

The Pilgrim's Progress
Chapter 16—"The Pilgrims' Discussion About Little Faith"
October 22, 2014

"I've been in the fray before now. And yet, as you see, I'm alive through the goodness of Him who is best. Yet I can't boast of my manhood." - Christian

A number of lanes are attached to the narrow way, though in every instance they represent either a false gospel or a pathway to destruction. (Village of Morality, Doubting Castle, Country of Conceit, Danger and Destruction at the Hill Difficulty and Deadman's Lane). The road to heaven increasingly becomes crowded with a mixed multitude.

1. Ignorance (commentators think this "dreaming again is when Bunyan was released from prison)

A. A description of Ignorance
1. From the Country of Conceit (conceit = excessive appreciation of one's own worth or virtue)

2. A very spirited (full of energy, animation, or courage) lad (a male person of any age between early boyhood and maturity)

3. Wise in his own eyes
4. Ignorance: destitute of knowledge or education. (also : lacking knowledge or comprehension of the thing specified)

5. The character of Ignorance is a type of many that have no conviction of their sin and are unconscious of their wicked heart and their inability to save themselves.
B. The "faith" of Ignorance

1. Believed that his works would gain him automatic entrance into the Celestial City
2. He believed that everyone could follow their own religion and enter the Celestial City
3. Knew that the Wicket Gate was far from the Country of Conceit and didn't think that anyone in the country knew the way and it was easier to follow the crooked lane (which he thought was fine and pleasant) (John 10:1)

"the spake of Christ, and expected to be saved only by him, but it was in such a way as if Christ died to give the sinner's own works a saving efficacy...Christ will be an only Savior, or none at all...the best works, performed by the best man, are imperfect and mingled with sin, and therefore need to be forgiven; so that to say that a man is justified by his works is no better than saying that a man is justified by his sins." - G.B. Cheever

II. Turn Away

A. A description of Turn Away
1. From the Town of Apostasy (a total desertion of or departure from one's religion)
2. Seven devils had bound him with seven strong chords and carried him back to the door on the side of the hill (Mt 12:43-45)

3. Wanton (hard to control; undisciplined, unruly) professor (one that professes, avows or declares) and damnable (liable to or deserving condemnation) apostate (one who renounces religious faith)
4. Hung his head like a captured thief (he was a captured thief and a robber)

B. The reaction of Christian and Hopeful (they began to tremble because Turn Away had gone further)

III. Little-Faith

A. A description of Little-Faith (4X) that lived in the Town of Sincere (free of deceit, hypocrisy or falseness)

2. Fell asleep at Deadman's Lane

B. Meeting with Faint-heart (lacking courage), Mistrust (lacking trust or confidence) and

Guilt (a feeling of culpability [blame] for offenses) (Barry Horner)

1. Faint-heart takes away courage and strength for the truth and replaces them with

timidity and hesitancy.

2. Mistrust takes away confidence and assurance of the truth and replaces them with

doubt and suspicion. (earlier had fled down the Hill Difficulty with Timorous)

3. Guilt takes away peace and rest in the truth and replaces them with fear and

agitation.

C. The bag of silver, jewels and certificate

1. The bag of silver (spending money): he lost much of that for which he was

responsible for using and developing, namely growing faith, spiritual gifts and

graces.

2. The jewels

b. of no value to anyone in that country

c. Excluded from entrance to the Celestial City without them

d. Represent Christ's perfect righteousness and cleansing blood

D. Description of Little-Faith after being robbed and wounded

1. Made little use of his jewels. Forgot he had them most of the way.

2. Had anxiety over not having his money. Fresh thoughts of it would overwhelm him

and swallow up everything.

3. Went almost the rest of the way with dismal and bitter complaints. Whyte would

call him a "spiritual hypochondriac"

4. He told everyone he met everything about his robbery

"Now, the whole pity with Little-Faith was, though he was not a bad man, yet he never, even at his best days, had much of those things that make a good and well-furnished pilgrim; and what little he had he had now clean lost. He had never been much a reader of his Bible, he had never sat over it as other men sat over their newsletters and their romances. He had never had much taste or talent for spiritual books of any kind. He was a good sort of man, but he was not exactly the manner of man on whose broken heart the Holy Ghost sets the broad seal of heaven...He had no practice in importunate prayer. He had never prayed a whole night in his life. He had never needed to do so." – Alexander Whyte

IV. Application Questions

A. Would you identify Little-Faith as a Christian? (Mt 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8)

B. Why didn't Little-Faith use any of his spiritual weapons against Faint-heart, Mistrust and

Guilt?

C. What are the differences between Little-Faith and Turn Away?

"Backsliding presupposes some frontsliding" – Barry Horner

D. What can we learn from this chapter?

1. We are not to brashly desire to meet the enemy (prefer the absence of assaults).

2. Be prepared with armor and weapons.

3. Be in company with God and His people

V.

Next Week: Chapter 17 "The Pilgrims Meet the Flatterers"