

A DREAMER AND HIS WONDERFUL DREAM

The Story of John Bunyan and The Pilgrim's Progress

by

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Chapter 12

CHRISTIAN GAINS A TRAVELING COMPANION

At the end of the valley Christian passed by a cave, outside of which were the bones, bodies and blood of many who had gone this way formerly.

At the mouth of the cave sat a giant named Pope who had been largely responsible for the death of these many pilgrims. Strange to say, as Christian passed, he made no attempt to molest him, but contented himself by biting and nails and snarling, "You will never mend, till more of you are burned."

This cave had originally sheltered two giants, the other being Pagan. He had long since died, and the other, Giant Pope, being stiff in his limbs, was not able as in former years to pursue his persecution of Christians.

Giant Pagan, of course, is a picture of the persecutions under the pagan or heathen emperors of Rome, who in a few hundred years put to death hundreds of thousands of Christians. The light of the Gospel to a great extent has done away with the pagan persecutor.

Giant Pope is an illustration of the Roman Catholic system which exists to this day, and has also been responsible for the death of numberless thousands who loved not their lives unto death, but who obeyed GOD rather than man, and preferred the simple teachings of the Word of GOD to a form of paganized Christianity.

Thank GOD for the Reformation, by which this Giant received a blow from which he has never fully recovered. Let us thank GOD for the liberties that we enjoy, which have been purchased so dearly by the blood and tears of those who dared to believe the Bible as the believers' only authority for faith and practice, and who dared to make the Gospel known in the face of torture, fire, and sword!

CHRISTIAN MEETS FAITHFUL

As Christian passed on he came to a little hill, from the top of which he saw ahead of him a man named Faithful.

He had heard of Faithful, for he had started from the City of Destruction a short while after himself. Hoping to

avail himself of the pleasure of his company, Christian shouted, "Ho! ho! Stay, I will be your companion." At this, Faithful looked behind him, and Christian cried again, "Stay, stay till I come up to you!" But Faithful answered, "No, I am upon my life, and the avenger of blood is behind me!"

When Christian saw that Faithful was not going to wait for him, he was nettled and thought within himself, "I'll show you that I can catch up to you, and outrun, you, too." With this he began to run and soon caught up to Faithful. Not content with this, Christian, with a vain glorious smile on his face, passed him, but not looking very well to his feet, he stumbled and fell, nor could he rise again until Faithful came to where he lay.

Faithful did not proceed to read Christian a lecture on what his pride had done for him. Neither did he say, "It serves you right! That's what you get for trying to beat me! Now lie on the bed you have made till you have learned your lesson!"

No, he remembered what GOD's Word said should be done under such circumstances: "**Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted**" (Galatians 6:1). So very kindly, he gave Christian his hand, and with his assistance Christian was lifted up and they went on very lovingly together.

We have in this incident the truth of the Scripture clearly emphasized, "**Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall**" (Proverbs 16:18). Christians need ever to remember that pride is a hateful thing in the sight of GOD. He hates a proud look, and pride will always lead to a fall. We are warned in Scripture to beware, "**lest being lifted up with pride, we fall into the condemnation of the Devil,**" for it was pride that caused his fall. See Isaiah 14:12-15.

There are four kinds of pride every believer needs to beware of.

- First, pride of face. Quite a number are stumbled because of this, and become so occupied with their good looks that they spend more time in front of a mirror than in reading GOD's Word and communion with Him by prayer. Others do not seem to be content with the face or complexion that GOD has given them, and attempt by all sorts of artifices to remedy this seeming lack. Let us never forget that the wicked Jezebel is the first person we hear about in the Bible who painted her face, and sure she is no example to be imitated by children of GOD! The best kind of beauty is a beautiful character, and this is only obtained by heart devotion to the Lord, definite Bible study, sincere prayer and a loving and loyal life of service for Him on behalf of others.

- The next kind of pride is pride of place. Ofttimes a child of GOD imagines that his position in life, or his wealth, gives him a right to look down upon his less fortunate brother in a patronizing way, and to treat him more or less contemptuously. This is a fatal error, for GOD is no respecter of persons and has enjoined us to "**mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.**" GOD has no aristocracy in His family. Snobbery is inexcusable in a believer. This does not mean that there is no difference between master and man. The Christian employee is told to give to his Christian employer the same obedience and heart service that he would give to CHRIST (Ephesians 6:5-9). But in the things of GOD, and in the heavenly relationship we are "**all one in Christ Jesus,**" so that there is no room left for a false pride amongst members of the same household.

Then again, there is the pride of race. No race of people have any monopoly of GOD's favor, whether they be white, black, brown or yellow. We are told that in Heaven there are people from "**every kindred, and tongue and people and nation.**" They are those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of GOD's dear Son and

who sing His praise. Again, our Lord pointed out that "**God so loved the world**," which surely includes all nations, colors and tongues. Let us thank GOD if it has been our lot to be born in a country where GOD's Word is available, and where the influences of Christianity are seen in the blessings of civilization; but never let us look down with contempt or pride upon the less fortunate people who are not so greatly privileged as are we. Rather let us send forth, or go forth to these people of other colors and languages and carry to them the message of the Gospel that alone can bring them blessings of salvation, full and free.

Last, but by no means least, is the pride of grace. How often the Christian is tempted to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, and imagines he can pray better, preach better, give more and serve the Lord better than some other Christian. These vain glorious thoughts develop a swelled head, a sanctimonious smugness, a spirit of intolerance, and a barrenness of soul in the believer that precede the fall that always follows. All have not the same gift in the body of CHRIST of which all believers are members. Each one has his own particular part to play. The hand cannot say to the foot, "**I have no need of thee**"; **neither can the ear say, "Because I am not the eye I am not of the body"** (I Corinthians 12:15-16). If GOD has given us some gift, let us thank Him for it, and seek to discharge that service with humbleness of mind and lowliness of heart, for GOD only reveals Himself to the humble and contrite one that trembles at His Word (Isaiah 66:1-2). We need to remember that "**God knoweth the proud afar off!**" (Psalm 138:6).

WANTON

As Christian and Faithful walked together, Christian asked his companion how he came to leave the City of Destruction, and Faithful told how Christian's pilgrimage had aroused many of the inhabitants including himself, but though they had talked a great deal about the pilgrim journey, only he himself has started out.

Then Christian inquired whom he had met on the King's highway and what adventures had befallen him. Faithful then told of meeting a woman named Wanton who had sought to dissuade him from going on pilgrimage by promising him all manner of things and by flattering him; but Faithful had remembered what the Bible said about her, that "**her steps take hold on hell.**" Accordingly he had shut his eyes and turned away from her at which she railed upon him, but he pursued his way.

This, of course, illustrates what many a would-be pilgrim meets as he seeks to leave the City of Destruction.

Wanton is a picture of the world with all its vanities, lusts, sinful pleasures, popularity and the like, that seek to deter the convicted sinner from the way to the Cross. Felix, who judged the Apostle Paul, was turned aside by Wanton, for after Paul had reasoned with him concerning righteousness, temperance and judgment he had trembled but said, "**Go thy way for this time. When I have a more convenient season I will call for thee.**" Alas, we do not hear of this "**convenient season**" ever returning.

Let each unsaved reader do what Faithful did if GOD by His Spirit is arousing you to a sense of your danger - shut your eyes to Wanton's subtle temptations, for they lead to hell, and turn your back on anything that would hinder you from salvation.

Faithful next recounted his experiences at the Cross where his sins, which were many, were all forgiven him because of his belief in CHRIST's finished work and acceptance of Him as his own Saviour.

ADAM

Then Faithful told of meeting an old man named Adam the First at the foot of the hill of Difficulty.

This old man had asked him who he was and where he was going. When he heard that Faithful was on his way to the Celestial City he asked, "Will you be content to dwell with me for the wages I will give thee?" Faithful inquired, "What is your work, and what are your wages?" Adam the First replied that his work had many delights, and the wages were that Faithful should be heir to all he had.

He furthermore declared, that his house was furnished with all the dainties of the world, and that his servants were his own daughters whose names were, Lust of the Eyes, Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life; when Faithful further inquired as to how long his would be host would live, he replied "I shall live as long as you do."

All this sounded rather inviting to Faithful at first, and he was somewhat inclined to go along with him; but as he looked at the old man's forehead he saw these words written, "**Put off the old man with his deeds.**"

Then there came to his mind that if ever he went to live with this man, he would be made his slave, and his life would be ruined. As he turned to go, Adam the First gripped him with such a fearful grasp that he had cried out in agony and cried, "**O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?**" Then he remembered the promise of deliverance through CHRIST so exclaimed, "**I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!**"

With this he started up the Hill of Difficulty.

In this incident we are introduced to an important subject that concerns every Christian, namely, the believer's two natures.

Every believer is the possessor of two natures. The unsaved person has but one nature, which is called in Scripture, the flesh. If the last letter of the word "Flesh" is removed, and the four remaining letters spelled backwards, a good definition of what is meant by "flesh" is obtained.

"Self" is that principle within that makes a person what he is. It causes him to think what he thinks, say what he says, and do what he does. We read in the Bible that the flesh is "**enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God**" (Romans 8:5-8).

We all inherited this nature from our first parent, Adam, through whom sin came into the world. Hence Bunyan personifies it as "Adam the First."

Thus man by nature, as a result of his physical birth, becomes the possessor of a nature that can do nothing to please GOD, for its very spirit is enmity against GOD. This is why the Lord JESUS told Nicodemus that he "**must be born again**"; that is, he must become the possessor of another nature, a divine nature, by means of which he could please GOD and do His will.

THE DIVINE NATURE

The moment a person receives the Lord JESUS CHRIST as his own personal Saviour, he becomes the possessor of the divine nature which is imparted to him by the HOLY Spirit of GOD, Who also indwells him the moment he believes on CHRIST. Read carefully II Peter 1:3-4; Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthians 3:16.

GOD does not, however, take away or change the old nature, so that in every Christian there are these two natures called in Galatians 5:17, "**the flesh and the Spirit.**" These two natures are in constant conflict one with the other. The old nature desiring or lusting for the things of the old life; the new nature desiring the things of the new life in CHRIST JESUS. Which nature is to have the victory? the answer is very simple. Whichever one you yield yourself to. GOD says, "**walk in the Spirit**"; that is, in obedience to His leading and guiding, "**and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh**" (Galatians 5:16).

If we would be delivered from the dominion of the flesh, we must remember two things.

First, we must reckon it [the flesh] to be dead [as GOD declares it is through CHRIST's death] by making no provision for it, and having no confidence in it (Romans 6:6-11).

Second, we must yield ourselves to GOD for a righteous life, and keep on yielding (Romans 6:13).

The result will be that "**Sin shall not have dominion over you**" (Romans 6:14). This will only be true of us as we are constantly yielding ourselves to Him and seeking to go on by His Word, in His will, and doing His work.

DISCONTENT

Faithful's next adventure was in the valley of Humiliation with a man named Discontent who sought to influence him to go back, by trying to make him discontented with his lot. He told Faithful that by going on this journey through the valley he was annoying his one-time friends named Pride, Arrogancy, Self-Conceit, Worldly-Glory and many others. But Faithful soon put Discontent to flight by telling him that though these men were once his relations, they had disowned him as he had rejected them, and that he preferred to be guided by GOD's Word which declared that "**before honor is humility.**" This requires no explanation as the names explain themselves. Discontent can always be overcome as the Christian remembers what he once was and what he now is by the grace of GOD. Truly "**Godliness, with contentment, is great gain**" (I Timothy 6:6).

SHAME

In that same ballad Faithful was approached by a sneaking individual named Shame, who sought to prove to him that Christianity was a low, sneaking, pitiful business, and that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing. He declared that for a man to have to watch his words and ways was ridiculous. He stated also that not many mighty, rich or wise people were Christians; but that they were mostly of the poor and ignorant class, who were content to live humble lives unnoticed by the great ones of the world.

He further suggested that it was a shameful thing for a man to sigh and groan about his sins, and to ask a neighbor's forgiveness for petty faults, etc.

Then asked Christian, "What did you say to him?"

Faithful replied, "Say! I could not tell what to say at first. Yea, he put me so to it that my blood came up in my

face, but a last I began to consider that GOD's Word declared 'that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.'

Then Faithful told his companion that as he contrasted GOD's ways and thoughts with man's, he saw that GOD's ways were right and that he had nothing to be ashamed of, but everything to boast of in belonging to CHRIST. He saw that GOD prefers the weak and foolish things of the world to the mighty and wise; and the poor and despised with tender consciences, to those who are self-sufficient.

As he thought of the Lord JESUS, and how He had not been ashamed of him when he hung upon Calvary's Cross; but had borne his sins, endured the cross and despised the shame that sinners lost and guilty might be saved, he turned to Shame and exclaimed, "Depart! thou art an enemy to my salvation. Shall I prefer thee to my sovereign Lord? How then shall I look Him in the face at His coming? Should I now be ashamed of His ways and servants, how can I expect the blessing?" With these brave words Faithful rejected Shame, and well would it be if every Christian were so faithful to his Lord!

How often the child of GOD has been turned aside by Shame who has sought to make him ashamed of taking a bold stand for his Lord and Master.

How frequently he whispers in the believer's ear when he seeks to serve the Lord in the open air meeting, or in the distribution of Gospel tracts, or while seeking to speak a word for the Saviour in private conversation with his friends and neighbors!

Every Christian is tempted to dodge some service for the Lord because of the reproach of the world connected with it. What is the pilgrim to do? Just what Faithful did. Remember what the Lord JESUS did for him, is now doing for him, and will yet do for him. The Christian has nothing to be ashamed about, but like Paul can truthfully say, "**I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth**" (Romans 1:16).

A Christian who is ashamed of his Lord shuts the door of salvation to some who might have been led to CHRIST and been saved. The Scripture inquires "**How shall they hear without a preacher?**" Therefore speak up, Christian, and witness a bold confession to your absent and rejected, but soon coming Lord!

"Ashamed of JESUS, that dear Friend
On Whom my hopes of Heaven depend?
No! When I blush, be this my shame
That I no more revere His Name!"

Let us ponder solemnly the words of the Lord JESUS, "**Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels**" (Mark 8:38). Shall we not rather say

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

"Where the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an off'ring far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my life, my soul, my all."

The time of His rejection by the world is drawing to a close. He will soon come forth from Heaven to call His blood-bought people home to share His eternal glory. May it be yours and mine, fellow believer, to live for and be a faithful witness unto Him 'till He come.'

~ end of chapter 12 ~
