

Table of Contents to my comments on select portions of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Part One (Bunyan's Part Two features Christiana, among others).

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CHAPTER ONE

Bunyan's Book-Book

John Bunyan (1628-1688) was born near Bedford at Elstow, England. His *Pilgrim's Progress* is considered to be one of the most influential works of fiction ever written. Here are a few blurbs by other influential persons who esteem it highly:

"Pilgrim's Progress is read with the greatest pleasure." – George Whitefield (1714-1770)

"I find this book so full of matter, that I can seldom go through more than a page or half a page at a time." – John Newton (1725-1807)

"Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is Pilgrim's Progress. I believe I have read it through at least a hundred times...Prick him anywhere, and you will find that his blood is 'bibline,' the very essence of the Bible flows from him." – Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

"That tenderest and most theological of books is pulsating with life in every word." – J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937)

In the introductory defense (i.e., the "author's apology") of his book-book, Bunyan rhymes that his

"book will make a Traveller of thee,

If by its Counsel thou wilt ruled be;

it will direct thee to the Holy Land,

If thou wilt its directions understand:

Yea, it will make the slothful, active be;

The blind also delightful things to see...This book is writ in such a dialect,

As may the minds of listless men affect:

It seems a novelty, and yet contains

Nothing but sound and honest Gospel-strains.”

One frequent objection that came up during Bunyan's time was his use of allegory (In his defense, Bunyan quoted Hosea 12:10, "I have used similitudes," on the title page of the *Pilgrim's Progress*):

“But they lack solidness. Speak man your mind;

They drowned the weak; metaphors make us blind.”

To which Bunyan replied:

“The Prophets used much by metaphors

To set forth truth; yea, whos considers

Christ, His Apostles too, shall plainly see,

That truths to this day in such mantles be.”

J-Bun, in his conclusion to the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, spits the following lines:

Now, READER, I have told my dream to

thee;

See if thou canst interpret it to me,

Or to thyself, or neighbour; but take heed

Of misinterpreting; for that, instead

Of doing good, will but thyself abuse:

By misinterpreting, evil ensues.

Take heed also, that thou be not extreme,

In playing with the outside of my dream:

Nor let my figure or similitude

Put thee into a laughter or a feud.

Leave this for boys and fools; but as for thee,

Do thou the substance of my matter see.

Put by the curtains, look within my veil,

Turn up my metaphors, and do not fail;

There, if thou seekest them, such things to

find,

As will be helpful to an honest mind.

What of my dross thou findest there, be bold

To throw away, but yet preserve the gold;

What if my gold be wrapped up in ore?—

None throws away the apple for the core.

But if thou shalt cast all away as vain,

I know not but 'twill make me dream again.

In the part two of Bunyan's little book-book, he sends Christiana on her way:

"Go now, my little book, to every place,

Where my first Pilgrim has but shewn his face:

Call at their door: If any say, Who's there?

Then answer thou, Christiana is here."

And in response to various and sundry objections, Bunyan doth say:

OBJECTION 3.

But some there he that say, He laughs too loud

And some do say, His head is in a cloud.

Some say, His words and stories are so dark,

They know not how, by them, to find his mark.

ANSWER.

One may, I think, say, Both his laughs and

cries,

May well be guess'd at by his wat'ry eyes.

Some things are of that nature, as to make

One's fancy chuckle, while his heart doth ache.

When Jacob saw his Rachel with the sheep,

He did at the same time both kiss and weep.

Whereas some say, A cloud is in his head,

That doth but show how wisdom's covered

With its own mantles, and to stir the mind

To a search after what it fain would find.

Things that seem to be hid in words obscure,

Do but the godly mind the more allure

To study what those sayings should contain,

That speak to us in such a cloudy strain.

I also know a dark similitude

Will on the fancy more itself intrude,

And will stick faster in the heart and head,

Than things from similes not borrowed.

Wherefore, my book, let no discouragement

Hinder thy travels. Behold, thou art sent

To friends, not foes; to friends that will give

place

To thee, thy Pilgrims, and thy words embrace.

Besides, what my first Pilgrim left conceal'd

Thou, my brave second Pilgrim, hast reveal'd;

What CHRISTIAN left lock'd up, and went his

way,

Sweet CHRISTIANA opens with her key.

Bunyan says that part two of *The Pilgrim's Progress* clarifies some of the alleged muddiness of the first part.

Here's Bunyan's final prefatory paragraph, before beginning his second reverie:

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS;

IN THE SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM. THE SECOND PART.

"Now may this little book a blessing be

*To those who love this little book and me;
And may its buyer have no cause to say,
His money is but lost or thrown away;
Yea, may this Second Pilgrim yield that fruit,
As may with each good Pilgrim's fancy suit;
And may it persuade some that go astray,
To turn their feet and heart to the right way,
Is the hearty prayer of
The Author,*

JOHN BUNYAN.

The Lord willing, I will walk through select portions of Bunyan's book-book (part one, first; then part two) in subsequent posts. This is not what I would call an "exhaustive book review," but a relatively brief review and commentary on certain sections. [NOTE: I have yet to begin walking through select portions of Bunyan's Part Two.]

CHAPTER TWO

Swift quote on Pilgrim's Progress

A quote from Jonathan Swift:

“Some gentlemen abounding in their university erudition, are apt to fill their sermons with philosophical terms and notions of the metaphysical or abstracted kind, which generally have one advantage, to be equally understood by the wise, the vulgar, and the preacher himself. I have been better entertained, and more informed by a chapter in the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress,’ than by a long discourse upon the will and the intellect, and simple or complex ideas. Others again, are fond of dilating on matter and motion, talk of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, of theories, and phenomena, directly against the advice of St Paul, who yet appears to have been conversant enough in those kinds of studies” (Jonathan Swift, A Letter to a Young Clergyman).

We shall see, the Lord willing, what exactly Bunyan will inform us about concerning his book-book (i.e., *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Parts 1 and 2).

CHAPTER THREE

Calvinism Painted in Exquisitely Delightful Colours

Some information I acquired regarding Bunyan's book-book (mostly from Barry E. Horner's *Pilgrim's Progress: Themes and Issues* and his *Pilgrim's Progress: An Outlined Commentary*):

"I know of no book, the Bible excepted, as above all comparison, which I, according to my judgment and experience, could so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving truth according to the mind that was in Christ Jesus, as in The Pilgrim's Progress. It is, in my conviction, incomparably the best Summa Theologiae Evangelicae ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 3, 1838).

In his book *Themes and Issues*, Horner cites Luther scholar Gordon Rupp's description of Coleridge's description of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*:

"Coleridge called it a compendium of evangelical doctrine, and we shall be wise not to treat it as a long outmoded pious book for children" (Gordon Rupp, *Six Makers of English Religion, 1500-1700* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957), p. 98.

Also from the pen of Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

*“This wonderful work is one of the very few books which may be read over repeatedly at different times, and each time with a new and different pleasure. I read it once as a theologian -- and let me assure you that there is great theological acumen in the work -- once with devotional feelings — and once as a poet. I could not have believed beforehand that Calvinism could be painted in such exquisitely delightful colours. ...Calvinism never put on a less rigid form, never smoothed its brow and softened its voice more winningly than in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*” (Roger Sharrock, ed., Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress, A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 53-54.*

In Bunyan’s *“The Holy City; Or, The New Jerusalem”* he addresses “four sorts of readers,” one of which is “the mother of harlots”:

“TO THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, &c.

My fourth word is to the lady of kingdoms, the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, and the abominations of the earth.

MISTRESS,—I suppose I have nothing here that will either please your wanton eye or go down with your voluptuous palate. Here is bread indeed, as also milk and meat; but here is neither paint to adorn thy wrinkled face, nor crutch to uphold or undershore thy shaking, tottering, staggering kingdom of Rome; but rather a certain presage of thy sudden and fearful final downfall, and of the exaltation of that holy matron, whose chastity thou dost abhor, because by it she reproveth and condemneth thy lewd and stubborn life. Wherefore, lady, smell thou mayest of this, but taste thou wilt

not: I know that both thy wanton eye, with all thy mincing brats that are intoxicated with thy cup and enchanted with thy fornications, will, at the sight of so homely and plain a dish as this, cry, Foh! snuff, put the branch to the nose, and say, Contemptible! (Mal 1:12,13; Eze 8:17). 'But wisdom is justified of all her children' (Matt 11:19). 'The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee' (Isa 37:22), yea, her God hath smitten his hands at thy dishonest gain and freaks (Eze 22:7-11, &c.). 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory'" (Isa 66:10,11).

The Lord willing, we shall see that Bunyan's *Progress* is one giant bucket of face-paint that with a SWORD-sized TROWEL may be gobbled upon the face of the Mother of Harlots in a vain attempt to shore in all her self-righteous, brazen, and haggish chasms.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chef Bunyan's Delicacies

In his commentary on the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Barry E. Horner writes:

"...the assessment of The Pilgrim's Progress for the future by Cambridge scholar George Sampson ought to be seriously pondered and optimistically embraced:

'There is no need to say anything about the book by way of criticism; for its characters, its scenes and its phrases have become a common possession. Of course in every age there has been, and there always will be, the kind of superior person who disdains it. Such people are naught. The Pilgrim's Progress goes on forever. Creeds may change and faith may be wrecked; but the life of man is still a pilgrimage, and in its painful course he must encounter the friends and the foes, the dangers and the despairs that Bunyan's inspired simplicity has drawn so faithfully that even children know them at once for truth'

(George Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941), p. 375.

Sampson's argument, put to rhyme, is that:

There is no need to speak haughtily and to criticize;

For Bunyan's book has been commonly "possessified."

Those who disdain popular consumption as "quite inedible."

Are duly marginalized as those who are "simply. not. credible."

Unregenerate ones are desirous of Chef Bunyan's delicacies – the impression is indelible.

Regenerate ones discerning deceitful-dainties set before them, are simply not compel-able.

CHAPTER FIVE

As I walked through the wilderness of this world

John Bunyan begins with the following well-known line, *“As I walked through the wilderness of this world”*:

“AS I walked through the wilderness of this world, I came upon a certain place where there was a den; and I lay down in that place to sleep; and as I slept I dreamed a dream.”

Barry E. Horner comments on these opening lines:

“To the realist concerning this decadent modern age, the opening words are both arresting and intriguing. Having read the whole of the first paragraph, one is immediately made aware of the fact that this allegory is seriously and vitally concerned with the plight and destiny of mankind in its common predicament, not mere moralistic platitudes. The esteemed historian G. M. Trevelyan, declared in 1928:

‘Of all the works of high imagination which have enthralled mankind, none opens with a passage that more instantly places the reader in the heart of all the action that is to follow; not Homer’s, not Milton’s, invocation of the Muse; not one of Dante’s three great openings; not the murmured challenge of the sentinels on the midnight platform at Elsinor – not one of these better performs the author’s initial task. The attention is at once captured, the imagination aroused. In these first sentences, by

the magic of words, we are transported into a world of spiritual values, and impressed at the very outset with the sense of great issues at stake nothing less than the fate of a man's soul'

(G. M. Trevelyan, "Bunyan's England," *The Review Of The Churches*, July, 1928, p. 319).

Bunyan continues:

"I dreamed, and, behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back, (Isa. 64:6; Luke 14:33; Psa. 38:4; Hab. 2:2; Acts 16:31). I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, "What shall I do?" (Acts 2:37).

Acts 2:37 is Bunyan's Scripture reference [originally placed in the margins—CD] which records the response of those "pricked in their heart" and crying "men and brethren, what shall we do?" in reply to Peter's scathing indictment. It is important to note at this point, that Bunyan believed that the Holy Spirit of God was working in the unconverted and unregenerate Christian a form of "prevenient grace," contrary to the Scripture's testimony that those within whom the Spirit of God works are NEVER left ignorant of the effectual Remedy to their spiritual plight (John 16:13-14; Romans 8:16, 10:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 4:6). Bunyan's abhorrent view of "prevenient grace" is seen in Christian and Hopeful's

somewhat protracted exchange on The Enchanted Ground (I quote a small part of that exchange here):

Christian: But what was the cause of your carrying of it thus to the first workings of God's blessed Spirit upon you?

Hopeful: The causes were, 1. I was ignorant that this was the work of God upon me. I never thought that by awakening for sin, God at first begins the conversion of a sinner.

When asking “what was the cause of your carrying of it thus?,” Christian responds to Hopeful’s previous statement that to the Word of God he had “shut mine eyes against the light thereof.” There may be a certain sense of “awakening” (as when Jesus Christ in His providence forcefully put Saul of Tarsus in his rightful place upon the Damascus Road), but to describe a self-righteous sense of “awakening” that goes MUCH FURTHER, involving the Holy Spirit’s workings that leave the sinner ignorantly seeking to establish his own righteousness, is a clear affront to the Holy Spirit’s role — which is to glorify Jesus Christ in the hearts of His people (2 Corinthians 4:6). To conclude, here is a confirming quote that comes from Bunyan’s *The Strait Gate*:

“Be thankful, therefore, for convictions; conversion begins at conviction, though all conviction doth not end in conversion. It is a great mercy to be convinced that we are sinners, and that we need a Saviour; count it therefore a mercy, and that thy convictions may end in conversion, do thou take heed of stifling of them. It is the way of poor sinners to look upon convictions as things that are hurtful; and therefore they use to shun the

awakening ministry, and to check a convincing conscience. Such poor sinners are much like to the wanton boy that stands at the maid's elbow, to blow out her candle as fast as she lights it at the fire. Convinced sinner, God lighteth thy candle, and thou putteth it out; God lights it again, and thou putteth it out. Yea, 'how oft is the candle of the wicked put out?' (Job 21:17)

At last, God resolveth he will light thy candle no more; and then, like the Egyptians, you dwell all your days in darkness, and never see light more, but by the light of hell-fire; wherefore give glory to God, and if he awakens thy conscience, quench not thy convictions. Do it, saith the prophet, 'before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and he turn' your convictions 'into the shadow of death, and make them gross darkness.' (Jer 13:16)."

This is not a surprise. Bunyan and many others held to a pernicious kind of "grace" (so-called; *contra* Romans 11:6) that could be stifled, put out, and even finally overcome. This "grace" is not to be confused with the Arminian version of "prevenient grace," since in the Calvinist Puritan version this "grace" preceding regeneration and conversion is "followed-up" with a stronger dose of "invincible regenerating grace" in the case of the elect sinner. Calvinists such as W.G.T. Shedd have articulated these "levels of grace" in his *Dogmatics* (and perhaps in his book, *Calvinism: Pure & Mixed*).

CHAPTER SIX

Come Meet the Mountain

“O my dear wife,’ said he, ‘and you, the children of my bowels, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from Heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee, my wife, and you, my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.’ At this, his relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head; therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears.

So when the morning was come, they would know how he did; he told them, worse and worse; he also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him. Sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber to pray for, and pity them, and also to condole his own misery. He would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time.”

This is NOT Holy Spirit conviction begun in this darkened heart of Christian, contrary to what John Bunyan and many other false religionists may think. Rather, it is a natural conviction of conscience that multitudes of unregenerate persons experience due to being created in the image of God. Romans 2:14-15 speaks to this natural conscience conviction wherewith men are left in and remain in their ignorance of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of Christ.

For true Christians — in stark contrast to Bunyan’s Christian — “*harsh and surly carriages*” toward them may be their experience for preaching the true gospel-uncompromised. Believers in the true gospel who *actually* make their judgments by the gospel (*yes, really*) are at times derided, chided, or quite neglected by their own unbelieving family members.

*We haste the day of Christ’s return and on His mercy we are countin’.
We fear the Lord and persuade men to repent of their self-glorying heist.
We boast in suffering at the hands of God-haters for our Savior-Christ.
The time is short, so repent and believe. Or, come meet the Mountain:*

“Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Evangelist

“He answered, ‘Sir, I perceive, by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, (Heb. 9:27); and I find that I am not willing (Job 16:21, 22) to do the first, nor able (Eze. 22:14) to do the second.’ Then said Evangelist, ‘Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils?’ The man answered, ‘Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave; and I shall fall into Tophet’ (Isa. 30:33).”

It is true that those without a righteousness that answers the demands of God’s law and justice – which righteousness includes Christ’s propitiatory blood and obedience imputed — *“shall fall into Tophet.”* This shows that even the most heretically-bloated books in the world do contain some true statements.

“And, Sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit, I am sure, to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.’ Then said Evangelist, ‘If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?’ He answered, ‘Because I know not whither to go.’ Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, ‘Fly from the wrath to come’ (Matt. 3:7). The man therefore, read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, ‘Whither must I fly?’ Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, ‘Do you see yonder wicket gate?’ (Matt. 7:13).”

Evangelist points Christian to “*yonder wicket gate*,” which is Jesus Christ (Christ said “*I am the door*”). It is to this “gate” that Evangelist directs Christian to escape from the wrath to come.

“The man said, ‘No.’ Then said the other, ‘Do you see yonder shining light?’ (Psa. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19). He said, ‘I think I do.’ Then said Evangelist, ‘Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.’ So I saw in my dream that the man began to run.”

Since Christian was unable to see the wicket gate (i.e., Christ) Evangelist’s follow-up question is, “*do you see yonder shining light?*” By “*shining light*” I think Evangelist is giving Christian a more general direction to the Word of God (Bunyan references 2 Peter 1:19):

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

Since Scripture is spoken of as a “lamp” and a “light” to illumine paths, Bunyan’s professing Christian is directed to read the “*sure word of prophecy*” (i.e., the Bible) till he receives further direction at the wicket gate. The phrases “*until the day dawn*” and “*the day star arise in your hearts*” may refer to the final glorification of true Christians at the consummation of all things. But if they be applied to initial regeneration, then it behooves us to note the proper source of this “light” that later “illumines” the darkened ignorant heart of Bunyan’s Christian at “*the place of deliverance.*”

“Now, he had not ran far from his own door, but his wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return (Luke 14:26); but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, ‘Life! Life! Eternal life!’ So he looked not behind him (Gen. 19:17), but fled towards the middle of the plain.”

I do not think it is superfluous to note that while crying *“Life! Life! Eternal life!”*, Bunyan’s Pilgrim is deadly ignorant of the righteousness upon which this eternal life is based. Thus:

While from the wrath of God fleeing, he is still under the wrath of God being (John 3:36).

For by ignorant fleeing, an established self-righteousness he is ardently seeking (Romans 10:1-4).

CHAPTER EIGHT

An Adiaphoran Bore

“The neighbors also came out to see him run; and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened; and some cried for him to return. Now among those that did so, there were two that were determined to fetch him back by force. The name of one was Obstinate, and the name of the other was Pliable. Now by this time the man was a good distance ahead of them; however they were resolved to pursue him, and this they did and in a little while overtook him. Then said the man, ‘neighbors, wherefore are you come?’ They said, ‘To persuade you to go back with us.’ But he said, ‘That can by no means be; you dwell,’ said he, ‘in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born, I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with Fire and Brimstone: be content, good neighbors, and go along with me’”
(Pilgrim’s Progress).

When the unregenerate elect are regenerated by God they immediately take flight out of Babylon. But the timorous tinder, will try to hinder, says I:

Many are trying with pseudo-pious crying.

To force a return to a furnace of iron.

Others threaten with a different tack:

*“Against the Church you are turning your back;
Against the Elders you are talking defiant smack.”*

Laugh like a horse till they are hoarse.

With frivolity, jollity, hilarity, and mirth.

“Church’s been false since the time of her birth?”

*Ensconced in the Devil's lie, they do this verbal drive-by.
Filthy flatterers jettison true gospel medicine.
And imagine this will not be the end of them.
"The true gospel is an adiaphoran bore."
Say uxorious dolts benighted by the Whore.*

We continue with Bunyan's *Progress*:

Obst. What, said Obstinate, and leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

Thus objecteth the truth-despisers of varying stripe — from the tolerant Calvinist to the audacious Arminian to the Agnostic ignoramus.

Chr. Yes, said Christian, for that was his name, because that all which you shall forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that that I am seeking to enjoy; and if you will go along with me and hold it, you shall fare

as I myself; for there where I go, is enough and to spare: Come away, and prove my words.

At this time, Bunyan's Christian is a professing Christian who is ignorant of the Scriptural revelation of God's everlasting righteousness revealed in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:1-4).

Obst. What are the things you seek, since you leave all the world to find them?

Chr. I seek an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.

Obst. Tush, said Obstinate, away with your Book; will you go back with us or no?

Chr. No, not I, said the other, because I have laid my hand to the Plow.

Obst. Come then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him; there is a company of these craz'd-headed coxcombs, that, when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

Pli. Then said Pliable, Don't revile; if what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours; my heart inclines to go with my neighbor.

Many tolerant Calvinists *abusive ad hom* true Christians as “craz’d-headed coxcombs” instead of dealing with God’s Word.

I recall one pliable plant who heard the true gospel upon the rocky soil, and sadly abandoned the gospel-truth for the hypothetical asinities housed in [Hyper-Calvinism](#). Bunyan’s Pliable desires a kingdom with no King (among other things).

Obst. What! more fools still? Be ruled by me, and go back; who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

Obstinate, yes. But at least he has a spine. Would that many tolerant false Christians — especially the tolerant Calvinists — would take Obstinate’s lead and speak words plain and forthright, and not great and swelling bluster that is bereft of a meaningful backbone.

Chr. Come with me, neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this Book; and for the truth of what is exprest therein, behold, all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it.

Pli. Well, neighbor Obstinate, said Pliable, I begin to come to a point: I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him: but, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

Chr. I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little Gate that is before us, where we shall receive instructions about the way.

Thus Bunyan's Christian is still ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (cf. Romans 10:1-4).

Pli. Come then, good neighbor, let us be going. Then they went both together.

Obst. And I will go back to my place, said Obstinate; I will be no companion of such mis-led, fantastical fellows.

Now I saw in my Dream, that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the Plain; and thus they began their discourse.

And for now, we end here.

CHAPTER NINE

Pliable Professor

Chr. Come Neighbor Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me: Had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.

Pli. Come, Neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going?

Chr. I can better conceive of them with my Mind, than speak of them with my Tongue: but yet, since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book.

Pli. And do you think that the words of your Book are certainly true?

Chr. Yes, verily; for it was made by him that cannot lye.[alternate or archaic spelling of "lie."--CD]

Pli. Well said; what things are they?

Chr. There is an endless Kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting Life to be given us, that may inhabit that Kingdom for ever.

Pli. Well said; and what else?

Chr. There are Crowns of glory to be given us, and Garments that will

make us shine like the Sun in the firmament of Heaven.

Pli. This is very pleasant; and what else?

I believe the following Scriptures describe those Pliable professing Christians whose theological convictions resemble a plate of jell-o or a bean-bag cushion.

“And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear

the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:16-20).

A certain group of poets have stated that many have “*no spiritual-ear, like when corn is cob-less.*” We have experiential knowledge of a few rootless and entangled ones (rootless and entangled are those who make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, who later defect from the Truth).

“And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:25-27).

Pliable desireth the loaves, but not the Giver of the loaves.

“For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:6-7).

Whether biologically male or female, there are many Pliable professors of true Christianity who are spiritual “*silly women laden with sins, led away*

with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

As a heretical poet of Pliable's own has correctly sung:

“So you wanna go back to Egypt where it's warm and secure. ... Eating leaks and onions by the Nile. Ooh what breath, but dining out in style. ... Well there's nothing to do but travel, and we sure travel a lot. 'Cause it's hard to keep your feet from moving when the sand gets so hot. ... So you wanna go back to Egypt, where old friends wait for you. You can throw a big party and tell the whole gang, that what they said was all true”

We continue with the correspondence of Pliable and Christian:

Pli. Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things; come on, let us mend our pace.

Chr. I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this Burden that is upon my back.

Now I saw in my Dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew near to a very miry Slough, that was in the midst of the plain; and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here therefore they wallowed for a time, being grievously

bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the Burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.

Pli. Then said Pliable, Ah Neighbor Christian, where are you now?

Chr. Truly, said Christian, I do not know.

Pli. At that Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect 'twixt this and our Journey's end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave Country alone for me. And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the Slough which was next to his own house: so away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

I believe Bunyan would not say that his Christian was converted yet — since he'd not yet arrived at the Wicket Gate — but a “Christian” in name only (i.e., a nominal Christian).

CHAPTER TEN

Slough of Despond

After Pliable left Christian to *“tumble in the Slough of Despond alone,”* he was lifted out by one named “Help.” The narrator then steps out of his dream to say:

“Then I stepped to him that plucked him out, and said, ‘Sir, wherefore, since over this place is the way from the City of Destruction to yonder Gate, is it that this plat [patch of ground –CD] is not mended, that poor travellers might go thither with more security?’ And he said unto me, ‘This miry Slough is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond; for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place: And this is the reason of the badness of this ground.’”

To reiterate what Bunyan says of convictions from his *Strait Gate*:

“Be thankful, therefore, for convictions; conversion begins at conviction, though all conviction doth not end in conversion. It is a great mercy to be convinced that we are sinners, and that we need a Saviour; count it therefore a mercy, and that thy convictions may end in conversion, do thou take heed of stifling of them. It is the way of poor sinners to look upon convictions as things that are hurtful; and therefore they use to shun the

awakening ministry, and to check a convincing conscience. Such poor sinners are much like to the wanton boy that stands at the maid's elbow, to blow out her candle as fast as she lights it at the fire. Convinced sinner, God lighteth thy candle, and thou putttest it out; God lights it again, and thou putttest it out. Yea, 'how oft is the candle of the wicked put out?' (Job 21:17)

At last, God resolveth he will light thy candle no more; and then, like the Egyptians, you dwell all your days in darkness, and never see light more, but by the light of hell-fire; wherefore give glory to God, and if he awakens thy conscience, quench not thy convictions. Do it, saith the prophet, 'before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and he turn your convictions into the shadow of death, and make them gross darkness.'" (Jer 13:16)

Bunyan's "Help" describes further, the "pre-conversion" Slough of Despond:

"True, there are by the direction of the Lawgiver, certain good and substantial steps, placed even through the very midst of this Slough; but at such time as this place doth much spue out its filth, as it doth against change of weather, these steps are hardly seen; or if they be, men through the dizziness of their heads, step besides; and then they are bemired to purpose, notwithstanding the steps be there; but the ground is good when they are once got in at the Gate."

But as we shall see at some point in Bunyan's Book-Book, the Lord willing, though the "post-conversion ground" be "*good when they are once got in at the Gate,*" that does not necessarily preclude them from despairing imprisonment in Doubting Castle ([Part 1](#)), nor does it necessarily mean

there are not certain regenerate post-conversion Pilgrims (in Bunyan's benighted estimate) who perpetually carry a Slough of Despond within their minds (Part 2).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Travailing Wisdom of Tolerant Calvinism

“Tell me, those desiring to be under Law, do you not hear the Law? For it has been written, Abraham had two sons, one out of the slave woman and one out of the free woman. But, indeed, he of the slave woman has been born according to flesh, and he out of the free woman through the promise, which things are being allegorized, for these are two covenants, one, indeed, from Mount Sinai bringing forth to slavery (which is Hagar, for Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and she slaves with her children), but the Jerusalem from above is free, who is the mother of us all; for it has been written, Be glad, barren one not bearing; break forth and shout, the one not travailing; for more are the children of the desolate rather than she having the husband. But, brothers, we are children of promise according to Isaac. But then, even as he born according to flesh persecuted the one according to Spirit, so it is also now. But what says the Scripture? Cast out the slave woman and her son, for in no way shall the son of the slave woman inherit with the son of the free woman. Then, brothers, we are not children of a slave woman but of the free woman” (Galatians 4:21-31).

Tolerant Calvinists profess to believe the true gospel, and claim that the Jerusalem from above is their Mother. This profession is spuriously made since said Calvinists further confess to being regenerated under a “feliculously inconsistent gospel” (i.e., a false gospel antithetical to the gospel the Lord’s apostles preached; cf. Galatians 1:8-9). Even as he born according to flesh persecuted the one according to Spirit, so it is also now:

“Most...I would assume came to understand the doctrines of grace through a process: a breaking, difficult process, one that has, for many of us, cost us dearly. But it was not that PROCESS that saved us. It seems that some would have us to believe that God births no children, but only mature adults, in the kingdom, in the sense that unless you have a full-orbed, perfect understanding of the relationship of all parts of the gospel to each other that you do not, in fact, know Christ. I am so thankful that is transparently false” (James R. White; see:

<http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php/2012/12/23/a-brief-response-to-mar-c-carpenter-a-few-thoughts-on-hyper-calvinism-vintage/>

Those born according to flesh toil and travail their way to an empty profession of the true gospel (cf. Romans 10:1-4). They falsely accuse those born according to the Spirit of teaching *“that God births no children, but only mature adults.”* Clearly, God the Holy Spirit births spiritual infants. These tolerant travelers hate the truth that when God births infants, He gives them knowledge of His redemptive glory in the face of Jesus Christ as an immediate and inevitable fruit of His regenerating work (see 2 Corinthians 4:6). The glorious gospel set forth in 2 Corinthians 4:6 is maligned as *“a full-orbed, perfect understanding of the relationship of all parts of the gospel.”*

This particularly influential spiritual son of Hagar further misrepresents and diverts attention from the essence of the gospel of Christ:

“And, of course, you cannot begin to substantiate the idea that Paul was going about adding ‘limited atonement’ to the list of things that define the

gospel proclamation, without which, there is no true faith” (James R. White).

The focus is incorrectly placed on the *EXTENT*, when it should be placed on the *EFFICACY* of the atonement. White’s diversionary tactic aside, it is quite clear to him that a simple concept like the propitiating efficacy of Christ’s atonement (Romans 3:25) does NOT define or constitute the heart of Paul’s gospel proclamation (see [“Gospel Atonement”](#)).

The spiritual sons of slavery vehemently affirm their adherence to gospel atonement — but not without this querulous qualification:

“Do I call believers to hold to a consistent theology on the doctrine of the atonement? You bet I do. Do I teach it in the fellowship where I serve as an elder? Sure do. Do I believe it important to the honoring of God to believe it? Yes indeed. Do I believe someone who is ignorant of it is lost? Of course not” (James R. White).

Then came Marc’s response to White’s disgusting promiscuity:

“So you would not judge someone who is ignorant of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as lost. That says it all”
(<https://agrammatos.wordpress.com/2010/12/09/james-white-slanderer-spiritual-harlot-hypocrite/>).

So when does Bunyan's Worldly Wiseman enter into this? This IS a post about *Pilgrim's Progress*, isn't it? Patience, now. Bunyan's Evangelist reprimands the as yet unconverted Christian:

"The man that met thee is one Worldly Wiseman, and rightly is he so called: partly because he savoureth only the doctrine of this world, (therefore he always goes to the Town of Morality to church); and partly because he loveth that doctrine best, for it saveth him from the Cross. And because he is of this carnal temper, therefore he seeketh to prevent my ways, though right."

Most tolerant Calvinists would rather be found dead in a ditch than to attend church in the Town of Morality. There would be virtually no congeniality between these Calvinists and *Legality* (along with his son, *Civility*). I say "virtually" since despite any animosity between them, they BOTH love and "savourerth only the doctrine of this world" (and therefore the world heareth them). James R. White embodies and epitomizes the tolerant Calvinist "world-savouring" that "saveth him from the [offense of the] Cross." Bunyan's Evangelist continues:

"Now there are three things in this man's counsel that thou must utterly abhor.

1. His turning thee out of the way.

2. His labouring to render the Cross odious to thee.

3. And his setting thy feet in that way that leadeth unto the administration of Death.”

As was seen in earlier posts, Bunyan perniciously expanded and extended the ministry of the Holy Spirit to include Christian's unregenerate and unconverted state of ignorance of the Remedy of burden-removal. Here Bunyan expands even further to include a false holy spirit conviction that allows for a hearkening unto the administration of death (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:1-8).

Similar to Bunyan's Worldly Wiseman, the tolerant Calvinists are zealous and seemingly indefatigable in their labouring to render the Cross of Christ odious to us — to whom not even for an hour did we yield in subjection, that the truth of the gospel might continue.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Wicket Gate

Bunyan's Christian finally enters in at the Wicket Gate. Upon entering Christian says:

"Now I begin to reap the benefits of my hazards."

Good-will then asks concerning any who tried to persuade Christian to return to the City of Destruction:

Good-will. But did none of them follow you, to persuade you to go back?

Chr. Yes, both Obstinate and Pliable; but when they saw that they could not prevail, Obstinate went railing back, but Pliable came with me a little way.

Good-will. But why did he not come through?

Chr. We indeed came both together, until we came to the Slough of Despond, into the which we also suddenly fell. And then was my Neighbor Pliable discouraged, and would not adventure further. Wherefore getting

out again on that side next to his own house, he told me I should possess the brave country alone for him; so he went his way, and I came mine: he after Obstinate, and I to this Gate.

Good-will. Then said Good-will, Alas, poor man, is the coelestial glory of so small esteem with him, that he counteth it not worth running the hazards of a few difficulties to obtain it?

Chr. Truly, said Christian, I have said the truth of Pliable, and if I should also say all the truth of myself, it will appear there is no betterment 'twixt him and myself. 'Tis true, he went back to his own house, but I also turned aside to go in the way of death, being persuaded thereto by the carnal arguments of one Mr Worldly Wiseman.

Good-will. O, did he light upon you? What! he would have had you a sought for ease at the hands of Mr Legality. They are both of them a very cheat: But did you take his counsel?

Chr. Yes, as far as I durst: I went to find out Mr Legality, until I thought that the Mountain that stands by his house would have fallen upon my head; wherefore there I was forced to stop.

Good-will. That Mountain has been the death of many, and will be the death of many more; 'tis well you escaped being by it dashed in pieces.

Chr. Why truly I do not know what had become of me there, had not Evangelist happily met me again, as I was musing in the midst of my dumps: but 'twas God's mercy that he came to me again, for else I had never come hither. But now I am come, such a one as I am, more fit indeed for death by that Mountain than thus to stand talking with my Lord; but O, what a favour is this to me, that yet I am admitted entrance here.

Please note the nefarious "'twas God's mercy ..." No. It 'twas not "God's mercy" while remaining ignorant of the righteousness of God (see Romans 10:1-4).

"Then I saw in my Dream, that Christian asked him further, If he could not help him off with his Burden that was upon his back; for as yet he had not got rid thereof, nor could he by any means get it off without help.

He told him, 'As to they Burden, be content to bear it, until thou comest to the place of Deliverance; for there it will fall from thy back itself.'

Again note the utter anti-Biblical wickedness in this last paragraph. Bunyan as narrator puts forth a common heresy that says there is an unspecified amount of time between regenerating light shown in the heart, and

knowledge of God's redemptive glory seen in the face of Jesus Christ
(contrary to 2 Corinthians 4:6).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Battle-Tested

“I saw also that the Interpreter took him again by the hand, and led him into a pleasant place, where was builded a stately Palace, beautiful to behold; at the sight of which Christian was greatly delighted: He saw also upon the top thereof, certain persons walking, who were clothed all in gold.

Then said Christian, ‘May we go in thither?’

Then the Interpreter took him, and led him up toward the door of the Palace; and behold, at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a Book and his Inkhorn before him, to take the name of him that should enter therein; He saw also, that in the door-way stood many men in armour to keep it, being resolved to do the men that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in a maze.

At last, when every man started back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write, saying, ‘Set down my name, Sir:’ the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his Sword, and put an Helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force;

but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely. So after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the Palace, at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of those that walked upon the top of the Palace, saying,

‘Come in, Come in;

Eternal Glory thou shalt win.’”

In Revelation 18:3 we read of the Great Whore whose wine of the wrath of her fornication has been drunk deeply by the unbelieving world. The Whore’s army is vast and employs many devices wherewith to deceive and destroy the elect of God (if that were possible).

We know that *“The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name”* (Exodus 15:3), and that the God of peace shall crush Satan under our feet shortly (Romans 16:20). Let us rise up against her in battle (cf. Obadiah 1:1).

“And I saw an angel coming down out of Heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain on his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the old serpent who is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut him up, and sealed over him, that he should not still lead astray the nations, until the thousand years are fulfilled. And after these things, he must be set loose a little time. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them. And judgment was given to them, and the souls of the ones having been beheaded because of the witness of Jesus,

and because of the Word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast nor its image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one having part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years. And whenever the thousand years are ended, Satan will be set loose out of his prison, and he will go to mislead the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to assemble them in war, whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the land and encircled the camp of the saints, and the beloved city. And fire from God came down out of Heaven and burned them down. And the Devil leading them astray was thrown into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet were. And they were tormented day and night to the ages of the ages. And I saw a Great White Throne, and the One sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled; and a place was not found for them. And I saw the dead, the small and the great, standing before God. And books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead in it. And death and hell gave up the dead in them. And they were each judged according to their works. And death and hell were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And if anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire” (Revelation 20:1-15).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Man in the Iron Cage

“Now,’ said Christian, ‘let me go hence.’ ‘Nay, stay,’ said the Interpreter, ‘till I have shewed thee a little more, and after that thou shalt go on thy way.’ So he took him by the hand again, and led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an Iron Cage.

Now the Man, to look on, seemed very sad; he sat with his eyes looking down to the ground, his hands folded together; and he sighed as if he would break his heart. Then said Christian, ‘What means this?’ At which the Interpreter bid him talk with the man.

Then said Christian to the Man, ‘What art thou?’ The Man answered, ‘I am what I was not once.’

Chr. What wast thou once?

Man. The Man said, I was once a fair and flourishing Professor, both in mine own eyes, and also in the eyes of others; I once was, as I thought, fair

for the Coelestial City, and had then even joy at the thoughts that I should get thither.

Chr. Well, but what art thou now?

Man. I am now a man of Despair, and am shut up in it, as in this Iron Cage. I cannot get out; O now I cannot.

Chr. But how camest thou in this condition?

*Man. I left off to watch and be sober; I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the Word and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit, and he is gone **[in the unbelieving apostate's case the Spirit was never "there" to begin with in any way (no so-called Westminster Confession of Faith "common operations" either—CDJ]**; I tempted the Devil, and he is come to me; I have provoked God to anger, and he has left me; I have so hardened my heart, that I cannot repent.*

Then said Christian to the Interpreter, But are there no hopes for such a man as this? Ask him, said the Interpreter.

Chr. Then said the Christian, Is there no hope, but you must be kept in the Iron Cage of Despair?

Man. No, none at all.

Chr. Why? the Son of the Blessed is very pitiful.

Man. I have crucified him to myself afresh, I have despised his Person, I have despised his Righteousness, I have counted his Blood an unholy thing; I have done despite to the Spirit of Grace: Therefore I have shut myself out of all the Promises, and there now remains to me nothing but threatnings, dreadful threatnings, fearful threatnings of certain Judgment and fiery Indignation, which shall devour me as an Adversary.

Chr. For what did you bring yourself into this condition?

Man. For the Lusts, Pleasures, and Profits of this World; in the enjoyment of which I did then promise myself much delight; but now every one of those things also bite me, and gnaw me like a burning worm.

Chr. But canst thou not now repent and turn?

Man. God hath denied me repentance: his Word gives me no encouragement to believe; yea, himself hath shut me up in this Iron Cage; nor can all the men in the world let me out. O Eternity! Eternity! how shall I grapple with the misery that I must meet with in Eternity!

Inter. Then said the Interpreter to Christian, Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee.

Chr. Well, said Christian, this is fearful; God help me to watch and be sober, and to pray that I may shun the cause of this man's misery.

Who is this Man in the Iron Cage?

"These are sunken rocks in your love feasts, feasting together with you, feeding themselves without fear, waterless clouds being carried about by winds, fruitless autumn trees, having died twice, having been plucked up by the roots" (Jude 1:12).

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask; and He shall give life to him, to the ones not sinning unto death. There is a sin unto death. I do not say that he should ask about that. All unrighteousness

is sin, and there is a sin not unto death. We know that everyone being generated from God does not sin, but the one having been generated from God keeps himself, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil. And we know that the Son of God has come, and He has given to us an understanding that we may know the true One, and we are in the true One, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and the life everlasting. Little children, guard yourselves from idols. Amen” (1 John 5:16-21).

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matthew 5:13)..

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:4-6).

Any possibilities in the above Scriptures?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Place of Deliverance?

“Now I saw in my Dream, that the highway up which Christian was to go, was fenced on either side with a Wall, and that Wall is called Salvation. Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back.

He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a Cross, and a little below in the bottom, a Sepulchre. So I saw in my Dream, that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his Burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.

Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death. Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him, that the sight of the Cross should thus ease him of his Burden. He looked therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks. Now as he stood looking and weeping, behold three Shining Ones came to him and saluted him with ‘Peace be to thee;’ so the first said to him, ‘Thy sins be forgiven:’ the second stript him of his Rags, and clothed him with Change of Raiment; the third also set a mark in his forehead, and gave him a Roll with a Seal upon it, which he bid him look on

as he ran, and that he should give it in at the Coelestial Gate. So they went their way.”

Barry E. Horner writes:

*“In today’s conservative evangelical environment, readers of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* could easily be forgiven for assuming that the conversion of Christian occurred at the Place of Deliverance where, when he gazed at the uplifted cross, his burden was loosed from off his back. Yet it may come as a surprise to these same readers, even as it did to me several years ago, to discover that, beyond doubt, John Bunyan understood the conversion of Christian to have taken place earlier, at the Wicket-gate” (Horner, *Pilgrim’s Progress: Themes and Issues*, p. 123).*

It is clear from Bunyan’s other writings what he believes the “Wicket Gate” or the “Strait Gate” to be — the place of conversion to Jesus Christ. Unlike Bunyan’s “Christian,” the true Christian has the knowledge of God’s redemptive glory seen in the face of Jesus Christ shown in his heart as an immediate and inevitable fruit of regeneration (see 2 Corinthians 4:6). Bunyan’s (false) Christian is left groping in the darkness of ignorance (see Romans 10:1-4) at the Wicket Gate for a time after his “conversion.” It is only after some time of instruction at the House of Interpreter, followed by his departure from thence, that Bunyan’s Christian “comes into a clearer sight” of the Cross of Christ. Sound familiar? Horner asks:

*“While the author of the *Pilgrim’s Progress* definitely portrays Christian as being converted at the Wicket-gate, release from this pilgrim’s burden does not occur until, having been instructed at the House of Interpreter, he gazes at the uplifted cross at the Place of Deliverance. To twenty-first-century*

Christians, this may seem a conflicting order of events. What, then, is Bunyan's intention here? What does this deliberate hiatus represent? What is this post-conversion experience at the Place of Deliverance?" (Pilgrim's Progress: Themes and Issues, p. 131).

Peering through the lens of Scripture, the deliberate hiatus represents a zealous religionist passionately, yet blindly, progressing in ignorance of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 10:1-4). The supposed "post-conversion" experience represents a false Christian who enters the Wicket-Gate through belief of the lie (cf. Galatians 1:8-9), who then later "progresses into" an alleged belief of the true gospel. It is nothing new for unregenerate religionists to confess entrance into life by the Gate False (Galatians 1:8-9), only to later "progress" or "grow into," the Gate True (John 10:1-7; Romans 1:16-17).

The burden that remained on Christian's back for a time after conversion, represents the zealous religionist who is ignorant of God's righteousness (Romans 10:1-4). This is completely antithetical to the true gospel and the truth that no regenerate person is left ignorant of the only ground of acceptance before God, which is the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 10:1-4).

"At this point the pilgrim has no deep understanding of the atonement, and uncertainty remains, yet his face is set heavenwards" (Horner, Themes And Issues, p. 136).

To Bunyan and to Horner, and contrary to Romans 10:1-4, uncertainty of the sole grounds of acceptance before God or ignorance of the righteousness of God, is not indicative of lostness, but merely indicative of

one who lacks a “*deep understanding of the atonement.*” If this blasphemous nonsense was true, Paul would not have prayed in Romans 10:1 for the salvation of those who exhibited similar ignorance to that of Bunyan’s Christian.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Three Horsemen of Apathetic Lips

Bunyan's Christian,

“espied two men come tumbling over the Wall, on the left hand of the narrow way; and they made up apace to him. The name of the one was Formalist, and the name of the other Hypocrisy. So, as I said, they drew up unto him, who thus entered with them into discourse.”

Here I am not giving my take on what Bunyan may have meant, but only riffing off the exchange of Christian with Formalist and Hypocrisy to illustrate the pernicious prevalence of professing Christians who believe they were regenerated by means of the Galatians 1:8-9 false gospel, and who then later “grew into” the Romans 1:16-17 true gospel. What these false Christians call “progress” and “growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18), Paul calls *transforming oneself into an angel of light* (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). This angel of light takes many forms, and [the tolerant Calvinist form is one that is commonly taken.](#)

CHR. Gentlemen, whence came you, and whither go you?

FORM. and HYP. We were born in the land of Vain-glory, and are going for praise to Mount Sion.

Those desiring to avoid, step over, and obviate the offensive Strait Gate, believe the self-righteous wickedness that it is possible for a true Christian to believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception. In other words, they believe that it is possible for a true Christian to follow a false Jesus (contrary to Jesus' words in John 10:4-5).

CHR. Why came you not in at the gate, which standeth at the beginning of the way? Know you not that it is written, that he that cometh not in by the door, 'but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber?' (John 10:1).

FORM. and HYP. They said, That to go to the gate for entrance was, by all their countrymen, counted too far about; and that, therefore, their usual way was to make a short cut of it, and to climb over the wall, as they had done.

For an enlightening elaboration on this portion of Bunyan's text, see the following article:

[James White: Slanderer, Spiritual Harlot, Hypocrite](#)

CHR. But will it not be counted a trespass against the Lord of the city whither we are bound, thus to violate His revealed will?

FORM. and HYP. They told him, that, as for that, he needed not to trouble his head thereabout; for what they did, they had custom for; and could

produce, if need were, testimony that would witness it for more than a thousand years.

What are the value of things like custom, succession, and antiquity APART FROM TRUTH? As even their own poets have ceded:

“Because that Satan from the beginning has laboured to deck his pestilent synagogue with the title of the kirk of God, and has inflamed the hearts of cruel murderers to persecute, trouble, and molest the true kirk and members thereof as Cain did Abel; Ishmael, Isaac; Esau, Jacob; and the whole priesthood of the Jews, Christ Jesus himself, and his apostles after him; it is a thing most requisite that the true kirk be discerned from the filthy synagogue, by clear and perfect notes, lest we, being deceived, receive and embrace to our own condemnation the one for the other.

The notes, signs, and assured tokens whereby the immaculate spouse of Christ Jesus is known from that horrible harlot, the kirk malignant; we affirm are neither antiquity, title usurped, lineal descent, place appointed, nor multitude of men approving an error. For Cain in age and title was preferred to Abel and Seth; Jerusalem had prerogative above all places of the earth, where also were the priests lineally descended from Aaron; and greater multitude followed the scribes, Pharisees, and priests, than unfeignedly believed and approved Christ Jesus and his doctrine; and yet, as we suppose, no man (of whole judgment) will grant that any of the forenamed were the kirk of God.”

Continuing:

CHR. But, said Christian, will your practice stand a trial at law?

FORM. and HYP. They told him, That custom, it being of so long a standing as above a thousand years, would, doubtless, now be admitted as a thing legal by any impartial judge; and beside, said they, if we get into the way, what's matter which way we get in? if we are in, we are in; thou art but in the way, who, as we perceive, came in at the gate; and we, are also in the way, that came tumbling over the wall; wherein, now, is thy condition better than ours?

Tolerant Calvinists Phil Johnson, James White, and Douglas Wilson are three recklessly cavalier horsemen who are not overly concerned with [those “muddled maidens” who came tumbling over the wall of presumption and ignorance of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel \(cf. Romans 10:1-4\).](#)

Ironically these Valiant Calvinists of Charity are the “silly damsels” who are ever learning and never able to acknowledge the true gospel (cf. 2 Timothy 3:5-7 and:

<https://agrammatos.wordpress.com/2017/09/26/essential-gospel-doctrine/>).

CHR. I walk by the rule of my Master; you walk by the rude working of your fancies. You are counted thieves already, by the Lord of the way; therefore, I doubt you will not be found true men at the end of the way. You come in

by yourselves, without His direction; and shall go out by yourselves, without His mercy.

There are MANY ZEALOUSLY IGNORANT THIEVES trespassing in the Way, attempting to masquerade as the true servants of King Jesus (cf. Romans 10:1-4; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15). They are like Jannes and Jambres who resist the TRUTH. They are those who exude a superficial form of godliness, but who deny the [GOSPEL POWER](#) from which true godliness is derived (cf. 2 Timothy 3:1-10).

*“To this they made him but little answer; only they bid him look to himself. Then I saw that they went on every man in his way, without much conference one with another; save that these two men told Christian, that as to laws and ordinances, they doubted not but they should as conscientiously do them as he; therefore, said they, ‘we see not wherein thou differest from us, but by the coat that is on thy back, which was, as we trow **[believe or imagine—CD]** given thee by some of thy neighbours, to hide the shame of thy nakedness.”*

CHR. By laws and ordinances you will not be saved, since you came not in by the door. And as for this coat that is on my back, it was given me by the Lord of the place whither I go; and that, as you say, to cover my nakedness with. And I take it as a token of His kindness to me; for I had nothing but rags before. And, besides, thus I comfort myself as I go:

Surely, think I, when I come to the gate of the city, the Lord thereof will know me for good, since I have His coat on my back — a coat that He gave

me in the day that He stripped me of my rags. I have, moreover, a mark in my forehead, of which, perhaps, you have taken no notice, which one of my Lord's most intimate associates fixed there in the day that my burden fell off my shoulders. I will tell you, moreover, that I had then given me a roll, sealed, to comfort me by reading, as I go on the way; I was also bid to give it in at the Celestial Gate, in token of my certain going in after it; all which things, I doubt, you want, and want them because you came not in at the gate.

To these things they gave him no answer; only they looked upon each other, and laughed.”

The Three Horsemen of Apathetic Lips (and those sycophants who believe just like them) came NOT in at the [Gate of the TRUE GOSPEL of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone.](#) They have stumbled at the STONE OF STUMBLING and have been offended at the ROCK OF OFFENSE (cf. Romans 9:29-33).

“And he who falls on this Stone will be broken; but on whomever It falls, It will pulverize him” (Matthew 21:44).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Roll Pride

After Christian's little dust-up with Formalist and Hypocrisy he ascends the hill called *Difficulty* and then rests at *Arbour*. *Arbour* is "made by the Lord of the Hill, for the refreshment of weary Travellers." Bunyan narrates:

"... thither therefore Christian got, where also he sat down to rest him. Then he pulled his Roll out of his bosom, and read therein to his comfort; he also now began afresh to take a review of the Coat or Garment that was given him as he stood by the Cross. Thus pleasing himself awhile, he at last fell into a slumber, and thence into a fast sleep, which detained him in that place until it was almost night; and in his sleep his Roll fell out of his hand. Now as he was sleeping, there came one to him and awaked him, saying, 'Go to the Ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.' And with that Christian suddenly started up, and sped on his way, and went apace till he came to the top of the Hill."

Bunyan's Christian loses his Roll:

"... he felt, and found it not. Then was Christian in great distress, and knew not what to do; for he wanted that which used to relieve him, and that which should have been his pass into the Coelestial City. Here therefore he began to be much perplexed, and knew not what to do. At last he

bethought himself that he had slept in the Arbor that is on the side of the Hill; and falling down upon his knees he asked God's forgiveness for that his foolish act and then went back to look for his Roll."

Christian, after a diligent search, finds his lost Roll. What is this "Roll"?

*"Now by this time he was come to the Arbor again, where for a while he sat down and wept; but at last, as Christian would have it, looking sorrowfully down under the settle, there he espied his Roll; the which he with trembling and haste caught up, and put it into his bosom. But who can tell how joyful this man was when he had gotten his Roll again! **For this Roll was the assurance of his life and acceptance at the desired Haven.** Therefore he laid it up in his bosom, gave thanks to God for directing his eye to the place where it lay, and with joy and tears betook himself again to his Journey."*

What meaneth this? Bunyan's (false) Christian initially lost, and then later regained assured confidence in his own established righteousness as the grounds of "*his life and acceptance at the desired Haven.*" This goes against what happens to true Christians as set forth in passages such as Romans 10:1-4 and Hebrews 10:19.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Battle with Apollyon

Christian arrives at the palace *Beautiful* and recounts to the Porter and his three daughters Prudence, Charity, and Piety, his experiences up to this point. Since it is a recounting — and already this is chapter #18 in this *Pilgrim's Progress* series — we will skip over it. Fast-forward just a bit to the *Valley of Humiliation* where Christian encounters Apollyon.

“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.”

After some conversing Apollyon makes this charge:

Apol. Thou hast already been unfaithful in thy service to him, and how dost thou think to receive wages of him?

Chr. Wherein, O Apollyon, have I been unfaithful to him?

Apol. 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.

Chr. All this is true, and much more which thou hast left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honor is merciful, and ready to forgive; but besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy Country, for there I sucked them in, and I have groaned under them, been sorry for them, and have obtained Pardon of my Prince.

Bunyan's Christian cedes much ground, eh?

Apol. 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.

Chr. Apollyon, beware what you do, for I am in the King's High-way, the way of Holiness, therefore take heed to yourself.

As we've seen thus far, Bunyan's Christian is NOT in the true King's High-way. But let's continue.

Apol. 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 further; here will I spill thy soul!

Christian and Apollyon fall to it and commence a sore combat “for above half a day, even till Christian was quite spent.”

“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 of his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly stretched 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.’ And with that Apollyon spread forth his Dragon’s wings, and sped him away, that Christian for a season saw him no more.

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 upward; but 'twas the dreadfulest fight that ever I saw."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Colossal Calvinism

“Now I saw in my Dream, that at the end of this Valley [of the Shadow of Death—CD] lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of Pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave, where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time; by whose power and tyranny the men whose bones, blood, ashes, &c. lay there, were cruelly put to death.

But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learnt since, that Pagan has been dead many a day; and as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy, and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave’s mouth, grinning at Pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails, because he cannot come at them.

So I saw that Christian went on his way; yet at the sight of the Old Man that sat in the mouth of the cave, he could not tell what to think, ‘specially because he spake to him, though he could not go after him; saying, You will never mend till more of you be burnt. But he held his peace, and set a good face on’t, and so went by and caughted no hurt.”

I will add nothing here except to mention that in reading this account I imagine six giant-headed, caricatured or cartoon drawings of John Piper, J.I. Packer, John R.W. Stott, Tim Keller, Douglas Wilson, and James R. White. All of these hulking figures — more or less — make up colossal Calvinism (perhaps Stott would be considered the clay portion of the feet, of the great Protestant Reformed image).

CHAPTER TWENTY

A Giant Ignoramus

Christian meets up with Faithful and they begin discoursing about their past experiences, from the City of Destruction, up to the present. Faithful talks of how Christian was “the talk of the town” after he left and also how Pliable was mocked by some as a turncoat to his profession. Faithful also mentions how Wanton railed on him for rejecting her whorish ape of Potiphar’s wife. A bit later he mentions a man named Shame whom he met in the Valley of Humiliation:

Christian: Why, what did he say to you?

Faithful: 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 hectoring liberty that the brave spirits of the times accustomed 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; nor any of them neither, before they were persuaded to be fools, and to be of a voluntary fondness to venture the loss of all for nobody knows what.

Thus saith many a self-proclaimed agnostic who unwittingly admit to being a giant ignoramus.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

In Word and Deed

Christian and Faithful encounter Talkative. After briefly conversing with Talkative, Faithful quietly asks Christian what manner of person Talkative is.

Christian: His name is Talkative: he dwelleth in our town. I wonder that you should be a stranger to him, only I consider that our town is large.

Faithful: Whose son is he? And whereabout doth he dwell?

Christian: He is the son of one Say-well. He dwelt in Prating-Row; and he is known to all that are acquainted with him by the name of Talkative of Prating-Row; and, notwithstanding his fine tongue, he is but a sorry fellow.

Faithful: Well, he seems to be a very pretty man.

Christian: That is, to them that have not a thorough acquaintance with him, for he is best abroad; near home he is ugly enough. Your saying that he is a pretty man, brings to my mind what I have observed in the work of a

painter, whose pictures show best at a distance; but very near, more unpleasing.

Christian describes Talkative further:

Christian: This man is for any company, and for any talk; as he talketh now with you, so will he talk when he is on the ale-bench; and the more drink he hath in his crown, the more of these things he hath in his mouth. Religion hath no place in his heart, or house, or conversation; all he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise therewith.

Evidently Talkative is a false religionist enamored by the sound of his own voice, and one who is blithely unaware of the admonition of Jesus, James, and John:

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:26-27).

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

The conversation continues apace:

Faithful: Well, I was not so fond of his company [Talkative’s—CD] at first, but I am as sick of it now. What shall we do to be rid of him?

Christian: Take my advice, and do as I bid you, and you shall find that he will soon be sick of your company too, except God shall touch his heart, and turn it.

Faithful: What would you have me to do?

Christian: Why, go to him, and enter into some serious discourse about the power of religion; and ask him plainly, (when he has approved of it, for that he will,) whether this thing be set up in his heart, house, or conversation.

Faithful resumes his talk with Talkative....until Talkative’s patience begins to wear thin.

Talkative: This kind of discourse I did not expect; nor am I disposed to give an answer to such questions, because I count not myself bound thereto, unless you take upon you to be a catechiser; and though you should so do,

yet I may refuse to make you my judge. But I pray, will you tell me why you ask me such questions?

Faithful: Because I saw you forward to talk, and because I knew not that you had aught else but notion. Besides, to tell you all the truth, I have heard of you that you are a man whose religion lies in talk, and that your conversation gives this your mouth-profession the lie. They say you are a spot among Christians, and that religion fareth the worse for your ungodly conversation; that some have already stumbled at your wicked ways, and that more are in danger of being destroyed thereby: your religion, and an ale-house, and covetousness, and uncleanness, and swearing, and lying, and vain company-keeping, etc., will stand together. The proverb is true of you which is said of a harlot, to wit, "That she is a shame to all women:" so are you a shame to all professors.

Talkative: Since you are so ready to take up reports, and to judge so rashly as you do, I cannot but conclude you are some peevish or melancholy man, not fit to be discoursed with; and so adieu.

Then up came Christian, and said to his brother, 'I told you how it would happen; your words and his lusts could not agree. He had rather leave your company than reform his life. But he is gone, as I said: let him go; the loss is no man's but his own. He has saved us the trouble of going from him; for he continuing (as I suppose he will do) as he is, would have been but a blot in our company: besides, the apostle says, 'From such withdraw thyself.'

Faithful: But I am glad we had this little discourse with him; it may happen that he will think of it again: however, I have dealt plainly with him, and so am clear of his blood if he perisheth.

Christian: You did well to talk so plainly to him as you did. There is but little of this faithful dealing with men now-a-days, and that makes religion to stink so in the nostrils of many as it doth; for they are these talkative fools, whose religion is only in word, and who are debauched and vain in their conversation, that (being so much admitted into the fellowship of the godly) do puzzle the world, blemish Christianity, and grieve the sincere. I wish that all men would deal with such as you have done.

To close this chapter:

“Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present” (2 Corinthians 10:11).

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17).

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:25).

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

By-Ends Of Fair-Speech

After Faithful is put to death at Vanity Fair, Christian meets up with Hopeful. Bunyan narrates:

“Now I saw in my dream, that Christian went not forth alone, for there was one whose name was Hopeful (being made so by the beholding of Christian and Faithful in their words and behaviour, in their sufferings at the Fair), who joined himself unto him, and, entering into a brotherly covenant, told him that he would be his companion. Thus, one died to bear testimony to the truth, and another rises out of his ashes, to be a companion with Christian in his pilgrimage. This Hopeful also told Christian, that there were many more of the men in the Fair, that would take their time and follow after.

So I saw that quickly after they were got out of the fair, they overtook one that was going before them, whose name was By-ends. So they said to him, ‘What countryman, Sir? And how far go you this way?’ He told them that he came from the town of Fair-speech, and he was going to the Celestial City (but told them not his name).

‘From Fair-speech,’ said Christian. ‘Is there any good that lives there?’
[Prov. 26:25] [Scripture reference Bunyan’s–CD]

BY-ENDS. Yes, said By-ends, I hope.

CHR. Pray, Sir, what may I call you? said Christian.

BY-ENDS. I am a stranger to you, and you to me. If you be going this way, I shall be glad of your company. If not, I must be content.

CHR. This town of Fair-speech, said Christian, I have heard of. And, as I remember, they say it is a wealthy place.

BY-ENDS. Yes, I will assure you that it is; and I have very many rich kindred there.

CHR. Pray, who are your kindred there? If a man may be so bold.

BY-ENDS. Almost the whole town; and in particular, my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech, (from whose ancestors that town first took its name), also Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Any-thing; and the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my mother's own brother by father's side. And to tell you the truth, I am become a gentleman of good quality, yet my great-grandfather was but a waterman, looking one way and rowing another, and I got most of my estate by the same occupation.

Bunyan cited Proverbs 26:25 to describe the general character of Mr. By-ends:

“He who hates, dissembles with his lips, for he lays up deceit in his inner being; when his voice is gracious, do not believe him, for he has seven hateful things in his heart. Though his hatred is covered by guile, his evil shall be revealed in the assembly” (Proverbs 26:24-26).

Mr. By-ends said that most of his estate was gained by the occupation of “waterman” (one who looks one way while rowing another). As his name might indicate or imply, Mr. By-ends is basically a zeitgeist sniffer who *“jumps in his judgment with the present way of the times, whatever it was”*:

“Then Christian stepped a little aside to his fellow, Hopeful, saying, ‘It runs in my mind that this is one By-ends of Fair-speech; and if it be he, we have as very a knave in our company as dwelleth in all these parts.’ Then said Hopeful, ‘Ask him; methinks he should not be ashamed of his name.’ So Christian came up with him again, and said, ‘Sir, you talk as if you knew something more than all the world doth; and if I take not my mark amiss, I deem I have half a guess of you: Is not your name Mr. By-ends, of Fair-speech?’

BY-ENDS. This is not my name, but indeed it is a nick-name that is given me by some that cannot abide me. And I must be content to bear it as a reproach, as other good men have borne theirs before me.

CHR. But did you never give an occasion to men to call you by this name?

BY-ENDS. Never! never! The worst that ever I did to give them an occasion to give me this name was, that I had always the luck to jump in my judgment with the present way of the times, whatever it was, and my chance was to get thereby; but if things are thus cast upon me, let me count them, a blessing; but let not the malicious load me therefore with reproach.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Art Of Getting

Bunyan continues his narration:

“Now I saw in my dream that Christian and Hopeful forsook him [By-ends–CD], and kept their distance before him; but one of them looking back, saw three men following Mr. By-ends, and behold, as they came up with him, he made them a very low congee; and they also gave him a compliment.

The men’s names were Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all; men that Mr. By-ends had formerly been acquainted with. For in their minority they were schoolfellows, and were taught by one Mr. Gripe-man, a schoolmaster in Love-gain, which is a market town in the county of Coveting, in the north. This schoolmaster taught them the Art Of Getting, either by violence, cozenage, flattery, lying, or by putting on the guise of religion; and these four gentlemen had attained much of the art of their master, so that they could each of them have kept such a school themselves.

Well, when they had, as I said, thus saluted each other, Mr. Money-love said to Mr. By-ends, Who are they upon the road before us? (for Christian and Hopeful were yet within view).”

BY-ENDS. They are a couple of far countrymen, that, after their mode, are going on pilgrimage.

MONEY-LOVE. Alas! Why did they not stay, that we might have had their good company? For they, and we, and you, sir, I hope, are all going on pilgrimage.

BY-ENDS. We are so, indeed; but the men before us are so rigid, and love so much their own notions, and do also so lightly esteem the opinions of others, that let a man be never so godly, yet if he jumps not with them in all things, they thrust him quite out of their company.

Sound familiar? Of course, it all comes down to the crucial question, “By what standard?”

SAVE-ALL. That’s bad, but we read of some that are righteous overmuch; and such men’s rigidness prevails with them to judge and condemn all but themselves. But, I pray, what, and how many, were the things wherein you differed?

BY-ENDS. Why, they, after their headstrong manner, conclude that it is duty to rush on their journey all weathers; and I am for waiting for wind and tide. They are for hazarding all for God at a clap; and I am for taking all advantages to secure my life and estate. They are for holding their notions, though all other men are against them; but I am for religion in what, and so far as the times, and my safety, will bear it. They are for religion when in

*rags and contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his golden slippers,
in the sunshine, and with applause.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Doubting Castle

From Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*:

"Now a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out in passionate speech: 'What a fool, quoth he, am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty. I have a Key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.' Then said Hopeful, 'That's good news; good brother pluck it out of thy bosom and try.'

Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt (as he turned the Key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the Castle-yard, and with his Key opened that door also. After he went to the iron Gate, for that must be opened too, but that Lock went very hard, yet the Key did open it. Then they thrust open the gate to make their escape with speed; but that gate as it opened made such a creaking, that it waked Giant Despair, who hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, felt his limbs to fail, for his fits took him again, so that he could by no means go after them. Then they went on, and came to the King's High-way again, and so were safe, because they were out of his jurisdiction.

Now, when they were over the stile, they began to contrive with themselves what they should do at that stile to prevent those that should come after from falling into the hands of Giant Despair. So they consented to erect there a pillar, and to engrave upon the side thereof this sentence — ‘Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the King of the Celestial Country, and seeks to destroy his holy pilgrims.’”

This is an extremely popular and often-referenced scene that reveals Bunyan’s anti-Biblical belief that believers can become unbelievers for a period of time. Speaking of the faith of Abraham, God through the apostle Paul says:

“And being about a hundred years old, not weakening in faith, he did not consider his body to have died already, nor yet the death of Sarah’s womb, and did not stagger by unbelief at the promise of God, but was empowered by faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able to do” (Romans 4:19-21).

Bunyan’s “Christian” and “Hopeful” reveal their darkened ignorance and unbelief concerning Jesus Christ and His atoning blood and imputed righteousness as the SOLE ground of acceptance with God (Romans 10:1-4). They doubted God’s promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. The key called “Promise” was hidden away in “Christian’s” blackened bosom which revealed that “Christian” was bereft of, and not submitted to, the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:3).

The primary reason “Hopeful” and “Christian” were supported from utter despondency at the hands of Giant Despair, was because they did NOT yet despair of their own righteousness as the sole ground of acceptance before God. If “Christian” and “Hopeful” HAD despaired of their own self-righteousness, and hoped in the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, they would never doubt, they would never be shaken, for they would have had their foundation on the Rock of Jesus Christ:

“Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him [cometh] my salvation. He only [is] my rock and my salvation; [he is] my defence; I shall not be greatly moved. ... My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation [is] from him. He only [is] my rock and my salvation: [he is] my defence; I shall not be moved. In God [is] my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, [and] my refuge, [is] in God” (Psalm 62:1-2,5-7). “They that trust in the LORD [shall be] as mount Zion, [which] cannot be removed, [but] abideth for ever. As the mountains [are] round about Jerusalem, so the LORD [is] round about his people from henceforth even for ever” (Psalm 125:1-2).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Congregation of the Dead

Next, Christian and Hopeful come to the Delectable Mountains where they are instructed by four shepherds named Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere. The Narrator says:

“Then I saw that they [the four shepherds—CD] had them to the top of another mountain, and the name of that is Caution, and bid them look afar off; which, when they did, they perceived, as they thought, several men walking up and down among the tombs that were there; and they perceived that the men were blind, because they stumbled sometimes upon the tombs, and because they could not get out from among them. Then said Christian, ‘What means this?’

The Shepherds then answered, ‘Did you not see a little below these mountains a stile, that led into a meadow, on the left hand of this way?’ They answered, ‘Yes.’ Then said the Shepherds, ‘From that stile there goes a path that leads directly to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, and these, pointing to them among the tombs, came once on pilgrimage, as you do now, even till they came to that same stile; and because the right way was rough in that place, they chose to go out of it into that meadow, and there were taken by Giant Despair, and cast into Doubting Castle; where, after they had been a while kept in the dungeon, he at last did put out their eyes, and led them among those tombs, where he has left them to wander to this very day, that the saying of the wise man might be fulfilled, ‘He that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall

remain in the congregation of the dead.’ [Pro. 21:16]’ Then Christian and Hopeful looked upon one another, with tears gushing out, but yet said nothing to the Shepherds.”

Because the narrow way that leads to life was too constricted and difficult for Bunyan’s Christian and Hopeful, they chose for a time to tread upon the comfortably wide and expansive meadow that leads to destruction.

“Go in through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are the ones entering in through it. For narrow is the gate, and constricted is the way that leads away into life, and few are the ones finding it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Up to this point, there has been no true repentance granted to Christian and Hopeful. They have not yet been granted repentance unto life. They have not yet repented of establishing their own self-righteousness in Doubting Castle (cf. Romans 10:1-4). They continue to wander out of the way of understanding, and thus they remain communicant members of the congregation of the dead.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Conceit of Ignorance

More from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*:

“And I slept, and dreamed again, and saw the same two Pilgrims going down the mountains along the highway towards the city. Now, a little below these mountains, on the left hand, lieth the country of Conceit; from which country there comes into the way in which the Pilgrims walked, a little crooked lane. Here, therefore, they met with a very brisk lad, that came out of that country; and his name was Ignorance. So Christian asked him from what parts he came, and whither he was going.

IGNOR. Sir, I was born in the country that lieth off there a little on the left hand, and I am going to the Celestial City.

CHR. But how do you think to get in at the gate? for you may find some difficulty there.

IGNOR. As other people do, said he.

CHR. But what have you to show at that gate, that may cause that the gate should be opened to you?

IGNOR. I know my Lord's will, and I have been a good liver; I pay every man his own; I pray, fast, pay tithes, and give alms, and have left my country for whither I am going.

CHR. But thou camest not in at the wicket-gate that is at the head of this way; thou camest in hither through that same crooked lane, and therefore, I fear, however thou mayest think of thyself, when the reckoning day shall come, thou wilt have laid to thy charge that thou art a thief and a robber, instead of getting admittance into the city.

IGNOR. Gentlemen, ye be utter strangers to me, I know you not; be content and follow the religion of your country, and I will follow the religion of mine. I hope all will be well. And as for the gate that you talk of, all the world knows that that is a great way off of our country. I cannot think that any man in all our parts doth so much as know the way to it, nor need they matter whether they do or no, since we have, as you see, a fine, pleasant green lane, that comes down from our country, the next way into the way.

When Christian saw that the man was 'wise in his own conceit', he said to Hopeful, whisperingly, 'There is more hope of a fool than of him.' [Prov.

26:12] And said, moreover, "When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool" [Eccl. 10:3]."

Those who believe Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception (as well as those believing such blasphemers are their spiritual brethren), came NOT through the true Christ-exalting narrow gate, but through the ignorant, conceited, and self-exalting crooked lane of universal atonement (cf. Romans 10:1-4; Galatians 6:14).

"Those who deny the effectual work of Jesus Christ, claiming instead that the blood of Jesus Christ atoned for everyone without exception (including those in hell), deny the very heart of the gospel. They do not believe that it is the work of Jesus Christ alone that makes the difference between salvation and damnation; instead, these self-righteous boasters believe that it is the effort of the sinner that makes the difference between salvation and damnation. These blasphemers deny that Jesus Christ made full satisfaction for sins and that Jesus Christ accomplished and ensured salvation for all whom He represented. They trample underfoot the precious blood of Jesus Christ, treating it as something of no value. They glory and boast in themselves, for whatever one believes makes the difference between salvation and damnation is what one glories and boasts in. There is not a single one of these blasphemers who is a child of God." [Psa 25:14; 74:18; 94:4; 139:20; Pro 30:12-13; Isa 28:14-18; 42:8; 48:11; Joh 16:8-14; Rom 3:27-28; 4:2; 10:3; 16:17-18; 1Co 2:12; 2Co 10:3-6; Gal 1:8-9; 6:14; Eph 2:8-9; Phi 3:18-19; 1Ti 4:1; 2Ti 3:2-5; 4:3-4; Heb 10:29; 1Jo 2:22-23; 4:6; 2Jo 9] (Christian Confession of Faith).

And:

“Those who refuse to judge by this standard alone, preferring instead to judge by reputation, appearance, religious zeal and dedication, or a false gospel, show that they place no value on the gospel and thus show themselves to be unregenerate. All who consider at least some believers in a false gospel (e.g., believers in universal atonement) to be their brothers in Jesus Christ are unregenerate.” [Deu 29:19; Pro 17:15; Isa 5:20; Jer 8:10-12; 1Co 13:6; 1Th 5:3; 2Jo 11] (Christian Confession of Faith).

Those who consider at least some believers in a false gospel (Galatians 1:8-9) to be their brothers in Jesus Christ entered NOT through the Narrow Gate, but through that same crooked lane in the conceit of ignorance (Romans 10:1-4).

“I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in, and will go out, and will find pasture” (John 10:9).

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner” (Acts 4:11).

For further expounding on one certain builder whose views embody and epitomize those who have NOT entered through Christ, but rather have set His efficacious cross-work at nought, see the following article:

[James White: Slanderer, Spiritual Harlot, Hypocrite](#)

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

A False and Fantastical Faith

Continuing his dialogue with Ignorance, Bunyan's so-called "Christian" asks:

CHR. How dost thou believe?

IGNOR. I believe that Christ died for sinners, and that I shall be justified before God from the curse, through his gracious acceptance of my obedience to his law. Or thus, Christ makes my duties, that are religious, acceptable to his Father, by virtue of his merits, and so shall I be justified.

CHR. Let me give an answer to this confession of thy faith.

1. Thou believest with a fantastical faith; for this faith is nowhere described in the Word.

2. *Thou believest with a false faith; because it taketh justification from the personal righteousness of Christ, and applies it to thy own.*

3. *This faith maketh not Christ a justifier of thy person, but of thy actions; and of thy person for thy actions' sake, which is false.*

4. *Therefore, this faith is deceitful, even such as will leave thee under wrath in the day of God Almighty; for true justifying faith puts the soul (as sensible of its condition by the law) upon flying for refuge unto Christ's righteousness: which righteousness of his is not an act of grace, by which he maketh for justification, thy obedience accepted with God; but his personal obedience to the law, in doing and suffering for us what that required at our hands. This righteousness, I say, true faith accepteth; under the skirt of which, the soul being shrouded, and by it presented as spotless before God, it is accepted, and acquit from condemnation.*

IGNOR. What! would you have us trust to what Christ in his own person has done without us? This conceit would loosen the reins of our lust, and tolerate us to live as we list; for what matter how we live, if we may be justify'd by Christ's personal righteousness from all, when we believe it?

CHR. Ignorance is thy name, and as thy name is, so art thou; even this thy answer demonstrateth what I say. Ignorant thou art of what justifying righteousness is, and as ignorant how to secure thy soul through the faith of it from the heavy wrath of God. Yea, thou also art ignorant of the true

effects of saving faith in this righteousness of Christ, which is to bow and win over the heart to God in Christ, to love his name, his word, ways, and people, and not as thou ignorantly imaginest.

It is clear (*is it not?*) that Bunyan's Christian is saying that not only does Ignorance possess a false and fantastical faith, he further "*demonstrateth*" his ignorance "*of what justifying righteousness is*" (cf. Romans 10:1-4). He also said to Ignorance that his "*faith is deceitful, even such as will leave thee under wrath in the day of God Almighty.*" If this is NOT just meaningless bluster, then Bunyan's Christian is *actually* judging Ignorance to be unregenerate *in spite* of Ignorance's profession of Jesus Christ's Person and Work. Now, would a forthright concession by your typical tolerant Calvinist be that Bunyan's Christian is advocating a form of Neo-Gnosticism that imperiously demands that "[*theological perfection in sanctification is necessary for salvation*](#)"?

HOPE. Ask him if ever he had Christ revealed to him from heaven.

IGNOR. What! you are a man for revelations! I believe that what both you and all the rest of you say about that matter, is but the fruit of distracted brains.

HOPE. Why, man! Christ is so hid in God from the natural apprehensions of the flesh, that he cannot by any man be savingly known, unless God the Father reveals him to them.

IGNOR. That is your faith, but not mine; yet mine, I doubt not, is as good as yours though I have not in my head so many whimsies as you.

CHR. Give me leave to put in a word. You ought not so slightly to speak of this matter. For this I will boldly affirm (even as my good companion hath done), that no man can know Jesus Christ but by the revelation of the Father; [Matt. 11:27] yea, and faith too, by which the soul layeth hold upon Christ, if it be right, must be wrought by the exceeding greatness of his mighty power; the working of which faith, I perceive, poor Ignorance, thou art ignorant of. [1 Cor. 12:3, Eph. 1:18,19] Be awakened then, see thine own wretchedness, and fly to the Lord Jesus; and by his righteousness, which is the righteousness of God (for he himself is God), thou shalt be delivered from condemnation.

IGNOR. You go so fast, I cannot keep pace with you. Do you go on before; I must stay a while behind.

Then they said,

'Well, Ignorance, wilt thou yet foolish be,

To slight good counsel, ten times given thee?

And if thou yet refuse it, thou shalt know,

E're long, the evil of thy doing so.

Remember, man, in time; stoop, do not fear;

Good counsel taken well saves: therefore hear.

But if thou yet shalt slight it, thou wilt be

The loser, Ignorance, I'll warrant thee.'

Then Christian addressed thus himself to his fellow:

CHR. Well, come my good Hopeful, I perceive that thou and I must walk by ourselves again.

So I saw in my dream that they went on apace before, and Ignorance he came hobbling after. Then said Christian to his companion, It pities me much for this poor man; it will certainly go ill with him at last.

HOPE. Alas! there are abundance in our town in his condition, whole families, yea, whole streets, (and that of Pilgrims too); and if there be so many in our parts, how many, think you, must there be in the place where he was born?

CHR. Indeed the Word saith, "He hath blinded their eyes, lest they should see", &c.

"... and that of Pilgrims too." Bunyan's so-called "Hopeful" believes that it is possible for at least some "*Pilgrims too,*" to be in the same condition as Ignorance. Bunyan's "Christian" replies to this by referring to Scriptures that speak of the blindness and blinding of unregenerate men. But apparently to Hopeful and Christian, NOT everyone with an ignorant, deceitful, false, and fantastical faith is NECESSARILY unregenerate "*and going about to establish their own righteousness*" (Romans 10:3). Thus, Bunyan's

Christian and Hopeful brazenly contradict the Holy Spirit of God speaking through the Apostle Paul.

Bunyan continues with his narration concerning the demise of one, "Ignorance:"

"Now while I was gazing upon all these things, I turned my head to look back, and saw Ignorance come up to the river side; but he soon got over, and that without half that difficulty which the other two men met with. For it happened that there was then in that place, one Vain-hope, a ferryman, that with his boat helped him over; so he, as the other I saw, did ascend the hill, to come up to the gate, only he came alone; neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement. When he was come up to the gate, he looked up to the writing that was above, and then began to knock, supposing that entrance should have been quickly administered to him; but he was asked by the men that looked over the top of the gate, 'Whence came you, and what would you have?' He answered, 'I have eat and drank in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets.' Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the King; so he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then said they, 'Have you none?' But the man answered never a word. So they told the King, but he would not come down to see him, but commanded the two Shining Ones that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the City, to go out and take Ignorance, and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a dream."

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Conclusion of Pilgrim's Progress, Part One

Bunyan concludes Part One of his *Pilgrim's Progress* with the following rhyme:

Now, Reader, I have told my dream to thee;

See if thou canst interpret it to me,

Or to thyself, or neighbour; but take heed

Of misinterpreting; for that, instead

Of doing good, will but thyself abuse:

By misinterpreting, evil ensues.

Take heed, also, that thou be not extreme,

In playing with the outside of my dream:

Nor let my figure or similitude

Put thee into a laughter or a feud.

Leave this for boys and fools; but as for thee,

Do thou the substance of my matter see.

Put by the curtains, look within my vail,

Turn up my metaphors, and do not fail,

There, if thou seekest them, such things thou'lt find

As will be helpful to an honest mind.

What of my dross thou findest there, be bold

To throw away, but yet preserve the gold.

What if my gold be wrapped up in ore?

None throws away the apple for the core.

But if thou shalt cast all away as vain,

I know not but 'twill make me dream again.

Through the canon of Scripture, we see Bunyan's muddy mixture. Take up, discern, and read, that ["bibline,"](#) Bunyan does not bleed. This "sort-of-review," with completion now in view, has WordPress "tags" with this look: John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Bunyan's Book-Book. By

“Book-Book,” I mean *Progress Part One*, AND *Part Two*. So, for now, adieu.

