

25 - Christian Meets Faithful

Now as CHRISTIAN went on his way, he came to a little ascent, which was cast up on purpose that pilgrims might see before them; up there, therefore, CHRISTIAN went, and looking forward, he saw FAITHFUL before him upon his journey. Then said CHRISTIAN aloud, "Ho, ho! So-ho (stay, and I will be your companion)." At that, FAITHFUL looked behind him; to whom CHRISTIAN cried again, "Stay, stay! till I come up to you!"

Faithful. But FAITHFUL answered, "No, I am upon my life; and the Avenger of Blood is behind me!" At this, CHRISTIAN was somewhat moved; and putting to all his strength, he quickly got up with FAITHFUL, and did also overrun him, so the last was first. Then did CHRISTIAN vain-gloriously smile, because he had got the start of his brother; but not taking good heed to his feet, he suddenly stumbled and fell, and could not rise again until FAITHFUL came up to help him.

Then I saw in my dream, they went very lovingly on together, and had sweet discourse of all things that had happened to them in their pilgrimage; and thus CHRISTIAN began:

Chr. My honoured and well-beloved brother, FAITHFUL, I am glad that I have overtaken you; and that God has so tempered our spirits, that we can walk as companions in this so pleasant a path.

Faith. I had thought, dear friend, to have had your company quite from our town; but you did get the start of me, wherefore I was forced to come this much of the way alone.

Chr. How long did you stay in the city of Destruction before you set out after me on your pilgrimage?

Faith. Till I could stay no longer; for there was great talk presently, after you were gone out, that our city would in short time, with fire from heaven, be burned down to the ground.

Chr. What! did your neighbours talk so?

Faith. Yes; 't was for awhile in everybody's mouth.

Chr. What! and did no more of them but you come out to escape the danger?

Faith. Though there was, as I said, a great talk thereabout, yet I do not think they did firmly believe it. For in the heat of the discourse, I heard some of them deridingly speak of you and of your desperate journey—for so they called this your pilgrimage; but I did believe, and do so still, that the end of our city will be with fire and brimstone from above, and therefore have made mine escape.

Chr. Did you hear no talk of neighbour PLIABLE?

Faith. Yes, CHRISTIAN; I heard that he followed you till he came at the Slough of Despond, where, as some said, he fell in. But he would not be known to have so done; but I am sure he was soundly bedabbled with that kind of dirt.

Chr. And what said the neighbours to him?

Faith. He hath, since his going back, been had greatly in derision, and that among all sorts of people: some do mock and despise him, and scarce will any set him on work. He is now seven times worse than if he had never gone out of the city.

Chr. But why should they be so set against him, since they also despise the way that he forsook?

Faith. "Oh," they say, "hang him: he is a turncoat; he was not true to his profession!" I think God has stirred up even his enemies to hiss at him, and make him a proverb, because he hath forsaken the way (#Jer 29:18,19).

Chr. Had you no talk with him before you came out?

Faith. I met him once in the streets; but he leered away on the other side, as one ashamed of what he had done: so I spake not to him.

Chr. Well, at my first setting out, I had hopes of that man; but now I fear he will perish in the overthrow of the city: for it is happening to him according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (#2Pe 2:22).

Faith. They are my fears of him too: but who can hinder that which will be?

Chr. "Well, neighbour FAITHFUL," said CHRISTIAN, "let us leave him, and talk of things that more immediately concern ourselves. Tell me now what you have met with in the way as you came; for I know you have met with some things, or else it may be writ for a wonder."

Faith. I escaped the slough that I perceive you fell into, and got up to the gate without that danger: only I met with one whose name was WANTON, that had like to have done me a mischief.

Chr. 'T was well you escaped her net; Joseph was hard put to it by her, and he escaped her as you did; but it had like to have cost him his life (#Ge 39:11,12,13). But what did she do to you?

Faith. You cannot think (but that you know something) what a flattering tongue she hath; she laid at me hard to turn aside with her, promising me all manner of content.

Chr. Nay, she did not promise you the content of a good conscience.

Faith. You know what I mean, all carnal and fleshly content.

Chr. Thank God you have escaped her: the abhorred of the Lord shall fall into her ditch (#Pr 22:14).

Faith. Nay, I know not whether I did wholly escape her, or not.

Chr. Why, I trow you did not consent to her desires?

Faith. No, not to defile myself; for I remembered an old writing that I had seen, which saith, "Her steps take hold on hell" (#Pr 5:5). So I shut mine eyes, because I would not be bewitched with her looks (#Job 31:1); then she railed on me, and I went my way.

Chr. Did you meet with no other assault as you came?

Faith. When I came to the foot of the hill called "Difficulty," I met with a very aged man, who asked me what I was, and whither bound? I told him that I was a pilgrim going to the Celestial City: then said the old man, Thou lookest like an honest fellow; wilt thou be content to dwell with me for the wages that I shall give thee? Then I asked him his name, and where he dwelt? He said his name was Adam the first; and that he dwelt in the town of Deceit (#Eph 4:22). I asked him then, What was his work? and what the wages that he would give? He told me that his work was many delights; and his wages, that I should be his heir at last. I further asked him, what house he kept, and what other servants he had? So he told me that his house was maintained with all the dainties in the world; and that his servants were those of his own begetting. Then I asked how many children he had? He said that he had but three daughters, —the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; and the pride of life (#1Jo 2:16); and that I should marry them all, if I would. Then I asked how long time he would have me live with him? And he told me, as long as he lived himself.

Chr. Well, and what conclusion came the old man and you to at last?

Faith. Why, at first I found myself somewhat inclinable to go with the man, for I thought he spake very fair; but, looking in his forehead as I talked with him, I saw there written, "Put off the old man with his deeds."

Chr. And how then?

Faith. Then it came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said, and however he flattered, when he got me home to his house he would sell me for a slave. So I bid him forbear to talk; for I would not come near the door of his house. Then he reviled me, and told me that he would send such a one after me, that should make my way bitter to my soul. So I turned to go away from him; but just as I turned myself to go thence, I felt him take hold of my flesh, and give me such a deadly twitch back, that I thought he had pulled part of me after himself: this made me cry, "O wretched man!" (#Ro 7:24) So I went on my way up the hill.

Now when I had got about halfway up, I looked behind me, and saw one coming after me, swift as the wind; so he overtook me just about the place where the bench stands.

Chr. "Just there," said CHRISTIAN, "did I sit down to rest me; but, being overcome with sleep, I there lost this roll out of my bosom."

Faith. But, good brother, hear me out: so soon as the man overtook me, he was but a word and a blow; for down he knocked me, and laid me for dead. But when I was a little come to myself again, I asked him wherefore he served me so? He said, because of my secret inclining to Adam the first; and with that he struck me another deadly blow on the breast, and beat me down backward, so I lay at his foot as dead as before. So when I came to myself again, I cried him mercy; but he said, "I know not how to show mercy," and with that knocked me down again. He had doubtless made an end of me, but that one came by, and bade him forbear.

Chr. Who was that that bade him forbear?

Faith. I did not know him at first; but as he went by, I perceived the holes in his hands and in his side; then I concluded that He was our Lord. So I went up the hill.

Chr. That man that overtook you was Moses; he spares none, neither knows he how to show mercy to those that transgress his law.

Faith. I know it very well; it was not the first time that he has met with me. 'Twas he that came to me when I dwelt securely at home, and that told me he would burn my house over my head if I stayed there.

Chr. But did you not see the house that stood there on the top of that hill, on the side of which Moses met you?

Faith. Yes, and the lions, too, before I came at it; but for the lions, I think they were asleep, for it was about noon; and because I had so much of the day before me, I passed by the porter, and came down the hill.

Chr. He told me, indeed, that he saw you go by. But I wish you had called at the house; for they would have showed you so many rarities, that you would scarce have forgot them to the day of your death. But pray tell me, did you meet nobody in the Valley of Humility?

Faith. Yes, I met with one DISCONTENT, who would willingly have persuaded me to go back with him; his reason was, for that the valley was altogether without honour. He told me moreover, that there to go was the way to disobey all my friends, as PRIDE, ARROGANCY, SELF-CONCEIT, WORLDLY-GLORY, with others; who he knew, as he said, would be very much offended if I made such a fool of myself as to wade through this valley.

Chr. Well, and how did you answer him?

Faith. I told him that although all these that he named might claim kindred of me, and that rightly—for indeed they were my relations according to the flesh, —yet since I became a pilgrim, they have disowned me, as I also have rejected them; and therefore they were to me now no more than if they had never been of my lineage. I told him moreover, that as to this valley, he had quite misrepresented the thing; for before honour is humility, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Therefore, said I, I had rather go through this valley to the honour that was so accounted by the wisest, than choose that which he esteemed most worth our affections.

Chr. Met you with nothing else in that valley?

Faith. Yes, I met with SHAME; but of all the men that I met with in my pilgrimage, he, I think, bears the wrong name. The other would be said Nay, after a little argumentation, and somewhat else; but this boldfaced SHAME would never have done.

Chr. What did he say to you?

Faith. What! why he objected against religion itself! He said it was a pitiful, low, sneaking business

for a man to mind religion; he said that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing; and that for a man to watch over his words and ways, so as to tie up himself from that blustering liberty that the brave spirits of the times accustom themselves unto, would make him the ridicule of the times. He objected also, that but few of the mighty, rich, or wise, were ever of my opinion (#1Co 1:26); nor any of them neither, before they were persuaded to be fools (#1Co 3:18 Php 3:7,8), and to be of a voluntary fondness to venture the loss of all for nobody else knows what. He moreover objected the base and low estate and condition of those that were chiefly the pilgrims of the times in which they lived; also their ignorant and want of understanding in all natural science (#Joh 7:48). Yea, he did hold me to it at that rate also, about a great many more things than here I relate: as, that it was a shame to sit whining and mourning under a sermon, and a shame to come sighing and groaning home; that it was a shame to ask my neighbour forgiveness for petty faults, or to make restitution where I had taken from any. He said also, that religion made a man grow strange to the great, because of a few vices (which he called by finer names); and made him own and respect the base, because of the same religious fraternity. And is not this, said he, a shame?

Chr. And what did you say to him?

Faith. Say! I could not tell what to say at the first. Yea, he put me so to it, that my blood came up in my face; even this SHAME fetched it up, and had almost beat me quite off. But at last I began to consider, that "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (#Lu 16:15). And I thought again, this SHAME tells me what men are; but tells me nothing what God or the word of God is. And I thought moreover, that at the day of doom we shall not be doomed to death or life according to the blustering spirits of the world; but according to the wisdom and law of the highest. Therefore, thought I, what God says is best, indeed is best; though all the men in the world are against it. Seeing, then, that God prefers his religion; seeing God prefers a tender conscience; seeing they that make themselves fools for the kingdom of heaven are wisest; and that the poor man that loves Christ is richer than the greatest man in the world that hates him— SHAME, depart! thou art an enemy to my salvation! —shall I entertain thee against 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? (#Mr 8:38) But indeed this SHAME was a bold villain—I could scarce shake him out of my company! Yea, he would be haunting of me, and continually whispering me in the ear with some one or other of the infirmities that attend religion; but at last I told him 't was but in vain to attempt further in this business, for those things that he disdained, in those did I see most glory: and so at last I got past this importunate one. And when I had shaken him off, then I began to sing:

"The trials that those men do meet withal
That are obedient to the heavenly call
Are manifold, and suited to the flesh,
And come, and come, and come again afresh;
That now, or some time else, we by them may
Be taken, overcome, and cast away.
Oh let the pilgrims, let the pilgrims then
Be vigilant, and quit themselves like men!"

Chr. I am glad, my brother, that thou didst withstand this villain so bravely; for of all, as thou sayest, I think he has the wrong name. For he is so bold as to follow us in the streets, and to attempt to put us to shame before all men; that is, to make us ashamed of that which is good: but if he was not himself

audacious, he would never attempt to do as he does. But let us still resist him; for notwithstanding all his bravadoes, he promotes the fool, and none else. "The wise shall inherit glory," said Solomon; "but shame shall be the promotion of fools" (#Pr 3:35).

Faith. I think that we must cry to him for help against SHAME, that would have us to be valiant for the truth upon the earth.

Chr. You say true. But did you meet nobody else in that valley?

Faith. No, not I: for I had sunshine all the rest of the way through that, and also through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Chr. 'T was well for you; I am sure it fared far otherwise with me. I had for a long season, as soon almost as I entered into that valley, a dreadful combat with that foul fiend, APOLLYON. Yea, I thought verily he would have killed me; especially when he got me down, and crushed me under him, as if he would have crushed me to pieces. For as he threw me, my sword flew out of my hand; nay, he told me he was sure of me: but I cried to God, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my troubles. Then I entered the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and had no light for almost half the way through it. I thought I should have been killed there over and over; but at last day brake, and the sun rose, and I went through that which remained with far more ease and quiet.

Jer 29:18,19, 2Pe 2:22, Ge 39:11,12,13, Pr 22:14, Pr 5:5, Job 31:1, Eph 4:22, 1Jo 2:16, Ro 7:24, 1Co 1:26, 1Co 3:18 Php 3:7,8, Joh 7:48, Lu 16:15, Mr 8:38, Pr 3:35

“¹⁸ And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth—to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, ¹⁹ because they have not heeded My words, says the LORD, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*; neither would you heed, says the LORD.” (Jer 29:18-19 NKJV)

“But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."” (2Pe 2:22 NKJV)

“¹¹ But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house *was* inside, ¹² that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. ¹³ ¶ And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside,” (Ge 39:11-13 NKJV)

“The mouth of an immoral woman *is* a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there.” (Pr 22:14 NKJV)

“Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell.” (Pr 5:5 NKJV)

““I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?” (Job 31:1 NKJV)

“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” (Eph 4:22 NKJV)

“For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” (1Jo 2:16 NKJV)

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Ro 7:24 NKJV)

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.*” (1Co 1:26 NKJV)

“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.” (1Co 3:18 NKJV)

“⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Php 3:7-8 NKJV)

““Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?” (Joh 7:48 NKJV)

“And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” (Lu 16:15 NKJV)

““For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”” (Mr 8:38 NKJV)

“The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.” (Pr 3:35 NKJV) “