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Now after awhile, they perceived afar off one coming softly and alone, all along the highway, to meet them. Then said CHRISTIAN to his fellow, "Yonder is a man with his back toward Zion; and he is coming to meet us."

Hope. I see him; let us take heed to ourselves now, lest he should prove a flatterer also.

So he drew nearer and nearer; and at last came up unto them. His name was ATHEIST; and he asked them whither they were going?

Chr. We are going to the Mount Zion.

Then ATHEIST fell into a very great laughter.

Chr. What is the meaning of your laughter?

Atheist. I laugh to see what ignorant persons you are, to take upon you so tedious a journey, and yet are like to have nothing but your travel for your pains.

Chr. Why, man; do you think we shall not be received?

Ath. Received! There is no such place as you dream of in all this world.

Chr. But there is in the world to come.

Ath. When I was at home in mine own country, I heard as you now affirm, and from that hearing went out to see; and have been seeking this city these twenty years, but find no more of it than I did the first day I set out (#Jer 17:15 Ec 10:15).

Chr. We have both heard and believe that there is such a place to be found.

Ath. Had not I, when at home, believed, I had not come thus far to seek; but finding none (and yet I should, had there been such a place to be found, for I have gone to seek it farther than you), I am going back again, and will seek to refresh myself with the things that I then cast away for hopes of that which I now see is not.

Chr. Then said CHRISTIAN to HOPEFUL, his fellow, "Is it true which this man hath said?"

Hope. "Take heed, he is one of the flatterers; remember what it hath cost us once already for our hearkening to such kind of fellows. What! no Mount Zion! did we not see from the Delectable Mountains the gate of the city? Also, are we not now to walk by faith? Let us go on," said HOPEFUL; "lest the man with the whip overtake us again. You should have taught me that lesson, which I will round you in the ears withal: 'Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge.' I say, my brother, cease to hear him, and let us believe to the saving of the soul" (#Pr 19:27 Heb 10:39).

Chr. My brother, I did not put the question to thee, for that I doubted of the truth of our belief myself; but to prove thee, and to fetch from thee a fruit of the honesty of thy heart. As for this man, I know that he is blinded by the god of this world: let thee and I go on, knowing that we have belief of the truth, and "no lie is of the truth" (#1Jo 2:21).

Hope. Now do I rejoice in hope of the glory of God!

So they turned away from the man; and he, laughing at them, went his way.

Jer 17:15 Ec 10:15 Pr 19:27 Heb 10:39 1Jo 2:21

“Indeed they say to me, "Where *is* the word of the LORD? Let it come now!"” (Jer 17:15 NKJV)

“The labor of fools wearies them, For they do not even know how to go to the city!” (Ec 10:15 NKJV)

“Cease listening to instruction, my son, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.” (Pr 19:27 NKJV)

“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” (Heb 10:39 NKJV)

“I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” (1Jo 2:21 NKJV)