



CHAPTER IX

Delectable Mountains



saw now that they went on, till they came at the river that was on this side of the Delectable Mountains. To the river where the fine trees grow on both sides; and whose leaves, if taken inwardly, are good against surfeits, where the meadows are green all the year long, and where they might lie down safely (Psa. 23). By this river side, in the meadow, there were cotes and folds for sheep, a house built for the nourishing and bringing up of those lambs, the babes of those women that go on pilgrimage (Heb. 5:2). Also there was here one that was intrusted with them, who could have compassion, and that could gather these lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and that could gently lead those that were with young (Isa. 40:11).

2. Now to the care of THIS MAN, Christiana admonished her four daughters to commit their little ones, that by these waters they might be housed, harboured, succoured, and nourished, and that none of

them might be lacking in time to come.¹ This Man, if any of them go astray, or be lost, He will bring them again; He will also bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen them that are sick (Ezek. 34:11-16). Here they will never want meat, and drink, and clothing; here they will be kept from thieves and robbers; for this Man will die before one of those committed to His trust shall be lost (Jer. 23:4).

3. Besides, here they shall be sure to have good nurture and admonition, and shall be taught to walk in right paths, and that you know is a favour of no small account. Also here, as you see, are delicate waters, pleasant meadows, dainty flowers, variety of trees, and such as bear wholesome fruit; fruit not like that that Matthew ate of, that

¹ This is a most encouraging view of the tender care of the Saviour, to the children of believers committed to His care, by godly parents. Not by any ceremonial observance, but by constant fervent supplications to the Throne of Grace on their behalf, and by a consistent pious example to train them up in the way in which they should go, that when they are old they should not depart from the new and living way-(ED).

fell over the wall out of Beelzebub's garden; but fruit that procureth health where there is none, and that continueth and increaseth it where it is. ² So they were content to commit their little ones to Him; and that which was also an encouragement to them so to do, was, for that all this was to be at the charge of the King, and so was as an hospital for young children and orphans.

4. Now they went on; and when they were come to By-path Meadow, to the stile over which Christian went with his fellow Hopeful, when they were taken by Giant Despair, and put into Doubting Castle; they sat down and consulted what was best to be done; to wit, now they were so strong, and had got such a man as Mr. Great-heart for their conductor, whether they had not best to make an attempt upon the Giant, demolish his castle, and, if there were any pilgrims in it, to set them at liberty, before they went any further.

5. So one said one thing, and another said the contrary. One questioned if it were lawful to go upon unconsecrated ground; another said they might, provided their end was good;

6. **GREAT-HEART**----but Mr. Great-heart said, Though that assertion offered last cannot be universally true, yet I have a commandment to resist sin, to overcome evil, to fight the good fight of faith; and, I pray, with whom should I fight this good fight, if not with Giant Despair? I will,

² Here we frequently find our author speaking of our God and Saviour as Man; he excels in this. It is to be wished that authors and preachers wrote and spake of the manhood of Jesus, who was a perfect Man, like unto us in all things except sin. The view and consideration of this is sweet to faith, and endears our Saviour to our hearts-(Mason).

therefore, attempt the taking away of his life, and the demolishing of Doubting Castle. Then said he, Who will go with me?

7. **HONEST** --- Then said old Honest, I will.

8. And so will we too, said Christiana's four sons, Matthew, Samuel, James, and Joseph; for they were young men and strong (1 John 3:13, 14).

9. So they left the women in the road, and with them Mr. Feeble-mind and Mr. Ready-to-halt with his crutches, to be their guard, until they came back; for in that place though Giant Despair dwelt so near, they keeping in the road, a little child might lead them (Isa. 11:6). So Mr. Great-heart, old Honest, and the four young men, went to go up to Doubting Castle, to look for Giant Despair.

10. When they came at the Castle-gate, they knocked for entrance with an unusual noise. At that the old Giant comes to the gate, and Diffidence, his wife, follows.

11. **GIANT-DESPAIR**--- Then said he, Who, and what is he that is so hardy, as after this manner to molest the Giant Despair?

12. **MR. GREAT-HEART** --- Mr. Great-heart replied, It is I, Great-heart, one of the King of the Celestial Country's conductors of pilgrims to their place; and I demand of thee that thou open thy gates for my entrance. Prepare thyself also to fight, for I am come to take away thy head, and to demolish Doubting Castle.

13. Now Giant Despair, because he was a giant, thought no man could overcome him; and, again, thought he, since

heretofore I have made a conquest of angels, shall Great-heart make me afraid! So he harnessed himself, and went out. He had a cap of steel upon his head, a breast-plate of fire girded to him, and he came out in iron shoes with a great club in his hand.

14. Then these six men made up to him, and beset him behind and before. Also when Diffidence, the giantess, came up to help him, old Mr. Honest cut her down at one blow. Then they fought for their lives, and Giant Despair was brought down to the ground, but was very loath to die. He struggled hard, and had, as they say, as many lives as a cat; but Great-heart was his death, for he left him not till he had severed his head from his shoulders.³

15. Then they fell to demolishing Doubting Castle, that you know might with ease be done, since Giant Despair was dead. They were seven days in destroying of that; and in it of pilgrims they found one Mr. Despondency, almost starved to death, and one Much- afraid, his daughter; these two they saved alive. But it would have made you a-wondered to have seen the dead bodies that lay here and there in the

³ What cannot Great-heart do? what feats not perform? what victories not gain? Who can stand before Great-heart? Diffidence shall fall, and Giant Despair be slain by the power of Great-heart, with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17); even Despondency, though almost starved, shall be delivered, and his daughter Much-afraid shall be rescued. O for more of Great-heart's company!-(Mason). The struggle with Despair may be dangerous, and painful, and long-continued, but it shall he finally successful. "I am persuaded," saith the Apostle, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul demolished the castle, and slew the giant; but,

*"Sin can rebuild the castle, and make it remain,
And make Despair the Giant live again."*-ED.

castle-yard, and how full of dead men's bones the dungeon was.

16. When Mr. Great-heart and his companions had performed this exploit, they took Mr. Despondency, and his daughter Much-afraid, into their protection; for they were honest people, though they were prisoners in Doubting Castle, to that tyrant Giant Despair. They, therefore, I say, took with them the head of the Giant, for his body they had buried under a heap of stones, and down to the road and to their companions they came, and showed them what they had done. Now when Feeble-mind and Ready-to- halt saw that it was the head of Giant Despair indeed, they were very jocund and merry.⁴

17. Now Christiana, if need was, could play upon the viol, and her daughter Mercy upon the lute; so, since they were so merry disposed, she played them a lesson, and Ready-to- halt would dance. So he took Despondency's daughter, named Much-afraid, by the hand, and to dancing they went in the road. True, he could not dance without one crutch in his hand; but, I promise you, he footed it well. Also the girl was to be commended, for she answered the music handsomely.

18. As for Mr. Despondency, the music was not much to him; he was for feeding rather than dancing, for that he was almost

⁴ How well does Mr. Bunyan describe the experience of the Much-afraids, Ready-to-halts, and the Feeble-minds, in the Come and Welcome. "Poor coming soul, thou art like the man that would ride full gallop, whose horse will hardly trot! Now, the desire of his mind is not to be judged of by the slow pace of the dull jade he rides on, but by the hitching, and kicking, and spurring, as he sits on his back. Thy flesh is like this dull jade; it will not gallop after Christ, it will be backward, though thy soul and Heaven lie at stake. But be of good comfort, Christ judgeth according to the sincerity of the heart."-(Vol. 1, p. 252).

starved. So Christiana gave him some of her bottle of spirits, for present relief, and then prepared him something to eat; and, in little time, the old gentleman came to himself, and began to be finely revived.

19. Now I saw in my dream, when all these things were finished, Mr. Great-heart took the head of Giant Despair, and set it upon a pole by the highway side, right over against the pillar that Christian erected for a caution to pilgrims that came after, to take heed of entering into his grounds.⁵

*Though Doubting Castle be demolish'd,
And the Giant Despair hath lost his head,
Sin can rebuild the Castle, make't remain,
And make Despair the Giant live again.*

Then he writ under it, upon a marble stone these verses following:

*This the head of him, whose name only
In former times did pilgrims terrify.
His Castle's down; and Diffidence, his wife,
Brave Master Great-heart has bereft of life.
Despondency, his daughter Much-afraid,
Great-heart for them also the man has play'd;
Who hereof doubts, if he'll but cast his eye
Up hither, may his scruples satisfy.
This head also, when doubting cripples dance,
Doth show from fears they have deliverance.*

20. When these men had thus bravely showed themselves against Doubting Castle, and had slain Giant Despair, they went forward; and went on till they came to the Delectable Mountains, where Christian and Hopeful refreshed themselves with the varieties of the place.

⁵ This is the work and aim of every faithful minister of Christ, to destroy Giant Despair, and demolish Doubting Castle, in the hearts of God's children. A more awful character is not in the world, than the man who assumes the ministerial name and character, without understanding the nature of that ministry of reconciliation which is committed to everyone who is really called and sent of God-(J.B.).

They also acquainted themselves with the shepherds there, who welcomed them, as they had done Christian before, unto the Delectable Mountains.

21. Now the Shepherds, seeing, so great a train follow Mr. Great-heart, for with him they were well acquainted, they said unto him,

22. **SHEPHERDS** ---- Good Sir, you have got a goodly company here. Pray, where did you find all these?

23. **GREAT-HEART** ---- Then Mr. Great-heart replied: *First*, here is Christiana and her train, Her sons, and her sons' wives, who like the wain,⁶

*Keep by the pole, and do by compass steer,
From sin to grace, else they had not been here;
Next, here's old Honest come on pilgrimage,
Ready-to-halt, too, who, I dare engage,
True-hearted is, and so is Feeble-mind,
Who willing was not to be left behind;
Despondency, good man, is coming after,
And so also is Much-afraid his daughter.
May we have entertainment here, or must
We further go?
Let's know whereon to trust.*

24. **SHEPHERDS**. Then said the Shepherds, This is a comfortable company. You are welcome to us, for we have [comfort] for the feeble as for the strong. Our Prince has an eye to what is done to the least of these; therefore infirmity must not be a block to our entertainment (Matt. 25:40). So they had them to the palace door, and then said unto them, Come in, Mr. Feeble-mind; Come in, Mr. Ready-to-halt; come in, Mr. Despondency, and Mrs. Much-afraid, his daughter.⁷ These, Mr.

⁶ The wain," seven bright stars in the constellation of Ursa Major, called by country people, the plough, or the wain, or Charles I's chariot-(ED).

⁷ Those ministers who exercise the greatest affection towards weak and upright Christians, are most according to the description of pastors, after God's own heart, given in the Scriptures of truth-(Ivimey).

Great-heart, said the Shepherds to the guide, we call in by name, for that they are most subject to draw back; but as for you, and the rest that are strong, we leave you to your wonted liberty.

25. **GREAT-HEART** Then said Mr. Great-heart, This day I see that grace doth shine in your faces, and that you are my Lord's Shepherds indeed; for that you have not pushed these diseased neither with side nor shoulder, but have rather strewed their way into the palace with flowers, as you should. ⁸ (Ezek. 34:21).

26. So the feeble and weak went in, and Mr. Great-heart and the rest did follow.

27. **SHEPHERDS** When they were also set down, the Shepherds said to those of the weaker sort, What is it that you would have? for, said they, all things must be managed here to the supporting of the weak, as well as the warning of the unruly.

28. So they made them a feast of things easy of digestion, and that were pleasant to the palate, and nourishing; the which, when they had received, they went to their rest, each one respectively unto his proper place. When morning was come, because the mountains were high, and the day clear, and because it was the custom of the Shepherds to show to the Pilgrims,

⁸ Bunyan was peculiarly tender with the weak; they are to be received, but not to doubtful disputations. Thus, with regard to the great cause of separation among Christians, he says, "If water- baptism" (whether by sprinkling of infants, or immersing of adults) "trouble their peace, wound the consciences of the godly, and dismember their fellowships, it is although an ordinance, for the present to be prudently shunned, for the edification of the church." "Love is more discovered when we receive, for the sake of Christ, than when we refuse his children for want of water."-(Bunyan on Baptism, vol. 2, p. 608). When will such peaceful sentiments spread over the church?-(ED).

before their departure, some rarities;⁹ therefore, after they were ready, and had refreshed themselves, the Shepherds took them out into the fields, and showed them first what they had showed to Christian before. Then they had them to some new places. The first was to Mount Marvel, where looked, and beheld a man at a distance, that tumbled the hills about with words. Then they asked the Shepherds what that should mean? So they told them, that that man was a son of one Great-grace, of whom you read in the First Part of the Records of the Pilgrim's Progress. And he is set there to teach pilgrims how to believe down, or to tumble out of their way, what difficulties they shall meet with, by faith.¹⁰ (Mark 11:23, 24).

29. **GREAT-HEART** Then said Mr. Great-heart, I know him. He is a man above many.

30. Then they had them to another place, called Mount Innocent; and there they saw a man clothed all in white, and two men, Prejudice and Ill-will, continually casting dirt upon him. Now, behold, the dirt, whatsoever they cast at him, would in little time fall off again, and

⁹ There are things taught by the Gospel, here called "rarities," which, though high and mysterious, will yet, when clearly stated, prove the means of exciting Christians to live by faith, and to cultivate whatsoever things are lovely and of good report-(Ivimey).

¹⁰ Strong faith, in the words of Christ, will "believe down" mountains of afflictions, or tumble them out of the Christian's way. Though it will not perform miracles, it will remove difficulties resembling mountains-(Ivimey).

his garments would look as clear as if no dirt had been cast thereat.¹¹

31. Then said the Pilgrims, What means this?

32. **SHEPHERDS** The Shepherds answered, This man is named Godly-man, and this garment is to show the innocency of his life. Now, those that throw dirt at him, are such as hate his well-doing; but, as you see the dirt will not stick upon his clothes, so it shall be with him that liveth truly innocently in the world. Whoever they be that would make such men dirty, they labour all in vain; for God, by that a little time is spent, will cause that their innocence shall break forth as the light, and their righteousness as the noon-day.

33. Then they took them, and had them to Mount Charity, where they showed them a man that had a bundle of cloth lying before him, out of which he cut coats and garments for the poor that stood about him; yet his bundle or roll of cloth was never the less.

34. **PILGRIMS** Then said they, What should this be?

35. **SHEPHERDS** This is, said the Shepherds, to show you, that he that has a heart to give of his labour to the poor, shall never want wherewithal. He that watereth shall be watered himself. And the cake that the widow gave to the Prophet did not cause that she had ever the less in her barrel.

¹¹ The history of Joseph, with that of Mr. Bunyan, and of thousands besides, proves, that charges against a godly, innocent man, arising from the prejudice, ill-will, and malice of his enemies, shall eventually turn out to his honour, and to their confusion. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you FALSELY, for My sake" (Matt. 5:11)-(ED).

36. They had them also to a place where they saw one Fool, and one Want-wit, washing of an Ethiopian, with intention to make him white; but the more they washed him the blacker he was.

37. **PILGRIMS** They then asked the Shepherds what that should mean.

38. **SHEPHERDS** So they told them, saying, Thus shall it be with the vile person. All means used to get such a one a good name shall, in conclusion, tend but to make him more abominable. Thus it was with the Pharisees, and so shall it be with all hypocrites.¹²

39. **MERCY** Then said Mercy, the wife of Matthew, to Christiana, her mother, Mother, I would, if it might be, see the hole in the hill, or that commonly called the by-way to hell.

40. So her mother brake her mind to the Shepherds. Then they went to the door. It was in the side of a hill, and they opened it, and bid Mercy hearken awhile. So she hearkened, and heard one saying, *Cursed be my father, for holding of my feet back from the way of peace and life;* and another said, *O that I had been torn in pieces, before I had, to save my life, lost my soul!* and another said, *If I were to live again, how would I deny myself, rather than come to this place!*

41. **MERCY** Then there was as if the very earth had groaned and quaked under the feet of this young woman for fear. So she looked white, and came

¹² This represents the folly of those who go about to reform the manners, without aiming at the conversion of the heart. Nature, in its highest state of cultivation and improvement, is nature still. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit-(J.B.).

trembling away, saying, Blessed be he and she that are delivered from this place.¹³

42. Now when the Shepherds had shown them all these things, then they had them back to the palace, and entertained them with what the house would afford. But Mercy being a young and breeding woman, longed for something that she saw there, but was ashamed to ask. Her mother-in-law then asked her what she ailed; for she looked as one not well.

43. **MERCY** Then said Mercy, There is a looking-glass hangs up in the dining-room, off which I cannot take my mind: if, therefore, I have it not, I think I shall miscarry.

44. **CHRISTIANA** Then said her mother, I will mention thy wants to the Shepherds, and they will not deny it thee.

45. **MERCY** But she said, I am ashamed that these men should know that I longed.

46. **CHRISTIANA** Nay, my daughter, said she, it is no shame but a virtue, to long for such a thing as that.

47. **MERCY** So Mercy said, Then, mother, if you please, ask the Shepherds if they are willing to sell it.

48. Now the glass was one of a thousand. It would present a man, one way, with his own features exactly (James 1:23); and, turn it but another way, and it would

¹³ O, damned souls will have thoughts that will clash with glory, clash with justice, clash with law, clash with itself, clash with hell, and with the everlastingness of misery; but the point, the edge, and the poison of all these thoughts will still be galling, and dropping their stings into the sore, grieved, wounded, fretted place, which is the conscience, though not the conscience only; for I may say of the souls in hell, that they, all over, are but one wound, one sore- (Bunyan's Greatness of the Soul, vol. 1, p. 119). Well might Mercy say, "Blessed are they that are delivered from this place!"-(ED).

show one the very face and similitude of the Prince of Pilgrims Himself (1 Cor. 13:12). Yea, I have talked with them that can tell, and they have said, that they have seen the very crown of thorns upon His head, by looking in that glass; they have therein also seen the holes in His hands, in His feet, and His side (2 Cor. 3:18). Yea, such an excellency is there in that glass, that it will show Him, to one where they have a mind to see Him; whether living or dead; whether in earth or Heaven; whether in a state of humiliation, or in His exaltation; whether coming to suffer, or coming to reign.¹⁴

49. **CHRISTIANA** Christiana, therefore, went to the Shepherds apart¹⁵- now the names of the Shepherds are Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere-and said unto them, There is one of my daughters, a breeding woman, that I think doth long for something that she hath seen in this house; and she thinks she shall miscarry, if she shall by you be denied.

¹⁴ O what a blessed thing it is to long for the Word of God so as not to be satisfied without it, and to prize it above and beyond all other things! Love to the Word excites the soul to say with David, "I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord" (Psa. 119:174). This is a special mark of a gracious soul-(Mason). Every true believer longs to be more completely acquainted with the Scriptures from day to day, and to look into them continually-(Scott). Abraham Cheer, who perished in prison for nonconformity in Bunyan's time, published a little volume of Poems, in which he compares the Bible to a looking-glass, in these very appropriate lines- "If morn by morn you in this glass will dress you, I have some hopes that God by it may bless you."-(P. 37)-(ED).

¹⁵ -- This doubtless is meant to intimate, that in times of great anxiety, and in prospect of seasons of difficulty, Christians desire above all things the special supports and consolations of the Word of God-(Ivimey).

50. **EXPERIENCE.** Call her, call her; she shall assuredly have what we can help her to.

51. **MERCY** So they called her, and said to her, Mercy, what is that thing thou wouldst have? Then she blushed, and said, The great glass that hangs up in the dining-room.

52. So Sincere ran and fetched it, and, with a joyful consent, it was given her.

53. **MERCY** Then she bowed her head, and gave thanks, and said, By this I know that I have obtained favour in your eyes.

54. They also gave to the other young women such things as they desired, and to their husbands great commendations, for that they had joined with Mr. Great-heart, to the slaying of Giant Despair, and the demolishing of Doubting Castle. About Christiana's neck, the Shepherds put a bracelet, and so they did about the necks of her four daughters; also they put earrings in their ears, and jewels on their foreheads.¹⁶

55. When they were minded to go hence, they let them go in peace, but gave not to them those certain cautions which before were given to Christian and his companion. The reason was, for that these had Great-heart to be their guide, who was one that was well acquainted with things, and so could give them their cautions more seasonably; to wit, even then when the danger was nigh the approaching. What cautions Christian and his companion had

¹⁶ By this jewelry is probably intimated, that they gave them written testimonials of possessing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, that they might be recognized as Christian women by other churches-(Ivimey).

received of the Shepherds, they had also lost, by that the time was come that they had need to put them in practice. Wherefore, here was the advantage that this company had over the other.

56. From hence they went on singing, and they said,

*Behold, how fitly are the stages set
For their relief that pilgrims are become!
And how they us receive without one let,
That makes the other life our mark and home!*

What novelties they have to us they give,
That we, though Pilgrims, joyful lives may live;
They do upon us, too, such things bestow, That show
we Pilgrims are, where'er we go.

Notes: