

37 -Ignorance From Conceit

And I slept, and dreamed again; and saw the same two pilgrims going down the mountains, along the high way towards the City. Now, a little below these mountains, on the left hand, lies 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 part he came? and whither he was going?"

Ignorance. Sir, I was born in the country that lies 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?

Ign. "As other good 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?

Ign. I know my Lord's will, and I have led a good life: 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.

Ign. Gentlemen, ye be utter strangers to me, I know you not; be content to 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 not, since we have, as you see, a fine pleasant green lane, that comes down from our country the next way into it.

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" (#Pr 26:12). And said, moreover, "When he that is a fool walks by the way, his wisdom fails him; and he saith to everyone that he is a fool (#Ec 10:3). What! shall we talk further with him? or outgo him at present, and so leave him to think of what he hath heard already; and then stop again for him afterwards, and see if by degrees we can do any good by him?" Then said HOPEFUL:

"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. 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 in the side of the hill (#Mt 12:45 Pr 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-A-WAY, 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 gone past, HOPEFUL looked after him, and espied on his back a paper with this inscription, "Wanton professor, and damnable apostate."

Pr 26:12 Ec 10:3 Mt 12:45 Pr 5:22

“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him.” (Pr 26:12 NKJV)

“Even when a fool walks along the way, He lacks wisdom, And he shows everyone *that he is* a fool.” (Ec 10:3 NKJV)

““Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”” (Mt 12:45 NKJV)

“His own iniquities entrap the wicked *man*, And he is caught in the cords of his sin.” (Pr 5:22 NKJV)