

## Chapter Twenty-One

### Christian and Faithful on trial at Vanity Fair

#### A. The Origin and Nature of Vanity Fair.

John Brown gives convincing evidence that the historical basis of Vanity Fair was the lavish annual fair at Sturbridge near Cambridge, a neighborhood that Bunyan was familiar with. A half square mile in area and lasting several weeks, this fair was “a vast emporium of commerce” that included European representation and the spoils of the voyages of Drake and Raleigh.

When business was over it was succeeded by pleasure. Round the square, in the center of which rose the great maypole with its vane at the top, there were coffee-houses, taverns, music-halls, buildings for the exhibition of drolls [jesters], legerdemain [conjuring tricks], mountebanks [itinerant charlatans], wild beasts, monsters, dwarfs, giants, rope-dancers, and the like. . . . Year by year the country gentry for ten or twelve miles round came in with their sons and daughters for the diversions of the place.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction.

The pilgrims now face a seeming paradox, that is their arrival at a place which is, by and large, identical to that which they departed from. Philip Edwards resolves this problem as follows:

The journey takes him [Christian] to Vanity Fair, which is of course the very City of Destruction which he had left long before. It is a different city because Christian has become a different man. That city which he had once dwelt contentedly in, then fled from in fear, he now enters as a convinced Christian, ready to put up with whatever mockery, abuse, and violence may be directed at him. Faithful and Christian are no longer citizens of the City of Destruction; they are pilgrims and strangers in it. Their own tongue has become a place of hostility and persecution. The change is denoted not by a return (which would have done violence to other uses of the journey image) but by an arrival at a new city called Vanity. There never was any escape from the City; these refugees have to stay in it for the whole of their natural lives. The alteration of the image of the journey from flight from a doomed city to arrival in a hostile city excellently conveys the transmutation of the self and consequently one's surroundings in accepting Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

#### a. They progress from a personal to a public wilderness.

The encounter with Talkative was depressing enough; but now the whole society he represents is actually confronted.

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<sup>1</sup> John Brown, *John Bunyan*, pp. 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Edwards, “The Journey in *The Pilgrim's Progress*,” *The Pilgrim's Progress, critical and Historical Views*, ed. Vincent Newey, p. 114.

- b. They progress from worldly ambassadors to the world as a whole.

Their encounters with the like of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman and Madam Wanton have been very individualistic; but now the corporate force of the world is thrust upon them.

2. Its history and purpose.

THEN I saw in my dream that when *Christian* and *Faithful* had come out of the *Wilderness*, they immediately saw ahead of them a *Town* which was named *Vanity*. Now at this *Town*, a fair is promoted there that is known as *Vanity Fair*. It is maintained all the year long and bears the name *Vanity Fair* because the *Town* where it is located is regarded as lighter than vanity; and also, because all that is sold there, as well as those who come to buy, is vanity [*worthless*]. As is the saying of the wise man, "All that this world promotes is vanity."<sup>3</sup>

This *Fair* is not some newly constructed business, but an enterprise going back into antiquity. Let me tell you about its origin. Almost five thousand years ago, even then there were pilgrims walking toward the *Celestial City*, just as these two honest persons are doing. So *Beelzebub*, *Apollyon*, and *Legion*,<sup>4</sup> along with their associates, noticing that the path along which pilgrims traveled toward the *City* passed through this *Town of Vanity*, they determined to construct a fair;<sup>5</sup> it was to be a festive market in which there would be sold every sort of vanity, and it would be open all the year long.

George Cheever comments: "Vanity Fair is the city of Destruction in its, gala dress, in its most seductive sensual allurements. It is this world in miniature, with its various temptations."<sup>6</sup> It is Satan's theme park and world of carnal dreams.

- a. Vanity and the fair that it promotes.

The King's narrow highway runs directly through the town of Vanity, a bustling metropolis, that has a fair that is open all the year long. Thus pilgrims in transit are required to be insulated from the allurements of Vanity Fair while not being isolated from its life (John 17:14-17; 1 Cor. 5:9-10). Not that all the citizens here are ungodly. When Christiana and her company pass this same way, they lodge for the evening at the home of Mr. Mnason (Acts 21:16), a sage Christian, who invites his friends, Mr. Contrite, Mr. Holyman, Mr. Love-saint, Mr. Dare-not-ly, and Mr. Penitent to visit for a time of fellowship.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ps.* 62:9; *Eccles.* 1:2, 12-18; 2:1-26; 11:8; *Isa.* 40:17.

<sup>4</sup> *Mark* 5:9.

<sup>5</sup> *II Cor.* 4:4.

<sup>6</sup> George Cheever, *Lectures on Bunyan*, p. 233.

<sup>7</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, pp. 224-25.

b. Vanity Fair and its infernal design.

This Fair is but the central thrust of the marketing policy of the Corporation of Vanity. The Town “is lighter than vanity” (Ps. 62:9), that is void of any consideration of the great issues of the soul such as righteousness and wisdom and life and death (Eccles. 2:11-17; 12:13-14). Rather, it promotes with great advertising skill pretty tinsel packages that soon lose their shine; they quickly corrode falling through the fingers of their owners like sand. Those items advertised as giant sized, chrome-plated, polyunsaturated, full flavored, extra strength, fully guaranteed, triple dipped wonders are soon discarded as useless trash.

(1) It is as ancient as the fall of man.

Shortly after the fall of Adam and Eve “almost five thousand years ago [agone],” Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion made a concerted effort to dissuade earnest pilgrims from traveling toward the Celestial City. They designed a most subtle snare by which travelers would be permanently detained, and lose sight of the King’s Highway (Matt. 13:22; II Cor. 4:4).



Christian and Faithful enter Vanity Fair

- (2) It remains as the purveyor of various carnal wares.
- (a) The intellectual enticement of being sophisticated and broadminded, not narrow, old-fashioned, and bigoted.
  - (b) The offer of a short pleasurable rest from the rigors and discipline of a committed soldier of Jesus Christ.
  - (c) The invitation to participate in a slightly indecent amusement since, “once saved, one is always saved.”
  - (d) The suggestion of making a slight concession to the flesh which is later applauded as a sign of liberality.
3. Its catalog and variety of delights.

Therefore at this *Fair* every type of merchandise was sold, including houses, lands, trades, honors, promotions, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, and pleasures; there were also delights of all sorts such as prostitutes, madams, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and much more.<sup>8</sup>

And moreover, at this *Fair* there is the constant entertainment of jugglers, cheats, games, plays, clowns, mimics, tricksters, rogues, and many other amusements. Here also are to be found a number of free offerings including thefts, murders, adulteries, perjurers, all available in various shades of blood [*scarlet*].<sup>9</sup>

Not all of the merchandise at Vanity Fair is of the same character. There are things lawful, things doubtful, and things unlawful, yet all are promoted with selfish indulgence in mind. Even the things lawful are displayed in such a way as to distract pilgrims from the priority of the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:31-33; I Cor. 6:12; 10:23).

- a. For the morally sensitive, things lawful.

These are things lawful that can be indulged in unlawfully, such as houses, land, countries, wives, husbands, trades, etc.

- b. For the morally ambivalent, things doubtful. -

These are things of questionable profit that can be indulged in unlawfully such as honors, silver, gold, precious stones, plays, entertainments, servants, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 6:31-32; Rev. 18:11-14.

<sup>9</sup> Rev. 17:3-4; 18:11-14.

- c. For the morally insensitive, things unlawful.

These are things blatantly unlawful that the shameless indulge in such as lusts, prostitutes, blood, cheats, fools, thefts, adulteries, murders, lies, etc.

4. Its international and cultural representation.

And as in other fairs of lesser importance, there are several lanes and streets with representative names where certain categories of merchandise are marketed; so here it is the same, for you have places, lanes, and streets named after countries and kingdoms where the goods of this *Fair* are to be found. There is the *Britain Row*, the *French Row*, the *Italian Row*, the *Spanish Row*, the *German Row*, where a variety of vanities is sold.

But as in other fairs, where one commodity group tends to dominate over all others, so the merchandise of *Rome* is lavishly promoted in this *Fair*. However, our English nation, along with some others, has expressed a disliking for this flaunted huckstering.<sup>10</sup>

This is truly a world fair with cultural diversity and unity of purpose. The fierce competition for sales is yet for the common undertaking of waylaying passing pilgrims.

- a. There are many distinctive national displays.

The exotic cuisine and intoxicating delicacies from Britain, France, Italy, Spain, and Germany are exhibited with great skill and appeal.

- b. There is the overwhelming display of Rome.

While the colors of purple and scarlet predominate, there is also the supporting adornment of gold, precious stones, and pearls (Rev. 17:1-6). Added to this is the pomp of religion to which England vigorously objects.

5. Its strategic and unavoidable location.

The Vanity planning commission has gone to great lengths to ensure that transient pilgrims are compelled to experience the full force of the Fair's bewitching display.

- a. All pilgrims must encounter Vanity Fair.

Now as *City* runs directly through this *Town* with its lusty *Fair*; and he who would go to that *City*, and yet not pass through this *Town*, must necessarily go out of the world.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This is evidenced by the English Reformation facilitated by King Henry VIII in 1534, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada by Queen Elizabeth I in 1588.

<sup>11</sup> John 17:14-17; I Cor. 5:9-10.

Hence, the world is not to be circumvented according to some monastic or isolationist ideal (John 17:15). Indeed, such a route is impossible to find, that is unless we leave the world entirely (I Cor. 5:9-10). We can surmise that had an alternative highway been suggested to the two pilgrims, it would only have led to the sister towns of Mammonopolis, Ichabod Gulch, and Babylonville.

- b. All pilgrims follow the steps of their Lord.

The *Prince of Princes* himself, when traveling in this region, passed through this *Town* when heading toward his own country, and at a time when the *Fair* was in full operation. Yes, and I believe it was *Beelzebub*, the chief *Lord* of this *Fair*, who personally invited him to buy some of his vanities; yes, he would have even made him a *Lord* of this *Fair* if only the *Prince* had bowed to his overall authority while passing through the *Town*. Further, because he was such a person of honor, *Beelzebub* escorted him from street to street and showed him, in a short space of time, all the kingdoms of the world so that he might lure the *Blessed One* to lower himself and buy some of his vanities. But this *Stranger* had no desire whatsoever for this merchandise, and therefore he departed from the *Town* without spending so much as one cent on these worthless goods.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, this *Fair* is certainly an antiquity of long standing, and a very great *Fair* at that.

This further appearance of Christ in retrospect portrays his “endurance of hostility by sinners” (Heb. 12:3) while not in the slightest degree entering into their commerce. Hence, he has left an example for pilgrims “to follow in his steps” (I Pet. 2:21).

- (1) He was going in the opposite direction.

The “Prince of Princes” had formerly come this way, having journeyed from the Celestial City toward the Place of Deliverance. His necessary encounter with Vanity Fair en route enabled him to identify with human frailty (Heb. 4:15; 5:8).

- (2) He was offered every enticement by Beelzebub.

During a personally escorted tour, every facility and display was persuasively thrust upon him. Beelzebub himself even attempted to seduce this holy Lord of Lords with three special bargains (Matt. 4:3-10; Luke 4:3-12). These were:

- (a) A personal invitation to buy merchandise

This devilish Lord had not gained his presidency of the Fair by accident. Rather, his sales ability “with all power and signs and false wonders, . . . with all the deception of wickedness,” was thought to be irresistible (II Thess. 2:9-10).

<sup>12</sup> Matt. 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8; Heb. 12:3.

- (b) A subservient presiding role over the Fair.

For the mere recognition of Beelzebub as overlord, there would be granted every imaginable compensation, including the adulation of the citizens and free participation in all events.

- (c) A grand scheme of world dominion.

The international exhibits were presented as but tokens of the larger world-wide conglomerate that Beelzebub could deliver, that is if his unholy dominion was recognized as supreme.

- (3) He was resistant to every proposition.

The whole of Vanity Fair did not attract the Prince of Princes in the slightest degree. He did not spend so much as a penny upon its bitter delicacies. Rather, he responded with frequent reference to the constitution, sovereignty, and glory of the Celestial City. As a result, the citizens of Vanity desired to eject this intruder crying out, “Away with him, away with him” (John 19:15).



Vanity Fair

## B. The Reaction of Vanity Fair to these Transient Aliens.

The singular thrust here of Bunyan is not the expressed revulsion and contempt of Christian and Faithful for the unholy lifestyle of the participants at Vanity Fair. Rather it is the opposite reaction that is the surprise of the giddy revelers at the holy demeanor of these unusually sober transients.

### 1. By observation and analysis.

Now as I said, these pilgrims must necessarily pass through this *Fair*. Well, so they did; but especially note that even as they entered the *Fair*, all of the people there became disturbed, and the whole *Town* itself was turned into a commotion around them. There were several reasons for this, namely:

First, the pilgrims were dressed with a type of clothing that was quite different from the attire of those who traded at that *Fair*.<sup>13</sup> Therefore the people of the *Fair* stared at them with astonishment. Some of them said that they were fools, and some called them bedlams [*madmen*], while others derided them as outlandish men [*foreigners*].<sup>14</sup>

Second, as the great crowd wondered at their clothing, so they were similarly curious about their speech, for few could understand what they said. The pilgrims spoke their native tongue, the language of *Canaan*;<sup>15</sup> but those who managed and frequented the *Fair* were the men who spoke the language of this world. So that throughout the *Fair* their foreign speaking made them appear as barbarians in their midst.<sup>16</sup>

Third, and this did especially amuse the merchants, these pilgrims placed little value on all of their goods; they did not even care to browse at them; and if they were solicited to buy such items, they would put their fingers in their ears and cry out, “Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity;”<sup>17</sup> at the same time they would look upward signifying that their trade and commerce were with *Heaven*.

The two pilgrims make no attempt to accommodate themselves to the worldly ways of Vanity Fair, even under the pretext of “witnessing at their level,” or “communicating through their culture” (I Thess. 2:1-12).

#### a. They notice their unusual clothing.

Their distinctive dress is that garment perfectly tailored for sinners, namely Jesus Christ’s imputed righteousness (I Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:27; Phil. 3:8-9) which was

<sup>13</sup> *Isa. 61:10; Gal. 3:27; Phil. 3:8-9.*

<sup>14</sup> *Job 12:4; I Cor. 4:9-10.*

<sup>15</sup> *Isa. 19:18; I Cor. 2:6-8; I John 4:5-6.*

<sup>16</sup> *I Cor. 2:7-8; 14:11.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ps. 119:37; Phil. 3:19-20; I John 2:15-17.*

freely received at the Place of Deliverance 93). Their fashion consciousness focuses on conformity to godliness rather than current carnal apparel. For this reason they are an astonishment and scornfully derided as fools (buffoons), bedlams (lunatics), and outlandish men (foreigners). They show no interest in the latest silks, satins, velvets, braids, linens, etc. on display.

b. They notice their uncommon speech.

Their conversation, while using the same language as the citizens of Vanity, yet was comprised of a vocabulary and meaning that caused them to be labelled as seeming “barbarians” or speakers of a foreign tongue. This “language of Canaan” or “speech of Zion” was talk about heavenly truth reminiscent of an experience in Bunyan’s life prior to his conversion. In *Grace Abounding* he recounts how he overheard four poor women talking about their Christian “heart-work.”

For I was now a brisk talker also my self in the matters of Religion: but now I may say, I heard, but I understood not; for they were far above out of my reach, for their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts. . . . And me thought they spake as if joy did make them speak: they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world, as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their Neighbours (Num. 23:9).<sup>18</sup>

In other words the two pilgrims were speaking “God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom. . . . which none of the rulers of this age has understood” (I Cor. 2:6-8).

c. They notice their intentional disinterest.

The concern began to be voiced that if this sort of potential customer increased, then unemployment and total economic collapse would result at the Fair. The reasons were obvious.

(1) A refusal to listen to the sales promotion.

Of no amusement was the fact that these strangers were determined to avoid the allurements set before them, so much so that they put their fingers in their ears and cried out, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity” (Ps. 119:37).

(2) A resolve to do commerce only with heaven.

While the merchants and hucksters endeavored to catch the eyes of Christian and Faithful, yet the pilgrims set their gaze heavenward indicating their singular interest in the “trade and traffic” of the kingdom of God (Phil. 3:18-20).

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<sup>18</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, §§ 37-38, p. 10.

2. By antagonism and assault.

The commercial imagery employed by Bunyan at this point may well recall a period in his early Christian life when he was tempted “to sell Christ.” He describes in *Grace Abounding* how he was enticed, “to sell and part with this most 6les-sed Christ, to exchange him for the things of this life; for any thing: the temptation lay upon me for the space of a year.”<sup>19</sup>

a. The invitation to buy is solemnly rejected.

So beholding the strange behavior of these men, one scornful trader happened to address them: “What will you buy?” But the pilgrims soberly replied, “We buy the truth.”<sup>20</sup> At this, opportunity was taken all the more to pour contempt upon these men. Some mocked, some taunted, some spoke reproachfully, and some called upon others to strike them. Eventually things came to a great commotion and disturbance in the *Fair*, so much so that disorder was everywhere.<sup>21</sup> As a result, word was brought to the governor of the *Fair* who quickly came down and appointed deputies, some of his most trusted friends, to examine these pilgrims concerning why they had brought about this disturbance of the *Fair*.

The taunting sales pitch, “What will ye buy?” is met with the sober rejoinder, “We buy the Truth” (Prov. 23:23). Christian and Faithful are not controlled by their senses or feelings, which can be so deceptive; they are not controlled by their pockets; they are not controlled by the tide of public opinion. Rather, they are controlled by God’s objective reality, the Word of truth (John 8:31-32; 17:17).

(1) The response is verbal abuse.

The praise of folly would have undoubtedly brought forth enthusiastic applause. But instead, as proof of man’s sinful irrationality, the cause of God’s truth is met with loathing and derision (Luke 23:20-23).

(2) The response is a call to violence.

Why does mankind as a whole rage and stimulate unending conflicts around the world? Because he is primarily averse to God (Ps. 2:1-3) and lusts after personal pleasures (Jas. 4:1-2). So these same reasons stimulate violence against these holy and peaceable pilgrims.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, §§ 132-139, pp. 41-43.

<sup>20</sup> Prov. 23:23; *John* 17:17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ps.* 2:1-3; *Acts* 19:23-41.

- b. The resulting confusion brings a preliminary examination.

So the men were taken aside for investigation; and those who presided at this enquiry asked them from where they came, and where they were going, and why they were so unusually dressed. *Christian* and *Faithful* told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in this world, and that they were traveling to their own country, which is called the *Heavenly Jerusalem*,<sup>22</sup> and that they had not given any cause for the men of the *Town* or the merchants to abuse them, and to delay them in their journey. The only possible exception could be that when asked to buy some goods there, they responded that they would only buy the truth.

But the appointed examiners did not believe them, though they did regard them as madmen and lunatics, and likely to be the sort who would bring confusion to the *Fair*. Therefore they were detained to be beaten, then besmeared with dirt and caged in such a way as to be made a spectacle to all the men of the *Fair*.<sup>23</sup> And there they lay for some time while being made the objects of any man's sport or malice or revenge. Meanwhile, the governor of the *Fair* only continued to laugh at their plight.

The word spreads of the disturbance at the Fair so that a great and curious crowd gathers. The result is that business dealings almost come to a halt. With the scene becoming ugly, Beelzebub hastens to the now howling crowd and appoints some trusted associates to carry out an investigation. So the pilgrims are asked concerning their journey and strange attire.

- (1) The pilgrims declare they are strangers to the world.

With shameless honesty, they openly confess their radically different, other-worldly aspirations.

- (a) They are going to their own country.

As "strangers and exiles on the earth," they are seeking "a better country, that is a heavenly one" (Heb. 11:13-16). This spiritual Jerusalem is the very antithesis of materialistic Vanity Fair.

- (b) They have given no cause for abuse.

As admitted "aliens and strangers," they desire a swift passage through Vanity Fair so as to avoid "fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). They have spurned many promotional offers since the only commodity they desire, namely truth, does not appear to be on sale. However, they are guiltless of any impropriety worthy of ill-treatment.

<sup>22</sup> Heb. 11:13-16; *I Pet.* 1:1; 2:11.

<sup>23</sup> *I Cor.* 4:9, 13.

- (2) The examiners declare they are mad trouble-makers.

The day following Bunyan's momentous arrest at a rural conventicle [clandestine Nonconformist meeting], the accusing Mr. Justice Wingate declared to the tinker that "he would break the neck of their meetings." At that very hour the local vicar, Dr. Lindale, appeared and entering into the fray, as Bunyan relates, "fell to taunting me with many reviling terms."<sup>24</sup> So these events may well be portrayed at this initial stage in the pilgrims' arraignment when they are falsely accused of being disturbing lunatics and idiots.



Christian and Faithful taken captive

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<sup>24</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, pp. 51-52.

- (a) They beat and besmear them.

Since we have no evidence of Bunyan suffering physical beating, it is safe to say that here he intends to portray the beating down and defilement of the soul.

It is not a bag of money, or the punishing of the carcass . . . that will please or satisfy him [Satan]. It is the soul that he aims at; the ruin of the precious soul that he hath bent himself to bring to pass.<sup>25</sup>

- (b) They cage and display them.

Recalling the human freaks, animal oddities, and raucous side-shows of Sturbridge Fair near Cambridge, p. 194), Bunyan may have in mind Paul's confession that "we have become a spectacle to the world. . . . the scum of the world, the dregs of all things" (I Cor. 4:9, 13).

3. By conflicting opinion and re-examination.

Of course, had these pilgrims agreed to freely trade at Vanity Fair, their release would have been immediate. So Sharrock comments:

At any time, merely by undertaking not to preach again to a public assembly, Bunyan might have obtained his release: this is the measure of his courage and of the degree of personal integrity he had achieved once his religious doubts were at rest.<sup>26</sup>

- a. The pilgrims' testimony promotes division.

But the pilgrims remained patient and never returned abuse for abuse received; on the contrary, they only blessed while speaking good words for bad, and acted kindly in the face of brutal treatment.<sup>27</sup> However, some men at the *Fair*, who were more discerning and less prejudiced than most, began to restrain the more degraded types and accuse them of continual abuse of the captives.<sup>28</sup> In response, these baser sort let fly at there challengers and began to regard them as bad as the caged pilgrims; they accused them of being accomplices and worthy of receiving the same mistreatment. The others then replied that as far as they could see, the two transients were quiet, sober, and harmless in nature; further they regarded many who attended the *Fair* as being much more worthy of being caged, yes, and pilloried as well, than the men presently being assailed. So after an exchange of a variety of opinions on both sides, while at the same time the pilgrims themselves behaved both wisely and soberly, the opposing groups began to physically assault and injure each other.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 696.

<sup>26</sup> John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. Roger Sharrock, p. xxv.

<sup>27</sup> *Rom. 12:17-21; I Thess. 2:1-12; I Pet. 3:9.*

<sup>28</sup> *Acts 17:7.*

While Christian and Faithful maintain a holy separateness, yet this evident distinction is at the same time a witness which generates the seeds of an awakening. Undoubtedly Hopeful and “many more of the men in the Fair”, like Paul (Acts 7:58-60), are challenged by this uncompromising testimony.<sup>29</sup>

- (1) They are treated as objects of sport.

As non-participants, both their unusual clothing and uncommon speech are mocked. Following his arrest, Bunyan was derided as a tinker, a biblical literalist, a pestilent fellow, as one ignorant of Greek, as being possessed by the Devil.<sup>30</sup>

- (2) They respond with blessing and good words.

With the spirit of Christ resting on them, they exchange good for evil, blessing for cursing, patience for hysteria, kindness for malice (Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20-21; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:21-23).

- (3) They draw a sympathetic following.

Through the agency of discriminating grace, some observers prove to be less prejudiced; consequently, they oppose the brutality of the baser sort. Jesus Christ encountered this same timid support which, when put to the test, did not amount to much (John 7:12-13).

- (4) They promote violent disagreement.

While Christian and Faithful remain calm and sober as objects of blatant injustice, yet their righteous testimony stimulates bitter division between the two emerging factions. Jesus Christ is the universal divider of men (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; Acts 17:4-5, 32-34; 28:24). The two factions are:

- (a) The moderate sympathizers.

Like Pilate (Luke 23:4), they have a sense of justice that is able to discern injustice. They know of thieves and pickpockets at the Fair who are far more worthy of this type of condemnation. However, like Pilate (Luke 23:23-25), they lack moral courage.

- (b) The militant antagonists.

Like the chief priests (Luke 23:10, 18), they are willfully blind to the evident godliness and innocence of the two pilgrims. Their resulting fury knows no bounds; they even charge their neighbors with complicity; they physically abuse them so that worldly gaiety gives way to worldly savagery.

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<sup>29</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 225.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 50-62.

b. The pilgrims' testimony promotes further investigation.

Then the two prisoners were again brought before their examiners and charged with being guilty of causing the recent disturbance at the *Fair*. As a result they beat them unmercifully, hung them in irons, and paraded them in chains up and down the streets of the *Fair*; this being intended to make them an example and warning to the citizens lest any should be tempted to defend the pilgrims or associate themselves with the them. But *Christian* and *Faithful* behaved themselves with increasing wisdom while continuing to have humiliation and shame cast upon them; yet with so much meekness and patience, they did begin to win to their side a comparative few of the men at the *Fair*. This caused the more militant opponents to only rage all the more, so much so that they now sought the death penalty for the prisoners. Therefore they announced that not merely the cage and irons were sufficient to satisfy them, but that the strangers should die on account of the damage they had caused and the deception of some of the men of the *Fair*.<sup>31</sup>

While Bunyan draws upon his own interrogation and incarceration at the hands of the world, both religious and civil, he also appears to identify Christian and Faithful with the trials, both religious and civil, and persecution of the Lord Jesus Christ during Passion Week.

(1) They are severely beaten and humiliated.

Like their Lord they are prejudicially condemned before trial (John 11:53), mercilessly beaten and tortured (Matt. 26:67-68; 27:26-31; Luke 23:11; John 18:22-23), and derisively paraded before the citizens of Vanity (John 18:13-15).

(2) They respond with meekness and patience.

Like their Lord they respond with passive non-resistance that reflects the graces of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:4-7; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 6:11; Tit. 3:1-2; I Pet. 2:21-31). As a result, a few observers are persuaded of the power of the Gospel.

(3) They further enrage their opponents.

Like their Lord who suffered the growing hatred of the Jewish religious leaders (John 11:49-50), they are the objects of intensifying venom that plots to eliminate all opposition.

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<sup>31</sup> *John 3:19.*

- (a) Being deemed worthy of death.

Public ridicule, imprisonment, and iron shackles are now deemed to be too lenient as punishment for the trouble they have supposedly caused. Now only death will satisfy their evil craving.

- (b) Being remanded for trial by judge and jury.

Of course the intent here is not the upholding of justice, but rather the maintenance of unrighteousness in the face of the threat of righteousness (Ps. 2:2-3; John 3:19).



Caged Faithful and Christian

## c. The pilgrims' testing promotes the remembrance of Evangelist.

Then *Christian* and *Faithful* were remanded to the cage again until the process of law could deal with them. Here they were incarcerated with their feet fastened in the stocks.<sup>32</sup> Here also they recalled to mind what they had formerly heard from their faithful friend *Evangelist*; this caused them to be confirmed in their acceptance of the conditions and trials of the way since they had been told about them before they actually occurred. Now they also comforted each other by reasoning that whoever was chosen to suffer [unto death], he would indeed have the advantage. Therefore each man secretly desired that he might have the preference here; yet they both committed themselves to the all-wise and sovereign purposes of the *Almighty*; so being full of content, they rested in the condition in which they found themselves waiting to see how they would be disposed of.

In other words, there is the recall of recent sound pastoral counsel, and especially Evangelist's exhortation: "But when you are come to the Town [of Vanity], and shall find fulfilled what I have here related, then remember your friend and quit your selves like men; and commit the keeping of your souls to your God, as unto a faithful Creator"<sup>33</sup> (cf. John 16:1-4).

## (1) They desire to suffer, each more than the other.

Being dominated by a heavenly priority, that is preference for early entrance into the Celestial City, they compete for this privilege in the secrecy of, their hearts (Phil. 1:23). At the same time they tenderly comfort each other concerning the possibility of martyrdom.

## (2) They commit themselves to God's sovereign ways.

Evangelist's exhortation is heeded. The two pilgrims commit their souls to "a faithful Creator" (I Pet. 4:19), that is believing in his gracious sovereign oversight in the midst of fierce persecution (Rom. 8:31-39).

## (3) Application.

We are not to expect this world to act rationally with regard to the upholding of God's truth and righteousness. But we are to rest in the fact that God "remains faithful" (II Tim. 2:13), even when the world treats us unjustly and with malice. Thus in Bunyan's account of his imprisonment, he closes with these words of faithful resignation:

Thus have I, in short, declared the manner and occasion of my being in prison; where I lie waiting the good will of God, to do with me as he pleaseth; knowing that not one hair of my head can fall to the ground without the will

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<sup>32</sup> *Acts 16:24.*

<sup>33</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 126.

of my Father which is in heaven. Let the rage and malice of men be never so great, they can do no more, nor go no further, than God permits them; but when they have done their worst, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28).<sup>34</sup>

### C. The Formal Trial of Christian and Faithful.

Up to this point, there has been portrayed the more informal response of the societal world to the living embodiment of the truth of God. In other words, the rubbing of shoulders at a neighborly level has sparked a hostile reaction against Christian and Faithful. But at the more formal level of legislative government and establishment religion, for all their pretended judicious airs, tradition, and sophistication, yet they prove to be even more implacable in their aversion to authentic Christian testimony.

#### 1. The appointment of the pilgrims for trial.

When a convenient time had been determined, the prisoners were brought forth to be tried in order that they might be found guilty and condemned. So that time having come, they were brought before their enemies to be formally accused; the name of the appointed judge was *Lord Hate-good*. The accusation was essentially the same as what had already been declared, though it included some minor variation. The contents were as follows:

“That they [*Christian and Faithful*] were enemies of, and disturbers of the trading at the *Fair*; that they had caused both commotions and divisions in the *Town*, and had gained supporters for their most dangerous opinions, in contempt of the law of their *Prince [Beelzebub]*.”<sup>35</sup>

Notwithstanding its pretended claims of commitment to religious tolerance, the world is never content with the toleration of biblical Christianity. Not only here in the town of Vanity, but also in the City of Destruction, the towns of Deceit, Fair-speech, Love-gain, Apostasy, Graceless, and the Village of Morality, there is identical resistance to the gospel of the saving grace of God. This opposition will often use the cover of local ordinances to enforce the suppression of gospel truth.

#### a. The pilgrim Bunyan draws from his own experience.

Nonconformists had very good reason to be interested in the judicial processes of their time during the seventeenth century. With a state church in power during most of this period, they suffered much at the hands of oppressive legal zealots such as the notorious Judge Jeffreys and other enforcers of religious conformity. Likewise, Bunyan reflects this concern in several ways. In *The Holy War* he describes in detail the trials of the Diabolonians,<sup>36</sup> and the Doubters.<sup>37</sup> Being trials

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., I, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> *Acts 19:25*. There is also a reflection here of Bunyan’s indictment in 1661 as a “disturbance and great distraction.”

<sup>36</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, pp. 309-317.

of the ungodly, they provide a stark contrast with the trial before us at the town of Vanity. And then there is Bunyan's account of his own legal trials entitled *A Relation Of My Imprisonment* included in *Grace Abounding*.<sup>38</sup>

- (1) He suffered from Satan's governance of the world.

Like Christian and Faithful, instead of trafficking with the world, he engaged it with true gospel testimony. On the day of his arrest, just before the constable led him away, Bunyan addressed the house meeting as follows:

It was a mercy to suffer upon so good account: For we might have been apprehended as thieves or murderers, or for other wickedness; but blessed be God it was not so, but we suffer as Christians for well doing.<sup>39</sup>

- (2) He suffered from unjust state tyranny.

At Bunyan's formal trial in January of 1661, before a bench of five magistrates, he confessed to not attending the parish [Anglican] church nor using the Prayer Book. Brown then relates:

At length Bunyan's direct utterances seemed to one of the magistrates to be assuming a form so dangerous that he was for stopping him; but Kelynge [chairman of that Session] said there was nothing to fear, the Prayer Book was in no danger, "having been ever since the Apostles' time," a fact apparently not known to any church historian previous to Kelynge.<sup>40</sup>

At the conclusion of his three months sentence, Brown also adds that "without any farther indictment or sentence, and therefore in defiance of Habeas Corpus [a new written indictment], Bunyan was kept a prisoner for the next six years."<sup>41</sup>

- b. The two pilgrims are to be tried with prejudice.

This "kangaroo court," being so prejudicial, most likely reflects Bunyan's own unjust treatment when on trial. He recounts that "they [the five presiding magistrates] often said, that I was possessed with the spirit of delusion, and of the Devil. All which sayings, I passed over, the Lord forgive them!"<sup>42</sup>

- (1) The presiding judge is Lord Hategood.

The likelihood is that Lord Hategood represents the harsh style of Sir John Kelynge, one of Bunyan's judges, rather than Judge Jeffreys who so mistreated Richard Baxter. Brown describes one instance representative of

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 366-369.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., I, pp. 50-62.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., I, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup> John Brown, *John Bunyan*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

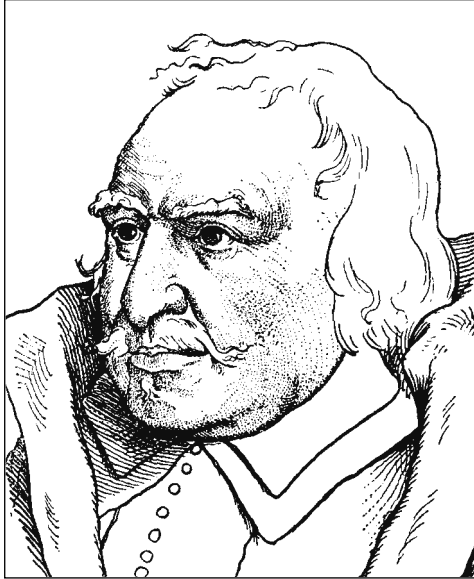
<sup>42</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. 56.

Kelynge's harsh style as follows: "In violent overbearing way he once fined a jury a hundred marks apiece for acquitting a few poor people who had met for worship with Bibles but without Prayer Books."<sup>43</sup>

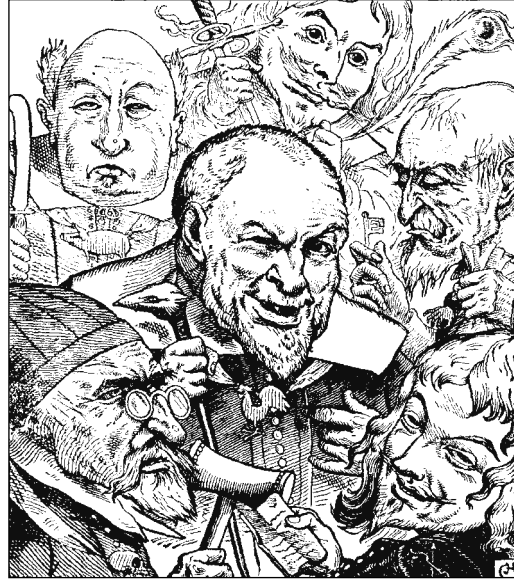
(2) The perverse indictment is read.

The allusion here is not only to the bill of indictment brought against Bunyan (p. 10 ), but also to the charge of the Ephesian silversmiths by which they accused Paul of diminishing their trade in the manufacture of idols (Acts 19:24:28). In all likelihood these pilgrims had broken the laws of Vanity. Yet for them a higher law must prevail, and that is the rule of the righteous will of God (Acts 5:29). Specifically they are accused of being:

- (a) Commercial interlopers, with objectionable merchandise.
- (b) Social schismatics, with a dislike for unity.
- (c) Treasonous heretics, with a hatred for Beelzebub's rule.



Justice Lord Hate-good



His honorable friends

<sup>43</sup> John Brown, *John Bunyan*, p. 142.

## 2. The initial defense of Faithful.

Then *Faithful* gave his answer, explaining that he had only spoken against that which had asserted itself against the *Highest*. He further said, “As for causing a disturbance, I made none since I am a man of peace; the party that began to support us were persuaded through their recognition of our truth and innocence, and thus they turned from a worse condition to a better. And as for the king that you talk about, since he is *Beelzebub*, the enemy of our *Lord*, I defy him and all his hellish angels.”<sup>44</sup>

There is something of the character of Stephen evident in Faithful's stance here, namely a spirit that is utterly honest and forthright, and a lance that sorely wounds diseased souls (Acts 6:8-7:60).

- a. As their Lord is Lord of all, he must be obeyed.

Beelzebub must be opposed because he is a usurper (Is. 14:13-14) who encourages the citizens of Vanity to prefer his lordship (Gen. 3:4-5) rather than that of the true Lord of the land (Matt. 4:8-9).

- b. As men of peace, they gained followers by truth.

However, Vanity does not trade in truth; it is a restricted import (John 8:44-45). Hence, its sudden emergence did cause surprise, but only because of the superior competition it provided for falsehood. Besides, those who did buy this new product became much improved in their health (John 8:32).

- c. As Beelzebub is their Lord's enemy, he must be defied.

No mediated trade negotiations are possible. The corrupt product and its designer must be denounced at all costs. Stephen, “having the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15), did not fear to address those “gnashing their teeth at him” (Acts 7:54) and accuse them of being “stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” (Acts 7:51).

## 3. The perverse witnesses for the prosecution.

Then it was proclaimed that those who had anything to say in support of their *Lord* the *King* against the prisoner at the bar should immediately appear to so testify. So there came forward three witnesses, namely *Envy*,<sup>45</sup> *Superstition* [*formal religion, popery*], and *Pickthank* [*a self-serving tell-tale*]. They were then asked if they knew the prisoner at the bar, and what they had to say in support of their *Lord* the *King* against him.

<sup>44</sup> Acts 5:29; 6:8-7:60..

<sup>45</sup> Matt. 27:18.

Kelman comments: “The words of the three witnesses are little more than a paraphrase of Faithful’s own confessions. Yet they have the subtle power of putting every detail into a base instead of a heroic light. This is the fine art of lying.”<sup>46</sup> But further, while the recollections of Faithful’s denunciations in *Vanity* are generally true, yet there is an intentional avoidance of any mention of the true gospel which, as Hopeful later recounts, was also powerfully proclaimed.<sup>47</sup>

a. Envy takes the stand.

*Envy* was first to testify, and he spoke this way, “My *Lord*, I have known this man a long time, and will attest under oath before this honorable bench that he is —”

JUDGE: Hold on a moment; first administer the oath to him.

So he was sworn in to tell the truth.

Then *Envy* continued, “My *Lord*, this man, in spite of his plausible name, is one of the vilest men in our country; he regards neither our *Prince* nor his people, laws, or customs; rather he does all that he can to persuade the men of our *Town* concerning his subversive ideas, which in general he declares to be principles of faith and holiness.<sup>48</sup> And in particular, I myself once heard him assert that *Christianity* and the customs of our *Town of Vanity* were diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled. Now, my *Lord*, by this statement he not only condemns all of our praiseworthy good works, but also ourselves in our doing of them.”

JUDGE: Have you anything more to say?

ENVY: My *Lord*, I could say a great deal more, only I would not weary the court with this detail. Yet, if it is necessary, when the other gentlemen have given their evidence, to avoid any lack of testimony that might allow the prisoner to go free, I would be willing to declare further evidence.

his personalised vice was also embodied in Mr. Badman. It could fester for seven years and then make its full weight known as a cat pouncing upon a mouse. “This envy is the very father and mother of a great many hideous and prodigious wickednesses. . . . It rotteth the very bones of him that entertains it [Prov. 14:30]. . . . It is envy that is the very nursery of whisperings, debates, backbitings, slanders, reproaches, murders, &c.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> John Kelman, *The Road*, I, p. 225.

<sup>47</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 153.

<sup>48</sup> *Acts 16:20-21; 17:7*.

<sup>49</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, pp. 647-648

- (1) He slanders Faithful out of secret admiration.

This is one of the most nauseous features of human depravity. Yet Envy here secretly admires he who he denounces as “one of the vilest men in our Country.” And such was the treatment measured out to Joseph by his brethren (Acts 7:9) and Jesus Christ by his religious adversaries (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10). Envy is the most corrupt form of selfishness.

- (2) He accuses Faithful of treason.

This would be true only if Faithful claimed citizenship in Vanity. Rather he is a legitimate alien in transit and therefore, at worst, only worthy of expulsion. Now with this Envy probably agrees, except that he desires the most cruel form of banishment that can be devised, namely extinction!

- (a) This alien promotes faith and holiness.

His foreign produce is unpalatable to the carnal mind, condemned by Beelzebub, and not to be compared with the popular appeal of skepticism, human achievement, and amoral relativism.

- (b) This alien opposes Vanity with Christianity.

He does not seek for compromise with Vanity so that a synthesis of ideas might result. Rather he claims that Christianity is true and Vanity is false. He does not “hesitate between two opinions” (I Kings 18:21). Rather he calls for “repentance toward God” (Acts 20:21), not negotiation.

- (c) This alien condemns loyal Vanity citizens.

Their lifestyle is denounced as “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings,” and thus they are personally identified as aliens to “the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

- (3) He offers further prolonged accusation.

His malice knows no limit. Neither has his storehouse of slander been emptied. These vices must only be played out for maximum effect. He will assist Lord Hategood in whatever way will best bring about the demise of Faithful, just as the religious leaders of Jerusalem killed the prophets and Jesus Christ (Matt. 23:37).

## b. Superstition takes the stand.

So the *Judge* requested that he remain at the trial in case his further testimony was needed. Following this *Superstition* was called to the stand and told to look toward the prisoner; then he was also asked what he could say in defense of their *Lord* the *King* against him. Having been sworn in, then he commenced to testify.

SUPERSTITION: My *Lord*, I have had no great acquaintance with this man, nor do I desire to have any further knowledge of him. However, this I do know, that he is a very pestilent [*troublesome*] fellow,<sup>50</sup> and from some discussion that I had with him in this *Town* the other day, I distinctly heard him declare that our religion was vain, and it was of the type by which it would be impossible for a man to please *God*. Now, my *Lordship*, you very well know what conclusively follows from such sayings; it is that we are presently continuing in this vain worship and as a result remain in our sins, and finally shall be damned. So this is what I have to say.

Vanity was not void of religion, though its religion was void of any holy influences upon sinful hearts. Early Sunday morning services were replete with gorgeous robes, priestly incantations, fragrant incense, glistening symbolism, responsive prayers, and mystical music. But immediately following their conclusion, the communicants were quick to be engaged, as usual, in every form of revelry that the Fair had to offer. Such was the religion of Superstition.

## (1) He is encouraged to be prejudiced.

The irony here is that this witness is sworn in only after agreeing to give a slanted testimony. His cause is not the upholding of truth, but rather the satisfaction of Lord Hategood, who, no doubt, attends the same church as Superstition.

## (2) He describes Faithful's teaching as a plague.

While Formalist scornfully laughed at the testimony of Christian,<sup>51</sup> Superstition similarly objects to the testimony of Faithful, as if his manner and message were leprous (I Cor. 1:23). His specific criticism is of Faithful's teaching that:

## (a) Vanity religion displeases God.

In other words, vain religion is utilitarian religion that gives priority to self-indulgence rather than the supremacy and glory of God. Vain religion is full of man and empty of the only living and true God, formal acknowledgement notwithstanding (Mark 7:6-8).

<sup>50</sup> *Acts 24:5*.

<sup>51</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p.104.

## (b) Vanity worship is empty.

For all the pomp, order, and zeal, yet such formal worship ignores the vital issue of God's revealed means of reconciliation, namely justification of the individual sinful soul in the sight of a holy God by grace through faith. Hence, Vanity religion is empty because it is unacceptable (Is. 1:10-15; Luke 20:46-47).

## (c) Vanity citizens are condemned.

According to God's assessment of their condition, they remain in their sins, whatever they may otherwise think (John 8:24). As a consequence, they continue to qualify for the judgment of God.

## c. Pickthank takes the stand.

Then was *Pickthank* sworn in, and he was also asked what he knew, in support of their *Lord* the *King*, against the prisoner at the bar.

PICKTHANK: My *Lord*, and all of your gentlemen, I have known this fellow for a long time and heard him speak of things that ought not to be spoken. For he has denounced our noble *Prince Beelzebub*, and spoken contemptuously of his honorable friends, whose names are the *Lord Old Man*, the *Lord Carnal Delight*, the *Lord Luxurious*, the *Lord Desire of Vain-glory*, my old *Lord Lechery* [*Lusty*], *Sir Having Greedy*, with all of the rest of our nobility.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, he has said that if it were possible for all men to be of his opinion, then not one of these noblemen would anymore reside in this *Town*. Besides, he has not been afraid of reviling even you, my *Lord*, who are now appointed to be his judge; he has called you an ungodly villain, along with many other slanderous names; most of the gentry of our *Town* have been similarly smeared.

Thus when this *Pickthank* had concluded giving his evidence, the *Judge* directed his speech toward the prisoner at the bar, saying, "You deserter of the truth, you heretic and traitor; have you heard what these honest gentlemen have testified against you?"

A "pickthank" is a servile flatterer, one who informs for favor, that is an individual who "picks" on others for personal "thanks." So this Pickthank seeks to curry favor with Lord Hategood at the expense of Faithful.

## (1) He is encouraged to be prejudiced.

Being beholden to personal aggrandizement rather than the unadorned truth, Pickthank makes an oath to declare only that select and embellished evidence that will suit his purpose.

<sup>52</sup> Sins are all Lords, and great ones.

- (2) He describes Faithful's disrespect for Vanity aristocracy.

Addressing both judge and jury, he appeals to that reactive spirit in the natural man which becomes so defensive and full of rage when confronted with truthful accusations that must be redefined as personal slander. As with Envy and Superstition, this witness also knows more about the integrity of Faithful than it is convenient for him to disclose.

- (a) Faithful has ignobly opposed Beelzebub.

In truth he exposed the treachery of Beelzebub and the demonic members of his household (Matt. 10:24-25).

- (b) Faithful has discourteously opposed Beelzebub's friends.

In truth he exposed the hypocrisy of a ruling aristocracy and recommended righteous government (Prov. 14:34).

- (c) Faithful has dishonorably opposed Lord Hategood.

In truth he exposed a corrupt judiciary that ought to be both condemned and purged (John 7:24).



Envy, Superstition, Pickthank

## 4. The rebuttal of Faithful against his accusers.

FAITHFUL: May I speak a few words in my own defense?<sup>53</sup>

JUDGE: You contemptible fellow! You good-for-nothing vagrant! You do not deserve to live any longer, but rather to be immediately put to death here and now. Yet so that all men may recognize our gentleness toward you, let us hear what you have to say.<sup>54</sup>

With seething prejudice, Judge Lord Hategood delivers a verbal lashing to Faithful that lacks any semblance of expected impartiality and self-control. It is reminiscent of the many depreciating terms that were used to belittle Bunyan when on trial, especially with regard to his unlearned tinker status. So again, this Judge has, according to his ungodly bias, once again disqualified himself. Thus Faithful is prompted to request an opportunity to defend himself.

- a. He is called upon with prejudice.

“Sirrah” is a contemptuous form of address, a variant of “Sir” intended to convey an overbearing manner. So Judge Hategood indicates to Faithful that his condemnation is in reality certain, in spite of whatever defense he might make.

- b. He only spoke God’s Word, regardless of Mr. Envy.

FAITHFUL: First, in reply to what *Mr. Envy* has declared, I never said anything except that whatever rules or laws or customs or people are plainly opposed to the *Word of God*, they are also diametrically opposite to *Christianity*. If anything that I have said in this regard is incorrect, then do persuade me of my error; I am more than willing to renounce my folly, if you can clearly prove it.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast with his accuser, there is no vitriolic response born of hidden festering resentment. Rather self is wholly subject to the court of truth, that is the Word of God, and even willing repentance if necessary (Act 25:10-11). As we shall soon see, Judge Hategood was not ignorant of Scripture, just perverse in his handling of it.

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<sup>53</sup> *Acts 22:1.*

<sup>54</sup> *Acts 22:22.*

<sup>55</sup> *John 18:23; Acts 25:11.*

- c. He only spoke God's revealed truth, regardless of Mr. Superstition.

Second, as to the charge that *Mr. Superstition* brought against me, I can only say this, that in the true worship of *God* a divine faith is required; but there can be no divine faith without a divine revelation of the will of *God*. Therefore, whatever is employed in the worship of *God*, that is not in agreement with divine revelation, cannot be sourced in anything else than human faith, which faith will not result in eternal life.<sup>56</sup>

This touches upon the nerve of Bunyan's reason for enduring imprisonment for the cause of Christian liberty in worship. Faith based upon divine revelation must prevail over form such as was enforced upon Nonconformists via the Book of Common Prayer. In commenting on the difference between the worship offered to God by Cain and Abel, Bunyan makes the same point again:



Faithful's rebuttal

<sup>56</sup> *The Puritan regulative principle concerning right worship.*

The difference therefore that was between these worshippers, it lay not in that they worshipped divers gods, but in that they worshipped the same God in a diverse manner: The one in faith, the other without; the one as righteous, the other as wicked. And even thus it is between us and our adversaries: We worship not divers gods, but the same God in a diverse manner: We according to faith; and they according to their OWN INVENTIONS.<sup>57</sup>

- d. He only spoke plainly, regardless of Mr. Pickthank.

Third, concerning what *Mr. Pickthank* had to say, while avoiding those abusive terms that I have been accused of using, nevertheless I say that the *Prince* of this *Town*, and all of the attending rabble that he has appointed, are more fit for being in *Hell* than in this *Town* and country; and so may the *Lord* have mercy upon me.

Being sensitive to the charge of having an abusive and contemptuous manner, yet Faithful does not in the slightest degree diminish his prophetic earnestness and forthrightness. Having already proclaimed the gospel to this community, he does not hesitate in declaring the judgment of God against gospel despisers. Hence, his accusers are deserving of punishment in Hell.

5. The summation of Judge Lord Hategood to the jury.

Then the *Judge* addressed the jury who all this while had been watching and listening nearby. “Gentlemen of the jury, you see this man who has been the center of a violent controversy in this *Town*;<sup>58</sup> you have also heard what these worthy gentlemen have testified against him; furthermore you have listened to his reply and confession. It now rests in your heartfelt decision as to whether he should live or die. Nevertheless, I believe it is proper that I should instruct you about the precedents of our law.”

For all his outward performance in legal protocol, this man not only “hates the good,” but he is also determined to “crush the good.” Darkness cannot tolerate the light of righteousness; rather it must attempt to extinguish the radiance of holiness (John 1:5; 3:19).

- a. The witnesses are “worthy Gentlemen.”

While Judge Hategood may be likened to Pilate, and the witnesses for the prosecution to Judas, the jury may also be paralleled by Annas, Caiaphas, and the whole Jewish Sanhedrin. Stephen also suffered at the hands of some of these same “worthy Gentlemen” (Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60).

<sup>57</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, II, p. 444.

<sup>58</sup> *Acts 19:28-41*.

- b. The sentence can be either hanging or pardon.

The tyranny experienced by the Nonconformists during the Restoration monarchy of King Charles II was, to some degree, intended recompense for the execution of King Charles I by the Commonwealth Parliament of Oliver Cromwell. Hence, Offor draws upon Macaulay's *History of England* in commenting that: "In many cases the justices considered a field preacher to be equally guilty of regicide [king slaying]." <sup>59</sup>

- c. The law of the land needs explanation.

"In the days of *Pharaoh the Great*, a servant of our *Prince*, there was an act made that addressed the danger of those who would promote false religion and cause it to multiply in our midst and thus overcome the whole realm. So it was decreed that the males of such false prophets should be thrown into the river. <sup>60</sup> There was another act made in the days of *King Nebuchadnezzar the Great*, also a servant of our *Prince*; it declared that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden image should be thrown into a fiery furnace." <sup>61</sup>

"Yet another act was established in the days of *King Darius*, that whoever, for an appointed period of time, would call upon any other god than he himself should be cast into the lions' den. <sup>62</sup> Now this rebel has broken the substance of these laws, not only in thought, which is not an indictable offence, but also in word and deed; therefore these actions cannot be tolerated."

"Concerning the law of *Pharaoh*, it was promulgated for the purpose of preventing trouble before it had actually happened. But in this instance, an actual crime is all too apparent. With regard to the second and third precedents, you will notice how the prisoner also argues against our religion in much the same way. Therefore on account of the treason which he has openly confessed to, he deserves to die as a criminal."

When on trial in January of 1660, the Chief justice, Sir John Kelynge disputed concerning the Bedford tinker's claim to the right to preach without restriction. Bunyan justified his conviction from Scripture, and the ensuing dispute as to the meaning of I Peter 4:10-11 resulted in the Chief justice coming off the worse. Bunyan then recounts: "He said he was not so well versed in Scripture as to dispute on words to that purpose. And he said, moreover, that they could not wait upon me any longer." <sup>63</sup> So Judge Hategood, while being correct in offering the assistance of legal precedents, is yet abysmally ignorant and even perverse concerning the biblical cases he sets forth.

<sup>59</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. xlvii.

<sup>60</sup> Exod. 1:8-22.

<sup>61</sup> Dan. 3:1-30.

<sup>62</sup> Dan. 6:1-28.

<sup>63</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, p. 56.

- (1) The precedent established by Pharaoh.

Pharaoh the Great, a servant of Prince Beelzebub, opposed a foreign religion by having the newborn males of this sect thrown into the Nile (Ex. 1:15-22). However, Pharaoh's command did not prevail so that Egyptians were eventually despoiled by the Hebrews and judged by God.

- (2) The precedent established by Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar the Great, another servant of Prince Beelzebub, was also challenged by this same foreign religion. Because the members of this sect would not worship his image, they were thrown into a fiery furnace (Dan. 3:1-30). However, these foreigners were delivered by their God and Nebuchadnezzar was converted to their faith.

- (3) The precedent established by Darius.

Darius the Great, yet another servant of Prince Beelzebub, was similarly confronted with this identical foreign religion. Because one leading member of this sect would not pray to the king as the only god, he was thrown into a den of lions (Dan. 6:1-28). However, this foreigner was delivered by his God and Darius was converted to his faith.

- (4) Faithful is guilty according to these precedents.

He has transgressed the law of Vanity in thought, word, and deed. Yet it totally escapes the understanding of Judge Hategood that these same precedents promise the vindication and deliverance of Faithful.

- (a) This rebel exceeds the precedent standards.

While Pharaoh took merely preventative action, this criminal's overt rebellion calls for the most stringent penalty. Again, not being merely content with silent and private dissent, this bigoted antagonist certainly merits the punishment of a Nebuchadnezzar or Darius on account of his treasonous opposition to the state religion of Vanity.

- (b) This rebel deserves to die.

Bunyan himself was threatened with death. At the end of his trial in January of 1660, Chief Justice Kelynge declared:

Hear your judgment. You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following; 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.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-57.

6. The perverse jury delivers its unanimous verdict.

If Cheever is correct in his conviction that: “Nothing can be more masterly than the satire contained in this trial,”<sup>65</sup> then surely the apex of this caricature has now been reached. Yet we are now faced with an emotional dilemma. As Hammond reminds us: “Bunyan says in his prologue, some experiences invite both a comic and a tragic response - we really do not know whether to laugh or cry at this point.”<sup>66</sup>

a. The agreement of the jurists that Faithful is guilty.

Then the jury, whose names were *Mr. Blind-man*, *Mr. No-good*, *Mr. Malice*, *Mr. Love-lust*, *Mr. Live-loose*, *Mr. Heady*, *Mr. High-mind*, *Mr. Enmity*, *Mr. Liar*, *Mr. Cruelty*, *Mr. Hate-light*, and *Mr. Implacable*, retired to consider a verdict.<sup>67</sup> In consultation amongst themselves, each individual concluded that the prisoner was guilty, and so their verdict proved to be unanimous; for each jury member had voiced his condemnation. First, the foreman of the jury, *Mr. Blind-man* said, “I clearly see that this man is a heretic.” Then *Mr. No-good* said, “Let us be rid of such a fellow from the face of the *Earth*.”<sup>68</sup> “Yes,” said *Mr. Malice*, “for I hate the very appearance of this man.”

Then *Mr. Love-lust* said, “I could never tolerate him.” “Nor could I,” responded *Mr. Live-loose*, “for he would always be condemning my lifestyle.” “Hang him, hang him,” said *Mr. Heady*. “He is a sorry scrub [*ruffian*],” said *Mr. High-mind*. “My heart boils with anger against him,” said *Mr. Enmity*. “He is a rogue,” said *Mr. Liar*. “Hanging is too good for him,” said *Mr. Cruelty*. “Let us dispose of him immediately,” said *Mr. Hate-light*. Then *Mr. Implacable* said, “If I would be given the whole world, still I could not be reconciled to him; therefore, let us deliver our verdict and find him guilty of death.”

In contrast with this rogue’s gallery is the panel of twelve eminent jurists described in *The Holy War* who are appointed to judge certain Diabolonian scoundrels. They are Messrs. Belief, Trueheart, Upright, Hatebad, Lovegod, Seetruth, Heavenly-mind, Moderate, Thankful, Goodwork, Zeal-for-God, and Humble. Those on trial are Messrs. Athiest, Lustings, Incredulity, Forget-good, Hardheart, Falsepeace, Notruth, Pitiless, and Haughty.<sup>69</sup> However, here “twelve bad men and false” illustrate the essential weakness of consensus through the democratic process when the populace in general is ungodly. Undoubtedly each jurist is thoroughly convinced of Faithful’s guilt, even though their collective verdict is fundamentally unjust.

<sup>65</sup> George Cheever, *Lectures on Bunyan*, p. 236.

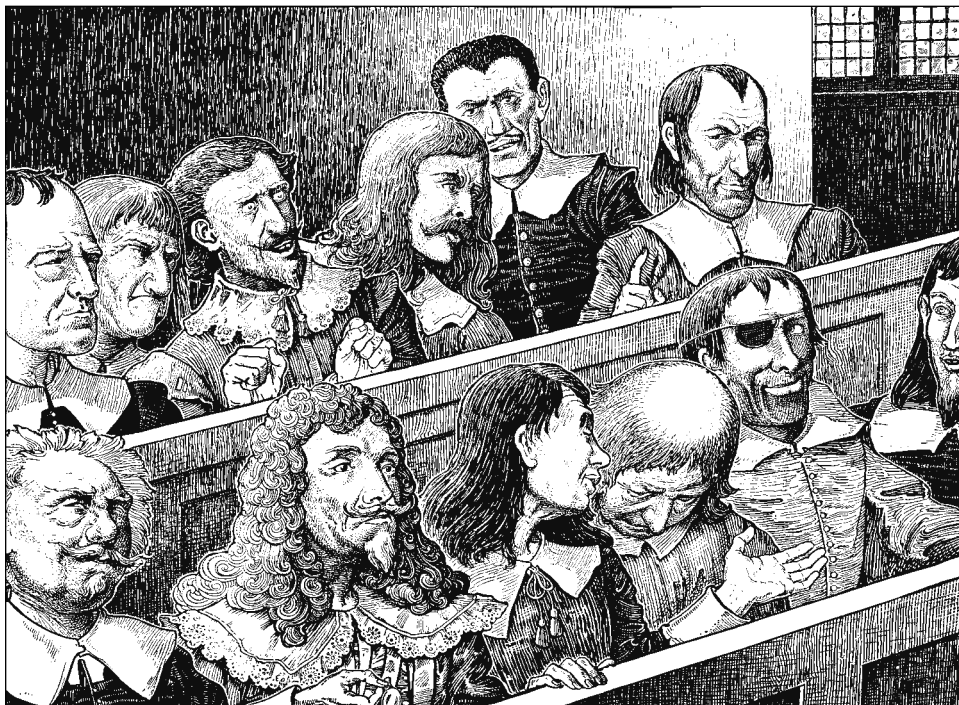
<sup>66</sup> Brean S. Hammond, “*The Pilgrim’s Progress*: Satire and Social Comment,” *The Pilgrim’s Progress, Critical and Historical Views*, ed. Vincent Newey, p. 121.

<sup>67</sup> *II Tim. 3:1-4*.

<sup>68</sup> *Acts 22:22*.

<sup>69</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, pp. 309-317.

- (1) Mr. Blind-man, the foreman declares: “I see clearly that this man is an Heretick” (John 9:39-41).
- (2) Mr. No-good says: “Away with such a fellow from the Earth” (Luke 23:18).
- (3) Mr. Malice says: “Ay. . . . for I hate the very looks of him” (I Cor. 5:8).
- (4) Mr. Love-lust says: “I could never endure him” (I John 2:16).
- (5) Mr. Live-loose says: “He would always be condemning my way” (Jas. 5:1, 5).
- (6) Mr. Heady says: “Hang him, hang him” (II Tim. 3:1-4).
- (7) Mr. High-mind says: “He is a sorry Scrub [ruffian]” (I Tim. 6:17).
- (8) Mr. Enmity says: “My heart riseth against him” (Jas. 4:4).
- (9) Mr. Liar says: “He is a Rogue” (Rev. 21:8).
- (10) Mr. Cruelty says: “Hanging is too good for him” (Heb. 11:35-38).
- (11) Mr Hate-light says: “Lets dispatch him out of the way” (John 3:19).
- (12) Mr. Implacable says: “Might I have all the World given me, I could not be reconciled to him, therefore let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death” (Rom. 1:28-32).



The jury considers its verdict

- b. The sentence of Faithful is to be most cruel.

So the *Judge*, having been advised of the jury's agreement, delivered his sentence. *Faithful* was condemned to be returned to his prison cell, and there to be put to death by means of the most cruel method possible.

According to John Brown,<sup>70</sup> Bunyan entered Bedford prison in 1660 with only two books, his Bible and a copy of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. It is the latter of these two volumes, with its reputation for the macabre, with which he seems to now draw upon as he describes the savagery of Faithful's punishment as a martyr. For a brief and modern vindication of Foxe's integrity as a historian, refer to S. M. Houghton's editorial introduction to d'Aubigne's *The Reformation in England*,<sup>71</sup> and especially the comment by C. S. Lewis.

#### D. The Parting of Christian and Faithful.

To some believers, like Faithful and Peter (John 21:18), is given the calling or martyrdom. Bunyan freely confesses his fear that in "climbing up the ladder of the gallows" he would, with "a pale face and tottering knees," yield to the enemy and bring reproach to the way of God. Then with a surge of faith he declares:

I am going on, and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no; if God doth not come in, . . . I will leap of the ladder even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell; Lord Jesus, if thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for thy Name.<sup>72</sup>

1. Faithful is executed with fiendish delight.

Therefore they brought the condemned prisoner out to execute him according to their law. First they scourged him, then they severely mauled [*battered*] him, after this they slashed his flesh with knives; further they stoned him and lanced him with their swords, and finally they burned him to ashes at the stake.<sup>73</sup> So *Faithful* came to his earthly end. Now I noticed that behind the watching multitude there stood a chariot and a pair of horses waiting for *Faithful*; for as soon as his adversaries had executed him, he was immediately placed in it and transported up through the clouds, with trumpet accompaniment, by means of the shortest route, to the gate of the *Celestial City*.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> John Brown, *John Bunyan*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>71</sup> S. M. Houghton, *The Reformation in England*, II, pp. 1314.

<sup>72</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, I, §§ 333-339, p. 49.

<sup>73</sup> *Matt. 26:67; 27:26; John 18:31; 19:7; Heb. 11:36-38*. There is also allusion here to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.

<sup>74</sup> *II Kings 2:11*.

Just as the timid influences of Nicodemus (John 3:1-2; 7:50-52) and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38) were of little effect upon the fierce opposition of the Jewish Sanhedrin to Jesus Christ, so the moderate forces in Vanity seem to have dissipated as a restraining influence. Instead, the rage of the natural man against embodied righteousness is vented with devilish orchestration against one, “of whom the world was not worthy” (Heb. 11:38).

a. He is unmercifully tormented.

The variety of tortures that Bunyan describes is undoubtedly drawn from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, though such extreme physical abuse has frequently been the experience of faithful souls throughout the Christian era, as Scripture foretells (John 16:2; 1 Cor. 4:13; Heb. 11:35-37). Eusebius writes in the second century of a Christian lady named Blandina who was martyred in Lyons, France. In seeking a pagan confession from her, “men were weary and faint who were torturing her by turns from morning till evening in every manner. . . . And, after the scourging, after the wild beasts, after the roasting-seat, she was finally enclosed in a net, and thrown before a bull. . . . And the heathen themselves confessed that never among them had a woman endured so many and such terrible tortures.”<sup>75</sup>



Faithful is martyred

<sup>75</sup> H. M. Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*, pp. 67-79).

- b. He is mercifully translated.

The triumphal welcome of Faithful into heaven, so vividly alluding to the translation of Elijah into heaven (II Kings 2:11), well portrays the sanctifying process of “the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow (I Pet. 1:11; cf. 2:21-23). In *The House Of The Forest Of Lebanon*, Bunyan quotes at length from the letter of an Italian martyr, Pomponius Algerius, as recorded in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*. This prison epistle includes the following: “In this world there is no mansion firm to me; and therefore I will travel up to the New Jerusalem which is in heaven, and which offereth itself to me, without paying any fine or income.”<sup>76</sup>

2. Christian is remanded for further consideration.

But as for *Christian*, he had some relief in the midst of this agonizing situation in his being remanded back to prison. So there he remained for a period of time. Nevertheless, he that overrules all things, having the power of their rage in the palm of his hand,<sup>77</sup> ordered events in such a way that *Christian* was enabled, on that occasion, to escape from the *Town* and continue on his way.

And as he went along, he sang:

Well *Faithful*, you have faithfully professed  
 Unto your *Lord*: with him you will be blessed;  
 When faithless ones, with all their vain delights,  
 Are crying out under their hellish plights.  
 Sing, *Faithful*, sing; and let your name survive;  
 For though they killed you, yet you are alive.<sup>78</sup>

The chief character is brought to the fore again, although now he is tempted to be overcome with feelings of grief and loneliness. Has he not watched the intense suffering of his beloved friend at the hands of evil men? And does he not long for the encouragement of Christian companionship? But no, there is a triumphant note at the promotion of Faithful, and undoubtedly wonderment at the sovereignty of God’s ways. So he ponders - Why was only Faithful martyred? And why am I allowed to escape from Vanity? So he also sings.

- a. He is released by the confounding power of his Lord.

God can cause “the wrath of man to praise Him” (Ps. 76:10), even through the death or deliverance of a child of God. Here God’s sovereignty opens a prison door so that Christian might escape the evil machinations of Vanity.

<sup>76</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, III, p. 531.

<sup>77</sup> *Ps. 76:10*.

<sup>78</sup> *Rev. 14:13*.

- b. He is joyful in song as he progresses further ahead.

But how can Christian joyfully sing when his best friend has just been executed? Because his best friend was true to his Lord. Because his best friend is now with his Lord. Because his best friend's Lord will justly deal with the ungodly of Vanity at a future day. Because his best friend is now singing in heaven to the praise of his Lord.



Faithful translated to the Celestial City