Introduction

The last time we were with Christian and Hopeful, we listened in as they discussed the difference between the right and wrong kinds of fear, the repression of sin, the role of bad friends in corrupting good morals, the four reasons that people backslide, and the nine ways that people gradually and progressively move away from God, become hardened, and perish forever in their own deceit.
The men had traveled about two miles since they began their conversation about the repression of sin, had completed their journey over the Enchanted Ground, and subsequently entered the country of Beulah. Since their path went directly through it, they stopped to refresh themselves for a while.
The Country of Beulah

• The air was sweet and pleasant.
• Christian and Hopeful continually heard the singing of birds and saw the flowers appearing every day.
• They heard the voice of the dove in the land.
• The sun shone night and day.
• Beulah was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death and out of reach of Giant Despair.
The Country of Beulah

• Shining Ones commonly walked in this land.
• The contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed.
• They had plenty of corn and wine.
• They heard voices from the Celestial City.
• They rejoiced more than they had when they traveled in other parts of the kingdom.
The Pilgrims had a view of the Delectable Mountains from the House Beautiful. Then, from the Delectable Mountains they could see the Celestial City. Now, in the land of Beulah, they heard voices coming out of the city and got so close to it that their view of its glory was almost overpowering.
“The land is meant to represent the sweet peace and confidence that believers should experience towards the close of their lives. It is the soul that is spiritually-minded and living on the borders of heaven.”
“Here Christians have visions of eternity, believers’ hearts long to be with the lover of their souls and desire to be free from the sin that continually tries to entrap them, and pilgrims anticipate delightful fellowship with the saints in heaven. Here also ‘the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed.’”
“Oh, sweet contract, our engagement day, when we first accepted Christ’s proposal to make us his bride. Better still is the believer’s dying, for surely this is our wedding day, when Christ will lift the veil from his bride’s face, and as the veil is lifted, we shall see our beloved clearly for the first time.”

- Maureen Bradley
We have followed Christian from the *City of Destruction* as far as the country of *Beulah*. After reading Bunyan’s description of this beautiful land, who would not want to enjoy all that it offers while on this side of the River of Death? However, it is only one stage in pilgrimage – and a very advanced stage at that! Bunyan has his Pilgrims go from strength to strength by a gradual process.
Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.

They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.
“A very near, deep, blissful communion with God is here portrayed, and that beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, by which daily the soul is changed more and more into the same image. Here the ministering spirits that wait upon us are more frequent and full in their companies. Here the spirit of adoption is breathed over the soul, and it walks and talks with Christ, almost as Moses and Elias in the mount of transfiguration.”
“No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you” (Is. 62:4-5).
The Meaning of *Beulah*

- Beulah is the Hebrew word for *married* and is a name symbolically applied to Israel.
- Israel and her God shall be “married” again; it shall become fruitful again and be replenished. Your sons shall marry you and be fond of you again.
- By using this language, the prophet Isaiah wishes to express the future prosperity of Israel. The land once populated shall again be populated.
Deserted and Desolate

• God never miscalls anyone or anything, for his judgment is according to truth and all shall concur with it sooner or later.

• Israel had been in a ruined condition because of the Babylonian Captivity. The people were called *Deserted* and the land *Desolate*. She was like a woman who had been reproachfully divorced or left as an inconsolable widow.
“The Anointed One will achieve a transformation like the change from lonely desolation to happy marriage – the result of the work of the Servant in 54:1-8. The emptied city and the wasted land become the objects of delight and joy. The new names (Hephzibah: *My delight is in her*) and Beulah (*married*) are explained in the two halves of verse 5: respectively the wedding and the honeymoon.
“Zion’s sons make their marriage vow to their bride to ‘love and cherish,’ to give themselves in devoted service to the welfare of Zion, and the Lord goes on honeymoon with his people, rejoicing over them. With such economy of words and beauty of imagery Isaiah depicts the loving unanimity that characterizes Zion and her intimate union with the Lord – which Revelation 19:7 foresees as the marriage of the Lamb.”
A New Name

• God is the fountain of honor and the church’s honor comes from Him. She will be called by a new name, a pleasant name, such as she was never called before.

• “To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it” (Rev. 2:17).
“My Delight Is In Her!”

• This was the state Christianity was in before the preaching of the gospel – it was deserted and desolate.

• Isaiah predicted that God’s people would be called Hephzibah and the land of Israel, Beulah. Hephzibah signifies “My delight is in her.” It was the name of Hezekiah’s queen, Manasseh’s mother (II Kings 21:1), a proper name for a wife who ought to be her husband’s delight.
By his grace, God has made the church his delight and delights to do her good.
Important Reminders

- God delights in His people
- God will be with His people forever.
- Descriptions like Isaiah’s are of God’s people in their final, glorified state.
- God will rejoice over you.
- You are significant to Him.
- God’s interest in you is not casual, but focused, determined, and full of love.
“This body (the church), thus seen in its absolute fulness and perfection by God from eternity, will be at last revealed to the universe in all its completeness and glory, so that it will transcend all the other works of God in its visible excellences.”
A Better View

• As they approached the City, they saw that it was built of pearls and precious stones.
• The street was paved with gold.
• Because of the glory of the City, Christian became sick – homesick.
• Christian and Hopeful rested by the City for a while, crying out, “If you see my Beloved, tell him that I am love-sick.”
O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you – if you find my lover, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.”
“In the immediate view of heavenly felicity, Paul ‘desired to depart hence and be with Christ, as far better’ than life; and David ‘fainted for God’s salvation.’ In the lively exercise of holy affections, the believer grows weary of this sinful world, longs to have his faith changed for sight, his hope swallowed up in enjoyment, and his love perfected, and secured from all interruption and abatement.”
“What are these two difficulties? Are they not death without, and unbelief within? It is through the latter, that the former is all distressing to us. O for a strong, world-conquering, sin-subduing, death-overcoming faith, in life and death! Jesus, Master, speak the word, unbelief shall flee, our faith shall not fail, and our hopes shall be steady.”

- William Mason
Longing For God

“The soul knows for certain only that it is hungry.”
- Simone Weil

“You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”
- Augustine