

Chapter Eighteen

Christian Overtakes and Converses with Faithful

A. Christian Recovers from his Proud Fall.

NOW as *Christian* went on his way, he came to a slight ascent which was specially designed so that pilgrims could more easily see ahead of them; there-fore *Christian* went up and, looking forward, he saw *Faithful* in the distance intent on his journey. Then did *Christian* call out loudly, "Ho, ho, So-ho [*Here, here, look here*]; wait, let me catch up and I will be your companion." At this *Faithful* looked behind him, causing *Christian* to again cry out, "Wait, wait till I catch up with you." But *Faithful* replied, "No, I travel with my life at stake, and the *Avenger of Blood* is close behind."¹ This reply somewhat moved *Christian*, so mustering all his strength he quickly caught up with *Faithful* and in fact raced past him so that the last had become first! As a result *Christian* smiled with a sense of self-congratulation; he felt proud of now being ahead of his brother. Yet not paying attention to his feet, he suddenly stumbled and fell to the ground, and was unable to get up, that is until *Faithful* came up to help him.²

Then I saw in my dream that both of them went on very lovingly together; and they had delightful conversation about all of the things that had happened to them on their pilgrimage. So *Christian* spoke:

The importance of Christian fellowship emphasized at the Palace Beautiful is now reinforced. Here we see Christian offering help after receiving it; here he gives mature advice following his recovery. Furthermore, there is revealed a contrast between two pilgrims who, because of their different characters, face different problems. R. M. Frye comments:

Faithful is a more fleshly man than Christian, less profound perhaps, and certainly less proud. His temptations accordingly differ from Christian's, and as he is less morbidly fearful about his own guilt, he has no difficulty at the Slough of Despond. He does, however, have a tempting encounter with the lustful Madam Wanton outside the Gate, and she promises him "all manner of content." . . . More humble than Christian, but also more conventional, he is tempted in the Valley of Humiliation not by the massive onslaughts of Apollyon but by the rather bourgeois appeals of Discontent and Shame, who taunt him with his violation of conventional mores.³

¹ Num. 35:19, 21, 24-27; Deut. 19:6.

² Prov. 16:18; Eccles. 4:9-10; I Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:1.

³ R. M. Frye, "The Way of All Pilgrims," *Bunyan: The Pilgrim's Progress, A Casebook*, ed. Roger Sharrock, p. 153.

1. He recognizes Faithful ahead in the distance.

Christian climbs a modest vantage point which is providentially designed to encourage pilgrims with its vista of the immediate future. It provides a time of encouragement, the prospect of spiritual companionship which the healthy child of God ought to yearn for (I John 3:14). Only then does he identify in the distance a former citizen of the City of Destruction going in the direction that leads to life.

a. Application.

Now we are introduced to the riches of true individual, as distinct from corporate, fellowship, that which gives buoyancy, consolation, strength, and growth. The solo Christian is as deprived as a derelict child, since there is no possibility of family conversation!

b. Christian desires companionship.

Recalling the advice of the Porter at the Palace Beautiful concerning Faithful passing by, as well as the warm fellowship, he longs for genuine spiritual intimacy. Thus he shouts to Faithful asking that he halt for a moment. "Ho, ho," is an expression of surprise. "So-ho," is an expression of unexpected discovery.

c. Faithful desires life.

Though, in looking back, Faithful may have recognized Christian, yet he refuses even to pause for a short while because his life is at stake. He is fleeing from "the avenger of blood," that is Satan or "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10). The imagery here, while drawing upon the flight of a manslayer from an avenger (Deut. 19:5-6; Josh. 20:5-9), yet more broadly depicts the pilgrim being pursued by the enemy of souls (Ps. 8:2; 44:15-16).

2. He overtakes Faithful with great speed.

This humorous vignette completely destroys the caricature of puritans, such as Bunyan, as being forever dour and austere. So Christian sprints forward with such acceleration that, being unable to stop quickly, he rushes past Faithful.

a. The result is gloating that precedes a fall.

(1) Christian is proud of his progress.

Realizing that, having been last, he is now first (Matt. 19:30), he gloats at his strong effort and advance beyond his brother. For a fatal moment, Christian forgets that he is in the way, not for the purpose of competing with other pilgrims, but rather so that through grace he might arrive at the Celestial City. Believers are certainly to contest Satan, but not one another; they are to humbly serve one another as Faithful will soon demonstrate (Matt. 23:11-12).

(2) Christian is prostrate in his progress.

Just when flushed with his attainment, he suddenly stumbles and heavily falls to the dust. Christian is so winded on account of vainglory that he cannot get to his feet (Prov. 16:18; I Cor. 10:12). The steady approach of Faithful only makes his humiliation all the more complete.

b. The result is a compassionate helping hand.

Faithful does not rebuke or belittle his fellow-countryman. Rather, he comes to the rescue with gentle and uplifting hands (Rom. 14:1; 1 Thess. 5:14). So, “they went very lovingly on together.” As Charles Wesley has written:

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
Who joins us by His grace,
And bids us, each to each restored,
Together seek His face.
He bids us build each other up;
And, gathered into one,
To our high calling's glorious hope
We hand in hand go on.



Faithful helps Christian up

B. Faithful Recounts his own Distinctive Experiences.

It was integral to Puritan ministry during the seventeenth century, and ongoing during the eighteenth century awakenings, that Christians frequently share their spiritual experiences for the purpose of personal and corporate benefit. Richard Sibbes is representative when he writes:

For our better encouragement in these sad times, and to help our trust in God the more, we should often call to mind the former experiences, which either ourselves or others have had of God's goodness, and make use of the same for our spiritual good. . . . We should take notice of God's dealings with us in sundry kinds; how many ways he hath refreshed us, and how good we have found him in our worst times. . . . This hath formerly been the custom of God's people, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," (Ps. 66:16).⁴

1. His departure from the City of Destruction.

How delighted he is that they can recount and share the distinctive events of their common pilgrimage, and especially acknowledge that God, in sovereign grace, has "tempered their spirits."

a. He left after Christian had gone ahead.

CHRISTIAN: My honored and well-beloved brother *Faithful*, I am glad that I have caught up with you, and that *God* has so tempered our spirits that we can walk as companions along such a pleasant pathway.

FAITHFUL: Dear friend, I had thought of enjoying your company even from our *Town*, but you did get quite a start on me; therefore I was forced to come this far on my own.

But if Christian was first to leave the City of Destruction, then how is it possible that Faithful could have come to be ahead at this stage? Thus Bunyan injects a mystery here that will shortly be solved in the following conversation.



Faithful

⁴ Richard Sibbes, *Works*, I, pp. 216-217.

- b. He fled on account of Christian's warning.

CHRISTIAN: For how long did you stay in the *City of Destruction*, that is before you set out after me on your pilgrimage?

FAITHFUL: Till I could stay no longer; since after you had departed, there was so much discussion concerning the near prospect of our *City* being burned to the ground by means of fire from *Heaven*.

CHRISTIAN: Is that so? Did your neighbors really talk this way?

FAITHFUL: Yes, this sober conversation was in everybody's mouth, at least for a while.

CHRISTIAN: But tell me, were there no more than yourself who came away to escape the danger?

FAITHFUL: As I said, there was certainly a lot of talk going on, though I do not think that they really believed it. For in the heat of this exchange I heard some of them speak of you with ridicule. Your pilgrimage was contemptuously called a desperate journey, though I did believe, and still do, that the end of our *City* will be with fire and brimstone from above; so as a result I made my escape.

Christian's prophetic message of impending fire and judgment had become the talk of the town, even after his departure. But the discussion was more derisive than serious. Only Faithful was sufficiently brave enough in faith to ignore the contemptuous cries of his fellow countrymen and make his escape.



Pliable mocked after his apostasy

c. He witnessed Pliable's shameful return.

CHRISTIAN: Did you hear of any talk concerning neighbor *Pliable*?

FAITHFUL: Yes, *Christian*, for I heard that he accompanied you till he came to the *Slough of Despond*; there, as some have reported, he fell in. Even so he would not let on about this; but I am quite sure that he was thoroughly bedaubed [*fouly covered*] with the dirt of that place.

CHRISTIAN: And what did the neighbors say to him?

FAITHFUL: Since his return he has been the subject of considerable derision, and that by all sorts of people. Some quite mock and despise him, while scarcely anyone will give him employment. He is now seven times worse than if he had never departed from the *City*.⁵

CHRISTIAN: But why is it that they were so set against him, especially since they also despised the way that he eventually abandoned?

FAITHFUL: Oh they said "Hang him, since he is a turn-coat; he was not true to his profession." I think *God* has stirred up even his enemies to hiss [*jeer*] at him so as to make him a proverb [*standing example*], because he deserted the way.

CHRISTIAN: Did you ever talk with him before your departure?

FAITHFUL: I did meet him once in the streets, but he only leered at me from a distance on the other side, as if ashamed of what he had done; so I did not actually speak to him.

CHRISTIAN: Well, when I first set out on pilgrimage, I did have some hope for that man. But now I fear he will perish in the imminent destruction of the *City*, just as his case is described according to the true proverb, "The dog has turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed has gone back to her wallowing in the mire."⁶

FAITHFUL: They are my fears for him as well. But who can hinder that which is to be?

However, Faithful was not discouraged by the sorry sight and craven testimony of this wimpish citizen. Yet he could not forget the degree of shame that was heaped upon Pliable by his former friends.

(1) Shamed by his bedaubing.

Try as he may to deny it, his shabby presence bore eloquent testimony to his yielding to defeat under the weight of guilt.

(2) Shamed by his neighbors.

They despised and mocked him, for even the world hates a quitter, that is one who, having put his hand to the plough, then looks back (Luke 9:62).

⁵ *Matt. 12:43-45.*

⁶ *Prov. 26:11; II Pet. 2:22.*

(3) Shamed by his worse condition.

Not only had he become unemployed, as if an outcast, but also his present state was found to be seven times worse than that which was prior to his attempt to go on pilgrimage (Lev. 26:21).

(4) Shamed by his erratic faith.

His neighbors mocked him as a turncoat and sought that he be hung. It seems that God raised them up to condemn his vagrant ways (Jer. 29:18-19).

(5) Shamed by his cringing guilt.

Because of his failure, he would even move to pass on the other side of the street so as to avoid conversation.

(6) Shamed by his reprobate heart.

Christian adds that at first he considered Pliable to be genuine; but then his turning back confirmed his unclean nature and ungodly desires, even as a “dog is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (II Pet. 2:22). For such, “it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them” (II Pet. 2:21). Thus Faithful agrees with his fellow pilgrim and especially regarding the mystery here of sovereign ordination.

Faithful and
Madam Wanton



2. His encounter with beguiling Wanton.

CHRISTIAN: Well neighbor *Faithful*, let us cease wondering about him, and rather talk of things that more immediately concern us. Tell me now, what have you met with and experienced having come thus far? Truly it would be a wonder worth recording if you had not met with at least some notable things.

FAITHFUL: I escaped the *Slough of Despond* which, I understand, you fell into; and so I reached the *Wicket-gate* without any danger, except that there I was propositioned by a woman named *Wanton* [*Promiscuous*] who intended to do me considerable harm.

CHRISTIAN: It was just as well you escaped her clutches. *Joseph* [*in Egypt*] was severely tested by her, though he escaped her just as you did; otherwise she would have cost him his life.⁷ But what else did she do to you?

FAITHFUL: You cannot imagine, except through personal experience, just how flattering her tongue was; she pressed me hard to go with her by promising all sorts of sensual pleasure.

CHRISTIAN: But she did not promise you the enjoyment of a good conscience.

FAITHFUL: No, for you well understand that what she really offered was strictly carnal and fleshly.

CHRISTIAN: Thank *God* you have escaped her, since it is the abhorred of the *Lord* who shall fall into her ditch.⁸

FAITHFUL: True, but I am still not sure if I have totally escaped her pleading.

CHRISTIAN: Why I trust you did not agree to her solicitation, did you?

FAITHFUL: No, I did not defile myself with her, for I remembered an old writing which I had seen that declared, "Her steps descend down to *Hell*." So I shut my eyes to prevent myself from being bewitched with her seductive looks.⁹ Then she suddenly became angry and abused me, at which I quickly departed from her.

The fact that Faithful was untroubled by the Slough of Despond, in contrast with Christian, and yet was severely tried by seductive Wanton, is intended by Bunyan to convey the important truth that, according to individual characteristics, pilgrims are prone to be troubled by distinctive temptations. Bunyan himself was more disturbed by bouts of deep depression, so it would seem, rather than carnal lusting after the opposite sex, as *Grace Abounding* well illustrates. He comments that,

[God] made me shy of women from my first conversion until now. . . . It is a rare thing to see me carry it pleasant towards a woman; the common salutation of a woman I abhor, it is odious to me in whomsoever I see it. Their company alone, I cannot away with. I seldom so much as touch a woman's hand, for I think these things are not so becoming me.¹⁰

⁷ Gen. 39:11-13.

⁸ Prov. 7:1-27; 22:14.

⁹ Job 31:1; Prov. 6:25-27; 5:5.

¹⁰ Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. 46.

On the other hand, Kelman states concerning Faithful: “He hates lust because he fears it, and because he knows that he has good reason to fear it.”¹¹

- a. Faithful was propositioned after entering the Wicket Gate.

Whereas Christian was assailed at this place by the arrows of devils under the command of Captain Beelzebub, Faithful was here accosted by a lewd woman named Madam Wanton. We further know that her custom was to organize merry balls attended by her close acquaintances, Mrs. Light-mind, Mrs. Love-the-flesh, Mr. Lechery, and Mrs. Filth.¹²

- (1) She had previously tested Joseph.

Potipher's wife was her alias. But he fled by means of “the way of escape” (Gen. 39:11-13; 1 Cor. 10:13; II Tim. 2:22).

- (2) She flattered with her tongue.

All sorts of pleasure and carnal content flowed from her soliciting lips (Gen. 39:7, 10; Prov. 5:3). She almost confounded his senses with her subtle suggestions (Prov. 6:25; 7:1-21).

- b. Christian recalls the wages that Wanton hid from view.

He gives fatherly advice akin to that of Solomon (Prov. 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 23:26-28).

- (1) A pierced conscience.

She promised carnal contentment and sensual satisfaction under the guise of a good conscience (Prov. 7:15-21). She did not tell of the conscience in fact being mortally wounded (Prov. 7:23).

- (2) A deep pit.

She promoted her mouth as sweet as honey while in fact it proved to be as bitter as wormwood (Prov. 5:3-4). Thus her speech was really a deceptive and deep pit leading to Hell for those cursed by the Lord (Prov. 5:5; 22:14; 23:27).

- c. Faithful turned from her bewitching looks.

His intentional breaking of eye contact with Madam Wanton was a wise course of action (Prov. 6:25). Only then did her “sweetness” turn to gall and venomous scorn, as was the case with Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:13-18).

¹¹ John Kelman, *The Road*, I, p. 168.

¹² Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 177.

3. His meeting with old Adam the First.

Faithful's distinctive weakness in the flesh continues to be assailed, yet in a slightly different manner. The location here was at the bottom of the Hill Difficulty, and again it elicits an intended contrast. To begin with, it seems that, unlike his companion, Faithful did not drink at the refreshing spring. Kelman then comments:

[Adam the First] is an extension of the idea of Wanton, representing an appeal not to any one appetite, but to the entire sensuous side of a man - to all that is of the earth, earthy. . . . This episode corresponds to Christian's sleep in the arbour on that same Hill Difficulty, and the difference of experience is determined simply by the different natures of the two men. It was natural for Faithful to take his relaxation in a broader and more voluptuous form than Christian. Yet their temptation is the same.¹³

a. The old man attempts to recruit Faithful.

CHRISTIAN: Did you meet with any other assaults as you went on your way?

FAITHFUL: When I came to the foot of the *Hill Difficulty*, I met a very old man who asked me, "Who I was and where I was going?" I replied that I was a pilgrim going to the *Celestial City*. Then he commented, "You look like an honest fellow. Will you consider the contentment that is available by living with me, and especially the wages I am prepared to offer?" Then I asked him his name and where he lived. He said that his name was *Adam the First*,¹⁴ and that he resided in the *Town of Deceit*.¹⁵ Then I enquired of him what his line of business was and what exactly the wages were that he offered. To this he responded that his employment offered many delights, and that his wages were full heirship in his family.

I further asked him details concerning the support of his household and the servants that he kept. So he explained that his household was maintained with a great variety of exotic dainties gleaned from the four corners of the world; further, his servants were his own children. Then I asked him how many children he had, and he replied that there were only three, all daughters, named *The Lust of the Flesh*, *The Lust of the Eyes*, and *The Pride of Life*,¹⁶ and that I could marry them if I so wished. Then I asked how long I could expect to live with him, and he answered, as long as he himself lived.

Adam the First depicts "the first man Adam" or original fallen Adam in contrast with "the last Adam" or Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:45-47). Further, he represents "the old man" or unregenerate natural man (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9), in contrast with "the new man" or regenerate spiritual man (Rom. 6:7-11; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10). In other words, Adam the First tempts the new spiritual

¹³ Kelman, *The Road*, I, p. 170.

¹⁴ Rom. 5:12, 17; I Cor. 15:45-47.

¹⁵ Eph. 4:22.

¹⁶ I John 2:16.

man Faithful to yield to the old man embodied in the temporal and corrupt shell of the flesh.

- (1) He offers his worthless pedigree.

By dwelling in the town of Deceit, “the old self [man] . . . is being corrupted with the lusts of deceit” (Eph. 4:22).

- (2) He offers employment for heirship.

By requiring the expenditure of much energy of the flesh (Gal. 6:12; II Pet. 2:9-10), he has gathered many servants who have heirship conferred upon them. They at first delight in sensual pleasure, and then inherit corruption (Gal. 6:8a).

- (3) He offers his house full of worldly dainties.

By cultivating “the deeds of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21), he bears many “children of wrath” who “live in the lusts of the flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:3).

- (4) He offers his three daughters in marriage.

By making a polygamous proposal concerning his daughters, Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and Pride of Life (I John 2:16), he also offers the delusion of carnal longevity (I Cor. 7:31; I John 2:17).



Lust of the Flesh



Lust of the Eyes



Pride of Life

b. The old man is impressive, yet repulsive.

CHRISTIAN: Well, and what agreement eventually came between the old man and yourself?

FAITHFUL: Why at first I felt somewhat inclined to go with the man because his manner was quite appealing. However, on looking at his forehead as I talked with him I saw inscribed there, "Put off the old man with his deeds."¹⁷

So many of the emissaries of Satan have a degree of attraction about them. Consider Mr. Worldly-wiseman, Talkative, Demas, the Flatterer (II Cor. 11:14-15).

(1) His speech is fair.

Perhaps he was an acquaintance of Talkative, son of Say-well from Prating-row in the City of Destruction, or Lord Fairspeech. His words were beguiling (Col. 2:4), exploitive (II Pet. 2:3), persuasive (I Cor. 2:4), arrogant and vain (II Pet. 2:18; Jude 16).



Adam the First seizes Faithful

¹⁷ Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9.

(2) His forehead is ominous.

Written on the flesh of Adam the First's forehead is clear identification: "Put off the old man with his deeds" (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). Kelman further adds:

But at last Faithful looks him straight in the face and sees the truth. The flesh ever wins by side glances and suggestions. Looked at directly, with an unclouded eye, it only disgusts; for the spiritual eye is sensitive to broad effects, though it can easily be bewitched by things seen only sidelong.¹⁸

c. The old man is a deceitful tyrant.

CHRISTIAN: How did you respond then?

FAITHFUL: Why it came burning hot into my mind that whatever he said, and however he flattered, yet when he lured me into his house, then he would sell me as a slave. So I insisted that he cease his talk since I had not the slightest intention of even going near the door of his house. Then he reviled me, and told me he would set a certain person onto me who would cause the way ahead to become bitter to my soul. So I turned to depart from him: but just as I was leaving to proceed on my journey, I felt him grasp hold of my flesh with such a deadly seizure that I felt he had torn away part of my body to himself. This made me cry out in pain, "Oh wretched man [*that I am!*]"¹⁹ So I went on my way up the Hill.

Such words of promise and sensual freedom notwithstanding, he offers only slavery (Rom. 6:6) and bondage (Gal. 3:3; 5:1; 6:8). Such is the destiny of disciples of carnality (Rom. 6:16-17; Eph. 2:3). Thus Faithful encounters the temptation and painful consequences of following the leading of his adamic flesh rather than the Spirit of God's indwelling call to righteousness (Rom. 6:12-13, 16; II Tim. 2:22; Tit. 2:12; I Pet. 4:1-2).

(1) He threatens to make the soul bitter.

To oppose or "put to death" the flesh (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5) as represented by Adam the First is to arouse his animosity. Thus he promises an assailing messenger of condemnation, that is Moses, who will yet more excite the sinfulness of the flesh and produce greater anguish in the renewed soul (Rom. 7:8-11).

(2) He painfully aggravates the flesh.

Faithful's resistance to Adam the First leads to this carnal tyrant's "twitching" of his flesh, and his sorry awakening to the sting of sin's power latent in the flesh. Here the animosity between the flesh and the Spirit of God

¹⁸ Kelman, *The Road*, I, p. 170.

¹⁹ Rom. 7:24; Gal. 5:17.

inherent in the believer is vividly portrayed (Gal. 5:17), as well as the price for entertaining the overtures of that flesh. Thus the pinching of the flesh, the smarting of the flesh, the agonizing pain of the flesh (Rom. 7:18-19) cause the pilgrim to cry out in deep distress, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:24).

4. His merciless assault by Moses.

Now when I had proceeded about halfway up, I looked behind me and saw someone coming after me, as swift as the wind; so he overtook me just about where the *Shady Resting-place* is located.²⁰

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it was there that I sat down to rest myself; but being quite overcome with sleep, I lost my *scroll* there because it fell out of my chest pocket.

FAITHFUL: But my good brother, do hear me out. Just as soon as the man overtook me, without a word he struck me down and left me for dead. However, upon reviving a little from unconsciousness, I asked him why he had treated me so brutally. He indicated that is was on account of my secret inclination to heed old *Adam the First*; and with that he struck me another deadly blow on my chest and beat me down to the ground; so once again I lay at his feet as if dead. So when I regained consciousness, I pleaded with him for mercy; but he replied that he did not know how to show mercy, and then he knocked me down once more. Undoubtedly he would have completely finished me off had it not been for another person who came and demanded that he immediately cease with his assault.²¹

CHRISTIAN: Who was it that ordered him to stop?

FAITHFUL: At first I did not recognize him; but then as he passed by I noticed the holes in his hands as well as his side. Then I concluded that he was our *Lord*. So I continued on up the *Hill*.²²

CHRISTIAN: That man who overtook you was *Moses*; he does not spare anyone, nor does he know how to show mercy to those who disobey his law.

FAITHFUL: I well know what you say to be true because this was not the first time that we had met. When securely living in the *City of Destruction*, it was he who came and threatened to burn down my house if I continued to live in that place.

Notice the location of this encounter. Both Christian and Faithful experience contrasting difficulty here, that is half-way up the Hill Difficulty. Both appear to neglect given means of spiritual refreshment.

a. He was feeling weary on the Hill Difficulty.

Faithful, as well as Christian, was tested at a point of growing weariness. His looking backward rather than ahead suggests fear on account of Adam the First's warning of imminent assault.

²⁰ *Rom. 7:7-12.*

²¹ *II Cor. 3:1-18.*

²² *John 20:24-29.*

b. He was attacked and left for dead.

Bunyan portrays Moses here as a minister of death and condemnation who offers no mercy and has temporal glory (II Cor. 3: 7, 9, 11).

The law [of Moses] is so far from giving life or strength to do it, that it doth quite the contrary. (1) It weakeneth, it discourageth, and dishearteneth the sinner, especially when it shows itself in its glory; for then it is the ministration of death, and killeth all the world. . . . (2) It doth not only thus discourage, but abundantly increaseth every sin. . . . (4) The law stays no man from the due reward of his deeds; it hath no ears to hear nor heart to pity its penitent ones. . . . (5) By the law, God will show no mercy.²³

(1) Because Moses opposes old Adam the First.

The law fiercely opposes and continues to assail any inclination to serve the flesh or carnal dictates (I Tim. 1:9), just as Faithful is beaten down three times.

(2) Because Moses knows no mercy.

Mt. Sinai thunders and demands and accuses (Rom. 7:7), but there is no mercy from that mountain (Heb. 12:18-21). “So that I say, if thou break the law, the first covenant, and thou being found there, God looking on thee through that, he hath no regard on thee, no pity for thee, no delight in thee.”²⁴

(3) Because Moses can only assail and condemn.

Thus, on its own, the ministry of Moses ultimately leads to death. It is the

letter of the law. . . . the ten commandments, whose proper work is only by showing the soul its sin against this law, to kill, and there leaves him stark dead, not giving him the least life, or support, or comfort, but leaves the soul in a helpless and hopeless condition, as from itself, or any other creature.²⁵

As the hound and ferret of unrighteousness, he had formerly, at the City of Destruction, threatened to burn down Faithful's house unless he fled away.

c. He was rescued by his wounded Lord.

Jesus Christ has dominion over and greater glory in comparison with Moses (II Cor. 3:1-18; Heb. 3:1-6). But it is his wounded hands, having originated from a different mountain (Heb. 12:22-24), that satisfy the demands of Moses (John 1:17; Acts 13:38-39) and cause his condemnation to depart (Rom. 7:4; 8:1-4). Here is demonstrated the power of the righteousness of the gospel over the impotence of the righteousness of the law (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26).

²³ Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. 317.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 503.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, III, p. 719.

5. His bypassing of the Palace Beautiful.

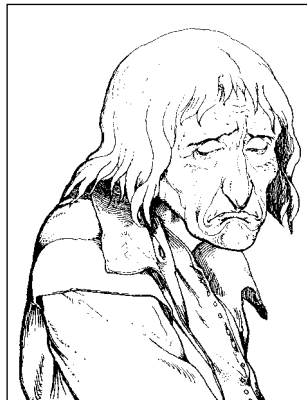
CHRISTIAN: But did you not see the *House* that stood on the top of that *Hill*? It lay on the same side of the way where *Moses* met you.

FAITHFUL: Yes, and I saw the lions as well before I came to it, though it being noon, these beasts seemed asleep. So because I had so much of the day ahead of me, I passed by the *Porter* of that *House* and came down the other side of the *Hill*.

CHRISTIAN: When I spoke to him he told me that he had seen you pass by, though I wished that you had stayed awhile. Those at the *House* would have showed you so many uncommon treasures that you would have hardly forgotten them in a lifetime. But do tell me, did you not meet with anyone in the *Valley of Humiliation*?

Here is the explanation as to how Faithful could leave the City of Destruction following Christian, and yet have moved ahead of his pilgrim friend until they were recently joined together in fellowship.

- a. Faithful, untroubled by the lions and with many hours of daylight at his disposal, opted to pass by the Palace Beautiful. Thus he declined the invitation of the Porter, and as a consequence, was deprived of enjoying the benefits of fellowship at a biblical local church.
- b. What meaning does Bunyan intend here? Since it was earlier suggested that the lions represented civil and ecclesiastical tyranny in England, their passivity and lack of aggression in this instance would suggest that Faithful is representative of non-separatist Puritanism. That is, rather than identify with a separatist church such as that which Bunyan was associated with in Bedford, Faithful remains in the Church of England with the hope that it be purified from within. However, note that Bunyan portrays the separatist Christian as having intimate and profitable fellowship with the nonseparatist Faithful. In Bunyan's own pastoral ministry, though a separatist himself, yet he maintained close fellowship with nonseparatists such as William Dell, Cambridge Master, the influential Anglican rector of Yelden, about 10 miles north of Bedford.



Discontent

6. His temptation to defect by Discontent.

FAITHFUL: Yes, I met with a certain *Discontent*, who was so intent on persuading me to go back with him. He reasoned that the *Valley* ahead was dishonorable; further, to go ahead would be to displease all my friends such as *Pride*, *Arrogancy*, *Self-conceit*, *Worldly-glory*, and many others. These, he said, would be very much offended if I made such a fool of myself as to wade through this *Valley*.

CHRISTIAN: Well then; how did you answer him?

FAITHFUL: I told him that though all of these that he had named might claim to be my friends, and rightly so in terms of they're being relatives in the flesh, yet since becoming a pilgrim they had in fact disowned me; I also had rejected them, and therefore they were now no more to me than if they had never been family members.²⁶ Furthermore I told him that concerning this *Valley*, he had quite misrepresented it, "For before honor is humility, and a haughty spirit before a fall."²⁷ Therefore I explained that I would rather go through this *Valley* to obtain the honor which the wise so highly value than choose that which he esteemed to be worthy of our affections.

Christian's question, "But pray tell me, did you meet no body in the Valley of Humility?" betrays his curiosity as to how Faithful might have fared with Apollyon. In fact Apollyon is not mentioned by Faithful since pride and its necessary deflation was more of a problem with Christian. Here we see how Faithful spurned honor and expressed his preference for humility.

a. Discontent claims the Valley of Humiliation is dishonorable.

Bunyan seems to portray more regressive than progressive pilgrims. Discontent is yet another apostate, who appears to have known former acquaintances of Faithful in the City of Destruction. He desires honor and esteem without any preceding humiliation, as is the pattern of Christ and his disciples (Prov. 15:33; Phil. 2:5-11; II Tim. 2:2; Heb. 12:1-2).

(1) It detracts from worldly glory.

The accolade of the world, the treasures of Egypt, the allurements of Sodom, the life of Babylon, the greetings of men on street corners (Luke 11:43; 20:46) are too highly valued to be discarded for humiliation that leads to heavenly approbation.

(2) It annuls worldly friendships.

The camaraderie of Pride, Arrogancy, Self-conceit, and worldly Glory, is too desirable even though it means being an enemy of God (Jas. 4:4). Of course this attitude is blind to the prospect of having far superior pilgrim friends.

²⁶ Gal. 6:14.

²⁷ Prov. 15:33; 16:18; 18:12.

b. Faithful claims honor by way of humiliation.

He would gladly be regarded as a fool by his former friends, in his transit through a place of such self-abasement, so that he might be counted as wise and honorable before God (Prov. 18:12; I Cor. 3:18-23). After all, he has been disavowed by these former friends and has likewise disavowed them (Gal. 6:14), since they were only related through flesh and not the Spirit of God.

7. His dismay at the brazen character of Shame.

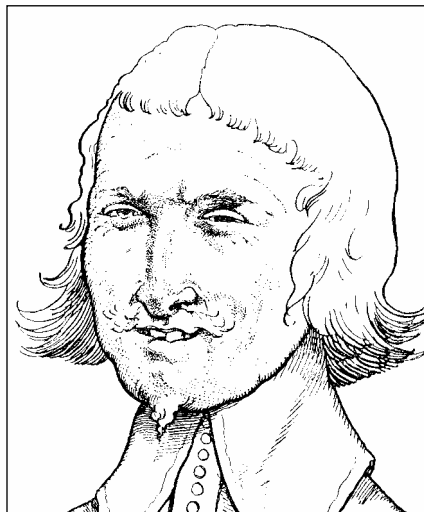
When Faithful briefly met Discontent, he readily accepted humility before honor and confessed to his spurning of former carnal friends. But now the ramifications of this commitment are severely put to the test by means of Shame's relentless denunciation, according to popular opinion, of the distinctiveness of true Christianity.

a. Shame is misnamed in relation to his profession.

CHRISTIAN: Did you meet with anyone else in that *Valley*?

FAITHFUL: Yes, I met with *Shame*. But of all the men that I met with in my pilgrimage, I believe he bears the most inappropriate name. Although he would not accept it, a variety of evidence would more correctly suggest that he be called *Shameless*.

He obtained his name from his own arrogant opinion of biblical Christianity, namely that it was disreputable, demeaning, and discredited according to the great of this world. Thus, his crusading role involved confronting pilgrims with the "shame" of Christianity so that they might become ashamed and shipwrecks of the faith (I Tim. 1:19). Hence, it would have been better for this haughty character to have been named "Shameless."



Shame

b. Shame militantly objects to biblical Christianity.

CHRISTIAN: Why do you say this? What did he say to you?

FAITHFUL: “What?” you ask. Why he objected against religion itself; he said that it was a pitiful, low, sneaking business for a man to esteem religion; he said that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing, and that for a man to watch over his words and ways so as to curtail that swaggering spirit which the heroes of this modern age freely parade, would be to make him the most popular object of scorn. He also objected that very few of the mighty [*and influential*], the rich [*and famous*], and the [*intellectually*] wise were ever of my persuasion.²⁸ Further, on being invited to become fools, very few would freely venture the loss of all for the sake of a nebulous dividend.²⁹ Moreover, he objected to the base and low standard of living to which most pilgrims submitted themselves;³⁰ he sneered at their ignorance of the times in which they lived, and thus their lack of under-standing of the physical sciences.

Yes, and he pressed me with a great deal more besides that which I have told you. He said that it was a shame to sit grieving and mourning under a sermon, and it was a shame to return home sighing and groaning. Further, he said that it was a shame to ask my neighbor for forgiveness on account of my petty faults, or to make restitution when I had stolen from somebody. He also said that religion caused a man to appear strange before the great of this world, for he became so concerned about a few petty vices spoken of in ever so serious terms, and this perception caused him to fraternize with the basest of society, solely on the ground of religious convictions. So he concluded, “And is not this a shame?”

George B. Cheever comments:

The delineation of this character by Bunyan is a masterly grouping together of the arguments used by men of this world against religion, in ridicule and contempt of it, and of their feelings and habits of opinion in regard to it.³¹

As a nonconformist and separatist, undoubtedly Bunyan personally experienced these jibes from the ecclesiastical and monarchical establishment. The definition of “religion” here must be understood as that conservative evangelical kind so scrupulously upheld by the Puritans of the seventeenth century.

(1) It is weak, unmanly, not self-assertive.

Meekness, gentleness, and modesty are not admirable virtues (John 3:30; Phil. 2:3). A tender conscience is a psychological aberration that should be supplanted by a congratulatory selfimage and vocal forwardness.

(2) It is restrictive to the modern spirit of freedom.

²⁸ I Cor. 1:26; 3:18.

²⁹ Phil. 3:7-8.

³⁰ John 7:48.

³¹ George B. Cheever, *Lectures on Bunyan*, p. 231.

Better are the “brave spirits of the times” who, with their “hectoring [blustering, bullying] liberty,” shoot off with their mouths in such a braggedly manner, as do modern humanists.

- (3) It is disowned by the mighty, rich, and learned.

Most of them were never so silly as to venture the loss of their titles, possessions, and knowledge to gain nebulous “pie in the sky when you die by and by!” (John 7:48; I Cor. 1: 26-29; 3:18; Phil. 3:7-8).

- (4) It involves unnecessary poverty and ignorance.

There is no virtue in poverty, no merit in suffering, no advantage in bare subsistence. The enlightenment of this modern, scientific, and intelligent age has rendered the Bible and Christianity to be merely sentimental crutches for old women and little children.

- (5) It requires preaching that wounds the conscience.

Christians are a shame for suffering preaching that causes them to groan and sigh, that leads them to confess petty sins, that results in desire for reconciliation with a neighbor even to the point of making restitution.



Faithful resists Shame

- (6) It shuns petty vices of the great and befriends sinners.

How contradictory it was to severely condemn the great on account of their few weaknesses, indiscretions, and concessions to the flesh, while, on religious grounds, respecting the uncultured, base, and depraved masses of society. Surely this was disgraceful and shameful.

- c. Faithful revives to rebuke his arrogant challenger.

CHRISTIAN: Then what did you say to him?

FAITHFUL: Say? Why at first I did not know what to say. Yes, he pressed me so hard that my face became red with embarrassment, as if I had myself become ashamed and nearly beaten down in defeat. But at last I began to consider that, “that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of *God*.”³² And I realized that this *Shame* was describing what men are about, but nothing concerning what *God* or the *Word of God* reveals. I thought as well that at the final day of judgment, we shall not be awarded death or life by the swaggering spirits of this modern world, but rather according to the wisdom and law of the *Highest*.

Therefore I thought, what *God* says is best, even though all the men in the world are against it.

Seeing then that *God* prefers his religion, seeing that *God* prefers a tender conscience, seeing that those who yield themselves as fools for the kingdom of *Heaven* are wisest,³³ and that the poor man who loves *Christ* is richer than the greatest man in the world who hates him; then I said, “*Shame*, depart from me because you are an enemy of my salvation. Shall I listen to you contrary to my sovereign *Lord*? Otherwise, how shall I look him in the face at his coming? If I should now be ashamed of his ways and servants, how then can I expect the future blessing?”³⁴

At first Faithful is speechless due to the boldness of Shame’s arguments, and for a fleeting moment he toys with the barrage of devilish reasonings. Then he blushes in realizing that Shame had conquered, even if but for an instant. But as grace would have it, the antidote of the Word of God begins to arise and extinguish the threatening infection.

- (1) What man highly values, God abominates.

Shame has exclusively upheld man and ignored the Word of God. Whereas the Word of God declares that He loathes human estimation (Luke 16:15).

- (2) God’s Word and judgment matter more than humanism.

³² Luke 16:15.

³³ *I Cor. 1:18-25; 4:10.*

³⁴ Mark 8:38.

Of what worth will be “the hectoring spirits of the world,” that brave and fiercely autonomous attitude, at the Day of Judgment (Luke 12:20-21; Heb. 9:27)? What God says, both now and then, is of supreme importance.

(3) God’s will is best though all oppose it.

The wisdom of this world, all of “the natural sciences” will pass away, “but the Word of the Lord abides forever” (I Pet. 1:23; I John 2:17). Therefore His revelation must have the pre-eminence, not rationalism, skepticism, evolutionary materialism, naturalism, mysticism, pantheism, humanism, etc.

(a) His specific revelation.

After all, if God be alone God, then his religion is the only religion, and His Word the only Word to be heeded.

(b) His delight in a tender conscience.

Since God prefers a tender conscience to one that is suppressed and hardened (Ps. 51:17; Rom. 1:18, 25; Eph. 4:32), those who spurn His preference will eventually despair and be beyond hope (Prov. 29:1).

(c) His kingdom of fools.

They are the wisest, since it is better to be a fool for Christ’s kingdom in this life (I Cor. 3:18; 4:10) than be a fool at his return in glory (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26).

(d) His superior riches in Christ.

God’s desire is for poor Christians in this world to be presently lavished from His abundance with spiritual riches that are of greater worth than the material splendor of the most godless earthly tyrant (Matt. 5:3; Rom. 11:33; II Cor. 4:6-7; Eph. 1:7; 3:8; Phil. 4:19; Col. 2:1-2). Further, these sojourners are heirs of even greater wealth yet to come (I Pet. 1:3-4).

(4) No blessing awaits those ashamed of Christ.

Thus Shame is exhorted to depart as an enemy of salvation and an intolerable rival of Christ. To be ashamed of Christ is to forfeit the blessing of Christ (Matt. 10:33; Heb. 11:16).

d. Shame persists like a leech with his slander.

Nevertheless, this *Shame* was a bold villain indeed. I could hardly get rid of his clinging company; yes, he would even shadow me and continually whisper in my ear countless other weaknesses that he associated with religion. Eventually I told him that it would be in vain for him to continue in this manner, for those things which he derided were in fact those in which I boasted most of all. And so at last I was able to leave behind this persistent one.

Then when I had finally shaken him off, I began to sing:
 The trials that those men do meet withal
 That are obedient to the heavenly call,
 Are manifold and suited to the flesh,
 And come, and come, and come again afresh;
 That now, or sometime else, we by them may
 Be taken, overcome, and cast away.
 Oh let the pilgrims, let the pilgrims then,
 Be vigilant, and quit [*behave*] themselves like men.³⁵

This world has its own evangelists, and Shame is an excellent representative of this class. He is not easily cast aside, while his humanistic gospel is pressed home with unflinching persistence. For this reason he is Faithful's most troublesome opponent at the Hill Difficulty.

- (1) He offers countless criticisms.

just as Apollyon reminded Christian of his past sins, so Shame dredges up the "infirmities" or misdemeanors of historic Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic.

- (2) He receives a firm rebuke for his vanity.

Faithful finally shakes him loose by means of his persistent glorying and boasting in those things which Shame reviled (I Cor. 1:30-3)

- (a) The insistent Shame withdraws in defeat.
 (b) The victorious Faithful advances in song.

- e. Christian commends Faithful for his steadfastness.

Not having encountered Shame and his audacious bravado, yet Christian offers appropriate encouragement (Col. 2:5).

- (1) The bold, such as Shame, will receive the promotion of fools (Prov. 3:35b).
 (2) The brave, such as Christian, will inherit glory (Prov. 3:35a).

³⁵ I Cor. 16:13.

- (3) Faithful calls for fellowship in prayer so that they might be “valiant for Truth upon the Earth.”

8. His smooth passage beyond.

CHRISTIAN: My brother, I am glad that you did so bravely withstand this villain; for I think as you do, that of all the people you met, he undoubtedly has the wrong name. How bold he is to follow us in the streets and attempt to put us to shame before a watching world, that is to embarrass us concerning that which is good. For if he was not so audacious, he would never attempt to be so bold. But let us resist him, for notwithstanding all of his bravado, he exclusively promotes himself as a fool. Remember that *Solomon* said, “the wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools.”³⁶

FAITHFUL: I think we ought to cry out to him for help against *Shame* so that we might be valiant for truth upon the *Earth*.³⁷

Christian is surprised to learn that Faithful traversed the Valley of the Shadow of Death in sunshine, without being distracted by dark spiritual turbulence, hellish fiends, and Pope and Pagan. But then, Faithful has that specific strength of faith whereby such assaults are more readily cast aside.

C. Christian Recollects his own Distinctive Experiences.

CHRISTIAN: Then it was far better for you since I fared much worse. Almost as soon as I entered the *Valley of Humiliation* I endured a prolonged and dreadful battle with that foul fiend *Apollyon*. Yes, I thought that he would surely kill me, and especially when he struck me to the ground and attempted to crush me; he seemed intent on breaking me in pieces. For as he threw me down, my sword flew out of my hand; then he exclaimed that he would now certainly destroy me. Yet I cried out to *God* and he heard me and delivered me from all of my troubles.³⁸

Then I entered into the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and from then on had no light until almost halfway through that terrible place. Over and over again I felt sure that I would be killed there; but at last the morning broke, and with the rising of the sun I continued through that wilderness with far more ease and quiet.

He gives a minimum of detail, probably out of a sense of regret that he did not avoid the darkness as so happily did Faithful.

1. His surprise at Faithful’s lack of experience.

³⁶ Prov. 3:35.

³⁷ Jer 9:3. Refer to *Valiant-for-Truth in Part Two of The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

³⁸ Ps. 34:6.

But the comparison of experiences amongst pilgrims can be not only beneficial, but also detrimental if jealousy sets in.

2. His fierce bout with Apollyon.

We learn far more here of Christian's feelings in this encounter than formerly.

a. He feared to death.

He himself understood that the loss of his sword, due to crushing pressure, was a critical moment that virtually ensured defeat.

b. He cried to God.

This added fact indicates that Christian did not completely despair. Hence, we learn that God's enabling of Christian to regather his sword was a result of desperate prayer (Ps. 34:6).

3. His darkness in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

What was this bleak period which differs from the sunshine which Faithful experienced? Most likely it is a contrast between the previously mentioned non-separatist, less troublesome stance of Faithful, who did not visit the Palace Beautiful, and the separatist Christian (Bunyan) who suffered much more from State Church persecution. When Bunyan was on trial at the commencement of his twelve year imprisonment, a Justice Keelin passed the following sentence:

You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following; and at three months' end, if you do not submit to go to church to hear Divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm: and if, after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, &c., or be found to come over again without special license from the king, &c., you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly.³⁹

³⁹ Bunyan, *Works*, I, pp. 56-57.