



CHAPTER III

The House of the Interpreter



hus, now when they had talked away a little more time, they drew nigh to a house which stood in the way, which house was built for the relief of pilgrims; as you will find more fully related in the First Part of these Records of the Pilgrim's Progress. So they drew on towards the house (*the House of the Interpreter*), and when they came to the door, they heard a great talk in the house. They then gave ear, and heard, as they thought, Christiana mentioned by name. For you must know that there went along, even before her, a talk of her and her children's going on pilgrimage. And this thing was the more pleasing to them, because they had heard that she was Christian's wife, that woman who was sometime ago so unwilling to hear of going on pilgrimage. Thus, therefore, they stood still, and heard the good people within commending her, who, they little thought, stood at the door. At last Christiana knocked, as she had done at the gate before. Now, when she had knocked, there came to the door a young damsel, named *Innocent*, and opened the door and looked, and behold two women were there.

2. **DAMSEL.** Then said the damsel to them, With whom would you speak in this place ?

3. **CHRIST.** Christiana answered, We understand that this is a privileged place



for those that are become pilgrims, and we now at this door are such; wherefore we pray that we may be partakers of that for which we at this time are come; for the day, as thou seest, is very far spent, and we are loath to-night to go any further.

4. **DAMSEL.** Pray, what may I call your name, that I may tell it to my Lord within?

5. **CHRIST.** My name is Christiana; I was the wife of that pilgrim, that some years ago did travel this way, and these be his four children. This maiden also is my companion, and is going on pilgrimage too.

6. **INNOCENT.** Then ran Innocent in (for that was her name) and said to those within, Can you think who is at the door? There is Christiana and her children, and her companion, all waiting for entertainment here. Then they leaped for joy, and went and told their Master. So He came to the door, and looking upon her, He said, Art thou that Christiana whom Christian, the good man, left behind him, when he betook himself to a pilgrim's life?

7. **CHRIST.** I am that woman that was so hard-hearted, as to slight my husband's troubles, and that left him to go on in his journey alone, and these are his four children; but now I also am come, for I am convinced that no way is right but this.¹

¹ Here see how the experience of true grace works in the heart: by keeping the subjects of it low in their own eyes, and cutting off all self-exalting, "I am that hard-hearted woman," &c. This ever dwelt uppermost in Christiana's heart. O soul, if thou truly knowest thyself, thou wilt ever be sinking into nothing, yea, worse than nothing, because a sinner

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8. **INTER.** Then is fulfilled that which also is written of the man that said to his son, “*Go, work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went*”.

9. **CHRIST.** Then said Christiana, So be it, Amen. God make it a true saying upon me, and grant that I may be found at the last of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless!

10. **INTER.** But why standest thou thus at the door? Come in, thou daughter of Abraham. We were talking of thee but now, for tidings have come to us before, how thou art become a pilgrim. Come, children, come in; come, maiden, come in. So He had them all into the house.

11. So, when they were within, they were bidden sit down and rest them; the which when they had done, those that attended upon the Pilgrims in the house, came into the room to see them. And one smiled, and another smiled, and they all smiled, for joy that Christiana was become a pilgrim. They also looked upon the boys. They stroked them over the faces with the hand, in token of their kind reception of them. They also carried it lovingly to Mercy, and bid them all welcome into their Master’s house.²

before the Lord, and confess thy vileness unto him, and acknowledge, if he had left thee to thyself, destruction must have been thy inevitable doom. And see how confident divine teaching makes us. Under its power and influence, we can say with Christiana, I am convinced that no way is right but this, even to be a pilgrim of the Lord, and sojourner upon the earth.

² Here- is joy indeed, which strangers to the love of Christ intermeddle not with. Believer, did you never partake of this pleasing, this delightful sensation, on seeing other poor sinners like thyself called to know Jesus, and follow him? Surely this is the joy of heaven: and if thou hast this joy, thou hast the love that reigns in heaven. Glory to Jesus, I think I can truly say, I have this blessed evidence in my heart, that I know somewhat of this joy, arising from seeing poor lost sinner converted, not merely to an opinion, or to a party of Christians, but their hearts converted to Jesus, so as to love him and follow him. O for a spread and increase of this spirit, among Christians of all denominations!

12. After a while, because supper was not ready, the Interpreter took them into his significant rooms, and showed them what Christian, Christiana’s husband, had seen some time before. Here, therefore, they saw the man in the cage, the man and his dream, the man that cut his way through his enemies, and the picture of the biggest of them all, together with the rest of those things that were then so profitable to Christian.

The Muck-raker:

13. This done, and after these things had been somewhat digested by Christiana and her company, the Interpreter takes them apart again, and has them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand. There stood also one over His head with a celestial crown in His hand, and proffered him that crown for his muck-rake; but the man did neither look up, nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor.

14. **CHRIST.** Then said Christiana, I persuade myself that I know somewhat the meaning of this; for this is a figure of a man of this world, is it not, good Sir?

15. **INTER.** Thou hast said the right, said He, and his muck-rake doth show his carnal mind. And whereas thou seest him rather give heed to rake up straws and sticks, and the dust of the floor, than to what He says that calls to him from above with the celestial crown in His hand, it is to show that Heaven is but as a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas, it was also showed thee, that the man could look no way but downwards, it is to let thee know that earthly things, when they are with power upon men’s minds, quite carry their hearts away from God.

15. **CHRIST.** Then said Christiana, O deliver me from this muck-rake!

16. **INTER.** That prayer, Said the Interpreter, has lain by till it is almost rusty. “*Give me not riches,*” is scarce the prayer of one of ten thousand. Straws, and sticks, and dust, with most, are the great things now looked after.

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17. With that Mercy and Christiana wept, and said, It is, alas! too true.³

The Spider on the Wall:

18. When the Interpreter had shown them this, He has them into the very best room in the house; a very brave room it was. So He bid them look round about, and see if they could find anything profitable there. Then they looked round and round; for there was nothing there to be seen but a very great spider on the wall: and that they overlooked.

19. **MERCY.** Then said Mercy, Sir, I see nothing; but Christiana held her peace.

20. **INTER.** But, said the Interpreter, look again, and she therefore looked again, and said, Here is not anything but an ugly spider, who hangs by her hands upon the wall. Then said He, Is there but one spider in all this spacious room?

21. **CHRIST.** Then the water stood in Christiana's eyes, for she was a woman quick of apprehension; and she said, Yea, Lord, there is here more than one. Yea, and spiders whose venom is far more destructive than that which is in her.

22. **INTER.** The Interpreter then looked pleasantly upon her, and said, Thou hast said the truth.

23. This made Mercy blush, and the boys to cover their faces, for they all began now to understand the riddle.⁴

³ Reader, didst thou, like these pious pilgrims, never shed a generous tear for thy base and disingenuous conduct towards thy Lord, in preferring the sticks and straws of this world, to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the salvation of thy immortal soul! Oh, this is natural to us all! and though made wise unto salvation, yet this folly cleaves to our old nature still. Let the thought humble us, and make us weep before the Lord.

⁴ There was not one dreaming perfectionist among them. No, they all knew the venom of sin which was in their fallen nature. This made them cover their faces with shame, and sink into deep humility of heart. Every true interpreter of God's word, yea, the blessed Interpreter of God's heart, Jesus, will look pleasantly upon those who confess the truth;

22. **INTER.** Then said the Interpreter again, "The spider taketh hold with their hands (as you see), and is in kings' palaces'. And wherefore is this recorded, but to show you, that how full of the venom of sin soever you be, yet you may, by the hand of faith, lay hold of, and dwell in the best room that belongs to the King's house above!⁵

23. **CHRIST.** I thought, said Christiana, of something of this; but I could not imagine it all. I thought that we were like spiders, and that we looked like ugly creatures, in what fine room soever we were; but that by this spider, this venomous and ill-favoured creature, we were to learn how to act faith, that came not into my mind. And yet she has taken hold with her hands, as I see, and dwells in the best room in the house. God has made nothing in vain.

24. Then they seemed all to be glad; but the water stood in their eyes; yet they looked one upon another, and also bowed before the Interpreter.

Hen and Chickens:

25. **INTER.** He had them then into another room, where was a hen and chickens, and bid them observe a while. So one of the chickens went to the trough to drink, and every time she drank, she lift up her head, and her eyes towards Heaven. See, said He, what this little chick doth, and learn of her to acknowledge

while he beholds the proud self-righteous sinner afar off.

⁵ Here is the mystery of God's grace, the mystery of precious faith; that, however hateful sin is in the sight of a holy God, however full of sin the sinner is, yet he can love the sinner, as much as he loaths his sin. Why? because he views his elect sinners in Christ the Son of his love, by whom a perfect atonement is made for sin, his precious blood cleanses their soul from all sin, and presents them without spot of sin before God. This, faith apprehends; and then the soul dwells in the best room indeed, even in the very heart of God in Christ. The Lord increase our faith in this precious truth, that we may the more love and glorify the God of grace and truth! O let not our venom of sin deject us, while there is the blood of Christ to cleanse us! O for stronger love to Christ, and greater hatred of sin! Both spring from believing.

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whence your mercies come, by receiving them with looking up. Yet again, said He, observe and look; so they gave heed, and perceived that the hen did walk in a fourfold method towards her chickens.

She had a common call, and that she hath
all day long.
She had a special call, and that she had
but sometimes.
She had a brooding note. And
She had an outcry.

26. Now, said He, compare this hen to your King, and these chickens to His obedient ones. For, answerable to her, Himself has His methods, which He walketh in towards His people; by His common call, He gives nothing; by His special call, He always has something to give; He has also a brooding voice, for them that are under His wing; and He has an outcry, to give the alarm when He seeth the enemy come. I chose, My darlings, to lead you into the room where such things are, because you are women, and they are easy for you.⁶

27. **CHRIST.** And Sir, said Christiana, pray let us see some more.

⁶ Observation and experience justify this excellent simile. God's common call is, to all his creatures, who live within the sound of his gospel. His special call is, when he bestows the grace, pence, and pardon of the gospel of Christ upon his people. The brooding note is, when he gathers them under his wings, warms their hearts with the comforts of his love, nourishes their souls with close fellowship with himself, and refreshes their spirits with the overflowings of joy in the Holy Ghost. "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice," says David. (Psa. ixiii. 7.) "I eat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste." (Song ii. 3.) O for more of these precious brooding notes, to be gathered under the wing of our Immanuel! But, be our frames and experience what they may, still we are ever in danger; for enemies surround us on every side, and our worst are within us. Therefore our Lord has an outcry: he gives the alarm, calls upon us, and warns us of danger. Why? that we should flee to him, and run into him: for "the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. xviii. 10.)

The Slaughter-house:

28. **INTERP.** So He had them into the slaughter-house, where was a butcher killing of a sheep; and behold the sheep was quiet, and took her death patiently. Then said the Interpreter, You must learn of this sheep to suffer, and to put up wrongs without murmurings and complaints. Behold how quietly she taketh her death, and without objecting, she suffereth her skin to be pulled over her ears. Your King doth call you His sheep.⁷

The Flower Garden:

28. **INTERP.** After this He led them into His garden, where was great variety of flowers; and he said, Do you see all these?

29. **CHRIST.** So Christiana Said, Yes.

30. **INTERP.** Then said He again, Behold the flowers are diverse in stature, in quality, and colour, and smell, and virtue; and some are better than some; also where the gardener hath set them, there they stand, and quarrel not with one another.⁸

The Field of Wheat and Corn:

31. Again, He had them into His field, which He had sowed with wheat and corn; but when they beheld, the tops of all were cut off, only the straw remained; He said again, This ground was dunged, and ploughed, and sowed; but what shall we do with the crop?

32. **CHRIST.** Then said Christiana, Burn some, and make muck of the rest.

33. **INTERP.** Then Said the Interpreter again, Fruit, you see, is that thing you look

⁷ Were we as sheep going astray? Are we now returned to thee, O Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls? Lord, give us more and more of thy meek and lowly spirit!

⁸ Christ's church is his garden; his people are planted in it by the power of his grace, and they shall soon be transplanted into his kingdom of glory. Though there may be little non-essential differences of judgment, yet why should they fall-out? O for more love and peace from Jesus, and then there will be more among each other.

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for, and for want of that you condemn it to the fire, and to be trodden under foot of men: beware that in this you condemn not yourselves.⁹

The Robin and the Spider:

34. Then, as they were coming in from abroad, they espied a little robin with a great spider in his mouth; so the *Interpreter* said, Look here. So they looked, and Mercy wondered; but *Christiana* said, What a disparagement is it to such a little pretty bird as the robin-redbreast is, he being also a bird above many, that loveth to maintain a kind of social-bleness with man; I had thought they had lived upon crumbs of bread, or upon other such harmless matter; I like him worse than I did.

35. INTERP. The Interpreter then replied, This robin is an emblem, very apt to set forth some professors by; for to sight, they are, as this robin, pretty of note, colour, and carriage. They seem also to have a very great love for professors that are sincere; and above all other, to desire to associate with them, and to be in their company, as if they could live upon the good man's crumbs. They pretend also, that therefore it is that they frequent the house of the godly, and the appointments of the Lord; but, when they are by themselves, as the robin, they can catch and gobble up spiders, they can change their diet, drink iniquity, and swallow down sin like water.¹⁰

36. So, when they were come again into the house, because supper as yet was not ready,

⁹ A precious caution. See to it, Christian, that you avoid those things which cause deadness and unfruitfulness, and follow those things which tend to quicken and make your souls fruitful in good works, to the glory of God.

¹⁰ A very striking emblem this, and most pertinently applied; and, if your soul is sincere, it will cause a holy fear, create a godly jealousy, put you upon self-examining, and make you sigh out, in some such words as David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24.) O what will it avail in a dying hour, or in the judgment-day, that we have worn the mark of profession, and seemed to man what we were not in heart and reality of life before God? From all self-deceiving, good Lord, deliver us! for we are all naturally prone to it.

Christiana again desired that the Interpreter would either show or tell of some other things that are profitable.

PARABLES

The Sow and the Ox

37. INTER. Then the Interpreter began, and said, The fatter the sow is, the more she desires the mire; the fatter the ox is, the more gamesomely he goes to the slaughter; and the more healthy the lusty man is, the more prone he is unto evil.

Adorning

38. There is a desire in women to go neat and fine, and it is a comely thing to be adorned with that that in God's sight is of great price.

Professing and Enduring:

39. It is easier watching a night or two, than to sit up a whole year together. So it is easier for one to begin to profess well, than to hold out as he should to the end.

Casting Overboard:

40. Every shipmaster, when in a storm, will willingly cast that overboard that is of the smallest value in the vessel; but who will throw the best out first? None but he that feareth not God.

The Leak in the Ship:

41. One leak will sink a ship; and one sin will destroy a sinner.

Ingratitude:

42. He that forgets his friend, is ungrateful unto him; but he that forgets his Saviour, is unmerciful to himself.

Sowing Cockles

43. He that lives in sin, and looks for happiness hereafter, is like him that soweth cockle,

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and thinks to fill his barn with wheat or barley.

Miscellaneous Sayings:

44. If a man would live well, let him fetch his last day to him, and make it always his company keeper.

45. Whispering, and change of thoughts, prove that sin is in the world.

46. If the world, which God sets light by, is counted a thing of that worth with men; what is Heaven, which God commendeth?

47. If the life that is attended with so many troubles, is so loath to be let go by us, what is the life above?

48. Everybody will cry up the goodness of men; but who is there that is, as he should, affected with the goodness of God?

49. We seldom sit down to meat, but we eat and leave; so there is in Jesus Christ more merit and righteousness than the whole world has need of.

The Rotten Tree:

50. When the Interpreter had done, He takes them out into His garden again, and had them to a tree, whose inside was all rotten and gone, and yet it grew and had leaves. Then said Mercy, What means this? This tree, said He, whose outside is fair, and whose inside is rotten, it is to which many may be compared, that are in the garden of God; who with their mouths speak high in behalf of God, but indeed will do nothing for Him; whose leaves are fair, but their heart good for nothing but to be tinder for the devil's tinder box.¹¹

¹¹ That's my very character, says many. a doubting, broken-hearted sinner. Well, thank God, says many a self-confident, whole-hearted pharisee, it is far from being mine. We can only say to this—he that knows most of his own superlatively deceitful and desperately wicked heart, suspects himself most, and exercises most godly jealousy over himself; while persons, who see least of themselves, are most self-confident and daring. Even Judas could as boldly ask, Master, Is it I who shall betray thee? as any of the rest of his disciples.

51. Now supper was ready, the table spread, and all things set on the board; so they sat down and did eat, when one had given thanks. And the Interpreter did usually entertain those that lodged with Him, with music at meals; so the minstrels played. There was also one that did sing, and a very fine voice he had. His song was this:

*The Lord is only my support,
And he that doth me feed;
How can I then want anything
Whereof I stand in need?*

52. When the song and music was ended, the Interpreter asked Christiana what it was that at first did move her to betake herself to a Pilgrim's life.

53. **CHRIST.** Christiana answered, First, the loss of my husband came into my mind, at which I was heartily grieved; but all that was but natural affection. Then, after that, came the troubles and pilgrimage of my husband into my mind, and also how like a churl I had carried it to him as to that. So guilt took hold of my mind, and would have drawn me into the pond; but that opportunely I had a dream of the well-being of my husband, and a letter sent me by the King of that country where my husband dwells, to come to Him. The dream and the letter together so wrought upon my mind, that they forced me to this way.

54. **INTER.** But met you with no opposition before you set out of doors?

55. **CHRIST.** Yes, a neighbour of mine, one Mrs. Timorous (she was akin to him that would have persuaded my husband to go back, for fear of the lions). She all to befooled me for, as she called it, my intended desperate adventure; she also urged what she could to dishearten me to it; the hardship and troubles that my husband met with in the way, but all this I got over pretty well. But a dream that I had of two ill-looking ones, that I thought did plot how to make me miscarry in my journey, that hath troubled me much; yea, it still runs in my mind, and makes me afraid of everyone that I meet, lest they should meet me to do me a mischief, and to turn me out of the way.¹²

¹² Ah, Mrs. Timorous! how many professed pilgrims hast thou befooled and turned back! How

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Yea, I may tell my Lord, though I would not have everybody know it, that between this and the gate by which we got into the way, we were both so sorely assaulted that we were made to cry out, Murder! and the two that made this assault upon us were like the two that I saw in my dream.

56. INTERP. Then said the Interpreter, thy beginning is good, thy latter end shall greatly increase. So He addressed Himself to Mercy, and said unto her, And what moved thee to come hither, sweet heart?

57. Then Mercy blushed and trembled, and for a while continued silent.

58. INTER. Then, said He, be not afraid, only believe, and speak thy mind.

59. MERCY. So she began, and said, Truly, Sir, my want of experience is that which makes me covet to be in silence, and that also that fills me with fears of coming short at last. I cannot tell of visions and dreams as my friend Christiana can; nor know I what it is to mourn for my refusing of the counsel of those that were good relations.¹³

60. INTER. What was it then, dear heart, that hath prevailed with thee to do as thou hast done?

often does she attack and affright many real pilgrims! I am sure she has often made my poor heart ache with her ghastly looks and terrifying speeches. She always accosts us in the Armenian dialect, Save thyself; or, like Satan, when he borrowed Peter's tongue, to oppose our Lord's sufferings. O may we ever say to her, in our Lord's words, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 23)

¹³ A very simple and artless confession. The Lord works very differently upon his elect; but always to one and the same end, namely, to make us prize Christ, his salvation. and his ways, and to abhor ourselves, the paths of sin, and to cast off all self-righteous hopes. If this is effected in thy heart, reader, no matter whether thou canst tell of visions and dreams, and talk high of experiences. Many are and have been deceived by these things, and come to nothing. But where the soul is rooted and grounded in the knowledge of precious Christ, and love to his ways, though there may be many fears, let this be an indubitable evidence of a real and sincere pilgrim.

61. MERCY. Why, when our friend here was packing up to be gone from our town, I and another went accidentally to see her; so we knocked at the door and went in. When we were within, and seeing what she was doing, we asked what was her meaning. She said, she was sent for to go to her husband; and then she up and told us how she had seen him in a dream, dwelling in a curious place, among immortals, wearing a crown, playing upon a harp, eating and drinking at his Prince's table, and singing praises to Him for bringing him thither, &c. Now, methought, while she was telling these things unto us, my heart burned within me; and I said in my heart, If this be true, I will leave my father and my mother, and the land of my nativity, and will, if I may, go along with Christiana.

62. So I asked her further of the truth of these things, and if she would let me go with her; for I saw now that there was no dwelling, but with the danger of ruin, any longer in our town. But yet I came away with a heavy heart, not for that I was unwilling to come away, but for that so many of my relations were left behind.

63. And I am come, with all the desire of my heart, and will go, if I may, with Christiana, unto her husband, and his King.

64. INTER. Thy setting out is good, for thou hast given credit to the truth;¹⁴ thou art a Ruth,

¹⁴ Thou hast given credit to the truth. What is this but faith, the faith of God's elect; the faith of the operation of God? But some may ask. What, is justifying, saving faith, nothing more than a belief of the truth? If so, the very devils believe, yea, more, they tremble also. True: but mind how Mercy's faith wrought by her works. True, she did not tremble, like a devil, without hope, but she fled for refuge to the hope set before her in the gospel. She fled from sin, from the city of destruction, to Christ for salvation. Though she had not the joy of faith, yet she followed on to know the Lord, walking in his ways, and hoping for comfort from the Lord in his due time. O how are many poor pilgrims' hearts dejected and distressed about the faith of the gospel, by the strange, perplexing, unscriptural definitions which have been given of it! Whereas faith is the most simple thing in the world, it is the belief of the truth as it is in Jesus; that we are lost sinners in ourselves, and that there is salvation for us in him. Where this is believed in the heart, it causes a sinner to become a pilgrim: believing the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the perfect

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who did, for the love she bare to Naomi, and to the Lord her God, leave father and mother, and the land of her nativity, to come out, and go with a people that she knew not heretofore. "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust".

65. Now supper was ended, and preparation was made for bed; the women were laid singly alone, and the boys by themselves. Now when Mercy was in bed, she could not sleep for joy, for that now her doubts of missing at last, were removed further from her than ever they were before. So she lay blessing and praising God, who had had such favour for her.¹⁵

66. In the morning they rose with the sun, and prepared themselves for their departure; but the Interpreter would have them tarry awhile, for, said He, you must orderly go from hence. Then, said He to the damsel that first opened unto them, Take them and have them into the garden to the bath, and there wash them, and make them clean from the soil which they have gathered by travelling. Then Innocent the damsel took them, and had them into the garden, and brought them to the bath; so she told them that there they must wash and be clean, for so her Master would have the women to do that called at His house, as they were going on pilgrimage. They then went in and washed, yea, they and the boys and all; and they came out of that bath, not only sweet and clean,¹⁶

purity of God's law, his own ruined state, the preciousness of Christ, the glory of his salvation, the necessity of holiness, and the hope of glory; this faith will influence the conduct, bring love into the heart, and cause the soul to persevere, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Oh, if thou hast a grain of this precious faith in thy heart, bless Jesus for it, and go on thy way rejoicing.

¹⁵ Here now is the comfort of faith. As our faith grows strong, it expels our doubts, enlivens our hearts, and sets our souls a blessing and praising our Immanuel. This prayer, "Lord, increase our faith!" is ever needful for God's glory, and to our soul's comfort.

¹⁶ There is no travelling on pilgrimage without gathering soil. There are no pilgrims, but daily need to have recourse to this bath of sanctification. What may we understand by it? The blood of Jesus, which cleanses us from all sin. (1 John i. 7.) Christ is the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. (Zech. xiii. 1.) Christ is the soul's only bath. As all baths are for the health and purification of the

but also much enlivened and strengthened in their joints. So when they came in, they looked fairer a deal than when they went out to the washing.

67. When they were returned out of the garden from the bath, the Interpreter took them, and looked upon them, and said unto them, Fair as the moon. Then he called for the seal, wherewith they used to be sealed that were washed in His bath. So the seal was brought, and He set His mark upon them, that they might be known in the places whither they were yet to go. Now the seal was the contents and sum of the passover which the children of Israel did eat when they came out from the land of Egypt, and the mark was set between their eyes. This seal greatly added to their beauty, for it was an ornament to their faces. It also added to their gravity, and made their countenances more like them of angels.¹⁷

body; such is this bath to the soul. But, unless a bath be used, and water applied, this cannot be effected. So, unless we have recourse to Christ, we cannot enjoy the comfort of health and purification of soul. But the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, convinces us of sin, shews us our flesh-contracted spots and defilements, and leads us to the blood of the Lamb. The Spirit bears witness to this blood, and purifies and comforts by the application of this blood only. O how does this enliven and strengthen our souls, by filling our consciences with joy and peace in believing! Let us bless our dear Saviour for such a bath. Let us pray him to keep us from being so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, as not to feel our want of it; or so blinded by a false notion of our own perfection, as not to see our constant need of this fountain.

*The fountain of Christ
I ever will sing;
The blood of our Priest,
Our crucified King;
Which perfectly cleanses
From sin, and from filth;
And richly dispenses
Salvation and health.*

*This fountain from guilt
Not only makes pure,
And gives, soon as felt,
Infallible cure;
But if guilt removed
Return and remain,
Its pow'r may be proved
Again and again.*

¹⁷ This means the sealing of the Spirit, whereby they were sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph.

68. INTERP. Then said the Interpreter again to the damsel that waited upon these women, Go into the vestry and fetch out garments for these people; so she went and fetched out white raiment, and laid down before Him; so He commanded them to put it on:¹⁸ it was “fine linen, white and clean.” When the women were thus adorned, they seemed to be a terror one to the other; for that they could not see that glory each one on herself, which they could see in each other. Now, therefore, they began to esteem each other better than themselves. “For you are fairer than I am,” said one; and “you are more comely than I am,” said another. The children also stood amazed to see into what fashion they were brought.¹⁹

69. The Interpreter then called for a manservant of His, one Great-heart, and bid him

iv. 80.) O this is blessed sealing! None know the comfort and joy of it, but those who have experienced it. It confirms our faith, establishes our hope, and inflames our affections to God the Father, for his everlasting love; to God the Son, for his everlasting atonement and righteousness; and to God the Spirit, for his enlightening mercy, regenerating grace, quickening, sanctifying, testifying, and assuring influences, whereby we know that we are the children of God, for “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 16.) All the comfort of our souls lies in keeping this seal clear in our view, and constant in our sight. Therefore grieve not the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ Mind, they are commanded to put it on. Though God imputes the righteousness of his beloved Son to sinners, yet it is received and put on by faith. Hence it is called the righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21), and the righteousness of faith. (Rom. x. 6). Christ the God-man wrought it out, God the Father imputes it, and faith receives it, under the influence of God the Spirit. God’s imputation does not supersede faith’s acceptance of his Son’s righteousness.

¹⁹ This is always the case, when souls are clothed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness. They are little, low, and mean in their own eyes, and they esteem each other better than themselves: whereas they, who at all look to, trust in, or depend upon their own righteousness, in any degree, for their clothing and justification before God, always look down with an air of supercilious contempt upon others, who they think are not so righteous as themselves. This is contrary to living by faith upon, and looking wholly to Jesus. Lord, hide self-righteous pride from my heart, and link me into the depth of deepest humility, that I may ever glory of thee, and in thee, in ,whom I am perfectly righteous!

take sword, and helmet, and shield; and take these my daughters, said He, and conduct them to the house called Beautiful, at which place they will rest next. So he took his weapons and went before them; and the Interpreter said, God speed. Those also that belonged to the family, sent them away with many a good wish. So they went on their way and sang—

*This place has been our second stage;
Here we have heard and seen
Those good things that, from age to age,
To others hid have been.
The dunghill-racer, spider, hen,*

*The chicken, too, to me
Hath taught a lesson; let me then
Conformed to it be.*

*The butcher, garden, and the field,
The robin and his bait,
Also the rotten tree doth yield
Me argument of weight;*

*To move me for to watch and pray,
To strive to be sincere;
To take my cross up day by day,
And serve the Lord with fear.*

Notes :

