

The Pilgrims Progress
John Bunyan

The Truth About Talkative
(Pg. 49, ¶4 - Pg. 54, ¶1)
(Reading For June 27, 2021)

FAITHFUL. Then Faithful stepped forward again, and said to Talkative, Come, what cheer? How is it now?

TALKATIVE. Thank you, well. I thought we should have had a great deal of talk by this time.

FAITHFUL. Well, if you will, we will fall to it now; and since you left it with me to state the question, let it be this: How doth the saving grace of God discover itself, when it is in the heart of man?

TALKATIVE. I perceive then, that our talk must be about the power of things. Well, it is a very good question, and I shall be willing to answer you. And take my answer in brief, thus: First, Where the grace of God is in the heart, it causeth there a great outcry against sin. Secondly—

FAITHFUL. Nay, hold, let us consider of one at once. I think you should rather say, It shows itself by inclining the soul to abhor its sin.

TALKATIVE. Why, what difference is there between crying out against, and abhorring of sin?

FAITHFUL. O! a great deal. A man may cry out against sin of policy, but he cannot abhor it, but by virtue of a godly antipathy against it. I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit, who yet can abide it well enough in the heart, house, and conversation.

Joseph's mistress cried out with a loud voice, as if she had been very holy; but she would willingly, notwithstanding that, have committed uncleanness with him (Gen 39:15). Some cry out against sin, even as the mother cries out against her child in her lap, when she calleth it slut and naughty girl, and then falls to hugging and kissing it.

TALKATIVE. You lie at the catch, I perceive.

FAITHFUL. No, not I; I am only for setting things right. But what is the second thing whereby you would prove a discovery of a work of grace in the heart?

TALKATIVE. Great knowledge of gospel mysteries.

FAITHFUL. This sign should have been first; but first or last, it is also false; for knowledge, great knowledge, may be obtained in the mysteries of the gospel, and yet no work of grace in the soul (1Co 13). Yea, if a man have all knowledge, he may yet be nothing, and so consequently be no child of God. When Christ said, "Do you know all these things?" and the disciples had answered, Yes; He addeth, "Blessed are ye if ye do them." He doth not lay the blessing in the knowing of them, but in

the doing of them. For there is a knowledge that is not attended with doing: "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not." A man may know like an angel, and yet be no Christian, therefore your sign of it is not true. Indeed, to know is a thing that pleaseth talkers and boasters; but to do is that which pleaseth God. Not that the heart can be good without knowledge; for without that the heart is naught. There is, therefore, knowledge and knowledge. Knowledge that resteth in the bare speculation of things; and knowledge that is accompanied with the grace of faith and love; which puts a man upon doing even the will of God from the heart: the first of these will serve the talker; but without the other the true Christian is not content. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart" (Psa 119:34).

TALKATIVE. You lie at the catch again; this is not for edification.

FAITHFUL. Well, if you please, propound another sign how this work of grace discovereth itself where it is.

TALKATIVE. Not I, for I see we shall not agree.

FAITHFUL. Well, if you will not, will you give me leave to do it?

TALKATIVE. You may use your liberty.

FAITHFUL. A work of grace in the soul discovereth itself, either to him that hath it, or to standers by. To him that hath it thus: It gives him conviction of sin, especially of the defilement of his nature and the sin of unbelief (for the sake of which he is sure to be damned, if he findeth not mercy at God's hand, by faith in Jesus Christ) (Joh 16:8-9; Rom 7:24; Mar 16:16). This sight and sense of things worketh in him sorrow and shame for sin; he findeth, moreover, revealed in him the Saviour of the world, and the absolute necessity of closing with him for life, at the which he findeth hungerings and thirstings after him; to which hungerings, &c., the promise is made (Psa 38:18; Jer 31:19; Gal 2:16; Act 4:12; Mat 5:6; Rev 21:6). Now, according to the strength or weakness of his faith in his Saviour, so is his joy and peace, so is his love to holiness, so are his desires to know him more, and also to serve him in this world. But though I say it discovereth itself thus unto him, yet it is but seldom that he is able to conclude that this is a work of grace; because his corruptions now, and his abused reason, make his mind to misjudge in this matter; therefore, in him that hath this work, there is required a very sound judgment before he can, with steadiness, conclude that this is a work of grace.

To others, it is thus discovered:

1. By an experimental confession of his faith in Christ (Rom 10:10; Phi 1:27; Mat 5:19).

2. By a life answerable to that confession; to wit, a life of holiness; heart-holiness, family-holiness (if he hath a family), and by conversation-holiness in the world; which, in the general, teacheth him, inwardly, to abhor his sin, and himself for that, in secret; to suppress it in his family, and to promote holiness in the world; not by talk only, as a hypocrite or talkative person may do, but by a practical subjection, in faith and love, to the power of the Word (Joh 14:15; Psa 50:23; Job 42:5, 6; Eze

20:43). And now, Sir, as to this brief description of the work of grace, and also the discovery of it, if you have aught to object, object; if not, then give me leave to propound to you a second question.

TALKATIVE. Nay, my part is not now to object, but to hear; let me, therefore, have your second question.

FAITHFUL. It is this: Do you experience this first part of this description of it? and doth your life and conversation testify the same? or standeth your religion in word or in tongue, and not in deed and truth? Pray, if you incline to answer me in this, say no more than you know the God above will say Amen to; and, also, nothing but what your conscience can justify you in; "for, not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Besides, to say, I am thus, and thus, when my conversation, and all my neighbours, tell me I lie, is great wickedness.

TALKATIVE. Then Talkative at first began to blush; but, recovering himself, thus he replied: You come now to experience, to conscience, and God; and to appeal to him for justification of what is spoken. 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 mouthprofession the lie. They say, you are a spot among Christians; and that religion fareth the worse for your ungodly conversation; that some already have stumbled at your wicked ways, and that more are in danger of being destroyed thereby; your religion, and an alehouse, and covetousness, and uncleanness, and swearing, and lying, and vain company keeping, &c., will stand together. The proverb is true of you which is said of a whore, to wit, that she is a shame to all women; so are you a shame to all professors.

TALKATIVE. Since you are 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.

CHRISTIAN. Then came up 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, he 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 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; then should they either be made more conformable to religion, or the company of saints would be too hot for them. Then did Faithful say,

*How Talkative at first lifts up his plumes!
How bravely doth he speak! How he presumes
To drive down all before him! But so soon
As Faithful talks of heart-work, like the moon
That's past the full, into the wane he goes.
And so will all, but he that HEART-WORK knows.*

Thus they went on talking of what they had seen by the way, and so made that way easy which would, otherwise, no doubt, have been tedious to them; for now they went through a wilderness.

Now, when they were got almost quite out of this wilderness, Faithful chanced to cast his eye back, and espied one coming after them, and he knew him. Oh ! said Faithful to his brother, Who comes yonder? Then Christian looked, and said, It is my good friend Evangelist. Aye, and my good friend too, said Faithful, for it was he that set me the way to the gate. Now was Evangelist come up unto them, and thus saluted them:

EVANGELIST. Peace be with you, dearly beloved; and peace be to your helpers.

CHRISTIAN. Welcome, welcome, my good Evangelist; the sight of thy countenance brings to my remembrance thy ancient kindness and unwearied labouring for my eternal good.

FAITHFUL. And a thousand times welcome, said good Faithful. Thy company, O sweet Evangelist, how desirable it is to us poor pilgrims!

EVANGELIST. Then said Evangelist, How hath it fared with you, my friends, since the time of our last parting? What have you met with, and how have you behaved yourselves?

Then Christian and Faithful told him of all things that had happened to them in the way; and how and with what difficulty, they had arrived to that place.

EVANGELIST. Right glad am I, said Evangelist, not that you have met with trials, but that you have been victors; and for that you have, notwithstanding many weaknesses, continued in the way to this very day.

I say, right glad am I of this thing, and that for mine own sake and yours. I have sowed, and you have reaped; and the day is coming, when both he that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together; that is, if you hold out; "for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not" (Joh 4:36; Gal 6:9). The crown is before you, and it is an incorruptible one; "so run, that you may obtain" it (1Co 9:24-27). Some there be that set out for this crown, and, after they have gone far for it, another comes in, and takes it from them; hold fast, therefore, that you have, let no man take your crown (Rev 3:11). You are not yet out of the gun-shot of the devil; you have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin; let

the kingdom be always before you, and believe steadfastly concerning things that are invisible. Let nothing that is on this side the other world get within you; and, above all, look well to your own hearts, and to the lusts thereof, "for they are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"; set your faces like a flint; you have all power in heaven and earth on your side.

CHRISTIAN. Then Christian thanked him for his exhortation; but told him, withal, that they would have him speak further to them for their help the rest of the way, and the rather, for that they well knew that he was a prophet, and could tell them of things that might happen unto them, and also how they might resist and overcome them. To which request Faithful also consented. So Evangelist began as followeth:

EVANGELIST. My sons, you have heard in the words of the truth of the gospel that you must, through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, that in every city bonds and afflictions abide in you; and therefore you cannot expect that you should go long on your pilgrimage without them, in some sort or other. You have found something of the truth of these testimonies upon you already, and more will immediately follow; for now, as you see, you are almost out of this wilderness, and therefore you will soon come into a town that you will by and by see before you; and in that town you will be hardly beset with enemies, who will strain hard but they will kill you; and be you sure that one or both of you must seal the testimony which you hold, with blood; but be you faithful unto death, and the King will give you a crown of life. He that shall die there, although his death will be unnatural, and his pain perhaps great, he will yet have the better of his fellow; not only because he will be arrived at the Celestial City soonest, but because he will escape many miseries that the other will meet with in the rest of his journey. But when you are come to the town, and shall find fulfilled what I have here related, then remember your Friend and quit yourselves like men (Mat 11:19, 1Co 16:13), and commit the keeping of your souls to your God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.