

# Pictures from Pilgrim's Progress

## Part Three



C. H. Spurgeon

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#### **11. Christian and Apollyon.**

*"Now Christian bethought himself of setting forward, and they were willing he should. 'But first,' said they, 'let us go again into the armoury.' So they did, and when he came there, they harnessed him from head to foot with what was of proof, lest perhaps he should meet with assaults in the way."*

John Bunyan, with great wisdom, puts the Palace Beautiful first, and then no sooner does Christian get out of the Palace gates than he begins to descend into the Valley of Humiliation. They had given him a sword, and a shield, and a helmet. He had never had those before. Now that he had his sword, he found that he had to use it against Apollyon; now that he had his shield, he had to hold it up to catch the fiery dart; now that he had received the weapon of "All prayer," he found that he had need of it as he walked through that desperate place, the Valley of the Shadow of Death. God does not give His people weapons to play with; He does not give them strength to spend on their lusts. Lord, if Thou hast given me these goodly weapons, it is sure I shall need them in hard fighting. If I have had a feast at Thy table, I will remember that it is but a short walk from the upper chamber to the garden of Gethsemane. Daniel, the man greatly beloved, was reduced very low. "All his comeliness was turned into corruption and he retained no strength," when God shewed him "the great vision." Thus, too, with favoured John. He must be banished to

Patmos; in the deep solitude of that Aegean sea-girt island he must receive “the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him.” I have noticed, in the ordinary scenes of Christian experience, that our greatest joys come just after some of our sorest trials. When the howling tempest has played out its strength, it soothes itself to sleep. Then comes a season of calm and quiet, so profound in its stillness, that only the monstrous tempest could have been the mother of so mighty a calm. So seems it with us. Deep waves of trial, high mountains of joy. But the reverse is almost as often true; from Pisgah’s top we pass to our graves; from the top of Carmel we have to go down to the dens of lions, and to fight with the leopards. Let us be on our watch-tower, lest like Manoah, having seen the angel of God, the next thing should be that we say we shall surely die, for we have seen the Lord.

*“Then he began to go forward; but Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence would accompany him down to the foot of the hill. So they went on together reiterating their former discourses, till they came to go down the hill. Then said Christian, ‘As it was difficult coming up, so, so far as I can see, it is dangerous going down.’ ‘Yes,’ said Prudence, ‘so it is: for it is a hard matter for a man to go down into the Valley of Humiliation, as thou art now, and to catch no slip by the way;’ ‘therefore,’ said they, ‘are we come out to accompany thee down the hill.’ So he began to go down, but very warily: yet he caught a slip or two.”*

Satan does not often attack a Christian who is living near to God. It is when the Christian departs from his God, becomes spiritually starved, and endeavours to feed on vanities, that the devil discovers his vantage hour. He may sometimes stand foot to foot with the child of God who is active in his Master’s service, but the battle is generally short. He who slips as he goes down into the Valley of Humiliation, every time he takes a false step invites Apollyon to assail him. Oh, for grace to walk humbly with our God!

*“Then I saw in my dream, that these good companions, when Christian was gone down to the bottom of the hill, gave him a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and a cluster of raisins, and then he went his way.*

*“But now, in this Valley of Humiliation, poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way before he espied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him: his name is Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back, or to stand his ground. But he considered again that he had no armour for his back, and therefore thought that to turn the back to him might give him greater advantage with ease to pierce him with his darts; therefore he resolved to venture, and stand his ground; ‘for,’ thought he, ‘had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, it would be the best way to stand.’*

John Bunyan has not pictured Christian as carried to heaven while asleep in an easy chair. He makes him lose his burden at the cross-foot, but he represents him as climbing Hill Difficulty on his hands and knees. Christian has to descend into the Valley of Humiliation, and to tread the dangerous pathway through the gloomy horrors of the Shadow of Death. He has to be urgently watchful to keep himself from sleeping in the Enchanted Ground. Nowhere is he delivered from the necessities incident to the way, for even at the last he fords the black river, and struggles with its terrible billows. Effort is used all the way through, and you that are pilgrims to the skies will find it to be no allegory, but a real matter of fact. Your soul must gird up her loins; you need your pilgrim’s staff, and your armour. You must foot it all the way to heaven, contending with giants, fighting with lions, and combating Apollyon himself.

*“So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales like a fish, and they are his pride; he had wings like a dragon, and feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke; and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to*

*Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him.*

*“APOLLYON. Whence came you, and whither are you bound?”*

*“CHRISTIAN. I am come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and I am going to the City of Zion.*

*“APOLLYON. By this I perceive that thou art one of my subjects; for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it, then, that thou hast run away from thy king? ere it not that I hope that thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.*

*“CHRISTIAN. I was indeed born in your dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on; for the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23); therefore when I was come to years, I did, as other considerate persons do, look out, if perhaps I might mend myself.*

*“APOLLYON. There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee; but since thou complainest of thy service and wages, be content to go back, and what our country will afford, I do here promise to give thee.*

*“CHRISTIAN. But I have let myself to another, even to the King of princes; and how can I with fairness go back with thee?”*

*“APOLLYON. Thou hast done in this according to the proverb, ‘changed a bad for worse;’ but it is ordinary for those that have professed themselves His servants, after a while to give Him the slip, and return again to me. Do thou so too, and all shall be well.*

*“CHRISTIAN. I have given Him my faith, and sworn my allegiance to Him; how then can I go back from this, and not be hanged as a traitor?”*

*“APOLLYON. Thou didst the same to me, and yet I am willing to pass by all, if now thou wilt yet turn again and go back.*

“CHRISTIAN. *What I promised thee was in my nonage; and besides, I count that the Prince, under whose banner I now stand, is able to absolve me, yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with thee. And besides, O thou destroying Apollyon, to speak truth, I like His service, His wages, His servants, His government, His company, and country, better than thine; therefore leave off to persuade me further; I am His servant, and I will follow Him.*”

I have met with some who were of a fearful heart, afraid that they would be lost, because they felt that they had, at some period of their lives, neglected Christian duty. This is an old temptation that Satan often casts in the way of godly people. You remember how, in addition to the base insinuations which we have quoted, Apollyon charged poor Christian with being unfaithful:

*“Thou didst faint at first setting out, when thou wast almost choked in the Gulf of Despond; thou didst attempt wrong ways to be rid of thy burden, whereas thou shouldst have stayed till thy Prince had taken it off; thou didst sinfully sleep, and lose thy choice thing; thou wast, also, almost persuaded to go back, at the sight of the lions; and when thou talkest of thy journey, and of what thou hast heard and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.”*

Now, if any of you should be troubled by similar accusations of the adversary, recollect that, since Christ did not love you for your good works, — they were not the cause of His beginning to love you; — so He does not love you for your good works even now; they are not the cause of His continuing to love you. He loves you because He will love you. What He approves in you now is that which He has Himself given to you; that is always the same, it ever abideth as it was. The life of God is ever within you; Jesus has not turned away His heart from you, nor has the flame of His love decreased in the smallest degree. Wherefore, faint heart, “fear not, be strong.”

“APOLLYON. *Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy to this Prince; I hate His person, His laws, and people; I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.*

“CHRISTIAN. *Apollyon, beware what you do, for I am in the King’s highway, the way of Holiness; therefore take heed to yourself.*

“APOLLYON. *Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter. Prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no farther: here will I spill thy soul. And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.*

“*Then did Christian draw, for he saw it was time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand and foot. This made Christian give a little back; Apollyon, therefore, followed his work amain [with great strength, speed, or haste], and Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. For you must know, that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.*”

This is no mere figure. He that hath ever met Apollyon will tell you that there is no mistake about the matter, but that there is a dread reality in it. Christian met Apollyon when he was in the Valley of Humiliation, and the dragon did most fiercely beset him; with fiery darts he sought to destroy him and to take away his life. Brave Christian stood to him with all his might, and used his sword and shield right manfully, till his shield become studded with a forest of darts and his hand did cleave unto his sword. For many an hour man and dragon fought. I think I see him now before me, — that dread fallen spirit, the arch-enemy of our souls. “O Satan, thou hast thrust sore at me!” Many of a child of God

must utter this exclamation. It is no fault of Satan's if we are not quite destroyed. It is not for want of malice, or subtlety, or fury, or perseverance on the devil's part, if we still hold the field. He has met us many times, using all kinds of weapons, shooting from the right hand and from the left. He has tempted us to pride and despair, to care and to carelessness, to presumption and to idleness, to self-confidence and to mistrust of God. We are not ignorant of his devices, nor inexperienced in his cruelties.

I know that I am addressing many saints of God who can use David's language with emphasis: "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall," for I dwell among a tried and tempted people. The battle between the soul of the believer and the devil is a stern one. No doubt there are multitudes of inferior spirits who tempt men, and tempt them successfully, too; but they are much more easily put aside by godly men than their great leader can be.

*"Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, 'I am sure of thee now.' And with that he had almost pressed him to death; so that Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise;' and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian, perceiving that, made at him again, saying, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us' (Romans 8:37). And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings, and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more (James 4:7)."*

At last the fiend gave Christian a horrible fall, and down he went upon the ground; and, woe worth the day! at the moment when he fell he dropped his sword! Behold the dragon drawing up



all his might, planting his foot upon Christian's neck, and about to hurl the fiery dart into his heart. "Aha, I have thee now," saith he, "thou art in my power." But when the dragon's foot was about to crush the very life out of poor Christian, he did stretch out his hand, he grasped his sword and giving a desperate thrust at his foe, he cried, "Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy; for when I fall I shall arise again." So desperately did he cut the dragon that he spread his wings and flew away, and Christian went on his journey rejoicing in his victory.

The true believer understands all this. It is no dream to him. He has been under the dragon's foot many a time. Ah! and all the world put on a man's heart at once is not equal in weight to one foot of the devil. When Satan once gets the upper hand of the spirit, he wants neither strength, nor will, nor malice, to torment it. Hard is that man's lot who has fallen beneath the hoof of the Evil One. But, blessed be God, the child of God is ever safe, as safe beneath the dragon's foot as he shall be before the throne of God in heaven. And let all the powers of earth and hell and all the doubts and fears that Christians ever know, conspire together to molest a saint; in the darkest moment, lo, God shall arise, and His enemies shall be scattered, and He shall get unto Himself the victory. Oh, for faith to believe this!

*"In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight; he spake like a dragon; and, on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then, indeed, he did smile, and look upwards; but it was the dreadfullest fight that I ever saw."*

Apollyon is master of legions, and possesses the highest degree of power and craftiness. He who has once stood foot to foot with him will know that Christian was indeed hard put to it in the Valley of Humiliation, when the dragon stopped the pilgrim's

way, and made him fight for his life.

No Christian will find much to smile at while he is contending for his faith, his hope, his life, with this most cruel of foes. Messengers of Satan buffet us terribly, but Satan himself wounds desperately; wherefore we are wisely taught to pray, "Deliver us from the evil one." Single combat with the arch-enemy will strain every muscle of the soul, and pain every nerve of the spirit; it will force the cold sweat from the brow, and make the heart leap with palpitations of fear, and thus in some degree bring us to our Gethsemane, and make us feel that the pains of hell have gotten hold upon us. The prince of darkness has a sharp sword, great cunning of fence, tremendous power of aim, and boundless malice of heart, and thus he is no mean adversary, but one whom it is a terrible trial to meet. In his dread personality is contained a mass of danger for us poor mortals. When poor Christian was down under Apollyon's foot, his life was nearly pressed out of him; but he saw that, as God would have it, the sword which had fallen out of his hand was just within his reach, so he stretched out his hand, and grasped that "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," and therewith he gave his adversary such a terrible stab that he spread his dragon-wings, and flew away. Oh, to give the fiend such a stab as that! Let us tell out the promises; let us proclaim the gospel; let us publish everywhere the free grace of God; and in this way we shall turn the battle to the gate, and cause those who pursued us to be themselves pursued. Hallelujah for the cross of Christ! We bear it forward into the ranks of the foe, confident of victory. Our courage fails not, neither does our hope wax faint; the Lord who has helped us is the God of victories; "the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

## **12. What Faithful Met With In The Way.**

*"CHRISTIAN. Well, neighbour Faithful, tell me now, what have you 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.*

*"FAITHFUL. I escaped the Slough that I perceived you fell*

*into, and got up to the gate without that danger; only I met with one whose name was Wanton, who had like to have done me a mischief.*

*“CHRISTIAN. It 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. But what did she do to you?”*

*“FAITHFUL. You cannot think, but that you know something, what a flattering tongue she had; she lay at me hard to turn aside with her, promising me all manner of content.*

*“CHRISTIAN. Nay, she did not promise you the content of a good conscience.*

*“FAITHFUL. You know what I mean; all carnal and fleshly content.*

*“CHRISTIAN. Thank God you have escaped her: ‘The abhorred of the Lord shall fall into her ditch.’ (Proverbs 22:14.)*

*“FAITHFUL. Nay, I know not whether I did wholly escape her or no.*

*“CHRISTIAN. Why, I trow you did not consent to her desires.*

*“FAITHFUL. No, not to defile myself; for I remembered an old writing that I had seen, which said, ‘Her steps take hold on hell.’ (Proverbs 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.”*

The first of Faithful’s temptations was very gross. It is, indeed, almost a shame to speak of it; yet the purest and most heavenly-minded, being still in the body, have to confess that this temptation has crossed their path. It matters now how near we live to God, nor how we may have cleansed our way by taking heed thereto according to God’s Word, to us all, and I have sometimes thought especially to the young and to the aged, this temptation will surely come. It is a blessing if, by God’s grace, we use Joseph’s way of conquering it, namely, by running away

from it, for there is no other. Fly, for this foe is not to be parleyed with. While you tarry, you are taken prisoner. While you look, the fruit is plucked. While you think how to resist the attack of the serpent, you are caught in its folds. He that hesitates is lost. "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain," is the only direction to every man who would come out of Sodom. There is no way to escape from this sin save by flight. "Flee youthful lusts," wrote Paul to Timothy.

Observe that, although Faithful did not yield to Wanton's tempting, he says, "I know not whether I did wholly escape her or no." The probability is, that the temptations of the flesh, even when resisted, do us an injury. If the coals do not burn us, they blacken us. The very thought of evil, and especially of such evil, is sin. We can hardly read a newspaper report of anything of this kind without having our minds in some degree defiled. There are certain flowers which perfume the air as they bloom, and I may say of these matters that they scatter an ill savour as they are repeated in our ears. So much for Wanton's assault on Faithful. From her net, and her ditch, may every pilgrim be preserved!

"CHRISTIAN. *Did you meet with no other assault as you came?*

"FAITHFUL. *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. (Ephesians 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 him if he had any children. He said he had but three daughters; the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, and that I should marry them all if I would. (1 John 2:16.) Then I asked, how long time he would have me live with him? And he told me, as long as he lived himself.”*

I suppose that every Christian who has gone far on the road to Heaven, knows what Faithful means when he speaks of Adam the First. Still, it may be well to contemplate it for a little, for so we shall be constrained to praise the mighty grace which delivers us from the power of this father of all mischief, — the old Adam-nature that is in us.

First, observe that this nature is described as an old man. Some of you, perhaps, have not been converted more than two or three years, but you are thirty years old, so the old nature is thirty, though the new nature is only three. Some, who are seventy years of age, may yet be only babes in grace. How can we expect the babe, that is newly born, to be a match for the old man, unless God shall come to the rescue, and give superior strength?

This old man met the pilgrim, and called him “an honest fellow.” Just so; our old nature would always have us think well of ourselves. God’s Word says that “the heart is deceitful above all things.” Among other deceits that it practices, it always seeks to flatter us. Oh, yes, we are indeed wonderfully honest fellows! I have known men, who have committed all sorts of sins, who have prided themselves upon being surprisingly honest. They are no hypocrites! They make no pretence of being religious. They hate cant, and so on, and so on. Beware of the compliment your own heart pays you.

Then Old Adam asked Faithful to go home with him. Observe, he promised him wages. Under the Old Adam, it is all wage; under the New Adam, it is not of debt, but of grace. The old gentleman told him what the wages would be. He said that Faithful should be his heir at the last. A pretty inheritance that would be, for “the wages of sin is death;” and if we walk after the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption. We shall only inherit what the Old

Adam leaves us, and what does that mean but that we shall be heirs of wrath, even as others? A poor look-out for a servant to engage where eternal wrath must be the wages of his service!

As for the work, Old Adam said it would be all manner of delights. Yes, there is pleasure in sin, of a sort. The carnal mind will appreciate it. The froth on the top of the cup gleams with so many rainbow colours, and the taste thereof is so sweet at first, that he who drinks forgets what the dregs are, which God says all the wicked of the earth shall wring out. Even in this life he must drink of them, and in the life to come he must experience eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord. Then the old man said that his house was maintained with all the dainties in the world; and that is true, for the old nature seeks after all things to delight itself, and yet is never contended. When Solomon became its votary, he took to himself servants and maidens, men singers and women singers, music, and wine, and all manner of delights, and yet he had to say, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." All the delights of the flesh are nothing better than a delusion. How soon they are over and gone! The blaze of a few thorns is quickly past, and a handful of ashes is all that remains.

As for the three daughters of the old man, you know them. Of the Lust of the Flesh, we have already spoken under the head of wantonness. Then there is the Lust of the Eyes. The eye can scarcely look upon a thing of beauty without desiring it. We soon become covetous unless the Spirit of God keeps our mind under proper restraint. "Thou shalt not covet," is a commandment which is often broken by us almost unconsciously. Consequently, we do not repent as we should of our sin against that commandment which touches our thoughts and our desires. As to the Pride of Life, I am afraid that many Christians truckle to this third daughter of the First Adam by self-indulgence in dress, in expenses, in all sorts of showiness. Mark you, this Pride of Life, though the most respectable of the three, as people think, is as genuine a daughter of the Old Adam as is the Lust of the Flesh. I cannot imagine our Lord Jesus Christ dressing Himself so as to attract attention to His person; neither can I imagine Mary

Magdalene, or Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, caring for mere show and pomp. I cannot picture them walking so in the light of their Master's countenance. They were arrayed, rather, like those holy women in the old time, whose adorning was not that of plaited hair and gorgeous apparel, but of all the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. This daughter of the Old Adam is much set by in these days. She keeps the milliners' shops going, and she sends many a man into the bankruptcy court; and, alas! she is invited into many of our Christian circles, and thought right well of.

Old Adam proposed that Faithful should marry all these if he would. There are some who have entered into this dreadful triple wedlock, and they have had a terrible threefold curse as the result.

Notice how long the service was to be. He told Faithful that he would have him live with him "as long as he lived himself." When a man gives himself up to the Old Adam, he never gets free from the service, for, while the Old Adam has his snares for the young, he has also his temptations for the middle-aged, and I am certain that he has quite as many for the old. This serpent can suit himself to every age and disposition, nor is there a hole so small but he can wriggle into it. The service of sin is a life-long service, and the end of it is everlasting woe.

*"CHRISTIAN. Well, and what conclusion came the old man and you to, at last?"*

*"FAITHFUL. 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.'"*

What a mercy it was that Faithful was led to inspect the old man! We only need to look at him to see what he is. He is so transparently bad that, if a man will but put his "considering-cap" on, he must soon see that "the old man" is to be "put off, with his deeds." Conscience, I think, is sufficiently alert in all of us to tell us that self-indulgence, in any of its forms, cannot be right for the followers of the holy Jesus. "Put off the old man with his deeds,"

was the brand across his brow; and as soon as Faithful saw that, he declined to have anything more to do with him.

### **13. What Faithful Met With In the Way (Concluded)**

“CHRISTIAN. *And how then?*

“FAITHFUL. *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!’ (Romans 7:24.) So I went on my way up the hill. Now when I had got about half-way up, I looked behind, and saw one coming after me, swift as the wind; so he overtook me just about the place where the settle stands. 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 bid him forbear.*

“CHRISTIAN. *Who was that that bid him forbear?*

“FAITHFUL. *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.*

“CHRISTIAN. *That man that overtook you was Moses. He spareth none, neither knoweth he how to show mercy to those that transgress his law.*



*“FAITHFUL. I know it very well; it was not the first time that he has met with me. It was 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.”*

Faithful said, “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.” Ah! it is even so. If we give way to any of the lusts of the flesh, we become slaves to them, and there is no slavery at all equal to that of the man who has given himself up to his own corrupt nature. He will go from bad to worse, and from worse to the very worst of all. What slavery drink involves! “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.” As for our lusts, there are yet more glaring penalties which follow them. Every man knows that he cannot yield to them a little but the tendency is to yield to them more.

Thereupon, Old Adam began to revile Faithful. As surely as you resist the enticements of the flesh, it will turn and rend you. The devil has two ways of dealing with us. First he speaks us fair, and bids us do as he would; but if we say him “nay,” he declares we are not children of God, and begins to rail at us as if he were himself a saint, and had a right to find fault with us. He will be our enemy in one direction or another. So did this old man to Faithful.

He did also another thing, which some of us understand very well. He gave Faithful a deadly twitch. Ah! it should bring tears into our eyes to recollect what twitches sin has sometimes given us, as though it would drag us into its thrall again. We knew the evil, and, by God’s grace, resolved against it; nor did we fall into it, yet our feet were almost gone, our steps had well-nigh slipped. The flesh of the best of men is but the flesh of a depraved nature, and the old nature of the most holy man is thoroughly carnal, and cannot be otherwise. It is so bad and detestable that it must be

buried, for even God Himself will never attempt to improve it. The new nature must come, and first subdue it, and ultimately mortify it, till it dies outright; but while it is there, it “is enmity against God,” and “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.” What twitches it can give, as though it would pull a man in two!

Many believers are greatly cast down because of this conflict within them. As soon as there are wars and fightings between the two men, — the old man and the new man, — they conclude at once that it is all over with them. Foolish conclusion, indeed! since, if there were no wars, it would be a proof that there was no life. If there were no conflicts, it would be an evidence that there was but one power within, and that power the evil one. Draw not from your internal commotions, from the temptation which assails you, and the force with which it acts against your inward principles, — draw not the inference that, therefore, you are a cast-away of God. This is rather a reason why you should cry, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” and by faith should shout, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I have often been astounded at some Christians, who cannot understand anything about these inward conflicts resulting from this double nature. Real disciples though they doubtless are, they seem quite amazed that we should think it possible that the Christian should have in his old corruptions. I may be worse than other people, but I am obliged to confess to you that never a day passes in which I am not painfully conscious of the sin that dwelleth in me; and though I know that I am saved by grace, and have a new nature wrought in me by God the Holy Spirit, yet I often have to call out, with the Apostle, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” I thought that this was the experience of all God’s people. I can only say that, if it could be dispensed with, I should be glad to be rid of it; but I believe that, up to the very gates of Heaven, there will be this daily conflict, this hourly struggle between the house of David and the house of Saul, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between the Old Adam and the New

Adam, between the natural and the spiritual.

However, our Pilgrim escaped; yet he escaped only with a threatening, for the old man told him that he would send one after him that should make his way bitter to his soul. You know who this was. It was Moses; for, when the law comes home to a Christian's conscience, it says to him, "You profess to have clean escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust, but look at you! You know that, if you had been left to yourself, you would have done as others did; and though you have been kept from the actual sin, yet how you rolled the thought of it under your tongue, and how sweet it was! How can there be a change in your nature when such a thing can be said of you?" Down comes the great bludgeon again and again, till you lie all bleeding and ready to perish. When the law begins to deal even with a Christian, if One does not come by to aid him, it will soon slay the best among us. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." When the Christian comes to be judged by the law of God, it makes him say, "The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." It makes a man lie as though he were dead. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." I felt the power of sin working in me, and I seemed to lie, at the feet of the accuser, like one utterly devoid of life. Now, the law cannot really kill the Christian. If Christians know how to stand their ground, it will not harm them. We are not under the law, but under grace. We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

Moses is a good friend of ours, after all. He beats us very furiously; but, when he drives us to Christ, it is a blessed experience for us. If he threatens to burn down our house over our heads, if he drives us out of our refuges of lies, it is indeed a mercy for us. Nevertheless, for the conscience to be beaten by Moses, is a very painful process.

How joyful is the moment when He comes by who has "holes in His hands, and in His side"! Now, Christian, you understand that. When you get a sight of Christ crucified, Sinai's thunders

cease to frighten. When you can feel that He loved you, and gave Himself for you, and bore the transgression of your Old Adam nature in His own body on the tree, you can rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. You know what it is to be knocked about by Moses. I trust you also know what it is to be healed by the loving Lord, and to be sent on your way rejoicing.

Some persons will not understand all this. I can only pray that they may yet do so; for, recollect that, if there be in you no strivings after that which is good, then you are altogether corrupt. If you are never disturbed, and never troubled, you have good cause to be distressed. If you never fight the battle, you will never win the victory. If you never suffer, you will never reign. If you have not learned to deny yourselves, you shall not be partakers with God's people. You can easily tell which of the fish in a river are dead, and which are alive. There is one floating down the stream on top of the water. We may be certain that it is dead. But see you that other fish coming swiftly against the strong current? That is not a dead fish, but a living one. And when you find a man carried along by the customs of his neighbours, doing just as others are doing, you may conclude that is a dead soul. But when a man is fighting against himself, against custom, against everything that is of this world, then you may know that he is a living man, and the God who has given him life will sustain that life, and reward it at the last. The evidence of life is simple confidence in the bleeding Saviour. Beloved, keep your eyes on Him. He alone can guard you from Moses and from Adam the First. And, O poor sinner! if thou wouldst get perfect rest, turn thy tearful eyes to Him who says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

#### **14. Vanity Fair.**

*"Then I saw in my dream, that when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair. It is kept all the year long. It beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is*

*lighter than vanity (Psalm 62:9), and also, because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is vanity; as it is the saying of the wise, 'All that cometh is vanity' (Ecclesiastes 11:8)."*

The happiest state of a Christian is the holiest state. As there is most heat nearest to the sun, so there is most happiness nearest to Christ. No Christian enjoys comfort when his eyes are fixed on vanity. I do not blame ungodly men for rushing to their pleasures. Let them have their fill. That is all they have to enjoy, but Christians must seek their delights in a higher sphere than the insipid frivolities of the world. Vain pursuits are dangerous to renewed souls.

*"Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town where this lusty fair is kept; and he that would go to the city, and yet not go through this town, 'must needs go out of the world' (1 Corinthians 5:10)."*

When weary of the strife and sin that meets you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried on beds of down to heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you will not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Therefore, "stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

*"Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did; but, behold, even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved, and the town itself, as it were, in a hubbub about them, and that for several reasons: For,*

*"First, The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair made a great gazing upon them! some said they were fools; some, they were bedlams; and some they were outlandish men (1 Corinthians 4:9).*

*“Secondly, And as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan; but they that kept the fair were the men of this world. So that from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the others (1 Corinthians 2:7, 8).”*

If you follow Christ fully you will be sure to be called by some ill name or other. They will say how singular you are. If you become a true Christian you will soon be a marked man. They will say, “How odd he is!” “How singular she is!” They will think that we try to make ourselves remarkable, when in fact, we are only conscientious, and are endeavouring to obey the will of God.

They will say, “Why are you old-fashioned?” You believe the same old things that they used to believe in Oliver Cromwell’s day — those old Puritanical doctrines. They laugh at our faith and assert that we have lost our liberty.

*“This fair is no new erected business, but a thing of ancient standing. I will show you the original of it.*

*“Almost five thousand years ago there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are; and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made, that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore at this fair are all such merchandise sold as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferment’s, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures; and delights of all sorts, as harlots, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants’ lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold pearls, precious stones, and what not.”*

There are divers kinds of vanity. The cap and bells of the fool, the mirth of the world, the dance, the lyre, and the cup of the dissolute; all these men know to be vanities. They wear upon their forefront their proper name and title. Far more treacherous are

those equally vain things, the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches. A man may follow vanity as truly in the counting-house, as in the theatre. If he be spending his life in amassing wealth, he passes his days in a vain show. Unless we follow Christ, and make our God the great object of life, we only differ in appearance from the most frivolous.

It is the sweetness of sin that makes it the more dangerous. Satan never sells his poisons naked; he always gilds them before he vends them. Beware of pleasures. Many of them are innocent and healthful, but many are destructive. It is said that where the most beautiful cacti grow, there the most venomous serpents lurk. It is so with sin. Your fairest pleasures will harbour your grossest sins. Take care! Cleopatra's asp was introduced in a basket of flowers. Satan offers to the drunkard the sweetness of the intoxicating cup. He gives to each of us the offer of our peculiar joy; he tickleth us with pleasures, that he may lay hold of us.

*“And moreover, at this fair, there are at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.*

*“Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false swearer, and that of a blood-red colour.”*

Banish for ever all thought of indulging the flesh if you would live in the power of your risen Lord. It were ill that a man who is alive in Christ should dwell in the corruption of sin. “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” said the angel to Magdalene. Should the living dwell in the sepulchre? Should divine life be immured in the charnel-house of fleshly lust? How can we partake of the cup of the Lord and yet drink the cup of Belial? Surely, believer, from open lusts and sins you are delivered; have you also escaped from the more secret and delusive lime-twigs of the Satanic fowler? Have you come forth from the lust of pride? Have you escaped from slothfulness? Have you clean escaped from carnal security? Are you seeking day by day to live above worldliness, the pride of life, and the ensnaring vice of avarice? Follow after

holiness; it is the Christian's crown and glory.

*“Thirdly, But that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was, that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them: and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, ‘Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,’ and look upwards signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven (Philippians in. 20, 21).*

*“One, chanced, mockingly, beholding the carriage of the men to say unto them, ‘What will ye buy? But they, looking gravely upon him said, ‘We buy the truth.’”*

The common religion of the day is a mingle-mangle of Christ and Belial.

“If God be God serve Him; if Baal be God, serve him.” There can be no alliance between the two. Jehovah and Baal can never be friends. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” “No man can serve two masters.” All attempts at compromise in matters of truth and purity are founded on falsehood. May God save us from such hateful double-mindedness. You must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity. Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of kings. Therefore keep thyself unspotted from the world. Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings; let not those eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in His beauty; let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets; let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are ere long to be filled with heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy: —

***Rise where eternal beauties bloom,  
And pleasure all divine;  
Where wealth that never can consume,  
And endless glories shine!”***

*“At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking*



*reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last things came to a hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded. Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take those men into examination about whom the fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to examination; and they that sat upon them asked whence they came, whither they went, and what they did there in such an unusual garb. The men told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own country, which was the heavenly Jerusalem, and that they had given no occasion to the men of the town, nor yet to the merchandisers, thus to abuse them, and to let them in their journey, except it was for that, when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the truth. But they that were appointed to examine them, did not believe them to be any other than bedlams and mad, else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the fair. Therefore they took them and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt, and then put them into a cage, that they might be made a spectacle to all the men of the fair. There, therefore, they lay for some time, and were made the objects of any man's sport, or malice, or revenge; the great one of the fair laughing still at all that befell them."*

Pilgrims travel as suspected persons through Vanity Fair. Not only are we under surveillance, but there are more spies than we reckon of. The espionage is everywhere, at home and abroad. If we fall into the enemies' hands we may sooner expect generosity from a wolf, or mercy from a fiend, than anything like patience with our infirmities from men who spice their infidelity towards God with scandals against His people. Live a godly gracious life, and you will not escape persecution. You may be happily circumstanced so as to live among earnest Christians and so escape persecution; but take the average Christian man, and he will have a hard time of it if he is faithful. The ungodly will revile

those who are true to the Lord Jesus. Christians are ridiculed in the workshop, they are pointed out in the street, and an opprobrious name is hooted at them. Persecution acts as a winnowing fan, and those who are light as chaff are driven away by its blast; but those who are true corn remain, and are purified. Careless of man's esteem, the truly God-fearing man holds on his way, and fears the Lord for ever.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.” My longing is that the churches may be more holy. I grieve to see so much of worldly conformity. How often wealth leads men astray; how many Christians follow the fashion of this wicked world. Alas! with all my preaching, many wander, and try to be members of the Church, and citizens of the world too. We have among us avowed lovers of Christ, who act too much like “lovers of pleasure.”

It is a shameful thing for a professor of Christianity to be found in those music-halls, saloons, and places of revelry where you cannot go without your morals being polluted, for you can neither open your eyes nor your ears without knowing at once that you are in the purlieu [territory] of Satan.

I charge you by the living God, if you cannot keep good company, and avoid the circle of dissipation, do not profess to be followers of Christ, for He bids you come out from among them and be separate. If you can find pleasure in lewd society and lascivious songs, what right have you to mingle with the fellowship of saints or to join in the singing of psalms?

Keep the best company. Be much with those who are much with God. Let them be thy choicest companions who have made Christ their choicest companion; let Christ's love be thy love. With whom shall believers be, but believers? Our English proverb says, “Birds of a feather flock together.” To see a saint and a sinner associating is to see the living and the dead keeping house together. It is better to be with Lazarus in rags, than with Dives in robes. Dwell where God dwells. Make those your companions on earth, who will be your companions in heaven.

An unholy Church! it is useless to the world, and of no esteem

among men. It is an abomination, hell's laughter, heaven's abhorrence. The worst evils which have ever come upon the world have been brought upon her by an unholy Church. O Christian, the vows of the Lord are upon you. You are God's priest: act as such. You are God's king: reign over your lusts. You are God's chosen: do not associate with Belial. Heaven is your portion: live like a heavenly spirit. So shall you prove that you have true faith in Jesus, for there cannot be faith in the heart unless there be holiness in the life:

*“Lord, I desire to live as one  
Who bears a blood-bought name;  
As one who fears but grieving Thee,  
And knows no other shame.”*

### **15. “Beware The Flatterer.”**

WHEN Christian and Hopeful left the Delectable Mountains to pursue their way towards the Celestial City the shepherds bade them “Beware of the Flatterer.” They learned afterwards, by said experience, the folly of neglecting this advice, for thus the story runs: —

*“They went then till they came at a place where they saw a way put itself into their way, and seemed withal to lie as straight as the way which they should go: and here they knew not which of the two to take, for both seemed straight before them; therefore, here they stood still to consider. And as they were thinking about the way, behold, a man, black of flesh, but covered with a very light robe, came to them, and asked them why they stood there. They answered, they were going to the Celestial City, but knew not which of these ways to take. ‘Follow me,’ said the man, ‘it is thither that I am going.’ So they followed him in the way that but now came into the road, which by degrees turned, and turned them so from the city that they desired to go to, that, in little time, their faces were turned away from it; yet they followed him. But by-and-by, before they were aware, he led them both*

*within the compass of a net, in which they were both so entangled, that they knew not what to do; and with that the white robe fell off the black man's back. Then they saw where they were. Wherefore they lay crying some time, for they could not get themselves out.*

*“Then said Christian to his fellow, Now do I see myself in an error. Did not the shepherds bid us beware of the flatterers? As in the saying of the wise man, so we have found it this day, ‘A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet’ (Proverbs 29:5).*

*“HOPEFUL. They also gave us a note of directions about the way, for our more sure finding thereof; but therein we have also forgotten to read, and have not kept ourselves from the paths of the destroyer. Here David was wiser than we; for, saith he, concerning the works of men, ‘By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer’ (Psalm 17:4).*

*“Thus they lay bewailing themselves in the net.”*

This is not a picture of a temptation to turn aside altogether from the good way. The path of the destroyer appeared to run parallel to that in which they ought to have kept. Nor did they go blundering on, but consulting with one another. Therein they were mistaken, for they should have consulted their Book of instructions. Then they were misled by a gentleman of pleasing appearance, who looked like a servant of the King of kings, and who spoke softly to them, assuring them that, as he himself was bound for the Celestial City, he could lead them thither. His winning accents caused them to yield themselves to his guidance; and, by-and-by, their faces were turned directly away from the city towards which aforesaid they had been pressing. You see, it is not a case of the deliberate choice of sin; but rather of being deluded through neglect of the Word of God, which is the true guide of the pilgrim.

There are flatterers of this kind in our own hearts. It has often happened, in our experience, that we have been living in simple

dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the straight and narrow way which leadeth unto life eternal, and, by-and-by, we have, perhaps, read the experience of some great man, and we think, "Well, it must be right to feel as he felt, to doubt as he doubted, to be tempest-tossed as he was." There is another road, and we begin to think that it is well to live by feeling. The flatterer does not tell us, in so many words, to give up faith in Christ alone. We should recognize him, and be shocked if he did that: but he insinuates that we may walk a little by our holy feelings. We are not now such infants as we used to be; we have grown in grace somewhat; we may now rely a little upon the past; there is not the same need to be daily hanging upon Christ; why not rest on what was enjoyed at conversion, and make up, if necessary, with some present frames and feelings, present power in prayer, or present usefulness in the Lord's work?

Mr. Flatterer knows wells that, when we are most sanctified, there is enough cause to weep over every day in our life. He knows that those who most resemble Jesus are very, very far from being quite like Him. There is much more cause to deplore our sinnership, than to admire our saintship. As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so must we walk in Him. Still we rely upon His merits alone. If you begin to walk by yourself even a little way, you will soon find that path leading you, insensibly, into such legality that you try, if not actually to save yourself, yet to keep yourself saved through the works of the law. In a very little time, the believer who does this will fall into the net. He will find the pangs of hell, as it were, get hold upon him; he will find trouble and sorrow. When a bird is caught in a net, it attempts to get out this way and that way. It may break its wings, but it cannot escape; it rather entangles itself more completely. So the soul, that has forsaken simple faith, to live upon its own works, and feelings, and experiences, will try in vain to get relief. It is in legal bondage. The Ten Commandments suffice to make a heavy net when they twist around the sinner who has broken them. Apart from the blood of Jesus Christ, who can hope to escape from an awakened conscience? Thus is the Christian caught in a

net when the Flatterer, who lives in his soul, tempts him to self-righteousness and to forsake the Lord. Luther used to say, "You need fear a black devil half so much as a white one." The white devil of self-righteousness is more dangerous to the Christian than even the black devil of open sin. When open sin tempts us, we know it to be sin, and we are helped to forsake it. But oftentimes, the white devil seems to be an angel of light; and, under the garb of striving after sanctification, or aiming at perfection, we are tempted to leave our child-like confidence in the Lord. This way lies the net!

There are so many other nets that I should not care to have to count them. You young converts may meet with a person who will say to you, "I hear you are converted; I am glad of that, but where do you attend?" "Oh, SO-and-so!" "Ah! you should not go there; it is very well for some things, but there are higher truths that you will never learn there; you should come with us, and hear how we can explain the prophecies to you;" and so, under the guise of desiring you to listen to prophetic truth, they will lead you into some new form of error.

Others will seek to win you to admire with them the splendours of outward forms and ceremonies. How many unwary ones have been thus allured to Ritualism and Romanism! Certain others will say, "Oh, you should not have a minister!" They cry down the Lord's Shepherds who are found on the Delectable Mountains, and urge you to go where everybody teaches everybody. They are the people of God; they are not a sect, though ten thousand times more bigoted than any sect that ever existed. Beware, I pray you, of any form of doctrine or practice which would lead you from the place where you were born to God, where you have been nurtured in Christ, where you have been made useful, and helped forward in the Divine life. There are certain sects that only live by stealing members from other churches, whereas the aim of a Christian church should be to win souls direct from the world. These flatterers, for they are generally such, will tell you that you are too experienced to sit under the ordinary ministry; you are much too useful, or too spiritual, to remain in such a

congregation. If you hearken unto them, you will soon find that leanness has come into your soul, and that you are entangled in the net, for you have been drawn away from the truth as it is in Jesus by some creed of man's devising.

I would warn our young members especially against that form of faith which holds only half the Bible; against those who proclaim the Divine election, but ignore human responsibility, and who preach up high doctrine, but have little or nothing to say about Christian practice. I am persuaded that this is another net of the Flatterer, and many have I seen taken in it. They have ceased from all care about the souls of others, have become indifferent as to whether children were perishing or being saved, have settled on their lees, to eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and have come to think that this was all for which they were redeemed. Their compassions have failed; they have had no weeping eyes over perishing sinners; in fact, they have thought it a sign of being unsound to care about saving sinners at all. May God keep you from being flattered into this net, lest you become pierced through with many sorrows! To the Bible only you must look. Test every new idea with this touchstone: "To the law and to the testimony." Require a "Thus saith the Lord" from every flattering notion. The old Book is our infallible guide.

Now let us read the passage in which Bunyan describes the pilgrims' release from the net.

*"At last they espied a Shining One coming towards them, with a whip of small cord in His hand. When He was come to the place where they were, He asked them whence they came, and what they did there. They told Him that they were poor pilgrims going to Zion, but were led out of their way by a black man, clothed in white, 'who bid us,' and they, 'follow him, for he was going thither too.' Then said He with the whip, 'It is Flatterer, a false apostle, that hath transformed himself into an angel of light' (Proverbs 29:5; Daniel 11:32; 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15). So He rent the net, and let the men out. Then said He to them, 'Follow Me, that I may set you in your way again.' So He led them back to the way which they*

*had left to follow the Flatterer. Then He asked them, saying, 'Where did you lie last night?' They said, 'With the Shepherds, upon the Delectable Mountains.' He asked them then, if they had not of those Shepherds a note of direction for the way. They answered, 'Yes.' 'But did you,' said he, 'when you were at a stand, pluck out and read your note?' They answered, 'No.' He asked them, 'Why?' They said they forgot. He asked, moreover, if the Shepherds did not bid them beware of the Flatterer. They answered, 'Yes; but we did not imagine,' said they, 'that this fine-spoken man had been he.' (Romans 16:18).*

*"Then I saw in my dream, that He commanded them to lie down; which, when they did, He chastised them sore, to teach them the good way wherein they should walk (Deuteronomy 25:2); and as He chastised them, He said, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent' (Revelation 3:19. 2 Chronicles 6:26, 27). This done, He bid them go on their way, and take good heed to the other directions of the Shepherds. So they thanked Him for all His kindness, and went softly along the right way, singing, —*

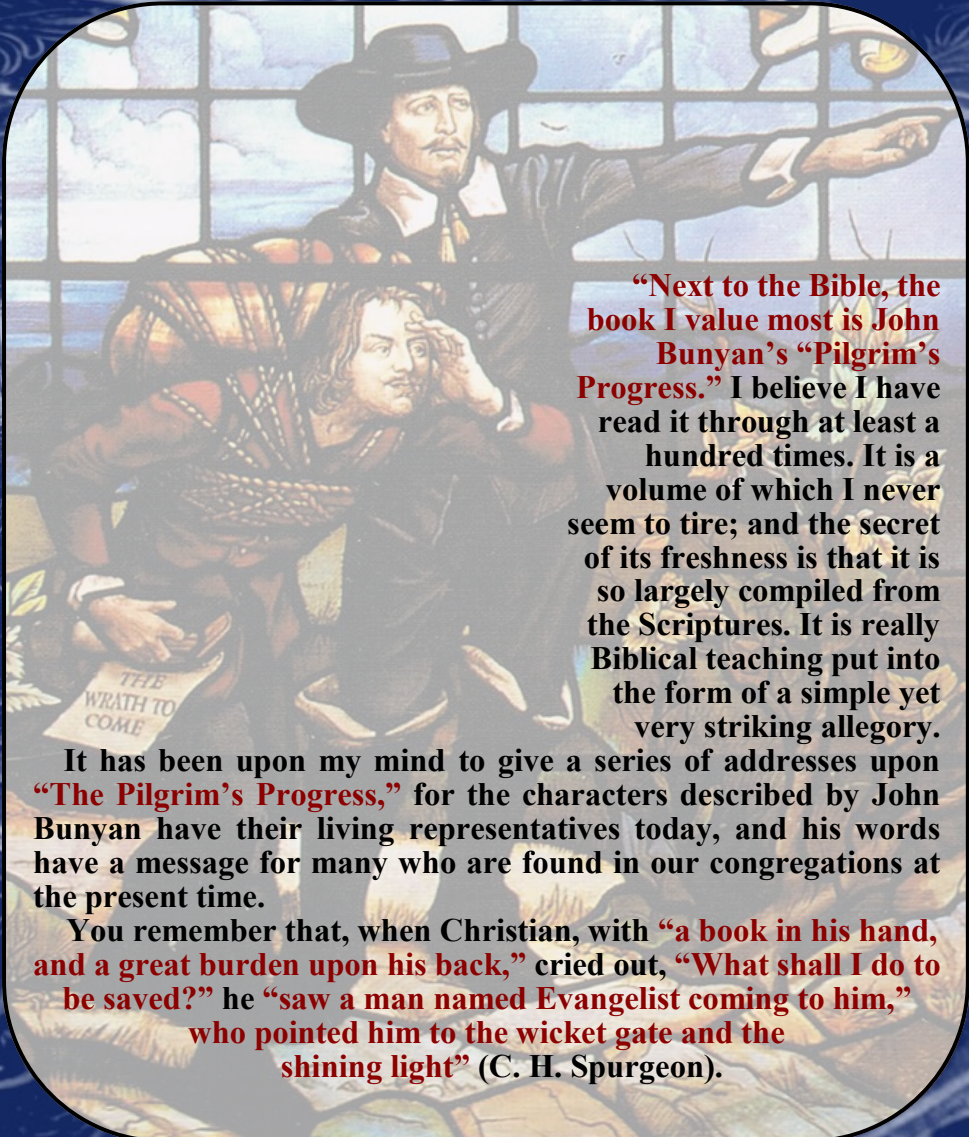
***"Come hither, you that walk along the way;  
See how the pilgrims fare that go astray?  
They caught are in an entangling net,  
'Cause they good counsel lightly did forget:  
'Tis true, they rescued were, but yet you see  
They're scourged to boot. Let this your caution be,"***

When a Christian gets into the net of self-righteousness, he is sure to be delivered because he belongs to the Lord, who will not suffer him to be destroyed. But the Shining One, who comes to deliver him out of the net, will certainly bring a scourge of small cords with Him, and will chasten him, again and again, till he is willing to walk humbly with his God. Alas! how soon we get high looks and a proud bearing! We dream that we need not come crouching at the cross-foot, as other sinners do. I heard one say that he had not prayed for forgiveness of sin for twelve months;



he had had his sins forgiven years ago. But when the Lord gives us a good dose of bitters, and makes us drink of the waters of Marah, we ask to be washed as Peter did when he changed his mind, and said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Then we feel the need of daily application of the precious blood, and we are willing to stand with the poor publican, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We must be chastened to keep us low. A good old countryman, now in Heaven, said to me, as I was walking with him in the field where he was ploughing, many years ago, "Ah, Master Spurgeon! if I get one inch above the ground, I get that inch too high, and have to come down again." So shall we. We must cling to the faith that owns that Christ is our All-in-all. If the flatterer leads us astray, woe will be unto us. So will it be, I believe, with Christian men and women who, having received a blessing in any church, are induced to turn aside from it. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." Many such have been well chastened, and have had to come back to their old church again, and have rejoiced once more to sit with the Lord's people with whom they had happy fellowship in days gone by.

The third of four booklets.



**“Next to the Bible, the book I value most is John Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress.” I believe I have read it through at least a hundred times. It is a volume of which I never seem to tire; and the secret of its freshness is that it is so largely compiled from the Scriptures. It is really Biblical teaching put into the form of a simple yet very striking allegory.**

It has been upon my mind to give a series of addresses upon **“The Pilgrim’s Progress,”** for the characters described by John Bunyan have their living representatives today, and his words have a message for many who are found in our congregations at the present time.

You remember that, when Christian, with **“a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back,”** cried out, **“What shall I do to be saved?”** he **“saw a man named Evangelist coming to him,”** who pointed him to the wicket gate and the **“shining light”** (C. H. Spurgeon).