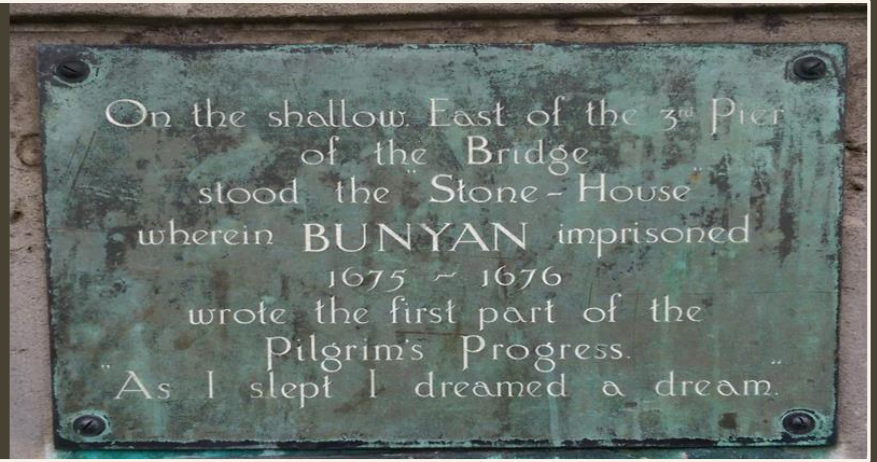
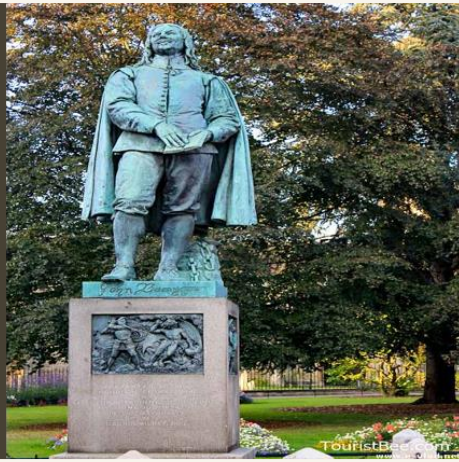


“WE MUST GO THROUGH MANY HARDSHIPS TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”
ACTS 14:22



JOHN BUNYAN'S *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH



THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

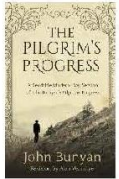
Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will increase, the love of many will grow cold. **But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

Matthew 24:9-13

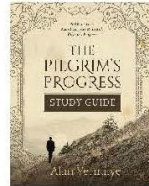




Study of *The Pilgrim's Progress* Spring 2024



[The Pilgrim's Progress—A Readable Modern-Day Version of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress — Revision by Alan Vermilye](#)
[The Pilgrim's Progress — Study Guide](#)



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Download [Pilgrim's Progress Scripture Reference Guide](#)
Download [The Pilgrim's Progress Study Guide Answer-Guide](#)

CHRISTIAN ENGAGES FAITHFUL AND TALKATIVE ON HIS PILGRIMAGE



TWO EPISODES

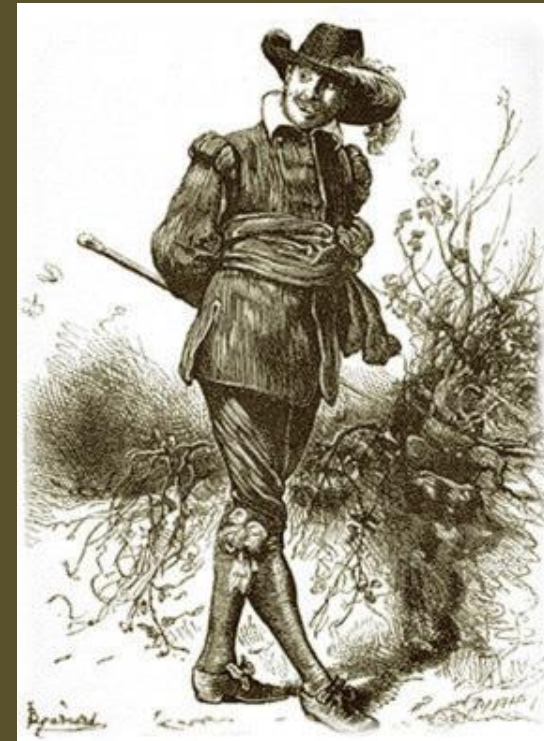
Faithful



The Narrow
Way



Talkative





Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Matthew 7:13-14

Now as Christian went on his way, he came to a little uphill slope that had been put there for the purpose of helping pilgrims see what was ahead of them. Christian ascended the slope and looked about. He saw Faithful just ahead of him on his journey. Christian shouted, "Hello! Wait right there, and I will come to you and be your companion. Faithful heard someone cry out, so he looked behind him and saw Christian, who cried out again, "Wait. Wait, so I can catch up with you."

Faithful responded, "No. I cannot stop my life is in danger because the avenger of blood is behind me."

Faithful's devotion to his journey prompted Christian to hasten his pace. So, with all the energy he could muster, Christian ran quickly, hoping to catch Faithful before he vanished from sight. Christian ran so swiftly that he caught up with Faithful and actually ran past him like a runner winning a race.

Satisfied with his running pace, Christian smiled proudly as he passed Faithful. Because he was not paying sufficient attention to the pathway he stumbled and fell to the ground. He was unable to get up by himself. Faithful gave him a hand and helped him to his feet.

The two men felt great admiration and love for one another as they began a delightful and pleasant conversation about all the things they had encountered on their journeys.

FRIENDS REUNITED

Christian threw his arm around Faithful and patted him on his back. “Faithful, I respect and love you as my own brother, and I'm so glad to have caught up with you. God has made our spirits one so that we can journey together as companions in this pleasant Narrow Way.”

Faithful turned and smiled. “Yes indeed! In fact, you have been such a good friend to me that I had hoped we might leave our hometown together. But you got started before me, so I traveled this far all alone. I don't know how I got ahead of you.”

“How long did you stay in the city of destruction before you set out after me on your pilgrimage?”

Faithful just shook his head. “I stayed only until I could stay no longer. I left immediately after you did. A lot of folks we're talking in town about the warning that fire would come from heaven and burn up the city.”

Christian looked at Faithful with surprise. “Really? The whole town was really talking about this?”

“Yes! In fact, everyone was talking about it, at least for a while.”

“Wow!” Christian said with some encouragement. “Then why did no one else come with you to escape the danger?”

Faithful shrugged his shoulders and said, “Well, it's like I said, there was a lot of talk going around, but I'm not sure many actually believed it. There were even heated debates and arguments in which I heard some people making fun of you and saying you were on a desperate foolish journey. Oh, but I believed, and still do, that our town will be destroyed with fire and brimstone from above. So I decided at that moment to plan my escape!”



Both Fled the City of Destruction to Head to the Celestial City

I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD' (Jer 29:18-19)

What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." (2 Pet. 2:22)

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Matthew 7:13-14

Christian's face showed concern. "What did you hear about Pliable?"

Faithful responded, "I heard that he followed you as far as the Slough of Despond. Many reported that he fell into the swamp, but he would never admit it. Yet, when he returned to the city, it was obvious because he was covered with mud."

Christian inquired, "And how did his family and friends treat him?"

Faithful shook his head, "Since he returned home, he's been the object of scorn and ridicule by everyone. They mock and despise him so badly that he has been unable to find work. Now he is seven times worse than before he left the city."

Christian was puzzled. "Why did they turn against him since he abandoned the way and returned home?"

"Oh, they've gone as far as to say, 'hang him! He is a traitor to his professed claims.' I think God has stirred up his enemies to hiss at him and use his name, 'Pliable,' as a byword to ridicule him as one who set out on the Way but abandoned it."

"Did you speak with him before you left the City of Destruction?" wondered Christian.

"I attempted to speak with him once in the streets, but when he saw me, he looked away. So, I did not have an opportunity to speak with him."

"When I first started my journey," said Christian, "but now I fear he will perish with the city. The proverb, 'The dog has returned to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed has returned to wallow in the mire,' aptly describes him."

"I fear you are right, my friend," responded Faithful.

“Well, Faithful. Let’s speak of more pleasant things, things that are of more immediate concern. Tell me, what have you met on your journey? I would be very surprised to hear that you had undergone no adventures along the way.”

“I avoided the Slough of Despond, which I understand you fell into. I got to the Wicket Gate without any danger. But I did meet with someone whose name was Wanton who would have liked very much to harm me,” reported Faithful.

“Good for you to escape her trap. Joseph was pursued by her, and he escaped her too, but it almost cost him his life. But what did she do to you?”

“You can only imagine how flattering she was.” Faithful looked directly at Christian and said, “She did her best to persuade me to run away with her, promising me all kinds of fleshly pleasures and contentment.”

Holding up his hand, Christian said, “But she did not promise you the satisfaction of a clear conscience. Did she?”

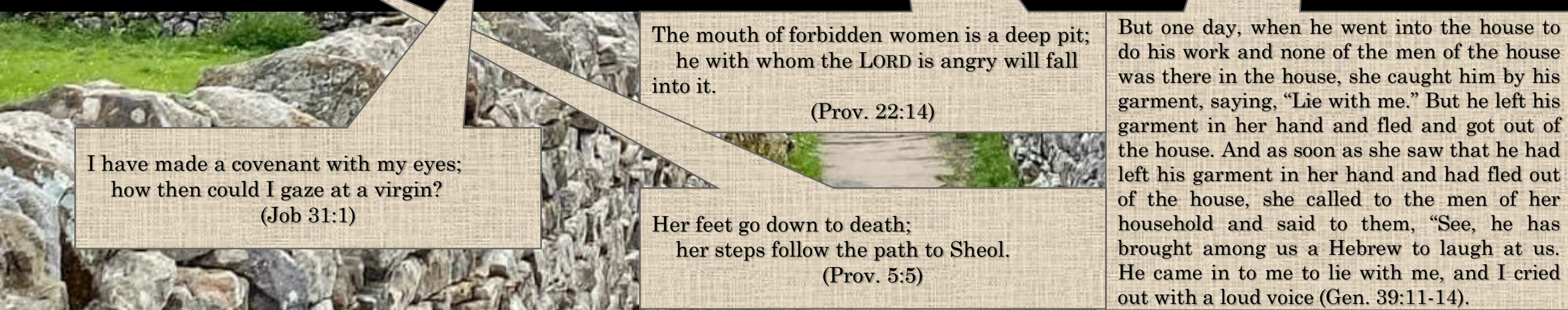
“No. You know exactly what I mean,” Faithful said slowly, “all manner of sexual satisfaction.”

“Thank God, you escaped her!” Christian responded. “The man under the Lord’s wrath falls into an adulterous woman’s deep pit.”

“Well, I’m not sure whether I escaped her completely or not.”

“Why? I’m assuming you did not give in to her desires.”

“No, I did not defile myself,” Faithful said, shaking his head. “I happened to remember an old writing that I had once seen which said, ‘Her steps take hold on Hell.’ So, I shut my eyes so that I would not be deceived by her beauty. Eventually she realized that I was an unwilling participant in her game, so she became angry with me, and I went on my way.”



The mouth of forbidden women is a deep pit;
he with whom the LORD is angry will fall
into it.

(Prov. 22:14)

Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to Sheol.

(Prov. 5:5)

I have made a covenant with my eyes;
how then could I gaze at a virgin?
(Job 31:1)

But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, “See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice (Gen. 39:11-14).

Christian wondered, "Did anyone else attempt to dissuade you from taking your journey?"

Faithful recounted, "Yes, when I came to the foot of the Hill of Difficulty, I met a very old man who asked me my name and destination. When I told him I was a Pilgrim going to the Celestial City, he said, 'You look like an honest fellow. Would you be willing to come live with me and work for me for wages I would be willing to give you?' Of course, I asked him his name and where he lived. He said his name was Adam the First, and he lived in a town called Deceit. Then I asked him what kind of business he owned and to provide more details about the wages he would pay. He told me it was delightful work, and as for my pay, he would make me the heir to his family."

"I also asked him what kind of house he lived in and what other servants he had. He told me his house was the most luxurious one in the world, and all his servants were his own children. I inquired how many children he had, and he said that he had just three daughters, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. He boasted that he would allow me to marry all three of them if I wished. Then I asked how long I could live with him, and he told me as long as he lived himself."

As one might expect, Christian was captivated by the story and blurted out, "Well, how did you respond? Surely you did not make any agreement with the man."

"No, but at the time I found myself somewhat inclined to go with him. His offer was tempting. But as we continued to talk I noticed something written on his forehead that said, 'Put off the old man with his deeds.'"

"What happened next?" Christian wondered.

Faithful replied, "Well, it suddenly occurred to me that regardless of what he said, how much he promised, I insisted that he stop talking to me because I had already decided to go. I said, 'I will not be persuaded. I will send someone else who would make my journey for me.' He held of my arm and he pulled me back with such force that I cried, 'Wretched man that I am!' I escaped and made my way to the Celestial City. I saw a man coming after me as quick as the wind he called the Spirit of the Law. He said, 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' (Rom. 7:2)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life^[c]—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

(1 John 2:15-17)

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Rom. 7:2)

But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off the old man, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:20-24).

Faithful held up his hand signaling Christian to stop speaking. “Hold on a second, my friend, and hear me out. As I said, the man caught up with me, and without saying anything, he knocked me unconscious with one blow and left me for dead. When I regained my composure, I asked him why he assaulted me. He said it was because of my secret inclination to follow Adam the First. With that, he struck me again, striking me in the chest and beating me backward so that I lay on at his feet like I was dead. When I recovered again, I pleaded with him for mercy, but he said, ‘I do not know how to show mercy!’ And with that, he knocked me down again leaving me for dead. No doubt, he would have killed me, if another man had not come by to restrain him.”

“Who restrained him?” asked Christian.

“At first, I did not know, but when he went by, I could see holes in his hand and in his side. Then I realized. He was our Lord. After this, I continued to the top of the hill.”

Christian reflected for a moment, and then said, “That man who overtook you and assaulted you was Moses. He does not spare anyone, nor does he know how to show mercy to those who violate the law, even secretly.”

“I know it very well,” Faithful said while rubbing his chest where the man had struck him. “That was not my first encounter with him. Moses was the one who found me in the security of my own home in the City of Destruction and told me he would burn my house to the ground if I stayed there.”

“But faithful,” Christian wondered, “did you not see the Palace Beautiful on top of the Hill of Difficulty adjacent to where you saw Moses?”

“Oh, yes!” Faithful nodded, “As I was coming up to it, I saw the lions too, but they must have been asleep. Since it was not yet noon, and I had so much of the day before me, I decided to pass by the porter and come down the hill without visiting the Palace Beautiful.”

“The watchman told me you passed by,” Christian said. “I wish you had stopped at the Palace. You would have seen so many rare treasures and enjoyed much conversation. You would have received armor like mine also.”

Christian and faithful walked on. Then Christian asked, "Please tell me, did you experience Humiliation?"

"Yes, I met a man named Discontent," faithful said. "He was working hard because he wanted honor if I was to enter the valley of humiliation. He also told me that it would be a waste of time including Pride, Arrogance Self-Conceit, Worldly Glory, and others, who, he was made a fool myself and ruined my reputation by entering the valley."

"How did you respond to him?" inquired Christian.

"I told him all of those men he named might claim to be my friends, but in truth they are my relatives," Faithful confided, "but since I became a pilgrim in the Way of Salvation, they have all rejected me, and I have accepted their rejection." "Also, I told him that he had quite misrepresented this valley because humility comes before honor and pride before destruction. Therefore, I told him I would rather go through this valley with the same honor of those who are wise than choose that which he esteemed more worthy."

"Did you meet with anyone else in the valley?"

"Yes, I did. I met a man named Shame, but of all the people I have met on my pilgrimage, I don't think his name suits him. I suppose he would disagree, but a shameful person can change after feeling convicted of his sins and feels embarrassed by his actions. But Shame has no shame at all and will never change his ways. That's why I believe it is more accurate to call him Shameless."

"Why,? What did he say to you?" Christian inquired.

"What did he say?" Faithful his arms as if exasperated. "Why, he objected to religion as a foolish business for a man to give any attention to religion. He even said that a tender conscience is an unmanly thing and that to be constantly watch everything you say or do makes you weak and keep hearing from freely parading about like the heroes of this modern age."

"Then he argued that only a few of the powerful, wealthy, elite, and intelligent people, those who do are persuaded to become fools by voluntarily giving up their wealth and status to the low standard of living that many pilgrims submit themselves to and seek a deeper understanding for new scientific theories.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

(1 Cor. 1:126)

Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.
It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor
than to divide the spoil with the proud.

(Prov. 16:18-19)

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

(Mark 8:35-38)

... more things . . . like it was a shame to
out eternal realities. Further, said it v
the restitution if I have stolen from someone
ncerned over a few vices, was she called
ed and enlightened of the world. Then he said
fortunate simply because they belong to the sam
Christian.

asked with wonder. “To tell you the truth, I do not know what to say at first! He
l and humiliated. And Shame brought up that which made me feel even more
er that ‘What is highly esteemed among men is detestable to God.’ Shame had

“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

(Luke 16:15)

told me . . . acceptable by worldly men, but he told me nothing about wh
“I also . . . about the Day of Judgment. We will not be assigned to et
standa . . . this world but according to the wisdom and law of the Mos
partial . . . keeping with our deeds. Therefore, I thought what God says b
world a . . . against it.”

“Seeing . . . that God prefers His religion and that He prefers a tender c
Kingdom of Heaven are wise, and the poor who love Christ are richer than
Him, I . . . Shame to leave me since he was an enemy of my salvation! I
arguments against my Sovereign Lord? If I do, then how can I look Him in the
ashamed of Him and His ways and expect His blessing? No.”

“Shame was a bold villain. I could hardly be rid of him. He followed me like a shadow, whispering in my ear about weaknesses that accompany religion. Finally, I told him his efforts were useless. The things he most disdained I regard to be the most glorious. So, at last, he left me and I began to sing.”

type of thinking leads
ous affiliation. Finally, he
*The trials that those men do meet with,
Who are obedient to the heavenly call,
Are manifold, and suited to the flesh,
And come, and come, and come again afresh;
That now, or some time else, we by them may
Be taken, overcome, and cast away.
O let the pilgrims, let the pilgrims then,
Be vigilant and quit themselves like men.*

His coming? Can I now be

Christian compassionately embraced Faithful and said, “My brother, I'm glad that you courageously withstood the attacks of this villain. As you said, of all the people you met, he undoubtedly has the wrong name. How bold is he to follow us in the streets and attempt to shame us before the world, that is to make us ashamed of what is good. If he were not so overconfident, he would never attempt to do what he does. But we must continue to resist him, for other than all his bravadoes, he is nothing more than a fool. ‘The wise shall inherit honor,’ said Solomon, ‘but He hold up fools to shame.’”

Proverbs 3:35

Faith responded, “I think we must pray to our Lord for help in resisting and opposing Shame, that we will be valiant for the truth as we continue on our earthly pilgrimage.”

“You speak the truth, but did you meet anyone else in the valley?” Christian wondered.

Faithful responded, “No, I didn't. I had sunshine all the rest of the way through the Valley of Humiliation and also through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.”

“How blessed you were, Faithful!” Christian exclaimed. “It did not go so well for me. As soon as I entered the valley, I had dreadful combat with the foul fiend Apollyon. Truthfully, I thought he was going to kill me, especially when he got me down and pressed me under his full body weight. I thought he was going to crush me to death because when he threw me down, my sword flew from my hand. He told me he was confident of his victory over me, but I cried to God, and He heard me and delivered me from my troubles. Then I entered into the Valley of the Shadow of Death and had no light for almost half the way. On more than one occasion, I thought I was going to be killed. At last, day dawned, and the sun rose so I could pass through the rest of the valley with greater ease and calm.”





As the two friends continued on their way, the path widened. Faithful noticed a man walking some distance from them to one side. He struck up a conversation with the man. He inquired, “Are you on your way to the Heavenly Country?”

“Yes, I am going there,” the man said.

“Wonderful. Walk with us,” Faithful responded.

“I would be delighted to be your conversation partner on the journey,” the new acquaintance said.

Faithful invited him, “Join us, then, as we converse about divine things.”

“Hello, I am Talkative,” the man said. “I am so pleased to have met some pilgrims who realize how profitable it is to talk of good things. So few pilgrims spend their time speaking of what is good while traveling. Most men waste their time talking about things that are of no value, a fact that troubles me.”

Faithful agreed, “Is anything of greater worth to speak of than the heavenly things of God?”

“Your company already pleases me,” Talkative excitedly replied. “You speak with conviction. There is nothing more profitable or pleasant than talking about things of God. Anyone who talks about history, or the mystery of things, or miracles, or signs and wonders will not find them more delightfully and as carefully recorded as in the Holy Scriptures.”

“True, indeed,” said Faithful, gesturing with his hand, “but our real objective is to benefit from speaking about these things. That must be our purpose.”

At this point, Talkative seized hold of the conversation, “Those are my thoughts also. To talk of such things is most profitable. By doing so, a man may gain knowledge about many things, including the vanity of earthly things and the benefit of things above. More specifically, by talking, a man can learn the need for the new birth, the insufficiency of our works, the need for Christ’s righteousness, and so on.”

“Additionally, by talking, we can learn what it means to repent, to believe, to pray, to suffer, and more. By talking, we acquire an understanding of the great promises and consolations of the gospel and the comfort of those promises. Furthermore, by talking, a man can learn to refute false opinions, to defend the truth, and also to instruct the ignorant.”

When Talkative paused to take a breath, Faithful seized the instant, “All this is true, and I’m glad to hear you say these things.



Talkative blathered on, “Because there is so little talk of these things, there are few who understand the need for faith and the necessity of a work of grace in their soul to obtain eternal life. They still live ignorantly under the law, through which no man will obtain the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“Yes,” said Faithful, “but the heavenly knowledge of these things is the gift of God. No one can attain them by human effort or by merely talking about them.”

As Talkative slapped Faithful on the back, he announced, “I know all of this very well. For, as Scripture affirms, a man can receive nothing except what has been given to him from Heaven. All is of grace, not of works. I could quote you a hundred Scripture passages confirming this truth.”

“Well, then,” responded Faithful, “what is that one thing that should fill our conversation?”

“Whatever you like,” offered Talkative, “I will talk of things heavenly or earthly, moral or evangelical, sacred or profane, past or future, domestic or foreign, important or inconsequential, so long as it is done for our benefit.”

Talkative’s fluency, large vocabulary, and apparent vast knowledge impressed Faithful, who slowed momentarily to walk with Christian, to whom he almost whispered, “What an eloquent man we have as a companion. Don’t you think this man will be a very excellent pilgrim?”

Christian offered a cautious smirk, “This man who impresses you can mesmerize anyone he meets.”

“Oh, so you know him?” wondered Faithful.

“Know him?” responded Christian. “Oh yes, better than he knows himself.”

“Who is he? Tell me,” Faithful whispered.

“His name is Talkative, and he lives in our hometown. I am surprised you have not met him before. Mr. Say-Well is his father. He lives on Chattering Row. His acquaintances know him as Talkative of Chattering Row. Though his speech is eloquent, his character is repulsive. Oh, indeed, he charms whoever will listen to him prattle on. He is like a painting that is best seen from a distance because up close, he is distinctly unpleasing.”

Faithful broke in, “You’re smiling. Are you jesting?”



“Though my face shows a smile, God forbid that I should joke or falsely accuse anyone! He keeps company with anyone who lends him an ear. Just as he speaks with you, he does the same at the pub where, the more he drinks the looser his tongue becomes. Christian faith has no place in his heart, his home, or his conversation. He is all talk, and his religion is to chatter with his mouth, not do kindnesses from the heart.”

Matthew 23:3; 1 Corinthians 4:20

“Really! Then he has deceived me,” Faithful admitted with a sad face.

“Deceived?” Be sure of it, Faithful,” Christian offered. “Remember the proverb, ‘Do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.’ He talks of prayer, repentance, faith, and the new birth, but he knows them only as topics for conversation. They are absent from his character. I have observed him at his home and in public. Thus, I know what I tell you about him is the truth. Religion is not at home in his house. The walls of his house hear no prayers and observe no sign of repentance for sin. Truly, an ox serves God far better than he does. He is a stain, a reproach, and a shame to true religion. No one who knows him has a good word to say about him other than that he is a fluent talker. His neighbors avoid him. Commoners who know him best say he plays like a saint in public but is a devil at home. Even his family agrees with me. He’s rude, mean-spirited, and rages at his workers who do not know what to do or to say to him. People who have to do business with him would prefer dealing with known swindlers. He teaches his sons to follow in his footsteps, rebuking them if he sees in them the slightest tendency toward a tender conscience. He degrades them, calling them blockheads and fools, even mocking them in the presence of others. As I observe him, his hypocritical lifestyle causes many to stumble and fall into ruin. Unless God prevents it, he will ruin many more.”



Faithful was astonished. “Well, my brother, I believe you, not only because you have known him but because you offer your report with a humble and solemn Christian posture.”

Christian continued, “If I had just met him, I might have been taken in by him much like you. If I had received such a report from those hostile to the Christian faith, I would have regarded it slanderous. I assure you, however, that what I say is truthful.”

Faithful replied, “Indeed, one’s walk must match one’s talk. I will remember this and be more careful.”

Romans 2:24-25



“Indeed,” said Christian, “one’s conversation and one’s behavior must be harmonious. Faith without works is dead, just as the body without the spirit is dead. It is written, ‘Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.’”

James 1:27

Because Talkative was still following them, Christian glanced back at him and said, “Talkative does not know this truth. To him, simply hearing and speaking makes one a Christian. He is deceived. Hearing is like soil receiving sown seed. Talk alone proves that the seed has neither taken root nor yielded fruit. We know that on the Day of Judgment, the Lord will not inquire, ‘Did you believe?’ but rather, ‘Were you doers or talkers only?’ He will judge us according to our deeds. Talkative’s profession of faith is empty.”

Matt 13:23, 30



“Do as I suggest. He will be gone quickly. Go to him and begin speaking of the power of authentic faith. Ask him if the gospel’s power is at home in his heart.”

Faithful took the advice, “You said I could pick a topic for our conversation. Here’s a topic. How does the grace of God reveal itself in one who has been redeemed by Christ Jesus?”

Talkative nervously smiled, “That’s a good question. First, when one God’s grace comes to a man it causes a great outcry against sin. Secondly. . . .”

Faithful interjected. “Slow down! Consider each aspect one at a time. What you should say is that grace shows itself in a person by convincing the heart to hate sin.”

“Why?” Talkative objected. “What’s the difference between crying out against sin and hating sin?”

“Oh, quite a difference!” Faithful responded.

Thoughtfully, Faithful responded, “I am reminded of what Moses wrote when he described the animal that’s ceremonially clean. It has a split hoof and chews the cud. However, the animal that has only a split hoof or only chews the cud is unclean. Like a rabbit, Talkative chews the cud of the Word of God, but he does not have a split hoof. He does not separate himself from sinful behavior. Like a rabbit, though he makes himself appealing with his mouth, where his feet take him reveals his unholiness.”

Christian smiled, “You speak the true sense of the gospel. And I will add one more thing from the Apostle Paul who calls some men, including loquacious men, that is talkers, resounding gongs and clanging cymbals. In another place, he says they are ‘things without life, emitting sound.’ They will never be found in the Kingdom of God, even if they have a voice like an angel.”

Faithful acknowledged, “I was not so fond of his company before, but now I’m weary of it. His talk is annoying. What should we do to be rid of him?”

Christian had an idea.

1 Cor 14:7

1 Cor 13:1-3

Lev 11, Deut 14



“Faithful continued, “People often cry out against sin in principle but do not hate sin unless they have a profound godly aversion to sin. There are preachers who cry out against sin from the pulpit who do not live it out in their hearts, homes, and behavior. Potiphar’s wife cried out loudly as if she were godly and virtuous, but she cried out only because Joseph would not enter her trap and commit adultery with her. Many cry out against sin while condoning it in their own hearts and conduct. It’s like a mother who scolds the child on her lap for behaving badly, but instead of spanking her, she smothers the girl with kisses and hugs.”

Talkative retorted, “You’re being clever and setting a trap for me.”

“No,” answered Faithful, “I’m setting things right. But now, tell me, what was the second evidence of grace you were going to suggest?”

Genesis 39:15

“Oh, it was a great knowledge of gospel mysteries,” Talkative replied.

“Perhaps you should have put that one first. Yet, it’s still not accurate,” Faithful offered. “Great knowledge may be found in the mysteries of the gospel without any work of grace in the heart. You see, if a man has all knowledge, he may still not be a child of God. When Christ asked, ‘Do you understand all these things?’ and the disciples said, ‘Yes,’ He added, ‘Blessed are you who *do* them. He does not speak the blessing on mere *understanding* of them but on the *doing* of them. A man can understand something and still not act on it. It’s like a servant who understands his master’s desires and still fails to act on them. Thus, your evidence is not accurate. To possess knowledge pleases talkers and braggers, but to act on that knowledge pleases God. Only knowledge that combines grace with faith and love leads a man to obey God from the heart.”

Mark 4:13

John 13:17

1 Cor 13:2

Talkative was irritated. You set a trap for me, again. This has become an unpleasant conversation.

“Well, then,” Faithful suggested, “offer more clear evidence that displays God’s work of grace in the heart.”

“No, not at this time, Talkative snapped, “because I see you will not agree with anything I say.”

“If you won’t, I shall, if you don’t mind,” replied Faithful. To which Talkative thrust his arms upward, as if surrendering.

“A true work of God’s grace is readily recognized by others because there is a conviction for his sin of unbelief manifested in sorrow and shame. He runs to Jesus, the only Savior, and clings to him for life. His hunger and thirst for the Savior increases. Commensurate with the strength of his faith is his joy, peace, love for holiness, and his desire to know Christ more as he serves him single-mindedly. This work of grace is made known to others by a public confession of his faith in Christ through baptism and by his obedience that agrees with his confession. Have you experienced what I have described? Does your behavior bear witness to your profession of faith? Or does your religion consist of words only, without deeds to verify the truth of them?”





Faithful continued, “Sir, if you respond to my question, say only what you know God will affirm to be true and what your conscience can validate. ‘It is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.’”

Blushing, Talkative said, This is not the kind of discourse I desired or expected. You talk about experience, conscience, and God. I’m not inclined to answer your questions, since you are not my catechism instructor. I will not be judged by you, but I am curious why you would pose such questions to me.”

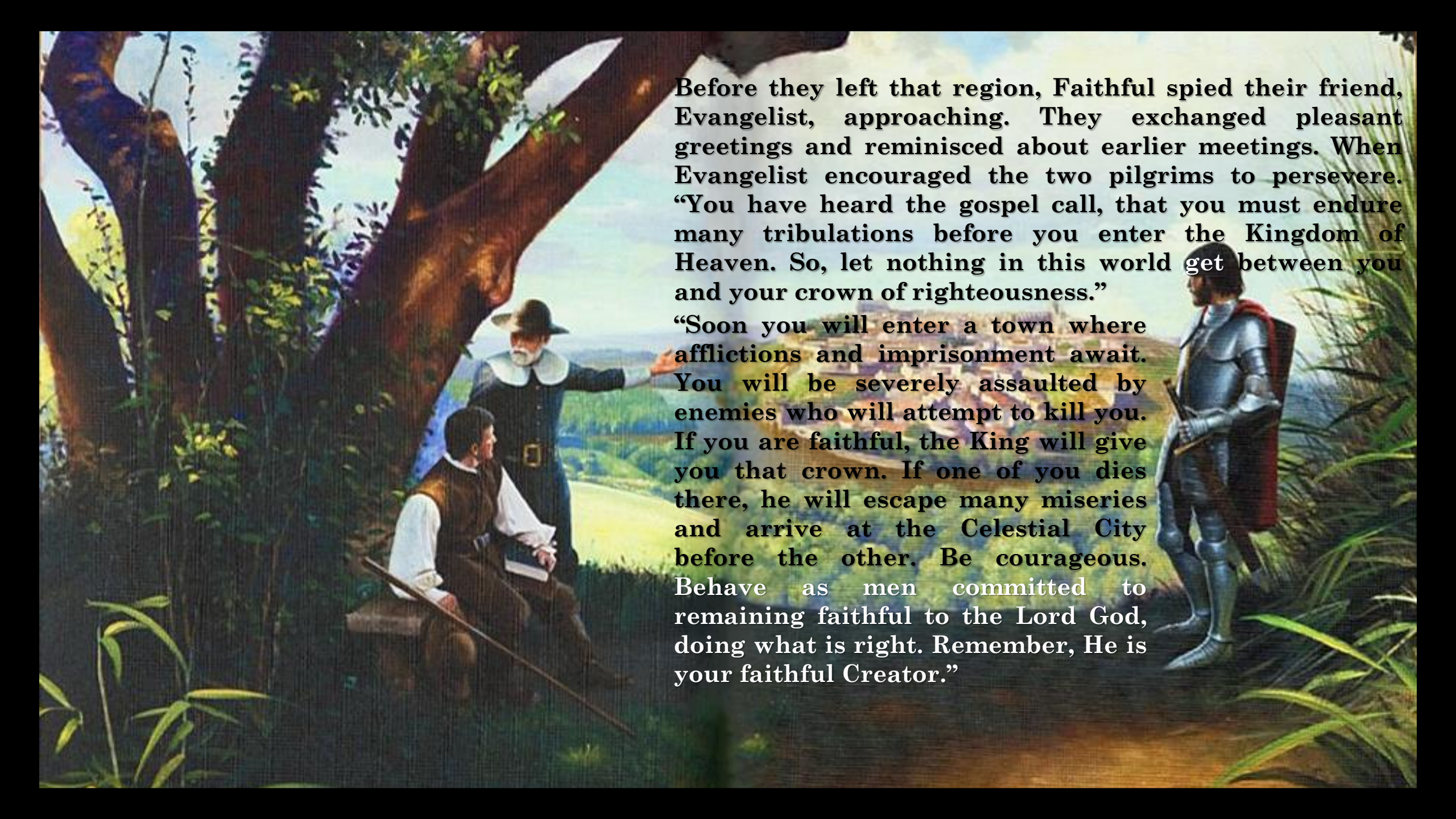
“You were anxious to talk, so I desired to know whether you have truly experienced gospel conversion or if you are all talk. Your reputation precedes you. Your religion is mere talk without gospel behavior. As a prostitute is a shame to all women, you are a shame to all true confessing Christians.”

At this, Talkative became irate. “Since you are eager to receive gossip about me and rashly judge me, I see you are a spiteful man, unworthy of my company. So, I’m done with you.” He turned and hastily walked away.

Christian resumed speaking with Faithful, “It happened as I told you. Your gospel speech and his cravings would conflict. Talkative despises the word of the gospel rather than repent of his wickedness. His departure is his eternal loss. Better he that he left than we be soiled by his presence as the Apostle Paul says, ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’ and ‘Separate yourself from such people.’ True to your name, you faithfully spoke the truth to him.”

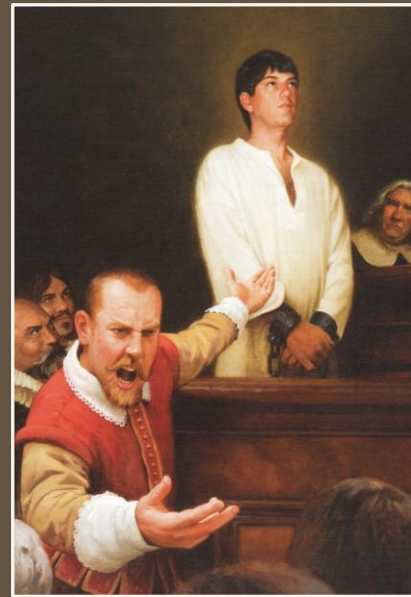
Then Faithful observed, “How talkative, like a strutting tom turkey first spread his plume, showing off everything he knew! Oh, how bravely he talked! How he presumed that his knowledge of every subject exceeded what we could know! No sooner that I began to speak about God’s work of grace in the heart, he marched off into the sunset cocksure that he understands how the heart functions, and not we.





Before they left that region, Faithful spied their friend, Evangelist, approaching. They exchanged pleasant greetings and reminisced about earlier meetings. When Evangelist encouraged the two pilgrims to persevere. “You have heard the gospel call, that you must endure many tribulations before you enter the Kingdom of Heaven. So, let nothing in this world get between you and your crown of righteousness.”

“Soon you will enter a town where afflictions and imprisonment await. You will be severely assaulted by enemies who will attempt to kill you. If you are faithful, the King will give you that crown. If one of you dies there, he will escape many miseries and arrive at the Celestial City before the other. Be courageous. Behave as men committed to remaining faithful to the Lord God, doing what is right. Remember, He is your faithful Creator.”



NEXT WEEK
CHRISTIAN &
FAITHFUL ARRIVE AT
VANITY FAIR



CHRIST BIBLE CHURCH

