looks.
But what's the bush, whose pricks, like tenter-hooks,
Do scratch and claw the finest lady's hands,
Or rend her clothes, if she too near it stands?
This bush an emblem is of Adam's race,
Of which Christ came, when he his Father's grace
Commended to us in his crimson blood,
While he in sinners' stead and nature stood.
Thus Adam's race did bear this dainty rose,
And doth the same to Adam's race expose;
But those of Adam's race which at it catch,
Adam's race will them prick, and claw, and scratch.

THE BEE

By John Bunyan

The bee goes out, and honey home doth bring,
And some who seek that honey find a sting.
Now would'st thou have the honey, and be free
From stinging, in the first place kill the bee.

Comparison.

This bee an emblem truly is of sin,
Whose sweet, unto a many, death hath been.
Now would'st have sweet from sin and yet not die,
Do thou it, in the first place, mortify.

THE HOUR GLASS

By John Bunyan

This glass, when made, was, by the workman's skill,
The sum of sixty minutes to fulfil.
Time, more nor less, by it will out be spun,
But just an hour, and then the glass is run.
Man's life we will compare unto this glass,
The number of his months he cannot pass;
But when he has accomplished his day,
He, like a vapour, vanisheth away.

THE OPERATION OF FAITH

by John Bunyan

The word of faith unto me pardon brings,
Shows me the ground and reason whence it springs:

To wit, free grace, which moved God to give
His Son to die and bleed, that I might live

This word doth also loudly preach to me,
Though I a miserable sinner be,

Yet in this Son of God I stand complete,
Whose righteousness is without all deceit;

'Tis that which God himself delighteth in,
And that by which all his have saved been.

THE BEGGER

by John Bunyan

He wants, he asks, he pleads his poverty,
They within doors do him an alms deny.
He doth repeat and aggravate his grief,
But they repulse him, give him no relief.
He begs, they say, Begone; he will not hear,
But coughs, sighs, and makes signs he still is there;
They disregard him, he repeats his groans;
They still say nay, and he himself bemoans.
They grow more rugged, they call him vagrant;
He cries the shriller, trumpets out his want.
At last, when they perceive he'll take no nay,
An alms they give him without more delay.

Comparison.

This beggar doth resemble them that pray
To God for mercy, and will take no nay,
But wait, and count that all his hard gainsays
Are nothing else but fatherly delays;
Then imitate him, praying souls, and cry:
There's nothing like to importunity.