

Pilgrim's Progress (Part 8)

Quote: *"Now may this little Book a blessing be To those that love this little Book, and me: And may its Buyer have no cause to say, His money is but lost, or thrown away."* —John Bunyan

● Recap

- By-Path Meadow
 - way became hard
 - stile (temptation)
 - led to pleasant meadow
- Doubting Castle
 - Giant Despair
 - Wife Diffidence
- Key of Promise
 - Scripture hidden in the heart for future use

● Delectable Mountains

- "Delectable": precious, to desire greatly (Strong's Concordance)
 - what makes these mountains such a desirable place?
- The Church of God
 - place of spiritual rest and food ("gardens, orchards, vineyards, and fountains")
 - gathering together of God's people (sheep) on Mount Zion (Delectable Mountains)
 - church age: evening time
- Shepherds (pastors)
 - **(1) Knowledge, (2) Experience, (3) Watchful, and (4) Sincere**
 - these are the qualities pastors should have
 - *"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15).*
 - Watchful was the porter (minister) at Palace Beautiful (the morning-time Church of God)
- Mountains are in Immanuel's land (Isaiah 8:8)
- Sheep belong to Immanuel
 - who laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11)
- Shepherds are "feeding their flocks" in the "tops of the mountains" (*Pilgrim's Progress*)
 - *"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers" (Ezekiel 34:12-13).*
- Shepherds question Christian & Hopeful
 - just as the ladies (elders) did Christian at Palace Beautiful (Church of God)
 - ensure that these are honest pilgrims
 - when the shepherds heard their answers: "Welcome!"
- **Some Wonders**
 - just as the ladies of Palace Beautiful showed Christian every room, the shepherds show Christian & Hopeful several "wonders"

- **Hill of Error**
 - pleasant climb on one side; very steep on the far side
 - bodies of several men lie at the bottom of this hill
 - * listened to Hymenaeus and Philetus
 - * they had the truth, but they corrupted the true doctrine (added/changed)
 - * 2 Timothy 2:18 – "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."
 - + they caused others to fall by teaching this false doctrine
 - bodies are left as a warning
 - * of ones who get too close to the edge
 - * of ones who climb too high
- **Mountain of Caution**
 - blind men walking among tombs
 - * spiritual eyesight is gone
 - * left only to wander in spiritually dead places
 - + cannot get out of the graveyard
 - + *Proverbs 21:16 – "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead."*
 - Shepherds ask if Christian & Hopeful saw "a stile that lead into a meadow"?
 - * must have been embarrassing to say "yes"
 - Giant Despair
 - * Christian & Hopeful say nothing, but they know all about this giant
 - * puts out the eyes of pilgrims (loss of spiritual eyesight)
 - + again, doesn't kill pilgrims but brings great despair
 - * put among the tombs by Giant
 - + eventually, they kill themselves & become a "tombstone"
 - * Christian & Hopeful say nothing but have "tears gushing out"
 - + realizing what they have escaped
- **By-Way to Hell**
 - door in the side of a hill
 - * smoky
 - * cry of the tormented
 - * smell of brimstone
 - a "way that hypocrites go in at" (not the out-and-out sinner)
 - * such as sell their birthright (Esau)
 - * such as sell their Master (Judas)
 - * such as blaspheme the Gospel (Alexander)
 - * such as lie and dissemble (Ananias and Sapphira)
 - + "dissemble": false show, pretend
 - a "show of pilgrimage"
 - * these were ones who had come far (spiritually)
 - * had kept up their profession for a long time
 - + "some even farther than this" (say the Shepherds)
 - Christian & Hopeful see their need to pray for strength

- **Hill Clear**
 - just as Christian received a view of the Delectable Mountains from the top of Palace Beautiful
 - heavenly places in Christ Jesus
 - Christian & Hopeful are given a glimpse of the gates of the Celestial City
 - heavenly vision
 - **Perspective Glass**
 - definition: a telescope which shows objects in the right position
 - remembrance of seeing By-Way to Hell made their hands shake
 - * shaking hands hindered their view of the gates of the Celestial City
 - * doubts and fears can hinder our vision of the goal (Heaven)
- **Advice (each shepherd gives counsel):**
 - (1) **Knowledge:** "A note of the way"
 - a map with directions (written down for future reference)
 - (2) **Experience:** "Beware of the Flatterer"
 - (3) **Watchful:** "Don't go to sleep on Enchanted Ground"
 - (4) **Sincere:** "Godspeed" (speed & safety)
- **(5) Ignorance From the Country of Deceit**
 - country located to the left hand side of the Delectable Mountains
 - "little crooked lane" leads to the "straight way"
 - Ignorance comes from this country
 - confident but ignorant
 - Christian perceives this pilgrim is untrue; asks Ignorance for his qualifications:
 - he believes he is a good man
 - he knows God's will
 - has went to church & heard the sermons, Sunday school lessons, etc.
 - he has lived well ("a good liver")
 - he is like the Pharisee: "I pay my tithe, give to the poor, pray, fast"
 - Coming a different way:
 - Ignorance didn't come through the Wicket Gate (Jesus)
 - "all the world knows that is a great way off of our country"
 - * too far, too hard
 - came by the crooked lane
 - * "a fine pleasant, green lane"
 - * this is "the next way into the way" (another door – thief & robber; John 10:1)
 - "You follow the religion of your country; I'll follow the religion of mine."
 - Proverbs 26:12
 - "That is your faith, but not mine, yet mine, I doubt not, is as good as yours."
- **Dark Lane**
 - man bound with seven devils (he is an apostate; Matthew 12:45)
 - might be Turn-Away from the Town of Apostasy (Christian is unsure)
 - paper on his back: "Wanton professor, and damnable apostate."
 - "wanton professor" = excessive (without restraint) pretender
 - damnable = destined for hell
 - apostate = one who has abandoned (left) the faith
 - seemed like a good Christian, until he turned around (and the sign could be seen)

- seven devils are carrying him back to the door in the hill (By-Way to Hell)
- Christian remembers a story & tells Hopeful:
 - **(6) Little-Faith**
 - compare having little faith to being an apostate (Turn-Away)
 - * Matthew 12:20 – "smoking flax shall he not quench"
 - * Little-Faith came from the Town of Sincere
 - * Turn-Away came from the Town of Apostasy
 - **(7) Faint-heart, (8) Mistrust, and (9) Guilt**
 - came from Broad-way Gate
 - * the broad way is never far from the narrow way¹
 - set upon Little-Faith after he fell asleep
 - * Faint-heart – takes away conviction & boldness
 - * Mistrust – lack of confidence arising from suspicion
 - * Guilt – fear replaces peace & rest ²
 - robbed Little-Faith of his money (but not his certificate – proof of the new birth)
 - * intend to kill him
 - Great-Grace from the Town of Good Confidence
 - robbers hear Great-Grace coming & flee
 - Little-Faith continually complains about his loss
 - * always drawing on the "grace" of others
 - * Little-Faith might have not spent enough time at Palace Beautiful
- **(10) The Flatterer** (a false apostle; angel of light)
 - Road divides
 - they fail to check their map (from the shepherds)
 - both roads look straight (but one is a counterfeit)
 - See a "man black of flesh" (black nature) wearing "a very light robe" (disguise)
 - "follow me, it is thither [the Celestial City] that I am going"
 - the (supposed straight) way twisted and turned until they were headed away from the city
 - Flatterer is so deceptive - Christian & Hopeful don't realize they've changed directions
 - entangled in a net (of flattery)
 - false pastors entangle through words of flattery
 - true pastors speak the truth (1 Thessalonians 2:4-6)
 - white robe fell off & they saw who he really was
 - they repent with much sorrow ("bemoaning in the net")
 - the more one fights, the greater hold the net has on them
 - A Shining One
 - questioned them
 - Christian & Hopeful confess their sin (ignoring the word & counsel of the shepherds)
 - * not deliberate sin, but failing to read the Word and take spiritual counsel
 - told them the deceiver's name (Flatterer)
 - pretends to be an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-14)

¹ http://www.bunyanministries.org/pp_commentary/29%20com%20colorless_testimony_of_little-faith.pdf

² Ibid

- understanding brought freedom (net was cut)
 - returned them to the Way
 - chastised them
 - there was no excuse for being led away
 - * warnings, map, etc.
 - was the beating a punishment or a deterrent?
 - * "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Revelation 3:19)
- **(11) Atheist**
 - been seeking the Celestial City for 20 years
 - belittles & intimidates Christian & Hopeful
 - "we walk by faith and not by sight"
- **Enchanted Ground**
 - a place of lukewarmness
 - Laodicean Age: "have need of nothing"
 - air makes one sleepy
 - lack of spiritual conflict can put one to sleep
 - stayed awake by "discourse"
 - discussed doctrine, personal testimony, and the Word of God
 - discussions about the weather, politics, social activities will not keep you awake spiritually
 - Godly fellowship
 - "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves . . . and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).
 - Spurgeon:
 - * "Christians who isolate themselves, and stand alone, are very liable to ... go to sleep."
 - * "Sleep is a state of inaction. No daily bread is earned by him that sleepeth."
 - *Pilgrim's Progress, Part 2*
 - * "For this Enchanted Ground is one of the last refuges that the enemy to pilgrims has; wherefore it is, as you see, placed almost at the end of the way, and so it standeth against us with the more advantage. For when, thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down as when they are weary? and when so like to be weary as when almost at their journey's end?"
- **The Land of Beulah**
 - Beulah = place of restored union; married woman (literal Hebrew)
 - Something to consider: perhaps Christian's journey is also a chronological progress of church history
 - Cross = Christ's actual death
 - Palace Beautiful = Morning-time church
 - Apollyon = fight with false religion
 - Valley of Humiliation & Valley of the Shadow of Death = Dark Ages
 - Cave of Pagan & Pope = pagan Rome & Roman Catholicism
 - passed after coming through Valley of Humiliation
 - notice how they had no trouble dwelling together
 - Vanity Fair = religion for every one (Protestantism)
 - Lord of the Fair = Rome (mother of all harlots)
 - Delectable Mountains = evening-time restoration of church (name & unity)

- shepherds are gathering His sheep
- place of spiritual food & rest
- Land of Beulah = Zion restored
 - *"Thou [Zion] shalt no more be termed Forsaken . . . but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (Isaiah 62:4).*
 - * Hephzibah - "my delight is in her"
 - * Zion is a "delightful land" (Malachi 11:12)
 - "In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed" (*Pilgrim's Progress*)
 - "In this country the sun shineth night and day" (*Pilgrim's Progress*)
 - * *"there shall be no night there" (Revelation 21:25)* - speaking of Zion
 - *"Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken" (Isaiah 62:11-12).*
 - * speaking of Zion – the Church of God (evening time)

- **The Dark River**

- no bridge
- deep
 - don't assume that death for the Christian will always be easy
- No other way?
 - Only Enoch & Elijah were allowed to walk that path
- "you shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place."
 - Christian has more trouble than Hopeful
 - one's faith determines the depth

Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. And with that Christian brake out with a loud voice, Oh, I see him again; and he tells me, *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isaiah 43:2).*

- **The Celestial City**

- Two Shining Ones
 - led them up the hill to the Celestial City
- Heavenly Host
 - came out to meet Christian & Hopeful
- Gates open
- Bells of the city ring
- present their certificates (proof of the new birth)
- "enter ye into the joy of your lord."
- Bunyan had a glimpse through the gates
 - "when I had seen, I wished myself among them"

- **Ignorance's End**

- crossed the river in a boat
 - Ferryman: Vain-Hope
 - seemingly peaceful death does not indicate one's spiritual condition
- not met by the Shining Ones
- knocks boldly

- sure that he'll be admitted
- "Where come you? And what would you have?"
 - "I have ate and drank in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets."
 - "have we not" (Matthew 7:22-24)
- asked for his certificate
 - certificate of the new birth
 - Christian received his certificate from the Three Shining Ones at the Cross
 - he has none
 - he said nothing
- King refused to come & see Ignorance
 - "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23)
 - commanded the Shining Ones to take Ignorance
 - "I saw that there was a way to Hell even from the gates of Heaven."

New Characters:

- (1) Knowledge
- (2) Experience
- (3) Watchful
- (4) Sincere
- (5) Ignorance
- (6) Little-Faith
- (7) Faint-heart
- (8) Mistrust
- (9) Guilt
- (10) The Flatterer
- (11) Atheist