

17 - Piety

Piety. Come, good CHRISTIAN, since we have been so loving to you, as to receive you into our house this night, let us, if perhaps we may better ourselves thereby, talk with you of all things that have happened to you in your pilgrimage.

Chr. With a very good will; and I am glad that you are so well disposed.

Piety. What moved you at first to betake yourself to a pilgrim's life?

Chr. I was driven out of my native country by a dreadful sound that was in mine ears, to wit, that unavoidable destruction did attend me if I abode in that place where I was.

Piety. But how did it happen that you came out of your country this way?

Chr. It was as God would have it; for when I was under the fears of destruction, I did not know whither to go; but by chance there came a man, even to me (as I was trembling and weeping), whose name is EVANGELIST, and he directed me to the Wicket gate, which else I should never have found; and so set me into the way that hath led me directly to this house.

Piety. But did you not come by the house of the INTERPRETER?

Chr. Yes, and did see such things there, the remembrance of which will stick by me as long as I live; especially three things: to wit, How Christ in despite of Satan, maintains his work of grace in the heart; how the man had sinned himself quite out of hopes of God's mercy; and also the dream of him that thought in his sleep the Day of Judgment was come.

Piety. Why, did you hear him tell his dream?

Chr. Yes, and a dreadful one it was, I thought; it made my heart ache as he was telling of it; but yet I am glad I heard it.

Piety. Was that all that you saw at the house of the INTERPRETER?

Chr. No: he took me and had me where he showed me a stately palace; and how the people that were in it were clad in gold; and how there came a venturous man, and cut his way through the armed men that stood in the door to keep him out; and how he was bidden to come in and win eternal glory. Methought those things did ravish my heart: I could have stayed at the good man's house a twelvemonth but that I knew I had farther to go.

Piety. And what else saw you in the way?

Chr. Saw! Why I went but a little farther, and I saw One, as I thought in my mind, hang bleeding upon the tree, and the very sight of him made the burden fall off my back (for I groaned under a weary burden), but then it fell down from off me. 'Twas a strange thing to me; for I never saw such a thing before. Yea, and while I stood looking up (for then I could not forbear looking), three shining ones came to me: one of them testified that my sins were forgiven; another stript me of my rags, and gave

me this embroidered coat which you see; and the third set the mark which you see in my forehead, and gave me this sealed roll (and with that he plucked it out of his bosom).

Piety. But you saw more than this, did you not?

Chr. The things that I have told you were the best; yet I saw some other small matters, as namely, I saw three men, SIMPLE, SLOTH, and PRESUMPTION, lie asleep a little out of the way as I came, with irons upon their heels; but do you think I could awake them! I saw also FORMALIST and HYPOCRISY come tumbling over the wall, to go, as they pretended, to Zion, but they were quickly lost; even as I myself did tell them, but they would not believe: but above all, I found it hard work to get up this hill, and as hard to come by the lions' mouths; and truly, if it had not been for the good man, the porter, that stands at the gate, I do not know but that, after all, I might have gone back again. But now I thank God I am here, and I thank you for receiving me.

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