看名著学英语丛书

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

韩文　主编

延边大学出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

看名著学英语丛书/韩文主编.
—延吉：延边大学出版社，2004.7
ISBN 7-5634-2915-8
Ⅰ.看…
Ⅱ.韩…
Ⅲ.外国文学—课外读物—英语—小说
Ⅳ.I561.44
中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 121181 号

延边大学出版社出版发行
(吉林延吉市公园街 105 号　邮政编码 133002)
中铁十六局印刷厂印刷
787×1092　32 开　24.625 印张
2004 年 7 月第 1 版　　2004 年 7 月第 1 次印刷
印数：1～1 000 册
定价：74.00 元（全四卷）

众生之路

（三）

TABLE OF CONTENTS

《THE WAY OF ALL FLESH》

By Samuel Butler

（三）

Chapter 47

ERNEST RETURNED TO CAMBRIDGE for the May term of 1858, on the plea of reading for ordination, with which he was now face to face, and much nearer than he liked. Up to this time, though not religiously inclined, he had never doubted the truth of anything that had been told him about Christianity. He had never seen anyone who doubted, nor read anything that raised a suspicion in his mind as to the historical character of the miracles recorded in the old and New Testaments.

It must be remembered that the year 1858 was the last of a term during which the peace of the Church of England was singularly unbroken. Between 1844, when Vestiges of Creation appeared, and 1859, when Essays and Reviews marked the commencement of that storm which raged until many years afterwards there was not a single book published in England that caused serious commotion within the bosom of the Church.

Perhaps Buckle's History of Civilization and Mill's Liberty were the most alarming, but they neither of them reached the substratum of the reading public, and Ernest and his friends were ignorant of their very existence. The Evangelical movement, with the exception to which I shall revert presently, had become almost a matter of ancient history. Tractarianism had subsided into a tenth day's wonder; it was at work, but it was not noisy. The Vestiges were forgotten before Ernest went up to Cambridge; the Catholic aggression scare had lost its terrors; Ritualism was still unknown by the general provincial public, and the Gorham and Hampden controversies were defunct some years since; Dissent was not spreading; the Crimean war was the one engrossing subject, to be followed by the Indian Mutiny and the Franco-Austrian war. These great events turned men's minds from speculative subjects, and there was no enemy to the faith which could arouse even a languid interest. At no time probably since the beginning of the century could an ordinary observer have detected less sign of coming disturbance than at that of which I am writing.

I need hardly say that the calm was only on the surface. Older men, who knew more than undergraduates were likely to do, must have seen that the wave of scepticism which had already broken over Germany was setting towards our own shores, nor was it long, indeed, before it reached them. Ernest had hardly been ordained before three works in quick succession arrested the attention even of those who paid least heed to theological controversy. I mean Essays and Reviews, Charles Darwin's Origin of Species, and Bishop Colenso's Criticisms on the Pentateuch.

This, however, is a digression; I must revert to the one phase of spiritual activity which had any life in it during the time Ernest was at Cambridge, that is to say, to the remains of the Evangelical awakening of more than a generation earlier, which was connected with the name of Simeon.

There were still a good many Simeonites, or as they were more briefly called 'Sims,' in Ernest's time. Every college contained some of them, but their headquarters were at Caius, whither they were attracted by Mr Clayton, who was at that time senior tutor, and

among the sizars of St John's.

Behind the then chapel of this last-named college, there was a 'labyrinth' (this was the name it bore) of dingy, tumble-down rooms, tenanted exclusively by the poorest undergraduates, who were dependent upon sizarships and scholarships for the means of taking their degrees. To many, even at St John's, the existence and whereabouts of the labyrinth in which the sizars chiefly lived was unknown; some men in Ernest's time, who had rooms in the first court, had never found their way through the sinuous passage which led to it.

In the labyrinth there dwelt men of all ages, from mere lads to grey-haired old men who had entered late in life. They were rarely seen except in hall or chapel or at lecture, where their manners of feeding, praying and studying were considered alike objectionable; no one knew whence they came, whither they went, nor what they did, for they never showed at cricket or the boats; they were a gloomy, seedy-looking confrerie, who had as little to glory in in clothes and manners as in the flesh itself.

Ernest and his friends used to consider themselves

marvels of economy for getting on with so little money, but the greater number of dwellers in the labyrinth would have considered one-half of their expenditure to be an exceeding measure of affluence, and so doubtless any domestic tyranny which had been experienced by Ernest was a small thing to what the average Johnian sizar had had to put up with.

A few would at once emerge on its being found after their first examination that they were likely to be ornaments to the college; these would win valuable scholarships that enabled them to live in some degree of comfort, and would amalgamate with the more studious of those who were in a better social position, but even these, with few exceptions, were long in shaking off the uncouthness they brought with them to the University, nor would their origin cease to be easily recognizable till they had become dons and tutors. I have seen some of these men attain high position in the world of politics or science, and yet still retain a look of labyrinth and Johnian sizarship.

Unprepossessing then, in feature, gait and manners, unkempt and ill-dressed beyond what can be easily

described, these poor fellows formed a class apart, whose thoughts and ways were not as the thoughts and ways of Ernest and his friends, and it was among them that Simeonism chiefly flourished.

Destined most of them for the Church (for in those days 'holy orders' were seldom heard of), the Simeonites held themselves to have received a very loud call to the ministry, and were ready to pinch themselves for years so as to prepare for it by the necessary theological courses. To most of them the fact of becoming clergymen would be the entree into a social position from which they were at present kept out by barriers they well knew to be impassable; ordination, therefore, opened fields for ambition which made it the central point in their thoughts, rather than as with Ernest, something which he supposed would have to be done some day, but about which as about dying, he hoped there was no need to trouble himself as yet.

By way of preparing themselves more completely they would have meetings in one another's rooms for tea and prayer and other spiritual exercises. Placing themselves under the guidance of a few well-known

tutors they would teach in Sunday Schools, and be instant, in season and out of season, in imparting spiritual instruction to all whom they could persude to listen to them.

But the soil of the more prosperous undergraduates was not suitable for the seed they tried to sow. The small pieties with which they larded their discourse, if chance threw them into the company of one whom they considered worldly, caused nothing but aversion in the minds of those for whom they were intended. When they distributed tracts, dropping them by night into good men's letterboxes while they were asleep, their tracts got burnt, or met with even worse contumely; they were themselves also treated with the ridicule which they reflected proudly had been the lot of true followers of Christ in all ages. Often at their prayer meetings was the passage of St Paul referred to in which he bids his Corinthian converts note concerning themselves that they were for the most part neither well-bred nor intellectual people. They reflected with pride that they too had nothing to be proud of in these respects, and like St Paul, gloried in the fact that in the flesh they had not

much to glory.

Ernest had several Johnian friends, and came thus to hear about the Simeonites and to see some of them, who were pointed out to him as they passed through the courts. They had a repellent attraction for him; he disliked them, but he could not bring himself to leave them alone. On one occasion he had gone so far as to parody one of the tracts they had sent round in the night, and to get a copy dropped into each of the leading Simeonites' boxes. The subject he had taken was 'Personal Cleanliness.' Cleanliness, he said, was next to godliness; he wished to know on which side it was to stand, and concluded by exhorting Simeonites to a freer use of the tub. I cannot commend my hero's humour in this matter; his tract was not brilliant, but I mention the fact as showing that at this time he was something of a Saul and took pleasure in persecuting the elect, not, as I have said, that he had any hankering after scepticism, but because, like the farmers in his father's village, though he would not stand seeing the Christian religion made light of, he was not going to see it taken seriously. Ernest's friends thought his dislike for Simeonites was

due to his being the son of a clergyman who, it was known, bullied him; it is more likely, however, that it rose from an unconscious sympathy with them, which as in St Paul's case, in the end drew him into the ranks of those whom he had most despised and hated.

Chapter 48

ONCE, RECENTLY, when he was down at home after taking his degree, his mother had had a short conversation with him about his becoming a clergyman, set on thereto by Theobald, who shrank from the subject himself. This time it was during a turn taken in the garden, and not on the sofa - which was reserved for supreme occasions.

'You know, my dearest boy,' she said to him, 'that papa' (she always called Theobald 'papa' when talking to Ernest) 'is so anxious you should not go into the Church blindly, and without fully realizing the difficulties of a clergyman's position. He has considered all of them himself, and has been shown how small they are, when they are faced boldly, but he wishes you, too, to feel them as strongly and completely as possible before committing yourself to irrevocable vows, so that you

may never, never have to regret the step you will have taken.'

This was the first time Ernest had heard that there were any difficulties, and he not unnaturally inquired in a vague way after their nature.

'That, my dear boy,' rejoined Christina, 'is a question which I am not fitted to enter upon either by nature or education. I might easily unsettle your mind without being able to settle it again. Oh, no! Such questions are far better avoided by women, and, I should have thought, by men; but papa wished me to speak to you upon the subject, so that there might be no mistake hereafter, and I have done so. Now, therefore, you know all.'

The conversation ended here, so far as this subject was concerned, and Ernest thought he did know all. His mother would not have told him he knew all - not about a matter of that sort - unless he actually did know it; well, it did not come to very much; he supposed there were some difficulties, but his father, who at any rate was an excellent scholar and a learned man, was probably quite right here, and he need not trouble

himself more about them. So little impression did the conversation make on him, that it was not till long afterwards that, happening to remember it, he saw what a piece of sleight of hand had been practised upon him. Theobald and Christina, however, were satisfied that they had done their duty by opening their son's eyes to the difficulties of assenting to all a clergyman must assent to. This was enough; it was a matter for rejoicing that, though they had been put so fully and candidly before him, he did not find them serious. It was not in vain that they had prayed for so many years to be made 'truly honest and conscientious.'

'And now, my dear,' resumed Christina, after having disposed of all the difficulties that might stand in the way of Ernest's becoming a clergyman, 'there is another matter on which I should like to have a talk with you. It is about your sister Charlotte. You know how clever she is, and what a dear, kind sister she has been and always will be to yourself and Joey. I wish, my dearest Ernest, that I saw more chance of her finding a suitable husband than I do at Battersby, and I sometimes think you might do more than you do to help her.'

Ernest began to chafe at this, for he had heard it so often, but he said nothing.

'You know, my dear, a brother can do so much for his sister if he lays himself out to do it. A mother can do very little indeed, it is hardly a mother's place to seek out young men; it is a brother's place to find a suitable partner for his sister; all that I can do is to try to make Battersby as attractive as possible to any of your friends whom you may invite. And in that,' she added, with a little toss of her head, 'I do not think I have been deficient hitherto.'

Ernest said he had already at different times asked several of his friends.

'Yes, my dear, but you must admit that they were none of them exactly the kind of young man whom Charlotte could be expected to take a fancy to. Indeed, I must own to having been a little disappointed that you should have yourself chosen any of these as your intimate friends.'

Ernest winced again.

'You never brought down Figgins when you were at Roughborough; now I should have thought Figgins