

23 - Apollyon

But now, in this Valley of Humiliation, poor CHRISTIAN was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way, before he espied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet with him; his name was APOLLYON. Then did CHRISTIAN begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back or to stand his ground. But he considered again, that he had no armour for his back, and therefore thought that to turn the back to him might give him greater advantage with ease to pierce him with his darts; therefore he resolved to venture, and stand his ground. For, thought he, had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, it would be the best way to stand.

So he went on, and APOLLYON met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales like a fish (and they are his pride); he had wings like a dragon; feet like a bear; and out of his belly came fire and smoke; and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to CHRISTIAN, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him:

Apollyon. Whence come you, and whither are you bound?

Chr. I am come from the city of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and am going to the City of Zion.

Apol. By this I perceive thou art one of my subjects; for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it, then, that thou hast run away from thy king? Were it not that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

Chr. I was born indeed in your dominions; but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on, for the wages of sin is death (#Ro 3:23); therefore, when I was come to years, I did as other prudent persons do, look out, if perhaps I might mend myself.

Apol. There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects; neither will I as yet lose thee. But since thou complainest of thy service and wages, be content to go back; what our country will afford I do here promise to give thee.

Chr. But I have let myself to another, even to the king of princes; and how can I with fairness go back with thee?

Apol. Thou hast done in this according to the proverb, "changed a bad for a worse"; but it is ordinary for those that have professed themselves his servants, after awhile to give him the slip, and return again to me: do thou so too, and all shall be well.

Chr. I have given him my faith, and sworn my allegiance to him; how then can I go back from this, and not be hanged as a traitor?

Apol. Thou didst the same to me; and yet I am willing to pass by all, if now thou wilt yet turn again and go back.

Chr. What I promised thee was before I came of age; and besides, I count that the Prince under whose banner now I stand is able to absolve me; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with

thee. And besides, O thou destroying APOLLYON, to speak truth, I like his service, his wages, his servants, his government, his company and country, better than thine. Therefore leave off to persuade me further: I am his servant, and I will follow him.

Apol. Consider again, when thou art in cold blood, what thou art like to meet with in the way that thou goest. Thou knowest that for the most part his servants come to an ill end, because they are transgressors against me and my ways. How many of them have been put to shameful deaths! and besides, thou countest his service better than mine, whereas he never came yet from the place where he is, to deliver any that served him out of our hands; but as for me, how many times, as all the world very well knows, have I delivered, either by power or fraud, those that have faithfully served me, from him and his, though taken by them—and so I will deliver thee!

Chr. His forbearing at present to deliver them, is on purpose to try their love, whether they will cleave to him to the end; and as for the ill end thou sayest they come to, that is most glorious in their account. For, for present deliverance, they do not much expect it; for they stay for their glory, and then they shall have it, when their Prince comes in his, and the glory of the angels.

Apol. Thou hast already been unfaithful in thy service to him; and how dost thou think to receive wages of him?

Chr. Wherein, O APOLLYON, have I been unfaithful to him?

Apol. Thou didst faint at first setting out, when thou wast almost choked in the Gulf of Despond; thou didst attempt wrong ways to be rid of thy burden, whereas thou shouldst have stayed till thy Prince had taken it off; thou didst sinfully sleep and lose thy choice thing; thou wast also almost persuaded to go back at the sight of the lions; and when thou talkest of thy journey, and of what thou hast heard and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.

Chr. All this is true; and much more which thou hast left out: but the Prince whom I serve and honor is merciful and ready to forgive. But besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy country; for there I sucked them in, and I have groaned under them, been sorry for them, and have obtained pardon of my Prince.

Apol. Then APOLLYON broke out into a grievous rage, saying, "I am an enemy to this Prince: I hate his person, his laws, and people: I am come out on purpose to withstand thee."

Chr. APOLLYON, beware what you do; for I am in the King's highway, the way of holiness: therefore take heed to yourself!

Apol. Then APOLLYON straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, "I am void of fear in this matter: prepare thyself to die! for I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no farther; here will I spill thy soul." And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but CHRISTIAN had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that. Then did CHRISTIAN draw, for he saw 't was time to bestir him; and APOLLYON as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that CHRISTIAN could do to avoid it, APOLLYON wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. This made CHRISTIAN give a little back; APOLLYON therefore followed his work furiously, and CHRISTIAN again took courage, and resisted as manfully

as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till CHRISTIAN was almost quite spent. For you must know that CHRISTIAN, by reason of his wounds, grew weaker and weaker.

Then APOLLYON, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to CHRISTIAN, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall: and with that, CHRISTIAN'S sword flew out of his hand. Then said APOLLYON, "I am sure of thee now"; and with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that CHRISTIAN began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while APOLLYON was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, CHRISTIAN nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise" (#Mic 7:8); and with that, gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. CHRISTIAN perceiving that, made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us" (#Ro 8:37). And with that, APOLLYON spread forth his dragon's wings, and sped him away (#Jas 4:7), that CHRISTIAN for a season saw him no more.

In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring APOLLYON made all the time of the fight—he spake like a dragon; and, on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from CHRISTIAN'S heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded APOLLYON with his two edged sword, then, indeed, he did smile, and look upward; but 'twas the dreadfulest sight that ever I saw!

So when the battle was over, CHRISTIAN said, "I will here give thanks to him that hath delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, to him that did help me against APOLLYON"; and so he did, saying:

"Great Beelzebub, the captain of this fiend,
Designed my ruin; therefore to this end
He sent him harnessed out, and he with rage
That hellish was, did fiercely me engage.
But blessed Michael helped me, and I,
By dint of sword did quickly make him fly:
Therefore to him let me give lasting praise
And thanks, and bless his holy name always!"

Then there came to him a hand, with some of the leaves of the tree of life; the which CHRISTIAN took, and applied to the wounds that he had received in the battle, and was healed immediately. He also sat down in that place to eat bread, and to drink of the bottle that was given him a little before. So being refreshed, he addressed himself to his journey, with his sword drawn in his hand; for he said, "I know not but some other enemy may be at hand." But he met with no other affront from APOLLYON quite through this valley.

Ro 3:23, Mic 7:8, Ro 8:37, Jas 4:7

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Ro 3:23 NKJV)

“Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The LORD *will be* a light to me.” (Mic 7:8 NKJV)

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Ro 8:37 NKJV)

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (Jas 4:7 NKJV)