

## Chapter Nineteen

### Christian and Faithful converse with Talkative

#### A. Talkative's Enthusiasm for Verbose Dialogue.

MOREOVER, I saw in my dream that as they went on, *Faithful* happened to look to one side of the way and saw a man whose name is *Talkative*;<sup>1</sup> he was beside them though at a distance, for at this place it was wide enough for all of them to walk. He was a tall man and somewhat handsome if viewed from a distance. So *Faithful* introduced himself to this man in the following manner.

FAITHFUL: Why friend, which way are you going? Is it toward the heavenly country?

TALKATIVE: Yes, I am headed toward that very same place.

FAITHFUL: Then that is good. I do hope that we may have your fine company.

TALKATIVE: Do be assured that I have every intention of being your companion.

FAITHFUL: Then join us right now and let us proceed together, and let us spend our time discussing some profitable things as we travel.

TALKATIVE: Certainly, for it is most enjoyable to talk with you, or others, of things that are good. I am so glad that I have met with those who are inclined toward such a good activity. For to tell you the truth, there are few to be found who care to spend their traveling time in this way; rather they eagerly choose to discuss things that are quite unprofitable, and this matter has often troubled me.<sup>2</sup>

FAITHFUL: Indeed that is a thing to be disturbed about; for what things are more worthy of the use of the tongue and mouth of men on *Earth* than those which concern the *God of Heaven*?

TALKATIVE: I do admire you for your attitude here, and especially your strong sense of conviction. Only let me add to what you say; for what thing is so pleasant and so profitable in discussion as that which concerns the things of *God*. For instance, if a man really delights in such wonderful things, then what could be more pleasurable than talking about the history or mystery of certain matters? More specifically, if a man enjoys talking about miracles, wonders, or signs, then where shall he find such things so delightfully and sweetly recorded as in Holy Scripture?

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<sup>1</sup> *Job 11:2; Prov. 10:19; Tit. 1:10, 16.*

<sup>2</sup> *II Tim. 2:14.*

Alexander Whyte makes a discerning comment:

Nobody could call him [Talkative] a detractor or a backbiter or a talebearer or a liar. . . . Had he been guilty of any of these things, Faithful would soon have found him out, and would have left him to go to the Celestial City by himself.<sup>3</sup>

Talkative's principal problem was not that he was talkative, but that he talked about that which found no parallel in the experience of his heart and life. Hence consider the essence of this disorder in more detail.

1. Introduction.

When opposition is faced for any worthwhile cause, it is common for the enemy to attack on two contrasting fronts, even as was the style of Apollyon. So here, we have witnessed that open, aggressive, categorical denial of the truth by means of the persistent onslaught of Shame. Now follows an entirely opposite approach whereby an agent of Satan uses that hidden, underhand, deceptive ruse of the apostate. His name is Talkative, and Bunyan casts him with a major role. And while we can easily anticipate the distinctive characteristic of this “noisy gong and clanging cymbal” (I Cor. 13:1), yet the warning of George Offor ought also to be kept in mind: “Reader, be careful not to judge harshly, or despise a real believer, who is blessed with fluency of utterance on Divine subjects.”<sup>4</sup>

2. His appearance from one perspective.

Even the populace of the City of Destruction would describe this man, notwithstanding his religious knowledge, as a fine, upstanding sort of fellow. He was never bent over as if heavily burdened. From a distance he appears to be positively handsome, but inside he is full of dead men's bones (Matt. 23:25-28). The world listens to him and applauds him and esteems him, but his wife could tell a different story!

3. His profession of seeking heaven.

This man speaks of his heavenly destination with a noticeable degree of passion. He represents a great number in this world who would profess to be like pilgrims. After all, such “heavenly-mindedness” does seem to imply a praiseworthy degree of moral fitness and good citizenship. Certainly it sounds better than being of a “hellish mind.”

4. His interest in essential doctrine.

This seems to be man of discrimination since he has had trouble finding agreeable company. After all, when he speaks of enjoying discourse concerning “things that are good,” we assume that he has the same personal commitment to the pursuit of righteousness.

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander Whyte, *Bunyan Characters*, I, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 120.

- a. He loves to discuss good things.

But what does he really mean by “good things”? And even if he responds that “good things” refer to “good doctrine,” still to what purpose is this doctrine intended? For fascination with doctrine is one thing, but transformation by doctrine quite another.

- b. He delights to consider biblical history.

While we will learn that Talkative has indeed traveled forward from the City of Destruction, yet it would seem that he did not lodge at the Palace Beautiful. Hence, his knowledge of the Bible, which is considerable, has not been mingled with searching personal enquiry as was the experience of Christian. Thus Talkative’s love of Bible truth and data is wrongly motivated (II Tim. 3:2-5).

- c. He enjoys talking about biblical mysteries.

How fascinated he is with the mysteries of supernatural phenomena such as miracles, signs and wonders. He firmly believes in being knowledgeable about the “charismata” of I Corinthians 12. He revels in sensual religion and encourages emotional abandon.

## B. Faithful’s too Eager Encouragement of Talkative.

It is significant that Faithful also did not enjoy soul-searching fellowship at the Palace Beautiful. Otherwise, he might have learned the art of careful investigation with regard to early acquaintance being made with pilgrims. His naive recognition of this charlatan contrasts with Christian’s caution.

1. Talkative is commended for his correctness.

FAITHFUL: That is very true, though to profit from the discussion of such things should be our real purpose.



Talkative

Faithful delights to hear another pilgrim speak, in contrast with Shame, with such glowing terms of gospel truth. Hence, he is quick to praise his new-found companion. However, note the subtle yet critical distinction that Bunyan makes here when Faithful enthusiastically speaks about “being profited by such good things in our talk.” This is twisted by Talkative who declares that “to talk of such good things is profitable.” These two statements are not identical in meaning!

2. Talkative expounds on God's Gospel of sovereign grace.

Most likely Bunyan has a specific individual in mind at this point, namely a pastoral acquaintance with similar Calvinistic convictions. Talkative is a man with excellent communicative and mental gifts, yet he wholly lacks saving grace and its fruit. Bunyan makes a similar important distinction here:

Just thus I saw it was and will be with them who have gifts, but want [lack] saving grace, they are in the hand of Christ, as the cymbal in the hand of David; and as David could, with the cymbal, make that mirth in the service of God, as to elevate the hearts of the worshippers, so Christ can use these gifted men, as with them to affect the souls of his people in his church; yet when he hath done all, hang them by as lifeless, though sounding cymbals. . . . Thus, therefore, I came to perceive, that though gifts in themselves were good to the thing for which they are designed, to wit, the edification of others; yet empty and without power to save the soul of him that hath them, if they be alone; neither are they, as so, any sign of a man's state to be happy, being only a dispensation of God to some.<sup>5</sup>

a. This gospel truth includes many wonderful doctrines.

TALKATIVE: That is exactly what I was getting at; for to talk of such things is most profitable since by so doing a man may get the knowledge of a variety of topics. For example, to speak generally, he may gain knowledge of the vanity of earthly things and the benefit of things above. But more particularly, he may learn of the necessity of the new birth, the insufficiency of our works, the need of *Christ's* righteousness, and so forth.

Besides, by this talk about religion, a man may learn what it is to repent, to believe, to pray, to suffer, or the like; further, by this type of conversation a man may learn what are the great promises and consolations of the gospel, and consequently gain much personal comfort. Moreover, by such discussion a man may learn how to refute false opinions, to vindicate the truth, and also to instruct the ignorant.

- (1) The priority of heaven over earth (John 3:31; 8:23).
- (2) The necessity of the new birth (John 3:3-8).
- (3) The necessity of Christ's imputed righteousness in contrast with the worthlessness of human righteousness (Phil. 3:7-9).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., I, §§ 299, 301, pp. 44-45.

(4) The necessity of repentance, faith, prayer, suffering (Acts 20:20-24, 36).

b. This gospel truth includes many comforting promises.

Let it be granted that Talkative does earnestly believe that these Scripture promises do apply to himself. Yet, the sobering truth is that he is totally deceived concerning his professed saving relationship with God through faith in Christ (John 8:30-32).

c. This gospel truth refutes error and vindicates truth.

Talkative has often demonstrated his rhetorical skill and understanding of apologetics in vigorous debate. Indeed, he may well have helped some ignorant seeker concerning his grasp of a point of truth, notwithstanding the fact that he traffics in un-lived in truth.

d. This gospel truth magnifies the sovereignty of grace.

FAITHFUL: All of this is very true, and how glad I am to hear you say these things.

TALKATIVE: Alas, the lack of this perspective is the reason why so few understand the need of faith and the necessity of a work of grace in their soul so that they might obtain eternal life. So they ignorantly live according to the works of the law, by which means no man can enter the kingdom of *Heaven*.<sup>6</sup>

FAITHFUL: But do allow me to say that heavenly knowledge of these truths is the gift of *God*; no man can attain these things by means of human effort, let alone mere talk about them.

TALKATIVE: All of this I know very well. For a man can receive nothing except it has been given to him from *Heaven*; all is of grace, not of works. I could quote to you a hundred Scripture passages that confirm this.<sup>7</sup>

(1) Talkative speaks of doctrine without experience.

Talkative speaks in detail of the doctrines of sovereign grace even though he is not the object of this saving work. His doctrine is correct, his knowledge of Scripture is comprehensive, yet he remains unconverted and graceless.

(2) Faithful speaks of doctrine and experience.

Faithful speaks in jubilant agreement with the doctrine of Talkative, and though naive at this point, yet he fires a first shot across the bow of this expert in religious chatter. He affirms that talk only is not sufficient; there must also be the evidence of heaven's benediction upon such speech.

<sup>6</sup> *II Tim. 3:5, 7.*

<sup>7</sup> Oh brave Talkative! *John 3:27; Eph. 2:8-9.*

## 3. Talkative is encouraged to lead in this discussion.

FAITHFUL: Well then, what is one good topic that we ought to talk about at this time?

TALKATIVE: Whatever you would like? I will talk of heavenly things or earthly things, of moral things or evangelical things, of sacred things or secular things, of past things or future things, of foreign things or domestic things, of essential things or incidental things, provided that any such discussion is profitable.<sup>8</sup>

FAITHFUL: (Now having become impressed with his newfound conversationalist, he stepped aside to *Christian*, who was walking by himself, and softly spoke to him) What a brave companion we have here! Surely this man will make a very excellent pilgrim.<sup>9</sup>

This caricature of some prolix Puritans which follows is described by Kelman as, “this drench of talk. . . . [which] gives characteristic promise of the surfeit which we are to have.”<sup>10</sup>

## a. He offers a breadth of topics.

- (1) This religious chameleon can equally enjoy conversation in the realm of the sacred and the secular, the church and the bar of a night club. He can discuss virtue and in the next breath tell a dirty joke!
- (2) This religious cousin of Pliable can talk out of both sides of his mouth to suit his audience. He can sound liberal to a liberal and conservative to a conservative.

## b. He amazes Faithful with his knowledge.

Faithful is astonished at the biblical erudition of his new friend, so much so that he shares his esteem with Christian who has kept a cautious distance from this animated discussion.

## c. He is accepted for his impressiveness.

Faithful is overawed by the “great swelling words” (11 Pet. 2:18; Jude 16; KJV) that have gushed forth from this polished communicator with such persuasion.

<sup>8</sup> Oh brave Talkative! *Matt. 7:21; II Pet. 2:18*.

<sup>9</sup> Faithful is beguiled by Talkative.

<sup>10</sup> John Kelman, *The Road*, I, p. 183.

### C. Christian's Unmasking of Talkative's Life.

Here, and in other future instances, we see the benefit of a pilgrim keeping company with another bona fide traveler. Without Christian's wisdom born of experience, Faithful would have been thoroughly seduced.

1. Talkative is a master at deceiving new acquaintances.

CHRISTIAN: (With a restrained smile) This man who you admire so much is able to beguile a multitude with his tongue, provided they are unfamiliar with him.

FAITHFUL: Then do you know him very well?

CHRISTIAN: Do I know him? Why yes, and even better than he knows himself.

He can charm and beguile the unwary, no doubt as was the manner of Judas. He even hoodwinked King David who wrote of him: "[He was] my equal, my companion and my familiar friend. We who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God. . . . His speech was smoother than butter, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords" (Ps. 55:13-14, 21).

2. Talkative comes from the City of Destruction.

FAITHFUL: Then seriously, do tell me who he is.

CHRISTIAN: His name is *Talkative* and he dwells in our former home *Town*; I am surprised that you do not know him, except for the reason that the *City of Destruction* is so large.

His unsavory pedigree is well known, though it is the largeness of this worldly metropolis that accounts for Faithful's ignorance of it. As there are distinctive cultures in Vanity Fair,<sup>11</sup> so here there are families who specialize in spheres of worldliness, especially developed skills in "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life" (I John 2:16).

3. Talkative is born of Say-well.

FAITHFUL: Who is his father? And exactly where does he live?

CHRISTIAN: He is the son of *Say-well* and he lives in *Prating [Foolish Chatter] -row*. All who really know him call him *Talkative of Prating-row*, and in spite of his eloquent manner of speaking, yet he remains a wretched fellow.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "There is the *Britain Row*, the *French Row*, the *Italian Row*, the *Spanish Row*, the *German Row*, where a variety of vanities is sold." Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 127.

<sup>12</sup> *Ps. 55:21*.

Talkative resides in Prating-row, a very noisy street, with his eloquent father Saywell. However, the whole household has a reputation of being impoverished since although there is much discussion about the prospect of fruitful employment, there is never any actual productive exertion (Prov. 14:23). Thus “they say things and do not do them” (Matt. 23:3).

4. Talkative is two-faced in his pilgrimage.

In *The Law And Grace Unfolded*, Bunyan comments:

Some professors of the gospel . . . [shall be] able to hold you in a very large discourse in several points of the same glorious gospel; but if you come to the same people and ask them concerning heart-work. . . . it may be they will give you such an answer as this - I do find by the preaching thereof that I am changed, and turned from my sins in a good measure, and also have learned (but only in tongue), to distinguish between the law and the gospel. . . . And thus far, it is like they may go, which is not far enough to prove them under the covenant of grace.<sup>13</sup>



Prating Row

<sup>13</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. 515.

- a. He is pretty as a picture, at a distance.

FAITHFUL: Well he seems to me to be a rather attractive sort of person.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, he does appear that way to those who are not well acquainted with him; for he looks at his best from a distance, but close up he is quite ugly. Your description of him as a handsome man brings to mind what I have noticed with regard to the painter; his pictures look best from a distance; but up close they are noticeably unpleasant.<sup>14</sup>

Many a painting is unattractive and rough close up, though far more appealing at a distance. So Talkative may seem attractive at a glance, but upon close scrutiny his real ugliness is clearly evident.

- b. He can talk as religious or irreligious.



Talkative at the ale-house

<sup>14</sup> *Matt. 23:25-28.*

FAITHFUL: But since you smile, can I conclude that you are offering merely an amusing comment?

CHRISTIAN: Even though I did smile, *God* forbid that I should make this a laughing matter, or that I should bring a false accusation against this man. I will simply reveal to you more about him. This man will accept any company, that is provided he is allowed to talk. Though this man will now talk with you, yet he will just as freely talk on the ale-bench [*enjoying tavern conversation*]. And the more drink he consumes, the more appropriate tavern talk he brings forth. Religion has no place in his heart, or home, or manner of living. All that he stands for is based upon his tongue; to make a noise with it is of the very essence of his religion.

His company sets the tone of his conversation. He can mesmerize holy saints with his devout talk, yet equally well entertain, with a bawdy note, his regular drinking friends at a bar. Either situation suits him, though he especially enjoys the loosing of his tongue with drink. His heart has no thirst for personal righteousness.

- c. He can discuss religion while lacking personal experience.

FAITHFUL: What you say amazes me! Then I have been greatly deceived by this man.

CHRISTIAN: Deceived? Why you may be certain of it. Remember the proverb, “They say and do not: but the kingdom of *God* is not in word, but in power.”<sup>15</sup> He talks of prayer, of repentance, of faith, and of the new birth; but he only knows how to talk about them.

His knowledge of systematic theology, of evangelical doctrines, of Calvinistic distinctives, is weighty. But while he can intelligently discuss prayer, repentance, faith, and regeneration, yet he is void of authentic experience in these matters. He is more of a spectator in these concerns than a participant (Matt. 23:1-3; I Cor. 4:20).

<sup>15</sup> Matt. 23:3; I Cor. 4:20; *I Thess. 1:5*.

## d. He is a saint abroad and a devil at home.

I have visited with his family and observed him both at home and far away, so I know what I say about him is the truth. His home is as empty of true religion as is the white of an egg void of flavor.<sup>16</sup> At his residence there is neither prayer nor any sign of repentance for sin. Yes, even an animal species serves *God* better than he. To all who know him, he is the very stain, reproach, and shame of true religion;<sup>17</sup> because of his reputation, the neighborhood in the *City of Destruction* where he lives hardly has a good word to say about him. The common people there know him as, "A saint abroad and a devil at home."

His real character, though disguised in public with a facade of appropriate religious clichés, is unsavory, that is without any savor of graciousness. At home he is a heavy-handed brute; his children cower at his meanness; his wife suffers constant abuse; he provides no spiritual leadership. He is a disgrace to even pagan worshippers.



Talkative abuses his wife and household

<sup>16</sup> *Job 6:6.*

<sup>17</sup> *Rom. 2:24-25.*

- (1) Consider his family.
  - (2) Consider his servants.
- e. He is a sham and a shame in his dealings.

His poor family can certainly agree with this because of their suffering of his extreme meanness and abusive language; even his servants are at a loss, in view of his unreasonableness, as to how they can satisfactorily fulfill their duties and address him. Men that do business with him say that, where a fair contract is sought, it is better to deal with a *Turk* [*barbarian trader*] than he. This *Talkative*, if it be possible, will defraud, beguile, and outsmart the most notorious of such foreign merchants.

His business life is rough and tough, and he teaches his sons to be as ruthless as he. He is a Shylock in financial matters; his trading associates would rather deal with a “Turk” (Muslim, Arab) than he. But on a Sunday he puts on his best religious dress and speaks with acceptance at the First Church of Bogus Piety.

- (1) His trading reputation.
  - (2) His son's humiliation.
- f. He is the cause of many stumbling at the truth.

In addition to this he brings up his sons to follow in his steps; and if he notices in any of them “a foolish timidness,” as he caricatures the first appearance of a tender conscience, then he bawls them out as being stupid and blockheads; for this cause he will rarely employ them or recommend them to others. It is my opinion that he has, by his wicked lifestyle, caused many to stumble and fall; except that *God* should intervene, he will undoubtedly lead many more to ruin.<sup>18</sup>

No doubt many who catch a glimpse of both sides of Talkative are perplexed. In challenging him concerning his duplicity, they are confounded with his barrage of justifying eloquence. As a result, many weak pilgrims are caused to stumble as they endeavor to copy this contradictory lifestyle (Rom. 16:17-18).

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<sup>18</sup> Rom. 16:17-18.

- g. He is the subject of reliable report.

FAITHFUL: Well, my brother, from what you say I am compelled to believe you, not only because you have personally known *Talkative*, but also because you give such a report with the right *Christian* attitude. I cannot imagine that you speak these things out of a malicious motive, but rather because of your love for the truth.

CHRISTIAN: Had I known him no more that you do, perhaps I might have thought of him as you did at first. Yes, and had I received such a report as this from the hands of those known to be the enemies of true religion, I would have thought it to be slanderous; sadly, the names and reputations of good men often suffer the lot of being defamed by bad men.

The attitude of Christian in this unsavory exposure was governed by good motives concerning the cause of truth and righteousness, the reputation of Christ's gospel, not a vindictive, self-righteous spirit that revels in gossip concerning the misfortune and degradation of others

- h. He is an embarrassment to good men.

But in addition to all these things, yes I have knowledge to prove him guilty of a great many more sorry matters that are equally as bad. Besides, good men are ashamed of him; they can neither call him brother nor friend; to those who know him, the mere mention of his name in their midst makes them blush.<sup>19</sup>

It is not the enemies of the truth who make these charges against Talkative, but rather it is godly and good men who make such accusations. They are ashamed at such a masquerade and especially bemoan the fact that Talkative causes biblical Christianity to be scorned (II Pet. 2:1-2).

5. Talkative confounds the relationship between saying and doing.

He believes that "saying" has value, particularly in the realm of righteousness and ethics, quite apart from the consistent outworking of this truth in the life of the "sayer." In other words, he believes that there is value in the message of a bald man who endeavors to sell hair restorer! He sees no interdependent relationship between saying and doing, though they are at the same time distinct entities. This truth is now variously illustrated.

<sup>19</sup> Rom. 2:24; II Pet. 2:1-2.

## a. The illustration of the soul and the body.

FAITHFUL: Well, I see that saying and doing are two different things, and from now on I shall more carefully observe this distinction.<sup>20</sup>

CHRISTIAN: They are two things indeed, and are as diverse as are the soul and the body. For as the body without the soul is but a dead carcass, so saying that excludes doing is but a dead carcass as well.<sup>21</sup> The soul of true religion is the practical part. Pure and undefiled religion, in the sight of *God the Father*, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.<sup>22</sup> *Talkative* is not aware of this; he thinks that hearing and saying alone will make a good Christian pilgrim, and thus he deceives his own soul.

In a human body, there is a unity of soul and body. Doing is likened to the soul while saying is likened to the body. The body without a soul, like saying without doing, is but a dead carcass. Hence, “The Soul of Religion is the practick part” (Jas, 1:22-27).

## b. The illustration of sowing and reaping.

Hearing is like the sowing of the seed; talking is not sufficient to prove that fruit is actually in the heart and life; and let us be perfectly clear that at the final day of doom, men shall be judged according to their fruit. It will not be said then, “Did you believe?” but, “Were you doers and talkers only?”<sup>23</sup> and accordingly they will be judged. The end of this world is compared to our earthly harvesting, and you know that men at harvest time regard nothing but fruit or grain. This is not to say that anything can be accepted without faith. But I speak to you this way to show you how insignificant the mere profession of *Talkative* will be at that day.

To hear speaking is but the sowing of the seed. But many hearers will yet be consigned to hell at the Day of Judgment. What distinguishes proper hearing is resultant fruit, that is the doing of a renewed heart and life (Matt. 13:24-30; 25:31-46; John 15:8).

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<sup>20</sup> *Matt. 23:1-4.*

<sup>21</sup> *Jas. 2:26.*

<sup>22</sup> *Jas. 1:22-27.*

<sup>23</sup> *Matt. 13:3-30, 36-43; 25:14-46.*

## c. The illustration of the law of Moses.

FAITHFUL: This brings to my mind that word from *Moses* in which he describes the clean type of beast. He is one that divides the hoof and chews the cud, not that divides the hoof alone or chews the cud alone. The rabbit chews the cud, yet is unclean because he does not divide the hoof. This truth is applicable to *Talkative* for he chews the cud, that is he seeks knowledge and chews upon the *Word*, but he does not divide the hoof, that is he does not separate himself from a sinful lifestyle; rather, as the rabbit, he retains the feet of a dog or bear, and therefore he is unclean.<sup>24</sup>

Having now grasped the truth that Christian has pressed home, Faithful interjects to add a supporting illustration of his own. It is drawn from the law of Moses concerning the distinction that Israel was to make with regard to the consumption of clean as opposed to unclean food (Lev. 11:1-8; Deut. 14:1-8). The animal such as the ox, goat, and sheep, chew the cud, that is ruminates and digest their food, and divide the hoof, that is walk aright. So the true believer both digests the Word and walks aright. But the animal such as the rabbit, camel, and rock-badger, chew the cud without dividing the hoof or walking aright. So Talkative is unclean for although he “chews the cud,” that is digests the truth of God, he does not “divide the hoof,” that is walk correctly and in a holy manner separate from sinners. The conclusion then is, “Touch [have fellowship with] nothing unclean” (Isa. 52:11; cf. Deut. 23:14; II Cor. 6:17).<sup>25</sup>

## d. The illustration of spiritual gifts and graces.

CHRISTIAN: As far as I know, you have spoken the true gospel sense of those texts, and I will add one further thing. *Paul* calls some men sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, and he includes great talkers as well; that is, as he expounds about these sayers elsewhere, he describes them as noisy and yet lifeless.<sup>26</sup> In being without life they lack true faith and the grace of the gospel. Consequently, these pilgrims shall never be placed in the kingdom of *Heaven* among those that are the children of life; and this remains true though their talk sounds like the voice of an angel.<sup>27</sup>

In I Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul uses hyperbole to indicate the extent to which a religious man may be gifted and yet lack spiritual life and graces. Such professors are lifeless instruments of sound (I Cor. 14:7). Though they may even sound angelic, yet without the love of God working in their hearts, they are worthless

<sup>24</sup> Lev. 11:1-47; Deut. 14:1-21.

<sup>25</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, § 71, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> I Cor. 13:1-3; 14:7.

<sup>27</sup> *Gal. 1:8*.

and useless. Such is the character of Talkative. Likewise in Galatians 1:8 Paul speaks of verbose angels who yet preach another gospel and are accursed.

#### D. Faithful's Insightful Testing of Talkative.

Since Christian is a man of good reputation, who evidences at this point some qualities of eldership (Tit. 1:9), Faithful yields to his perceptive estimate of Talkative, for he senses it has been intended for his good.

##### 1. Talkative's company has lost its attraction.

FAITHFUL: Well, I was not so fond of his company to start with, but now I am quite sick of it. What shall we do to be rid of him?

CHRISTIAN: Just take my advice and do as I tell you; then you will find that he will soon be sick of your company too, that is except *God* should touch his heart and convert it.

FAITHFUL: What would you have me to do?

Faithful confesses that he had some uneasy, indefinable concern about Talkative from the beginning of their meeting. But now he asks himself, "What fellowship has light with darkness? . . . What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" (11 Cor. 6:14-15). His holy desires call for separation. But how shall this be accomplished?

##### 2. Christian's consultation produces a plan of action.

FAITHFUL: What would you have me to do?

CHRISTIAN: Why go to him and enter into some serious discussion about the power of true religion. And ask him plainly, after he has agreed with this topic, which he will readily do, whether this power of true religion has been set up in his heart, house, or daily behavior.

It is designed to make it unnecessary for Talkative to be told to depart. Rather, he will decide to initiate separation on account of the one topic of conversation that he has no taste for.

##### a. He is in need of a renewed heart.

The present state of his heart is hardness, even loathing of the thought of his need of personal righteousness. Hence, unless God should mercifully soften his heart, he will quickly retreat from conversation that focuses upon his unholy condition (1 Cor. 2:14).

- b. He is in need of a challenged heart.

Faithful is to invite Talkative to enter into serious conversation about “the power of Religion,” that is the dynamic evidences of biblical Christianity. At this general level he is bound to express enthusiastic willingness. Then, when the true principles have been established, make pointed enquiry as to whether they are evidenced in his “Heart, House, or Conversation.”

3. Talkative’s religion is scrutinized by Faithful.

FAITHFUL: (Stepping forward again, he addresses *Talkative*) Come, my friend, what comfort do you have? How are you keeping?

TALKATIVE: Thank you; I am well. Though I thought we would have had considerable talk by now.

FAITHFUL: Well, if you agree, let us now have some useful discussion; and since you allowed me to nominate a question, let it be this: How does the saving grace of *God* show itself when it indwells the heart of a man.

TALKATIVE: I notice then that our talk must be about the power of things? Well, this is a very good question, and I shall be more than willing to reply. So do accept my brief answer as follows. First, where the saving grace of *God* indwells the heart, there it causes a great outcry against sin. Secondly —

The lone pilgrim seems anxious as Faithful approaches him again. He has become agitated because the agreed conversation has been delayed. Being starved of talk, Talkative feels deprived; the pity is that he does not feel the same way concerning his lack of personal holiness.

- a. Faithful asks, “What is the proof of saving grace in the heart?”

In other words, “What certain evidence ought to be found when the grace of God does truly convert a man in his heart?” Or, “How shall we infallibly know that a labeled fruit tree is really a fruit tree?” Or, “How shall we prove the boastful claims of a good cook?”

- (1) Talkative suggests it is an outcry against sin.

That is, the Spirit of God is certainly at work when sin is condemned in the world, when injustice is reprovved in human relationships, when wickedness in high places is denounced, when depravity in low places is censured.

## (2) But Faithful states it is a hatred of personal sin.

FAITHFUL: No, hold it there for a moment; let us consider each item one at a time. I think you should have rather said: It shows itself by inclining the soul to abhor its own sin.<sup>28</sup>

TALKATIVE: But why do you say this? What difference is there between crying out against, and the abhorring of [*personal*] sin?

FAITHFUL: Oh a great deal; a man may cry out against sin in principle; but he cannot abhor it except by virtue of his having a profound godly aversion to it. I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit, who yet can willingly embrace it in the heart, and house, and daily behavior.<sup>29</sup>

*Joseph's* mistress cried out with a loud voice, as if she were godly and virtuous; but notwithstanding this, she would have agreeably committed adultery with him.<sup>30</sup> Some cry out against sin, even as the mother cries out against her child in her lap, when she calls it a rude and naughty girl; then she quickly changes her mood and passionately devotes herself to hugging and kissing it.

This distinction here is no mere quibble with words as Talkative would have us believe. A physician must first attend to disease in his own body before he concerns himself with others who have the same disease. However, with regard to disease in the human soul, it is only the gracious surgical diagnosis of the Spirit of God that causes a person to make his own mortal condition his first priority (Matt. 7:5).

## (a) The godly first cry out against their own sin.

The prophets and apostles certainly denounced the wickedness of their day, but only after they had first come to grips with their own inward corruption. Such was the case with David (Ps. 32:5; 51:4), Isaiah (Isa. 6:5), Jeremiah (Lam. 1:18), Peter (Luke 5:8), and Paul (I Tim. 1:15).

## (b) The ungodly first cry out against the sin of others.

Their condemnation is born of a sense of self-righteousness rather than a hatred of sin for what it really is wherever it is found, namely an offence against the righteousness of God. Such hypocrites do not really hate sin; they only hate it in others.

## 1) Consider some pulpit pretenders.

They thunder forth from their pulpits with terrifying denunciation; they deport themselves with a cloak of holy symbolism; yet they

<sup>28</sup> Ps. 32:5; 51:4; Isa. 6:5; Lam. 1:18; Luke 5:8; I Tim. 1:15.

<sup>29</sup> Matt. 23:25-28.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. 39:15.

coddle and caress in their bosoms the very sins they denounce (Matt. 23:25-28).

2) Consider the cry of Joseph's mistress.

This devious lady first contrived to commit adultery with Joseph. However, when he stoutly resisted, she cried out with mock indignation as if her virtuous ideals had been grievously offended. Though her slaves may have suspected otherwise (Gen. 39:11-15).

3) Consider a mother rebuking her child.

She will severely scold her impish child, and yet in a moment she will also hug and kiss that same enfant terrible. And such is the contrary nature of unregenerate man that he will embrace sin while formally condemning it.

(3) Talkative suggests a great knowledge of gospel mysteries.

TALKATIVE: I now see that you are trying to be clever and catch me out.

FAITHFUL: No, not I, for I am only attempting to set things straight. But what is the second thing that you would offer as proof of an evident work of grace in the heart?

TALKATIVE: It is a great knowledge mysteries.



Eloquent Talkative

Straightaway Talkative becomes peeved at Faithful's explanation. His retort, "You lie at the catch" may be paraphrased: "You have set me up to be tricked." Refer to Bunyan's own explanation of this expression.<sup>31</sup> However, Christian denies this intention. His only design was to discover what is right according to the topic under discussion. He then asks Talkative to disclose his second item of evidence which he was earlier about to declare. Talkative's response is that true conversion is also evidenced by "great knowledge of gospel mysteries," or as Bunyan synonymously declares, "the mysterious act of our redemption,"<sup>32</sup> that is "the mysteries of God."<sup>33</sup>

(4) But Faithful states it is both knowing and doing.

FAITHFUL: This evidence should have been mentioned at the first, though it is false whether it be first or last. Knowledge, great knowledge may be obtained in the mysteries of the gospel, and yet no work of grace be present in the soul. Further, even if a man may have all knowledge, yet he may be nothing, and so consequently be no child of *God*.<sup>34</sup> When *Christ* said, "Do you know all these things?" and the disciples answered, "Yes." Then he added, "Blessed are you if you do them."<sup>35</sup> He does not offer this blessing in the mere knowing of his commands, but in the doing of them.<sup>36</sup>

Consequently there is a knowledge that is not accompanied with doing; it is found in the servant who knows his master's will, and yet fails to do it.<sup>37</sup> A man may know like an angel, and yet not be a Christian at all.<sup>38</sup> Therefore your proof is not valid. Indeed, to know is something which talkers and boasters find very pleasing. But to do is that which is pleasing to *God*.

Not that the heart can be good without knowledge. However, knowledge that is based upon the bare speculation of things and knowledge that is accompanied with the grace of faith and love, which constrains a man to do the will of *God* from the heart, these are not the same. The first of these is sufficient for the talker, but without the second the true Christian is not content. As the psalmist has written, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yes, I shall observe it with my whole heart."<sup>39</sup>

Because this matter gets to the heart of Talkative's problem, it ought to have been considered first. Nevertheless, Faithful's pointed explanation here must surely have caused his hearer to commence cringing with shame.

<sup>31</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. 93.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 671-672.

<sup>34</sup> I Cor. 13:2.

<sup>35</sup> *John 13:12-17*.

<sup>36</sup> *John 3:10; 14:21; Eph. 6:6; Jas. 1:25*.

<sup>37</sup> *Matt. 21:28-31*.

<sup>38</sup> I Cor. 13:1-2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ps. 119:34*.

- (a) The unregenerate may have great gospel knowledge.

A nominal Christian may be a biblical scholar, a renowned theologian, a college professor, a pastor, a Sunday school teacher, a Nicodemus (John 3:10), or a Judas Iscariot, and yet be void of the saving grace of God, and thus be a nothing in His sight (I Cor. 13:2). He may speak and know as an angel, yet these abilities alone do not conclusively prove conversion (I Cor. 13:1).

- (b) The true pilgrim knows and does his master's will.

Christ himself said that not knowing alone, but doing that which we know is to result in the blessing of God (Matt. 7:24-27; John 13:12-17). Notice how Paul both opens and closes his *Epistle to the Romans* with a call to the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). However, doing must also not stand alone, but rather find its birth in knowledge (Rom. 15:14; Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9-10; II Pet. 1:2-3; 3:18).

- (c) The character of saving knowledge must be distinguished.

The Puritans were careful to distinguish between a notional and an experiential knowledge of God. Stephen Charnock uses the contrasting terms of a "formal" as against an "efficient" knowledge of God, or again, a "speculative" as against a "practical" knowledge of God.<sup>40</sup> Thomas Manton also uses these terms, but adds the distinction between "naked, grammatical, memorative, opinionative" knowledge, and that which is "saving, prudent, God-centered, renewing knowledge."<sup>41</sup> So Bunyan makes the same distinction here.

- 1) There is knowledge being bare speculation.

It is likened to the man "that knoweth his Master's will, and doth it not" (Luke 12:47). He claims to know Christ and yet disobeys his commandments (I John 2:4). Manton explains that these religious connoisseurs "can more accurately discourse of divine things than a serious Christian; as a vintner [wine merchant] may have his cellar better stored than a nobleman, but he hath it for sale, not for use."<sup>42</sup>

- 2) There is knowledge that produces working faith.

While this emphasis does not excite mere talkers, it does please God (Heb. 13:16). However, such knowledge does excite genuine pilgrims when, as Charnock declares, it "is not a floating knowledge in the head, but a knowledge sinking to the heart; not a

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Charnock. *Works*, IV, pp. 10, 15-17.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Manton, *Works*, XIX, p. 381.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

knowledge in the brain, but efficacious to make an union with God.”<sup>43</sup> It is “faith [grounded upon knowledge] working through love” (Gal. 5:6; cf. Ps. 119:34; Jas. 1:22; I John 2:5-6, 29; 3:18; 4:20; 5:2-3).

(5) Talkative accuses Christian of being tricky.

TALKATIVE: You seem to be attempting to be clever again so as to catch me out; this has not become an edifying [*spiritually profitable*] conversation.

FAITHFUL: Well then, do offer another proof concerning how a work of grace in the heart is clearly evident.

TALKATIVE: No, not this time, for I now realize that we shall not agree.

Because Talkative's knowledge is not mixed with spiritual life and wisdom, he finds his speculative proposals to be not so credible. This fallibility troubles him, but even more so the emphasis upon personal Christianity. His aggravation is really concealed conviction. His claim that Christian's exposition of grace working in the heart is not edifying, that is not spiritually strengthening to the soul, is blatantly false. Again, this remark is merely a cover for Talkative's distaste for Christianity that has a holy influence upon the heart (Ps. 119:2; Prov. 20:27; II Cor. 13:5; Heb. 13:9, 15-16).



Talkative,  
Christian,  
and Faithful

<sup>43</sup> Charnock, *Works*, IV, p. 17.

## (6) But Faithful volunteers to answer his own question.

FAITHFUL: Well, if you will not propose something, may I have your permission to speak in this way?

TALKATIVE: Do feel at liberty to go ahead.

FAITHFUL: A true work of grace in the heart is recognized either by the person himself or by others who observe him. When the person himself gains this evidence, he receives conviction of sin, especially that conviction concerning the defilement of his nature and the sin of unbelief, for the sake of which he is certain to be damned unless he finds mercy at *God's* hand through faith in *Jesus Christ*.<sup>44</sup> This perspective and sensibility produces in him sorrow and shame for sin; moreover, he finds the *Savior* of the world revealed to him, and the absolute necessity of his closing with him for life, in which case he discovers a hunger and thirst for him, he to whom indeed the promise has been made.<sup>45</sup>

Now according to the strength or weakness of his faith in his *Savior*, so is his joy and peace, so is his love for holiness, so are his desires to know him more, and also to serve him in this world. But though I explain that this is a revelation unto himself; yet it is seldom that he is able to conclude that this is a work of grace, because his present corruptions and his abused reason cause his mind to misjudge in this matter. Therefore, in he who has such an inward work, there is required very sound judgment before he can confidently conclude that this is a work of grace.

It is significant that Talkative is now less inclined to be talkative. He yields to Christian on the ground that they will continue in disagreement. Again, the fact is that he has been wounded by the truth, and this does have a tendency to shut the mouth (Job 40:3-5; Rom. 3:19; Tit. 1:10-11).

## (a) Saving grace in the heart brings a true knowledge of self.

This subjective evidence is contrary to the inclination of the natural man; he is proudly autonomous, self-congratulatory, and in agreement with his carnal instincts. However, Bunyan here undoubtedly draws upon his own varying experiences as related in *Grace Abounding*.

## 1) There is conviction of personal sin, even unbelief.

There is awakening to the depth of human corruption that inhabits the human heart. Further, there is unbelief brought to light that is an arrogant challenge to God's gospel revelation (Ps. 38:18; Mark 16:16; John 16:9; Rom. 7:24).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Mark 16:16; John 16:8-9; Rom. 7:24.

<sup>45</sup> Ps. 38:18; Jer. 31:19; Matt. 5:6; Acts 4:12; Gal. 2:15-16; Rev. 21:6.

<sup>46</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, §§ 147-149, 261, pp. 24, 40.

- 2) There is repentance from sin, a turning to Christ.

There is revulsion at personal depravity, a trembling at unqualified guilt that leads to the eager embrace of the merciful yet righteous Jesus Christ. Groaning leads to gladness, and hungering leads to satisfaction (Jer. 31:19; Acts 4:12; Gal. 2:16).<sup>47</sup>

- 3) There is a desire for holiness resulting in service.

There is a change of heart that results in a change of affections whereby the pilgrim becomes aware of being “dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:1 1). There is a desire now for personal obedience resulting in righteousness (Rom. 6:16) and a sense of vocation (Is. 6:1-8; Matt. 5:6; I Thess. 1:9; Rev. 21:6).<sup>48</sup>

- 4) There is carnal confusion that requires a sound mind.

There is ongoing conflict, especially when the flesh continues to challenge the renewed affections (Gal. 5:17). For this reason, the new pilgrim is often befuddled concerning his assurance of a work of grace in his heart, that is unless his mind is well fortified with truth (Rom. 6:5-11; 7:4, 22-25; 8:1-11; 12:2).<sup>49</sup>

- (b) Saving grace in the heart is observable to others.

To others this work of grace is externally evidenced as follows. First, by a confession of faith in *Christ* born of genuine experience.

Second, by a life that is in agreement with such a confession, that is a life of holiness, specifically heart holiness, family holiness (if he has a family), and by daily behavior holiness in the world.<sup>50</sup>

So this holiness in general inwardly teaches him to abhor his sin and himself in the privacy of his heart; to suppress his sin in family life; and to promote holiness in the world. This he does, not by talk alone as the hypocrite or talkative person is accustomed to do, but by a practical subjection, through faith and love, to the power of the *Word*.<sup>51</sup> And now Sir, concerning this brief description of the work of grace and its evidence in true religion, if you have any objections to what I have said, then do declare them right now. But if not, then allow me to propose to you a second question.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., I, §§ 262-263, p. 40.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., §§ 263-264, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., §§ 253-254, 260, 319-320, pp. 39-40, 47.

<sup>50</sup> Ps. 50:23; Eccles. 12:13; Matt. 5:8; John 14:15; Rom. 10:9-10; Phil. 1:27; 3:17-20; I Pet. 2:11-12.

<sup>51</sup> Job 42:5-6; Ps. 50:23; Ezek. 20:43; Matt. 5:9; John 14:15; Rom. 10:9-10; Phil. 1:27; 3:17-20.

In other words, authentic pilgrims gain a reputation as they are observed in their travels. But it is not that disreputable sort which Talkative has earned. Rather it is like that estimate of the early Christians which Tertullian, the second century church apologist, writes about. He records that their enemies declared of them, "See how these Christians love one another."

1) By their recognition of true conversion.

Faith in Christ is seen to be a warm heart interest, a consuming passion, not nominal church membership or sterile orthodoxy (John 13:34; 14:15; Rom. 10:10).

2) By their recognition of fruitful conversion.

Faith in Christ is seen to be a harmony of confession and expression' As spiritually blind as lost sinners may be, yet they have a remarkable ability to acknowledge the supplanting of vice by virtue (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12).

- a) Heart-holiness in the world, through the mortification of sin (Rom. 8:13; Phil. 1:27; Col. 3:5).
- b) Family-holiness in the world, through godly headship, suitable discipline, and loving nurture (Ps. 50:20, 23; Eph. 5:22-6:9; I Tim. 3:4-5).
- c) Conversation-holiness in the world, through the vocal and practical expression of faith and love (Matt. 5:9; Rom. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6).
- d) Promotional holiness in the world, even as Faithful further presses home the evidence of a true work of grace in the heart to his unholy companion (Heb. 12:14).

- b. Faithful asks, “Do you experience this saving grace in your heart?”

TALKATIVE: No, I have nothing more to say; it seems pointless to object; rather let me hear. So what is your second question?

FAITHFUL: It is this. Do you personally experience the first part of my description of a true work of grace? And do your life and daily behavior testify to this same experience? Or is your religion based solely upon word and speech, exclusive of deed and truth?<sup>52</sup> By all means respond if you feel inclined to do so; but only speak that which you know the *God of Heaven* will accept as true, as well as that which your conscience can justify. For not he who commends himself is in reality approved, but he whom the Lord commends.<sup>53</sup> Besides, to say that I am such and such, when my daily behavior and neighbors plainly testify that I lie, surely this is great wickedness.

Talkative continues to be crippled in his speech. His agreement to continue to listen is an uncommon response. However, Faithful has now become the talkative one, and his next question is so piercing that it cuts Talkative to the bone (Heb. 4:12). In other words, he is bluntly asked, “Do you have the evidence of a true work of God’s redeeming grace in the very depths of your soul?”

- (1) Talkative is to answer honestly.

Faithful well knows that a testimony can describe expectations, and even hopes, rather than present reality, especially where a verbose religionist such as Talkative is concerned. So he asks some qualifying questions as well.

- (a) Does God agree with your testimony?

You claim, by outward profession, to be a holy child of God. But does that same God agree that your heart is holy, or does He know that in fact within you are full of corruption? (Matt. 23:25-28; II Cor. 10:18).

- (b) Does your conscience agree with your testimony?

You are very able in religious discourse. But is this a charade, a pretense in terms of what you know your heart is really thinking? If so, then for once be honest and answer this question truthfully.

- (c) Do your neighbors agree with your testimony?

If you speak of regeneration and redemption and sanctification, will your neighbors blaspheme God on your account? (Rom. 2:23-24). Do you multiply your wickedness by adding falsehood to your subterfuge?

<sup>52</sup> *I John 3:18.*

<sup>53</sup> *II Cor. 10:18.*

## (2) Talkative declines to answer at all.

TALKATIVE: (Beginning to blush, though recovering) You now focus upon experience and conscience and *God*, as well as appeals to Him for justification of what you say. I did not expect this kind of conversation, nor am I inclined to give an answer to such questions because I do not feel obliged to do so, that is unless you have appointed yourself as my catechizer [*examiner*]; and even if you had, I would probably refuse to have you as my judge. But I do long to know why you have asked me such questions.

While he is still not averse to religious discussion in general, inwardly he is repulsed by the prospect of talk about heart holiness in particular. He has now become more defensive and charges that “pietistic” talk is too personal a matter; it also lends itself to a judgmental spirit.

## (a) His blush betrays embarrassment.

For a moment, Talkative finds that his defenses are down and his guilt and shame are showing. His inward conviction leads to outward signification. However, he quickly pulls himself together and feigns mastery of his subject, as if an expert.

## (b) His objections lead to a question.

Although Talkative’s assessment of Faithful’s direction of thought is accurate, namely with regard to “experience, to conscience, and God,” yet he strenuously objects to any further discussion of this way of thinking. Why is this so?

## 1) Because he is unprepared in this matter.

There is more truth to Talkative’s reply than he cares to realise. His unpreparedness is a matter of the heart rather than the intellect. Of course, deep down in his soul he knows this to be true.

## 2) Because he is not obliged to be judged.

But this is a defensive cover up. He would be perfectly happy to submit to an examination in Bible knowledge and systematic theology since he would most likely do very well in these subjects. What he really objects to is being tested in a vital area in which he would undoubtedly fail.

## 3) Because he is unsure of Faithful's intentions.

So Talkative seeks a frank explanation from Faithful concerning the design of his questions. But is he so ignorant in his blindness? Or is he still doubtful as to whether anyone could see beneath his convincing masquerade?

## (3) Talkative is charged with gross hypocrisy.

FAITHFUL: Because I noticed your eagerness to talk while having no reason to believe that this was any more than notion [*speculation*]. Besides, to be very truthful with you, I have heard that by reputation you are a man whose religion is based upon pure talk, and that your daily behavior betrays the hypocrisy of your mouth-profession.

They say you are a stain in the midst of Christians, and that true religion suffers on account of your ungodly lifestyle, that some have already stumbled because of your wicked ways, and that more are in danger of making shipwreck of their faith.<sup>54</sup> Your religion involves fellowship with tavern life and covetousness and uncleanness and swearing and lying and worldly company and more. The proverb that describes a prostitute is also descriptive of you; in that she is a shame to women, so you are similarly a shame to all genuine Christians.

In *The Barren Fig-tree*, Bunyan describes the “fruitless professor” as follows:

You have some professors that are only saints before men when they are abroad, but are devils and vipers at home; saints by profession, but devils by practice; saints in word, but sinners in heart and life. These men may have the profession, but they want [lack] the fruits that become repentance. . . . The professor that is got into the vineyard of God doth feign [pretend] that he hath the faith, the faith most holy, the faith of God's elect. Ah! but where are thy fruits, barren fig-tree?”<sup>55</sup>

This blistering exhortation is delivered only after the evidence concerning Talkative is learned to be conclusive. However, such strong rebuke is well justified in certain circumstances (I Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:10, 13).

## (a) His faith is only notional.

There is a major dysfunctional relationship between his brain and his heart. His talk is chiefly cerebral, even if at times religious. His cognitive ability is acute, while at the same time he has no discernable pulse rate! His dress is fashionable, while beneath there lies a sick body (II Tim. 3:5).

<sup>54</sup> I Tim. 1:19; Jude 12-16.

<sup>55</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 568.

- (b) His faith is talk without walk.

There is a paralysis of the feet and hands that is compensated by a flurry of activity with the lips and tongue (Eccl. 10:12-15). To those who are impoverished, he delights to speak the words, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled” (Jas. 2:16).

- (c) His faith is odious to biblical Christianity.

Because of his unhealthy condition, a stench arises from his body that causes even pagans to hold their noses and profane the name of God (Ezek. 36:20). Some who have got too close have been known to become infected with Talkative’s disease, and as a result manifest the same paralyzing symptoms.

- (d) His faith is a prostitution of the truth.

He is a whore with the Word of God and Christian profession, that is an illicit merchandiser of sacred truth for the sake of personal profit (II Cor. 2:17; 4:2; 1 Pet. 5:2). As a prostitute disgraces womanhood and her body, so Talkative is a far greater disgrace to holy Christian stature and the body of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:27).

- (4) Talkative is offended and bids adieu.

TALKATIVE: Since you are quick to listen to reports about me, and to judge so rashly, I cannot but conclude that you are some irritable or mournful fellow who is not worthy of being conversed with, and so adieu [*farewell*].<sup>56</sup>

Lacking the grace of repentance, he becomes offended and huffy in the face of such a forceful accusation. Though withering for a moment, he puffs up his stature and commences to strut away while unleashing volleys of verbal contempt.

- (a) He resorts to abuse.

His ad hominem charges skirt the real issues concerning evident hypocrisy and experiential Christianity; he would rather divert attention away from himself and focus upon the personal ridicule of another. So Faithful is described as being prejudicial, condemnatory, hasty, moody, depressing, and a poor conversationalist.

<sup>56</sup> Amos 3:3; Gal. 6:14; I John 2:19.

- (b) He resorts to separation.

His parting benediction “adieu,” that is his commendation of Faithful to God, is wholly insincere and representative of Talkative’s glib manner of speaking. When Christian testimony is uncompromising, even the religious emissaries of the world understand that true fellowship is unprofitable (Amos 3:3; Gal. 6:14).

## E. Christian’s Summation of this Sad Encounter.

From a distance, Christian has overheard this whole encounter. He is clearly pleased with Faithful’s following of his advice. The result is as he predicted. And such an emphasis will always result in a division of mankind in this way, that is when the issue is made to be the demands of the righteousness of God upon man’s heart and life.

1. Talkative’s sudden exit was a relief.

CHRISTIAN: (Having approached his companion) Did I not tell you how this encounter would end? Your words and *Talkative’s* lusts could not agree. He preferred to leave your company rather than reform his life. But as I said, he is gone; so let him go. This loss belongs to none other than himself, and he has saved us the trouble of our departing from him. And assuming that he will continue as he is, he would only have been a stain on our company. Besides, the apostle says, “From such withdraw yourself.”<sup>57</sup>

While the subject matter of this encounter was profitable, yet the discussion was held under a cloud of essential disagreement. It was not warm fellowship concerning things held in common, but a dispute with regard to conflicting grounds of fellowship. Talkative was not even a confused and teachable seeker, but rather an antagonist, and an immoral one at that.

- a. The loss is his own.

The same could be said of Judas, whose company did not add anything of real positive spiritual value to the fellowship of the other eleven apostles. Likewise Talkative did not contribute anything of spiritual worth that proved to be a loss at his departure.

- b. The separation is commanded.

If indirect separation does not occur, as was the case here, with the departure of the ungodly from the godly (John 6:66; I John 2:18-19), then there must be direct separation of the godly from the ungodly (II Cor. 6:14-18; II Thess. 3:6; II John 9-11), otherwise pollution and loss of witness become very real factors.

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<sup>57</sup> I Tim. 6:5.

2. Faithful's close examination was responsible.

FAITHFUL: But I am glad that we had this short discussion with him; it may happen that he will further think about it. However, I have spoken plainly with him so that if he perishes, I am innocent of his blood.<sup>58</sup>

While many a lesser pilgrim might have criticized Faithful's firm dealing with Talkative, yet his explanation proves the purity of his motives.

a. He was concerned for Talkative's salvation.

The cut and thrust of argument was for the purpose of awakening Talkative to his great peril, not the rhetorical aggrandizement of Christian. Disputation can certainly be dangerous, but on the other hand, silence can be cowardly.

b. He was concerned for accountability before God.

The compulsion of the truth of God would not allow Faithful to abdicate his responsibility as a witness for God (Ezek. 3:17-21). However, Bunyan does not reveal Talkative's ultimate destiny.

3. Faithful's direct exhortation was appropriate.

CHRISTIAN: You did well to speak so frankly to him as you did; there is little of this faithful dealing with men today, and it is for this reason that true religion is so understandably odorous in the nostrils of many. For there are these talkative fools whose religion is only in word; they are morally corrupt and vain in their conversation, and on being so numerous admitted into the fellowship of the godly, do confuse the world, blemish Christianity, and grieve the sincere. I wish that all men would deal with these imposters as you have done; then they would either be made more agreeable to true religion, or else the fellowship of true pilgrims would prove to be too hot for them. Then did *Faithful* say:

The scarcity of this type of "faithful dealing," being intrinsic to the character of Faithful, most likely represents the similar lack of forthright exhortation that existed in Bunyan's day. No wonder then that insipid "Christianity" is spawned in such circumstances.

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<sup>58</sup> Acts 20:26; Ezek. 33:1-9.

- a. It was discriminating.

It was suitable as a disinfectant with regard to the religious stench that Talkative generated. There was no seeking for compromise through dialogue. Rather, the conflicting issues were made only all the more distinct.

- b. It is needful today.

In vogue in this modern era is non-directive, non-confrontational interaction that should always be kept at a calm and cool level. Holy indignation at the seductive ministries of thousands of contemporary “Talkatives” is conspicuous by its absence. There is no lion-like roar of the prophet (Amos 3:8); there is no speechless quaking of the “Talkatives.”

4. Faithful's closing tribute to heart-work.

Then did *Faithful* say:

How *Talkative* at first lifts up his plumes!  
 How bravely does he speak! How he presumes  
 To drive down all before him! But so soon  
 As *Faithful* talks of heartwork,<sup>59</sup> like the moon  
 That's past the full, into the wane he goes;  
 And so will all, but he that heartwork knows.

The outward plumage and boasting of Talkative is only that, namely bird-feathers. Inwardly he is chicken-hearted when it comes to passionate interest in godliness. As Jonathan Edwards maintains in his *Religious Affections*, it is inward holy desires and motives that give the best evidence of a rooted work of Grace in a Christian's heart.



Talkative says adieu

<sup>59</sup> “Heartwork” describes the sanctifying life of God in the soul of the genuine pilgrim as distinct from confessional and orthodox hypocrites such as Talkative.