

The Pilgrims Progress
John Bunyan

Christian Answers Hold-The-World & Demas
(Pg. 65, ¶2 - Pg. 68, ¶3)
(Reading For August 8, 2021)

Christian Answers Hold-The-World

CHRISTIAN. then said Christian, Even a babe in religion may answer ten thousand such questions. For if it be unlawful to follow Christ for loaves (as it is in the sixth of John), how much more abominable is it to make of him and religion a stalking-horse, to get and enjoy the world! Nor do we find any other than heathens, hypocrites, devils, and witches, that are of this opinion.

1. Heathens; for when Hamor and Shechem had a mind to the daughter and cattle of Jacob, and saw that there was no ways for them to come at them, but by becoming circumcised; they say to their companions, if every male of us be circumcised, as they are circumcised, shall not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs, be ours? Their daughter and their cattle were that which they sought to obtain, and their religion the stalking-horse they made use of to come at them. Read the whole story (Gen 34:20-23).

2. The hypocritical Pharisees were also of this religion; long prayers were their pretence; but to get widows' houses was their intent; and greater damnation was from God their judgment (Luk 20:46-47).

3. Judas the devil was also of this religion; he was religious for the bag, that he might be possessed of what was therein; but he was lost, cast away, and the very son of perdition.

4. Simon the witch was of this religion too; for he would have had the Holy Ghost, that he might have got money therewith; and his sentence from Peter's mouth was according (Act 8:19-20).

5. Neither will it out of my mind, but that that man that takes up religion for the world, will throw away religion for the world; for so surely as Judas designed the world in becoming religious, so surely did he also sell religion and his Master for the same. To answer the question therefore affirmatively, as I perceive you have done; and to accept of, as authentic, such answer, is both heathenish, hypocritical, and devilish; and your reward will be according to your works.

Then they stood staring one upon another, but had not wherewith to answer Christian. Hopeful also approved of the soundness of Christian's answer; so there was a great silence among them. Mr. By-ends and his company also staggered and kept behind, that Christian and Hopeful might outgo them. Then said Christian to his fellow, If these men cannot stand before the sentence of men, what will they do with the sentence of God? And if they are mute when dealt with by vessels of clay, what will they do when they shall be rebuked by the flames of a devouring fire?

Demas

Then Christian and Hopeful outwent them again, and went till they came at a delicate plain, called Ease, where they went with much content; but that plain was but narrow, so they were quickly got over it. Now at the further side of that plain, was a little Hill called Lucre, and in that hill a silver mine, which some of them that had formerly gone that way, because of the rarity of it, had turned aside to see; but going too near the brink of the pit, the ground being deceitful under them, broke, and they were slain; some also had been maimed there, and could not, to their dying day, be their own men again.

Then I saw in my dream, that a little off the road, over against the silver mine, stood Demas (gentleman-like) to call to passengers to come and see; who said to Christian and his fellow, Ho! turn aside hither, and I will show you a thing.

CHRISTIAN. What thing so deserving as to turn us out of the way to see it?

DEMAS. Here is a silver mine, and some digging in it for treasure. If you will come, with a little pains you may richly provide for yourselves.

HOPEFUL. Then said Hopeful, Let us go see.

CHRISTIAN. Not I, said Christian, I have heard of this place before now; and how many have there been slain; and besides that, treasure is a snare to those that seek it; for it hindereth them in their pilgrimage. Then Christian called to Demas, saying, Is not the place dangerous? Hath it not hindered many in their pilgrimage? (Hosea 4:16-19).

DEMAS. Not very dangerous, except to those that are careless (but withal, he blushed as he spake).

CHRISTIAN. Then said Christian to Hopeful, Let us not stir a step, but still keep on our way.

HOPEFUL. I will warrant you, when By-ends comes up, if he hath the same invitation as we, he will turn in thither to see.

CHRISTIAN. No doubt thereof, for his principles lead him that way, and a hundred to one but he dies there.

DEMAS. Then Demas called again, saying, But will you not come over and see?

CHRISTIAN. Then Christian roundly answered, saying, Demas, thou art an enemy to the right ways of the Lord of this way, and hast been already condemned for thine own turning aside, by one of his Majesty's judges (2Ti 4:10); and why seekest thou to bring us into the like condemnation? Besides, if we at all turn aside, our Lord the King will certainly hear thereof, and will there put us to shame, where we would stand with boldness before him.

Demas cried again, That he also was one of their fraternity; and that if they would tarry a little, he

also himself would walk with them.

CHRISTIAN. Then said Christian, What is thy name? Is it not the same by the which I have called thee?

DEMAS. Yes, my name is Demas; I am the son of Abraham.

CHRISTIAN. I know you; Gehazi was your great-grandfather, and Judas your father; and you have trod in their steps (2Ki 5:20; Mat 26:14, 15; 27:1-5). It is but a devilish prank that thou usest; thy father was hanged for a traitor, and thou deservest no better reward. Assure thyself, that when we come to the King, we will do him word of this thy behaviour. Thus they went their way.

By this time By-ends and his companions were come again within sight, and they, at the first beck, went over to Demas. Now, whether they fell into the pit by looking over the brink thereof, or whether they went down to dig, or whether they were smothered in the bottom by the damps that commonly arise, of these things I am not certain; but this I observed, that they never were seen again in the way. Then sang Christian—

*By-ends and silver Demas both agree; One calls, the other runs, that he may be
A sharer in his lucre; so these do Take up in this world, and no further go.*

Now I saw that, just on the other side of this plain, the Pilgrims came to a place where stood an old monument, hard by the highway side; at the sight of which they were both concerned, because of the strangeness of the form thereof; for it seemed to them as if it had been a woman transformed into the shape of a pillar; here therefore they stood looking and looking upon it, but could not for a time tell what they should make thereof. At last Hopeful espied written above the head thereof, a writing in an unusual hand; but he being no scholar, called to Christian (for he was learned) to see if he could pick out the meaning; so he came, and after a little laying of letters together, he found the same to be this, “Remember Lot’s wife.” So he read it to his fellow; after which they both concluded that that was the pillar of salt into which Lot’s wife was turned, for her looking back with a covetous heart, when she was going from Sodom for safety (Gen 19:26); which sudden and amazing sight gave them occasion of this discourse.

CHRISTIAN. Ah, my brother! this is a seasonable sight; it came opportunely to us after the invitation which Demas gave us to come over to view the Hill Lucre; and had we gone over, as he desired us, and as thou wast inclining to do, my brother, we had, for aught I know, been made ourselves like this woman, a spectacle for those that shall come after to behold.

HOPEFUL. I am sorry that I was so foolish, and am made to wonder that I am not now as Lot’s wife; for wherein was the difference betwixt her sin and mine? She only looked back; and I had a desire to go see. Let grace be adored, and let me be ashamed, that ever such a thing should be in mine heart.

CHRISTIAN. Let us take notice of what we see here, for our help for time to come. This woman escaped one judgment, for she fell not by the destruction of Sodom; yet she was destroyed by another, as we see she is turned into a pillar of salt.

HOPEFUL. True, and she may be to us both caution and example; caution, that we should shun her sin; or a sign of what judgment will overtake such as shall not be prevented by this caution; so Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with the two hundred and fifty men that perished in their sin, did also become a sign or example to others to beware (Num 26:9, 10). But above all, I muse at one thing, to wit, how Demas and his fellows can stand so confidently yonder to look for that treasure, which this woman, but for looking behind her, after (for we read not that she stepped one foot out of the way) was turned into a pillar of salt; especially since the judgment which overtook her did make her an example, within sight of where they are; for they cannot choose but see her, did they but lift up their eyes.

CHRISTIAN. It is a thing to be wondered at, and it argueth that their hearts are grown desperate in the case; and I cannot tell who to compare them to so fitly, as to them that pick pockets in the presence of the judge, or that will cut purses under the gallows. It is said of the men of Sodom, that they were sinners exceedingly, because they were sinners before the Lord, that is, in his eyesight, and notwithstanding the kindnesses that he had showed them, for the land of Sodom was now like the garden of Eden heretofore (Gen 13:10, 13). This, therefore, provoked him the more to jealousy, and made their plague as hot as the fire of the Lord out of heaven could make it. And it is most rationally to be concluded, that such, even such as these are, that shall sin in the sight, yea, and that too in despite of such examples that are set continually before them, to caution them to the contrary, must be partakers of severest judgments.

HOPEFUL. Doubtless thou hast said the truth; but what a mercy is it, that neither thou, but especially I, am not made myself this example! This ministereth occasion to us to thank God, to fear before him, and always to remember Lot's wife.