
LITTLE-FAITH

“HIM THAT is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations” (Romans 14:1).

There is genius and a powerful logic to the order by which Bunyan introduces his characters. We have met hypocrites, false teachers, blind leading the blind, the simple-minded, the slothful and so forth. In this section, Ignorance still follows at a distance, and Christian and Hopeful have watched as a man named Turn-away from the town of Apostacy is led away in bonds.

Now we are introduced to Little-Faith from the town of Sincere. He is resting and is attacked by three ruffian brothers, Faint-Heart, Mistrust and Guilt. They have their way with him, robbing Little-Faith of his silver and only running off when they sense that Great-Grace is also on the road and heading their way.

Bunyan would have us to see that Little-Faith is a true believer and not an apostate. He is a true Christian and a child of the King, but he has only a little faith. As far as his own heart is concerned, Little-Faith struggles with doubt and assurance of salvation—his life is assailed with anxiety and a guilty conscience. The pews of the church are filled with those of little faith. In fact, there is some of Little-Faith in most of us.

In the ensuing dialogue between Christian and Hopeful, the question is asked if Little-Faith was robbed of everything. The answer was that the thieves got his spending

money but they didn't get his treasure. His certificate for the Celestial City was missed. This is an important distinction that must be made. Christian puts things into perspective by instructing Hopeful that Little-Faith had neither the power nor the skill to hide anything. It was more by the providence of God than any ability of his own that the thieves missed that “good thing.” This shows that there may be a loss of confidence even to a degree of mistrust and unbelief, but the one upon whom God has set His grace will always return in repentance and faith. We must go back to the fire burning up the wall in the house of the Interpreter. There is much water poured by the Evil One upon the fire, but it never goes out because there is oil poured in from the back of the wall by the One who has grace greater than all our sinful unbelief and doubt.

Christians frequently talk of the wounding and beatings they receive from their lot in life. It's the bad things that seem to make for lengthy conversations around the dinner table. Yet frequently these gloomy discussions are simply the symptoms of losing spiritual comfort, peace and assurance because of little faith. The three brothers are constantly at our shoulder, whispering in our ear. Faint-heartedness usually comes by either sinful conduct or negligence of the promises of God. Mistrust is sure to follow and ultimately Guilt beats us down.
