

A DREAMER AND HIS WONDERFUL DREAM

The Story of John Bunyan and The Pilgrim's Progress

by

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Chapter 10

A TOUR OF A BEAUTIFUL CASTLE

PRUDENCE, PIETY AND CHARITY

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 in the City of Destruction; how, under the fearful 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, and Christian answered, "Yes, and I did see such things there, the remembrance of which will stick by me as long as I live; especially three things: First, how CHRIST in spite of Satan maintains His work of grace in the heart; next, how the man 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 blessing they brought; and also 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, and 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" (Hebrews 11:15-16).

Then Prudence next inquired if he did not sometimes have a desire for the things he had left behind, and 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 and of what took place there when his sins caused to 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 his recital of his experiences, he wept again. Thus they conversed until supper was announced, and then rose and went together to the table.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AT THE CASTLE BEAUTIFUL

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. How He had fought with and overcame 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 builded the Castle itself, so that He might still 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. We read "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 eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.'" If it is thus the privilege of the Lord's people, to remember the Lord's death until the Lord comes back again. It is His desire for all who love Him to thus remember Him. How blessed then 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, and 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?"

A TOUR OF THE CASTLE

After they had all arisen, Christian was taken into the study and there shown the genealogy of the Lord, and also the record of His mighty deeds, and 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 weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 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 saw 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 accomplished such a great victory.

The stone and sling with which the young stripling David, with the power of GOD, slew the great Goliath, was then pointed out to him.

These and many more things he saw, which 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" (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

Truly, little is much when GOD is in it.

This should encourage every Christian to so yield himself to GOD; that GOD may through him, weak and faulty though he may be, magnify His grace and power. All the incidents of Old Testament history are for our learning and admonition; so that we might be warned by other's failures, and encouraged by their successes 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 WORD OF GOD SEEN IN THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

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 in which they pointed, he saw a most pleasant mountainous country, with beautiful woods, vineyards, fruits and flowers, with springs of water, beautiful to behold. He was told this was Immanuel's country, and from these 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 prize it too fondly or well."

THE ARMOR OF GOD

The following day, as Christian bethought himself of setting 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" (I Timothy 6:18; Galatians 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 went he might take the good news of a dying Saviour's love, a risen Saviour's power, and a coming Saviour'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 and 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; that which 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 going around, 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 be not only 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 discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 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 without. 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 allowed 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 strongholds" of Satan. It was called All Prayer. This weapon was to be used in conduction 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).

Dr. Griffith Thomas 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, 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 armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:13).

May every reader be in the happy position of being thus prepared for the Christian conflict!

~ end of chapter 10 ~
