

36 - The Delectable Mountains

They went, then, till they came to the "Delectable Mountains," which mountains belong to the Lord of that hill of whom we have spoken before. So they went up to the mountains, to behold the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of water; where also they drank, and washed themselves, and did freely eat of the vineyards. Now there were on the tops of these mountains shepherds feeding their flocks; and they stood by the highway side. The pilgrims therefore went to them; and, leaning upon their staves (as is common with weary pilgrims when they stand to talk with any by the way), they asked, "Whose delectable mountains are these? and whose be the sheep that feed upon them?"

Shepherds. These mountains are Immanuel's Land, and they are within sight of his City; and the sheep also are his, and he laid down his life for them (#Joh 10:11).

Chr. Is this the way to the Celestial City?

Shepherds. You are just in your way.

Chr. How far is it thither?

Shepherds. Too far for any but those that shall get thither indeed.

Chr. Is the way safe, or dangerous?

Shepherds. Safe for those for whom it is to be safe; but transgressors shall fall therein (#Ho 14:9).

Chr. Is there in this place any relief for pilgrims that are weary and faint in the way?

Shepherds. The Lord of these mountains hath given us a charge, not to be forgetful to entertain strangers (#Heb 13:1,2); therefore the good of the place is even before you.

I saw also in my dream, that when the shepherds perceived that they were wayfaring men, they also put questions to them (to which they made answer as in other places); as, "Whence came you?" and "How got you into the way?" and, "By what means have you so persevered therein? For but few of them that begin to come hither do show their face on these mountains." But when the shepherds heard their answers, being pleased therewith, they looked very lovingly upon them; and said, "Welcome to the Delectable Mountains!"

The shepherds, I say—whose names were, KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, WATCHFUL, and SINCERE—took them by the hand, and had them to their tents, and made them partake of that which was ready at present. They said, moreover, "We would that you should stay here awhile, to be acquainted with us; and yet more to solace yourselves with the good of these Delectable Mountains." They then told them that they were content to stay; and so they went to their rest that night, because it was very late.

Then I saw in my dream, that in the morning the shepherds called up CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL, to walk with them upon the mountains. So they went forth with them, and walked awhile, having a pleasant prospect on every side. Then said the shepherds one to another, "Shall we show these pilgrims

some wonders?" So when they had concluded to do it, they had them first to the top of a hill called "Error," which was very steep on the furthest side; and bade them look down to the bottom. So CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL looked down; and saw at the bottom several men dashed all to pieces by a fall that they had from the top. Then said CHRISTIAN, "What meaneth this?" The shepherds answered, "Have you not heard of them that were made to err, by hearkening to HYMENEUS and PHILETUS as concerning the faith of the resurrection of the body?" (#2Ti 2:17,18) They answered, "Yes." Then said the shepherds, "Those that you see lie dashed in pieces at the bottom of this mountain are they; and they have continued to this day unburied (as you see), for an example to others to take heed how they clamber too high, or how they come too near the brink of this mountain."

Then I saw that they had them to the top of another mountain—and the name of that is "Caution"—and bade them look afar off. Which when they did, they perceived, as they thought, several men walking up and down among the tombs that were there. And they perceived that the men were blind; because they stumbled sometimes upon the tombs, and because they could not get out from among them. Then said CHRISTIAN, "What means this?"

The shepherds then answered, "Did you not see, a little below these mountains, a stile that led into a meadow on the left hand. "From that stile there goes a path that leads directly to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant DESPAIR; and these men—(pointing to them among the tombs)—came once on pilgrimage as you do now, even till they came to that same stile. And because the right way was rough in that place, they chose to go out of it into that meadow, and there were taken by Giant DESPAIR, and cast into Doubting Castle; where, after they had awhile been kept in the dungeon, he at last did put out their eyes, and led them among those tombs, where he has left them to wander to this very day, that the saying of the wise man might be fulfilled: "He that wanders out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (#Pr 21:16). Then CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL looked one upon another, with tears gushing out; but yet said nothing to the shepherds.

Then I saw in my dream that the shepherds had them to another place, in a bottom, where was a door in the side of a hill; and they opened the door, and bade them look in. They looked in, therefore, and saw that within it was very dark and smoky; they also thought that they heard there a rumbling noise as of fire, and a cry of some tormented, and that they smelt the scent of brimstone. Then said CHRISTIAN, "What means this?" The shepherds told them, saying, "This is a byway to hell, a way that hypocrites go in at: namely, such as sell their birthright, with Esau; such as sell their Master, with Judas; such as blaspheme the Gospel, with Alexander; and that lie and dissemble, with Ananias and Sapphira, his wife."

Hope. Then said HOPEFUL to the shepherds, "I perceive that these had on them, even everyone, a show of pilgrimage, as we have now; had they not?"

Shep. Yes, and held it a long time too.

Hope. How far might they go on pilgrimage in their day, since they, notwithstanding, were thus miserably cast away?

Shep. Some farther, and some not so far as these mountains.

Then said the pilgrims one to another, "We had need to cry to the strong for strength."

Shep. Aye, and you will have need to use it when you have it, too.

By this time the pilgrims had a desire to go forwards, and the shepherds a desire they should; so they walked together towards the end of the mountains. Then said the shepherds one to another, "Let us here show to the pilgrims the gates of the Celestial City, if they have skill to look through our perspective glass." The pilgrims then lovingly accepted the motion: so they had them to the top of a high hill, called "Clear," and gave them their glass to look. Then they essayed to look; but the remembrance of that last thing that the shepherds had showed them made their hands shake, by means of which impediment, they could not look steadily through the glass: yet they thought they saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place. Then they went away, and sang this song:

"Thus by the shepherds secrets are revealed,
Which from all other men are kept concealed:
Come to the shepherds, then, if you would see
Things deep, things hid, and that mysterious be."

When they were about to depart, one of the shepherds gave them a note of the way; another of them bade them beware of the flatterer; the third bade them take heed that they sleep not upon the enchanted ground; and the fourth bade them Godspeed. So I awoke from my dream.

Joh 10:11 Ho 14:9 Heb 13:1,2 2Ti 2:17,18 Pr 21:16

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” (Joh 10:11 NKJV)

“Who *is* wise? Let him understand these things. *Who is* prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the LORD *are* right; The righteous walk in them, But transgressors stumble in them.” (Ho 14:9 NKJV)

“¹ ¶ Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels.” (Heb 13:1-2 NKJV)

“¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.” (2Ti 2:17-18 NKJV)

“A man who wanders from the way of understanding Will rest in the assembly of the dead.” (Pr 21:16 NKJV)