

Pilgrim's Progress II – 53 – A Visit From Mrs. Timorous and Mercy

"But while they were thus about to be gone, two of the women that were CHRISTIANA'S neighbours came up to her house, and knocked at her door. To whom she said, as before, 'If you come in God's name, come in.' At this the women were stunned; for this kind of language they used not to hear, or to perceive to drop from the lips of CHRISTIANA. Yet they came in; but behold, they found the good woman preparing to be gone from her house.

"So they began, and said, 'Neighbour, pray what is your meaning by this?'

"CHRISTIANA answered and said to the eldest of them, whose name was Mrs. TIMOROUS, 'I am preparing for a journey.' (This TIMOROUS was daughter to him that met CHRISTIAN upon the Hill Difficulty, and would have had him go back for fear of the lions.)

"Timorous. For what journey, I pray you?

"Chris. Even to go after my good husband. And with that she fell a-weeping.

"Tim. I hope not so, good neighbour. Pray, for your poor children's sakes, do not so unwomanly cast away yourself.

"Chris. Nay, my children shall go with me; not one of them is willing to stay behind.

"Tim. I wonder, in my very heart, what or who has brought you into this mind.

"Chris. Oh, neighbour, knew you but as much as I do, I doubt not but that you would go with me.

"Tim. Prithee, what new knowledge hast thou got that so worketh off thy mind from thy friends, and that tempteth thee to go nobody knows where?

"Chris. Then CHRISTIANA replied, 'I have been sorely afflicted since my husband's departure from me; but specially since he went over the river. But that which troubles me most is, my churlish carriages to him when he was under his distress. Besides, I am now as he was then; nothing will serve me but going on pilgrimage. I was dreaming last night that I saw him. Oh that my soul was with him! He dwells in the presence of the King of the country; he sits and eats with him at his table; he is become a companion of immortals; and has a house now given him to dwell in, to which the best palaces on earth if compared, seem to me to be but as a dunghill (#2Co 5:1-4). The Prince of the place has also sent for me, with promise of entertainment if I shall come to him. His messenger was here even now, and has brought me a letter, which invites me to come.' And with that she plucked out her letter, and read it, and said to them, 'What now will you say to this?'

"Tim. Oh, the madness that has possessed thee and thy husband, to run yourselves upon such difficulties! You have heard, I am sure, what your husband did meet with, even in a manner at the first step that he took on his way, as our neighbour OBSTINATE, can yet testify; for he went along with him, yea, and PLIABLE too, until they, like wise men, were afraid to go any farther. We also heard, over and above, how he met with the lions, APOLLYON, the Shadow of Death, and many other things. Nor is the danger that he met with at Vanity Fair to be forgotten by thee. For if he, though a man, was

so hard put to it, what canst thou, being but a poor woman, do? Consider, also, that these four sweet babes are thy children, thy flesh and thy bones. Wherefore, though thou shouldst be so rash as to cast away thyself, yet, for the sake of the fruit of thy body, keep thou at home.

"But CHRISTIANA said unto her, 'Tempt me not, my neighbour; I have now a price put into mine hand to get gain, and I should be a fool of the greatest size if I should have no heart to strike in with the opportunity. And for that you tell me of all these troubles that I am like to meet with in the way, they are so far off from being to me a discouragement, that they show I am in the right. The bitter must come before the sweet; and that also will make the sweet the sweeter. Wherefore, since you came not to my house in God's name, as I said, I pray you to be gone, and not to disquiet me further.'

"Then TIMOROUS also reviled her, and said to her fellow, 'Come, neighbour MERCY, let's leave her in her own hands, since she scorns our counsel and company.' But MERCY was at a stand, and could not so readily comply with her neighbour; and that for a twofold reason. First, her bowels yearned over CHRISTIANA; so she said within herself, 'If my neighbour will needs be gone, I will go a little way with her, and help her.' Secondly, her bowels yearned over her own soul (for what CHRISTIANA had said had taken some hold upon her mind). Wherefore she said within herself again, 'I will yet have more talk with this CHRISTIANA: and if I find truth and life in what she shall say, myself with my heart shall also go with her.' Wherefore MERCY began thus to reply to her neighbour TIMOROUS.

"Mercy. Neighbour, I did indeed come with you to see CHRISTIANA this morning; and since she is, as you see, a taking of her last farewell of her country, I think to walk this sunshiny morning a little way with her to help her on the way.

"But she told her not of her second reason; but kept that to herself.

"Tim. Well, I see you have a mind to go a-fooling too; but take heed in time, and be wise: while we are out of danger we are out; but when we are in we are in.

"So Mrs. TIMOROUS returned to her house, and CHRISTIANA betook herself to her journey. But when TIMOROUS was got home to her house, she sent for some of her neighbours: to wit, Mrs. BAT'S-EYES, Mrs. INCONSIDERATE, Mrs. LIGHT-MIND, and Mrs. KNOW-NOTHING. So when they were come to her house, she fell to telling the story of CHRISTIANA and of her intended journey. And thus she began her tale:

"Tim. Neighbours, having had little to do this morning, I went to give CHRISTIANA a visit; and when I came at the door I knocked, as you know 't is our custom. And she answered, 'If you come in God's name, come in.' So in I went, thinking all was well; but when I came in, I found her preparing herself to depart the town, she and also her children. So I asked her what was her meaning by that; and she told me, in short, that she was now of a mind to go on pilgrimage, as did her husband. She told me also a dream that she had, and how the King of the country where her husband was had sent her an inviting letter to come thither.

"Mrs. Know-nothing. Then said Mrs. KNOW-NOTHING, 'And what, do you think she will go?'

"Tim. Aye, go she will, whatever come on't; and methinks I know it by this, for that which was my great argument to persuade her to stay at home (to wit, the troubles she was like to meet with in the

way), is one great argument with her to put her forward on her journey. For she told me in so many words, the bitter goes before the sweet. Yea, and for as much as it so doth, it makes the sweet the sweeter.

"Mrs. Bat's-eyes. 'Oh, this blind and foolish woman,' said she; 'will she not take warning by her husband's afflictions? For my part, I see, if he were here again, he would rest him content in a whole skin, and never run so many hazards for nothing.'

"Mrs. Inconsiderate also replied, saying, 'Away with such fantastical fools from the town—a good riddance, for my part, I say, of her. Should she stay where she dwells, and retain this her mind, who could live quietly by her? for she will either be dumpish or unneighbourly, or talk of such matters as no wise body can abide. Wherefore, for my part, I shall never be sorry for her departure; let her go, and let better come in her room: 't was never a good world since these whimsical fools dwelt in it.'

"Then Mrs. Light-mind added as follows: 'Come, put this kind of talk away. I was yesterday at Madam WANTON'S, where we were as merry as the maids. For who do you think should be there, but I, and Mrs. LOVE-THE-FLESH, and three or four more, with Mr. LECHERY, Mrs. FILTH, and some others. So there we had music and dancing, and what else was meet to fill up the pleasure. And I dare say, my lady herself is an admirably well bred gentlewoman, and Mr. LECHERY is as pretty a fellow.'

2Co 5:1-4

“¹ ¶ For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.” (2Co 5:1-4 NKJV)