

ENCHANTED GROUND AND HOPEFUL'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVERSION



*They are
come to the
Enchanted-
ground.*

*Helpful
begins to be
drowsy.*

*Christian
keeps him
awake.*

I saw then in my dream, that they went till they came into a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy, if he came a stranger into it. And here *Hopeful* began to be very dull and heavy of sleep;¹ wherefore he said unto *Christian*, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up mine eyes; let us lie down here, and take one nap.

2. **Chr.** *By no means*, (said the other) lest sleeping we never awake more.

3. **Hope.** Why, my brother? Sleep is sweet to the laboring man.

¹ The enchanted ground may signify the world in general, a state of outward prosperity, and long interval from conflicts and temptations: or a season when churches and professors are exempted from a sharp persecution. On one or other of these accounts too many sleep in the present day, some to their ruin. At such a time it is a mercy to have a faithful prudent friend, with whom we can have free communication in the things of God. And it is very useful frequently to look back, and remind one another of the steps by which the Lord drew us to Himself. This subject has a happy tendency to revive our spirits when we feel ourselves growing drowsy and dull in the way.

We may be refreshed if we take a nap.

4. **Chr.** Do you not remember, that one of the Shepherds bid us beware of the *Enchanted ground*? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping; wherefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1 Thes. 5. 6.

5. **Hope.** I acknowledge myself in fault; and had I been here alone, I had by sleeping run the danger of death. I see it is true, that the wise man saith, *Two are better than one*. Hitherto hath thy company been my mercy; *And thou shalt have a good reward for thy labor*.

*He is
thankful.*

Eccl. 4. 9.

6. **Chr.** Now then, said *Christian*, to prevent drowsiness in this place, let us fall into good discourse.

*To prevent
drowsiness
they fall to
good dis-
course.
Good dis-
course pre-
venteth
drowsiness.*

7. **Hope.** With all my heart, said the other.

8. **Chr.** Where shall we begin?

9. **Hope.** Where God began with us, but do you begin if you please.

10. **Chr.** I will sing you first this song.

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The
dreamer's
note.

When saints do sleepy grow,
let them come hither,
And hear how these two
pilgrims talk together,
Yea, let them learn of
them in any wise
Thus to keep open their
drowsy slumbering eyes;
Saints fellowship,
if it be managed well,
Keeps them awake,
and that in spite of hell.

They
begin at
the begin-
ning of
their con-
version.

11. **Chr.** Then *Christian* began, and said, I will ask you a question. How came you to think at first of doing as you do now?

12. **Hope.** Do you mean, how came I at first to look after the good of my soul?

13. **Chr.** Yes, that is my meaning.

14. **Hope.** I continued a great while in the delight of those things which were seen and sold at our fair; things which I believe now would have (had I continued in them still) drowned me in perdition and destruction.

15. **Chr.** What things were they?

16. **Hope.** All the treasures and riches of the world. Also I delighted much in rioting, reveling, drinking, swearing, lying, uncleanness, sabbath-breaking, and what not, that tended to destroy the soul.² But I

Hopeful's
life before
conver-
sion.

² While the unconverted sinner is sleeping the deadly sleep of sinful security, dream-

found at last, by hearing and considering of things that are Divine, which indeed I heard of you, as also of beloved *Faithful*, that was put to death for his faith and good living in *Vanity-Fair*, that the end of these things is death. And that for these things sake, *the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.*

Rom. 6. 21,
22, 23.
Eph. 5. 6.

17. **Chr.** And did you presently fall under the power of this conviction?

18. **Hope.** No, I was not willing presently to know the evil of sin, nor the damnation that follows upon the commission of it; but endeavored, when my mind at first began to be shaken with the Word to shut mine eyes against the light thereof.

Hopeful at first
shuts his eyes
against the light.

19. **Chr.** But what was the cause of your carrying of it thus to the first workings of God's blessed Spirit upon you?

ing of happiness in the vain amusements of sense; the divine Spirit, by its powerful energy on his mind, convinces the sinners that they are vain shadows passing away as a dream: that nothing is durable but what is eternal, that while he is amusing himself with dreams of happiness, he is slumbering on the very edge of the infernal pit. Thus roused, he sets himself to repent and reform; repeated unsuccessful trials however convince him he is without strength. When wearied and disappointed by fruitless endeavors, Christ with His righteousness and glorious fullness being revealed in him by the Spirit, becomes a joyful discovery, and being emptied of self he gladly casts himself on Christ for all.

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*Reasons of
his resisting
the light*

20. **Hope.** The causes were, 1.) I was ignorant that this was the work of God upon me. I never thought that by awakenings for sin, God at first begins the conversion of a sinner. 2.) Sin was yet very sweet to my flesh, and I was loth to leave it. 3.) I could not tell how to part with mine old companions, their presence and actions were so desirable unto me. 4.) The hours in which convictions were upon me, were such troublesome and such heart-affrighting hours, that I could not bear, no not so much as the remembrance of them upon my heart.

21. **Chr.** Then, as it seems, some-times you got rid of your trouble.

22. **Hope.** Yes, verily, but it would come into my mind again, and then I should be as bad, nay worse than I was before.

23. **Chr.** Why, what was it that brought your sins to mind again?

*When he
had lost his
sense of sin,
what brought
it again.*

24. **Hope.** Many things; as, 1.) If I did but meet a good man in the streets; or,³ 2.) If I have heard

³ Though sinners affect to despise the believer, their hearts secretly stand in awe of him, provided his character be consistent and exemplary; but they are hardened by the conduct of a half-professor, whose religion chiefly lies in talking and hearing. By reason of these the way of truth is evil spoken of. And even some sincere Christians lose much of that reverence they would otherwise command, by improper compliance's with the world, and a want of

any read in the Bible; or, If mine head did begin to ache; or, If I were told that some of my neighbors were sick; or, If I heard the bell toll for some that were dead; or, If I thought of dying myself; or, If I heard that sudden death happened to others. But especially when I thought of myself, that I must quickly come to judgment.

25. **Chr.** And could you at any time, with ease, get off the guilt of sin, when by any of these ways it came upon you?

26. **Hope.** No, not latterly; for then they got faster hold of my conscience; and then, if I did but think of going back to sin, (though my mind was turned against it) it would be double torment to me.

27. **Chr.** And how did you do then?

28. **Hope.** I thought I must endeavor to mend my life; for else, thought I, I am sure to be damned.

*When he
could no
longer shake
off his guilt
by sinful
courses, then
he endeavors
to mend.*

29. **Chr.** And did you endeavor to mend?

30. **Hope.** Yes; and fled from, not only my sins, but sinful company too, and betook me to religious du-

that exactness and circumspection which it is both their duty and honor to observe. The honor of our calling is intrusted to us, and we should watch and pray to maintain an uniform conduct, because of our observers.

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ties, as praying, reading, weeping for sin, speaking truth to my neighbors, &c. These things I did, with many others, too much here to relate.

31. **Chr.** And did you think yourself well then?

32. **Hope.** Yes, for a while; but at the last my trouble came tumbling upon me again, and that over the neck of all my reformations.

33. **Chr.** How came that about, since you were now reformed?

34. **Hope.** There were several things brought it upon me, especially such sayings as these: *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. By the works of the law, no man shall be justified. When ye have done all things, say, We are unprofitable:* with many more such like. From whence I began to reason with myself thus: If all my righteousnesses are filthy rags; if by the deeds of the law no man can be justified; and if when we have done all we are yet unprofitable, then 'tis but a folly to think of heaven by the law. I further thought thus: If a man runs a hundred pounds into the shopkeeper's debt, and after that shall pay for all that he shall fetch; yet his old debt stands still in the book uncrossed, for the which the shopkeeper may sue him, and cast him into prison, till he shall pay the debt.

35. **Chr.** Well, and how did you apply this to yourself?

36. **Hope.** Why, I thought thus with myself; I have by my sins run a great way into GOD'S book, and that my now reforming will not pay off that score; therefore I should think still, under all my present amendments, but how shall I be freed from that damnation that I have brought myself in danger of by my former transgressions?

37. **Chr.** A very good application; but pray go on.

38. **Hope.** Another thing that hath troubled me even since my late amend-ments is, that if I look narrowly into the best of what I do now, I still see sin, new sin, mixing itself with the best of that I do; so that now I am forced to conclude, that notwithstanding my former fond conceits of myself and duties, I have committed sin enough in one duty to send me to hell, though my former life had been faultless.

39. **Chr.** And what did you do then?

40. **Hope.** Do! I could not tell what to do, till I brake my mind to *Faithful*, for he and I were well, acquainted. And he told me, that unless I could obtain the righteousness of a man that never had sinned; neither mine own, nor all the righteousness of the world could save me.

41. **Chr.** And did you think he spake true?

Then he thought himself well.

Reformation at last could not help, and why. Isa. 64. 6. Gal. 2. 16 Luke 17. 10.

His being a debtor by the law troubled him.

His espying bad things in his best duties troubled him.

This made him break his mind to Faithful, who told him the way to be saved.

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42. **Hope.** Had he told me so when I was pleased and satisfied with mine own amendments, I had called him fool for his pains; but now, since I see mine own infirmity, and the sin that cleaves to my best performance, I have been forced to be of his opinion.

43. **Chr.** But did you think, when at first he suggested it to you, that there was such a man to be found, of whom it might justly be said that he never committed sin?

44. **Hope** I must confess the words at first sounded strangely, but after a little more talk and company with him, I had full conviction about it.

45. **Chr.** And did you ask him, what man this was and how you must be justified by him?

46. **Hope.** Yes, and he told me it was the *Lord Jesus*, that dwelleth on the right hand of the *Most High*: and thus, said he, you must be justified by Him, even by trusting to what He hath done by Himself in the days of His flesh, and suffered when He did hang on the tree. I asked him further, how that Man's righteousness could be of that efficacy, as to justify another before GOD? And he told me, He was the *Mighty GOD*, and did what He did, and died the death also, not for Himself, but for me; to whom His doings, and the worthiness of them, should be imputed, if I believed on Him.

47. **Chr.** And what did you do then?

48. **Hope.** I made my objections against my believing, for that I thought he was not willing to save me.

49. **Chr.** And what said *Faithful* to you then?

50. **Hope.** He bid me go to him and see; then I said it was presumption; he said no, for I was invited to come. Then he gave me a book of Jesus his inditing, to encourage me the more freely to come; and he said concerning that book, That every jot and tittle thereof stood firmer than heaven and earth. Then I asked him what I must do when I came; and he told me, I must entreat upon my knees, with all my heart and soul, the Father to reveal Him to me. Then I asked him further, how I must make my supplication to Him? And he said, Go, and thou shalt find Him upon a mercy-seat, where He sits all the year long, to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come. I told him, that I knew not what to say when I came. And he bid me say to this effect:

51. *God be merciful to me a sinner, and make me to know and believe in Jesus Christ; for I see, that if His righteousness had not been, or I have not faith in that righteousness, I am utterly cast away. Lord, I have heard that thou art a merciful God, and hast ordained that Thy Son Jesus Christ should be the Sav-*

*He doubts of
acceptation.*

Mat. 11. 28.
*He is better
instructed.*

Mat. 24. 35.
Psal. 94. 6.
Dan. 6. 10.
Jer. 29. 12,
13.

Ex. 25. 22.
Lev. 16. 2.
Numb. 7. 8,
9.
Heb. 4. 16.

*He is bid to
pray.*

*At which he
started at
present.*

Heb. 10.
Rom. 4.
Col. 1.
1 Pet. 1.

*A more
particular
discovery of
the way to be
saved.*

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ior of the world; and moreover, that thou art willing to bestow upon such a poor sinner as I am (and I am a sinner indeed) Lord, take therefore this, opportunity, and magnify Thy grace in the salvation of my soul, through Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

52. **Chr.** And did you do as you were bidden?

He prays.

53. **Hope.** Yes; over and over, and over.

54. **Chr.** And did the Father reveal His Son to you?

55. **Hope.** Not at the first, nor second, nor third, nor fourth, nor fifth; no, nor at the sixth time neither.

56. **Chr.** What did you do then?

57. **Hope.** What! why I could not tell what to do.

He thought to leave off praying.

58. **Chr.** Had you not thoughts of leaving off praying?

59. **Hope.** Yes; an hundred times twice told.

60. **Chr.** And what was the reason you did not?

Durst not leave off praying, and why.

61. **Hope.** I believed that that was true, which had been told me, to wit, that without the righteousness of this Christ, all the world could not save me; and therefore thought I with myself, if I leave off, I die and I can but die at the throne of grace.

And withal this came into my mind, If it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and will not tarry. So I continued praying, until the Father shewed me His Son.

Habb. 2, 3

62. **Chr.** And how was He revealed unto you?

63. **Hope.** I did not see Him with my bodily eyes, but with the eyes of mine understanding; and thus it was. One day I was very sad, I think sadder than at any one time of my life; and this sadness was through a fresh sight of the greatness and vileness of my sins. And as I was then looking for nothing but hell, and the everlasting damnation of my soul, suddenly, as I thought, I saw the Lord Jesus looking down from heaven upon me, and saying, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* But I replied, Lord I am a great, a very great sinner: and he answered, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Then I said, But Lord, what is believing? And then I saw from that saying, *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,* that believing and coming was all one; and that he that came, that is, ran out in his heart and affections after salvation by Christ, he indeed believed in Christ. Then the water stood in mine eyes, and I asked further, But Lord, may such a great sinner as I am, be indeed accepted of thee, and be saved by thee? And I heard him say, *and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* Then I said, But how,

Eph. 1. 18, 19.

Christ is revealed to him, and how.

Acts 16. 30, 31.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

John 6. 35.

John 6. 37.

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1 Tim. 1. 15.
Rom. 10. 4
Chap. 4.

Heb. 7. 24, 25.

Lord, must I consider of thee in my coming to thee, that my faith may be placed aright upon thee? Then he said, *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification: He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood: He is mediator between God and us: He ever liveth to make intercession for us.* From all which I gathered, that I must look for righteousness in His person, and for satisfaction for my sins by His blood; that what He did in obedience to His Father's law, and in submitting to the penalty thereof, was not for Himself, but for him that will accept it for his salvation, and be thankful. And now was my heart full of joy, mine eyes full of tears, and mine affections running over with love to the name, people, and ways of Jesus Christ.

64. **Chr.** This was a revelation of Christ to your soul indeed. But tell me particularly what effect this had upon your spirit?

65. **Hope.** It made me see that all the world, notwithstanding all the righteousness thereof, is in a state of condemnation. It made me see that God the Father, though he be just, can justly justify the coming sinner. It made me greatly ashamed of the vileness of my former life, and confounded me with the sense of mine own ignorance; for there never came thought into my heart before now, that showed me so the beauty of Je-

sus Christ. It made me love a holy life, and long to do something for the honor and glory of the name of the Lord Jesus. Yea, I thought that had I now a thousand gallons of blood in my body, I could spill it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus.⁴ †

NOTES:

⁴ Faith in Christ as He is revealed in the scriptures, brings a new discovery of God to the soul: it gives a view of Him as a just God, and the Savior. This faith works a kindly sorrow for sin, and most of all for pardoned sin; shows us the matchless beauty of Emmanuel's person and offices, and inspires us with a love of holiness, and an earnest desire to glorify Him in life and in death. Whosoever finds those marks wrought within him, though in ever so small a measure, may be assured that his faith is genuine, and that he is passed from death unto life. But let it be remembered, that though the Lord leads all the people to acknowledge of the same truths, yet he does not work upon them all in the same way. Many have by grace attained to an assured confidence in God's mercy through Christ and have been rooted and grounded in His love by faith, who cannot give such an account of the season and manner of their conversion as Hopeful here does. Inquiring souls, are apt to limit the Holy One of Israel; and think that they cannot be right unless their experience tallies with what they have heard of others.--Wherever there is a real dependence upon Christ, and hatred of sin, and an earnest desire after holiness, there certainly is a work of grace upon the heart.

