

The Pilgrim's Progress
Chapter 17 – “The Chastening of the Pilgrims”
November 5, 2014

"This word of the wise man, that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall, was fulfilled to the very letter in Christian and Hopeful that high-minded day." Alexander Whyte

I. Context

A. The scene **READ THIS PORTION OF THE BOOK**

1. Flatter (**to praise excessively especially from motives of self-interest**)
2. Straight and narrow path (**represents the revealed will of God for the Christian life**)
3. The Flatterer **represents false teaching.**
4. The net **represents confusion brought about by the error of false teaching.**

B. Christian and Hopeful at the fork in the road

- a.i.1. They were previously in similar situations
- a.i.2. They recently received counsel from the Shepherds
- a.i.3. They only “thought” about the Way (**didn't look at their map, heed the warning of the Shepherd, rightly judge the Flatterer**)

C. The Shining One

1. Shining ones: celestial creatures who act as guardians throughout Christian's journey.

“This messenger is obviously under orders to carry out specific duties, and thus he comes prepared with a whip in hand. The implication is that the Celestial City continually watches out for the well-being of those pilgrims it anticipates receiving.” – Barry Horner

2. An important caveat - **Man born blind (John 9:1-7)**
3. 1689 LBCOF Chapter 11: Of Justification (emphasis mine)

God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified, and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, **fall under God's fatherly displeasure**; and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

4. 1689 LBCOF Chapter 12: Of Adoption (emphasis mine)

All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and **chastened by him as by a Father, yet never cast off**, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

- II. God's purposes in chastening Christians (**rebuke, scourge, correct, afflict**)
- A. Correction (**make that heart examination**)
- a.i.1. The word of God is profitable for correction.
2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- a.i.2. 1 Cor 11 some sick because of their attitude at the Lord's Supper.
1 Corinthians 11:29–32 (ESV) ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.
- a.i.3. God is correcting the Christian in **love** rather than smiting him in **wrath**.
 "To be chastened of God for what we have done amiss, and by that means to be reduced to the sense and practice of our duty, is one of the greatest blessings on this side heaven that can light upon us." – Thomas Manton
- B. Prevention from going down paths into sin (**get in line and stay away from the edges of sin**)
- C. Education (**take your lessons and be sympathetic towards others**)
- a.i.1. Designed to teach the Christian the experiences of life that lead to a deeper fellowship with God.
- a.i.2. Preparation for other duties (Luke 22:31-32) – **Peter sifted to strengthen the brethren.**
- a.i.3. Raise the level of sympathy (2 Cor 1) – **I suffer all the time...so that I might comfort you.**
- III. Application Questions
- A. What was the purpose of Job's suffering? **Education**
- B. What are the two perils should Christians be aware of? (**Regard lightly God's discipline and faint when reproved by God (Heb 12:5)**)
- C. What does God show by chastening? (**Heb 12:6-8) God's love (Rev. 3:19 and Lam 3:31-33) and your sonship (Prov 23:13-14)**)
- D. What are two results of God's chastening his children? **Fullness of life (Heb 12:9) and holiness (Heb 12:10)**
 "It is not the sharpness of the affliction we should look to, but the improvement of it. The bitter waters may be made sweet by experiences of grace; if we are made more godly, wise, religious, it is a good cross; but if it leave us as careless and stupid, or no better than we were before, that cross is but a preparation to another; if it hath only stirred up our impatience, done us no good, God will follow his stroke, and heat his furnace hotter." – Thomas Manton (**CXC – 190 sermons on Psalm 119 [176 verses] preached during Bunyan's time**)

- IV. Next Week: Read Chapter 18 "Hopeful Tells of His Conversion" and Chapter 19 "The Pilgrims Deal with Ignorance." I plan to contrast the saving faith of Hopeful to the false profession of Ignorance.