

A DREAMER AND HIS WONDERFUL DREAM

The Story of John Bunyan and The Pilgrim's Progress

by

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Chapter 13

FAITHFUL SEALS HIS TESTIMONY WITH HIS OWN BLOOD

TALKATIVE

As the pilgrims thus conversed, they presently perceived ahead of them a tall man who looked better at a distance than he did near at hand. This man's name was Talkative.

As they drew up to him, Faithful asked him if he was going to the heavenly country, to which Talkative replied, "I am going to that same place." They then entered into a conversation, which we have not space here to record, but which is very interesting and instructive.

Faithful at first was greatly taken with him, for Talkative lived up to his name. He was a great talker on any subject, but when Faithful asked Christian in private what he thought of their new companion he replied, "This man is just a talker. Remember the proverb, 'They say and do not,' but the Scriptures declare that 'the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.'

He talks of prayer, of repentance, of faith, and of the new birth; but he knows only to talk of them.

I have been in his family, and observed him both at home and abroad, and I know what I say of him is truth. His house is as empty of Christianity as the white of an egg is of savour. There is neither prayer nor sign of repentance of sin. He is a stain, reproach and shame on Christianity to all who know him! Scarcely can a good word be said of it through all the end of the town where he dwells. The common people that know him say of him that he is 'a saint abroad, and a devil at home!'"

In these few but pointed words, Christian described Talkative; and Faithful, after another very interesting conversation with him, exposed him as a mere professor of Christianity without the possession of CHRIST as his Saviour.

Unfortunately there are plenty of Talkatives still living today who pose as believers and who can talk glibly of Scriptural truths without ever having experienced the power of them in their lives.

These "**have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.**"

Such persons are merely mouth Christians. All their religion is in their head, and they are Christians only from the teeth, outwards! They are all lip with no life to back it up. They are all believe, but no attempt to behave the Gospel. They are all position, but no condition. They are all standing and no state.

It is this kind of person who does more harm to Christianity than all the infidels in the world. A wise man once remarked, "What you are speaks so loud, that I cannot hear what you say."

Every Christian is an open book that all the world can read and the world is a good critic of what a true Christian should be. Paul had to write concerning certain ones, that their lives were so different from what they professed that "**the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles**" through them (Romans 2:21-24).

Does the world see the Lord JESUS in our lives? It has been well put thus:

"You are living a Gospel,
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say;
Men read what you live,
Whether faithless or true -
Say what is the Gospel
According to you?"

EVANGELIST

As Faithful chanced to look back, he saw coming towards them one who had pointed them to the Wicket Gate, Evangelist.

Soon Evangelist came up to them and greeted them warmly and inquired of their experiences since they had lost the burden of their sins. Accordingly Christian and Faithful recounted all that had befallen them on the way, their sorrows and joys, their victories and defeats. The recital of these things brought great joy to Evangelist, and he thanked GOD and encouraged them to go on for the Lord until the end of the journey was reached.

Evangelist now began to warn them of what should befall them as they continued on the heavenly highway.

He told them that they would presently come to a town, and as they passed through it they would be subject to temptation, persecution, shame and tribulation, and that one of them would be killed, and thus seal his testimony with his own blood.

Evangelist would not tell them which one would thus lay down his life, but he continued, "He that shall die there, although his death will be unnatural, and his pain perhaps great; yet he will have the better of his fellow, because he will be arrived at the Celestial City soonest."

Then their friend exhorted them to "**quit themselves like men,**" and urged them to give a good ringing testimony

to the saving and keeping power of the Lord JESUS CHRIST and to **"commit the keeping of their souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator."**

VANITY FAIR

Christian and Faithful now addressed themselves to their journey, thinking much about Evangelist's words to them. Presently, away ahead of them, they saw the outlines of a great city, the name of which was Vanity. The history of the city was as follows.

When Satan saw that the way to the Celestial City lay through this valley, he built this great city right over the path, so that every Christian had either to go through his city, or else go out of the world. In this place he organized a great fair that never ceased day or night. At this fair all sorts of things were displayed for sale which appealed to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life of all people. Here were sold such things as houses, lands, honors, popularity, pomp, fashion, pleasure, treasure, power, titles, lusts, wine and revellings of all kinds. This fair was called Vanity-Fair, and it received its name from the fact that the richest and wisest of natural man, King Solomon, after he had sampled all its dainties and pleasures had left it declaring, **"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."**

Satan's main object in building the town was to get Christians to forget the fact that they were "strangers and pilgrims in the world," and to become so occupied with the vanities that he displayed that they would lose their pilgrim character; and instead of passing straight through, they would linger and by and by take up their residence in his town, and thus be robbed of their joy in the Lord, their usefulness in the service of GOD, and their effectiveness against himself.

Vanity-Fair, of course, is simply a picture of this world which GOD's Word describes as **"lieth in wickedness,"** (I John 5:19) and which has Satan as its god (II Corinthians 4:4).

By the word "World" GOD does not mean the world of nature with its beautiful scenery, token of the creative power of the Son of GOD. Nor does it mean the people of the world which are loved by GOD. When the Bible speaks of the world, it means the present order of things that obtain in the world, in other words, the world system.

It has been well defined as "Those persons, places, pleasures, and pursuits from which GOD is left out." This is the world that has Satan as its god, and concerning which the believer is enjoined: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15-16).

As the pilgrims approached they heard the noises of the city, the ribald laughter of the worldling, the cries and tears of those who had been robbed, and the music and the shouting of those who were selling vanities. This caused them to look to the Lord for strength to enable them so to live, that **"men should take note of them that they had been with Jesus."**

They then entered the city and immediately became the center of attraction for three reasons.

- First, their clothes were entirely different from those worn by the people who traded at the fair. This caused the townsfolk to have various opinions concerning them. Some said that they were fools, others affirmed that they were mad, while others declared that they must be foreigners.

- Secondly, their manner of speech was distinct from the language spoken by the inhabitants of Vanity. The pilgrims spoke the language of Canaan, and of the things touching their Lord and Master, so that it seemed as though they spake another tongue.

- Thirdly, the pilgrims set no value upon the things that were offered them. In spite of all their inducements to buy, they consistently refused to have anything whatever to do with any of the vanities offered them. Instead, they placed their fingers in their ears to shut out the noise and din, and looking up to Heaven they cried, "**turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.**"

Thus did the pilgrims show to the people of Vanity that they were indeed strangers and pilgrims in the world; strangers, because they were away from home, and pilgrims, because they were going home.

THREE THINGS THAT MARK A CHRISTIAN

John Bunyan has given us here a striking illustration of the effect of a godly and consistent Christian life upon the world, by means of the character, speech and conduct of the child of GOD. The clothes, of course, speak of the righteous character with which every Christian should be clothed. He should be honorable, righteous and truthful in his dealings with the world, and this will always distinguish him from "**the crooked and perverse generation among whom he shines as a light in the world.**"

Then again, his speech should be different from that of the world. The world loves to talk about its own things, its politics, fashions, scandal, sport, business, pleasures and lusts: but the child of GOD loves to "**speak of things touching the King,**" and to talk of the dealings of GOD with him, and of the love and grace of the blessed Lord JESUS. "**They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name**" (Malachi 3:16). Paul's injunction to the believer is "**Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt.**" We need to remember that "**out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.**" The speech is the evidence of the condition of the heart and is the barometer of the soul.

The most significant thing, however, is the fact that Christian and Fearful refused to patronize the vanities offered them in the fair. Here the conduct of the Christian is in view. This is what the world takes most notice of in the life of the believer. John Bunyan says that "they set very light by all their wares." The Christian is a citizen of another country, for "**his citizenship is in Heaven**" (Philippians 3:20). In Titus 2:11-12 we read, "**The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.**"

Though it costs nothing to become a Christian, yet it costs the world to be a Christian. A young woman once approached an old Christian whose face was aglow with the peace of GOD and of a joy that was unspeakable, and exclaimed, "I would give the world to have your Christian experience!" The old Christian calmly replied, "That is just what it cost me."

No Christian can enjoy the world and CHRIST. He must either have the world or CHRIST. The phrase, "a Worldly-minded Christian" is as great an anomaly as a "heavenly-minded devil." The Lord JESUS said concerning His own, "**They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil**" (John 17:14-15). Thus the

Christian pilgrim is known and recognized by these three characteristics - a righteous and godly character; a sound and gracious speech; and an unworldly, self-denying and GOD glorifying manner of life. Let us, who claim to be Christians, ask ourselves if these things are true of us, so that the world shall recognize that we are what we claim to be, CHRIST's ones, or Christians.

THE PILGRIMS BUY THE TRUTH

This attitude of the pilgrim's roused the anger of some, and one man mockingly asked, "what will ye buy?" they replied, "we buy the truth."

This caused them to be despised the more, and from mocking they went to taunting, and from taunting to threatening, until at length a great stir was caused in the fair. This caused the great one of that place to come down and see the cause of the confusion. When he heard that Christian and Faithful had refused to have anything to do with his dainties and vanities, he ordered them to be examined; and though the pilgrims declared that they had given no occasion to any of the merchantmen to thus abuse them, except to say that they would buy the truth; yet their word was not accepted, but they were smeared with dirt and placed in an iron cage in the center of the town, there to be a spectacle to the world and to angels and men.

In this cage they remained for some time, and were the objects of the ridicule, scorn, sport and malice of the people of Vanity Fair. But to all the ill treatment they received, they replied with not a word of abuse. They returned blessing for cursing, giving good words in return for revilings, and good deeds in return for the ill treatment they received. They told the ones who treated them worst of the love of GOD for them, and of the gift of His dear Son to put away their sins and deliver them from the consequences of their guilt.

When the townsfolk saw this, some of the most observing began to take the part of Christian and Faithful when others would have injured them. This caused a fight to take place between those who sided with the pilgrims, and those who were for persecuting them. The news of this fight caused the pilgrims to be again examined, and this time they were placed in irons and beaten. They were afterwards marched up and down through the streets for an example and terror to others; but again Christian and his companion so conducted themselves, that still more people were aroused to sympathy for them. When the king of Vanity perceived this, he determined to put them to death and thus end their influence.

THE PILGRIMS ARE PUT ON TRIAL FOR THEIR LIVES

Accordingly, they were again brought before the court and charged with the crime of being enemies of the town of Vanity and of Satan their lord and the prince of the city. The Judge's name was Lord Hategood. When the charge was read, Faithful replied that he was a man of peace, and that those who had been won to their cause were won by their manner of life, and thus turned from the worse to the better and he concluded by saying, "As to the king you talk of, since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of the Lord, I defy him and all his angels!"

The witnesses for the prosecution were then called and three men stepped forward. Their names were Envy, Superstition and Pickthank or Parasite.

Envy testified that the prisoners were vile men, and that they neither regarded the Prince of the City, nor his people, laws and customs; but sought to teach them other laws and principles such as faith and holiness. He further testified that he had heard the accused say that Christianity and the customs of Vanity were entirely

different from each other, and could never be reconciled.

Superstition then testified that he had heard them affirm that the religion of Vanity could never please GOD, and that those who held it worshipped in vain, were yet in their sins, and would finally be damned if they died in that condition.

Finally, Pickthank was called and informed the Judge that he had heard the accused speak disrespectfully of the nobility of the town, such as Lord Old-Man, Lord Carnal-Delight, Lord Luxurious, Lord Desire-of-Vain-Glory and other of the high citizens of Vanity, and had even alluded to Lord Hategood as an ungodly villain. This aroused the Judge to a high degree of fury, and he shouted to Faithful, "Thou runagate, heretic and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?"

Then Faithful manfully addressed himself to the Judge as follows, "In answer to Mr. Envy, I never said anything but this: that what rule, or laws, or custom, or people, were against the Word of GOD, were therefore opposite to Christianity. If I have said wrong in this, convince me of my error . . . In regard to superstition I said only this: that in the worship of GOD there is required a divine faith, and there can be no divine faith without a divine revelation of the will of GOD. Therefore whatever is thrust into the worship of GOD that is not agreeable to divine revelation, cannot be done but by a human faith, which faith will not be profitable to eternal life. As to what Mr. Pickthank hath said, I say again that the prince of this town, with all the rabblement and his attendants by the gentleman named, are more fit for a being in hell than in this town and country; and so the Lord have mercy upon me."

THE JURY RENDERS FAITHFUL'S VERDICT

Then the Judge called the jury whose names were Blind-Man, No-Good, Malice, Love-lust, Live-loose, Heady, Highmind, Enmity, Liar, Cruelty, Hatelight and Implacable; and charged them to render their verdict as to the guilt of the prisoners. With one consent the jury declared them guilty, and Judge Hategood savagely condemned them to death by the most cruel method that could be devised.

For some reason the sentence against Christian was not executed, but Faithful was taken, and after being scourged was severely beaten, then stoned. He was afterwards dragged to the market place where he was fastened to a stake, around which were piled heaps of wood. Then amidst the blasphemies and derisive yells of the populace, Faithful was burned to death.

As Christian stood looking upon the form of his beloved companion enveloped with flames, he saw something that none of the wicked mob perceived. As he looked up, he noticed a little gate opening in Heaven. Through the gate came a beautiful chariot drawn by two horses, and driven by an angel, in whose hand was a crown. As he watched, he saw the chariot descend until it touched the foot of the stake to which Faithful was fastened.

As the charred and lifeless form of the martyr fell on the chains that bound it, the spirit of Faithful entered into the chariot. At this the angel placed the crown upon him saying, "**Thou hast been faithful unto death, behold I give thee a crown of life!**"

The chariot then ascended higher and higher until the gate of Heaven opened to admit it. As it did so, a stream of glory from within that beautiful city shone right upon the upturned face of Christian. This glimpse made him homesick for Heaven ever after.

Thus Faithful entered into that glorious place to enjoy the presence of the Lord JESUS for all eternity, and Christian was left alone in the city of Vanity. By this act Faithful sealed his testimony for CHRIST in his own blood, and was added to that innumerable company of martyrs who loved not their lives unto death, and of whom this world is not worthy.

The lesson for us is obvious. The world is still unchanged in its attitude towards those who live for CHRIST.

As in the long ago the world crucified its Creator and shouted "Away with him, we will not have this man to reign over us!"; so in this present day and age, all **"who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."**

The world loves its own, but hates the one, who by his Christian life and faithful testimony, takes his stand against it and its treasures, vanities, policies, power and pleasures. The age of active persecution has to a great extent passed, and one is not at the present time likely to be killed for the testimony of CHRIST.

Nevertheless the offence of the Cross is not ceased, and the opposition of the world will soon be felt by the one who seeks to live for his Lord and Master. It may cost the believer his health, wealth and life as it did Faithful, but the **"well done, thou good and faithful servant"** of the Master will more than compensate for the toil, self-denial and suffering of the way. Would that every born again child of GOD who reads these pages could truthfully exclaim from the heart.

"Take the world, but give me JESUS:
All its joys are but a name,
But His love abideth for ever,
Through eternal years the same.

"Take the world but give me JESUS;
Let me see His constant smile.
Then throughout my pilgrim's journey,
Light will cheer me all the while."

One word to the unsaved reader.

How is it with you?

If you are not for CHRIST, you are against Him. If you are not living for CHRIST, you are living for the world that despised, rejected and crucified Him.

Are you content thus to live with your back to the GOD Who loves you; with your heart shut to the Saviour Who died for you; with your spirit resisting the Spirit of GOD Who strives with you, and with your mind rejecting the Word of GOD that can alone bring the light of the Gospel into your sin benighted soul?

Wake up ere it be everlastingly too late!

Come in all your sins and need to the blessed Son of GOD. Receive Him as your Saviour and confess Him as your Lord, and then live for Him in the world in such a way, that like the pilgrim's your life shall tell for CHRIST.

GOD shall, in turn, use your testimony to be the means in His hands of leading others to know, love and serve His beloved Son.

~ end of chapter 13 ~
