

The Pilgrim Reaches the Place of Deliverance

Chapter 6

- I. The Cross and the Sepulcher
 - A. Three times of extreme joy for the Christian
 1. When he sees his sins removed (through the cross of Christ)
 2. When he is at the time of his death
 3. When he stands before his Judge (has a crown of glory)
- II. Simple, Sloth and Presumption (their names reveal their errors)
 - A. The Characters
 1. Simple
 - a. Represents a class who feel no danger because they see none.
 - b. He is blind to his danger because he sees no need for doctrine and understanding.
 - c. He may long for the blessings and promises, but misses the duties and warnings
 - d. For him truth is too complicated, doctrine divides, law and wrath were for another age.
 - e. "So we tell sinners; there are awful scenes before you, there is an angry God and a despised Saviour with whom you have to meet, there is a judgment and a hell. They see none of these things and they make no effort and give themselves no concern to be prepared for them."
 2. Sloth
 - a. Represents a class who desire a little more ease in a life of sin and carnal security.
 - b. He sees no need to rush into things. He has time, so he thinks, and so delays pursuing a pilgrimage. Perhaps tomorrow or the next day he will consider his plight, or get serious about God's Word.
 - c. Prov 24:33, Acts 24:25 (Felix)
 3. Presumption
 - a. Represents a class who take up the notion that all is well with them, or at least will be.
 - b. Those who presume upon the grace of God are often the ones most offended when godly counsel comes their way.
 - c. Presumption is a blind and arrogant confidence that is vain and groundless
 - d. "They cannot tell why they think so, they can give no account of the hope that is in them, nor do they concern themselves about anything of the kind. God is merciful and he will not send them to hell, and there the matter ends."
 - B. The classes
 1. They are out of the way
 2. They are asleep (in regards to spiritual things)
 3. They have fetters on their heels (they are tied and bound by the fetters of sin and Satan)
 4. "these three characters together with Christian are designed to represent the whole body of professors, and we may say, of those living in places favored with the light of the gospel. Christian represents the small number who have entered by the strait gate and who are pressing forward along the narrow way that leadeth to eternal

life. But Simple, Sloth, and Presumption represent different classes of that vast multitude who throng the broad way which leadeth down to death."

- C. the behavior of Christian toward these men.
1. He went to them, if peradventure he might awake them, and cried, "You are like them that sleep on the top of a mast." He does not say to himself: well it is true these men are in a dangerous state, but I cannot help it, it is none of my business, or it will be of no use for me to make an effort for their deliverance. **Compassion to their souls as well as a desire to see God glorified in their salvation leads him to this.**
 2. The men will start up out of sleep and not only ask Christian to help them, but do all in their power to find the place of safety. Instead of this Simple says: "I see no danger;" Sloth, "Yet a little more sleep;" and Presumption, "Every tub must stand upon its own bottom." **A vulgar proverb, the meaning of which is, mind your own business. Take care of yourself and I will do the same.**
 3. Bunyan notes in the margin: "There is no Persuasion will do if God openeth not the eye."
 4. In Part 2 of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christiana and her fellow pilgrims come upon this place, the three men are no longer asleep, but are hanged up in their irons
 5. Christian went sorrowfully upon his journey. While musing upon the folly of these men, he overtakes two others of a very different character and behavior. The men whom he left behind were all asleep, they could not be induced to put forth a single effort.

But lest you might think simple activity in religion was enough; here you have two men introduced to your notice, who were active enough, at least for a time, and yet were no safer than those whom we have been last noticing.

- III. Formality and Hypocrisy (These men seem to be all activity. the classes represented by these two men are found only in the church)
- A. Hypocrisy
1. (from the Greek *hupokrisis*) is one who acts out a part or puts on a mask, as an actor on a stage who dresses up and pretends to be someone he is not. A hypocrite is like one who wears a mask, appearing on the outside to be someone he is not on the inside.
 2. His attitudes, vocabulary and conduct vary according to his company.
 3. Bunyan elaborates on the hypocrite in his work *The Strait Gate*. Speaking of the many types of false professors, he comments:
"There is yet another professor; and he is for God and for Baal too. He can be anything for any company. He can throw stones with both hands. His religion alters as fast as his company. He is a frog of Egypt, and can live in the water and out of the water; he can live in religious company, and again as well out. Nothing that is disorderly comes amiss to him. He will hold with the hare, and run with the hound. He carries fire in the one hand, and water in the other. He is a very anything but what he should be. This is also one of the many that "will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
- B. Formality
1. Formalist is one who rests on the outward forms of religion.

2. He is content to believe that if he does the right things and says the right things that God will be satisfied with his efforts.
 3. He trades the convicting truth of the Gospel for the comfortable Customs of men.
 4. Bunyan also provides a description of the Formalist:

“Neither is the formalist exempted from this number. He is a man that has lost all but the shell of religion. He is hot, indeed, for his form; and no marvel, for that is his all to contend for. But his form being without the power and spirit of godliness, it will leave him in his sins; nay, he stands now in them in the sight of God, and is one of the many that "will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (2 Timothy 3:5).
- C. Formality and Hypocrisy are much alike.
1. They both take up with a form of godliness.
 2. Their religion consists entirely of outward profession, and the outward observance of ordinances.
 3. These are men that are boastful of their own accomplishments and overly proud of their own achievements.
 4. They are *vain* in that all their efforts and show of religion are empty and can never merit the favor of God.
 5. They *glory* in that their show of religion has merited their own favor and the praise of others.
 6. They are both deceived in thinking that God is equally impressed with the externals.
- D. They differ in this
1. the formalist is one who deceives himself, the hypocrite is one who is laboring to deceive others, while sensible, in some measure at least, of the deception and deceit he is practising.
 2. Vain-Glory is the birthplace of every formalist and hypocrite; and praise, the praise of men, is the great end of their profession.
- E. You next have a lengthy conversation between Christian and these men.
1. He asks them why they had not come in by the gate and They tell him that all their countrymen counted that too far around about. (the strait way of conversion and faith in Jesus Christ is reckoned too tedious by formalists and hypocrites.)
 2. "If it would not be counted a trespass against the Lord of the city whither we are bound, thus to violate his revealed will?" Thus it is that Christian sticks to Scripture. To this they reply, "That they had two things in their favor and that was enough for them. They had the multitude, and they also had antiquity." What a biting sarcasm is this upon formalists and hypocrites. Instead of going to the Word of God, they go to men. Who can fail to see here the two boasted arguments of Romanism— numbers and antiquity?
 3. Another thing worthy of notice which they tell Christian is, that they were in the way and that is enough, it could be a matter of no importance how they got into it.
 4. On Christian telling them plainly "that they were walking by their own fancy, whereas he was entered by the rule of the Word," "they bid him take care of himself and they would take care of themselves."
 5. On parting Christian gave them an account of his hope and experience, at which the men smiled, as if it was something curious and to be made light of.
 6. Thus they all three went on, until they came to the foot of the Hill of Difficulty. And this is about as far as formalists and hypocrites will ever go in religion. (The hill

Difficulty then signifies some suffering or trial which Divine Providence places in the way of professors, to test what is in them, something which requires much self-denial to overcome. We might mention persecution, the power of the world, the sacrifice of worldly interests, or even the failure of that praise which formalists and hypocrites promise themselves. Let it be remembered, however, that the Hill of Difficulty may be expected in the way, sooner or later, in one shape or other. At the bottom of this hill, however, there was a spring, from which those climbing up its steep ascent could drink, and thus be refreshed for the exertion required in climbing the hill. How beautiful! how scripturally true is this! God never calls upon his people to endure hardship but what he prepares them for it. In some ordinance the strength is renewed

7. And now look at the difference in the behavior of these three men. Christian hesitated not. "But Formality and Hypocrisy, looking at the steep, and concluding also that those two ways might meet again with that up which Christian went, on the other side of the hill; they were resolved to go in those ways." It is remarkable that neither Formality nor Hypocrisy saw the spring—for spiritual comforts are for the spiritually thirsty. Formality turned on to the path Danger, and Hypocrisy to the path Destruction. Thus we lose sight of these characters and while Formality is said to have taken the path Danger, yet, undoubtedly, the same fate met both—woe and everlasting misery.

IV. Conclusion :

1. We have here six different characters: to which do you belong? To that class represented by Simple, Sloth and Presumption, Hypocrisy and Formality or that represented by Christian?
2. Would you not live differently if you saw death and judgment before you? Are you a professed follower of Jesus? Then follow Christian's example and be earnest in awakening the slumbering, careless one. A tender concern for the souls of others is a good mark of concern for our own. If like Hypocrisy, you are only visibly in the way, be sure your sin will be exposed and your true standing be made known to the world. There are many steep hills to climb on the way to the Celestial City and your energies will flag and you will turn aside sooner or later. To the true Christian I say when called to ascend the hill, look for the spring. Go on in the strength of the Lord God and you will overcome all difficulties and will at length appear before the Lord in Zion.