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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Eighth Stage: The Delectable Mountains & the Shepherds; Ignorance; Little-Faith; the Flatterer

I. Review

- The whole story is cast as a dream which Bunyan had while in prison
- Christian reads the Bible and understands that he is living in the City of Destruction; he is crushed by a terrible heavy burden on his back
- He meets a man name Evangelist who talked with him and pointed him toward the Wicket Gate and he begins his pilgrimage
- After falling into the Slough of Despond, he is rescued and continues
- He listens to Mr. Legality takes a bad sidetrack to the tow of Morality to get his burden off his back
- But the mountain (Mt. Sinai, representing God's Law) leans over him and threatens to destroy him
- Evangelist found him and severely rebuked him for leaving the way; he got him back onto the true path
- Christian comes to the Wicket Gate, where he knocks, and is welcomed in by the gatekeeper, Goodwill
- Christian continues on his journey and comes to Interpreter's House
- Interpreter shows him seven helpful things in his house that are intended to put Christian in a proper frame of mind for his pilgrimage
 - The Spiritual Guide
 - The Dusty Room
 - Passion and Patience
 - The Fire Burning Against the Wall

- The Palace and the Warrior
- The Man in the Iron Cage
- The Dream of Judgment Day
- Christian comes at last to the cross and his burden rolls away into the empty tomb and he saw it no more
- The Shining Ones give him words of assurance, a new robe, and a scroll, telling him to look on it as he travels and give it in at the Celestial City (We find out later the scroll represents assurance of salvation)
- Christian interacts with three slumbering men—Simple, Sloth, and Presumption, and tries to rouse them to pilgrimage, but they blow him off
- Christian sees two men come tumbling in over the wall—Formalist and Hypocrisy—and rebukes them for not coming in through the Gate as he did; they represent false religions (like medieval Catholicism) which give assurance based on religiosity and works rather than faith in Christ
- Christian climbs with great effort up Hill Difficulty; halfway up, he stops at the Shady Arbor which the Lord of the Hill has put there for the refreshment of pilgrims
- Christian falls asleep in the Shady Arbor, wakes with the day far spent, and hurries on; but he accidentally left his scroll there
- Christian sees two men (Mistrust and Timorous) fleeing from some lions and after talking with them, he resolves to go on; but searching for his scroll to read and find comfort, he discovers it's gone
- He goes all the way back to the Shady Arbor, reproaching himself for his sinful sleep
- He comes back at last, sees the lions, and is told by a porter named Watchful that they are chained, and he'll be fine if he stays on the path
- He comes to the House Beautiful and is entertained there by four beautiful young women named Discretion, Charity, Prudence, and Piety, with whom he has searching conversations
- Christian enjoys a very refreshing time at that house; sees the sunrise and is strengthened for his journey
- The women equip him with armor for his upcoming battles

- Christian fights a fierce battle with Apollyon, a powerful demon sent by Satan to tempt him
- Christian is hard-pressed in the battle and suffers some wounds
- BUT in the end, Christian drives off Apollyon with the “sword of the Spirit,” the Word of God
- The Christian makes his way through the “Valley of the Shadow of Death”
- Here, Christian is beset by the terrors of the night, all kinds of distressing sounds leading to overwhelming fears and anxieties
- He must walk a narrow path between a steep cliff on one side and a noxious swamp on the other
- He takes himself to prayer and continues to make slow progress through the terrifying Valley
- When the sun finally comes up, he is able to travel much more easily through the Valley, even though the way became much more treacherous
- Along the way, he hears someone else traveling through it, reciting Psalm 23 to himself
- He catches up to him and finds that his name is Faithful, and they walk and talk together, and enjoy sweet fellowship
- Faithful describes his battle with the “Old Man” (Adam) and with Moses, who beats him up because of his sins; Christ bids Moses to stop
- Christian and Faithful talk to a man named Talkative, who talks a good game, but who has no real godliness to line up with his confession
- Faithful describes the elements of a true work of grace in a person’s life; Faithful exposes Talkative’s sinful lifestyle; Talkative refuses to walk with them any more
- Evangelist comes and warns Christian and Faithful about the trial they are about to undergo in Vanity Fair; prophesies that one of them will be martyred
- Christian and Faithful arrive at Vanity Fair, Bunyan’s allegory of “The World” with all its carnal delights and temptations
- Christian and Faithful try to make their way quietly through Vanity Fair, but the townspeople begin to oppose, mock, and eventually to attack them
- Christian and Faithful are arrested, imprisoned, and beaten
- Faithful goes on trial and makes a courageous testimony of his faith in Christ and their sinful ways
- Faithful is convicted by a jury of wicked men

- Faithful is brutally martyred and taken immediately by a chariot up to the Celestial City
- Christian escapes with his life; Hopeful, converted in part by their witness, joins him on pilgrimage
- Hopeful describes his battle with Adam (the “Old Man”) and Moses
- They meet By-ends who is a “Christian” when it benefits him, especially financially
- By-ends meets up with others like him (Mr. Hold-the-world; Mr. Money-love; Mr. Save-all) who discuss why it is fine for people to follow religion if and when it is profitable in this world
- Christian and Hopeful refute their false arguments
- The pilgrims are refreshed briefly by the River of the Water of Life
- Christian leads Hopeful off the true road in favor of “By-path Meadow” which seems to run right alongside the road, but which eventually veers off and leads them far astray
- A terrible storm comes along, and they cannot find their way back
- They sleep for the night, but are wakened by a giant named Despair who arrests them and throws them in the dungeon of his home called “Doubting Castle”
- Despair beats them mercilessly over several encounters; prodded by his wicked wife, Diffidence, Despair tries to persuade them to kill themselves
- Hopeful manages to speak words of hope to Christian and keeps him from suicide
- Eventually Christian remembers that he has a key in his breast pocket called “Promise,” and he pulls it out. It ends up unlocking every door that held them in and they make their escape
- Once back safely upon the true road, they put up a warning sign not to jump the fence into By-path Meadow, since it leads to Doubting Castle

II. The Delectable Mountains and the Shepherds

A. Refreshment at the Delectable Mountains

They went then till they came to the Delectable Mountains, which mountains belong to the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken before; so they went up to the mountains, to behold the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of water; where also they drank and washed themselves, and did freely eat of the vineyards.

Psalm 23:1-3 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he restores my soul.

DQ) What are some ways that the Lord restores our souls? Why is that so needed in the Christian life?

B. Meeting the Shepherds

Now there were on the tops of these mountains Shepherds feeding their flocks, and they stood by the highway side. The Pilgrims therefore went to them, and leaning upon their staves, (as is common with weary pilgrims when they stand to talk with any by the way), they asked, Whose Delectable Mountains are these? And whose be the sheep that feed upon them?

*Mountains delectable they now ascend,
Where Shepherds be, which to them do commend
Alluring things, and things that cautious are,
Pilgrims are steady kept by faith and fear.*

SHEP. These mountains are Immanuel's Land, and they are within sight of his city; and the sheep also are his, and he laid down his life for them. [John 10:11]

CHR. Is this the way to the Celestial City?

SHEP. You are just in your way.

CHR. How far is it thither?

SHEP. Too far for any but those that shall get thither indeed.

CHR. Is the way safe or dangerous?

SHEP. Safe for those for whom it is to be safe; but the transgressors shall fall therein. [Hos. 14:9]

CHR. Is there, in this place, any relief for pilgrims that are weary and faint in the way?

SHEP. The Lord of these mountains hath given us a charge not to be forgetful to entertain strangers, therefore the good of the place is before you. [Heb. 13:1-2]

DQ) What do you make of the Shepherds' answer concerning the Way to the Celestial City? How is it safe for the elect, but unsafe for all others?

C. The Shepherds Refresh the Weary Pilgrims

I saw also in my dream, that when the Shepherds perceived that they were wayfaring men, they also put questions to them, to which they made answer as in other places; as, Whence came you? and, How got you into the way? and, By what means have you so persevered therein? For but few of them that begin to come hither do show their face on these mountains. But when the Shepherds heard their answers, being pleased therewith, they looked very lovingly upon them, and said, Welcome to the Delectable Mountains.

The Shepherds, I say, whose names were Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere, took them by the hand, and had them to their tents, and made them partake of that which was ready at present. They said, moreover, We would that ye should stay here awhile, to be acquainted with us; and yet more to solace yourselves with the good of these Delectable Mountains. They then told them, that they were content to stay; so they went to their rest that night, because it was very late.

DQ) What do you think these four Shepherds represent in the Christian life? What do you make of their allegorical names?

D. The Magnificent View from the Mountains

Then I saw in my dream, that in the morning the Shepherds called up to Christian and Hopeful to walk with them upon the mountains; so they went forth with them, and walked a while, having a pleasant prospect on every side.

E. Some Scary Warning Sights

Then said the Shepherds one to another, Shall we show these pilgrims some wonders? So when they had concluded to do it, they had them first to the top of a hill called Error, which was very steep on the furthest side, and bid them look down to the bottom. So Christian and Hopeful looked down, and saw at the bottom several men dashed all to pieces by a fall that they had from the top. Then said Christian, What meaneth this? The Shepherds answered, Have you not heard of them that were made to err by hearkening to Hymeneus and Philetus as concerning the faith of the resurrection of the body? [2 Tim. 2:17,18] They answered, Yes. Then said the Shepherds, Those that you see lie dashed in pieces at the bottom of this mountain are they; and they have continued to this day unburied, as you see, for an example to others to take

heed how they clamber too high, or how they come too near the brink of this mountain.

Then I saw that they 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.

DQ) What do you think Christian and Hopeful were feeling as they heard what the Giant Despair had done to some others he had imprisoned?

Then I saw in my dream, that the Shepherds had them to another place, in a bottom, where was a door in the side of a hill, and they opened the door, and bid them look in. They looked in, therefore, and saw that within it was very dark and smoky; they also thought that they heard there a rumbling noise as of fire, and a cry of some tormented, and that they smelt the scent of brimstone. Then said Christian, What means this? The Shepherds told them, This is a by-way to hell, a way that hypocrites go in at; namely, such as sell their birthright, with Esau; such as sell their master, with Judas; such as blaspheme the gospel, with Alexander; and that lie and dissemble, with Ananias and Sapphira his wife. Then said Hopeful to the Shepherds, I perceive that these had on them, even every one, a show of pilgrimage, as we have now; had they not?

SHEP. Yes, and held it a long time too.

HOPE. How far might they go on in pilgrimage in their day, since they notwithstanding were thus miserably cast away?

SHEP. Some further, and some not so far, as these mountains.

Then said the Pilgrims one to another, We have need to cry to the Strong for strength.

SHEP. Ay, and you will have need to use it, when you have it, too.

DQ) What are we to think of the apostasy of others who seem to have been real Christians up to that point? Recently, many have been devastated by the declaration by Joshua Harris that he is not a Christian. The “devil is in the details,” for Harris preached and wrote many things that were true and right and biblically helpful, and he did so with strong passion. How does such a person’s apostasy affect those who heard him?

DQ) What is the role of warnings and healthy fear in the Christian life?

F. A Clear View of the Celestial City

By this time the Pilgrims had a desire to go forward, and the Shepherds a desire they should; so they walked together towards the end of the mountains. Then said the Shepherds one to another, Let us here show to the Pilgrims the gates of the Celestial City, if they have skill to look through our perspective glass. The Pilgrims then lovingly accepted the motion; so they had them to the top of a high hill, called Clear, and gave them their glass to look.

Then they essayed to look, but the remembrance of that last thing that the Shepherds had shown them, made their hands shake; by means of which impediment, they could not look steadily through the glass; yet they thought they saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place. Then they went away, and sang this song--

*Thus, by the Shepherds, secrets are reveal'd,
Which from all other men are kept conceal'd.
Come to the Shepherds, then, if you would see
Things deep, things hid, and that mysterious be.*

DQ) God sometimes grants to his people remarkable foretastes of heaven. Bunyan has several of these in Pilgrim’s Progress—for

the experience in “Beulah” will be the same. Read this account from Jonathan Edwards:

“Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception ... which continued as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have, several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

Why does God give these kinds of foretastes? What effect would it have on you if he gave one to you? How should we seek them?

G. A Final Warning from the Shepherds

When they were about to depart, one of the Shepherds gave them a note of the way. Another of them bid them beware of the Flatterer. The third bid them take heed that they sleep not upon the Enchanted Ground. And the fourth bid them God-speed.

III. The Conversation with Ignorance

A. Meeting Ignorance

1. Ignorance is a young man who thinks he is headed for the Celestial City... but he came not in “by the Gate”
2. He is trusting in his own good works... morality, gifts to the poor, the fact that he is on pilgrimage
3. Christian warns him that he is self-deceived, and that there is no way to enter except by the Gate (Jesus Christ)

B. Ignorance’s Response:

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.

DQ) How does Ignorance represent moral people from distant lands who have never heard of Christ and who are on their own spiritual pilgrimage by their national religion (e.g. Islam)? How does this show the need for missions, but also the challenge of missions?

C. Christian and Hopeful Decide to Let Ignorance Think for a While

*Let Ignorance a little while now muse
On what is said, and let him not refuse
Good counsel to embrace, lest he remain
Still ignorant of what's the chiefest gain.
God saith, those that no understanding have,
Although he made them, them he will not save.*

HOPE. He further added, It is not good, I think, to say all to him at once; let us pass him by, if you will, and talk to him anon, even as he is able to bear it.

So they both went on, and Ignorance he came after.

IV. Turn-away

Now when they had passed him a little way, they entered into a very dark lane, where they met a man whom seven devils had bound with seven strong cords, and were carrying of him back to the door that they saw on the side of the hill. [Matt. 12:45, Prov. 5:22] Now good Christian began to tremble, and so did Hopeful his companion; yet as the devils led away the man, Christian looked to see if he knew him; and he thought it might be one Turn-away, that dwelt in the town of Apostasy. But he did not perfectly see his face, for he did hang his head like a thief that is found. But being once past, Hopeful looked after him, and espied on his back a paper with this inscription, "Wanton professor and damnable apostate".

V. The Case of Little-faith

A. Christian Tells Hopeful about the Assault of Little-faith

Then said Christian to his fellow, Now I call to remembrance, that which was told me of a thing that happened to a good man hereabout. The name of the man was Little-faith, but a good man, and he dwelt in the town of Sincere.

The thing was this:--At the entering in at this passage, there comes down from Broad-way Gate, a lane called Dead Man's Lane; so called because of the murders that are commonly done there; and this Little-faith going on pilgrimage, as we do now, chanced to sit down there, and slept. Now there happened, at that time, to come down the lane, from Broad-way Gate, three sturdy rogues, and their names were Faint-heart, Mistrust, and Guilt, (three brothers), and they espying Little-faith, where he was, came galloping up with speed. Now the good man was just awake from his sleep, and was getting up to go on his journey. So they came up all to him, and with threatening language bid him stand. At this Little-faith looked as white as a clout, and had neither power to fight nor fly. Then said Faint-heart, Deliver thy purse. But he making no haste to do it (for he was loath to lose his money), Mistrust ran up to him, and thrusting his hand into his pocket, pulled out thence a bag of silver. Then he cried out, Thieves! Thieves! With that Guilt, with a great club that was in his hand, struck Little-faith on the head, and with that blow felled him flat to the ground, where he lay bleeding as one that would bleed to death. All this while the thieves stood by. But, at last, they hearing that some were upon the road, and fearing lest it should be one Great-grace, that dwells in the city of Good-confidence, they betook themselves to their heels, and left this good man to shift for himself. Now, after a while, Little-faith came to himself, and getting up, made shift to scrabble on his way. This was the story.

DQ) What are the names of the three highway robbers who assaulted Little-faith? Why do you think Bunyan chose those names?

B. Little-faith's Jewels and Scroll Not Stolen

HOPE. But did they take from him all that ever he had?

Chr. No; the place where his jewels were they never ransacked, so those he kept still. But, as I was told, the good man was much afflicted for his loss, for the thieves got most of his spending-money. That which they got not (as I said) were jewels, also he had a little odd money left, but scarce enough to bring him to his journey's end [1 Peter 4:18]; nay, if I was not misinformed, he was forced to beg as he went, to keep himself alive; for his jewels he might not sell. But

beg, and do what he could, he went (as we say) with many a hungry belly the most part of the rest of the way.

HOPE. But is it not a wonder they got not from him his certificate, by which he was to receive his admittance at the Celestial Gate?

CHR. It is a wonder; but they got not that, though they missed it not through any good cunning of his; for he, being dismayed with their coming upon him, had neither power nor skill to hide anything; so it was more by good Providence than by his endeavour, that they missed of that good thing.

DQ) What does the fact that Little-faith's jewels and scroll were not stolen from him represent?

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

C. Little-faith's Overwhelming Sorrow

HOPE. But it must needs be a comfort to him, that they got not his jewels from him.

CHR. It might have been great comfort to him, had he used it as he should; but they that told me the story said, that he made but little use of it all the rest of the way, and that because of the dismay that he had in the taking away his money; indeed, he forgot it a great part of the rest of his journey; and besides, when at any time it came into his mind, and he began to be comforted therewith, then would fresh thoughts of his loss come again upon him, and those thoughts would swallow up all. [1 Peter 1:9]

HOPE. Alas! poor man! This could not but be a great grief to him.

CHR. Grief! ay, a grief indeed. Would it not have been so to any of us, had we been used as he, to be robbed, and wounded too, and that in a strange place, as he was? It is a wonder he did not die with grief, poor heart! I was told that he scattered almost all the rest of the way with nothing but doleful and bitter complaints; telling also to all that overtook him, or that he overtook in the way as he went, where he was robbed, and how; who they were that did it, and what he lost; how he was wounded, and that he hardly escaped with his life.

DQ) John Newton told this story. How does Little-faith's overwhelming grief at what the thieves stole from him line up with this story?

Suppose a man was going to New York to take possession of a large estate, and his [carriage] should break down a mile before he got to the city, which obliged him to walk the rest of the way; what a fool we should think him, if we saw him ringing his hands, and blubbering out all the remaining mile, "My [carriage] is broken! My [carriage] is broken!"

D. Heavenly Jewels Cannot Be Sold

HOPE. But it is a wonder that his necessity did not put him upon selling or pawning some of his jewels, that he might have wherewith to relieve himself in his journey.

CHR. Thou talkest like one upon whose head is the shell to this very day; for what should he pawn them, or to whom should he sell them? In all that country where he was robbed, his jewels were not accounted of; nor did he want that relief which could from thence be administered to him. Besides, had his jewels been missing at the gate of the Celestial City, he had (and that he knew well enough) been excluded from an inheritance there; and that would have been worse to him than the appearance and villainy of ten thousand thieves.

HOPE. Why art thou so tart, my brother? Esau sold his birthright, and that for a mess of pottage, and that birthright was his greatest jewel; and if he, why might not Little-faith do so too? [Heb. 12:16]

E. The Difference Between Little-faith and No Faith (Esau)

CHR. Esau did sell his birthright indeed, and so do many besides, and by so doing exclude themselves from the chief blessing, as also that caitiff did; but you must put a difference betwixt Esau and Little-faith, and also betwixt their estates. Esau's birthright was typical, but Little-faith's jewels were not so; Esau's belly was his god, but Little-faith's belly was not so; Esau's want lay in his fleshly appetite, Little-faith's did not so. Besides, Esau could see no further than to the fulfilling of his lusts; "Behold, I am at the point to die, (said he), and what profit shall this birthright do me?" [Gen. 25:32] But Little-faith, though it was his lot to have but a little faith, was by his little faith kept from such extravagances, and made to see and prize his jewels more than to sell them, as Esau did his birthright. You read not anywhere that Esau had faith, no, not so much as a little; therefore, no marvel if, where the flesh only

bears sway, (as it will in that man where no faith is to resist), if he sells his birthright, and his soul and all, and that to the devil of hell; for it is with such, as it is with the ass, who in her occasions cannot be turned away. [Jer. 2:24] When their minds are set upon their lusts, they will have them whatever they cost. But Little-faith was of another temper, his mind was on things divine; his livelihood was upon things that were spiritual, and from above; therefore, to what end should he that is of such a temper sell his jewels (had there been any that would have bought them) to fill his mind with empty things? Will a man give a penny to fill his belly with hay; or can you persuade the turtle-dove to live upon carrion like the crow? Though faithless ones can, for carnal lusts, pawn, or mortgage, or sell what they have, and themselves outright to boot; yet they that have faith, saving faith, though but a little of it, cannot do so. Here, therefore, my brother, is thy mistake.

DQ) What is the difference between Esau selling his birthright, and Little-faith not being able to sell his jewels?

HOPE. I acknowledge it; but yet your severe reflection had almost made me angry.

CHR. Why, I did but compare thee to some of the birds that are of the brisker sort, who will run to and fro in untrodden paths, with the shell upon their heads; but pass by that, and consider the matter under debate, and all shall be well betwixt thee and me.

F. Little-faith Has No Courage to Fight

HOPE. But, Christian, these three fellows, I am persuaded in my heart, are but a company of cowards; would they have run else, think you, as they did, at the noise of one that was coming on the road? Why did not Little-faith pluck up a greater heart? He might, methinks, have stood one brush with them, and have yielded when there had been no remedy.

CHR. That they are cowards, many have said, but few have found it so in the time of trial. As for a great heart, Little-faith had none; and I perceive by thee, my brother, hadst thou been the man concerned, thou art but for a brush, and then to yield.

And, verily, since this is the height of thy stomach, now they are at a distance from us, should they appear to thee as they did to him they might put thee to second thoughts.

But, consider again, they are but journeymen thieves, they serve under the king of the bottomless pit, who, if need be, will come into their

aid himself, and his voice is as the roaring of a lion. [1 Pet. 5:8] I myself have been engaged as this Little-faith was, and I found it a terrible thing. These three villains set upon me, and I beginning, like a Christian, to resist, they gave but a call, and in came their master. I would, as the saying is, have given my life for a penny, but that, as God would have it, I was clothed with armour of proof. Ay, and yet, though I was so harnessed, I found it hard work to quit myself like a man. No man can tell what in that combat attends us, but he that hath been in the battle himself.

G. Not Everyone is as Great-grace, the King's Champion

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But, consider again, they are but journeymen thieves, they serve under the king of the bottomless pit, who, if need be, will come into their aid himself, and his voice is as the roaring of a lion. [1 Pet. 5:8] I myself have been engaged as this Little-faith was, and I found it a terrible thing. These three villains set upon me, and I beginning, like a Christian, to resist, they gave but a call, and in came their master. I would, as the saying is, have given my life for a penny, but that, as God would have it, I was clothed with armour of proof. Ay, and yet, though I was so harnessed, I found it hard work to quit myself like a man. No man can tell what in that combat attends us, but he that hath been in the battle himself.

H. Christian Exhorts Hopeful to Be Ready to Fight... But Not Judge Others

But for such footmen as thee and I are, let us never desire to meet with an enemy, nor vaunt as if we could do better, when we hear of others that they have been foiled, Nor be tickled at the thoughts of our own manhood; for such commonly come by the worst when tried. Witness Peter, of whom I made mention before. He would

swagger, ay, he would; he would, as his vain mind prompted him to say, do better, and stand more for his Master than all men; but who so foiled, and run down by these villains, as he?

DQ) What is Bunyan's point here? How does he show that not all of the Lord's servants are equally valiant in fighting off spiritual thieves and defeating temptations and Satanic assaults? Why should we not judge others when they fail and cave in to such assaults?

DQ) How does Peter's failure to stand for Christ serve as a timeless warning on the power of temptation?

When, therefore, we hear that such robberies are done on the King's highway, two things become us to do:

1. To go out harnessed, and to be sure to take a shield with us...
2. It is good, also, that we desire of the King a convoy, yea, that he will go with us himself. ... Oh, my brother, if he will but go along with us, what need we be afraid of ten thousands that shall set themselves against us? [Ps. 3:5-8, 27:1-3] But, without him, the proud helpers "fall under the slain". [Isa. 10:4]

I, for my part, have been in the fray before now; and though, through the goodness of him that is best, I am, as you see, alive, yet I cannot boast of my manhood. Glad shall I be, if I meet with no more such brunts; though I fear we are not got beyond all danger. However, since the lion and the bear have not as yet devoured me, I hope God will also deliver us from the next uncircumcised Philistine. Then sang Christian--

*Poor Little-faith! Hast been among the thieves?
Wast robb'd? Remember this, whoso believes,
And gets more faith, shall then a victor be
Over ten thousand, else scarce over three.*

VI. The Flatterer, Their Sin, and Their Discipline

A. The Flatterer Described

So they went on and Ignorance followed. They went then till they came at a place where they saw a way put itself into their way, and seemed withal to lie as straight as the way which they should go: and here they knew not which of the two to take, for both seemed straight before them; therefore, here they stood still to consider. And as they were thinking about the way, behold a man, black of flesh,

but covered with a very light robe, came to them, and asked them why they stood there.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.

Matthew 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

DQ) How does the Flatterer's disguise serve as a warning to us?

B. The Flatterer Misleads and Snares Them

They answered they were going to the Celestial City, but knew not which of these ways to take. Follow me, said the man, it is thither that I am going. So they followed him in the way that but now came into the road, which by degrees turned, and turned them so from the city that they desired to go to, that, in little time, their faces were turned away from it; yet they followed him. But by and by, before they were aware, he led them both within the compass of a net, in which they were both so entangled that they knew not what to do; and with that the white robe fell off the black man's back. Then they saw where they were. Wherefore, there they lay crying some time, for they could not get themselves out.

DQ) How did the Flatterer persuade them to follow him? What led them off the true path?

CHR. Then said Christian to his fellow, Now do I see myself in error. Did not the Shepherds bid us beware of the flatterers? As is the saying of the wise man, so we have found it this day. A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet. [Prov. 29:5]

HOPE. They also gave us a note of directions about the way, for our more sure finding thereof; but therein we have also forgotten to read, and have not kept ourselves from the paths of the destroyer. Here David was wiser than we; for, saith he, "Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." [Ps. 17:4] Thus they lay bewailing themselves in the net.

C. A Shining One Sets Them Free... then Disciplines Them Severely

At last they espied a Shining One coming towards them with a whip of small cord in his hand. When he was come to the place where they

were, he asked them whence they came, and what they did there. They told him that they were poor pilgrims going to Zion, but were led out of their way by a black man, clothed in white, who bid us, said they, follow him, for he was going thither too. Then said he with the whip, It is Flatterer, a false apostle, that hath transformed himself into an angel of light. [Prov. 29:5, Dan. 11:32, 2 Cor. 11:13,14] So he rent the net, and let the men out. Then said he to them, Follow me, that I may set you in your way again. So he led them back to the way which they had left to follow the Flatterer. Then he asked them, saying, Where did you lie the last night? They said, With the Shepherds upon the Delectable Mountains. He asked them then if they had not of those Shepherds a note of direction for the way. They answered, Yes. But did you, said he, when you were at a stand, pluck out and read your note? They answered, No. He asked them, Why? They said, they forgot. He asked, moreover, if the Shepherds did not bid them beware of the Flatterer? They answered, Yes, but we did not imagine, said they, that this fine-spoken man had been he. [Rom. 16:18]

Then I saw in my dream that he commanded them to lie down; which, when they did, he chastised them sore, to teach them the good way wherein they should walk [Deut. 25:2]; and as he chastised them he said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent." [2 Chron. 6:26,27, Rev. 3:19] This done, he bid them go on their way, and take good heed to the other directions of the shepherds. So they thanked him for all his kindness, and went softly along the right way, singing--

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

Hebrews 12:5-6 "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

DQ) Why does the Lord discipline us? What are some examples of discipline in the Christian life? How should we respond to discipline? How does discipline keep us from apostasy?