THE HOUSE OF THE INTERPRETER

Remember when you used to read the Bible and it was just words to you … and then, when the Lord saved you, you began to realise this precious Book became alive and directed your walk with God. … What had previously been mysteries were now becoming clearer.

Christian had recently entered through the gate of salvation. He had then been directed by Mr. Goodwill to travel a further distance to the house of Mr. Interpreter where he would come to a deeper understanding of that decision he had made. In this new journey Christian undertook, we notice first of all …

HIS PERSISTENCE

Jesus said, Lk. 9:62 No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. … One of the pillars of our faith is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. When Christ saves a person He puts within them that which is necessary to keep them going on. When the waves of temptation and doubt pile upon them they find themselves running to Christ as they would run to the cleft in the rock when the storm comes. Their first recourse is to their Saviour. That is the consequence of knowing Him in this way. This is the ongoing work of salvation … Salvation is the work of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit Who illumines a formerly darkened soul and brings them to Christ to be regenerated in Him, and their hope is absolutely in Him.

This is the force that lies behind the words, “he [Christian] went on till he came at the house of the Interpreter” … This was God leading him along the right road … And even though he had to stand and knock, and keep on knocking for a while, he would not stop until his persistence was rewarded, and the door to Mr. Interpreter’s house was opened. He continued until he received an answer … such was the burning desire within his soul! That is the difference between someone who starts in a form of the faith and gives up. At the beginning it may look genuine, but the proof is this: II Cor. 5:17 if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new … No Christ, no conversion … No Saviour, no salvation!

The proof of a true believer, then, is that they continue on the journey for which the Lord has brought them through the gate of salvation. … The Persistence of Christian … The Perseverance of the Saints.
**HIS PROFESSION**
Christian knew exactly who he was, why he was on that road and at that house, and where he was intent on going. It was clear, - there was no confusion … It is important to be convinced of these basic credentials. As we look around us today we see young men and young women looking forward to starting their university courses after their summer break… And at the end of their studies they are intent on being successful, and beginning their careers that will launch out into bright futures for them.

And here is Christian, - on this spiritual journey, - and he knows exactly what he must do to reach Mount Zion, and all the glories that await him there. He was aware he didn’t have all the answers to his questions. The great majority of the issues associated with this new journey remained too great for him to comprehend, - he was new/young in the faith. The language was sometimes foreign to him. The pictures and symbolism had interpretations he needed to learn from someone who was familiar with the true teaching, and so he addressed Interpreter, “I was told by the man that stands at the gate at the head of this way, that if I called here you would show me excellent things, such as would be helpful to me on my journey”. … All of us had that experience when, - as young believers, - we listened to godly men and women who had been on the road a lifetime!

How important it is for us to be used of God in the spiritual development of others. When He is achieving His purposes in your life, He will use you to help others progress in the faith. He never saves us to be isolated, - or to live out Christ on our own, - but it is His will for us to live and work amongst our brothers and sisters in the faith to encourage each other. … Mr. Interpreter, said Christian, I’ve started out on a new journey and I want to know how best to travel it and I have been directed to you … What a privilege when the Lord directs someone along your path to fulfil such a need!

Yes, indeed, Christian knew where the Lord had taken him from, and where the Lord was bringing him to … **His persistence and profession** … And, as a consequence, we then notice …

**HIS PROGRESSION**
One way we can understand this theme in this particular section is to divide it into three ‘compartments’. Firstly …
**Christian Company.** This is such an important aspect in our spiritual walk, - we need the help and encouragement of each other. I know God is with me, and I know the Holy Spirit indwells me … but the Lord also gives His people tangible and actual ‘able-to-see’ proofs of His presence in this world. Those ‘proofs’ are His people and they are born again of the same Holy Spirit of God Who indwells me. They are also seeking to live the life in honour of His most precious Name. The effects of Christian company can never be taken for granted. When I am feeling tired or weak in the Lord’s work, I look to His people for encouragement. It is never the Lord’s will for one believer to discourage another believer. Yes, there are times when correction and even confrontation is necessary but they are to be done in a manner that inevitably leads to encouragement. Christian grace must always be the overriding principle … James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another … 19 if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

… And notice Mr. Interpreter was willing to call upon the man who had the candle. The man was not named, and all he did was to light a candle … and yet, such an important task! What Christian was about to learn concerning his faith was contributed to that unnamed, seemingly-insignificant man who lit the candle so that Christian was able to see more clearly! The man’s name didn’t need to be mentioned … but God knew who he was! You may never have led a soul to Christ, and you might think you are fairly insignificant in the Lord’s work but when He uses you to even light a candle that would guide a brother or sister in the pursuit of God … what a great privilege!

In the Christian walk each of us needs Christian company, and each of us has much to learn from the other as the purposes of God are wrought among us.

**Christian Comfort (Encouragement)** The most important issue we all must be convinced of is the work of Christ on the cross for our salvation. There are other issues that can wait to a later occasion for us to become more fully aware of, but His work on Calvary is of supreme significance. It is what prompts and persuades you to search for Him and find Him, and it is also what keeps you on the Christian path. Mr. Interpreter showed Christian the glories of Christ … and it teaches us to be faithful in following after Him with all that we are.

It is Christ Who died for us, Who rose from the dead and triumphed over the grave for us, Who ascended into Heaven and is at the right-hand of God for us.
… Christ is the meaning of our salvation … and the same blood He shed on Calvary for me, He shed for you. The work He accomplished for me was the same He accomplished for you. Therefore, all things each of us should hope to do for Him must be done within the context of His great glory.

Just because I’m a pastor doesn’t mean my salvation is different or any better to yours … And the same work of the same Saviour that was necessary to save the drunken, womanizing, and filthy-tongued sinner was exactly the same work that saved the innocent little boy or girl! Christ’s atonement on Calvary was for all His people … and the picture Mr. Interpreter showed Christian was the same picture he would have shown anyone who came in through the gate and knocked on his door.

Yes, our Gospel is the same for all men and women, boys and girls. It doesn’t need any change regardless of what century we are living in or in what land it is being preached … It is the same Gospel! It never changes for it is perfect and God is its only Source. … Christ saved me with the same work of grace He saved you. Whitefield, the Wesleys, the Puritans, Spurgeon … they were all saved and washed in the same blood of Christ … and this is our encouragement, - our comfort, - that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners such as we (I Tim. 1:15). … And the purpose God has for us is that same purpose He had for Interpreter, - to encourage and comfort another on the way to Glory.

So far, we have simply considered Christian’s persistence, and his progression. Under the heading of Christian’s profession we have considered Christian’s company and comfort. Lastly, we shall remind ourselves of our …

Christian Certainties. The only means by which we can be travelling on this road of salvation is Christ, and the only means of reaching the end of the road remains Christ for He alone is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). We cannot advance in the Christian walk without Him … and without an ongoing deepening of our knowledge and relationship with Him. We must never forget these basic truths.

Mr. Interpreter made it very clear, “I have shown thee this picture first, because the man whose picture this is, is the only man whom the Lord of the place whither thou art going hath authorised to be thy guide … wherefore take good heed to what I have shown thee, and bear well in thy mind what thou hast seen, lest in thy journey thou meet with some that pretend to lead thee
right, but their way goes down to death”. Keep making sure you are looking to none other than Christ. Never allow yourself to take your eyes from off the Saviour … It doesn’t matter how long you have been saved, and it doesn’t matter what office or responsibilities you have in the church … the great and ultimate certainty is that God’s people can only continue in the Lord’s service when He reigns unchallenged in their hearts. Christian wasn’t turning round every now and again to look towards the ‘bright lights’ of the City of Destruction and then turning again to look forwards to the Celestial City … No, he was following the Saviour only. He had no desire, but to keep on looking ahead and travelling onwards.

There is coming a great day when God will call us to Himself … and that day will bring us into Heaven. When you know and love the Lord Jesus as your own and personal Saviour, and your faith is confirmed by your obedience to His Word … you have the certainty that when that day comes you will be absent from the body and present with the Lord (II Cor. 5:18).

Yes, as Interpreter told Christian, along the road there are many who disguise themselves in an effort to way-lay God’s people and that is why he told him to keep what Christ had done for him always in view.

One of the greatest hymn writers was also one of the greatest preachers of his era, he wrote, … “A debtor to mercy alone, of covenant mercy I sing; … My Saviour’s obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view. … The work which His goodness began, the arm of His strength will complete; His promise is Yea and Amen, and never was forfeited yet. Things future, nor things that are now, nor all things below or above, Can make Him His purpose forgo, or sever my soul from His love. … My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase; Impressed on His heart it remains, in marks of indelible grace. Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given; More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in Heaven.”

Keep it in front of you, Christian, said Mr Interpreter. No matter what difficulties lie before you, never lose sight of what Christ has done to save you and to make you His … and that you are eternally precious to Him!

This is the message each of us Who know Christ as Saviour is privileged to own. May God, then, also find us continually attentive to His grace so that we would be controlled by His power … so that we would be encouragers and helpers to others … and so that He would see His glory in us! Amen.