Now I saw the pilgrims on the other side of this plain called Ease. They came to a place where there was an old monument by the side of the highway. Both of them were concerned when they saw it, because the form was so strange. It seemed to them as if it had been a woman transformed into the shape of a pillar. They stood in front of the statue and stared at it. For a while they could not tell what it was. Finally, Hopeful saw something written above the head, an inscription in an unusual hand. But since he was not a scholar, he called out to Christian (because he was educated) to see if he could understand the meaning. So he came over and, after studying the letters, discovered this message: “Remember Lot’s Wife.” He then read it to Hopeful. After that, they both concluded that it was the pillar of salt into which Lot’s wife was turned when she looked back with a covetous heart as she was fleeing from Sodom for safety.¹ This sudden and amazing sight gave Christian and Hopeful the opportunity to have the following conversation:

Chr. “Ah, my brother, this is a timely sight. It came at an opportune time right after Demas invited us to come over to see the hill Lucre. Had we gone over as he wanted us to, and as you were inclined to do, my brother, for all I know we would have become like this woman, a spectacle for those who will come after us.”

Hopeful. “I am sorry that I was so foolish and am amazed that I am not like Lot’s wife. After all, what is the difference between her sin and mine? She only looked back, but I had the desire to go and see. Let grace be adored, and let me be ashamed that such a thing would ever be in my heart.”

Chr. “Let us take note of what we see here to assist us in the future. This woman escaped one judgment, in that she was not destroyed with Sodom, but she was destroyed by another. As we see, she has been turned into a pillar of salt.”

Hope. “True. And she should be a warning and an example to us: a warning, that we should avoid her sin. She is a sign of the judgment that will overtake those who are not stopped by this warning. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, along with the two hundred and fifty men who perished in their sin, also became a warning and an example to others.² But above all, I have meditated on one thing: namely, how Demas and his friends can stand with such confidence over there looking for that treasure, knowing that this woman only looked behind her (for we read that she did not step one foot out of the way) and was turned into a pillar of salt. The very judgment which fell

¹ “But Lot’s wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt” (Gen. 19:26).

² “And the sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. The same Dathan and Abiram were the community officials who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were among Korah's followers when they rebelled against the Lord. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them along with Korah, whose followers died when the fire devoured the 250 men. And they served as a warning sign” (Numbers 26:9-10).
on her made her an example within sight of where they are. They could not help but see her, if they only looked up.”

**Chr.** “It makes one wonder, and it proves that their hearts have grown daring in this matter. I cannot tell who to compare them to as appropriately as to those who pick pockets in the presence of the judge, or who will steal purses under the gallows. It is said of the men of Sodom that they were great sinners, because they were sinners ‘before the Lord,’ that is, in His eyesight. ³ They ignored the kindnesses He had showed them, because the land of Sodom had become like the Garden of Eden. ⁴ Therefore, they provoked him all the more to jealousy. Their plague was as hot as the fire of the Lord out of heaven could make it. It is only reasonable to conclude that those who sin in his sight - those same ones who have continually had examples set before them in order to caution them to do otherwise - will be partakers of the severest judgments.”

**Hope.** “There is no doubt that you have spoken the truth. What mercy has been shown to us that neither of us (especially I) has been made an example. This gives us the occasion to thank God, to fear him, and to always remember Lot’s wife.”

Then I saw that they went on their way to a refreshing river, which David the king called ‘the River of God.’ John called it ‘the River of the Water of Life.’ ⁵ Now the path they traveled was on the bank of the river. Here, Christian and his companion walked with great joy. They also drank water from the river which renewed them and lifted their weary spirits. In addition to this, there were green trees on both banks of the river which bore all kinds of fruit. The leaves of the trees were good for medicine. They were delighted with the fruit and ate the leaves to prevent various maladies and diseases that occur in people who travel. On either side of the river there was a meadow, exquisitely planted with lilies. And it was green all year long. They lay down to sleep in this meadow; for here they could lie down in safety. ⁶ When they awoke, they gathered some more fruit from the trees and drank again from the river. Again they lay down to sleep. They did this for several days and nights.

Then they sang:

³ “Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord” (Gen. 13:13).

⁴ “Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah)” (Gen. 13:10).

⁵ “You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it” (Ps. 65:9).

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:1-2; Bunyan references the entire 22nd chapter).

Read Ezekiel 47.

⁶ “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters” (Ps. 23:2).

“The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors” (Is. 14:30).
Behold ye how these Crystal streams do glide
(To comfort Pilgrims) by the highway side;
The Meadows green, besides their fragrant smell,
Yield dainties for them: And he that can tell
What pleasant Fruit, yea, Leaves, these Trees do yield,
Will soon sell all, that he may buy this Field.

When they decided to continue on (for they were not yet at the end of their journey), they ate and drank, and then left.

Now I saw in my dream that they had not traveled far when the path they were on turned away from the river. They regretted this but understood that they were not to get off the path they were on. Now the path became rough and their feet were sore because of their travels. So they were discouraged. ⁷ As they went on their way, they longed for a better path. Now just ahead of them, there was a meadow on the left-hand side of the road and a stile going over to it. ⁸ That meadow is called “By-Path Meadow.” Then Christian said to his companion, “If this meadow lies along our path, let’s go over to it.” So he went to the stile to look and was surprised to see a path on the other side of the fence. “This is what I have been longing for,” said Christian. “It is the easiest route. Come on, good Hopeful. Let’s go over there.”

Hopeful. “What if this path leads us astray?”

Chr. “That is not likely. Look! Does it not go along in the same direction?” So Hopeful was persuaded by his friend and went with him over the stile. When they were on the other side on the new path, they found it much easier on their feet. They looked ahead and saw a man walking (his name was Vain-confidence). They called to him and asked where the path led. He responded, “To the Celestial Gate.” “Look,” said Christian, “didn’t I tell you? See, we are right!” So they followed as the man led them. But night came, and it became very dark. Christian and Hopeful lost sight of the man they were following.

The man that traveled ahead of them (Vain-confidence) could not see where he was going and fell into a deep pit. ⁹ It had been intentionally placed there by the prince of the grounds to catch vain fools. When he fell, he was dashed to pieces.

Now Christian and Hopeful heard him fall. So they called out to him to find out what had happened. But there was no answer; they only heard a groaning. Hopeful said, “Where are we now?” Christian was silent, knowing that he had led him out of the way. And now it began to rain, thunder, and lightening in a terrible way. The water began to rise. Then Hopeful groaned, saying, “Oh, that I had kept on my path!”

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⁷ “They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way” (Num. 21:4).

⁸ A stile is “an arrangement of steps, rungs, or the like, contrived to allow passage over or through a fence to one person at a time, while forming a barrier to the passage of sheep or cattle” (Oxford English Dictionary).

⁹ “Those who guide this people mislead them, and those who are guided are led astray” (Is. 9:16).
The Pilgrim’s Progress

Chr. “Who could have ever thought that this path would have led us out of the way!”

Hope. “I was afraid of it from the very beginning and spoke to you about being cautious. I would have spoken more plainly, but you are older than I.”

Chr. “Good brother, do not be offended. I am sorry I have brought you away from our path and have put you into such imminent danger. Please forgive me. I did not do it maliciously.”

Hope. “Take comfort, my brother, for I forgive you. Believe that this will be for our good.”

Chr. “I am glad I have a merciful brother with me. However, we must not stand here; let’s try to go back again.

Hope. “Good brother, let me go first.”

Chr. “No, please, let me. If there is any danger, I would be the first to experience it. Because of my decision, we have both gone out of the way.”

Hope. “No, you will not go first. You are troubled, and you may lead us out of the way again.” Then for their encouragement, they heard a voice of one saying, “Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return.”10 But by this time the waters had greatly risen, so that the journey back was very dangerous. (Then I thought: it is easier to go off the path when we are on the path, than to get on the path when we are off the path). Yet, they ventured to go back. But it was so dark and the flood was so high, they almost drowned nine or ten times.

Even with all the skill they had, they could not get to the stile that night. So, stopping under a little shelter, they intended to sit down until morning. But being weary, they fell asleep. Now, not far from the place where they lay was a castle called Doubting Castle. The owner was Giant Despair. They had fallen asleep on his land. When Giant Despair got up early in the morning, he walked up and down his fields and caught Christian and Hopeful sleeping on his grounds. With a grim and surly voice, he demanded that they get up. He asked them where they were from and what they were doing on his property. They told him they were pilgrims who had lost their way.

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10 “Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns” (Jer. 31:21).