

A DREAMER AND HIS WONDERFUL DREAM

The Story of John Bunyan and The Pilgrim's Progress

by

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Chapter 5

IN THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE

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 things 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.

WHO IS THE INTERPRETER?

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, Graceless was welcomed 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 His 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 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, and on the day of Pentecost 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 of 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 of my readers are beginning to see their real deep need of the Saviour, it is because the Spirit of GOD is using the Word of GOD to produce this conviction of sin.

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 all his sins were laid by GOD on JESUS when He hung on Calvary's tree, and that CHRIST's death has eternally satisfied GOD on account of his sins; When, as a lost sinner, he receives the Lord JESUS as his own Saviour; that very moment the HOLY SPIRIT enters into him, indwells him, and seals him as GOD's own child (Ephesians 1:13-14). This is the new birth.

This is what is involved in becoming a new creature in CHRIST JESUS: "**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new**" (II Corinthians 5:17). Thus the believer is said to be the temple of GOD because the Spirit of GOD dwells in him (I Corinthians 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 (Ephesians 4:30; I Thessalonians 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 good 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!

A CANDLE LIT

The first act of the Interpreter after Graceless had entered, was to have a candle lighted, and then He asked Graceless to follow Him. "**The word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path**" (Psalm 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**" (Isaiah 8:20).

The first scene to which Graceless was conducted was the framed 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 written upon his lips; the world was behind his back; he stood as though he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold was over his head.

When Graceless inquired what this picture represented, the Interpreter told him that it was a description of a real Christian who could be recognized by the characteristics seen in this picture.

What a searching lesson is this 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 and 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: **"For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself"** (Philippians 3:20-21) and **"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"** (Colossians 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 and will say like David, **"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver"** (Psalm 119:72). And again, **"Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee"** (Psalm 119:11). And once more, **"O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day"** (Psalm 119:97).

We next see that the law of truth was upon his lips, thus indicating that not only did he study 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 word 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"** (Galatians 6:14). The Christian thus turns his back upon all the vanities of the world and its lusts.

Next, see what he is doing. He is 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 Saviour 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 fearful Christian is looking forward to the glad day, when, at the coming of his Lord and Saviour, 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 to hear CHRIST's **"Well done thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of the 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 His Word?
- 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 Saviour, 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 live for Him so 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 ROOM FULL OF DUST

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, caused Graceless to be almost choked by it.

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 then cleaned with pleasure.

Graceless asked the Interpreter what was 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, caused 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; 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?**" (Jeremiah 17:19) and 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 upon 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 it 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 . . . That sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful."**

We repeat again that the law was given to show the sinner his need of CHRIST.

- The law is thus like a mirror that reveals the defilement, but does not cleanse it.

- It is like a plumbline that shows the crookedness, but does not, and cannot straighten.

- It is like a measuring rod or rule by which we may see how far we have come short of GOD's standard, but it cannot bring us 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 through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, Who died for poor, guilty and unclean sinners.

His death on the Cross has forever satisfied all the righteous demands of the law against us. His resurrection was GOD's seal of complete approval of 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 Saviour.

When the Saviour has been thus received, He cleanses the heart from sin and takes up His abode there. Listen to

His own word, "**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**" (Revelation 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**" (I John 1:17).

PASSION AND PATIENCE

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 the best things 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 he was carrying. 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 them. 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 any warning, all the treasure with which Passion was so gleefully occupying himself, turned into a heap of worthless rags and 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 lives for this world alone and for its so-called 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, character, and his soul in trying to satisfy himself with the things of the world.

Inasmuch as all his 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.

Patience, however, in contrast to Passion, was a picture of a child of GOD, a Christian, 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 pleasures that last for ever shall 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**" (II Corinthians 4:18)

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**" (I John 2:17).

WHERE ARE OUR TREASURES?

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 "**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**" (Matthew 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**" (I Timothy 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, through he had little of this world's goods, was rich towards GOD and had great treasure in Heaven!

How much better it is 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 Saviour 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 fearfulness of a Christless eternity.

~ end of chapter 5 ~