

A DREAMER AND HIS DREAM

or

THE STORY OF JOHN BUNYAN AND
"THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS"

By

ALFRED P. GIBBS

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Choruses for Young and Old," "Through the
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"A Primer on Preaching," "Scrip-
tural Principles of Gathering,"
"God's Good News," Etc.*

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PREFACE

An attempt has been made in this volume to re-emphasize the sound Scriptural teaching of "The Pilgrim's Progress" especially to young people, and this is the sole explanation of its existence.

Of its many imperfections none is more conscious than the author, but if it leads the reader to a more diligent study of this immortal allegory, and also of Bunyan's other words, especially "Grace Abounding" and "The Holy War," he will feel amply repaid.

The contents of this book appeared originally in a series of weekly articles in "Words of Love," a Sunday School magazine, and are now sent forth in this complete form with the earnest desire that the blessing of God may attend its reading, and that, as a result, many may be led to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and thus begin the pilgrim journey; and that those who are already treading the celestial highway, may be encouraged to go on for God and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever and ever.

Chicago, Ill., 1930

A. P. G.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

The kind reception given to the first edition has been an encouragement to issue this new edition which has been revised and printed in larger type.

May "the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich" be upon it, and use it to the glory of Him "Who loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His Own blood"!

Chicago, Ill., 1935

A. P. G.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

A third edition has become necessary, and is sent forth in larger type, but with the same desire for the glory of the Son of God and the blessing of the reader.

Chicago, Ill., 1944

A. P. G.

A Dreamer and His Dream

CHAPTER ONE

It may be well, before we consider the story of "The Pilgrim's Progress" itself, to devote a little time to the history of the man who wrote this book, which has been classed, by those well qualified to judge, as the next best book to the Bible. His biography is as interesting as his book, and we shall see later how much of his own life's history has been woven into the texture of his immortal allegory.

Sometime during the year of 1628 John Bunyan was born in the little village of Elstow, near to the town of Bedford, in Bedfordshire, England.

We know very little of his parentage except that his father was a tinker to trade and extremely poor. John Bunyan, in later years wrote: "My descent was of a low and inconsiderable generation, my father's house being of that rank that was the meanest and the most despised occupation of those days." We may be thankful that God is "no respecter of persons," and that He has declared in His word that: "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the *weak* things of the world to confound the things which are mighty . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:26-29). It matters not how poor a person may be, or how lowly a station he may occupy in life; the moment that person becomes a Christian he is made a child of God, an heir of God and a joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ. God delights to "raise the poor out of the dust, that He

mighty set him with princes" (Ps. 113:7, 8).

His education was such as the poor people of that day could afford. He had scarcely grasped the elements of reading and writing before he was taken from school in order to help his father mend pots and pans, and thus aid in keeping the ever lurking wolf from the door. He soon forgot the little he had learned, and tells us that he quickly "developed into an idle boy, who for swearing, lying and blasphemy had few, if any, equals in the neighborhood." He was a ringleader in the village wickedness. He cared nothing for God's word or for God's beloved Son; neither gave he any time or thought to his fearful state before God, or where he would spend eternity. He desired his own way, and nothing pleased him better than when he was indulging in all sorts of sinful pleasures.

This is a graphic description of the natural condition of all. We may not have gone to the same lengths in sin as did John Bunyan, but the fact remains that God in His word has declared: "There is *none* righteous, no, not one: there is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable; there is *none* that doeth good, no *not one* . . . for there is *no* difference: for *all* have *sinned*, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10-12, 13).

In his young days Bunyan enlisted as a soldier and took part in the civil war which was then raging between the Parliament and the King. At the siege of Leicester he was amongst those who were ordered to make an assault; but another man obtained permission to go instead of him, and was killed in the early part of the battle. This caused him to think seriously about eternal things but, like many others, he tried to put off these thoughts by plunging deeper into the pleasures of sin, until he became notorious in the countryside for his ungodliness and vice. Time and time again God spoke to him. He was rescued from drowning many times, and on other occasions was delivered from death in a

remarkable way; but, in spite of all these tokens to him of God's love, forbearance, goodness and long suffering, they failed to bring him to repentance. (Rom. 2:4). He seemed determined to go his own way, and sought, as do many today, to become "the master of his fate and the captain of his soul."

At the early age of nineteen John Bunyan was married. All his wife brought to him in the way of wedding presents were two good books that her father, a very poor but godly man, gave her. These books were entitled "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," and "The Practice of Piety." By this time he had practically lost the faculty of reading; so his wife encouraged and helped him to read these two excellent books, and persuaded him to turn over a new leaf and adopt a religious life. This John Bunyan seemed quite willing to do, and each Sunday went twice to church, repeating the responses and singing with the best of them; but all the while clinging to his sins. He had to learn, like all others who expect to be in heaven, that reformation and a religious profession are no substitutes for the new birth or regeneration. The words of our Lord Jesus, addressed to the most moral and religious man of his day, need to be carefully pondered: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be *born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

It was the custom in those days, as alas, it is in these days, to make Sunday a mixture of the professed worship of God and the pleasures of sin. There were two services at the church, after which the same bells summoned the parishioners to take part in May games, Whitsun ales, morris dances, and various other sports. One day a minister of the gospel preached on the evils of desecrating the Lord's day, and showed how wrong it was to use this day, that commemorated the rising from the dead of the Lord Jesus, as a time for sport. This awakened conviction in the soul of Bunyan and he determined he would no longer indulge in these things on Sunday. This resolve, however, soon evaporated and, after a good dinner,

he eased his conscience and went out as usual to his games.

Scarcely had he taken his bat to play a game called "cat," when suddenly he seemed to hear a voice from heaven saying: "Wilt thou *leave* thy sins and go to heaven; or *have* thy sins and go to hell?" It seemed to him that Christ was standing face to face with him, and was about to visit well-deserved judgment upon him. He left the game for a few moments to think upon these things. As thoughts of a holy God crowded into his mind he argued thus: "If I am already damned, I may just as well be damned for *many* sins as for a *few* sins!" Having made this fearful decision he returned to his game again, and none of his companions guessed, for one moment, what an awful transaction had taken place. Thus did Bunyan again reject the gracious warning of the God Who loved him.

Before we judge him for this, let us each ask himself the question: "Have *I* ever rejected God's message to me?" Think of the many times that God has spoken to you through some preacher of the Gospel, or a gospel tract, or through the death of some relative and friend, or the faithful teaching of a godly Sunday School teacher; or a narrow escape from death. Have you heeded the message and turned to the Savior; or, like Bunyan, hardened your heart and turned away your ears from the truth? Give heed to God's voice which speaks to each one saying: "Because there is wrath, *beware* lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job 36:18).

Bunyan's conscience, however, was ill at ease. In spite of his rejection of the heavenly warning, God graciously continued to deal with him and sought to bring him to repentance. One day while he was cursing and swearing with some of his ungodly companions, one of the worst women in the village passed by, and hearing his fearful language rebuked him in these words: "You ungodly wretch! I never heard such swearing in my life! You are enough to spoil all the youth in the whole town!" This

rebuke put him to shame, coming as it did from a woman of evil reputation. Once again he determined to become a better man and give up his outwardly vile conduct for the future. This he did, and everyone wondered at the change and spoke well of him, both to his face and behind his back. This pleased him considerably, and he became quite proud of his achievement. He practiced self-denial, thinking by so doing he would gain more favor with God. He gave up dancing, much as he secretly yearned for it. He used to be very fond of bell ringing, but this also he denied himself, thinking by so doing he would please God more. He would often stand outside the belfry tower and look longingly within as his companions rang the bells; but he was afraid to enter, lest God, in judgment, should cause one of the bells to fall from its place and kill him. One day this thought came to him: "Supposing the whole tower were to fall and crush me! I should certainly be doomed!" This settled him and he stayed away from the place altogether and, in the eyes of his neighbors, became the model of what a Christian should be.

Alas for John Bunyan! He was making the mistake that many, both before and since his day, have made. He was attempting to get right with God on the ground of his own good works, resolutions and religious exercises; whereas God distinctly and plainly declares in His word that "By *grace* are ye saved through faith . . . *not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 8, 9); and again, "*Not by works* of righteousness which we have done, but according to His *mercy* He saved us" (Titus 3: 5). God does not save sinners because of any good works they have done or ever will do; but because of the work His beloved Son accomplished on Calvary's cross, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree and died in the stead of the sinner, and thus satisfied every claim of God against the guilty one. He who seeks to be justified by his own deeds, thus ignores and rejects the only provision that God, in His grace, offers to the lost and guilty children of men.

In fact, John Bunyan himself described his condition during this period in these words: "I was nothing but a poor, painted hypocrite. I did all I did, either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of by men. I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope." Let us see to it that we do not fall into this same error but, owning our own need as lost and guilty sinners, trust in the finished work of God's dear Son, and receive Him in simple faith to be our own personal Savior. Thus, being justified by faith, we shall have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).

However, better times were ahead, for one day as he was walking through the streets of Bedford, crying as his trade demanded: "Pots and pans to mend!" he saw a few poor women sitting at a door. They were conversing with each other in such a manner as Bunyan had never heard before. They spoke with assurance of their soul's salvation; of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus; of their knowledge of Him as their personal Savior; and, at the same time, of the wretchedness of their state by nature. This was all new to him, and he listened with great attention to their conversation and sought their counsel as to his own state before God.

This they gladly gave to him from the word of God, and showed him, first of all, his need of a Savior. They unfolded to him, for the first time in his life, that all his own righteousnesses, in which he was trusting, were in God's sight like filthy rags, (Isa. 64:6); that, in spite of all his efforts to please God, it was utterly impossible, for "they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God" (Rom. 8:8). They pointed out to him that "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, he had not submitted himself to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). In other words, Bunyan was shown his true state in God's sight, that of a helpless, lost and guilty sinner.

Next, they pointed out God's wondrous love in giving His only Son, Who came from heaven to seek and save the lost and Who, on Calvary's cross, suffered, the Just One

for us the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He was shown from the Bible that all the work necessary for the salvation of lost and ruined sinners, had been accomplished, to God's entire satisfaction, through the sacrifice of Christ. Then they pointed out to him God's "easy, artless, unencumbered plan" of salvation through faith in Christ's finished work and acceptance of Him as Savior and confession of Him as Lord of his life (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Thus John Bunyan, for the first time in his life, heard the gospel of the grace of God. In this manner God used the testimony of these simple, but godly women to arouse him to a sense of his need of salvation. He now began to read the Bible for himself and, by this means, was confirmed in his belief that what the women had told him was true. The result of his reading the Scriptures produced within him a deep sense of his guilt and sin. As he saw how holy, just, righteous and sin-hating God was, and how grievously he had sinned against Him; he began to realize that his sins were a heavy burden, and that he was deserving only of God's righteous wrath, condemnation and banishment from His presence for all eternity. I wonder how many of my readers have discovered this for themselves. Perhaps some are trying, like Bunyan, to make themselves fit for God's presence by their good works and religious observances, and ignoring that God has said: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Rom. 3:20). Remember that,

"Your fair pretensions must wholly be waived,
Your best resolutions be crossed;
You never can know yourself to be saved,
Till you own you are utterly lost!"

Bunyan now began to ask questions of these Christian women to which they could give no reply. He was possessed of a very vivid imagination, and what would have satisfied most people utterly failed to give him that peace he was seeking. As fast as one difficulty was solved, another would take its place, until he despaired of ever finding the peace he sought. They advised him to go to their pastor, a man named Mr. Gifford, who knew the

Scriptures much better than they, and he would probably have all his difficulties solved. Thus counselled, Bunyan went to see Mr. Gifford, and was indeed greatly helped by his soberer judgment, and excellent understanding in the word of God. He was told to study the Bible more carefully, and to rest in childlike faith in what he found recorded therein; for only then could he have a sure foundation on which to rest for the assurance of his eternal salvation.

The result of this further study of the holy Scriptures was to more deeply impress him with the sense of his guilt; and he would often retire to the privacy of his little attic and cry to God for mercy. It seemed to him that the more he strove to obtain peace, the deeper his distress became; and the nearer he sought to get to God, the further God seemed to depart from him. He had to learn, as every one else who is saved, that “not saved are we by trying, from self can come no aid,” and that:

“It is not thy tears of repentance nor prayers,
But the blood that atones for the soul;
On Him then Who shed it, thou mayest at once
Thy weight of iniquity roll.
Look! Look! Look and live!”

(Isa. 45:22)

He would often wander into the fields at eventide, where, alone with God, he would cry from the depths of his heart: “What must I do to be saved?” Sometimes he thought he was possessed by a demon. He would have gladly exchanged his life for that of a dog. He regretted the day he had ever been born and was, of all men, most miserable. Sometimes he was tempted to take his own life, but was afraid to do so, because he knew that this would but seal his eternal doom. Truly, there is no trouble like soul trouble: “A wounded spirit, who can bear?” Yet we can thank God for the deep experience through which he passed for, when deliverance came, he was able, in a peculiar measure, to enter into the soul difficulties of others, and thus be of great help to them.

On one occasion, when particularly depressed, the thought came to his mind that he had committed the unpardonable sin, and consequently could not possibly be saved, however greatly he desired to be. In this frame of mind, he consulted a very old Christian and confided this new difficulty to him; but to his dismay, this Christian, who ought to have known better, informed him that probably he was right and had indeed committed the unpardonable sin! Thus did Bunyan prove the truth of the Scripture which says: "Vain is the help of man!" The effect of this experience was to drive him more and more to the sure and certain word of God that alone can make the sinner "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Perhaps God is dealing with you, my reader, at this present moment, and showing you your need of regeneration, and your helplessness to save yourself. God does this in order that you may be brought to an end of yourself, and led to see that your only hope, for 'time and eternity, is in the work that the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). A man once said it took him forty years to learn three things: first, that he could do nothing to save himself; second, that God did not want him to do anything to save himself; third, that the Lord Jesus had finished, fully and completely, and to God's entire satisfaction, *all the work necessary to save each lost and guilty sinner* who simply trusted in Him.

It was while Bunyan was passing through this period of deep exercise of soul, that a book came into his possession that proved to be great help to him. It was Luther's "Treatise on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians." This book so nearly described his condition, difficulties, doubts, and fears that he thought Luther must have written this book for his special benefit! He valued this book next to his Bible, and spent hours reading it and comparing it very diligently with the Bible. It is no wonder, that when Bunyan was saved by the grace of God, he was mightily used of God to help others in the

way of life. God has said: "Ye shall seek Me, and ye shall find Me, when ye shall search for Me with *all your heart*." If God is dealing with you now, give yourself no rest or peace until you have been brought into the assurance of salvation through faith in the crucified and risen Son of God.

It is difficult to say just when the soul saving truth burst into the darkened heart of John Bunyan, for the Devil, with his fiery darts of doubt, was ever ready to quench any little light that he received from the word of God. His book, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," records his experiences and should be read by all desiring a fuller knowledge of his conversion. In this autobiography, he speaks of an occasion when he asked his wife if she remembered a Scripture which had in it the words: "But ye are come unto Jesus." She could not recall it, so he began to read his New Testament until he came to those words in Heb. 12:22-24, "But ye are come . . . unto Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." As he read these words a flood of divine light seemed to fill his soul as he realized that the Lord Jesus Christ was the alone Savior and Mediator; and that salvation, full, free and eternal, was the possession of all who trusted in Him and rested in His finished work. He believed the glad message, and that night could scarcely sleep for the joy that filled him because of the conscious sense of the forgiveness of his sins. But even after this wonderful experience, he was sometimes plagued with many doubts, and often was in the depths of despair.

Deliverance came, fully and finally, one day as he was passing through a field. As he was musing, this sentence fell upon his soul: "Thy righteousness is in heaven." With the eye of his soul he saw that the Lord Jesus Christ, at the right hand of God, was his personal righteousness. He perceived that His work on the cross had satisfied God *completely* on his behalf, in token of which He had been raised from the dead and exalted to be a Prince and a Savior. He saw for the first time the glorious truth of

2 Cor. 5:21. "For God hath made Christ to be sin for us, He, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." He discovered that his *good frame* of mind did not make his righteousness any *better*, nor did his *bad frame* of mind make it *worse*; but his righteousness was a *Person*, the One Who had loved him and had given Himself for him and Who was the same, yesterday, today and forever!

All Bunyan's doubts were now dissolved like mist before the rising sun. He was fully and finally delivered from his slavish fears, and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Henceforth he ceased to be occupied with his own realizations, fears and doubts, and looked away from himself to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Would that this were the experience of each reader! We need to remember, however, that all people do not have the same difficulties, doubts and fears, nor the same depth of conviction of sin that Bunyan had. But all who are really and truly saved have taken their place before God as lost and guilty sinners; and, as such, have believed that Christ bore their sins, took their place at Calvary, and died in their stead. They have accepted Him as their personal Savior, and have the assurance from the word of God that they are saved. Rom. 10:9-10; John 3:16; 5:24; Acts 16:30, 31; Eph. 2:8, 9. Read these Scriptures for yourself and rest not until you can truthfully sing:

"O happy day that fixed my choice,
On Thee my Savior and my God;
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And spread its raptures all abroad—
Happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away!"

CHAPTER TWO

Bunyan now began to confess Christ as his Savior and Lord before men. He saw from the word of God that believers were baptized upon their profession of faith in Christ, so he desired to thus obey the Lord in baptism. He was accordingly immersed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47; 16:30-33; Rom. 6:3-11, etc.) In the town of Bedford was a company of Christians who were termed "Nonconformists" or "Dissenters," because they would not conform to the rules and regulations of the State Church. These people believed, and rightly so, that the word of God was the alone rule for faith and practice. With this company Bunyan associated himself, and he speaks of the great joy he experienced as he sat at the Lord's table with the Lord's people and remembered the Lord's death till the Lord should come again (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:7). Ponder carefully these scriptures. If you are a child of God you will surely be glad to hear the voice of the Shepherd (John 10:27) and obey Him in these two ordinances that He instituted for all who have trusted Him as their Savior.

The experience through which John Bunyan had passed now stood him in good stead. He began, as opportunity afforded itself, to speak of the Lord Jesus to both saved and unsaved. He did not rush ahead of God, but gradually blossomed out into a clear, rugged preacher of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. The calls to preach became so many that, after prayerful consideration, he decided to give up his tinkering and devote his whole time to the ministry of God's word. Hundreds came to listen to him from all classes and conditions of society. The simple folks loved to hear him preach because he used language they could understand; and his rough eloquence, born of sincere love for their souls, attracted and held their attention. The rich and educated, too, used to come and hear "the preaching tinker" as they called him; and they marvelled at the ability of one who

had received so little education. Many souls professed to be saved under his ministry, and the children of God were strengthened in the faith and "grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

It so happened, however, that there was a law in England in those days which decreed that none but ordained ministers, or those intending to be, should be allowed to preach. Bunyan denied the right of the State to say who should, or who should not preach. He believed that he had "the mighty ordination of the pierced hands" (John 15:16) and this, to his mind, was all that was necessary. He had his commission from the Commander-in-Chief Who had said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). In obedience to his Lord he went everywhere preaching the gospel to all who would gather to listen.

This brought him to the notice of the authorities, and complaint was lodged against him but, due to the brethren rallying to his support, the prosecution was dropped. Then came the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne of England, and such ministry as Bunyan's was forbidden under severe penalties. For a time Bunyan used to disguise himself in order to pass unnoticed to the place where he was to preach; but at length he decided to dispense with all disguise and boldly preach the word, preferring to "obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:24). He was asked to preach in a little village called Samsell and accepted the invitation. His friends warned him that the authorities knew of it and would take measures to stop him; but he went forward boldly, determined that nothing should make him afraid. He had the promise of the presence and power of his Lord, so why should he be afraid what man should do unto him?

Accordingly he went to Samsell to conduct the meeting. After he had opened the service with prayer, he read this text: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" While he was proceeding to speak from it a policeman walked in and, producing a warrant, arrested him on the spot.

He was taken before a Justice of the Peace named Wingate, who tried to get him to promise to cease preaching, and to find sureties who would pledge themselves to see that he kept his word; but this Bunyan resolutely refused to do. Accordingly, Justice Wingate on the 13th of November, 1660, committed him to the Assizes when he would be brought up for trial.

A few weeks later, when the Assizes met, Bunyan was brought before the court at which sat the following judges: Keeling, Chester, Blundale, Beecher and Snagg. His indictment was then read: "John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, laborer, hath devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear the divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventions, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of the kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord, the king."

Without any opportunity being given for the examination of any witnesses for the defence he was found guilty, and Judge Keeling savagely and bitterly condemned him as follows: "Hear your sentence. You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following; and at three month's end, if you do not submit and go to church to hear divine service and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm; and if, after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, you must stretch by the neck for it!" Bunyan's reply is worthy of notice. Unafraid and unawed by these judges that had so unjustly condemned him, he replied, "If I were out of prison today, I would preach again tomorrow, so help me God!"

We may well thank God for such men as John Bunyan. The horrors of the prison, together with the separation from his wife and children, did not move his dauntless soul. It is to such men, that we, in later years, are indebted for the religious liberty we now enjoy. These men valued a good conscience with God more than a good reputation amongst their fellows. They valued the liberty of heaven more than their freedom of movement on

earth. This is the brand of Christianity that the world respects. Alas! There are too many so-called Christians who are intimidated by men's opinions and threats, and suit their speaking to the likes and dislikes of their audiences, and who love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Verily, such have their reward, but not in heaven. Under God; it is due to such men as Bunyan that we are now permitted to preach the gospel freely, none daring to make us afraid. Let us ever remember that these privileges we enjoy have cost the blood and tears of thousands who gladly suffered torture, imprisonment, banishment and death rather than deny the faith, or besmirch their good conscience before God. May it be ours to rightly value and follow their noble example.

The prison where he was confined was as different from modern prisons as night from day. It was a dark and damp place, situated on the level of the river Ouse. It was often over-crowded, making it one of the most foul and loathsome places of confinement in England. In this fearful place Bunyan spent twelve long years. For some reason the sentence of banishment was never put into effect. His case caused quite a little trouble and came into the courts on several occasions; but this did not help him, as the judges seemed afraid to execute their sentence, yet had not the courage to release him, so he was confined in Bedford jail for that lengthy period. Just think of it! Many of my readers are not yet twelve years of age and yet, for this period of time, Bunyan was "a prisoner of Jesus Christ," all because, like Daniel, he had "dared to have a purpose firm, and dared to make it known!" •

Someone has said: "Your Christian experience is worth just what it costs you." It cost the apostle Paul the loss of all things and ultimately his own life. It cost Bunyan twelve years in a foul den. What has ours cost us? What have we suffered for the sake of the Gospel?

*"Must we be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize and sailed through
bloody seas?"*

At any time, had he desired it, Bunyan could have obtained his liberty by promising not to preach any more; but he was made of sterner stuff than this, and counted it an honor to suffer for "Christ's sake and the gospel's."

Let us not forget that he had a wife and children. How were his family to live if the bread winner was in prison? Bunyan was able to earn a little money by tagging shoe laces, but this was not sufficient to keep them. How then were they taken care of? The same God that gives to the birds of the air their nests, and the flowers of the field their clothing, saw to it that during the whole time of His servant's imprisonment, all their needs were supplied, and they wanted for no good thing. Truly, God's promises are not mere empty words, but real truths on which His children may confidently depend. "My God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). Upon these "exceeding great and precious promises," Bunyan rested in simple faith; and proved, as thousands of others, that "those who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true."

Whilst his enemies were rejoicing in the fact that they had quieted his dissenting voice by putting him in prison, they little realized they were fulfilling the purposes of God. They were yet to discover that "God worketh all things together for good to them that love Him, who are the called according to His purpose"; (Rom. 8:28) and that "God makes the wrath of His enemies to praise Him!" It is quite true that Bunyan was shut out *from* man, but it is equally true that he was shut up *to* God Who, in a marvelous way, opened up the Scriptures to him. As a result of much Bible study and prayer, the wonderful story of "The Pilgrim's Progress" was written while he was in Bedford jail. This accomplished, and is still accomplishing, a work for God that never could have been done had Bunyan been at liberty.

The prison, as it were, became God's university in which John Bunyan was educated in the will of God through the word of God, and thus enabled of God to pen this masterpiece of English literature, this greatest of all

allegories, which has been used to the awakening and salvation of many thousands of precious souls. May God, in His grace, be pleased to use it to your salvation if you have not yet become a Christian! Cowper was right when he sang:

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the deep,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread
Are great with mercies, and shall break
In blessings on your head!”

Through the many years that have passed since it was written, an ever increasing number of Christians have found through its pages, comfort in trouble, guidance in difficulty and deliverance from the bondage of legalism. Indeed, the whole Church has been edified, as in this beautiful allegory, the Christian life from start to finish has been so graphically pictured.

“The Pilgrim’s Progress” was not published until 1678, six years after Bunyan had been set at liberty. The manner in which he, together with a large number of other Nonconformists, as they were called, obtained his freedom is interesting. Some time after the return to the throne of Charles II, who, during the Civil war had fled to France, he was waited on by a deputation of Quakers, one of whom was a man named Carver. This man reminded the king that during his flight from England after the battle of Worchester, he had aided him in his escape to France, and had been the one who had carried him

ashore from a small boat when a privateer had been on the point of capturing him. This the king recalled, and the old sailor interceded with him for the Nonconformists in English prisons and said: "I am now come to ask thee to be kind to my brethren in their distress, as I was kind to thee in thine."

The king replied that Carver might renew his request another time and he would consider it. Without any delay, Carver, joined by other Quakers, appealed for the liberation of all Nonconformists of every name, and the result was that on September 13, 1672, Bunyan, together with many others was set at liberty. Mr. Gifford having died, he was asked to become the pastor of the little congregation in Bedford. After much prayer he decided to do so and thus resumed his preaching of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. He was again mightily used to the ingathering of many precious souls and the upbuilding of believers in their most holy faith.

Thus did God deliver His servant after all His purposes concerning him had been accomplished. "The Pilgrim's Progress" had been written. Bunyan had learned the deep things of God in the solitude of his prison cell, and he came out of it a better man. He knew God better; he knew the Lord Jesus more intimately; he knew the Scriptures more fully, and had learned, like Paul, "in whatsoever state he was, to be content." Truly, "walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," when those stone walls enclose a child of God; and the iron bars one whom the Son of God has made free. John Bunyan's spirit was unfettered, his conscience was free, and his tongue became the pen of a ready writer. Thus did Bedford jail, dark, dank, and dreary, become the birthplace of the next best book to the Bible.

The first edition of "The Pilgrim's Progress" was published in 1678 by Nathaniel Ponder and the title page read as follows:

"The Pilgrim's Progress From This World To That Which Is To Come. Delivered under the similitude of a

dream. Wherein is discovered the manner of his setting out, his dangerous journey, and safe arrival at the desired country. By John Bunyan. Licensed and entered according to order. London, printed for Nathaniel Ponder at the Peacock in the Poultry near Cornhill 1678."

Its popularity was immediately assured. Old and young, educated and uneducated, churchmen and dissenters alike, purchased the book, and within ten years twelve editions had been published. Before Bunyan died, over 100,000 copies had been sold in England alone. Since then, it has been translated into over one hundred languages and has a sale second only to the Bible. Monuments have been erected to the memory of Bunyan but, like all monuments, they will crumble and fall. The greatest monument to his memory is the book he has written, a book which lives in the hearts and lives of thousands who, through the reading of its pages, have been brought to see their need of the Lord Jesus Christ, and led to accept and confess as Savior and Lord, the One whose precious blood secured their pardon.

Bunyan also wrote many more books, the greatest of them being "The Holy War," a book every Christian should read. Lord Macauley declared that had "The Pilgrim's Progress" not been written, "The Holy War" would have been the greatest allegory in existence. Amongst his other books, "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman" and "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" are the best known. In all, Bunyan wrote and published about sixty volumes.

During the sixteen years that elapsed between his release and death, Bunyan was a busy man. Crowds flocked to hear him preach. Sometimes he would have 1,200 people by seven o'clock on a winter morning. Everywhere he went, the people would crowd to hear him, many being unable to gain admission to the building. He had only one message: the all sufficiency of the living Word—Christ, and the "written word"—the Scriptures, to meet all the needs of both sinner and saint. These truths, preached in the power of the Holy Spirit of God,

were blessed to the salvation and edification of thousands of souls.

John Bunyan died in the year 1688. The cause of his home-call was as follows. A young man had run away from his home, thus incurring the displeasure of his parents. The young man desired a reconciliation and asked Mr. Bunyan if he would try to use his influence to bring this about, which he promised to do. Accordingly, Bunyan started out on horseback to see the parents of this boy and secured their promise to receive him back. On the return journey he was caught in a heavy rainstorm which gave him a severe chill. Due to his enfeebled constitution, the result of his prison experiences, this developed into something more serious, and after a comparatively short illness, the "Immortal Dreamer," as he was called, passed into the presence of the Lord he had loved and served so well. As his friends stood weeping at his bedside, watching their beloved friend's life slowly ebbing out, Bunyan rallied himself and exclaimed: "Weep not for me! We shall meet, ere long, to sing the new song and remain everlastingly happy, world without end!"

The place of his death was Snow Hill and his body was laid in the Bunhill Fields, the Nonconformist burial ground. There it awaits that time when his spirit, which is already with Christ shall, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, be reunited to a changed and glorified body, according to the power whereby the Son of God is able to subdue all things unto Himself, (Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-17). The plain inscription of the tombstone is "John Bunyan, Author of 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' Born 1628. Died 1688." May the book he wrote, as we study its pages, become to us the blessing it has been to so many before! May his example of Christian fortitude and sincere devotion to the Lord Jesus, be to each reader an inspiration and encouragement, not only to begin the "journey from this world to that which is to come;" but, during that journey, live for, and glorify the One Whose precious blood makes possible "The Pilgrim's Progress!"

The story itself is told as though it were a dream and is written in allegorical form. That is, it is similar to a parable, or an earthly story with a spiritual meaning. The Christian life, from the beginning to its end, is described as a journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Each person who appears in the story has a name that exactly describes his character. Thus a person named Mr. Good will be a good man, and a person named Mr. Bad, a bad man, and so on. Carefully remember the names of those who are introduced into this allegory, and it will give you a key that will help to unlock its treasures, and will explain many things that would otherwise be difficult to understand.

The story is full of scriptural truth, and large portions of God's precious word will be quoted. May the good seed of the holy Scriptures find an abiding place in the heart of the reader; for we are assured from the Bible that those who are children of God have become such by being "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1: 23).

The Pilgrim's Progress is a most important book for three reasons. First, because it tells us about the most important journey that anyone can go on, namely, a journey from this life to the life to come—from time to eternity. Second, because it reveals the most important persons that will be met on that journey, and warns or counsels us as to how we should receive or reject their instructions. Lastly, this book unfolds the most important subject in this world, namely, salvation from the *penalty* of sin (which is eternal separation from God) through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ; salvation from the *power* of sin through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer; and salvation from the very *presence* and *possibility* of sin, through being at home with Christ at the end of the journey.

CHAPTER THREE

Now let us begin the story itself. It opens upon a man whose face is turned from his own home. His clothes are all in rags and a heavy burden is upon his back. As he reads from a book which he holds in his hands, he cries as though his heart would break: "What must I do to be saved?" Who is this man? Where does he live? Why are his clothes so ragged and filthy? What is that burden he carries on his back? What book is he reading, and why does he cry: "What must I do to be saved?" All these questions naturally arise in our minds; so we will answer them in the order they are asked.

The man's name is Graceless, or one who is without the grace of God in his heart. It is quite true that he is called "Christian" in the "Pilgrim's Progress;" but, further on in the story, when this pilgrim reaches a beautiful castle and is asked what his name is, he replies: "My name is Christian, but it used to be Graceless." We will therefore call him "Graceless," for this name suits him much better in the state in which he is.

Graceless is a picture of everyone by nature. If, up to this time you have never been born again, then this is *your name* in the sight of God. God's word nowhere suggests that all people are the children of God; but, on the contrary, it states that all are by nature the children of wrath, without God, without Christ, without hope, without peace, without excuse, and without life (Eph. 2:1-3, 11-13). Only those who are "the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus" have any right to address God as: "Our Father, which art in heaven."

There are many, in these days, who imagine they are Christians because they live fairly decent lives, or have submitted to themselves various religious rites and ceremonies, or have joined some religious denomination. These people have never seen their true condition before God, and consequently have never availed themselves of the great provision He has made for lost and guilty

sinners through the salvation secured by His beloved Son at Calvary's Cross. God, Who knows all things, has declared in His word: "There is *none* righteous, *no, not one*: there is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable; there is *none* that doeth good, *no not one* . . . There is *no difference*: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10-12, 23). Thus the name of each one who is still unsaved is "Graceless" or "Sinner." When a person is prepared to own his name as "Sinner," he will discover that the gospel is indeed good news, for it reveals the wondrous truth: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save—sinners!" (1 Tim. 1:15).

The town in which he lived was the City of Destruction. This is a picture of this world which is "guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19), and which "lies in the arms of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). This world will one day be visited in judgment by the Lord Jesus, Whom it once despised, rejected and crucified. All who reject Him as Savior will discover, in a future day, that: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Thus this world, to those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel by believing on Christ, is a City of Destruction; for the wrath of God abides, even now, on all who reject His beloved Son (John 3:36). This world-system, with all its vanities, pleasures, lusts, treasure, pride and popularity is governed, not by the God of heaven, but by the god of this age, the Devil. He has "blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest they should believe, and the light of the gospel should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). Those who receive God's Son to be their Savior and Lord are described as being "not

of this world," although they live in it. At the coming of the Lord Jesus, they shall be taken out of this scene before the judgment of a holy God falls upon it.

The filthy rags with which Graceless was clothed is an illustration of what our own righteousnesses are like in God's sight. Doubtless Graceless had thought, as many others, that he was just as good as the next man. He prided himself on his good works, his good resolutions, his good character, and his religious observances; but God mercifully opened his eyes to see the truth of what His word declared, namely, that "We are *all* as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as *filthy rags*" (Isa. 64:6). Notice this carefully. It does not say "All our badness," but "All our righteousnesses, (that is, the good deeds and moral character in which many are trusting for their salvation) are filthy rags" in His sight.

God is a holy, righteous and sin-hating Person, and only *perfection* can please Him. Anything short of perfection is sin; and inasmuch as all the garments of our character are spotted and stained by sin, therefore these garments in His sight are filthy rags. No person clothed in filthy rags can possibly enter the gates of heaven, for nothing that defiles can be admitted there. But what we cannot supply, God has provided. He has made possible a spotless robe of perfect righteousness for every unclean sinner who will own his need and receive His Son, the Lord Jesus, as his Savior. This righteousness, or rightness before God, was purchased by the precious blood of Christ, Who died for sinners and rose again for their justification. God offers this robe of righteousness unto all, and puts it upon each person that believes on His Son (Rom. 3:22). Are you still clad in the filthy rags of your own righteousnesses, or have you been clothed with the righteousness of God?

What about this burden? This is a picture of the burden of sins that God sees on each person who is unsaved. God's word describes sin as a burden that weighs down the soul with guilt. In Isaiah 1:4 we read: "O people *laden with iniquity*." The Lord Jesus, when He

came to this earth said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are *heavy laden*, and I will give you rest." What is sin? Sin is the transgression of the law, a breaking of God's commandments. The holy law declared: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27). The failure to obey these commands is *sin*, and inasmuch as *all* have failed to keep God's holy and righteous law, therefore *all* have sinned and come short of His standard (Rom. 3:23).

These sins, which mount up day by day, become like a great burden of guilt to those who are honest with God and themselves. Perhaps some unsaved person will object: "I do not feel the burden of sin, so therefore am not the lost and guilty sinner that Graceless was." Let us answer the objection. Supposing a heavy load was placed on a *dead* person; would he feel it? "No," you reply, "for he is dead." Suppose this heavy load was placed on a *living* person; would *he* feel it? "Yes," you reply, "for he is alive." So it is with many today. God tells us that all by nature are *dead* in their trespasses and sins; consequently they do not feel their burden of sin and guilt. When the Spirit of God commences to arouse a person from that condition, the burden of sin is realized. Think of all the bad thoughts you have entertained in your mind; of all the bad words that have escaped your lips; of the bad deeds you have committed during your lifetime. Remember that all these are *sins*, and are *your own sins*. God knows them all and hates every one of them, though He loves the sinner.

The greatest sin possible to man is that of unbelief, or the rejection of God's dear Son as Savior. It is the despising of the One who died that God's righteous claims might be met and salvation, full, free and eternal made possible for the vilest sinner who will believe. Is the reader guilty of this terrible sin of unbelief? This is the sin of which the Spirit of God convicts men. The Savior said of His work: "When He (the Spirit of God) is come,

He shall convince the world of sin . . . because they believe not on Me" (John 16:8-11).

Poor Graceless' burden was so strongly fastened to him that all his attempts to remove it were unavailing. Neither his good works, his tears, his prayers, his friends, nor even his pastor could remove it. Perhaps the reader, even now, is seeking to lighten the burden of his guilt by his own efforts. All such attempts are doomed to failure, for only God can remove the load of sins and give the guilty conscience peace. Have you realized your true condition yet, and owned yourself to be what God says you are—a lost, guilty, helpless and burdened sinner?

The book Graceless held in his hands was the Bible—God's word. It was the reading of this book that had opened his eyes to see himself as he really was. The Bible is a light that exposes our sins; a mirror that reflects our thoughts; a sword that cuts right to the heart. It shows us that the Scripture is true when it says: "The heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). God's word is like a camera, or, better still, like an X-ray machine, that brings to light the hidden things of darkness.

If we would see ourselves as we really are, we must read the word of God. It will tell us the truth about ourselves. It will reveal our sinfulness, rebellion, pride, and desperate need of salvation. It will also show us the wonderful provision that God has made for that need in the gift of His Son, Who was made sin for us; He, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Is it any wonder that this man, realizing his fearful plight and his utter inability to deliver himself, cried from his heart: "What must I do to be saved?" Would that every reader, awakened in the mercy of God to see his need, would re-echo his cry and seek earnestly and sincerely to be saved from the consequences of his sins. Thus has John Bunyan graphically described the lost and ruined state of all by nature. Happy is that person who sees, in Graceless, a picture of

himself; for the next best thing to knowing oneself to be saved, is to know oneself to be lost!

In this condition, poor Graceless went home to his wife and children. He tried hard to keep them from seeing his distress of soul, but he could not keep silent long. At length he began to unburden the thoughts of his heart to them: "O, my dear wife," he exclaimed, "and you, my dear children, I am undone by reason of a burden that lies hard on me. Moreover, I am certainly informed that this city will be burned with fire from heaven, and both myself and you shall miserably come to ruin, unless some way of escape can be found whereby we may be delivered." When he had said this, his wife and children were amazed, and thought he had lost his reason by thinking too much on eternal things; so they got him to bed as soon as possible, thinking that a night's rest would clear these notions from his mind. But alas! instead of sleeping, poor Graceless could only spend the night in groans and tears. Like David, he had to cry: "Day and night Thy hand is heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. 32:4). The more he contemplated the holiness of the God against Whom he had so grievously sinned, the greater he perceived his guilt to be. As he thought of the wages of sin, which is eternal death, he groaned aloud.

In the morning they asked him how he did, but all he could reply was: "Worse and worse." He sought once more, from the Bible, to point out to them their sin and consequent danger, but they began to be hardened and deride him for his folly. They would often neglect him entirely so that he began to retire privately to his room. He would often wander in the fields alone, sometimes reading, sometimes praying and would cry out in his misery. Graceless learned that little sympathy could be expected, even from those near and dear to him by the ties of nature, in his deep soul distress. He was brought to realize that "the heart knoweth his own bitterness" (Prov. 14:10) and that conviction of sin is a matter between the individual soul and the God against Whom he

has sinned. Truly there is no trouble like soul trouble. If any who read this are passing through a similar experience, remember that: "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," and that Jesus said: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:12, 13).

One day, as he wandered in the fields, he opened his Bible and read these words: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). At this he cried aloud the same pitiful cry: "What must I do to be saved?" Hearing this sincere plea for salvation, a man named Evangelist came to him who inquired what he wanted and why he cried thus, to which Graceless answered: "Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, and I find I am not willing to do the first nor able to face the second." "But why not," inquired Evangelist: "seeing this life is attended with so many evils?" Graceless replied: "Because I fear this burden upon my back will sink me into hell." Evangelist next inquired: "Then why do you stand still?" Graceless answered: "Because I know not whither to go." At this, Evangelist gave him a roll of parchment on which was written these words: "Flee from the wrath to come!" (Matt. 3:7). Graceless then inquired, "Whither must I fly?" Evangelist, pointing with his finger said: "Can you see yonder Wicket Gate?" Graceless replied: "No!" "Then do you see yonder shining light?" next asked Evangelist. Graceless replied: "I think I do." Then Evangelist said: "Keep that light in your eye, and follow its direction, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The meaning of this is perfectly simple. Evangelist is a picture of a true child of God, who, having been delivered from the burden of sins himself, is in the position to tell others the way of salvation. The Lord Jesus commands all who know and love and trust Him to: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). What a privilege and honor it is to point

a poor, sin-burdened soul to the Lamb of God "that taketh away the sin of the world!" You will notice that Evangelist did not attempt to take off Graceless' burden—only God can do this when Christ is received into the heart by faith. The Wicket Gate is a picture of the willingness of Christ to receive sinners. He said: "I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The shining light is an illustration of the word of God which is described as "A lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path" (Ps. 119:105). As the sinner follows the light of the Scriptures, it will bring Him to the One of Whom the Bible speaks, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. He it was who loved us and gave Himself a ransom for our salvation (1 Tim.2:5-6).

Graceless then did what every sin-burdened soul should do. He began to run in the direction of the light that Evangelist had indicated. No sooner, however, had he started to flee, than his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but Graceless, remembering his need, placed his fingers in his ears to shut out their entreaties and, as he ran, he cried: "Life! Life! eternal life!" Others of his neighbors did their best to prevent him from leaving the City of Destruction. They used ridicule and laughed at him for being such a fool. Others threatened him with violence if he did not give up the idea; but Graceless had wisely stopped his ears to shut out the pleas of his family, and the jeers and threats of his onetime friends.

What a true picture this is of the difficulties of starting out on this greatest and most important of all journeys! The Devil will see to it that all his opposition will be exerted against the poor sinner who seeks to escape from his clutches. He will seek, by all the means in his power, to prevent the soul from being saved; for well he realizes that once a person trusts Christ as his Saviour he has lost him forever. He will use friends and enemies alike to keep the sinner from turning from his evil ways. All sorts of obstacles will be forthcoming. There will be ridicule, scorn, reasoning and active opposition, even

from one's own family. The truly anxious soul, however, will not be deterred by these things. Like Graceless he will pay no heed to anyone or anything that would prevent him from fleeing from the wrath to come. It is important to notice that Graceless did not try to make himself any better before he started out. He did not try to mend his rags or attempt to cleanse himself from his filthiness; but just as he was, in all his sin and need, he fled towards the gate Evangelist had pointed out to him. May it be yours to say:

“Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, Whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O, Lamb of God, I come!”

CHAPTER FOUR

Two men, however, determined to run after him and bring him back by force. Their names were Obstinate and Pliable. They soon caught up to him and Graceless, seeing them, inquired why they had followed him. They replied they had come to take him back to the place where he belonged. But Graceless answered: "That can by no means be, for you dwell in the City of Destruction, the place where I was born, and where, if you die, you must be lost eternally. Nay, my friends, come along with me." "What!" objected Obstinate: "and leave all our friends and comforts behind us?" "Yes," replied Graceless: "For all the pleasures of the City of Destruction are not to be compared for one moment with the glorious things laid up for them that love God. If you go with me, you shall share in them, for there is enough for all, for the same Lord is rich unto all them that call upon Him." At this Obstinate inquired: "What are the things you seek, since you leave all the world to find them?" Graceless rejoined: "I seek an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, which is reserved in heaven for all who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

When Obstinate heard this he said to his companion: "Come, Pliable, and let us leave this fool to his folly." Pliable, however, impressed by the earnestness and sincerity of Graceless replied: "Don't revile, for if what he says is true, the things he seeks are better than ours, and my heart inclines to go with him." "What?" roared Obstinate: "more fools still! Come, be ruled by me, and let us go back." But Graceless, seeing Pliable's hesitancy, warmly invited him to accompany him on the pilgrim journey, so Pliable consented. At this, Obstinate, as angry as could be, returned to the city of Destruction.

As they journeyed together, Pliable eagerly questioned his companion as to how far the Celestial City was, and what things he would get when he arrived there. Grace-

less, as best he could, tried to describe the glories of that eternal home where all who love the Lord Jesus shall one day be gathered together. He told him of the endless kingdom and of the everlasting blessedness all its inhabitants enjoyed. He spoke of the crowns of reward to be given to the faithful, and of the garments of glory in which the redeemed should eternally shine. He described the perfection of "that land that is fairer than day," where there is no more crying or sorrow; where there is no more sickness, pain, or death; and where all tears shall forever be wiped away. He spoke of that beautiful city that needs not the light of the sun or moon, but where the Lamb of God is the light thereof. (Rev. 21).

Pliable interrupted him every now and again by exclaiming: "Well said! And what else shall I get?" Thus encouraged, Graceless continued to point out the wonderful sights he would behold in that glorious place. He described the seraphims and cherubims whose glory would dazzle the eye. He spoke of the holy prophets, and of the noble army of martyrs who had laid down their lives for the sake of the gospel; of the thousands upon thousands and thousands of thousands of the redeemed, all robed in purest white, who would sing the great hallelujah chorus; of the myriads of angels who lived only to do the bidding of Him Who sits upon the throne; and is the Center of all heaven's glory—the Lamb of God, Who had loved them and given Himself for them. As Pliable listened rapturously to this graphic portrayal of the glories of heaven he exclaimed: "The hearing of this is enough to ravish the heart! How glad I am that I came with you! Come, let us hurry up and get there quick!" Graceless replied: "I cannot go very fast because of this burden on my back."

Whilst they were thus busily talking about the beauties and glories of heaven, they did not notice that right in front of them was a great pond filled with mud, which was called the Bog of Despondency. Into this mire they fell headlong and were soon covered with the filthy mud and Graceless, because of his burden, began

to sink. Then cried Pliable: "Ah, neighbor Graceless, where are you now?" Graceless replied: "I do not know." Pliable then began to be offended and cried angrily: "Is this the happiness you have been telling me about? If, at the beginning of the journey, we are thus treated, what will it be like before we reach the journey's end?" With these words, he gave a desperate struggle or two and, climbing out of the side of the bog nearest to the City of Destruction, he made his way back to his own home and Graceless saw him no more. On his return to the city some called him wise for coming back, some called him a fool for ever starting out; while others mocked him for his cowardice. Thus Pliable sat sneaking amongst them until, at last, tongues ceased to wag, and he then returned to his old time pursuits, companions and the pleasures of sin.

John Bunyan has given us, in these two men, a splendid illustration of the difference between a real, earnest, sin-convicted seeker of salvation; and a mere empty, sentimental, and shallow inquirer. You will have noticed that Pliable had no burden of sin. All he was interested in was what he was going to get. Graceless, on the other hand, started on the journey because he realized he was a guilty sinner, needing deliverance from the burden of his sin. Pliable is thus a picture of a mere, empty professor of religion; who, when the slightest opposition shows itself, is immediately offended and throws up the profession he had made and goes back again to the pleasures of the world. He very often terms himself a "backslider," when he has never really been a "frontslider!" It is this type of person who brings shame and disgrace to Christianity.

Graceless, however, kept his face turned away from the city of Destruction and struggled as best he could to get across the bog; but all his struggles only sank him deeper into the mire, and he began to despair of ever getting out alive. Just as he was about to give up hope, a man named Help came to the edge of the bog and inquired who he was and what he was doing there, so

Graceless explained how he had fallen in. Then Help asked him why he had not looked for the steps across the bog, but Graceless replied: "Fear followed me so hard that I fled." Then said Help: "Give me your hand." Thus advised, Graceless placed his hand in Help's hand, and was lifted up out of the quagmire.

The Bog of Despondency, as its name suggests, is a picture of the desponding or sorrowful fears and doubts that fill the mind and soul of the anxious sinner, and sink him deep into despondency, doubt, darkness and despair. These fears and doubts, suggested by the Devil, combined with the evil reasonings of the sinner's own wicked heart of unbelief, all unite to discourage and dismay the burdened soul. Satan will often suggest to the sinner that he is too bad to be saved or, failing this, that Christ will not receive him even if he does come to Him. If this does not succeed he tells the sinner that he will not be able to hold on, even if Christ does receive him. How many a poor soul, bowed down with the weight of his sins, is kept from trusting Christ because of these lies of the Devil!

Help is a picture of the promises of God which are at the disposal of all in such difficulty. Inasmuch as Graceless had to grasp Help's hand in order to be lifted out of the bog, so the sinner must grasp the promises of God by the hand of faith if he is to be delivered from his despondency, doubt and despair. If Satan suggests to the sinner that he is too bad to be saved, then here is a promise for him to grasp: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*" (Luke 19:10). If the evil one is whispering that Christ will not receive the sinner, then this promise will avail to deliver: "Him that cometh to Me, (Jesus said) I will in *no wise cast out*" (John 6:37). If there is any doubt as to the keeping power of the Lord Jesus, then this promise that Christ made should be grasped: "I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall *never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand*" (John 10:28). If these, and many more exceedingly great and precious promises are laid hold of

in simple faith, the sinner will be taken out of the miry clay of his own fears, and put on the solid rock of God's assuring word.

As Graceless proceeded on his way to the gate, guided by the light, he saw a man coming to meet him whose name was Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, who lived in the town of Carnal-Policy. When they met, Mr. Worldly-Wiseman asked: "Where are you going in such a burdened manner?" Graceless replied: "I am going to the Wicket Gate to be told how I may be rid of this heavy burden that is upon me." Mr. Worldly-Wiseman next inquired if he would like some good advice, to which Graceless replied he would, providing it was really good. His new acquaintance now proceeded to ask him who had sent him on his journey. When Graceless informed him of Evangelist's counsel, Worldly-Wiseman waxed indignant and declared that Evangelist was a dangerous and troublesome man; and that the way he had directed him was wrong, as the mud of the bog of Despondency could testify. He dolefully predicted that there was worse yet in store for him if he persisted in following the light.

He then inquired of Graceless how he had come to realize that he had a burden of sin. When Graceless replied by saying it was through the reading of the Bible, Worldly-Wiseman, with a knowing look remarked: "I thought so, and it has happened unto you as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, get the same ideas as you have, which unman them to such an extent that they start on desperate ventures to obtain what they know not." Continuing in an oily, smooth and self-confident tone, Worldly-Wiseman advised Graceless to reject Evangelist's counsel and turn from the light he had been told to follow, and go to a friend of his named Mr. Legality who lived nearby. He assured him that this man would give him the best advice as to how he could be eased of his burden and live in a respectable fashion.

Alas for poor Graceless! Taken in by the fair speech and apparent sincerity of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, he turned his feet from the way that led to the Wicket Gate,

took his eyes off the light he had been asked to follow, and made his way in the direction of the residence of Mr. Legality or Lawyer, who lived near to a mountain called Sinai.

In this incident John Bunyan has given us a graphic illustration of what is occurring, even now, in the life of many a poor sinner. Awakened to a sense of guilt through the reading or hearing of the word of God, the sinner is directed by some Christian to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only door through Whom pardon, peace and life may be obtained. While on the way to Christ, he is met by some person who has never been born again by the Spirit of God, and is consequently ignorant of God's way of salvation; yet this person seeks, guided by the wisdom of this world, to advise sinners what best to do! It is thus a case of the blind seeking to lead the blind, and the result is disastrous to both. We are told in the Bible that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and that: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). Let us never forget that "The preaching of the cross is to them *that perish*, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). Beware of any man, however well educated, eloquent and kind, who seeks to turn a sinner from Christ, the only Way, and from the Bible, the only guide, to another way that Scripture condemns.

But let us return to Graceless. Presently he reached Mount Sinai; but what a fearful sight it presented. It seemed to him as though the whole mountain was about to topple over and crush him. From its summit, which was encapped with clouds, came great tongues of fire as if eager to devour him! His burden of sins seemed to increase in weight, and poor Graceless began to be exceedingly afraid at this awe-inspiring sight, and regret he had ever listened to the advice of Worldly-Wiseman. As he thus stood, expecting nothing but death, he saw Evangelist coming towards him, who inquired, "What are you

doing here? Are you not the man I found crying outside the City of Destruction?" "Yes," replied Graceless faintly. "Then what are you doing here, seeing I directed you to the Wicket Gate?" next inquired Evangelist. Graceless then told him all that had befallen him and of his meeting with Worldly-Wiseman and the wrong advice he had so foolishly taken.

Evangelist then sternly rebuked him for his folly and sin in having turned from the path of faith to the way of human wisdom. He said: "Stand still, that I may shew thee the words of God. 'See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape; if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven,'" (Heb. 12:25). At this, Graceless fell at his feet as dead crying: "Woe is me, for I am undone!" But Evangelist took him by the right hand and said: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. Be not faithless but believing." These words caused Graceless' hopes to revive again.

Evangelist next pointed out to him what evil Worldly-Wiseman had done to him and said: "He is called Worldly-Wiseman because he only desires the doctrines of this world. This he does because it saves him from the cross, with its offence to the world. You must, therefore, hate three things in this man's counsel: first, his turning thee out of the way; second, his attempt to render the cross distasteful to thee; third, his putting of your feet in the way that leads only to death." Evangelist then began to speak more fully of these three things and showed Graceless the real meaning of Mount Sinai.

He unfolded to him that Mount Sinai illustrated the holy and righteous law that God had given, through Moses, to the children of Israel long ago. This law not only revealed the righteous requirements of God's holiness, righteousness, justice and truth; but, at the same time, exposed man's sin, for sin consisted in coming short of, or transgressing this holy law. He pointed out to him from the Scriptures that: "By the deeds of the law there

shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). He showed him that Mr. Legality was a person who vainly imagines he can get right with God by his attempts to keep the law. In other words, he seeks to get right with God on the ground of his own good works, good thoughts and good words. Such a person endeavors to teach others this and thus leads them into the bondage of legalism, and that condemnation which the law imposes on all who fail to keep it in its entirety.

When Evangelist had concluded his speech, he called to the heavens for confirmation of the truth he had uttered. From the mount there came in words of thunder: "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to *do them*'!" (Gal. 3:10).

Graceless was now in a lamentable condition. He saw how sinful and foolish he had been in attempting to gain favor with God by trying to keep a law that he had already broken thousands of times. He realized, as never before, the holy character of the God against Whom he had so grievously sinned. His eyes were opened to the fact that by God's holy and righteous law he was condemned, for he had not kept it. He therefore, began to cry out most pitiably: "Is there any hope? May I now go back? I am sorry I ever listened to the counsel of Worldly-Wiseman, but may my sin be forgiven?" To this Evangelist sternly replied: "Your sin is great, yet the man at the gate will receive thee, for he has good will to men. Only take heed that thou turn not aside again, lest thou perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little" (Psa. 2:12). Thus comforted, Graceless thanked Evangelist for his timely help and, paying no heed to anyone else, walked back until he came to the place from whence he had been turned aside. Once more he saw the light of the word of God, and walked in the direction of the Wicket Gate.

Let us also learn the lesson that Graceless was taught: that no person can ever be justified before God by keeping the law. In the first place, no one has ever kept it fully and completely, except the Lord Jesus Christ; and secondly, because no one can ever keep it. It may be asked, "Why then, was the law given?" We reply in the words of Scripture: "The law entered, that the offence (or sin) might abound" (Rom. 5:20). In other words, it is the law that reveals our sinfulness and, therefore, our need of cleansing from those sins.

We may well thank God that the same Bible which reveals to us our guilt and need, also tells us of God's remedy for that need in the Person and through the work of our blessed Savior. He fulfilled all God's law in His life, yet met all the claims of that law against us (who had broken it) by His death, leaving nothing for the sinner to do to be justified before God but to rest in His finished work and accept Him as Savior and Lord. It is written: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but *only through faith* in Jesus Christ; even we believed on Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and *not by the works of the law*: because by the works of the law shall *no flesh* be justified" (Gal. 2:16 R. V.) Turn from Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary, and from your own works to Christ's finished work! Through Calvary's work alone can salvation, full, free and eternal, be obtained by faith in God's Son!

Presently Graceless saw the Wicket Gate to which he had been directed. When he came closer he saw written over it the words: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He knocked therefore, saying as he did:

"May I now enter here? Will He within
Open to sorry me, though I have been
An undeserving rebel? Then shall I
Not fail to sing His lasting praise on high."

In response to his knock a person named Goodwill came to the door who asked him who he was and what he

wanted. To this Graceless replied: "Here is a poor burdened sinner. I come from the City of Destruction, but am going to Mount Zion that I may be delivered from the wrath to come. I would know therefore, sir, since I am informed that by this gate is the way thither, if you are willing to let me in." To this speech Goodwill replied by saying: "I am willing with all my heart." Then opening the gate, he held out his hand in welcome. As Graceless grasped his outstretched hand and was about to cross the threshold, Goodwill gave him a pull that jerked him across the threshold. When Graceless inquired the reason for this action, Goodwill informed him that Satan had erected a strong castle within bowshot of this gate. From the top of this castle, he and his servants shot arrows at pilgrims, if perchance he could prevent them from escaping his clutches by crossing the threshold of the door. When Graceless heard this he exclaimed: "I rejoice and tremble!"

We may well pause here and learn the lesson of the Wicket Gate and the Devil's arrows. The Wicket Gate, as we have already mentioned, is a picture of the willingness of the Lord Jesus to receive any sin-burdened sinner who comes to Him. There is only one way to God, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the way, the truth, and the life; and no man can come unto the Father but by Him." All who come to the Father through Him, owning their sin-burdened state, are assured of a welcome, for the Savior said: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in *no wise* cast out."

The Devil, however, is ever ready to hinder the sinner from coming to Christ, and uses all his wisdom, subtlety and power to keep the sinner in his clutches. Let us name some of the arrows that Satan is using today. Perhaps he is even now using them to deter the reader from being saved. First, there is the arrow of *Laughter*. When Satan sees a person about to trust the Lord Jesus and be saved, he fits this arrow into his fearful bow and, shooting it at the pilgrim whispers: "Listen! If you come to Christ and confess Him before others as your Lord and

Savior, you will be laughed at, ridiculed and scorned and lose your popularity with your friends and associates.

Alas, many have been kept from crossing the door of decision for Christ, as a result of this arrow, and have been lost when they might have been saved. Lost through a companion's laugh! It has been well said that thousands of people have been laughed into hell, but not one has yet been laughed out of that fearful place. Are you going to allow this arrow to have any effect on you? Supposing your friends *do* laugh at you. It cannot hurt you. Remember, the world mocked, derided, despised and rejected God's Son. Are you any better than He? Listen to His own words: "He that is ashamed of Me and of My words in this wicked and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father and the holy angels." Would you like the Lord Jesus to be ashamed of you? Then do not be ashamed of Him. Let not the arrow of Laughter keep you from accepting Him as Savior and confessing Him as your Lord before others.

Next, there is the arrow of *Pleasure*. This terrible arrow has done great execution. As Satan shoots this, he suggests to the sinner that if he becomes a Christian he will not have any more fun or pleasure, that all the joy of life will be gone and he will be miserable all the while. Many have listened to and believed this lie of the Devil, but the Lord Jesus said regarding Satan: "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." There are thousands of people today who seem to imagine that to become a Christian is to be a weakling, and that the child of God is a sad and sorry specimen of humanity! They imagine that because the Christian does not indulge in what *they* are pleased to call "pleasures," that therefore he has no pleasure. This is absolutely false!

There is no pleasure in the world to be compared with the pleasure that God gives His children—not the pleasures of this world, with its pomp, fashion, popularity, power, lust and sin; but the real genuine pleasure and

joy that comes through the knowledge of sins forgiven; of perfect peace with God; of the knowledge of Christ as Savior and Friend; of the happy fellowship with the One Whose friendship never changes and Whose love never dies; of the assurance of a home eternal in the heavens, and of the joy that springs from the heart that has Christ within. If you are not a Christian *you* are the one to be pitied. The believer alone can sing:

“I tried the broken cisterns, Lord, but ah, the waters
failed;
E’en as I stooped to drink they fled, and mocked me as
I wailed!
Now none but Christ can satisfy; none other Name
for me,
There’s love and life and *lasting* joy, Lord Jesus found
in Thee.”

Remember; God doesn’t want people to “give up” things in order to be saved. He wants them to take something infinitely better than what they now have. Are you going to allow the arrow of Pleasure to rob you of your soul?

But now comes the most dangerous arrow of all. We will call it “*Plenty of Time*.” This is Satan’s most successful weapon. He will allow the sinner, if necessary, to believe all the truths of the gospel. He will whisper: “O, yes, it’s quite true that you are a lost sinner. It’s quite true that if you die in that state you will be eternally lost. It’s quite true that God loves you and gave His Son to die for your sins. It’s quite true that Christ, by His death and resurrection, has accomplished all that is necessary for your salvation. It’s quite true that all you need to do to be saved is to believe the gospel and to accept the Lord Jesus as your own personal Savior—but *there’s plenty of time!* Put it off! Wait a while! Do it tomorrow, or some other time! Wait until you are older, or on your dying bed, and then, like the dying thief, you can be saved at the eleventh hour!”

How many have been deceived by this terrible lie! There are thousands, right now, in a lost eternity who never intended to be there. They put off their soul's salvation to some more convenient season which never arrived. Then death came in, and before they were aware, their eternal doom was sealed. God's time is *Now*. Listen to His word: "*Today* if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart" (Heb. 3:7, 8). "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou *knowest not* what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). Well did the poet sing:

"Fairest flowers soon decay,
Youth and beauty pass away.
Oh, you have not long to stay,
Be in time!
While God's Spirit bids you come,
Sinner, do not longer roam,
Lest you seal your hopeless doom,
Be in time!"

Like Graceless, cross the threshold of the open door and receive the welcome that Christ gives to every guilty, burdened sinner who comes to Him.

CHAPTER FIVE

After Graceless had recounted his experiences to Goodwill, he was taken a little way along the road in order that the true path might be pointed out to him. When they came to a certain place Goodwill said: "Look before you. Do you see this narrow way? This is the way *you* must go. It was builded by the patriarchs, prophets, Christ and His apostles, and it is as straight as a rule can make it." Graceless replied: "Are there no turnings, no windings, by which a stranger may lose his way? To this Goodwill answered: "Yes, there are many ways that butt down upon it, but they are crooked and wide, whereas the true path may always be distinguished by the fact that it is straight and narrow." Then Graceless inquired whether Goodwill would help him off with his burden, but Goodwill told him that he must be content to bear it until he should come to a place where it would fall off without any effort on his part.

As Graceless prepared to continue his journey, Goodwill further informed him that a short distance along the road he would come to a house owned by a person called the Interpreter. He was to knock at the door and tell him who had sent him. He would then be admitted and shown many excellent things that would teach him lessons which would stand him in good stead for the remainder of his journey. Thus advised, Graceless made his way along the straight and narrow path, until he came in sight of the Interpreter's house at which he knocked.

Soon someone came to the door and inquired who was there. Graceless replied as Goodwill had directed him, and asked for the Master of the house. When at length the Interpreter came, he welcomed Graceless with these words: "Come in; I will show thee that which will be profitable to thee." It may be well, before entering with Graceless into the Interpreter's house, to explain of whom He is a picture. The Interpreter is a picture of the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Godhead, Whose sole work

and delight it is to reveal Christ to the pilgrim. The Lord Jesus, just before He ascended to the right hand of the Father, said to His disciples: "It is better for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter (or the Holy Spirit) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16: 7-14). Ten days after the ascension of Christ, this promise was fulfilled. On that day the Holy Spirit came down, and from that time has been in this world to do what Christ said He would do.

The Holy Spirit's first work with the unsaved sinner is to convince him of his sins, and show him his helpless and hopeless state in that condition. He it is that causes the sinner to realize his fearful burden of sin and guilt. If any reader is beginning to see his deep need of the Savior, it is because the Spirit of God is using the word of God to produce this conviction of sin within him. Next, He presents, through the Scripture, God's way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus and His work of reconciliation. He opens the eyes of the soul to see that: "All that was needed to do and to pay, Jesus has done in His own blessed way." When the sinner realizes the glorious truth that God laid all his sins on Jesus when He hung on Calvary's tree, and that Christ's death has eternally satisfied God on his behalf; then the light of the Gospel commences to dawn on him. When, at length, owning himself to be a lost and guilty sinner, he receives the Lord Jesus as his own Savior; that very moment the Holy Spirit enters into him, indwells him, and seals him as God's own child. (Eph. 1: 13-14). This is the new birth. This is what is involved in becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus. (II Cor. 5: 17.) The believer is now said to be "the temple of God," because the Spirit of God dwells

in him. (1 Cor. 3:16.). It has been well put in this way:

“Soon as my all I ventured on the atoning blood,
The Holy Spirit entered, and I was born of God.”

The Holy Spirit's work with the believer is to take the word of God and, through it, lead the child of God into all truth, and especially to glorify the Lord Jesus in all things. How much the Christian needs His divine guidance, His leading and controlling hand! As one has beautifully expressed it:

“Every virtue we possess, and every conquest won;
And every thought of holiness are His alone.”

The Holy Spirit, though unseen to our eyes, is nevertheless just as much a Person as is the Lord Jesus. He is not a mere “influence,” but a distinct Person Who can be grieved, quenched and resisted. (Eph. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19; Acts 7:5). Let us see to it that we do not reject or resist His strivings. May it be ours, as we go through the Interpreter's house, to pay good heed to all we see and hear, and take care that we neither resist nor quench the Holy Spirit as He seeks to impress our hearts with the lessons He would have us learn!

The first act of the Interpreter, after Graceless had entered, was to have a candle lighted, and then asked Graceless to follow Him. This act is full of meaning. The light is an illustration of the Bible: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). It is very important to remember that the Spirit of God only interprets to the child of God what He has already caused to be inspired in the word of God. These are the days of new religions and false cults, all claiming to be revelations from God by the Spirit. How are we to test them? By the *light* of the inspired Scriptures. The Bible is the *complete* revelation from God. Nothing can be added to it or taken away from it, and God Himself declares: “To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is *no light* in them” (Isa. 8:20). We can therefore un-

hesitatingly reject any teaching that does not have the full support of all the word of God.

The first scene to which Graceless was conducted was the picture of a man with a grave countenance. His eyes were lifted up to heaven; the best of books was in his hand; the word of truth was upon his lips; the world was behind his back; he stood as though he pled with men, and a crown of gold hung over his head. When Graceless inquired what this picture represented, the Interpreter told him that it was a full length portrait of what a real Christian should be. What a searching lesson this is for all who profess to be believers on the Lord Jesus! It is one thing to *profess* to be a Christian, but another thing to *prove*, by the life lived, the reality of having been regenerated by the Spirit of God. Christ said: "By their *fruits* ye shall know them," and this applies to Christians as to everyone else. Let us look at the picture a little closer, and test ourselves by it to see whether we are real, or merely imitation Christians.

You will notice that this man's face was turned heavenward. This teaches us that a true believer in the Lord Jesus will be a heavenly minded person, because he has been born from above, (John 3:3) and is going to dwell eternally above. In the meantime, while living in this world, his citizenship and all he holds dear, is in heaven. Thus the Christian is more interested in heavenly things than in earthly things. (Phil. 3:21, R. V. Col. 3:1-2.)

Next, notice that the best of books, the Bible, was in his hand. The true child of God will love, revere and study the word of God. Like David, he will testify: "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. 119:72). He will say: "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). He will exclaim: "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). The word of truth was upon his lips, and this indicates that he not only studied God's word, but that he also sought to tell it to others.

The world was behind his back. The Christian should be recognized by the fact that though he is *in* this world, he is not of it; and that he is obedient to the scripture which says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world" (I John 2:15, 16). He should be able to say like Paul: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). The real Christian thus turns his back upon all the vanities of the world and its lusts.

Now notice what he was doing. He was pleading with men. The really born again person counts it the greatest privilege of his life to present the Person and work of Christ to others. He gladly confesses Christ as his Lord and loves to show forth, to sinners far and near, the praises and virtues of Him Who has brought him out of darkness into His marvelous light. In other words, he obeys the command of his Savior Who said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Last, but by no means least, the crown of gold over his head signifies that the faithful Christian is looking forward to that glad day when, at the coming of his Lord and Savior, he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. It will be ample compensation for all the trials and difficulties of life's path when he hears Christ's: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

Would it not be well for each professing Christian to examine himself in the light of this picture, and ask himself the question: "Am I really what I profess to be? Do unsaved people see by my life that I am a citizen of heaven? Do I really love the Bible? Is His word of truth upon my lips? Have I turned my back upon the

world that crucified and rejected my Redeemer, or am I so mixed up with its pleasures and vanities that no one sees any difference in me? Do I desire and love to speak to others of the Savior, and seek to lead them to Him? Am I looking forward to the coming of the Lord when, at His judgment seat, all my life with its motives and works shall be revealed and rewarded; or shall I be ashamed at His coming?"

The world has no time for half and half Christians, but it does respect the one who backs up, by a godly consistent *life*, what he professes by his *lips* to be. Make sure that you are really a Christian and then seek to so live for Him that "the world will see Jesus in you." Someone has put it thus:

"*You* are living a gospel, a chapter each day;
By the deeds that you do, by the words that you say.
Men read what you *are*, whether faithless or true.
Say—what is the gospel according to *you*?"

The Interpreter next took Graceless by the hand and led him into a large room that was full of dust, for it had never been swept from the day it was built. After they had looked at it awhile, the Interpreter called to a man to come and sweep it clean, so the man began to sweep violently; but all his sweeping did was to cause the dust that was lying thick on the floor to rise in clouds and fill the room, causing Graceless to be almost choked. When Graceless had witnessed the uselessness of such means to clean the room, the Interpreter asked a maid that stood by to sprinkle water on the dust; which, when she had so done, the room was cleaned with pleasure.

Graceless asked the Interpreter to explain the meaning of all this. He was told that the room was an illustration of the heart of man by nature. The dirt, dust, and filth was a picture of the sins that had defiled the whole of man with its corruption. The person with the broom was an illustration of the vain attempt to cleanse the heart by the deeds of the law; but the maid with the

water was a symbol of the gospel with its sweet and precious influences; which, when received into the heart by faith, causes the defilement to be put away, and the heart to become a habitation for the King of Glory.

How briefly and well has John Bunyan illustrated this great truth of the difference between law and grace. The law, which utterly condemns the best of men; and grace, which fully and freely saves the worst! Let us examine this scene a little closer. What a graphic description this is of the human heart by nature! It may not be a pleasing picture, but it is true. God has declared that: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jer. 17:19). The Lord Jesus has given to us His analysis of the heart in these words: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things *come from within* and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). This is the heart of each one by nature, as seen by God. The heart, of course, means that part of our being that is the origin of our thoughts, words and actions. The Scriptures declare that: "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

The man with the broom illustrates the effect of God's holy and righteous law on the heart. When the sinner reads the ten commandments, and sees therein the righteous requirements of God's holiness; there is immediately aroused within him a sense of the sinfulness of his heart. Thus the reading of God's law causes "sin to appear exceedingly sinful," and shows him how vile and bad he really is. At the same time the law does not, and cannot, cleanse him from his sins. God's word speaks of this in Romans 7, where Paul says: "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said: 'Thou shalt not covet'; but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust . . . When the commandment came, sin revived (or

was stirred up) . . . that sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful.”

We emphasize again that the law was given to show the sinner his need of Christ. The law is thus like a mirror that reveals his defilement, but does not cleanse it. It is like a plumbline that shows his crookedness, but does not straighten. It is like a measuring rod or rule, by which he may see how far he has come short of God's standard, but it cannot bring him up to this divine requirement. It is like a weight in the balances of God's scales of righteousness, but it only serves to show that we have all been “weighed in the balances and found wanting.” The law, though “holy and just and good,” *cannot justify* the sinner before God, but can only *condemn* him because he has broken it.

The maid with the water is a splendid picture of the gospel, or the good news, concerning the work accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who bore our sins and died for poor, guilty and unclean sinners. His death on the cross forever satisfied all the righteous demands of the law against us. His resurrection was God's seal of complete approval on His finished work of reconciliation. The Lord Jesus now ever lives to save all who will open their hearts to the gospel message; and, ceasing from all self-effort, will trust themselves implicitly to Him as their own personal Savior. When the Savior has been thus received He cleanses the heart from sin and takes up His abode there. Listen to His Own words: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20). Seek no longer to cleanse your own heart by attempting the utterly impossible task of keeping the law, but

“Just now, your doubtings give o'er;
Just now, reject Him no more;
Just now, throw open the door—
Let Jesus come into your heart!”

He will then do what the law cannot do; for "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

The next scene to which Graceless was conducted was a very strange one. He was taken into a room where two boys were seated. One was named Passion and the other Patience. Passion was very restless and discontented, while Patience sat quiet and content. When Graceless inquired why Passion was so discontented, he was informed that the Governor of the house had promised each of the boys a great treasure at the beginning of next year. Passion did not want to wait until the good pleasure of the Governor, but desired all his good things now, and that was why he was grumbling so much. While Graceless looked on, he saw a man with a great bag of treasure approach Passion and pour at his feet the rich and rare treasures it contained. This bag contained gold, silver, precious stones, worldly pleasures and all those things which the natural man imagines will give him satisfaction. When Passion saw this wondrous display at his feet, he was greatly delighted and began to play with these treasures. Every now and then he would laugh Patience to scorn for preferring to wait until the next year, but, as Graceless watched, a very peculiar thing happened. In a moment, without the slightest warning, all the treasure with which Passion was so gleefully occupying himself, turned into a heap of worthless rags, dust and ashes, so that he had nothing left of all his riches.

At this, Graceless asked the Interpreter to explain the meaning of this scene. He was told that the two boys were figures or pictures of two classes of people in the world. Passion was an illustration of the person who lived for this world alone and for its treasures, pleasures, popularity, pride and lust. Such a person has no time for God or for Christ; neither does he give any thought to his sinful condition or the judgment that awaits the one who dies in his sins. All he lives for is what he can get out of this present life. He spends all his time, talents, wealth,

health and character in trying to satisfy himself with the things of the world. Inasmuch as all Passion's treasure turned to worthless rags and ashes, so death will usher the worldly person into an awful eternity, and he will have to leave behind all those things that occupied his heart on earth.

The Interpreter then went on to point out that Patience, in contrast to Passion, was a picture of a child of God who, having been born from above, and having his citizenship in heaven, was content to wait with patience for that time when the true riches and lasting pleasures should be his eternal portion in the life that is to come. In that glorious Celestial City where the moth and the rust doth not corrupt, and where the thief does not break through and steal, the believer will enjoy, to the full, those eternal riches and pleasures that are the heritage of every born-again person. The Bible assures us that "the things which are seen are temporal (or passing away); but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 1).

This is a needed lesson for all to learn, for these two classes are still in the world today and you, my reader, belong to one or the other. If, up to this time, you have been making plans for this life only, you are like Passion. Though you may possess considerable treasure and enjoy the pleasures, popularity and the fashions of this world; yet remember that the Bible declares that: "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2: 17). A fool has been well defined as "one whose plans all end in this life." Does the plan of your life end with the grave, or does it go beyond and provide for your eternal blessedness? Will the stroke of death take from you all you have, or will death usher you into that glorious place where in "His presence there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures for evermore?" Be wise while you have your health, strength and soundness of mind and heed the Savior's words: "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of

God, and His righteousness; and all these things (that is, the necessary things of life) shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Remember that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). The question that the Lord Jesus asked needs to be carefully pondered: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

How much better off was Patience, who, though he had little of this world's goods, was rich towards God and had great treasure in heaven! Surely it is much better to know one's sins are all forgiven; to enjoy peace with God; to be satisfied with His fellowship; to be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and to look forward with eager expectation to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Who shall take all who love Him into His presence! In heaven there shall be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more sickness and no more death; but unspeakable joy, eternal health and endless glory!

If you are not yet a Christian, you may become one while you read this. Take your place as a lost sinner and believe the good news of the gospel, that Christ died for your sins. Accept Him as your own Savior and confess Him as your Lord. Then like Patience, you will have the peace of God on earth for time, and the glories of heaven for all eternity. Those who live only for this world will have the rags and ashes of a Christless life, the sadness of a Christless death, and the tragedy of a Christless eternity.

CHAPTER SIX

After this, the Interpreter led Graceless into another room where he witnessed a still more remarkable spectacle. He saw a fire burning against a wall, and a man pouring bucket after bucket of water upon it in order to quench the fire; but, strange to say, instead of putting it out, the fire rose higher and higher and became hotter and hotter. This puzzled Graceless very much, so he asked the Interpreter to explain why the fire did not go out. Accordingly his guide conducted him to the other side of the wall, and Graceless perceived that the fire went right through the wall, and that a person stood there pouring oil upon it continually. Not only did this oil prevent the fire from being extinguished, but actually caused it to rise higher and become hotter than before!

Graceless now inquired: "What means this?" The Interpreter replied: "This fire is the work of grace that is wrought in the heart. He that casts water upon it is the Devil, but the Person on the other side of the wall is Christ, Who, with the oil of His grace and intercession, maintains the work He has begun in the heart. Inasmuch as He stands on the other side of the wall, so the child of God finds it difficult to realize how this work of grace is maintained."

What a splendid picture we have here of the believer's security! The moment a person is saved, God kindles within him the fire of grace. This is the new birth, which makes the believer "a new creation in Christ Jesus." Has this event happened in *your* life yet? But no sooner has the fire of grace been kindled than the Devil seeks to put it out. Perhaps he attempts this, first, with a bucketful of *difficulties* and seeks to make the Christian life so difficult that the believer will be willing to give it up. Does this cause the fire to be quenched?—No! He next tries a bucketful of *temptations* which he knows the believer is most susceptible to, so that he will be tripped up and disgrace his profession and the Name he bears. He causes

all sorts of fierce temptations to sweep across the soul. Will this extinguish the fire?—No! Following this, he takes a bucketful of *doubts*; doubts as to the truth of the word of God, doubts of the ability of God to keep, and doubts of salvation, until the child of God is bewildered by these countless perplexities. Does this put out the fire of grace?—No! Lastly, Satan tries a bucketful of *persecutions*. He stirs up the Christian's old time friends against him, and causes his enemies to threaten, until it seems as though he hasn't a friend in the world! Does this quench the fire of grace?—No!

Why does this fire remain unquenchable? It is due to the fact that, unseen to the believer, within the veil of heaven, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Who died for his sins and rose again because of his justification. What is the Lord Jesus doing in heaven? He is doing what the man on the other side of that wall was doing. He is continually maintaining the work He has begun, by His ceaseless intercession for us with the Father. The same One Who died to *save* the believer, ever lives at the right hand of the Father to *keep* him. The Devil may rage, and the child of God may sin, but the blessed Lord Jesus, the great high Priest, is always interceding on his behalf, and thus is continually maintaining the fire of grace He has kindled.

Listen to God's word which declares: "Wherefore He (the Lord Jesus) is able to save them to *the uttermost* that come unto God by Him, seeing *He ever liveth to make intercession* for them" (Heb. 7:25). And again: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it (or complete it) until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Has He begun a good work in you, my reader? If so, you may be certain that He will complete that work. . Perhaps you are afraid to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior because you fear that you will not be able to hold out to the end. Let this beautiful illustration of the keeping power of the Son of God encourage you to trust Him; for it is not the Christian's holding on to Christ that makes

him secure, but Christ's *holding on to him!* Hearken to His Own words: "I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall *never perish, neither* shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:25). Paul could say: "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to *keep* that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

Remember, that when the Lord Jesus is received as Savior and Lord, He also becomes the Intercessor, Advocate, great high Priest and Friend of the believer. Our feelings and experiences may fluctuate, but He remains the same. A believer has well expressed himself thus:

"My love is oftentimes low,
My joy still ebbs and flows,
But peace with Him remains the same—
No change Jehovah knows!

"I change, He changes not,
For Christ can never die;
His love, not mine, the resting place,
His truth, not mine, the tie!"

Trust then in the finished work of the Lord Jesus and accept Him as your Savior; and He will see to it that all who trust Him will be kept eternally secure.

Graceless was next taken into a pleasant place where he beheld a beautiful palace. On the top of this palace many persons were walking, each one of whom was clothed in gold. Graceless then inquired: "May we go in thither?" At this the Interpreter led him to the door of the palace. At the entrance sat a man at a table with ink and pen, ready to take the names of all those desirous of entering. Guarding the door were many men strongly armed, to resist any who should attempt to enter. As Graceless watched, he saw a man of brave countenance come forward and give his name to the man at the table. Then, taking a helmet and sword, he commenced to fight his way through the guards, giving and receiving many

blows, until at last he succeeded in gaining an entrance into the beautiful palace. As he did so, those standing on the ramparts sang most sweetly:

“Come in, come in, eternal glory thou shalt win.”

So he went in and was clothed with the garments of gold. At this Graceless smiled and said: “I think I know what this means.”

Have we, too, learned the lesson of the valiant man? The Palace is a picture of the reward of faithful service. Those that barred the way into the palace can represent all those things that would seek to hinder the Christian from being faithful to his Lord; such as pride, love of popularity, love of wealth and ease, selfishness, fear of man, persecution, shame and such like. All these things combine to prevent the believer from winning the crown promised to the faithful.

We need to distinguish between *gifts* and *rewards*. A gift is that which is offered to us and becomes ours when we receive it; but a reward is something that must be earned. Every believer possesses eternal life as a free gift the moment he receives Christ, for “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6: 23). Every believer, however, will not have the *crown* of life. This is only promised to the one “that endureth temptation” (James 1:12). Again, every believer is clothed with a perfect righteousness given to him by God (Rom. 3:22); but every believer will not receive the *crown* of righteousness. This is the reward of faithful service (2 Tim. 4: 7-8). Once more, each believer will be in glory with his Lord, but not every believer will be given a *crown* of glory. This is given to the faithful shepherd of souls who seeks continually the welfare of the flock of God (1 Pet. 5: 2-4). Lastly, all believers in Christ will be made eternally joyous in heaven, but every believer will not have bestowed upon him the *crown* of rejoicing. This is the soul winner’s reward (1 Thess. 2: 19).

We need ever to remember that "no cross means no crown." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." If we would merit the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" of our Lord; then we must "fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on the life that is life indeed." The Christian life is not a flowery bed of ease; but a fight. It is a warfare against three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. Paul could say at the end of his earthly career: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Remember, only an enlisted person can fight this fight. The unsaved, lost and guilty sinner has no part or lot in this matter. What God requires of the sinner is that he receives, as a free gift, the salvation, pardon and eternal life, purchased by the blood of His dear Son. Then, having received the Lord Jesus, he is enjoined to serve Him faithfully, sincerely, lovingly and obediently, looking for His coming. We need to ponder the solemn words of Christ: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that *no man take thy crown*" (Rev. 3:11). It is possible for the Christian to lose the full reward (2 John 8); for his crown to be taken (Rev. 3:11); to be ashamed at His coming; (1 John 2:28); to miss the abundant entrance (2 Pet. 1:11); to miss the "well done" of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 25:21); to have his works burned up (1 Cor. 3:15); and to be disapproved as a servant (1 Cor. 9:27). May it be the desire and aim of each Christian who reads these pages to so live for and serve the Lord Jesus, that, at His coming, He may give him His commendation and say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It has been well observed that the reward is not to the *successful*, but to the *faithful* servant.

The next scene to which Graceless was conducted was a very sad one. He was shown a very dark room where he saw a man in an iron cage. The man was groaning as

though his heart would break, so Graceless was moved to ask him: "What art thou?" The man replied: "I am what I once was not." Then Graceless inquired: "What wast thou once?" The man replied: "I was once a fair and flourishing professor of religion, both in my own eyes and in the eyes of others. I once was, as I thought, on my way to the Celestial City; but now I am a man of despair, shut up in the cage and unable to get out." With this, the man groaned again.

Graceless next inquired how he came to be in the cage of despair, and the man told him that he had sinned against the light of God's word and the goodness of God; that he had so resisted the Holy Spirit of God that He no longer strove with him; that he had so hardened his heart that he could no longer repent; and that he had yielded to the Devil, and the Devil was now come into him. Graceless asked: "Is there no hope for you? Must you always be kept in this iron cage of despair?" The man sadly replied: "There is no hope at all." Then Graceless, moved with compassion, exclaimed, "Why, is there *no* hope? The Son of God is very pitiful." The man answered: "I have crucified Him to myself afresh. I have despised His Person. I have despised His righteousness. I have counted His blood an unholy thing. I have done despite to the Spirit of grace. Therefore I have shut myself out of all the promises and there now remains to me nothing but dreadful threatenings of certain judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour me as an adversary."

Graceless next inquired how he had brought himself into this fearful state, to which the man replied: "For the lusts, pleasures, and profits of this world, in the enjoyment of which I promised myself much delight; but now everyone of those things bite and gnaw me as a burning worm." "But cannot you repent?" urged Graceless, and the man rejoined: "God hath denied me repentance. His word gives me no hope; yea, He Himself hath shut me up in this iron cage of despair; nor can all the men of the world get me out." Then, clasping his hands

in despair, he cried in notes of agony: "O eternity! eternity! How shall I grapple with the misery that I must meet with in eternity!" Then said the Interpreter to Graceless: "Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee." To which Graceless, awestricken, exclaimed: "God help me to watch and be sober, that I may shun the cause of this man's misery!"

What a terrifying picture this is of the dreadful consequences of continually rejecting the Spirit's striving, and hardening the heart to the message of the gospel of God's grace! There are people today who are in the same condition as this man of despair. They have been to gospel meetings and have heard of their true condition in God's sight: that they were lost and guilty sinners, deserving only the righteous wrath of God. They have heard the wonderful story of God's great love in the gift of His beloved Son, and of the grace of the Lord Jesus Who came to seek and save the lost and guilty sinner. They have heard, time and time again, of the One Who died on Calvary's cross, that all God's righteous claims against the sinner might be met. They have heard that all the work necessary to save the sinner has been done completely and to God's entire satisfaction; and that, because of the finished work of Christ, salvation, full and free is offered to "whosoever will." The Spirit of God has convicted them of their sins, and they have been moved to think of their eternal welfare; but they have continually resisted the strivings of the Spirit, and sought to quench the conviction of their guilt by plunging into the pleasures of sin deeper and deeper, until at last their hearts, long hardened, have become cold and silent, and they no longer have any desire for salvation.

This class of people have no time for the Lord Jesus; no time for the gospel message; no time for the friendly word; no time for the faithful tract distributor; no time for eternal realities. Their hearts, once tender and susceptible to the knock of the Lord Jesus; once greatly

moved at the story of Calvary, are now indifferent, either to the wooings or the warnings of Scripture.

Let this be a warning to the unsaved reader. Do not trifle with the Spirit's dealings. Do not ignore the solemn warnings of God's words, but

“Hark, sinner, while God from on high doth entreat thee,
And warnings, with accent of mercy doth blend,
Give ear to His voice, lest in judgment He meet thee,
The harvest is passing, the summer will end!”

Remember that God said: “He that being often re-proved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov. 29:1). The same sun that melts ice hardens clay. The same gospel that would melt the heart will, if rejected, neglected, and despised, cause that heart to be hardened. How unspeakably sad it will be, after having heard the way of salvation, to have to confess: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!” (Jer. 9:30). Will you not, just where you are and as you are, close in with God's offer of salvation, and accept His dear Son to be your own personal Savior, lest the fate of the man of despair be yours also!

CHAPTER SEVEN

Graceless was now beginning to realize, more and more, the fearful responsibility that rests upon the hearer of the gospel: and what an awful fate awaits the one who dies in his sins after rejecting the offered mercy of God. The man of despair had impressed this fact indelibly on his heart, and he was now anxious to get rid of his burden. The Interpreter, however, had yet another scene for him to witness. He now conducted him into a room where he saw a man rising from a bed. His face was deathly pale, and he was trembling in every limb. Graceless inquired: "Why does this man tremble?" The Interpreter then asked the man to explain to Graceless the cause of his terror, and the man replied: "This night, as I was in my bed asleep, I dreamed, and behold the heavens grew exceeding black, and it thundered and lightened in a fearful way, so that I was in an agony. I perceived that the clouds moved at an unusual rate, upon which I heard a great sound of a trumpet, and saw the Son of Man riding upon a cloud, attended with the thousands of heaven, who were all in flaming fire, as also were the whole heavens.

"Then I heard a voice crying: 'Arise ye dead and come to judgment!' With this, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the dead came forth, and were brought before a great white throne upon which the Son of Man was now seated. A great flame separated the Judge from those who now stood before Him. Then I heard a voice proclaim: 'Gather together the tares, the chaff, and the stubble and cast them into the burning lake.' With this, the bottomless pit opened at my feet, out of which came smoke and coals of fire and hideous noises. Then came another voice which said: 'Gather the wheat into My garner!' With this many were caught up and carried away into the clouds, but I was left for judgment. I tried to hide myself, but could not, for the Judge's eyes of flaming fire were ever upon me. My sins came up before me, and my conscience accused me on every side. Upon this I awakened out of my sleep and behold, it was a dream!"

“But what was it that made you so afraid of the sight?” inquired Graceless. The man replied: “Because I thought the day of judgment had come, and that I was not ready for it. The thing that frightened me most, however, was the fact that the angels gathered up several and left me behind; and also that the pit of hell opened her mouth just where I stood, and I thought the Judge had always His eyes upon me with indignation in His countenance.” Then the Interpreter turned to Graceless and asked: “Hast thou considered all these things?” Graceless replied: “Yes, and they put me in hope and fear.” “See then,” continued the Interpreter: “that you keep these things in your mind, for they will be a spur to you to keep you going forward in the way you should go.”

We may well linger a little longer and learn from this man’s dream the tragic result of dying without trusting the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a time coming when the Son of God, now despised and rejected, shall come in power and great glory, attended by all His saints and the host of heaven, to execute judgment upon all who have neglected, rejected or despised Him. Listen to the words of Scripture: “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1:7-9). This man’s dream will be an awful reality to every Christ-rejector at the coming of the Lord. All who have refused to receive Him as their Savior, shall, in that day, face Him as their Judge, and hear from His lips the dread sentence of eternal banishment: “Begone from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

Are you, my reader, ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus? Are you saved? Have you been born again? If not, then you are unprepared; and there remains for you a “certain fearful looking for of judgment!” How different

it shall be with those who have been saved by His grace through receiving Him as their Savior! They can look forward with glad anticipation to His coming, for He will receive them unto Himself, and conduct them to that glorious place that He is even now preparing for those who love Him. The believer will never have to stand before the great white throne to be judged for his sins, because all his sins have been borne and judged in Another, his divine Substitute, Sin-Bearer and Savior. Flee, then, to those loving arms that were outstretched for your sins on Calvary's cross. Come to Him, just as you are and where you are, and grasp the glorious fact that

“All thy sins were laid on Jesus,
Jesus bore them on the tree;
God, Who knew them, laid them on Him,
And, believing, thou art free!”

Listen to the words of the Savior Himself: “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not come into judgment*; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

After Graceless had thus been shown the wonderful sight of the Interpreter's house, he began to be very anxious to get rid of the burden he was bearing. What he had seen had convinced him that the greatest and most important thing in life was to be right with God. Has the reader come to this same conclusion? If so, the “Pilgrim's Progress” will not have been written in vain.

The Interpreter now took Graceless to another door and showed him the straight pathway that led to a little hill. Graceless, after thanking the Interpreter for all his kind and good counsel, went on his way saying:

“Here I have seen things rare and profitable,
Things pleasant, dreadful, things to make me stable.
In what I have begun to take in hand;
Then let me think on them and understand
Wherefore they showed me was, and let me be
Thankful, O good Interpreter, to Thee!”

As Graceless proceeded, he perceived that on each side of the road was a wall called Salvation. Soon he saw, ahead of him, a little hill on which was a cross with an open grave at the foot. This naturally brought to his mind that wonderful scene described in the Scriptures, when the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal God, laid down His life as a sacrifice for the sin of the whole world. He recalled the holy sinless life that the Savior had lived, which had so completely satisfied and pleased His Father. He remembered the purpose for which the Lord Jesus came to this sinful world: "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

He brought to mind all the despising and rejection of men that He had endured. He thought of Pilate's question: "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called the Christ?" And the terrible answer of the very people He had come to save: "Let Him be crucified!" He recalled the sad procession to Calvary, with the weary, thorn-crowned Savior bearing His cross, until they came to the place where they nailed Him to it, heaping taunts, ignominy, and shame upon Him as they did so. Despised and rejected by men, and forsaken of His God, with the awful burden of the sin of the world upon Him, the Savior had bowed His head and died. The remembrance of these things moved Graceless greatly.

Presently he came right to the foot of the cross. By the eye of faith, guided by God's word, he saw the Lord Jesus on that cross. As he looked, he realized the glorious truth of that Scripture which says: "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath *laid* on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5-6). Graceless now realized that the Lord Jesus, on that cross, had known all about his sinful state and, in wondrous love

and grace, had borne all his sins in His Own body on the tree. He saw that Christ had taken his place and had died for him, and that all the work necessary for his salvation had been accomplished to God's complete satisfaction. Graceless, from the depths of his heart, now accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and immediately the burden of his sin and guilt rolled off his shoulders and fell into the open grave at the foot of the hill, where he saw it no more for ever.

His eyes now became a fountain of tears. Tears of sorrow, as he thought of the holy Son of God made sin for him, and of all the cruel suffering and shame He had endured, so that one so vile as he might be cleansed through His precious blood. Tears of joy, because he realized that the Lord Jesus had hung there as *his* Substitute, *his* Sinbearer, *his* Redeemer and *his* Savior; and that the shedding of His precious blood had purchased *his* salvation from the awful penalty of sin. He could now say like Paul: "The Son of God loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*!" (Gal. 2:20). This filled him with joy and peace through believing, so that he exclaimed: "He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death!"

Has the experience of Graceless been yours, my reader? Have you realized *your* need of the Savior yet? Are you conscious of *your* lost condition as a guilty sinner before God? If so, then do as Graceless did. Come in all your sin and need to the One Who said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Believe that on the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus Christ bore away *your* sins, and died in *your* place. Rest in His finished work on your behalf, and accept Him, in your heart, as your own personal Savior. You, too, shall know the joy of sins forgiven, of peace with God, and of the assurance, from God's own word, that you are eternally saved.

You will have noticed that it was not Graceless' prayers, tears of repentance, good resolutions, or religious

rites and ceremonies that caused him to lose his burden. It was a simple childlike belief in the truth of the gospel, and an acceptance of Christ as his own Savior. Will you not, even as you read this, say from your heart:

“Just as I am, poor, guilty, lost;
I come to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ,
In simple faith I trust in Thee,
Who bore my sins and died for me.”

Jesus said: “Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” Trust Him then, right now and, together with Graceless and many thousands more, you will prove the reality of His saving grace and keeping power all along life’s highway until the Celestial City is reached, for

“Christ the Lord is risen! Victory is won!
All the work that saves the sinner has been done!
Now, through faith in Him, God offers full and free:
Pardon, peace and joy and glorious liberty!”

As the pilgrim thus stood, thanking and praising the Lord Jesus for all He had done for him; three shining ones appeared to him. The first said: “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee!” This is the first blessing the sinner receives when he trusts in the Lord Jesus. All his sins are forgiven. The black sins of the past are forever blotted out; and peace, perfect peace, is given for the present, and glory is assured for the future. God puts the sins of the believer out of *reach*, for He says: “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:12). God also puts them out of *sight*, for we read: “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). God puts them out of *mind* for He declares: “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more” (Jer. 31:34). Can it be said truthfully of you, my reader: “I write unto you . . . because your sins *are forgiven you* for His Name’s sake”? (1 John 2:12). If not, make sure of this wondrous blessing by heeding and obeying the gospel call which says: “Be it known unto you . . . that through this Man (The Lord Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of

sins; and by Him, all that believe, are justified from all things" (Acts 13:38).

The next shining one stripped him of the filthy rags of his own righteousness and clothed him in a garment of spotless purity, even with a righteousness from God. What a beautiful illustration of the act of God whereby He imputes, or puts to the account of the believer, that perfect righteousness secured by the finished work of His Son. This righteousness is like a robe that completely covers the Christian, makes him fit for the presence of God and gives him a perfect standing before Him. Just as the prodigal son, on his return, had the best robe put on him; so God puts the beautiful robe of righteousness on every soul that receives Christ.

This righteousness is Christ, so that the believer is said to be "in Christ." As God sees the believer "in Christ," He can see no fault nor spot in him, for we read: "As He (Christ) is, so *are we in this world*" (1 John 4:17); and again: "God hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God *in Him*" (2 Cor. 5:21). Are you, my reader, still trusting in your own righteousness that can never satisfy God; or can you say as one long ago: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my Lord; for He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10).

The third shining one set a mark on his forehead and gave him a roll with a seal upon it. This, of course, speaks of the sealing of the Holy Spirit of God, by which the believer is made secure until the day of redemption. This mark is an invisible one, but all Christians have this seal upon them. The Bible makes this very plain: "In Whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after that ye believed, *ye were sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). Thus the Holy Spirit indwells and makes His abode in all who are saved, so that the body of the Christian becomes the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16).

The roll is a picture of the assurance and consequent joy of salvation that results from the realization of the possession of all these blessings in Christ Jesus.

Not only was Graceless' condition altered, but his name was also changed. His name was no longer "Graceless," but "Christian." From this point, this will be his name until the end of the journey. What made him a Christian? Was it his prayers? his tears? his good resolutions? his good deeds? his joining the church? or submitting to some religious rite or ceremony? No! Ten thousand times no! It was simple faith in the finished work of God's dear Son, acceptance of Him as Savior and confession of Him as Lord, that made him a Christian. A Christian is one who belongs to Christ. Are you a truly born-again Christian, my reader? Are your sins, which are many, all forgiven? Are you clothed with the righteousness of God? Do you have the assurance of a present and eternal salvation? If not, make sure of all these blessings in the same way that Graceless did. Come in all your sins to the One Who died for sinners. Believe He died for *you*, and trust simply and entirely in His completed work. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou *shalt* be saved!" (Acts 16:31). May it be yours to say:

"Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me."

After these blessings had come to Christian, he gave three leaps for joy and went on singing:

"Thus far did I come, laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in
'Till I came hither; what a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bind it to me crack?
Blest cross! Blest sepulchre! Blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

As Christian went on his way, singing and making melody in his heart unto the Lord, he came to a place where three men were lying fast asleep. While they slept Satan had placed chains on their legs, thus making them his slaves. When Christian saw these men in such a perilous plight, utterly unconscious of their danger, he did what every Christian should do. He took them each by the shoulder and shook them and cried: "Wake up! You are like men that sleep on the top of a mast, for the dead sea is under you and a gulf that has no bottom! Wake up! The Devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour! Wake up! and I will help you off with your fetters!" At this, one of the men named Simple awoke and, after looking around a little, murmured: "I see no danger," and went to sleep again. The next man named Sloth drawled sleepily: "I want a little more sleep," and he dozed off again. The third man, Presumption by name, angry at having been awakened, replied to Christian's kindly counsel by protesting: "Every tub must stand on its own bottom."

You are doubtless thinking to yourself: "What foolish people they were to reject the kind advice of Christian!" Strange though it may appear, there are thousands of people today who are doing exactly the same thing; and perhaps the reader may be one of them. John Bunyan has well pictured the state of every unsaved sinner as asleep to his true state before God; asleep to his danger of being without Christ; asleep to the fact that he is the bond servant of sin; and asleep to the fearful consequences of dying in his sins. Many, when they are aroused by some earnest Christian, or by the reading of gospel literature, reply like Simple: "I don't see any danger. I don't see that I am a guilty, lost sinner. I don't see that I am in danger of going to hell. I don't feel afraid of dying and of meeting God." These people imagine that because they do not see or feel any danger, that there is no danger!

The writer once knew a little boy, who, while happily playing tag around an open well, fell in, and before he could be brought out, was drowned. He did not see or feel he was in danger, but this was due to his ignorance. All out of Christ are in danger of the wrath of God. Listen to the solemn warning: "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job 36:18). God hates sin and must punish it. The Lord Jesus declared: "If ye die in your sins, where I am, there ye cannot come" (John 8:21, 24). Remember: "The wages of sin is death." Though a person may not realize his need of Christ or his great danger, it does not alter the fact that he is in danger and therefore needs to be saved.

The next person, Sloth by name, is a typical example of many today. When such a person is aroused from the sleep of sinful pleasure, he replies: "I want a little more sleep." In other words: "Let me alone for a while longer, so that I can enjoy the world, do as I please, say what I please, and go where I please. By and by I will wake up and become a Christian; but just now, I want a little more sleep." Alas! There are thousands of such in a lost eternity at this present moment. When they had their opportunity of being awakened and saved, they chose to put off the matter of their soul's salvation until a more convenient season. At last came that grim visitor, Death, and while they were still asleep to eternal realities, their souls were ushered into eternity and their eyes were opened, like the rich man of Luke 16, in hell. If the reader sees himself pictured in the case of Sloth, let not the Devil lull you to sleep with this world's pleasures any longer; but wake up, ere it be everlastingly too late, and trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and the shackles of sin will be broken.

The third man, Presumption, is a picture of another class of persons. These, when aroused to a sense of their need of Christ, instead of being grateful for what they hear, get angry with the messenger and the message and

cry indignantly: "Every tub must stand on its own bottom!" In other words: "Every man must look after his own affairs! Don't you worry about me! I'll look after myself! You mind your own business and let me mind my own. I'll take my chance with the rest!" The person who adopts this attitude is very foolish. One might just as well quarrel with a good doctor because he diagnoses a dangerous disease and prescribes the only remedy. God, Who knows the sinfulness of sin, and Who has described the heart by nature as being: "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," has also, in equally plain language, prescribed the remedy—"the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." The person who objects: "I will take my chance with the rest," is guilty of wicked presumption; for God's word does not speak of a "chance" of salvation or of a "chance" of being eternally lost. The Bible contains "certainties," not "chances." There is no "chance" of the sinner being eternally lost if he dies in his sins; he will most *assuredly* be lost! Neither is there any "chance" of being saved if the sinner will believe the gospel and accept the Savior; he will most *assuredly be saved* that very moment!

Christian had to leave these three men fast asleep by the wayside, exposed to danger, death and damnation. Is it to be so with you, dear reader? As you read these pages ask yourself the question: "Am I ready to meet God? Am I awake to my spiritual needs?" If you cannot honestly say so, heed the friendly and faithful counsel of one who loves your soul, and wake up and trust in the Lord Jesus as your own personal Savior for:

"Life at best is very brief, like the falling of a leaf,
 Like the binding of a sheaf, be in time!
 Fleeting days are telling fast that the die will soon be
 cast,
 And the fatal line be passed, be in time!
 Be in time! Be in time!
 While the voice of Jesus calls you, be in time!
 If in sin you longer wait, you may find no open gate,
 And your cry be just too late—be in time!"

As Christian continued on the pilgrim pathway, which was bordered on either side by the walls of salvation, he perceived two men climbing up from the other side of the wall. When they reached the top they leaped into the straight and narrow way and began to follow Christian. At this, Christian asked them who they were and where they were going, to which they replied: "Our names are Formalist and Hypocrisy. We were born in the land of Vain-Glory and we are going for praise to Mount Zion." Christian demanded: "Why came you not in at the gate which standeth at the beginning of the way? Know ye not that it is written: 'He that entereth not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber'?"

Formalist and Hypocrisy however, would not give heed to Christian's faithful counsel. They declared that the way to the gate from their town was altogether too far around; so they had followed the custom of the inhabitants of their city and made a short cut by climbing over the wall. They further assured Christian that such a time-honored custom would be admitted as being 'quite proper' by an impartial judge. They concluded their argument in these words: "Seeing we are already in the way, what matter is it which way we came in? If we are in, we are in. Thou art also in the way, who, as we perceive, came in at the gate! We are also in the way that climbed up over the wall. Wherein, now, is thy condition better than ours?" To this Christian gave an effective reply: "I walk," said he, "by the rule of my Master. You go by the rude working of your fancies. You are counted thieves already by the Lord of the way. You came in by yourselves without His direction, and shall go out by yourselves without His mercy."

To this they gave little reply except to sneeringly point out to Christian that they could not see any difference between him and them except the coat he wore, which they suggested must have been given him by some of his neighbors to hide the shame of his nakedness. When Christian heard this, he replied by telling them that by

their laws and ordinances they would never be saved and added: "As for this coat on my back, I would have you know it was given me by the Lord of the place whither I go, and that, as you say, to cover my nakedness, for I had nothing but rags before. I have also a mark on my forehead that one of the Lord's most intimate Associates placed there the day that my burden fell off my shoulders. I have also a roll to comfort me by reading as I go." When Formalist and Hypocrisy heard this, they looked at each other and gave a contemptuous laugh, and followed Christian along the narrow way.

In this incident John Bunyan has given us another forceful illustration of what thousands of people are doing in this present day. Formalist, of course, is a picture of the person who is trusting to religious forms, rites, ceremonies and the repeating of certain creeds for an entrance into heaven. He imagines that because he has passed through certain forms and ordinances, this has made him a Christian and placed him on the narrow road that leads to heaven. What a fearful error is this! Substituting a rite for the Redeemer, a symbol for the Savior; a creed for a new creation, and an ordinance for the Lord Jesus Christ! When such a person is asked whether he is on the way to heaven and how he knows it, he will reply: "O yes, I hope I am on the way to heaven, for I have been baptized;" or: "I have been confirmed;" or: "I take communion regularly;" or: "I am a member of the Church," or: "I engage regularly in religious exercises and am a Church worker," etc. He never mentions a word about having owned himself as a lost sinner and believed that Christ's death on Calvary satisfied God on his account. He knows nothing of coming to the Lord Jesus Christ Who said: "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." He has experienced nothing of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit upon acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord. He makes no mention of the word of God as the ground of his certainty of salvation. All he knows and speaks about are the rites, forms and

ceremonies he has been through, or the religious practices that he engages in as often as possible.

Let us say at this point, that the two ordinances the Lord Jesus instituted, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are only for those *who are already saved* and on their way to heaven. The sinner gets on to the narrow pathway through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Door. Listen to His Own words: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, *but by Me*" (John 14:6). Having entered into the way of life through Christ, the believer should be obedient to His divinely appointed ordinances. He should be baptized as a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ and, by this act, confess to the world that he has died with Christ, that he has been buried with Him, and that he is risen with Him to walk in newness of life. (See Romans 6:1-11). Thus he obeys the Lord in baptism, not in order to *become* a Christian, but because he is *already* one. The same applies to the remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of the bread. Many make this ordinance the door to salvation, thus robbing the Lord Jesus of His rightful place as the only Savior, Redeemer and Mediator. Any person who thus substitutes the mere outward form of an ordinance for the inward reality of faith in Christ, is a Formalist who has climbed over the wall.

Hypocrisy needs little explanation. He is a picture of the person who pretends to be what he is not. He puts on a great show of religion, but only in order to cover up a deceitful life. The Pharisees in our Lord's time were called hypocrites because they pretended to be much better than others. They made long prayers at the street corners, wore special religious garments, and gave alms with a great outward show. But while they made clean the outside of the cup, the inside—that which God saw—was full of evil. God wants reality, not sham; not an outward show, but a true inward heart-devotion to Himself. Would it not be well if each one examined himself right now. If we profess to be Christians, let us ask ourselves:

“How did I become a Christian? When did I become a Christian? Where did I become a Christian?” Let us test our answer with the Scriptures, and see whether we are *real* or *sham*. If we discover, from this examination, that we have never been really born again; then the sooner we climb back over that wall and come in by the Door, the better it will be for each of us!

As Christian proceeded, he presently came to a very steep hill called the Hill of Difficulty. He perceived that the straight and narrow way led right up it, and that there were two side roads, one leading to the left and the other to the right, at its base. At the foot of the hill was a spring. Christian first refreshed himself at it and then began to ascend the hill, saying as he did so—:

“This hill, though high, I covet to ascend;
The difficulty will not me offend,
For I perceive the way to life lies here.
Come, pluck up heart, let’s neither faint nor fear:
Better, though difficult, the right way go,
Than wrong, though easy, where the end is woe.”

When Formalist and Hypocrisy arrived and saw the extremely difficult pathway that led right up the hill, they consulted together, and decided it would be better to see whether they could not find an easier way, some short cut that would save them the long and arduous journey. They then perceived the two other roads and concluded that they led around the base of the hill and met the narrow path on the other side. One of these roads was called “Danger” and the other “Destruction.” They agreed to separate and each take a different route, and meet where these roads conveyed into the narrow path. Accordingly, one of them took the road called Danger which led him into a great forest where he was miserably lost. The other, taking the road called Destruction, soon found himself in a great plain filled with dark mountains, where he stumbled and fell and rose no more. Thus perished Formalist and Hypocrisy, as every mere formalist

and hypocrite shall. How true is that message from the good book which says: "There is a way which *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). A mere outward form, or an empty profession will not avail in the dread hour of death, or before the great white throne. Let us make certain of our eternal security now, lest the fate of Formalist and Hypocrisy be ours also.

CHAPTER NINE

Christian, in spite of the hard going, continued to ascend the hill, first running, then walking, until it became so difficult that he had to climb on his hands and knees. But he kept at it, and made progress gradually. The Hill of Difficulty, as its name indicates, is a picture of the difficulties and trials that await the Christian. Many have the idea that when a person becomes a child of God, all his difficulties are over for ever; but it is then that the believer realizes that his difficulties are more formidable than ever before. There will be testings, temptations, trials, and hardships that will appear as difficult to overcome as the Hill of Difficulty was hard to climb.

You will have noticed that Christian first refreshed himself at the spring. This spring is a picture of the fountain of God's word which refreshes the pilgrim, gives him strength to go on for God, and to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. As the Christian faces his difficulties in the strength of the Lord God, he will discover that every obstacle can be turned into a pedestal; and that spiritual muscle is developed that will stand him in good stead for the future. The believer is enjoined to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The words of that well-known hymn are fitting at this point:

“Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.”

However great the difficulty, however severe the trial, it is good to know that the Lord Jesus is ever with the Christian, and will never leave nor forsake those who have put their trust in Him. He is the “Friend that sticketh closer than a brother” through all the changing scenes of life.

As Christian struggled on his upward way, he presently came to a pleasant arbor, or shady resting place that

had been built by the Lord of the hill for the refreshment of weary travelers. This arbor was about midway to the top of the hill. Into this beautiful place Christian entered and, seating himself on a bench, rested his weary body. After a while he felt quite refreshed, but instead of getting up and continuing his journey, he began to examine his roll and the garment that had been given him by the Lord, and this gave him great pleasure. As he continued to be thus occupied with his blessings, he began to get quite drowsy, and soon sank into a deep slumber. During his sleep the roll fell unnoticed from his hands, but Christian slept on, until he was awakened by a voice sounding in his ears: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise!" Thus awakened and realizing that he had slept long in the arbor, Christian rushed out and ran as fast as he could up the remainder of the hill.

When he had almost reached the summit, he saw two men, wild eyed and fearful, running down the hill as hard as they could go. Their names were Timorous and Mistrust. When they came up to Christian, he stopped them and cried: "Sirs, what is the matter? You are running in the wrong direction!" At this, Timorous and Mistrust told him that as far as they could see, the further one went along this road, the more the difficulties and dangers increased. They concluded by telling Christian that they had just seen two great lions in the middle of the road, so they had turned and run away as fast as they could, lest they should be torn in pieces by those dreadful creatures. With this, they ran down the hill and left Christian alone.

Christian now began to feel afraid also, but he did not want to go back to the City of Destruction; and yet to go forward, according to Timorous and Mistrust, seemed certain death! What should he do? He felt for his roll so that he might comfort and assure himself. To his consternation, he could not find it, though he searched all his pockets. Christian was now in great distress, for he could not venture forward without his roll. At last he remem-

bered his sleep in the arbor and, falling down on his knees, he asked God's forgiveness for his foolish act and prayed, as had David long before when he had lost his roll: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee" (Psa. 51:12-13).

After he had thus confessed his sloth and sin, Christian arose and made his way back to the arbor. Looking carefully to this side and that, and all the while bemoaning his folly in having wasted his time sleeping, instead of using the arbor for a little refreshment from his weariness he cried: "O wretched man that I am that I should sleep in the day time; that I should sleep in the midst of difficulty! That I should so indulge the flesh, as to use that rest for ease to my flesh which the Lord of the hill hath erected only for the relief of the spirit of pilgrims . . . I am now made to tread with sorrow where I might have trodden with delight . . . O that I had not slept!"

At length he came to the arbor and sat down and wept, but at last, looking under the bench on which he had slept, he spied the missing roll. Quickly he picked it up and placed it in his bosom, and thanked God for having restored to him the assurance and joy of his salvation.

In this incident we have brought home to us a danger to which all Christians are subject. Many a child of God has allowed himself to be lulled into a condition of spiritual sleepiness because of his carelessness in the things of God. He has neglected his prayer life; failed to continue his private study of the Scriptures; ceased to witness for Christ before his unsaved companions; and left off his self denial. Consequently a spirit of lethargy has crept over his soul and he has lost the spiritual alertness he once possessed. In fact, there are thousands today who could be termed "sound Christians," for they are sound asleep! Their eyes are shut to their privileges and responsibilities as children of God in an unbelieving world. You will have

noticed it was while Christian was examining his roll and his robe that he fell asleep. In other words, it was while he was occupied with his *standing* in Christ which was perfect, that he forgot all about his *state*, and thus fell asleep.

It is possible for a Christian to get so engrossed with his *blessings* in Christ, such as his sanctification, justification, redemption and glorification, that he forgets the *Blesser*. It is possible for him to be so taken up with his *position* in Christ, that he forgets all about his *condition* or state. Again, it is possible for the believer to be so wrapped up with his *believing*, that he neglects his *behaving*, and thus falls asleep. A curious thing about a sleeping Christian is that he can talk in his sleep, preach in his sleep, walk in his sleep and criticize others in his sleep. In fact, he is best at this when soundest asleep! He can fight in his sleep, backbite in his sleep, and create no end of trouble in the company of Christians with whom he gathers; but there is one thing he cannot do in his sleep, he cannot bring glory to God.

What did Christian lose through his sleep? Was it his salvation or his eternal life? No, indeed! No Christian can lose this, for his life is hid with Christ in God. Christian did not have to get saved all over again. He did not have to go to the cross and lose his burden again. What then did he lose as he slept in that arbor? He lost the *joy* and *assurance* of his salvation—a vastly different thing. We need ever to remember that *relationship* depends on *birth*, but *fellowship* depends on *behavior*. It is one thing to be a child of your father, and an entirely different thing to be the *happy* child of your father. David is an illustration of this. In his prayer of penitence in Psalm 51, he prayed for the restoration of the *joy* of his salvation which had been lost through his sin.

What is the child of God to do when he loses the joy and assurance of his salvation through sloth and spiritual sleepiness? Just what Christian did. He must confess his sin to his heavenly Father, hating the sin that has inter-

ferred with his fellowship with the One Who has done so much for him. What will God then do? God will do what He has promised in His word: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Where will the joy of salvation be found again? Just where it was left when the believer fell asleep. Just as Christian had to return to the place where he had left off to watch and pray; so the believer must return to that prayer life, to that study of God's word, to that witnessing for Christ, to that whole-hearted devotion to the Son of God that first characterized him. As he does this, then the joy of the Lord will once more fill his soul, and the assurance of his salvation will give him confidence to go boldly forward in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in spite of all the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil.

Let us never forget that a sleeping Christian is a danger and menace to other believers, and a stumbling block in the way of the unsaved. The unsaved man sees that the sleepy Christian is indifferent to eternal things, and argues that if this person represents what salvation does for a man, then he doesn't want any of it! God has a message for sleepy Christians, listen to it: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!" (Eph. 5:14). And again: "It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed!" (Rom. 13:11). If the reader is amongst those who have lost the joy of their salvation, be frank and open with God and judge your carelessness and sin in His presence. Confess it and put it away from you, and once again communion, fellowship and joy will be restored to you, and you will again be privileged to be of use and service to the One Who bought you by His blood. He is coming soon and the privilege of witnessing will then be over.

"Hark, 'tis the watchman's cry: 'Wake, brethren, wake!
Jesus our Lord is nigh; Wake, brethren, wake!
Sleep is for sons of night, ye are children of the light;
Yours is the glory bright; Wake, brethren, wake!'"

As Christian reached the summit of the hill, he saw in the distance a stately castle called Beautiful. It had shapely towers and great walls, while the surrounding country seemed dark and dangerous. Christian was encouraged by the sight, for he knew that this castle existed for the sole purpose of entertaining strangers and pilgrims heavenward, so he hastened on. But before we proceed further, let us find out what this castle represents. The Castle Beautiful is a picture of a visible Church of God on earth; that is, an assembly or gathering of believers, who have met in the name of Christ alone, for the purpose of worship, praise, prayer, or the study of God's word. It is God's purpose that every believer should seek to meet with a company of born again Christians, and thus enjoy the benefits and blessing of this fellowship together.

We read in Acts 2 that: "They that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Here we see the divine order in the beginning. First, there was a reception of the word of God; next they obeyed the Lord by being baptized; following this, they were added to the company of believers already gathered and finally, they went on to know God's will and doctrine, and kept the feast of remembrance that the Lord had instituted the night in which He was betrayed. This is God's order for today, for we have no more right to alter God's order of gathering than we have to alter God's way of salvation.

If the reader is saved by the grace of God, he should seek to meet with God's people who gather according to the plan revealed in the Scriptures; who own no name but the Name above every name; who have no rules for reception except those rules contained in the Bible, namely: regeneration, soundness of life and soundness of doctrine; who practice only those ordinances given by the blessed Lord, namely: baptism and the Lord's supper; who have room for the ministry of all the gifts given by the risen

Head to the Church which is His body; (Eph. 4:10-12) and who give liberty for the Spirit of God to minister through whomsoever He will. The Bible enjoins us to "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together." There are many Christians today who look upon the visible church, all split up in many parties and factions, each claiming to be right and they ask: "Where shall we go?" "With whom shall we meet?" Many of them go *nowhere*; some go *everywhere*. The question is; where should they go? Let the Scripture that has assured us of our soul's eternal welfare, also settle our minds as to where He would have us to go.

The word of God is the believer's all-sufficient guide. The Lord Jesus said: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." This gathering together of believers unto Him constitutes a local church, whether it is held in a barn, kitchen, or the open air. Only believers can thus gather. No one, unless he is born again, has any right of admittance to such a company; and no one who has been born again and is sound in life and doctrine, has any right to be kept out of such a gathering.

With such a scripturally gathered company of believers all Christians should seek to associate themselves and thus enjoy the blessing that comes through obedience to His word, apart from the ecclesiastical forms invented by men. Let each Christian reader search his New Testament, and give himself no rest until he is satisfied that the company with whom he meets, or intends to meet, gathers in the name of the Lord Jesus alone; has room for *all* the children of God; liberty for the Spirit of God; openness of heart for all the truth of God, and are thus seeking to carry out the simple pattern revealed in God's own guide book.

As Christian proceeded on his way in the dusk of the evening, he suddenly perceived the two great lions that had scared Timorous and Mistrust so much. At this

Christian was very much afraid, for he dared not go ahead but, at the same time, did not desire to go back; so he stood still in the middle of the path, trembling in every limb, for the lions filled the air with their roaring. As he stood, not knowing what to do, the porter of the Castle named Watchful, seeing his dilemma, shouted to him: "Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained. They are placed there for the trial of faith, and for the discovery of those that have none. Keep in the middle of the path and no hurt shall come unto thee." With such words Christian was reassured and made his way cautiously in their direction. Sure enough, he now perceived that a strong chain was attached to each lion which allowed it to go thus far and no farther. Carefully keeping right in the middle of the King's highway, Christian at length passed between the lions and was safely received by Watchful.

The lesson of the lions is a very necessary one for the child of God. When the Christian, guided by the word of God, seeks to meet with a Scripturally gathered company of the Lord's people, there is bound to be opposition. Satan knows full well the value of Christian fellowship and the strength, comfort, and courage that such fellowship imparts to the believer. He therefore seeks by all the means in his power to hinder it. This accounts for the lions in the path of the Christian's life. Very often that which hinders becomes so great in the eyes of the believer, that it seems to close the road and make further progress impossible. All the pilgrim has eyes for are the lions that apparently bar the way to complete obedience to God.

Watchful is a picture of a godly shepherd of souls who is on the look out for obedient pilgrims. It is such who point out to the Christian that the lions are limited in their activity and, providing the child of God keeps right on in the middle of the path of obedience to God's will and word, they will not be able to harm him. Thus the believer's eyes, which before were occupied with the lions only, see God's provision and protection.

The two lions could represent the world on one hand and the Devil on the other. The world, with all its pleasures, pride, lust, popularity, power and riches, all seek to hinder the progress of the Christian. Satan with his subtle wiles, threats and temptations stands on the other side seeking to turn back the pilgrim. But what saith the Scriptures? It declares: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to men; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make *a way to escape*, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Thus the lions test the reality of the faith, love, and obedience of the pilgrim. Mere empty professors, such as Timorous and Mistrust, are scared away, and it is best that they should, for God desires reality and obedience, even in the face of dire opposition.

Watchful now escorted Christian to the door of the Castle and asked him his name, to which Christian replied: "My name is now Christian, but my name used to be Graceless." The Porter next inquired the reason for the lateness of the hour of his arrival, so Christian told him frankly of his sleep in the arbor, and of the loss and recovery of his roll. Then Watchful said: "I will call out one of the virgins of this place, who will, if she likes your talk, bring you in to the rest of the family, according to the rules of the house." With these words, Watchful rang a bell, upon which a grave and beautiful damsel named Discretion appeared and Christian was introduced to her. She asked him whence he was and where he was going, so he told her. She then enquired how he had got into the way, what he had seen, and what his name was. To all these questions Christian gave a clear and scriptural answer. This delighted Discretion, who perceived that he was a truly born-again Christian. She then called three more of the family to have a talk with him. Their names were Prudence, Piety and Charity and, after a short conversation with them, he was taken into the Castle and given a very warm welcome by its inmates. They crowded to the threshold and gathered around him

and welcomed him in these words: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord. This house was built by the Lord of the hill on purpose to entertain such pilgrims." At this, Christian bowed his head and entered the Castle, thanking and praising God for having brought him to such a place.

Here we have a beautiful picture of what it means to welcome a believer into an assembly or gathering of the Lord's people. Discretion is an illustration of the godly care or discretion which should be used ere one is so welcomed. Those whose responsibility it is to interview the one who seeks to meet in a Scriptural way should exercise every care, and make certain, as far as is humanly possible, that he or she is truly a child of God who is sound in life, that is, who is living as a child of God should; and who is sound in the faith, that is, not holding false doctrines dishonoring to the Lord Jesus. There are, alas, in many churches, those who are not really Christians. How did they get in? Because godly care was not used. Of course, life in Christ, and not a mere knowledge of the Scriptures is the ground for welcoming a believer. All Christians who are sound in life and doctrine should be warmly welcomed into an assembly. If any other conditions are imposed, it makes that company of Christians a denomination, a thing which is condemned in the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 3:1-5).

Perhaps there may be some reader who, by giving assent to some doctrine or creed; or through submitting himself to some ceremony, has "joined the church;" but who has never been really born again, and is therefore not in "the Church of God which is the body of Christ," and is consequently unfit to be in a local church. What should be done in a case like this? First, there should be an acknowledgement of one's need of Christ. Then a simple belief in the truth of the gospel that Christ died for the ungodly and therefore died for you. Take your place as such and, believing Christ died for you, accept Him as your own personal Savior. That very moment, the Spirit of God will put you into the true Church, the body of

Christ, of which He is the Head. Then seek the fellowship of those who meet in His Name alone, and you will experience what Christian did, the joy of being happily associated with those who love the Lord Jesus.

The three sisters, Prudence, Piety and Charity, illustrate those graces that should adorn every assembly of believers. There should be prudence or common sense. Many divisions and quarrels amongst God's people would have been avoided if Prudence had been allowed to have her way. Then Piety, or godliness, should be prominent. Where believers are seeking to "live godly in Christ Jesus," there will be an atmosphere that will glorify the Lord Jesus. Then last, but by no means least, there should be Charity or love. Where love abounds there will be no room left for jealousy, envy and strife. Love for the Lord Jesus and love for all those who love Him, will make the children of God loath to injure or speak evil of one another. Thus an assembly where Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity prevail, is one where God's people will find a welcome; where the gospel goes forth in the power of the Spirit of God; where souls are saved, and believers built up in their most holy faith. May it be ours to be in happy association with such an assembly!

CHAPTER TEN

While supper was being prepared, Prudence, Piety and Charity took Christian aside and began to converse with him. Piety began the conversation by asking him what had moved him to start on his journey. Christian replied by telling her of his experience while in the City of Destruction; how, under the dreadful sense of his guilt and sin, he had groaned and cried and had no rest by day or night, until Evangelist had pointed him the way to the Wicket Gate and from there to the Cross. "But did you not visit the Interpreter's house?" next inquired Piety. Christian answered: "Yes, and I saw such things there, the remembrance of which will stick by me as long as I live. Three things especially impressed me: first, how Christ, in spite of Satan, maintains His work of grace in the heart; next, the man who had sinned himself quite out of hope of God's mercy; and lastly, the dream of him who thought the day of judgment was come." Then Christian told of his visit to the Cross; of the sight of the Son of God bearing his sins; of the rolling away of his burden of guilt; of the Shining ones and the blessings they brought; of his meeting with Simple, Sloth and Presumption; and of Formalist and Hypocrisy; and of his experience with the lions.

Then Prudence began to ask him some questions. "Do you not think of the country from which you have come?" she asked, Christian replied: "Yes, but with much shame and detestation; truly, if I had been mindful of that country from which I came out, I might have had an opportunity to have returned; but now I desire a better country, that is an heavenly one" (Heb. 11:15, 16). Prudence next inquired if he did not sometimes have a desire for the things he had left behind. Christian replied by saying that he still had carnal and selfish desires, but four things helped him to overcome these. First, when he thought of the cross when his sins caused the Lord to drink the wormwood and the gall, it caused him to hate his carnal

desires; next, when he looked upon his robe; thirdly, when he read his roll; and lastly, when he thought of the glorious place to which he was going. "All these things," said he, "help me to overcome my carnal lusts and desires."

Then Charity inquired if he were a married man and had any children, to which Christian replied that he had a wife and four children. Then Charity asked: "Why did you not bring them with you?" At this Christian wept and exclaimed: "Oh! how willingly would I have done it, but they were all of them utterly adverse to my going on pilgrimage!" Next Charity inquired if he had sought by his words, and also by his life, to earnestly win them. Christian replied by telling them how he had sought by his prayers, pleadings and warnings to lead them on pilgrimage; but, in spite of all, they had refused. At this recital of his experiences, he wept again. Thus they conversed until supper was announced, when they rose and went together to the table.

Here the other inmates of the Castle were seated, and the table was spread with the finest of food. All the talk at the table was about the Lord of the hill and what He had done. They conversed about the great fight He had fought and the great victory He had gained over the one that had the power of death; how, through the shedding of His precious blood, He had obtained life, light and liberty; and how He had built the Castle itself, so that He might continue to lavish His love and care upon those who had confessed Him as their Lord.

The table, of course, is a picture of the Lord's Supper, or the feast of remembrance, that the Lord Jesus Himself instituted the very night in which He was betrayed. The Scriptures describe how "He took bread: and, when He had given thanks, He brake it and said: 'Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you: this do for a remembrance of Me.' After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying: 'This cup is the new

covenant in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, for a remembrance of Me: for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' ” It is now the privilege of the Lord's people, each Lord's day, to meet together in the Lord's name, in the Lord's own way, to remember the Lord's death until the Lord comes back again. It is the desire of the Lord Jesus that all who love Him should thus remember Him. How blessed it is to meet in His name alone, guided by His word alone, to remember Him alone. As the hymn writer has so well expressed it:

“According to Thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This would I do, O Christ, my Lord,
I would remember Thee.
Thy body broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember Thee.”

After supper Christian was conducted to a bedroom called Peace where he slept until the break of day. When he awakened he sang:

“Where am I now? Is this the love and care
Of Jesus for the men who pilgrims are;
Thus to provide that I should be forgiven,
And dwell already the next door to heaven?”

After they had all risen, Christian was taken into the study and shown the genealogy of the Lord, and also the record of His mighty deeds. He read also of the acts of those who, through faith in Him, had “Subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of the weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Heb. 11:33-34).

Following this, he was conducted to the museum where many wonderful things were kept, all of which were full of deep spiritual significance. They showed him Moses' rod with which he had struck the rock, and water had flowed out to the thirsty people of Israel. Christian learned that the rock was a picture of Christ, Who, on Calvary's cross was smitten by God in judgment, so that grace and pardon, full and free, might flow out to a guilty and condemned world. He saw the hammer and nail with which Jael slew Sisera, revealing that God used very little things to accomplish great ends. They showed him the pitchers, trumpets and lamps with which Gideon, with a small army of three hundred men, was used of God to overcome the great army of the Midianites, thus proving that one with God is always a majority. He saw also the ox goad wherewith Shamgar slew six hundred of the enemies of the children of Israel and delivered them from their oppressors. Next, they showed him the jawbone of the ass with which Samson obtained a great victory over the Philistines. Lastly, they showed him the stone and sling with which the young stripling David, in the power of God, slew the great Goliath.

These things delighted him very much, for he perceived the truth of the Bible which declares that: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:26-29). Truly, little is much when God is in it. This surely should encourage every Christian to so yield himself to God that he may be used, weak and faulty though he is, to magnify God's grace and power. All the incidents of Old Testament history are for our learning and admonition; so that we may be warned by their failures, and encouraged by their suc-

cesses to go on for God in this present life. Every Christian should therefore make a diligent study of these types or pictures, for they will be of great value to him on the heavenly highway.

The next day Christian would have recommenced his journey, but the sisters desired him to wait until the following day. Accordingly, on the morrow, they showed him the Delectable Mountains. As Christian looked in the direction to which they pointed, he saw a most pleasant mountainous country, with lovely woods, vineyards, fruits and flowers, with springs of water, beautiful to behold. He was told this was Immanuel's country, and that from those delectable mountains he would be able to see the gate of the Celestial City.

This beautiful country is a picture of the word of God, and what the study of it unfolds to the mind of the reader. What wondrous stretches and unfoldings of God's eternal purposes are laid bare to the student of this blessed book! What fragrance the exceeding great and precious promises breathe! God's eternal purposes are here revealed in all their beauty and grandeur. To many, this is an unknown country, and the reason is quite simple. They have never studied the Bible for themselves. They are content for others to describe what they see, but never investigate it for themselves. Thus they are robbed of the rare joy of allowing the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, to reveal the wondrous things that God has laid up for them that love Him. We need to heed the injunction to

“Study it carefully; think of it prayerfully;
Deep in thy heart let its sure precepts dwell.
Slight not its history; ponder its mystery;
None can e'er prize it too fondly or well.”

The following day, as Christian prepared himself to set out again, the sisters took him into the armory where the Christian armor was kept, and there he took to himself the whole armor of God. Here he harnessed

himself from head to foot with that armor described in Ephesians, chapter 6. First, he took the *Belt of truth*. How necessary this is for the Christian soldier! Truthfulness, sincerity and a good conscience are essential to Christian character. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," David said. "Wherefore putting away lying, let every man speak truth with his neighbor," says God's word. Truth is the belt or girdle that girds the loins and enables the believer to be left unencumbered for action.

Secondly, he fitted upon him the *Breastplate of Righteousness*. This breastplate was so placed that everyone he faced saw it. This speaks of the righteous acts that the Christian should do. The belt speaks of truth in word; the breastplate of truth in deed. We not only need Christian *talk*, but Christian *walk*; not only *lip* testimony, but *life* testimony. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works," said the Lord Jesus. We are further enjoined to be "rich in good works," and to "do good unto all men" (1 Tim. 6:18; Gal. 6:10). The Christian must back up, by a consistent godly life, what he claims by his words to be.

Next, he placed on his feet the *Shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace*, so that everywhere he might take the good news of a dying Savior's love, a risen Savior's power, and a coming Savior's glory. It is not for nought that we are told in the Bible that: "Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace." Every Christian should put on these shoes, for God desires everyone of His blood-bought children to be His ambassadors, heralds and messengers to carry the glad and glorious gospel of the full, free and eternal salvation He has provided at such infinite cost. Christ's last commission was: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Let us therefore, who are His, put on the shoes of the gospel.

The *Shield of Faith* was the next piece of armor he took. This shield was for the purpose of quenching all

the fiery darts of the Devil. How much the believer needs this shield! Faith is the victory that overcometh the world, and he who is the god of this age. This shield covers the Christian and turns aside those terrible darts of the Devil's temptations, doubts and lusts and also quenches the evil reasonings of his own heart. Faith in God; in His dear Son; in His precious word; in His love, ability and power, will enable the child of God to be more than a conqueror through Him that loved him.

Next, he took the *Helmet of Salvation*. This covered his mind which, in turn, controls the whole body. The helmet of salvation speaks of right thoughts the believer should have of God, of His Son, of the Holy Spirit, of the way of salvation, of the security of the believer and the eternal punishment of the Christ rejecter. There are many false cults and religions on every hand, and the Christian needs to be established in the great doctrines of Scripture, lest he be swayed by the reasonings of men and turned from his own steadfastness in the truth. Christ must not only be enshrined in the heart, but the pilgrim must also have the mind of Christ.

He next took the *Sword of the Spirit* which is the word of God. This sword was two-edged, living and powerful: It could cut deep, "even into the joints and marrow, and was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The importance of this weapon cannot be overestimated. Every Christian should know his Bible, for this is the sword of the Spirit, the weapon the Spirit of God uses, first upon the Christian himself, and then on the enemy. The believer must learn to wield this sword for himself. He must study it, use it, and continue to engage in sword exercise until he becomes expert in offensive and defensive warfare.

There are many swordless Christians today who are helpless when assailed by some enemy of God who seeks to bring in wrong teaching. There are enemies in the Christian camp today who would never have been al-

lowed to enter if Christians had been on the alert and well acquainted with their Bibles. There are many so-called ministers today who are denying, from their pulpits, the very things they are paid to teach. Many Christians seem helpless to contradict them because they do not know how to use their Bibles. The Lord Jesus used this sword when Satan sought to tempt Him. To all his temptations Christ answered: "It is written!" Surely the servant is not greater than his Lord!

The last weapon Christian took was an invisible one, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan. It was called *All Prayer*. This weapon was to be used in conjunction with all the other armor and weapons. What a mighty weapon is prayer! Prayer is the force that moves the hand of Him Who rules the universe! The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray and promised: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you" (John 16:23). Prayer can close and open the heavens. (James 5:17-18). One has well stated what prayer does in these words: "Prayer makes God's presence real, His power felt, His will clear, His service easy and His blessings available." Prayer is the Christian's vital breath and "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees." The place of prayer is the place of power and victory; so we need ever to pray and to be prayerful in all things.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered, or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.
Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The majesty on high."

Let us remember that God will not place this armor on anyone. God provides the armor, but each Christian

must *put it on* for himself. The Scripture is clear as to this: "Wherefore *take unto you* the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13). May every reader be in the happy position of thus being prepared for the Christian conflict!

O fight the good fight like a soldier,
Put on the whole armor of God,
The belt and the breastplate and helmet,
The shoes and the shield and the sword!
Then pray as you fight 'neath His banner,
And stand 'gainst the wiles of the foe;
The Savior the vict'ry will give you,
And be with you where'er you go!

CHAPTER XI

After Christian had been thus armored, he was escorted by Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity down the hill on which the Castle was built, into a valley called the Valley of Humiliation. Christian found it a very difficult thing to descend into this valley, and remarked to the sisters that it was more difficult to go down than it had been for him to ascend the hill of Difficulty. "Yes," replied Prudence: "it is an hard matter for a man to go down into the Valley of Humiliation as thou art now, and catch no slip by the way: therefore we have come out to accompany thee down the hill."

The valley, as the name indicates, represents the necessity for Christians to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. This self-humbling is anything but pleasant to the flesh, but it is an essential thing to the spiritual life, and leads to the place where God can use us in His service. The way *up* in the Christian life is always *down*. The way of exaltation always lies through the Valley of Humiliation. Our blessed Lord humbled Himself as none other has ever done, for we read: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). It was the Lord Jesus Himself Who said: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Again the Scriptures enjoin us to: "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves."

Presently they reached the bottom of the hill and, after they had bidden him farewell and given him some refreshment for the way, the sisters left him and returned to the Castle again. Christian then went on his way, thanking God for all he had seen and heard in the Castle Beautiful.

He had not gone far when he saw a hideous looking object whose name was Apollyon. This monster was fearful to behold. He was clothed in scales like a fish which were his pride. He had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, a head like a lion; while from his body there came flame and smoke. Then Christian began to be afraid, but remembering that he had no armor for his back, he stood his ground in the middle of the King's highway and waited as Apollyon came forward to meet him.

Apollyon now eyed Christian with hatred and asked him who he was and whence he had come. Christian replied: "I am from the City of Destruction which is the place of all evil, and I am going to the City of Zion." At this Apollyon hissed: "Then you are one of *my* subjects, for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it." Christian bravely retorted: "I was born in your dominion, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on; for the wages of sin is death." When Apollyon heard this, he adopted a different attitude, and tried to bribe Christian to go back and serve him once again, and promised he would be given the best that the City of Destruction could afford. Christian replied that he had sworn allegiance to Another, and would not turn back from his present Lord and Master, for he loved His service, His wages, His servants, His government, His company and His country much better than Apollyon's.

Apollyon then adopted another method of attack. He pointed out that the Christian path was a dangerous one, and that tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and the sword, with a shameful death, was the lot of many who trod the Celestial highway. Christian likewise remained unmoved at this, and reminded his enemy that everlasting glory lay at the end of the believer's life on earth. Once more Apollyon changed his tactics and pointed out the faults, failings and sins of Christian. He accused him of trying, by wrong ways, to

rid himself of sin's burden. He reminded him of his laziness in the arbor and of his sinful sleep. He charged him with having been fearful at the sight of the lions, and also of being of a vain-glorious disposition. To this Christian replied: "All this is true, and much more which thou hast left out, but the Prince Whom I serve and honor is merciful and ready to forgive."

At this Apollyon could contain his anger no longer and shrieked: "I am the enemy of this Prince: I hate His Person, His laws and His people. I am come out to withstand thee!" With this, he straggled over the King's highway and yelled: "Prepare to die, for I swear by my infernal den that you shall go no further!" Then, hurling a flaming dart at Christian's breast, he began his savage attack.

Christian now bestirred himself and, catching the dart on his shield of faith, quenched it. Drawing his sword, he proceeded to defend himself as best he could. Amid the shrieks and hissing of Apollyon, and the cries, groans and prayers of Christian, the fight went on. What a fight it was! The enemy rained down his fiery darts as thick as hail—darts of doubt, pride, anger, malice, envy, hatred and lust were hurled time and time again at him, until Christian, in spite of his armor, was wounded in the head and hand and foot and began to weaken and give back before the terrible onslaught.

This sore combat lasted almost half a day and Christian was almost overcome, for his wounds caused him to grow weaker and weaker. Apollyon, perceiving this, began to wrestle with him, and soon they were locked in a deadly grip. Christian was no match for his foe in this unequal struggle, and was soon thrown to the ground. As he fell, his sword slipped from his grasp. At this, Apollyon, with a fiendish laugh shouted: "I am sure of you now!" Lifting up his javelin, he was about to deliver the death blow; but Christian reached quickly for his sword, saying as he did: "Rejoice not against me, O

mine enemy, for when I fall, I shall rise again!" With this he plunged his sword into the body of his antagonist, who now gave back with a fearful groan of agony.

Christian, realizing what good work his sword had done, thrust it into him again, this time exclaiming: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!" With a shriek of mortal anguish, Apollyon now lifted up his wings and flew away, leaving Christian the victor in this fearful combat. Then did Christian give thanks to the One Who, by His grace, had enabled him to triumph over the dread enemy of his soul. A hand then appeared with leaves of the tree of life, which, when Christian placed on his wounds, were immediately healed. After this he seated himself and partook of the refreshment that the sisters of the Castle Beautiful had given him and was strengthened with might and power by His Spirit in the inner man. Thus invigorated, he recommenced his journey with drawn sword in his hand.

John Bunyan has given to us, in this thrilling story of the pilgrim's fight, a picture of what every Christian can expect from the adversary of his soul, the Devil. Every Christian believes in a personal Devil, possibly not the Apollyon pictured by Bunyan, for Satan does not always appear in the same guise. Sometimes he goes about as a "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." At other times he comes as an "angel of light and his servants as ministers of righteousness." One thing is certain, however. The moment a person becomes a Christian, the Devil will be up against him and will seek, by all the means in his power, to hinder his progress and cause him to lose his usefulness in the Master's service and the joy of the Lord which is his strength.

We are told in the Bible that the Christian does not "Wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places" (Eph.

6:12). Thus there is arrayed against the child of God all the forces of the Satanic host. The Christian life is not a joke, or a picnic, but a *fight*, without any truce or armistice, until the believer goes to be with the Lord. The sooner the Christian realizes and recognizes the forces arrayed against him, the better he will be prepared to meet the opposition. As one army studies the methods of the opposing forces, so the Christian should study the person, power, purpose and plans of Satan and his fearful host. Remember, Satan is a *person*. Our Lord said of him: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8: 44).

God's word to the believer is: "*Resist* the Devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). How can the Christian resist? By using the armor that God has provided in view of the conflict: "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil" (Eph. 6:11). Meet the Devil's temptations to sin by the "breastplate of righteousness." Meet the Devil's lies with "the girdle of truth." Meet his false systems of religion by the "shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace." Combat his evil suggestions concerning Christ's Person and work, and the doctrines once for all delivered to the saints, by putting on the "helmet of salvation." Resist his darts of doubt as to the truth of the promises of God and of the reality of His providence and love, by quenching them on the "shield of faith." Meet the enemy's open opposition with the "sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." Meet the Devil's invisible and subtle forces with the mighty weapon of "all prayer."

The Lord Jesus met Satan and was tempted by him for forty days, but to all his temptations Christ used the sword of the Spirit and replied: "It is written." If Christ was tempted, you may be certain you will be treated likewise. There are certain things to remember when

resisting Satan. First, Satan is a defeated foe, for the Lord Jesus, by His death and glorious resurrection, has forever annulled his power (see Heb. 2:9). Second, tell the Devil this, in an audible voice if need be. Claim, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the victory He won for you, and say as did the Lord Himself: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Thirdly, use the word of God on him. The Devil hates it and cannot stand this deadly sword. To do this, the word of God needs to be studied and used. Lastly, remember that the Lord Jesus is *in* you, *with* you and *for* you. Yield yourself wholly to Him for a righteous life (Rom. 6:13); and for active service (Rom. 12:1-8) and you will be "more than a conqueror through Him Who loves you."

And now just a word to the unsaved reader. The Devil will never fight with you until you seek to be delivered from his grasp, for "the whole world lieth in the arms of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). Satan doesn't worry those whom he has securely in his power. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" said the Lord Jesus (Luke 4:20). The strong man is Satan, his palace the heart of the unsaved, and his goods, the unsaved reader. Are you content to remain thus, or do you long for deliverance from such a master? Rest assured that if you are not a servant of Christ, owning Him as your Lord and Master; then Satan has you in his possession and, by all his subtlety, guile and deceit, will seek to keep you thus.

If you would be delivered from his tyranny, turn from him, owning your sins and need. Believe that God's dear Son bore your sins and took your place and died for you. Trust Him as your Savior and accept *now* the "gift of God which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). The chains that so long have bound you will be snapped. You will be delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the mar-

velous light, life and liberty of the children of God. May it be yours, even now, through receiving Christ as your own personal Savior to say:

“My chains are snapt, the bonds of sin are broken—
And I am free!
O, let the triumphs of His grace be spoken,
Who died for me!”

As Christian proceeded on his way along the Valley of Humiliation he discovered there was another valley at the end of it, called the Valley of the Shadow of Death. As the way to the Celestial City led right through it, he prepared to go straight on. Now this valley was a lonely place, which the prophet Jeremiah had described as: “A wilderness: a land of desert and of pits; a land of drought, and of the shadow of death” (Jer. 2: 6). As Christian approached its borders, two men suddenly rushed out from the darkness that enshrouded it and cried to him: “Go back! Go back, if you value your life!” When Christian asked them why they thus bade him return, they replied: “This valley is as dark as pitch! We saw the hideous creatures of darkness! We heard the continued howling and yelling, as of a people under unutterable misery, who sat there bound in affliction and iron! Over this valley hangs the discouraging clouds of confusion. Death also does always spread his wings over it.” Christian replied that as the way to his eternal home led right through it, he must needs keep to the path. Then the two men, who were descendants of the spies who brought an evil report of the land, departed, leaving Christian to go on alone.

With drawn sword, the pilgrim proceeded cautiously and soon the light of day faded. The road on which he walked became very narrow and he found it most difficult to keep his feet. As he journeyed, he dimly descried on his right hand a deep ditch, into which the blind of all ages had led the blind and miserably perished. This speaks of error in *principle*. On the other side was a

dangerous bog into which, if a man fell, he could find no bottom for his feet. This speaks of error in *practice*. Added to this, the intense darkness made the going very dangerous; but Christian remembered the promise: "He will keep the feet of His saints," so he looked to the Strong One for help.

In the midst of the valley was, as it were, the very mouth of hell. Flame and smoke filled the air, while hideous noises struck terror to his soul. Perceiving his sword to be of little avail in such emergency, Christian took the weapon of "all prayer" and prayed: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul!" Thus he went on, with traps and snares on every hand threatening him with disaster. Once he heard a company of fiends coming to meet him and wondered what he should do. He was tempted to go back, but resisted the inclination and resolved rather to press on. As the fiends came nearer, he cried in a most vehement voice: "I will walk in the strength of the Lord God!" They then gave back and came no further.

Furthermore, as he went on, one of the wicked ones got behind him and began to whisper awful thoughts into his mind. He caused evil suggestions and even blasphemies to come into his thoughts, so that he imagined they came from his own mind. This distracted him a great deal, and he was sore amazed at the fearful plight into which he was plunged. As he felt his way cautiously, he heard someone singing in the valley ahead of him, and this is what he heard the person sing: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Then was Christian glad for three reasons. First, that others who feared God were also in the valley. Second, if that person could realize the presence of Christ with him, why should not he? Third, Christian had a desire to catch up to him and enjoy his company; but this could

not be, for all who passed through this valley must go alone. Yet he was no longer alone, for now he had the sweet consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus with Him according to His own promise: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isa. 41:10).

Presently the day broke and the shadows fled away. Then said Christian: "He hath turned the shadow of death into the morning." As the sun rose and flooded the valley with its warm rays and brilliant light, Christian looked behind, not with any desire to go back, but to see the path he had so lately trodden. As he saw the narrow pathway with the ditch on each side, and marked the fearful traps and snares that abounded on every hand, he thanked God and took courage.

But now he was in that part of the valley that was even more dangerous than the other. The traps at this point were more cunningly set, nets and pitfalls abounded on every hand, also great holes and narrow defiles with scarcely a hand's grip to pass by; but bye and bye he came to the end of the valley, and thanked God once more for His preserving and protecting care and exclaimed: "His candle shineth on my head, and by His light I go through darkness" (Job 29:3). How glad he was that this terrible experience had come to an end at last!

This valley of the Shadow of Death is a picture of an experience in the life of a Christian that all believers do not pass through. God allows some of His children, for some wise reason known only to Himself, to walk in the darkness by removing from them the conscious sense of His presence. He does this in order to test the reality of their faith, love and obedience. It illustrates the difference between temptation and testing. The fight with Apollyon illustrates what temptation is, for the Devil tempts. God never tempts (James 1:13). Chris-

tian's experience in the valley shows us what testing is. God allows the believer to be tested in the darkness and there fulfils His promise to give him "the treasures of darkness." This experience is described in Isaiah 50:10 where we read: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His Servant, (Christ) that *walketh in darkness* and hath *no light*?" What is the child of God to do in such a case? Hear the answer: "Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God!"

God allowed Job to go through this experience. For no reason that Job knew, God allowed him to be stripped of his wealth, family and health, and he was left in complete darkness as to why God allowed him to suffer. Added to this, he was taunted by his so-called friends. What did Job do? In the midst of the valley he exclaimed: "He knoweth the way I take, and when I am *tried*, I shall come forth as gold!" Once again he cried: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!" Abraham went through this valley as he took his son, his only and well beloved son Isaac, and bound him on the altar and raised the knife to slay him. It was pitch darkness, spiritually, for Abraham, but he trusted and proved God in that darkness. Many of God's choicest saints have passed through the same experience, and have emerged from it with a spiritual discernment and strength they never knew before. The refining fire of trial burned the dross, in order that the gold of their faith might shine the more brilliantly.

Perhaps the reader may even now be passing through this valley. God, in His infinite wisdom, has allowed some bereavement to come to you, some loved one has been taken, and all seems dark. Perhaps it is some financial loss or ill health that afflicts you, and you are wondering why all these things have been allowed to come into your life. Rest assured, beloved child of God, your Father in heaven knows best. God is testing you,

proving you, refining you in the furnace of affliction, so that you, too, may come forth as gold: a better Christian, a stronger soldier of the cross and a more experienced saint, better able to sympathize and help those in a similar position. May it be yours to say as did another pilgrim through this valley:

“So on I go not knowing,
I would not if I might,
I’d rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light.
I’d rather walk by faith with Him,
Than go alone by sight.”

Rest assured: “God worketh all things together for good to them that love Him” (Rom. 8:28). You are not alone in the valley. Others are there, and they are proving the truth of God’s promises. In His own good time He will bring you into the light again, and you shall thank God, for all eternity, for the experience.

“In the way that He will choose
He will lead us,
Not a lesson we shall lose,
All will reach us.
Strange and difficult indeed
We may find it;
But the blessing we all need
Lies behind it.
All the lessons He shall send
Are the sweetest,
And His training in the end
The completest.”

CHAPTER XII

At the end of the valley Christian passed by a cave, outside of which were the bones, bodies and blood of many who had gone this way formerly. At the mouth of the cave sat a giant named Pope who had been largely responsible for the death of these many pilgrims. Strange to say, as Christian passed, he made no attempt to molest him, but contented himself by biting his nails and snarling: "You will never mend, till more of you are burned." This cave had originally sheltered two giants, the name of the other being Pagan. He had long since died and the other, Giant Pope, being stiff in his limbs, was not able as in former years to pursue his persecution of Christians.

Giant Pagan, of course, is a picture of the persecutions under the pagan or heathen emperors of Rome who, in a few hundred years, put to death hundreds of thousands of Christians. The light of the gospel, to a great extent, has done away with this pagan persecutor. Giant Pope is an illustration of the Roman Catholic system which exists to this day, that has also been responsible for the death of numberless thousands who loved not their lives unto death, but who preferred to obey God rather than man, and the simple teachings of the word of God to a form of paganized Christianity. Thank God for the Reformation, by which this giant received a blow from which he has never fully recovered. Let us thank God for the liberties that we enjoy, which have been purchased so dearly by the blood and tears of those who dared to believe the Bible as the believer's only authority for faith and practice, and who dared to make the gospel known in the face of torture, fire and sword!

As Christian passed on, he came to a little hill called Comfort, from the top of which he saw, ahead of him, a man named Faithful. He had heard of Faithful, for he had started from the City of Destruction a short while after himself. Hoping to avail himself of the pleasure

of his company, Christian shouted: "Ho! Ho! Stay, and I will be your companion!" Faithful looked behind him, but not recognizing Christian, quickened his pace. At this Christian cried again: "Stay, stay till I come up to you!" But Faithful answered: "No, I am upon my life, and the avenger of blood is behind me!" When Christian saw that Faithful was not going to wait for him, he was nettled and thought within himself: "I'll show you that I can catch up to you and outrun you, too!" He then began to run and soon caught up to Faithful. Not content with this, Christian, with a vain glorious smile on his face, passed him but, not looking very well to his feet, he stumbled and fell, nor could he rise again until Faithful came to where he lay.

Faithful did not proceed to read Christian a lecture on what his pride had done for him. Neither did he say: "It serves you right! That's what you get for trying to beat me! Now lie on the bed you have made until you have learned your lesson!" No, he remembered what God's word said should be done under such circumstances: "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, *restore* such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). So he very kindly gave Christian his hand and, with his assistance, Christian was lifted up and they went on very lovingly together.

In this incident the truth of the Scripture is clearly emphasized: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Christians need ever to remember that pride is a hateful thing in the sight of God. He hates a proud look and pride will always lead to a fall. We are warned in Scripture to beware: "lest, being lifted up with pride, we fall into the condemnation of the Devil," for it was pride that caused his ruin. See Isaiah 14:12-15.

There are four kinds of pride every believer needs to be warned against. First, pride of *face*. Quite a num-

ber are stumbled because of this. They become so occupied with their good looks, that they spend more time in front of a mirror than in reading God's word and communion with Him by prayer. Others do not seem to be content with the face or complexion that God has given them and attempt, by all sorts of artifices, to remedy this seeming lack. Let us never forget that the wicked Jezebel is the first person we hear about in the Bible who painted her face, and surely she is no example to be imitated by children of God! The best kind of beauty is a beautiful *character*, and this is only obtained by heart devotion to the Lord, definite Bible study, sincere prayer and a loving and loyal life of service for Him on behalf of others.

The next kind of pride is pride of *place*. Ofttimes a child of God imagines that his position in life, or his wealth, gives him the right to look down upon his less fortunate brother and treat him in a patronizing way with more or less contempt. This is a fatal error, for God is no respecter of persons, and has enjoined us to: "mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." God has no aristocracy in His family. Snobbery is inexcusable in a believer. This does not mean that there is no difference between master and man. The Christian employee is told to give to his Christian employer the same obedience and heart service that he would give to Christ (Eph. 6: 5-9). But, in the things of God and in the heavenly relationship, we are "all one in Christ Jesus." There is therefore no room left for a false pride amongst members of the same household.

Then again, there is the pride of *race*. No race of people have any monopoly of God's favor, whether they be white, black, brown or yellow. We are told that in heaven there are people out of "every kindred, and tongue and people and nation." They are those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of God's dear Son and who sing His praises. Again, our Lord pointed out that:

“God so loved the world,” and this surely includes all nations, colors and tongues. Let us thank God if it has been our lot to be born in a country where God’s word is available, and where the influences of Christianity are seen in the comforts of civilization; but never let us look down with contempt or pride upon less fortunate people who are not so greatly privileged as we. Rather let us send, or go forth to these people with the message of the gospel that alone can bring them the blessings of God’s salvation, so full and free.

Lastly there is the pride of *grace*. How often the Christian is tempted to estimate himself more highly than he ought to think. He often imagines he can pray better, preach better, give more and serve the Lord better than some other Christian. These vain-glorious thoughts develop a swelled head, a sanctimonious smugness, a spirit of intolerance and a barrenness of soul in the believer that always precedes the fall that follows. All Christians have not the same gift in the body of Christ, of which all believers are members. Each one has his own particular part to play. The hand cannot say to the foot “I have no need of thee”; neither can the ear say: “Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body” (1 Cor. 12:15-16). If God has given us some gift, let us thank Him for it, and then seek to discharge that service with humbleness of mind and lowliness of heart, for God only reveals Himself and manifests His power through the “humble and contrite one that trembles at His word.” (Isaiah 66:1-2).

As Christian and Faithful walked together, Christian asked his companion how he came to leave the City of Destruction. Faithful replied by telling him how Christian’s pilgrimage had aroused many of the inhabitants, including himself; but, though they had talked a great deal about the pilgrim journey, only he himself had started out. Then Christian inquired whom he had met on the King’s highway and what adventures had befallen

him. Faithful then told of meeting a woman named Wanton who had sought to dissuade him from going on pilgrimage by promising him all manner of things and by flattering him; but Faithful had remembered what the Bible said about her, that "her steps take hold on hell." Accordingly he had shut his eyes and turned away from her, at which she railed upon him, but he pursued his way.

This, of course, illustrates what many a would-be pilgrim faces as he seeks to leave the City of Destruction. Wanton is a picture of the world with all its vanities, lusts, sinful pleasures, popularity and the like, which combine to deter the convicted sinner from the way to the cross. Felix, who judged the apostle Paul, was turned aside by Wanton, for after Paul had reasoned with him concerning righteousness, temperance and judgment, he had trembled but said: "Go thy way for this time. When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee." Alas, we do not hear of this "convenient season" ever returning. Let each unsaved reader do what Faithful did. If God by His Spirit is arousing you to a sense of your danger—shut your eyes to Wanton's subtle temptations which lead to hell, and turn your back on anything that would hinder you from salvation.

Faithful next recounted his experiences at the cross where his burden of sins, fell off and were all forgiven, because of his belief in Christ's finished work and acceptance of Him as his own Savior.

Then Faithful told of meeting an old man named Adam the First at the foot of the hill of Difficulty. This old man had asked him who he was and where he was going. When he heard that Faithful was on his way to the Celestial City he asked: "Will you be content to dwell with me for the wages I will give thee?" Faithful inquired: "What is your work, and what are your wages?" Adam the First replied that his work had many delights, and the wages were that Faithful should be heir to all he had. He furthermore declared, that his house was fur-

nished with all the dainties of the world, and that his servants were his own daughters whose names were, Lust of the Eyes, Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life. When Faithful further inquired as to how long Adam the first would live, he replied: "I shall live as long as you do." All this sounded rather inviting to Faithful at first, and he was somewhat inclined to go along with him; but, as he looked at the old man's forehead, he saw these words written on it: "Put off the old man with his deeds." Then there came to his mind that if ever he went to live with this man, he would be made his slave and his life would be ruined. Accordingly he turned to go, but Adam the First gripped him with such a fearful grasp that he had cried out in agony: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Then he remembered the promise of deliverance through Christ, so exclaimed: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"! With this he started up the Hill of Difficulty.

In this incident we are introduced to an important subject that concerns every Christian, namely, the believer's two natures. Every believer is the possessor of two natures. The unsaved person has but one nature, which is called in Scripture, "the flesh." If the last letter of the word "Flesh" is removed, and the four remaining letters spelled backwards, a good definition of what is meant by "flesh" is obtained. "Self" is that principle within that makes a person what he is. It causes him to think what he thinks, say what he says and do what he does. We read in the Bible that the flesh is "enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then *they that are in the flesh cannot please God* (Rom. 8:5-8). We all inherited this sinful nature from our first parent, Adam, through whom sin came into the world. Hence Bunyan personifies it as "Adam the First."

Thus man by nature, as a result of his physical birth, becomes the possessor of a nature that can do nothing to

please God, for its very spirit is enmity against God. This is why the Lord Jesus told Nicodemus that he “must be born again”; that is, he must become the possessor of another nature, a Divine nature, by means of which he could please God and do His will.

The moment a person receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior, he becomes a partaker of this Divine nature which is imparted to him by the Holy Spirit of God, Who also indwells him the moment he believes on Christ. Read carefully II Peter 1:3-4; Eph. 1:13; I Cor. 3:16.

God, however, does not take away, or change the old nature. Thus in every Christian there are these *two* natures called in Gal. 5:17, “the flesh and the Spirit.” These two natures are in constant conflict, one with the other. The old nature still desires or lusts for the things of the old life; the new nature desires the things of the new life in Christ Jesus. Which nature is to have the victory? The answer is very simple: Whatever one you yield yourself to. God’s word to each believer is: “Walk in the Spirit”; (that is, in obedience to His leading and guiding,) “and ye *shall not* fulfil the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). If we would be delivered from the dominion of the flesh, we must remember two things. First, we must reckon it (the flesh) to be dead, (as God declares it is through Christ’s death) and we must make no provision for it, and have no confidence in it (Rom. 6:6-11). Second, we must yield ourselves to God for a righteous life, and keep on yielding (Rom. 6:13). God promises that the result will be: “Sin shall not have dominion over you” (Rom. 6:14). This will only be our experience in the measure that we are constantly yielding ourselves to Him and seeking to go on in obedience to His word, in His will and doing His work.

Faithful’s next adventure was in the valley of Humiliation with a man named Discontent, who sought to influence him to go back, by trying to make him discon-

tented with his lot. He told Faithful that by going through this valley he was annoying his one-time friends named Pride, Arrogancy, Self-Conceit, Worldly-Glory and many others. But Faithful soon put Discontent to flight by telling him that though these men were once his relations, they had disowned him as he had rejected them, and that he preferred to be guided by God's word which declared that "before honor is humility." This requires no explanation as the names explain themselves. Discontent can always be overcome as the Christian remembers what he once was and what he now is, by the grace of God. Truly: "Godliness, with *contentment*, is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

In that same valley Faithful was approached by a sneaking individual named Shame, who sought to prove to him that Christianity was a low, cowardly, pitiful business and that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing. He declared that for a man to have to watch his words and ways was ridiculous. He stated also that not many mighty, rich or wise people were Christians; but that they were mostly of the poor and ignorant class, who were content to live humble lives, unnoticed by the great ones of the world. He further suggested that it was a shameful thing for a man to sigh and groan about his sins, and to ask a neighbor's forgiveness for petty faults, etc. Then asked Christian: "What did you say to him?" Faithful replied: "Say? I could not tell what to say at first. Yea, he put me so to it that my blood came up in my face, but at last I began to consider that God's word declared: 'that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' "

Faithful then went on to tell his companion that, as he contrasted God's ways and thoughts with man's, he saw that God's ways were right and that he had nothing to be ashamed of, but everything to boast of in things belonging to Christ. He saw that God prefers the weak and foolish things of the world to the mighty and wise;

and the poor and despised with a tender conscience, to those who are self sufficient. As he thought of the Lord Jesus, he remembered He had not been ashamed of him when he hung upon Calvary's cross; but had willingly borne his sins, endured the cross and despised the shame that sinners such as he might be saved. He, therefore, turned to Shame and exclaimed: "Depart! thou art an enemy to my salvation! Shall I prefer thee to my sovereign Lord? How then shall I look Him in the face at His coming? Should I now be ashamed of His ways and servants, how can I expect the blessing?" With these brave words Faithful rejected Shame, and well would it be if every Christian were so faithful to his Lord!

How often the child of God has been turned aside by shame which has sought to make him ashamed of taking a bold stand for his Lord and Master. How frequently shame whispers in the believer's ear when he seeks to serve the Lord in the open air meeting, or in the distribution of gospel tracts, or while seeking to speak a word for the Savior in private conversation with friends and neighbors! Every Christian is tempted to dodge some service for the Lord because of the reproach of the world connected with it. What is the pilgrim to do? Just what Faithful did. He should remember what the Lord Jesus did for him, is now doing for him and will yet do for him. The Christian has nothing to be ashamed about but, like Paul, can truthfully say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). A Christian who is ashamed of his Lord shuts the door of salvation to some who might have been led to Christ and been saved. The Scripture inquires: "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Therefore speak up, Christian, and witness a bold confession to your absent and rejected, but soon coming Lord!

"Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend
On Whom my hopes of heaven depend?
No! when I blush, be this my shame
That I no more revere His Name!"

Let us ponder solemnly the words of the Lord Jesus, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). Shall we not rather say:

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an off'ring far too small,
Love, so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all."

The time of His rejection by the world is drawing to a close. He will soon come forth from heaven to call His blood-bought people home to share His eternal glory. May it be yours and mine, fellow believer, to live for and be a faithful witness unto Him until He comes!

CHAPTER XIII

As the pilgrims walked together and conversed, they presently perceived a tall man ahead of them who looked better at a distance than he did near at hand. This man's name was Talkative. As they drew up to him, Faithful asked him if he was going to the heavenly country, to which Talkative replied: "I am going to that same place." They then entered into a conversation, which we have not space here to record, but which is very interesting and instructive. Faithful at first was greatly taken with him, for Talkative lived up to his name. He was a great talker on any subject, but when Faithful asked Christian in private what he thought of their new companion he replied: "This man is just a talker. Remember the proverb, 'They say and do not,' but the Scriptures declare that 'the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.' He talks of prayer, of repentance, of faith and of the new birth; but he knows only to talk of them. I know his family and have observed him both at home and abroad, and what I say of him is the truth. His house is as empty of Christianity as the white of an egg is of taste; for in it there is neither prayer, nor sign of repentance of sin. He is a stain, reproach and shame on Christianity to all who know him! Scarcely can a good word be said of him through all that end of the town where he dwells. The common people, that know him, say of him that he is 'a saint abroad, and a devil at home!'" In these few but pointed words, Christian correctly described Talkative; and Faithful, after another very interesting conversation with him, exposed him as a mere professor of Christianity without the real possession of Christ as his Savior.

Unfortunately, there are plenty of Talkatives still living today who pose as believers and who can talk glibly of Scriptural truths without ever having experienced the power of them in their lives. These "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." Such

persons are merely mouth Christians. All their religion is in their head, and they are only Christians from the teeth, outwards! They are all *lip* with no *life* to back it up. They are all *believe*, but with no attempt to *behave* the gospel. They are all *position*, but no *condition*. They are all *standing* and no *state*.

It is this kind of person who does more harm to Christianity than all the infidels in the world. A wise man once remarked, "What you *are* speaks so loud, that I cannot hear what you *say*." Each Christian is an open book that all the world can read, and the world is a good critic of what a true Christian should be. Paul had to write concerning certain ones, whose lives were so different from what they professed, that "the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles" through them (Rom. 2:21-24). Does the world see the Lord Jesus in our lives? It has been well put thus:

"You are living a gospel,
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say;
Men read what you *live*,
Whether faithless or true—
Say, what is the gospel
According to *you*?"

As Faithful chanced to look back, he saw Evangelist coming towards them, who, when he came up to them, greeted them warmly and inquired of their experiences since they had lost the burden of their sins. Accordingly Christian and Faithful recounted all that had befallen them on the way, of their sorrows and joys, their victories and defeats. The recital of these things brought great joy to Evangelist and he exclaimed: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth!" He then encouraged them to go on for the Lord until the end of the journey was reached.

Evangelist now warned them of what should befall them as they continued on the heavenly highway. He told them that they would presently come to a town through which they must pass and, as they passed through it, they would be subjected to temptation, persecution, shame and tribulation, and that one of them would be killed and thus seal his testimony with his own blood. Evangelist would not tell them which one would thus lay down his life, but he continued: "He that shall die there, though his death will be unnatural and his pain perhaps great; yet he will have the better of his fellow, because he will be arrived at the Celestial City soonest." Then their friend exhorted them to "quit themselves like men," and urged them to give a good ringing testimony to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ and to "commit the keeping of their souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator." They then knelt down and commended each other to the Lord in prayer.

Christian and Faithful now addressed themselves to their journey, thinking much about Evangelist's words to them. Presently, away ahead of them, they saw the outlines of a great city called Vanity. The history of this city was as follows. When Satan saw that the way to the Celestial City lay through this valley, he built this great city right over the path, so that every Christian had either to go through his city, or else go out of the world. In this place he organized a great fair that never ceased day or night. At this fair all sorts of things were displayed for sale which appealed to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life of all people. Here were sold such things as houses, lands, honors, popularity, pomp, fashion, pleasure, treasure, power, titles, lusts, wine and revellings of all kinds. Here men and women bartered their souls for the vanities of this present evil world. This fair was called Vanity-Fair, and it received its name from the fact that Solomon, the richest and wisest of natural man, after he had sampled all its dainties and pleasures had left it declaring: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

Satan's main object in building the town was to get Christians to forget that they were "strangers and pilgrims in the world," and become so occupied with the vanities he displayed that they would lose their pilgrim character. Thus, instead of passing straight through, they would linger and, by and by, take up their residence in his town and be robbed of their joy in the Lord, their usefulness in the service of God and their effectiveness against himself.

Vanity-Fair, of course, is simply a picture of this world which God's word describes as: "lying in the arms of the wicked one," (1 John 5:19) and which has Satan as its god. (II Cor. 4:4). By the word "world" God does not mean the beautiful world of nature, token of the creative power of the Son of God. Nor does it mean the people of the world which are loved by God. When the Bible speaks of the world, it means the *present order of things* that obtains in the world; in other words, the world-system. It has been well defined as: "Those persons, places, pleasures, and pursuits from which God is left out." This is the world concerning which the believer is enjoined: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15-16).

As the pilgrims approached they heard the noises of the city: the ribald laughter of the worldling; the cries and tears of those who had been robbed; the music and songs of the lustful, and the shouting of those who were selling vanities. This caused them to pray to the Lord for strength to enable them so to live, that "men should take note of them that they had been with Jesus." They then entered the city and immediately became the center of attraction for three reasons. First, their *clothes* were entirely different from those worn by the people who traded at the fair. This caused the townsfolk to have various opinions concerning them. Some said that they were fools; others affirmed that they were mad; while

others declared that they must be foreigners. Secondly, their *manner of speech* was distinct from the language spoken by the inhabitants of Vanity. The pilgrims spoke the language of Canaan, and of the things touching their Lord and Master, so that it seemed as though they spake another tongue. Thirdly, the pilgrims *set no value* upon the things that were offered them. In spite of all their inducements to get them to buy, they consistently refused to have anything whatever to do with any of the vanities offered them. Instead, they placed their fingers in their ears to shut out the noise and din and, looking up to heaven cried: "Turn away our eyes from beholding vanity." Thus the pilgrims showed to the people of Vanity that they were indeed "strangers and pilgrims in the world;" strangers, because they were away from home; and pilgrims, because they were going home.

John Bunyan has given us a striking illustration of the effect of a godly and consistent Christian life upon the world, by means of the character, speech and conduct of the child of God. The clothes, of course, speak of the righteous character with which every Christian should be clothed. He should be honorable, righteous and truthful in his dealings with the world; and this will always distinguish him from this "crooked and perverse generation, among whom he shines as a light in the world."

Then again, his speech should be different from that of the world. The world loves to talk about its own things: its politics, fashions, scandal, sport, business, pleasures and lusts: but the child of God loves to "speak of the things touching the King," and to talk of the dealings of God with him, and of the love and grace of the blessed Lord Jesus. It is written: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. 3:16). Paul's injunction to the believer is: "Let your speech be always with grace, season-

ed with salt." We need to remember that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." The speech is the evidence of the condition of the heart and is the barometer of the soul.

The most significant thing, however, is the fact that Christian and Faithful refused to patronize the vanities offered them in the fair. Here the *conduct* of the Christian is in view. This is what the world notices the most in the life of the believer. John Bunyan puts it thus: "They set very light by all their wares." The Christian is a citizen of another country, for "his citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). In Titus 2:11-12 we read: "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world." Though it costs nothing *to become* a Christian, yet it costs the world *to be* one. A young woman once approached an old Christian, whose face was aglow with the peace of God and of a joy that was unspeakable, and exclaimed: "I would give the world to have your Christian experience!" The old Christian calmly replied: "That is just what it cost me."

No Christian can enjoy the world *and* Christ. He must either have the world *or* Christ. The phrase, "a worldly-minded Christian" is as great an anomaly as a "heavenly-minded Devil." The Lord Jesus said of those who had believed on Him: "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:14-15). Thus the Christian pilgrim is known and recognized by these three characteristics: a righteous and godly character; a sound and gracious speech; and an unworldly, self-denying and God-glorifying manner of life. Let us, who claim to be Christians, ask ourselves if these things are true of us. If this is so, then the world will recognize that we are what we claim to be, Christ's ones, or Christians.

This attitude of the pilgrims roused the anger of some and one man mockingly asked: "What will ye buy?" They replied: "We buy the truth." This caused them to be despised the more and from mocking they went to taunting, and from taunting to threatening, until at length a great stir was caused in the fair. This aroused the attention of the ruler of that place who came down to see the cause of this confusion. When he heard that Christian and Faithful had refused to have anything to do with his dainties and vanities, he ordered them to be examined by the magistrate. Though the pilgrims declared that they had given no occasion to any of the merchantmen to abuse them, except to say that they would buy the truth; yet their word was not accepted. They were accordingly smeared with dirt and placed in an iron cage in the center of the town, there to be a spectacle to the world and to angels and men.

In this cage they remained for some time, and were the objects of the ridicule, scorn, sport and malice of the people of Vanity Fair. But to all the ill treatment they received, they replied with not a word of abuse. They returned blessing for cursing, giving good words in return for revilings, and good deeds in return for the ill treatment they received. They told the very ones who treated them worst of the love of God for them, and of the gift of His dear Son to put away their sins and deliver them from the consequences of their guilt. When the townsfolk saw this, some of the most observing began to take the part of Christian and Faithful when others would have injured them. This caused a fight to take place between those who sided with the pilgrims, and those who wanted to persecute them. The news of this riot caused the pilgrims to be again examined, and this time they were placed in irons and beaten and then marched up and down through the streets for an example and terror to others. But again Christian and his companion so conducted themselves, that still more people were aroused to sympathy for them. When the ruler of Vanity perceived

this, he determined to put them to death and thus end their influence.

Accordingly, they were again brought before the court, which was presided over by Judge Hategood, and charged with the crime of being enemies of the town of Vanity and of Satan their lord. When the charge was read, Faithful replied that he was a man of peace, and that those who had been won to their cause were won by their manner of life, and thus turned from the worse to the better. He concluded by saying: "As to the king you talk of, since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his angels!"

The witnesses for the prosecution were then called and three men stepped forward. Their names were Envy, Superstition and Pickthank or Parasite. Envy testified that the prisoners were vile men, and that they neither regarded the Prince of the city, nor his people, laws and customs; but sought to teach them other laws and principles, such as faith and holiness. He further testified that he had heard the accused say that Christianity and the customs of Vanity were entirely different from each other, and could never be reconciled. Superstition then testified that he had heard them affirm that the religion of Vanity could never please God, and that those who held it worshipped in vain, were yet in their sins, and would finally be damned if they died in that condition. Finally Parasite was called, and informed the Judge that he had heard the accused speak disrespectfully of the nobility of the town, such as Lord Old-Man, Lord Carnal-Delight, Lord Luxurious, Lord Desire-of-Vain-Glory and other of the high citizens of Vanity, and had even alluded to Lord Hategood as an ungodly villain. This aroused the judge to a high degree of fury, and he shouted to Faithful: "Thou runagate, heretic and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?"

Then Faithful manfully addressed himself to the judge as follows: "In answer to Mr. Envy, I never said anything but this: that what rules, laws, customs or people were against the word of God, were therefore opposite to Christianity. If I have said wrong in this, convince me of my error. In regard to Superstition I said only this: that in the worship of God there is required a Divine faith, and there can be no Divine faith without a Divine revelation of the will of God. Therefore whatever is thrust into the worship of God that is not agreeable to Divine revelation, is but by a human faith, which faith will not be profitable to eternal life. As to what Mr. Parasite hath said, I say again that the prince of this town, with all the rabblement and his attendants by the gentleman named, are more fit for being in hell than in this town and country; and so the Lord have mercy upon me."

Then the Judge called the jury whose names were Blind-Man, No-Good, Malice, Love-lust, Live-loose, Heady, High-mind, Enmity Liar, Cruelty, Hatelight and Implacable. He charged them to render their verdict as to the guilt of the accused. With one consent the jury declared them guilty, and accordingly Judge Hategood savagely condemned them to death by the most cruel method that could be devised. For some reason the sentence against Christian was not executed; but Faithful was taken and, after being brutally beaten, was severely stoned. He was afterwards dragged to the market place where he was fastened to a stake, around which were piled heaps of wood. Then, amid the blasphemies and derisive yells of the populace, Faithful was burned to death.

As Christian stood looking upon the form of his beloved companion enveloped with flames, he saw something that none of the wicked mob perceived. As he looked up, he noticed a little gate opening in heaven. Through this gate came a beautiful golden chariot drawn

by two horses, and driven by an angel, in whose hand was a crown. As he watched, he saw the chariot descend until it reached the foot of the stake to which Faithful was fastened. As the charred and lifeless form of the martyr fell on the chains that bound it, the spirit of Faithful entered the chariot. At this, the angel placed the crown upon him saying: "Thou hast been faithful unto death; behold, I give thee a crown of life!" The chariot then ascended higher and higher until the gate of heaven opened to admit it. As it did so, a gleam of the glory from that beautiful city shone right upon the upturned face of Christian, and this glimpse made him homesick for heaven ever after. Thus Faithful entered into that glorious place to enjoy the presence of the Lord Jesus for all eternity, and Christian was left alone in the city of Vanity. By this act Faithful sealed his testimony for Christ with his own blood, and was added to that innumerable company of martyrs who loved not their lives unto death, and of whom this world is not worthy.

The lesson for us is obvious. The world is still unchanged in its attitude towards those who live for Christ. As in the long ago the world crucified its Creator and shouted: "Away with Him, we will not have this Man to reign over us!"; so, in this present day and age, all "who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The world loves its own, but hates the one who, by his godly life and faithful testimony, takes his stand against it and its treasures, vanities, policies, power and pleasures. The age of physical persecution has, to a great extent, passed, and one is not likely to be killed for the testimony of Christ. Nevertheless the offence of the Cross is not ceased, and the opposition of the world will soon be felt by the one who seeks to live for his Lord and Master. It may cost the believer his health, wealth and life as it did Faithful; but the "well done, thou good and faithful servant" of the Master will more than compensate for the toil, self-denial and suffering of the way. Would that

every born-again child of God who reads these pages could truthfully exclaim from the heart:

“Take the world, but give me Jesus:
All its joys are but a name,
But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.
“Take the world but give me Jesus;
Let me see His constant smile.
Then throughout my pilgrim’s journey,
Light will cheer me all the while.”

One word to the unsaved reader. How is it with you? If you are not *for* Christ, you are *against* Him. If you are not living for Christ, you are living for the world that despised, rejected and crucified Him. Are you content to live with your back turned to the God Who loves you; with your heart shut to the Savior Who died for you; with your will resisting the Spirit of God Who strives with you; and with your mind rejecting the word of God that can alone bring the light of the gospel into your sin benighted soul? Wake up, ere it be everlastingly too late! Come in all your sins and need to the blessed Son of God. Receive Him as your Savior and confess Him as your Lord. Then live for Him in the world in such a way that, like the pilgrim’s, your life shall tell for Christ. God will then use your testimony to be the means of leading others to know, love and serve His beloved Son.

CHAPTER XIV

We left Christian a prisoner in Vanity, but God, Who orders all things according to His own purpose, so decreed that he was at length allowed to have his liberty again. As soon as he was liberated, Christian resumed his journey towards the Celestial City, singing as he went:

“Well, Faithful, thou hast faithfully professed
Unto thy Lord: with Whom thou shalt be blest;
When faithless ones, with all their vain delight,
Are crying out under their hellish plights,
Sing, Faithful, sing; and let thy name survive,
For though they killed thee, thou art yet alive!”

Christian had not gone far, however, before he was joined by another man whose name was Hopeful, who had been made so by seeing the godly lives of Christian and Faithful, and hearing from their lips the glorious gospel of the grace of God. As a lost and guilty sinner, Hopeless, (for that was his name at that time) received the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, and was filled with hope and peace through believing. When Christian heard that another poor sinner had been brought to know Christ through his life and testimony, he was overjoyed and thanked God and took courage.

Christian and Hopeful now entered into a brotherly covenant to travel the highway of life together, sharing each other's joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, till death should them part. We are thus introduced to another pilgrim who is to continue with Christian until the end of the journey. Truly: “God buries His workers, but He carries on His work.” From the ashes of Faithful others were raised up to take his place in the ranks of the redeemed.

This also illustrates what soul winning means. There is no joy to be compared to that which fills the heart of

the Christian who realizes that God, through his life and testimony, has used him as the instrument to bring another fellow sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ. Has this ever been your happy experience, Christian reader? Do you know of anybody who is a Christian because *you* are one? If you have never had this unspeakable privilege and joy, seek it by all the means in your power. Let your life so speak for Christ, your lips so testify for Him, and your heart so go out to them in love and prayer, that they may be attracted to the Lord Jesus and, through the Spirit's conviction and regeneration, be led to journey with you along the heavenward way.

This is the responsibility of *every* Christian, and not a favored few. The Lord commands *all* His own to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This does not necessarily mean that we must all preach sermons, for all are not gifted alike; but surely all who are saved can tell others how salvation, full and free, may be their portion. A lady once asked a noted evangelist what was the best method of soul winning. His reply was: "go and do it." There are many ways of preaching the gospel. Tract distribution is a splendid means to this end. Get some good, sound gospel tracts and distribute them carefully and prayerfully. This will be a great aid in opening a conversation on spiritual things. Hospital visitation, open air work, and personal conversations all provide opportunity for soul winning. Paul's maxim was: "I am made all things unto all men that I might *by all means* save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Be not as the dying Christian who had to lament: "Yes, I am saved and going to heaven, but I am going empty handed, without having won one soul for Him" The Lord Jesus had no greater joy than to do His Father's will, and the Father's will is that "none should perish." Shall we not heed the words of the poet:

“Go labor on, spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father’s will;
It is the way the Master went—
Should not the servant tread it still?”

“Toil on, faint not, keep watch and pray;
Be wise the erring soul to win;
Go forth into the world’s highway,
Compel the wanderer to come in.

“Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice,
For toil brings rest, for exile home;
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom’s voice,
The midnight peal: ‘Behold, I come!’”

As they proceeded they overtook a man who was going before them whose name was By Ends, so they asked him who he was and where he was going. He told them he was from the town of Fairspeech and that he was going to the Celestial City, but he did not tell them his name. Then said Christian: “If you come from Fairspeech, then you come from a wealthy place.” At this By Ends smiled and replied: “O yes, and I have many rich relatives there.” When Christian asked him who his relatives were, By Ends informed him that amongst his many kindred in that place were Lord Turn-about, Lord Time-server, Lord Fairspeech (from whose ancestors that town first received its name), Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything and the parson of the parish, Mr. Two-tongues.” Continuing, By Ends remarked: “To tell you the truth, I am become a gentleman of good quality; yet my great grandfather was but a boatman who looked one way while he rowed the other, and I got most of my money doing the same thing.” Then Christian inquired if he was a married man. By Ends replied that he was happily married to Lady Pretender’s daughter, and they were both agreed on two points of religion; first, they would never strive against the wind and the tide, but would always go whichever way the wind blew. Secondly, they would be most

zealous for religion when it walked in silver slippers, and when the sun was shining, and when everyone applauded those who were religiously inclined.

When the pilgrims heard this, Christian turned aside to Hopeful and said: "I believe this man's name is By Ends and, if it is, he is one of the worst men in these parts. He is a shame and disgrace to anyone." Then Christian stepped up to him and inquired: "Is your name By Ends of Fairspeech?" By Ends replied: "That is not my name, but is a nickname given me, but I bear it as part of a reproach that other good men have borne before me. I got it because I had always the luck to jump in my judgment with the way of the times, and I made considerable money in this fashion." Christian then told him in plain language exactly what he thought of him and his ways, and concluded by informing him that if he would walk with them, he must be prepared to go against the wind, the storm and the tide; and to take his stand for Christianity when all men derided those who named the name of Christ, and counted them a reproach and shame. To this By Ends would not for a moment agree, so they left him and went their way.

As By Ends stood in the middle of the road, he saw three of his old school companions coming along the path, whose names were Hold-the-world, Money-love and Save-all. They had been in school together many years before in Love-gain College in Coveting county, and their head master had been a Mr. Tight-fist who had taught them the ignoble art of gaining wealth, either by fraud, violence and flattery; but especially by putting on the mask of religion. These pupils had become so expert in this line of things that they could quite easily have set up a school for themselves! After the usual salutations were over, Mr. Money-love asked: "Who are those two men going on the road before us?" By Ends then related to them what Christian and Hopeful had said to him, and concluded by saying: "The men before us are so rigid.

and love so much their own notions, and so lightly esteem the opinions of others, that, let a man be never so godly, if he does not agree with them in all things, they thrust him out of their company. "Ah," ejaculated Save-all: "I see that they are righteous overmuch! I affirm that the person who puts on the mask of religion in order to get wealth, gets two good things. He gets religion which is good and money which is good." This sentiment was heartily applauded by all the rest of his like-minded companions, and they moved slowly in the track of the two pilgrims.

We need not spend much time in explaining the meaning of these characters, as the speech of these four men carries its own condemnation. There are people today who are doing exactly the same thing as these men. How many there are who put on the cloak of religion and join some denomination in order to stand in well with the community where they have their business. They thus use their profession of Christianity to better themselves financially, socially and commercially. Judas, one of Christ's own disciples did this. He pretended to be a follower of the Lord, but it was because of the bag of money he had charge of, and from which he often stole for his own benefit. His awful end and fearful doom should be a warning to others who seek to follow his example.

The Pharisees, who lived in the time of our Lord, sought to do this, and were unsparingly exposed and condemned by the Savior Himself in these words: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretense make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation" (Matt. 23:14). God hates sham and hypocrisy in any form and has declared: "Ye *cannot* serve God and Mammon" (or wealth). He also reveals that "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish." The only way to deal with such persons as By Ends and his companions is to

do what Christian did, refuse to associate with such. The Bible enjoins the believer: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . . but "come out from among them and be separate." The question is asked: "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Such pious frauds should be mercilessly exposed and their company refused, lest they contaminate one's own soul, for it is written: "evil communications corrupt good manners."

Soon Christian and Hopeful came to a plain called Ease where they walked with much contentment but, as that plain was narrow, they quickly crossed it. As they reached the other side they saw a little hill called Lucre Hill or Money Hill, that lay right alongside the straight and narrow path. In this hill was a silver mine that had caused many to turn aside from the path in order to enrich themselves; but the ground around the edge of the mine, being loose and treacherous, had broken underneath them and caused some to be killed and others to be maimed for the rest of their lives.

As they came close to it, a man named Demas called to them and suggested that they should combine business with pleasure and turn aside from the path for a little while, and help themselves to the rich and rare treasures of the silver mine. He then went on to assure them that they would thus be enabled to spend the remainder of their journey heavenward in ease and comfort. This sounded good to Hopeful and he exclaimed: "Let us go and see!" Christian, however, put his hands upon his companion's shoulder and said: "I have heard of this place before and of the many who have been slain; and besides, that treasure is a snare to those that seek it, for it hinders them in their pilgrimage." With these words Christian persuaded Hopeful to reject Demas' advice, and they continued on their way.

God's word speaks of Money Hill, and warns the pilgrim thus: "They that *will* be rich, fall into temptation

and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For *the love of money* is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness" (1 Tim. 6:9-11).

This is a very real danger in the pilgrim path. You will have noticed that it was at the end of the plain called Ease that the temptation came. It is when things are going easy with the Christian that the subtle temptation comes to set his eyes and heart on getting money until, gradually, the love of money becomes the absorbing thing of life. When the love of money fills the heart, it displaces the love of Christ; the love of reading, studying and meditating in God's word; the love of prayer; the love of winning souls for the Savior; and the love of meeting together with God's people. This love of money, like a cancer, eats at the root of the spiritual life and produces coldness of heart, laxity in service and barrenness of soul; until the Christian loses his pilgrim character, his usefulness in Christ's service and his own joy of salvation. He develops into a shame and disgrace to the name of Christ, and becomes a stumbling block in the way of the unsaved.

Notice that the Bible does not say that: "Money is the root of all evil"; but that "the *love* of money is the root of all evil." Money is an excellent servant when controlled; but is a terrible and tyrannical master when it dominates the soul. The Lord Jesus addressed Himself to such as follows: "Thou sayest thou art rich and increased with goods and hast need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy naked-

ness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:17-18).

Beware of the lust of wealth, for it ruins the believer's life of communion with the Lord. The love of Christ and the love of wealth can never occupy the same heart. It is far better to be poor in this world's riches and be rich towards God, than vice versa. Money has been well described as "A universal provided for everything but happiness, and a universal passport to every place except heaven." The Lord Jesus said: "Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." God will see to it that all the needs of His children will be met. His promise is: "God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If any Christian reader feels that his money is running away with him, let him speedily get rid of some to support some servants of Christ in far off needy fields with the gospel, or to alleviate some necessity that is near at hand. God will be no man's debtor and the Christian's investment shall return in the way of blessing to his own soul, with interest compounded and hundredfold!

When By Ends and his companions arrived at Money Hill, and heard the invitation from Demas, they rushed towards the mine without a moment's hesitation. Whether they fell into the pit, or went down to dig, or were smothered by the foul gases at the bottom, John Bunyan does not tell us but he adds: "This I observed, they were never seen again in the pathway."

Presently the pilgrims came to a place where a monument stood which immediately aroused their curiosity. It looked as though it had been a woman transformed into a pillar. As they stood before it, Hopeful spied some handwriting on the head of the statue and Christian read out the words, which were these: "*Remember Lot's Wife!*" Then Christian realized that this was the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife had been turned as she looked

back, while fleeing from the city of Sodom. Let us recall the story and lay to heart the lesson in these three significant words: "Remember Lot's wife!"

Lot was the nephew of Abraham and they both dwelt in the land of Canaan, where each had large herds of cattle. The time came, however, when they must part, for there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle, and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. Accordingly Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Lot then looked around and, seeing the well watered plain of Jordan, chose this for himself and Abraham went the other way. In this plain of Jordan was a wicked city called Sodom, and soon Lot moved into this city and reared a family there.

After some years, the wickedness of this city became so great that God determined He would destroy it with fire from heaven; but before He did so, He sent two angels into the city to warn Lot and his family of its impending doom so that they might escape. Lot, in turn, sought to warn his sons-in-law of their danger, but they paid no attention to him. At last the two angels took Lot and his wife and two daughters, brought them to the gate of the city and said: "Escape for thy life! Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain! Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!" Thus commanded they began to flee from the doomed city, but Lot's wife, who loved Sodom with its wickedness, defied the angels words and turned to look back, no doubt with a longing desire to re-enter the city where her heart really lived. God, that moment, came in judgment upon her and turned her into a pillar of salt. Many years afterward the Lord Jesus, turning to His audience exclaimed solemnly: "Remember Lot's wife!"

There are three things we shall do well to remember

about Lot's wife. The first is, *Remember her privileges*. These were threefold. First, she was related to a righteous man, whose "soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," but this did not save her. The fact that a person is related to a child of God does not save that individual. Each person must be saved individually through faith in the finished work of Christ, and acceptance of Him as his own Savior. To be a child of Christian parents is indeed a great privilege, but it carries with it no guarantee of salvation. Perhaps some person reading this has parents who are on the way to heaven, while he is still traversing the broad downward part to hell. Perhaps some wife is a child of God while the husband is still a child of wrath. How sad to think of being related to a child of God and then lost eternally!

Second, think of the privilege of being warned by two angels sent down from heaven! Yet, in spite of this, she was lost. God warns the unsaved in this day by something far more authoritative than angels. He warns by His own word, the Bible, and bids the sinner to "flee from the wrath to come!" He furthermore "commands all men everywhere to repent." Has the reader heeded these and many other warnings; or have you, like Lot's wife, allowed them to pass unheeded?

Third, she knew the way to be saved and yet she perished in her sins. It is possible for one to memorize verses in the Bible that may make the way of salvation plain, and yet be lost. It is far better never to have known God's way of salvation, than to know it and neglect, reject or despise it. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. Let the example of Lot's wife be a warning to any who know how to be saved and yet are not saved.

Next, *Remember her sin*, the sin of unbelief. She heard the warning voice of the angels, but proved she did not believe them by her disobedience to their command. Unbelief is the damning sin and causes thousands of souls to be eternally lost. Many realize that they are sinners and, as such, are under God's condemnation. They have

heard of a Savior's love and of His death for their sins on Calvary's cross. They have heard that all who will believe on Him and receive Him as their own Savior will be eternally saved. Yet they still linger in their sins and trifle with the proffered mercy and grace of God! What keeps them in this position? Unbelief! Unbelief stands between them and God. If any reader is in such a condition, mark well the words: "Remember Lot's wife!"

Lastly, *Remember her doom.* She perished in the destruction of that on which she had set her heart. All her treasure was in Sodom, a picture of this world; and when Sodom perished, she perished with it. One day, we know not when, the Lord Jesus is to be "Revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Woe unto those, in that day, who are living for this world alone! There are many like Lot's wife, whose god is fashion, fancy, pleasure, power, sport and money. Their life is centered upon the passing things of this world. Although warned of the fate of one who did the same thing, yet they go on, heedless, careless and Godless; until the time comes when, upon a death bed, they seek to flee from the wrath they richly deserve. They attempt to disentangle their minds from that which has occupied them all their lives but, in their weak and dying condition, they realize, too late, that there is no escape for those who neglect so great salvation. Before they are awake, their poor Christless souls have passed into a Christless eternity, where there is endless weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Thus they perish, victims of their own mad folly and wilful rejection of God's great salvation. Well may each unsaved reader weigh carefully and soberly the meaning of these three intensely solemn words: "Remember Lot's wife!"

CHAPTER XV

Christian and Hopeful, after laying well to heart the lesson of Lot's wife, continued their journey, and presently came to a very beautiful place where a limpid stream meandered through a fertile valley. On each side of the stream were soft velvety swards of green grass, and all manner of trees upon which the most luscious fruit was growing. This river was called by David, "the river of God;" but by John, "the river of the water of life." Here they drank of the cool refreshing stream, partook of the fruit and rested themselves on the banks of the river. They lay down and slept, for here was a safe place to rest. Here they remained for many days and sang a song that an earlier pilgrim in these parts had composed, which ran thus: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

This beautiful scene, with all its rest and quiet refreshment, is a picture of an experience that often comes into the life of the Christian. It is what might be termed, "the resting experience." You will doubtless recall that the Lord Jesus once said to His disciples in the midst of their busy labors: "Come ye apart and rest awhile." This resting experience is very necessary for the pilgrim, for it is here that he is enabled to recuperate and prepare for the future conflicts of the Christian life. The river, so calm, clear and refreshing, is a picture of the word of God that refreshes the weary pilgrim as he drinks deep of its precious promises and encouraging truths. God speaks to His people thus: "O that they had hearkened unto My commandments; then had their peace been as a river!" The fruit could speak of the fruit of the Spirit which is manifested in the life of that one who is living in communion with God. This fruit has a ninefold qual-

ity and is described in Galations 5: 22 as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control." Such fruit in the believer's life glorifies God, and graces the pilgrim's character. The smooth velvety grass on which they reclined could illustrate the exceeding great and precious promises of God, on which the believer may confidently rest his weary soul, and find peace, perfect peace, for it is written: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

After many days of quiet refreshment they decided to continue their journey, but soon found that the road became exceedingly rough. There were great hills to climb and deep valleys to descend; while rocks and thorns in the pathway made the going very difficult. The feet of the pilgrims, by reason of their long sojourn at the beautiful river, had become very tender, so that they were much discouraged by the rough and thorny road.

Presently they came to a place where, by looking over the wall that bordered the path, they saw a lovely smooth field called By-Path Meadow. In it was a delightfully smooth and easy footpath which apparently led in the same direction as the rough path on which they were then walking. Soon they perceived a stile, or steps over the wall, which gave easy access into By-Path Meadow. Christian said: "Come, good Hopeful, let us climb over." Hopeful at first demurred and objected: "What if this should lead us out of the way?" Christian sought to silence his companion's objections by pointing out that the smooth pathway lay exactly parallel to the rough road. At length, Hopeful was persuaded by his companion and climbed over the stile into the meadow. They found it very different from the difficult road they had just left, for it was delightfully smooth and very easy to negotiate.

Presently they saw a man ahead of them named False-Confidence, so Christian called to him and asked him where the pathway led. False-Confidence replied: "It leads to the Celestial Gate." "There," exclaimed Chris-

tian to Hopeful: "Did I not say so? By this you may see that we are right." But, as they followed their leader, darkness gradually enveloped them, so that they lost sight of the one who was going before. Suddenly False-Confidence, not seeing what was before him, fell into a deep pit which had been dug by the owner of the field to catch false confident fools. The pilgrims heard him fall, so they called to him and asked him what was the matter. All they heard in reply were his groans of anguish, and then followed the silence of death.

At this Hopeful asked: "Where are we now?" but Christian had no reply, for the fearful truth of their plight was dawning on him. Then came a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a terrific peal of thunder, and rain began to pour in torrents. When Hopeful saw this he groaned and cried: "O that I had kept on my way!" Christian exclaimed: "Who would have thought that this path should have led us out of the way?" Hopeful replied: "I was afraid at the very first, and therefore gave you gentle caution. I would have spoken plainer, but you were older than I." At this, Christian cried penitently: "Good brother, be not offended! I am sorry I have brought thee out of the way, and have put thee into such great danger. Pray, my brother, forgive me, for I did not do it of any evil intent."

Hopeful promptly forgave him and they tried to find their way back to the stile again but, due to the intense darkness and the rising waters, they could not. In spite of all their skill they could not find the way. For their encouragement, however, they heard a voice which said: "Let thine heart be towards the highway, even the way that thou wentest; turn again!" Alas, in spite of all their efforts, they had to give up and acknowledge that they were hopelessly lost. At length they saw a sheltering rock and, with weary and aching bones and feeling utterly sick and miserable at heart, they lay down and soon were fast asleep.

Very early the next morning, while the pilgrims were still fast asleep, the owner of By-Path Meadow, a huge and cruel giant named Despair awakened in his great castle named Doubting Castle. Rising from his bed, he took his club, and made his way to where Christian and Hopeful were peacefully sleeping. With a grim and surly voice, he awakened them and demanded who they were and what they meant by trespassing on his grounds. You can well imagine the dismay of the pilgrims as they saw the giant towering over them. They made a feeble defense by telling the Giant that they were pilgrims who had lost their way. At this the Giant roared: "You have this night trespassed on me, by trampling in and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must come along with me." This they were compelled to do, for the Giant enforced his remarks with the business end of his club. Added to this was the fact that the pilgrims knew they were in the wrong, and therefore hadn't a word to say. Thus they were driven in front of the Giant, as meek as lambs, until they reached the Castle. This dreadful place, with its grim walls, iron gate and narrow-barred windows might well have struck terror to the bravest soul. Into this place the Giant drove them and, placing them in a dark and dirty dungeon, securely locked them in, and left them without a bit of bread or a drink of water from Wednesday morning till Saturday night. Here poor Christian and Hopeful lay bemoaning their sad plight, and wondering what was to be the end of it all.

Now Despair had a wife whose name was Diffidence or Distrust, and she counselled her husband to go down to the prisoners and give them as severe a beating with his club as he could, without killing them. This pleased the Giant well, so accordingly he came down and, without a word of warning or explanation, commenced to belabor them with his club so unmercifully that they cried in anguish and fell to the floor, groaning in agony and bleeding from their wounds. Bruised and almost unconscious,

they spent all that night in nothing but sighs and bitter lamentations.

The next day Distrust advised her husband to take down a length of rope, a knife and a bottle of poison, and counsel the pilgrims to do away with themselves. This sounded like good advice to the Giant, so he entered the cell where the prisoners still lay on the floor. He pointed out to them that, as their lives were attended by so many miseries, and that there was no possible hope of escaping from his castle; the best thing they could do would be to take their own lives, and thus they would be delivered from his grasp and from the terrors of his castle.

He then offered them the rope with which to hang themselves, the knife with which to cut their throats, and the poison to drink which would soon put them outside the confines of Doubting Castle. The prisoners, however, would have none of it and desired him to let them go. This roused Despair to anger and, taking his club, he was about to rush upon them and kill them on the spot, when a most peculiar thing happened. Without a moment's warning, he suddenly fell down in a fit—for he suffered from these fits in sunshiny weather—and completely lost the use of his hand. Sad to relate, Christian and Hopeful were so weak and faint and stiff from their wounds, that they were unable to take advantage of the Giant's helplessness. To their disappointment, Despair soon recovered from his indisposition and withdrew, leaving them to consider what they would do.

Poor Christian was in a dreadful way and seriously considered taking Despair's advice and ending his life. Hopeful, however, dissuaded him from this by pointing out the sinfulness of such a thing. He then tried to cheer him up by suggesting that escape would yet be possible and said: "Others, as far as I can understand, have been taken by him as well as we; and yet have escaped out of his hand." With such words Christian was made to see his folly and relinquished his idea. That evening, the

Giant came down to see how they did. When he found they were still alive, he threatened them with further dire punishment that would make them regret the day they were born. This caused Christian to faint and, when he recovered, he again desired to use the rope, knife, or poison that Despair had left them; but once again Hopeful caused him to give up the project. This time he pointed out how God had delivered him from Apollyon, and how bravely he had played the man on that occasion. He further reminded Christian of his attitude in Vanity; how he had not been afraid of imprisonment, torture and death, but had bravely witnessed for his Lord and Master. This effectually delivered Christian from such God-dishonoring thoughts, and they waited to see if deliverance should come.

The following day Distrust advised the Giant to take the prisoners, if they were still alive, to the courtyard of the castle, and show them the bodies and the bones of the pilgrims whom he had already killed. She ended by saying: "Make them believe, ere a week comes to an end, that thou wilt tear them in pieces as thou hast done their fellows before them." Despair promptly followed his wife's counsel. In spite of their stiffness and wounds he drove his prisoners before him and showed them the fearful spectacle of hundreds of dead men's bodies. He then threatened that if they did not do away with themselves, he would do the job for them ere Sunday came. With this terrifying threat he beat them again, drove them back to their cell and left them securely locked in, alone with their misery.

Now were the pilgrims indeed in a desperate plight. They had but a few hours more left to them and then the Giant would come down to their cell and kill them with his cruel club. What could they do to escape from the clutches of such an awful being? In their distress they decided to pray and confess their sins to their heavenly Father. They remembered His word: "If we confess our

sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Accordingly, they got down on their knees and told God all about it. They did not excuse themselves in the slightest degree; but brought their sins out into the light of God's presence and judged themselves unmercifully. They acknowledged their sin in having tried to escape from the path of obedience to His will and word and work by climbing over the stile. They owned their laziness, indifference and self-indulgence. They bemoaned their guilt and freely admitted they were receiving just what they deserved; but they prayed that God, in His grace and mercy, would make a way by which they could escape from their dark dungeon, the club of Giant Despair and the advice of Distrust.

They continued to pray and confess their sins until almost the break of day. Suddenly Christian, as one half amazed cried: "What a fool I am to thus lie in this stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty. I have a key in my bosom called Promise that will, I am persuaded, open any door in Doubting Castle!" Then Hopeful exclaimed: "That's good news, good brother. Pluck it out of your bosom and try!" Thus encouraged, Christian put his hand into his bosom and drew out the key called Promise. Placing it in the lock of the door of the cell, he found that the door opened with ease. Ascending the steps, they came to another door, but again this door opened with the wonderful key, until at length they entered the courtyard.

Once more the key was placed in the great iron gate and, though it took some time, finally this door opened. As it did so, it creaked quite loud upon its hinges, and this noise awakened the Giant from his sleep. Grasping his club, he rushed out after them as hard as he could but, as he was about to catch and kill them, he was overtaken by another of those peculiar fainting fits which rendered him quite helpless. The pilgrims, you may be

quite sure, wasted no time in getting back again to the stile. Climbing over it as quickly as they could, they once more stood in the King's highway and thanked God, from their depths of their hearts, for their miraculous escape from Doubting Castle. They had learned by experience, and very painful experience at that, that the pathway of obedience to God's will and word, though it might be rough and difficult at times, was ten thousand times better than By-path Meadow, with its terrible owner, his grim wife, and the fearful Castle!

We may well lay to heart the lesson of By-path Meadow, Giant Despair, Distrust and Doubting Castle, for its meaning is plain. Many a Christian, finding that the straight and narrow way is difficult and hard to the flesh, seeks to find an easier path by climbing over some conveniently placed stile. The Devil will see to it that the stile is quite handy, for he is quite an expert at mimicking "providence," as he did in the case of Jonah.

Perhaps some Christian is finding it hard to give out gospel tracts, and is tempted therefore to give it up. Perhaps he argues: "Why should I go to the prayer meeting? There are plenty of others and, besides, it looks like rain. Why attend the open-air meeting and be exposed to the ridicule of the enemies of Christ? Why not rather stay home and sing: "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying?" Why go to the trouble of taking a Sunday School class with its necessary study and visitation? Why put one's self out just to please some who do not seem to appreciate one's efforts? Why give so much of one's time, prayer and money to the Lord's work?

Sometimes a Christian reasons this way and then, following the example of some false confident professor of Christianity, climbs into By-path Meadow and tries to avoid the responsibilities of the Christian life. But what happens? Just exactly what happened to Christian and Hopeful. Spiritual darkness enshrouds him. The storms of passion and temptation sweep over his soul, and despair

grips his heart and beats him unmercifully. He is surrounded by dark and dreadful God-dishonoring doubts. He doubts his salvation, questions the truth of the word of God, the goodness and love of God and the power of Christ. Then comes distrust which whispers: "Do away with your Christian profession. Give it up and go back into the world, for you were never as miserable *then* as you are now!" Thus the poor child of God is nonplussed and knows not what to do. He is distressed and distracted beyond measure.

At last he gets down on his knees before God in honest and openhearted confession of his self-indulgence, laziness, pride and sin. As he thus judges himself in the light of God's presence, there is revealed to him the fact that the promises of God, long neglected and forgotten, are able to deliver him from all his doubts, perplexities and fears. The repentant Christian then lays hold on these promises by faith and pleads them before the throne of grace; and lo, all his doubts are dissolved like the mist before the rising sun. Despair *faints* before the sunlight of God's word and distrust is silent. The believer then gladly returns to that life of obedience to God's will, of his study of God's word and activity in God's work. He has learned by experience that: "God's way is a way of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace."

If any Christian reader is in Doubting Castle, by this incident, take courage and remember that the key of Promise fits any door in that gloomy place. Judge and confess your sins, and God will make good to you His "exceeding great and precious promises." Do not make the mistake of attempting to construct a key of your own; for only God's key can fit the door. Mere human reasoning is of no avail in such a contingency. God's word must be believed implicitly and relied upon unhesitatingly. Then, and only then, will the doors of doubt and darkness swing open to allow the soul to enjoy the liberty which Christ has made possible to His own.

Ere the pilgrims left the stile, they consulted what they had best do, and finally decided that it would be a good plan to put a notice of warning near the stile, so that others might learn from their experience the danger of seeking an easier path. Accordingly, they first erected a monument of stones and then placed on it these words:

“Out of the way we went, and then we found
What ’twas to tread upon forbidden ground!
And let them that come after have a care,
Lest heedlessness makes them, as we, to fare:
Lest they for trespassing, his prisoners are
Whose Castle’s Doubting, and whose name’s Despair!”

As the pilgrims proceeded, they presently came to the Delectable Mountains, where they went up to see the gardens, orchards, vineyards and fountains of water. Here they freely partook of the good provision of this bountiful country. Here also they saw flocks of sheep feeding upon rich pasture. In charge of the sheep were four shepherds whose names were Knowledge, Experience, Watchful and Sincere. Christian and Hopeful then inquired of these shepherds: “Whose are these sheep?” The shepherds told them that they belonged to the Good Shepherd Who had laid down His life for them. They next inquired how far it was to the Celestial City and the reply was: “Too far for any but those that shall get thither.” The next question was: “Is the way safe or dangerous?” To this the shepherds replied: “It is safe for those for whom it is to be safe, but transgressors shall fall therein.” Then the shepherds examined the pilgrims and, finding them true men of God, gave them a hearty welcome.

The Delectable Mountains illustrate that fuller and wider knowledge of the word of God which opens up to the believer the purposes of God for this age, and also for the future. Glorious prospects are revealed to the child of God and, from their sublime heights, the pilgrim can view the eternal counsels of the omnipotent God. As he

is enabled to enter, in some measure, into the riches of God's grace, he is led to exclaim: "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11: 33).

The shepherds speak of the graces that keep the pilgrim in these parts. Without these the believer would be apt to get puffed up. How much he needs the guidance of knowledge, the balance of experience, the ceaseless watchfulness of soul and godly sincerity.

These shepherds could also illustrate those in an assembly of believers who, by reason of their knowledge in the word of God, experience in the ways of God, watchfulness in the will of God and sincerity in the love of God, are thus fitted to be the shepherds of the flock of Christ. Christ's commission to Peter was: "Feed My lambs . . . feed My sheep." In 1 Peter 5: 1-4 the elders are enjoined to: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but, willingly; not for filthy lucre (or money) but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

This gift of shepherding is a much needed one in these days when Satan is so busy trying to scatter the sheep, and the wolflike teachers of evil doctrine are seeking to destroy the faith of the lambs. The work of a pastor or shepherd may be an unnoticed work, but it will receive a crown and commendation at His coming. Young Christians are also admonished to: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they

do it with joy and not with grief.” The responsibility of these shepherds is to lovingly lead the flock into right pastures; to feed them with the finest of the wheat of the word of God; to counsel, admonish, warn, discipline and encourage them in the ways of God, so that they shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and be able, in turn, to take the place of those who are removed by death. This is God’s order for the church as given in His word. There is no such thing in the word of God as “the pastor of a church,” but God speaks of evangelists, pastors, teachers, bishops, deacons; all working harmoniously together in the same assembly which is thus edified, or built up, in love.

CHAPTER XVI

The Shepherds then showed the pilgrims some of the sights in these parts. The first scene to which they conducted them was a hill called Error. From the top of this hill they were asked to look down the steepest side. As they did so, they saw the bodies of several who had been killed by falling from this high place. When they inquired how these people had come to meet their end, they were told that the hill represented false doctrine, and those whose bodies they had seen at the bottom had not endured sound doctrine but, after their own lusts, had heaped to themselves teachers having itching ears, who had turned away their ears from the truth and turned them unto the fables of men. The result had been that they had fallen, and their bodies lay unburied as a warning to all to take heed what they heard, and to prove all things and hold fast that which was good.

This hill of Error has a solemn meaning for us; for there was never a time in the history of the world when so much error was taught as in this day and age. In fact we are warned about this in God's word, for we read: "Now the *Spirit speaketh expressly*, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:1-2). Wrong doctrines seem to exercise an hypnotic spell over those who receive them. Few who have been led away by these errors of the wicked one are ever delivered from them. How careful, therefore, we should be, before receiving what is taught. All should be tested by the Bible; not by a *single* passage in the Bible, or a text, but by the *general teaching* of the word of God. Almost every false doctrine tries to find support for itself from some single isolated text of the Bible; but when the doctrine is tested by the *general teaching* of the Scriptures, it will be instantly detected and rejected as unscriptural by the discerning Christian.

Let us name a few of these errors that are abroad today so as to be warned of their deadly danger. There is so-called "Christian Science," a theory that is neither Christian nor scientific. This has succeeded in deceiving great numbers of those who are ignorant of the Scriptures. This system denies the personality of God, the Deity of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the reality of sin, the necessity for the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ and the existence of Satan. It seeks to discredit all the fundamental truths of the word of God. The question may be asked: "Why are such great numbers of people swallowing this lie?" The answer is simple and needs to be carefully noted. *Those who refuse to accept the truth of God in the light, will believe the Devil's lie in the dark.* Man must believe something. If he rejects the truth, he will, by that act, open the door of his soul to receive and believe error, and the most foolish, and nonsensical error at that!

Another false doctrine is that known as Russelism after its founder "Pastor Russell"; sometimes known as "Millennial Dawn." This denies the essential and eternal Deity of Christ, the eternal punishment of the Christ rejector, and many other things. Spiritism is another thing that is sweeping many into a lost eternity. Beware of this attempt on the part of the living to communicate with those who have died. In spite of a large amount of fraud, it is not all sham. Spiritism is a reality and God issues solemn warnings against it. He declares: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, (mediums) neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them . . . The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits I will even set My face against that soul" (Lev. 19:30; 20:6). In view of these warnings, beware of spiritism in any shape or form.

Another of these errors is so-called "Higher Criticism." Under the cloak of "honest scholarship," it attempts to undermine the foundations of the faith. There are un-

saved men, occupying pulpits on every hand, who are paid to preach the word of God; but, Judas like, are seeking to steal away the precious faith of those who sit under their ministry. They belittle the Bible and ridicule those who earnestly contend for "the faith, once for all delivered to the saints." They deny the full inspiration of the Scriptures and substitute for it what they are pleased to term: "the assured results of modern scholarship." Beware of any man, however polite and well educated, who seeks to discredit the word of God: "Let God be true and every man a liar." A Bible that is not true is no foundation for any man's faith but, thank God, it is true! We are assured that: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, (or mature) thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Space fails to mention the many other evil doctrines that surround us in these days. The Christian would be well advised to get good sound books and pamphlets dealing with these false cults, so as to be better prepared to meet them with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

The shepherds next took them to a hill called Mount Caution, from the top of which they looked into a valley beneath and saw several men walking up and down among some tombstones. Apparently they were blind, for they did not seem to know where they were going, but stumbled over the tombs and could not find their way out from the cemetery. Christian and Hopeful then inquired who these men were, and how they came to be amongst the tombs. The shepherds told them that this was the end of By-path Meadow, and that these men had climbed over the stile to avoid the difficulties of the narrow way. They had been caught by a giant named Despair, who, after keeping them in his castle for a time, had put out their eyes and then turned them loose amongst the tomb-

stones to wander for the rest of their lives, so that the saying of the wise man might be fulfilled which says: "He that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead."

When they heard this, Christian and Hopeful looked at one another with tears in their eyes, but they did not tell the shepherds of their acquaintance with Despair. They realized, with thankful hearts, what a wonderful escape had been theirs from such a cruel fate.

There are many Christians today who, through wandering from the right path, have had the light of their testimony for Christ put out by that trinity of evil: despair, doubt and distrust. Instead of confessing their sins and judging themselves in God's sight, and thus being delivered from their doubts; they have allowed their unjudged and unconfessed sins to produce such despair of soul that the light of their testimony is darkened. They now wander amongst the spiritually dead, bringing shame and disgrace to the name of Christ. They are stumbling blocks in the way of those who are still dead in their trespasses and sins, and an offense to the gospel they once professed to believe. People look at them and argue that if this is Christianity, then they want none of it, and thus God's name is blasphemed because of them. The longer one remains in Doubting Castle, the greater will be the danger of being robbed of this greatest of all boons, spiritual vision. If any reader is still there, let him bestir himself lest the fate of these men be yours.

The pilgrims were next conducted to a door in the side of a hill. The shepherds opened the door and bade them look in. They looked therefore and perceived that it was a most dreadful place, for there was a smell of burning and brimstone. They saw also the fearful flames of judgment and heard the pitious cries of those who were within that flame, weeping, wailing and gnashing their teeth.

With awed voices they inquired: "What place is this?" They were told that this was the side door to hell, the way that hypocrites go in at, such as Judas and others who had a show of pilgrimage, who outwardly appeared to be on the heavenly highway; but who lacked the one thing needful for entrance to the Celestial City; namely, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit of God. They had discovered, too late, that there was a vast difference between an outward form and the inward reality.

We may well pause at this solemn scene and each ask himself: "Am I truly a child of God, born again by His blessed Holy Spirit, and therefore a new creature in Christ Jesus; or am I simply deceiving myself, and mistaking my *profession* of Christ for a *possession* of Christ? Do I really know my sins forgiven? Have I peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; or is my feeling of security based on a wrong foundation that will not stand the test of eternity? Am I showing, by my unworldly life and godly character, that I have indeed passed from death unto life and from the power of Satan unto God?"

These are good questions to ask ourselves, for it would be a terrible thing to discover, too late, that we have been deceived. It is tragically possible for a person to deceive himself and live in a fool's paradise of his own making and, at last, have his eyes opened to realize that he has mistaken the shadow for the substance, religion for regeneration, churchianity for Christianity, profession for possession and ritual for reality. May it be the heart confession of each reader to be able to say:

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

Let us all make sure that we are resting only in the

finished work of Christ for our salvation, and the infallible word of God for our assurance.

After this, the Shepherds had them look through a telescope, for the Celestial City was visible from those mountains through this means. Though both Christian and Hopeful looked carefully through it, what they had recently seen had so worked upon them that they could not see anything very clearly. They thought that they saw something that looked like a gate, and also some of the glory of the place, and this gave them much encouragement. Then one of the Shepherds gave them a note of the way. Another bade them beware of the Flatterer. The third warned them not to sleep on the Enchanted Ground, while the last bade them God-speed.

After the pilgrims had thanked the Shepherds for their kind hospitality and counsel, they went on their way singing, •

“Thus by the Shepherds secrets are revealed,
Which from all other men are kept concealed;
Come to the Shepherds then, if you would see
Things deep, things hid, and that mysterious be.”

Presently they came to a dark lane where they met a man whom seven demons had bound with seven strong cords, and who was being carried to the side door to hell. Then did Christian and Hopeful tremble. As the man passed, Christian looked to see who it was, for he thought it might be a man named Turn-away from the town of Apostacy; but as the man hung his head he could not recognize him plainly, but he saw on his back a card on which was written, “Wanton professor and dreadful Apostate.”

Thus ended the history of a man who once professed Christianity, but who proved he had never been born again by turning back and opposing the gospel. It seems that for such there is little hope, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to open

shame. We need ever to remember that not all who say unto Jesus: "Lord, Lord," shall enter in to the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of the Father. The proof of true discipleship is continuance. "If ye continue in My word," said Christ, "then are ye My disciples indeed."

Soon they came to a place in this dark lane where another road, called Dead Man's Lane, entered it from Broadgate Road. Then Christian told his companion of an incident that had occurred at this place some time previously, for this spot was one of the most dangerous places of the pilgrim's journey. He recounted the story of a man named Little-Faith from the town of Sincere who, when he came to this place, lay down and slept. As he awakened, three brothers named Faint-Heart, Mistrust and Guilt, the worst scoundrels in the countryside, came upon him and demanded his money. Faint-Heart demanded: "Deliver thy purse." As Little-Faith, terrified by the onslaught, hesitated to do so, Mistrust ran up to him and thrusting his hands in his pocket robbed him of his bag of silver. Then Little-Faith cried out: "Thieves! Thieves!" At this, Guilt struck him a blow on the head and he fell, bleeding and unconscious, to the earth. The robbers, hearing someone coming along the road, and fearing that it should be one named Great-Grace from the city of Good-Confidence, took to their heels and left poor Little-Faith lying robbed, bleeding and senseless on the road.

When Little-Faith came to himself and discovered that he had lost nearly all his spending money for the journey, he was inconsolable. But he discovered that his most treasured and precious possession, several beautiful jewels, were still safe. However, he was forced to beg his way for the rest of his journey, for he could not sell the jewels. Many a day he went hungry and was so swallowed up with his loss that he could think and talk of nothing else for the remainder of his pilgrimage. He could have

easily secured a fresh supply of spending money from the Lord, but his loss so filled his mind that it blinded him to everything else. He was so taken up with his misfortune that nothing would console him. He spent all his time relating the story of the riches he once possessed, and of the poverty he now suffered. He thus dwelt continually in the past and sought no power for the present.

Little-Faith is a picture of a person who, though truly saved, yet through a faint heart in God's cause, and a mistrust of God's truth, gets a guilty conscience which robs him of his joy in the Lord, the peace of God, and the assurance and satisfaction of the gospel. Instead of joyfully treading the pilgrim pathway as God intended he should, he becomes the very picture of misery, and is always sighing and complaining about his loss and the sadness of his condition.

These "Little-Faiths" can always be distinguished by the fact that they are continually dwelling on past experiences. They speak of the good times they "used to have years ago"; of the service they "used to render," of the joy that "once they had." This is a sad condition for any Christian to get into; but it is good to know that the jewels, the essential things of the Christian life are still there. Every Christian has seven precious jewels that can never be lost. They have been well stated by another as follows: "The Christian has a *life* that cannot be forfeited (John 10:28); a *relationship* that cannot be broken (Gal. 3:26); a *righteousness* that cannot be tarnished (2 Cor. 5:21); a *peace* with God that can never be disturbed (Eph. 2:14); an *acceptance* that can never be questioned (Eph. 1:6); an *inheritance* that can never fade (1 Pet. 1:4), and a *title* that can never be disputed (Rev. 5:9)."

Peter had an experience like Little-Faith. He was knocked down and robbed and even denied his Lord with oaths and curses; yet Christ had prayed for him that his faith would not fail, and he was restored from his backsliding. Unlike Little-Faith he did not waste time be-

moaning the failure of the past, but drew from that store of all sufficient grace a fresh supply of "spending money," and went on to glorify the Lord in his life.

Is any reader in the condition of Little-Faith? Then let him confess his sin in having had a faint heart in God's cause, a mistrust of His promises and a consequently guilty conscience. Instead of bemoaning his lot and making other people miserable by the oft recital of his miserable and wretched condition; let him return, in humble repentance, to that work he neglected and that Bible he failed to study. God has promised: "I will restore unto you the years that the locusts hath eaten . . . and ye shall eat in plenty and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you" (Joel 2: 25-26). Do not any longer allow these three robbers to strip you of your joy but, "forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." You will then be a happy, useful and contented Christian.

CHAPTER XVII.

As they continued their journey, the pilgrims came to a place where they saw a path come into their way and which seemed to be as straight as the path on which they were traveling. It was, as it were, a way within a way and they did not know which path to take, for they both seemed straight before them. As they stood still to consider, a man approached them, clothed in a light robe, who asked them why they stood thus. When the pilgrims informed him of their predicament the man said: "Follow me, for I too, am going to the Celestial City, and am well acquainted in these parts." Accordingly they followed him, for he seemed a pleasant man and was full of compliments and fine sayings. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the road on which he was taking them turned away from the straight and narrow path; but being absorbed in listening to the fine things their companion was saying about them, they did not notice their deviation, and soon their faces were turned away from the Celestial City.

Suddenly, before they were aware of it, he led them into the compass of a large net in which they were so entangled that they could not, in spite of all their efforts, extricate themselves. Then the robe fell from the man, and they perceived he was a dark man whose name was Flatterer. As they lay crying in the net, Christian groaned: "Now do I see myself in an error! Did not the Shepherds bid us beware of flatterers? As is the saying of the wise man, so we have found it this day: 'A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet.'" Hopeful cried: "Here David was wiser than we; for saith he: 'Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer?'" Thus they lay helpless in the net, bewailing their folly, and rueing the day they had ever listened to the blandishments of the Flatterer.

Presently there came a shining one to them with a whip in his hand who asked them who they were and how they came to be in the net. Christian replied by telling him frankly the story of their deception. At this, the Shining One said: "Flatterer is a false apostle that hath transformed himself into an angel of light." He then tore the net and let them out saying: "Follow me that I may set you in your way again." When he had brought them to the place from whence they had been turned aside, he commanded them to lie down. As they did so, he gave them both a good thrashing with the whip, saying as he did: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent." This done, he bade them go on their way and take good heed to themselves, so the pilgrim's went on their way, singing in a chastened tone:

"Come hither, you that walk along the way;
See how the pilgrims fare that go astray;
They caught are in an entangling net,
'Cause they good counsel lightly did forget.
'Tis true they rescued were, but yet you see
They're scourged to boot: Let this your caution be!"

The lesson of the Flatterer is obvious. A Christian needs to beware of the person who is always complimenting him and trying to make him believe he is a very extraordinary specimen of humanity, and one of the very few perfect people in the world! The Devil will see to it that the Christian never suffers from an overdose of humility. On the contrary, he will compliment him on every sermon he preaches, on every prayer he prays, on every deed he does, on every gift he gives until, puffed up by these foolish notions, the poor pilgrim is soon entangled in a net. It is a good thing sometimes to get into the net, for the net lets the Christian down to earth, and he realizes what a fool he has been in thus imagining himself to be better than others. He discovers that the only extraordinary thing about him is his foolishness. God's chastening, that follows such an experience, helps to complete the

lesson that God would impress upon His children. In the school of experience, they learn the necessity for the injunction of God's word: "Be not wise in your own conceits!" Self-confidence, self-assertion, and self-advertisement are evils that carry their own condemnation, and of such the Christian should beware.

After a while they saw a man named Atheist coming towards them with his back to the Celestial City. When he was come up to them he inquired where they were going, and when they told him that they were going to the Celestial City he burst into laughter. On being asked the reason for his laughter he replied: "I laughed to see what ignorant persons you are to take such a tedious journey for nothing." He then told them that there was no such place as the Celestial City, for he had been seeking it for twenty years but had found no trace of it. He was therefore going back and advised them to give up all hope of ever seeing such a place, for no such city existed. "But," Christian exclaimed: "we have both heard and believe that there is such a place to be found." This amused Atheist the more and he went on his way, laughing at the simplicity of their faith.

The class of persons represented by Atheist is still with us in this day and the Bible warns us of such. These unbelievers, infidels, sceptics and agnostics are quite busy at the present time. In fact, there is in this country a society known as "The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism." It has been formed for the express purpose of denying the truth of God's word and the very existence of God Himself. Atheism masquerades in many garbs these days. We see it in what is called the "Evolutionary Hypothesis," which denies that the world of nature came into existence by the direct creative act of God as revealed in Genesis; but substitutes for it a theory that man has evolved from the lower forms of life by gradual processes until he has attained his present status. This has no foundation in the facts of science, but yet is

taught as though it were. Many of the young men and women of our country, in their ignorance and credulity, believe this false conception and reject the Divine revelation.

God has given us a description of an atheist in Ps. 14: 1 where it is stated: "The fool has said in his heart: 'There is no God.'" To the intelligent person, who uses the faculties God has given him, there can be no doubt of the existence of God. Creation demands a Creator. The wondrous design in creation demands an infinite Designer. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." Just as a book demands an author, so the fact of the Bible demands an Author for it. That Author is God Who, through the sixty-six books that comprise the Bible, has revealed His mind and will concerning us. In it is revealed the state of man and his need of salvation; the way of salvation through faith in the death and resurrection of His beloved Son; and the eternal doom of those who wilfully reject His proffered grace. Let not any man, calling himself by any name he wishes, turn you away from the holy word of God which has stood the test of centuries. In spite of the countless attacks against the Bible, it has emerged triumphant in every case, and shall continue to do so, for the Lord Jesus said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall *never* pass away!" Rather, "let God be true and every man a liar." It is important to remember that faith, though always unreasoning, is never unreasonable. God's word can bear the closest investigation, and has, for many, many years. The closer it is scrutinized the greater its perfection is realized.

The Atheist has been well likened to an owl which, with its eyes tightly closed, looked up into the face of the sun and screeched: "I see no sun!" The attacks of unbelievers on the Bible remind one of the dog who barked all night at the moon, but the moon seemed to be quite unaffected by it and kept shining just the same! Cowper, the Christian poet, expressed it beautifully when he sang:

“A glory gilds the sacred page,
A glory like the sun;
That gives its light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.”

The pilgrims now entered a certain country called the Enchanted Ground, whose air was calculated to make one feel very heavy and drowsy. Here Hopeful began to be very sleepy and said: “I now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up my eyes; let us lie down here and take a nap.” But Christian refused to do this and reminded Hopeful that the Shepherds had warned them to beware of sleeping on the Enchanted Ground. He further pointed out the grave danger of sleeping there, lest he should awake no more. This opened Hopeful’s eyes to his danger and he thanked Christian for his good counsel. In order that they might be kept alert, they began to converse with each other of their spiritual experiences.

The Enchanted Ground illustrates that period in the Christian life when everything seems to be going well. Business is prospering, good health is being enjoyed and family relationships are quite harmonious. The sun shines brightly and everything is going fine. It is at such a period as this that the Christian is exposed to a subtle danger. David, when passing through this experience, confidently asserted: “I shall *never* be moved.” Peter said to the Lord: “Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I.” But alas, both David and Peter were very soon asleep to their responsibilities and privileges and, when the temptation came, had not the strength to stand against it.

It is comparatively easy for the pilgrim to fall into the sleep of formality and perform all the duties of the Christian life as a mere matter of form. He can go through the routine of Christian service, prayer and preaching in a mechanical manner, while spiritually sound asleep and with no heart in it for the Lord. The pilgrim needs ever to keep a strict watch upon himself, lest sleep come upon him and he lose the keen edge of his spirituality. It would

be a good thing if each Christian would ask himself periodically: "Am I as eager to win souls for Christ as I used to be? Do I study God's word with the same zest and enjoyment as before? Am I enjoying communion with my heavenly Father and my Lord and Savior as once I did? Is the world less attractive to me now than previously?" These questions will all help to keep the child of God awake to his condition, and on the alert for the dangers that continually beset his path.

While Christian and Hopeful traversed the Enchanted Ground they conversed with each other. Hopeful began to tell Christian of his spiritual awakening, his conviction of sin and of his conversion in the city of Vanity. This conversation is well worth the careful attention of the reader of "Pilgrim's Progress," for it unfolds in a very forceful way the experiences of a soul aroused to a sense of his need of Christ and of his vain efforts to save himself; until at last, weary, worn and sad, he finds in the Lord Jesus Christ all he needs for his salvation; past, present and future.

Presently they came to a place where a crooked road from a town called Conceit joined the straight and narrow path. Along this road they saw a young man walking, who presently entered the narrow way and continued his walk toward the Celestial City. When they asked him his name and where he was going, he told them his name was Ignorance and that he hoped that he was going to the Celestial City. When they pointed out to him that there was only one way to enter the narrow way and that was through the door, Ignorance stated that in his town no one knew of such a door, but they had constructed this little way which led into the narrow path, and that this was good enough for them. Christian then asked him: "What have you to show at the gate of the Celestial City that it may be opened to you?" Ignorance replied: "I know my Lord's will. I have always lived a good life. I pray, fast, pay tithes and give alms."

Then Christian, in a very kind but faithful manner, pointed out to Ignorance his mistake and showed him from the Bible that, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, he had not submitted himself to the righteousness of God." He read to him the Scriptures which declare that a man must be born again if he would ever enter the Celestial City. He drew his attention to the fact that his own works of righteousness could not save him. He pointed out that God declared him to be a sinner, lost and guilty, in spite of his best endeavours. He showed him that God, seeing and knowing this, had provided a salvation full, free and eternal for all who would receive His Son as their own Savior. He told him of the old old story of Jesus and His love and how He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself on Calvary's cross, and then rose triumphant from the grave.

To all this good Scriptural counsel Ignorance turned away and refused to listen. He was like many today who imagine that their religious exercises, good works, prayers, giving, church membership and ordinances will put them on to the Celestial highway. He imagined that because he was sincere in his belief, his sincerity would save him, little realizing the awful tragedy of being sincerely mistaken. In spite of Christian's loving and faithful counsel, he refused to hearken and at last exclaimed: "That is your faith, but not mine; yet mine, I doubt not, is as good as yours . . . You go so fast I cannot keep pace with you. You go on before, I must stay a while behind."

Thus they had to leave him and Christian, turning to his companion exclaimed: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceits? There is more hope for a fool than for him!" This is not the last we shall hear of Ignorance, for we shall yet be told of his dreadful doom. But ere we leave him, is there a reader who fits this description of Ignorance? If, up to this time, you have been trusting in your morality, good works, church membership or

religious activities for your salvation, stop right where you are and list to the note of this solemn refrain: "*Ye must be born again!*" God declares you are a sinner, undone, unrighteous and ungodly; and that if you die in that condition you will be eternally doomed. Christ has solemnly stated that you must be born again if you would see the kingdom of God. Your good works and character, splendid though they may be, can never take the place of regeneration. "For by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Gal. 2:16). Your own righteousnesses in His sight are but filthy rags, if trusted in for salvation. (Isa. 64:6). They can therefore never merit His approval.

God, however, has provided for your need in the gift of His dear Son, Who, on the cross of Calvary, bare our sins in His Own body on the tree, and died to satisfy God's righteous and holy claims against the sinner. Christ, being raised from the dead for our justification, offers to you forgiveness for the past, peace for the present and glory for the future. The only condition attached to this wondrous salvation is that you will own your need as a sinner, receive Christ to be your own personal Savior and confess Him as your Lord. If you are not yet saved, you may become so as you read this, and thus be fitted for entrance to the Celestial City.

As they proceeded on their way, Christian asked his companion if he remembered about a man named Temporary, who at one time had thought a great deal about starting on the pilgrim journey; but had not been heard of after he had become acquainted with a person called Save-self. Hopeful replied that he had known him quite well, and that the reason Temporary gave up his intentions of becoming a Christian were fourfold: First, though his conscience had been awakened to a sense of his guilt before God, his mind was not changed. As soon as his conscience began to trouble him, he turned to something else, until he no longer felt anxious about his eternal

welfare. This he did continually, until his conscience became seared as with a hot iron. Secondly, he was afraid of the responsibilities that he would have to bear, of the difficulties he would have to face, and of the self-denial he would have to practice if he became a Christian. This caused him to hesitate and finally to reject the way of salvation. Thirdly, he feared the shame, ridicule and scorn that would be heaped upon him by men of the world if he named the name of Christ. Lastly, he loved his sins and, although he feared the wrath of God, yet he was secretly glad to turn his back on his conviction of sin, and give full play to his fleshly and sinful lusts.

Thus ends the history of Mr. Temporary. His descendants are with us today, and are doing exactly the same thing as he did. Many, like him, are convicted of their need of the Savior; but are allowing unbelief, pride, love of sin, fear of man and procrastination to keep them from starting on the-journey. 'God's word declares that: "The things which are seen are temporal; (or passing away) but the things which are not seen are eternal." Temporary tried to serve both worlds and discovered it was an impossible task, for the Savior said: "No man can serve two masters, for he will either love the one and hate the other; or serve one, and despise the other." If any reader is tempted to imitate Temporary, let him take warning from this. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve: self, with its pleasures, pride, sins and eternal doom; or Christ, with salvation, peace, service and eternal glory. Ponder well the question

“Where will you be when earth is passed?
Where, when the dread hour comes at last?
Where when, to you, time is no more,
When shut forever is the door.
Eternity! Eternity!
Where will you spend eternity?”

CHAPTER XVIII.

Soon the Enchanted Ground came to an end and the pilgrims entered into another country called Beulah Land, the air of which was sweet and pleasant and filled with the fragrance of beautiful flowers that grew in great abundance. Birds of gorgeous plumage filled the air with their melody. Here the sun shone continually, and they were far removed from the noise of Vanity Fair, from the terrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death and from the threats of Giant Despair and his castle. They could see the beautiful Celestial City in the distance and it was right glorious to behold. The Shining ones, that had appeared to them at the cross, walked continually in these parts. The contract between the bride and the Bridegroom was renewed, so that the Bridegroom rejoiced over the bride, as also did God rejoice over them.

In this beautiful region there was no lack of food, but an abundance of all that the pilgrims could desire. Here also they met many other pilgrims who were nearing the end of their journey. As they walked in the lovely gardens and partook of the luscious fruit, Christian exclaimed: "If you see my Beloved, tell him I am sick with desire to see His glory." They also heard voices coming from the Celestial City saying: "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold thy salvation cometh! Behold His reward is with Him!'" Here they slept and awakened and feasted to their heart's content; but all the while looked with longing eyes on the city of gold that was founded upon pearls. They anticipated with great delight the time when they should enter that glorious place and see the King in all His beauty.

In this land of Beulah, Bunyan has given us a beautiful illustration of that period in the Christian's life when his journey is almost at an end. Here the pilgrim seems to enter the borderland of eternity. The things of time

and sense lose their value entirely. The noise and bustle of this work-a-day world never penetrates the quiet and hallowed seclusion of this blessed spot. The Lord is the ever present Companion of the Christian and heaven seems to be just over the way. Its glories are so real and its splendors so attractive, that the pilgrim longs to be at home with his blessed Lord and Savior. Sweet foretastes of this glory are continually given to him, and he can almost hear the song of the redeemed in heaven that he is soon to swell. He sees and hears things that none who stand around the dying bed can hear or see. The world, with all its anxieties, fears and sorrows is lost sight of in the light of the city of God. This is Beulah Land, the borderland of the believer's eternal rest.

One day, as they walked through the gardens, they were met by two men whose faces shone as the light and whose raiment gleamed like gold. Those two angels asked Christian and Hopeful who they were and whence they came. When the pilgrims gladly responded, these angelic messengers asked them of their journey, what dangers and difficulties they had encountered, and what persons they had met with on the way; so the pilgrims told them all. This pleased the angels much and they, in turn, told them that there was yet another difficulty before them ere they could enter the Celestial City. The angels then conducted them to the side of a river called the River of Death. The sight of this river stunned Christian and Hopeful, so that they asked their guides: "Is there no other way to get to the gate, except through this river?" To this the angels replied: "Yes, but there hath not any, save two, namely Enoch and Elijah, been permitted to tread that path since the foundation of the world; nor shall there be, until the last trumpet shall sound." The pilgrims next asked how deep the river was, and they were told: "You shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the king of the place." With these words the angels left them.

We need not pause long here, for the truth is self evident. Every reader of these pages will be in eternity within one hundred years. Death comes to all men everywhere, irrespective of age, intellect, riches, religion and nationality. "It is appointed unto men once to die," is the solemn dictum of Holy Scripture. The universal confession of humanity is: "We must all needs die." The cold grip of death will one day be laid upon each person, unless the Lord Jesus comes within the lifetime of the Christian, and each must cross the chill river of death himself. Is the reader ready for this experience? If God were to say to you, as He did to one of old: "This night is thy soul required of thee," would you be ready for the journey from time to eternity? Could you look up into the face of God and say: "By thy saving grace, and trusting only in the merits of my Savior's finished work, I am ready to go at any time;" or would the summons find you unprepared to meet God? The message of the Bible is: "Prepare to meet thy God!" Death will come, swift and sure, perhaps at the most unexpected time, and your soul will then be ushered into an eternity of bliss or of woe. Which is it to be with you? Make certain of eternal blessing of being saved. Just where and as you are, accept God's Son as your own Savior Who "tasted death for every man!"

They now entered the stream of death and Christian immediately began to sink and cried to Hopeful: "I sink in deep waters. The billows go over my head! All His waves go over me!" Hopeful replied: "Be of good cheer, brother, I feel the bottom and it is good!" Poor Christian, however, began to be tormented with doubts and cried: "Oh, my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about. I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey!" With this, a great horror of darkness came over his soul. The Devil, seeing the physical weakness of Christian, began to suggest doubts to him and brought to his mind the many sins he had committed before he be-

came a pilgrim, and the many he had committed since he started on the journey.

Hopeful did his best to keep Christian's head above water and, for his encouragement, said: "I can see the other side and there are angels waiting to receive us!"

But Christian cried despairingly: "It is for *you* they wait. You have been hopeful ever since I knew you." Then said Hopeful: "My brother, you have forgotten the Scripture that says: 'The wicked have no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued as other men.' These troubles are no sign that God has forsaken you; but are sent to try you, to see if you will call to mind the goodness of God in the past to comfort you now in the present." With such words Hopeful reassured Christian and he was silent for a while, thinking. Then said Hopeful once more: "Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."

At this, Christian looked up and shouted: "Oh I see Him again and He tells me: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, and they shall not overflow thee!'" With this they both took courage and the waters became comparatively shallow, and soon they reached the other side.

Bunyan has given us a graphic illustration of that solemn time which comes in the life of the believer, when the spirit is about to leave the tenement of clay it has occupied since birth. Death is still an enemy to the Christian, for it is the last enemy that shall be destroyed at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. All Christians do not have the same experience in the hour of death. To some, dying is an easy thing, with no doubts to mar the way; but to others, with bodies racked with pain and minds beclouded by fear and doubt, death is a dreadful thing. But whether the passage of the river is easy or difficult, the result is the same to the Christian; for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," which is

“very far better.” A death bed scene is no criterion of what comes afterwards. Many a hardened Christ rejector, deluded by Satan’s wiles, has had a peaceful death; but what a fearful awakening shall be his on the other side! The Christian, subjected to the very end by the attacks of Satan, may find the river deep and the crossing difficult; but what a glorious awakening shall be his as he enters into the presence of his Lord and Savior!

As they stepped on the shore, they were met by two angels who welcomed them with these words: “We are ministering spirits, sent to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Now the Celestial City was built upon an exceedingly high hill that reached above the clouds, but the pilgrims mounted the hill with ease, for the garments of their mortality had been left in the river. Accompanied by the angels, sweetly conversing as they did so, the pilgrims ascended higher and higher. Their conversation was about the glory of the Celestial City, and their hearts were ravished as the angels sought to describe its magnificence. They said: “You are going now to the paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruit thereof. When you come there you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity.” They also told the pilgrims, that they should see the King in His beauty, and see Him as He now is, crowned with glory and honor; no longer the object of the hatred of men, but the center of universal homage and praise.

As they drew near to the gate, a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them. Then said the two angels who were escorting Christian and Hopeful: “These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world. They have left all for His holy name: and He hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy.” Then the

heavenly host gave a great shout and sang: "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" A company of trumpeters now came out and filled the air with wondrous melody and heavenly cadence and, compassing them on every side, escorted them upward with shouts of welcome and songs of joy.

The glorious city now came to view, that no tongue can properly describe or its glories unfold. Their thoughts, however, were more occupied with the Person that lived in that city than the beauties of the city itself. Presently they came to the gate, over which was written in letters of gold: "*Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they might have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*" At this gate the pilgrims gave in their credentials and, as the gate was opened, the glory from within transfigured the garments of the pilgrims so that they shone like gold. They were given crowns to wear and harps with which to praise the Lord. Then all the bells rang again with joy and it was said unto them: "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

Then sang Christian and Hopeful: "Blessing, honor, joy and power be to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever!" Thus, with everlasting joy over all, the pilgrims were now safe home with Christ forever. All earth's sorrows were forever past; its pains, disappointments and partings never to be experienced again. Death, darkness and despair have been eternally annulled; and glory, everlasting glory, is now their eternal portion. As John Bunyan describes the glorious entrance of the pilgrims into this blessed place of eternal bliss, he wistfully adds: "Which, when I had seen, I wished that I were among them!"

Do you, my reader, reecho these sentiments? Do you ardently desire to be amongst that blessed company who are eternally happy in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ? You can make absolutely certain of this if you will do as Christian and Hopeful did. Take your place as

a guilty, lost sinner. Believe the good news of the gospel, that Christ died for your sins. Accept Him unreservedly as your own personal Savior and confess Him as the Lord of your life. The word of God will then assure you that you are eternally saved, and that you will be kept by the power of God, until the day when you shall be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

The story is not over, however, for some time later Ignorance came to the side of the river. Being afraid to cross alone, he perceived a ferry boat owned by a man named Vain Hope, who offered to give him a comfortable journey across the stream. Being easily persuaded, Ignorance stepped into his boat and, lulled into a sense of false security, was rowed across the river with comparative ease. There was no one to meet him on the other side, so he began to ascend the hill alone, until he came to the gate of the Celestial City. Here he knocked and asked admission. When he was asked who he was and whence he came and what he wanted, he replied: "I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and He has taught in our streets." He was then asked for his certificate which would give him the right to enter the city. Alas, he had none, for he had rejected the gift of God which was eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord, and had thought that his morality, good works and religious profession were quite good enough.

Then the King commanded the same two angels who had escorted Christian and Hopeful to take Ignorance, bind him hand and foot, and carry him away into outer darkness where there should be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Accordingly, poor Ignorance, with all his fancied goodness, self-righteousness, pride and rejection of God's way of salvation, was taken by the angels and carried over hill and vale, until the side door to hell was reached. Into this fearful place he was thrust, there to bemoan his wretchedness, folly and the awful sin of

rejection of God's Son for all eternity. Bunyan adds these solemn and searching words at the end of Part I of his book: "Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction."

Is the fate of Ignorance to be yours, my unsaved reader? Rest assured, God does not desire it to be so. Christ Himself has told us that: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him *should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not desire you to be thus eternally lost, for He died on Calvary's cross under the awful load of the sin of the world. He endured the outpoured wrath of God against sin, so that every sinner who believes on Him should be delivered from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death. The Holy Spirit of God does not desire you to end in this awful fashion, for He is seeking, by His strivings with you, to produce conviction of sin and arouse you to a sense of your need of Christ, and to lead you to put your trust in the Savior's finished work of reconciliation. The writer of these pages, together with a great company of others, does not want you to go out into eternity unprepared, as did Ignorance.

Therefore by the love of God, Who gave His Son; by the love of the Son of God, Who gave Himself a Ransom for all; by the love of the Holy Spirit Who takes of the things of Christ and makes them real; wake up to a sense of your need and flee for refuge to those arms stretched wide to receive you. Delay no longer, but say from your heart: "As a guilty, lost sinner, but believing that the Lord Jesus Christ bore my sins, took my place and died for me, I now definitely receive Him to be my own personal Savior for time and all eternity, and own Him henceforth as the Lord my life."

May the God of all grace, Who enabled John Bunyan, that immortal dreamer, to pen this masterpiece of spiritual biography, grant that each unsaved one who reads these pages may come to know, love, trust and serve the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Whose death, resurrection and ceaseless ministry at the right hand of the majesty on high, make possible the pilgrim's progress from this world to that which is to come! Amen.