Chapter Six

The Porter’s Lodge

Then I saw in my dream that Christian picked up his pace so that he could possibly get lodging at the Porter’s Lodge. Before he had gone very far, he entered a very narrow passage, which was about 1/8 of a mile from the lodge. Looking ahead, he focused on the two lions that were on either side of the path. He began to think about the dangers that drove Mistrust and Timorous back. (The lions were chained, but he did not see the chains). He became afraid and, for a moment, thought about going back like the other two had done. He felt that nothing but death was before him. But the Porter at the lodge, whose name was Watchful, perceiving that Christian had stopped as if he would turn around, cried out to him saying, “Where is your faith? Do not fear the lions, for they are chained and are placed there to try each pilgrim’s faith and to discover those who have none. Keep in the middle of the path and no harm will come to you!”

Then I saw that he went on, trembling for fear of the lions, but doing exactly what the Porter had told him to do. He heard them roar, but they did not harm him. So he clapped his hands and went on until he came and stood before the gate where the Porter was. Christian said to the Porter, “Sir, whose house is this? May I lodge here tonight?” The Porter answered, “This house was built by the Lord of the Hill for the relief and security of pilgrims.” The Porter also asked where he had come from and where he was going.

Chr. “I have come from the City of Destruction and am going to Mount Zion. But because the sun has set, I would like to lodge here, if possible.”

Watchful, the Porter. “What is your name?”

Chr. “My name is now Christian. At first, my name was Graceless. I came from the race of Japheth, whom God will persuade to dwell in the tents of Shem.”

Watch. “Why are you coming so late? The sun has already set!”

Chr. “I would have been here sooner, but - wretched man that I am - I slept in the Arbor that stands on the side of the hill. If it had not been for that, I would have been here sooner. For when I fell asleep, I lost my roll and went without it to the top of the hill. Once there, I felt for it, but, not finding it, was forced to go back to the place where I had slept. My heart was filled with

1. “It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house in charge of his servants, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back - whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” (Mk. 13:34-37).

2. “May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave” (Gen. 9:27).
Watchful, “Well, I will call one of the young ladies of this place who will speak with you and bring you in to meet the rest of the family, so long as you agree with the rules of the house.” Then Watchful the Porter rang a bell. A serious and beautiful woman came through the door. Her name was Discretion. She asked why she had been called.

Watchful answered, “This man is on a journey from the City of Destruction to Mount Zion. But he is tired, and the night has come. He asked me if he could lodge here tonight. I told him I would call for you. After you have spoken with him, you may decide whatever seems best.”

Discretion. She asked him where he had come from and where he was going, and he told her. She asked him also how he became a Christian, and he told her. Then she asked him what he had seen and experienced on his journey. Finally, she asked for his name, and he said, “It is Christian. And I have an even greater desire to stay here tonight, because, as far as I can tell, this place was built by the Lord of the Hill for the relief and security of pilgrims.” She smiled, but there were tears in her eyes. After a short pause, she said, “I will call two or three more members of the family.” So she ran to the door and called for Prudence, Piety, and Charity. They talked with him for a while longer and then led him to the family. Many of them met him at the entrance of the house and said, “Come in, you who are blessed of the Lord! This house was built by the Lord of the Hill for the purpose of caring for pilgrims.” Then he bowed his head and followed them into the house. When he had come in and sat down, they gave him something to drink and agreed to make the most of the time before supper by engaging him in meaningful conversation. They asked Piety, Prudence, and Charity to speak with him. And so they began:

Piety. “Since we have been gracious to you by receiving you into our house tonight, good Christian, let us talk with you about all the things that have happened to you on your journey. Perhaps we can learn something from you.”

Chr. “I would be delighted to talk with you. I am glad that you are so interested.”

Piety. “What made you begin your journey in the first place?”

Chr. “I was driven out of my own country by a horrible conviction that unavoidable destruction would come upon me if I continued to live in that place.”

Piety. “But how did it happen that you came out of your country and traveled this way?”

Chr. “It was God’s plan. For, when I was living in fear of destruction, I did not know where to go. By chance, however, a man came to me (as I was trembling and weeping) whose name is Evangelist. He directed me to the Wicket-Gate, which I could never have found on my own. He led me to the path that has brought me directly to this house.”

Piety. “Did you come by Interpreter’s house?”

Chr. “Yes. I saw things there that I will remember as long as I live, especially three things: how
Christ, in spite of Satan, maintains His work of grace in the heart; how the man in the cage had sinned himself out of the hope of God’s mercy; and the dream of the man who thought the Day of Judgment had come.”

Piety. “Did he tell you his dream?”

Chr. “Yes; and I thought to myself how horrible it was. My heart ached as he was telling it. Yet I am glad I heard it.”

Piety. “Was that all you saw at his house?”

Chr. “No. He also took me and showed me a Stately Palace. The people in it were clothed in gold. An adventuresome man cut his way through the armed men that stood at the door to keep him out. He had been invited to come in and win eternal glory. Those things filled my heart. I could have stayed at the good man’s house for a year, but I knew I had farther to go.”

Piety. “What else did you see along the way?”

Chr. “What did I see! Why I went just a little bit further and saw one bleeding as He hung upon the tree, and the very sight of Him made my burden fall off my back (for I had groaned under a heavy burden). It was a strange thing for me, for I had never seen such a thing before. And while I stood looking up (I could not endure to look very long), three angels came to me. One of them told me that my sins were forgiven. Another stripped me of my rags and gave me this embroidered coat. The third gave me the mark you see on my forehead and this sealed roll (and with that, he took it from his coat).”

Piety. “You saw more than this, didn’t you?”

Chr. “The things I have just mentioned were the best. But I also saw three men - Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. They were asleep by the side of the road and had chains on their ankles. But do you think I could awaken them? I also saw Formalist and Hypocrisy tumble over the wall and pretend to go on to Zion, but they were quickly lost. I warned them myself, but they would not believe me. Above everything I have told you, I found it hard work to get up this hill and equally as difficult to come by the lions. If it had not been for the good Porter at the gate, I might have turned back. Now I thank God I am here, and I thank you for receiving me.”

Then Prudence wanted to ask him a few questions.

Prudence. “At times, do you think about your own country?”

Chr. “Yes, but with much shame and revulsion. Truly, if I had been drawn to my country - the one I left - I might have returned to it; but now I desire a better country - a heavenly one.”

3. “If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them” (Heb. 11:15-16).
Pru. “Do you still think about the things you used to think about in the City of Destruction?”

Chr. “Yes, but not because I want to. I, along with my countrymen, used to find great pleasure in sinful thoughts. But now, all those things cause me grief. If I could choose the things I think about, I would never think about my past anymore. Even when I long to do that which is best, that which is evil is still with me.”

Pru. “Do you find that sometimes the sinful desires and temptations seem to be gone, but at other times are so strong that they perplex you?”

Chr. “Yes, but that is seldom. When I do feel released from these desires, they are golden hours for me.”

Pru. “Can you remember the means by which you gain victory over these sinful desires?”

Chr. “Yes. When I think about what I saw at the cross, that will do it. And when I look at my embroidered coat, that also will do it. When I look into the roll that I carry in my coat, that will do it. And, finally, when I think warmly about where I am going, that will do it.”

Pru. “What is it that makes you so desirous of going to Mount Zion?”

Chr. “There I hope to see Him alive who had died on the cross. I also hope to be rid of all those things in me that continue to annoy me. They say there is no death there, and that I will live with the people I like the best. To tell you the truth, I love Him because He released me from my burden. Yet I am tired of my old sinful nature. I would love to be where I will never die again and with the people that will continually cry out, ‘Holy, holy, holy.’”

Charity. “Do you have a family?”

Chr. “I have a wife and four small children.”

Cha. “Why didn’t you bring them along with you?”

Chr. Then Christian wept and said, “Oh, how I longed to do just that! But all of them were opposed to my going on my pilgrimage.”

Cha. “You should have talked to them and endeavored to show them the danger of remaining behind.”

Chr. “I did that and told them what God had shown me about the destruction of our city. But

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4. “He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken” (Is. 25:8).

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Rev. 21:4).
they thought I was only joking, so they did not believe me.”

Cha. “And did you pray to God that He would bless the counsel you gave to them?”

Chr. Yes, and with much love. You must know that my wife and children are very dear to me.”

Cha. “Did you tell them about your own sorrow and your fear of destruction? I am supposing that you could clearly see the coming destruction.”

Chr. “Yes; over, and over, and over again. They could see fear in my countenance, in my tears, and in my trembling under the weight of the judgment that hung over our heads. None of this, however, was sufficient to persuade them to come with me.”

Cha. “What could they say for themselves? Why would they not come?”

Chr. “My wife was afraid of losing this world. My children were only interested in the foolish pleasures of youth. For these reasons they left me to wander on my journey alone.”

Cha. “Could you have inhibited their coming with you by the way you lived your life, even though you used persuasive words?”

Chr. “Certainly I cannot commend my life, because I am conscious of many failings. I also know that the way a man lives his life may speak louder than the arguments or persuasive words he speaks, even though he is speaking for their good. Yet this I can say: I was extremely careful about not doing anything that would make them resist going with me on my pilgrimage. In fact, they told me I was too careful; and that I denied myself certain things (for their sakes) that they did not think were sinful. I think I can say that what hindered them from coming along was my great sensitivity about sinning against God or of doing any wrong to my neighbor.”

Cha. “It is true that Cain hated his brother because his own works were evil and his brother’s righteous. If your wife and children have been offended by you for this, they show themselves to be no friend of what is good; and you have delivered your soul from their blood.”

Now I saw in my dream that they sat talking together until supper was ready. Then they sat down to eat. The table was full of delicious food and fine wine. All of their conversation at the table was about the Lord of the Hill, what He had done, why He did what He did, and why He had built the house. By what they said, I perceived that He had been a great Warrior and had fought

5. “So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, ‘Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!’ But his sons-in-law thought he was joking” (Gen. 19:14).

6. “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous” (Jn. 3:12).

7. “But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself” (Ezk. 3:19).
with and slain him that had the power of death, but not without great danger to Himself. This made me love Him all the more.

For, as they said, and as I believe (said Christian), He did it with the loss of much blood. And what puts the glory of grace into all that He did was that He did it out of pure love for His country. And besides, there were some of them from His household who said they had seen Him and spoke to Him after He died on the cross. They have attested that they heard it directly from His own lips, that He is such a lover of sinful pilgrims that no one can be found like Him from the east to the west.

Furthermore, they explained that He had stripped Himself of His glory for the poor. And they heard Him say and affirm that He would not dwell in Mount Zion alone. They also heard Him say that He had made many pilgrims princes, though they were born beggars and their homes had been in the dust.

They talked together until late in the evening. After they prayed and committed themselves to the Lord for protection, they went to bed. Pilgrim stayed in a large chamber upstairs with a window that opened towards the rising of the sun. The name of the chamber was Peace. There he slept until morning. When he awoke he sang:

Where am I now? is this the love and care  
Of Jesus, for the men that Pilgrims are?  
Thus to provide! That I should be forgiven!  
And dwell already the next door to Heaven.

John Bunyan first published The Pilgrim’s Progress in London after it was licensed on February 18, 1678. This edition was revised from the original in 1993 by John L. Musselman.

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8. “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Heb. 2:14-15).

9. “He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. ‘For the foundations of the earth are the Lord’s; upon them he has set the world’” (I Sam. 2:8).

“He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people” (Ps. 113:7-8).