

FOLLY OF IGNORANCE



And I slept, and dreamed again, and saw the same two pilgrims going down the mountains along the highway towards the city. Now a little below these mountains on the left hand, lieth 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 parts he came, and whither he was going*.

The country of Conceit, out of which came Ignorance.

Christian and Ignorance have some talk together.

2. ***Ignor.*** Sir, I was born in the country that lieth off there, a little on the left hand, and am going to the Celestial City.

3. ***Chr.*** But how do you think to get in at the gate for you may find some difficulty there?¹

4. ***Ignor.*** As other good people do, said he.

5. ***Chr.*** But what have you to shew at that gate, that the gate should be opened to you?

¹ In the character of Ignorance you have an exact description of our decent moralists, who expect heaven as a reward of their good works. But such are ignorant of their utter impotency to all good, and of the necessity of conversion to God, through faith in Christ without which all their good works are unprofitable. These are the greatest enemies of true faith.

6. ***Ignor.*** I know my Lord's will, and have been a good liver: I pay every man his own; I pray, fast, pay tithes, and give alms, and have left my country, for whither I am going.

The grounds of Ignorance's hope.

7. ***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.

8. ***Ignor.*** 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 men in all our parts, do so much as know the way to it; nor need they matter whether they do or no, since we have, as you see, a fine pleasant green lane, that comes down from our country the next way into it.

He telleth every one he is but a fool.

9. When *Christian* saw that the man was wise in his own conceit, he said to *Hopeful* whisperingly, *There is more hopes of a fool than of him*. And said moreover, *When he that is*

Prov. 26.
12.

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Eccles. 10.
3.

*How to carry
it to a fool.*

a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one, that he is a fool. 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 of 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.*

10. **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.*

Matt. 12. 45.
Prov. 5. 22.

11. 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 on the side of the hill. 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-away* that dwelt in the town of

*The
destruction
of one
Turn-away.*

*Apostasy.*² 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.* †

NOTES:

² Awful is the state of the apostate from the ways of God; his guilt and condemnation are more aggravated, his spirit is more hardened, his outward conduct for the most part more abandoned than if he had never known the way of righteousness. He has crucified the Son of God afresh, put him to open shame, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. He is given up as a reprobate mind, and to the power of Satan, and goes on from bad to worse, till he falls into the hand of the living God.