

Pilgrim's Progress II – 54 – Uncertainties

"By this time CHRISTIANA was got on her way; and MERCY went along with her. So as they went, her children being there also, CHRISTIANA began to discourse. And, 'MERCY,' said CHRISTIANA, 'I take this as an unexpected favour that thou shouldst set foot out of doors with me, to accompany me a little in my way.'

"Mercy. Then said young MERCY (for she was but young), 'If I thought it would be to purpose to go with you, I would never go near the town any more.'

"Chris. 'Well, MERCY,' said CHRISTIANA, 'cast in thy lot with me. I well know what will be the end of our pilgrimage: my husband is where he would not but be for all the gold in the Spanish mines. Nor shalt thou be rejected, though thou goest but upon my invitation. The King who hath sent for me and my children is one that delights in mercy. Besides, if thou wilt, I will hire thee, and thou shalt go along with me as my servant. Yet we will have all things in common betwixt thee and me; only go along with me.'

"Mer. But how shall I be ascertained that I also shall be entertained? Had I this hope but from one that can tell, I would make no stick at all; but would go, being helped by him that can help, though the way was never so tedious.

"Chris. Well, loving MERCY, I will tell thee what thou shalt do. Go with me to the wicket gate, and there I will further inquire for thee; and if there thou shalt not meet with encouragement, I will be content that thou shalt return to thy place. I also will pay thee for thy kindness which thou showest to me and my children, in thy accompanying of us in our way as thou doest.

"Mer. Then will I go thither, and will take what shall follow; and the Lord grant that my lot may there fall even as the King of heaven shall have his heart upon me!

"CHRISTIANA then was glad in her heart, not only that she had a companion, but also for that she had prevailed with this poor maid to fall in love with her own salvation. So they went on together; and MERCY began to weep. Then said CHRISTIANA, 'Wherefore weepest my sister so?'

"Mer. 'Alas!' said she, 'who can but lament that shall but rightly consider what a state and condition my poor relations are in that yet remain in our sinful town? and that which makes my grief the more heavy is, because they have no instructor, nor any to tell them what is to come.'

"Chris. Bowels becomes pilgrims. And thou dost for thy friends as my good CHRISTIAN did for me when he left me; he mourned for that I would not heed nor regard him; but his Lord and ours did gather up his tears, and put them into his bottle; and now both I, and thou, and these my sweet babes, are reaping the fruit and benefit of them. I hope, MERCY, these tears of thine will not be lost: for the truth hath said, that 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, in singing. And he that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him' (#Ps 126:5,6).

"Then said MERCY:

‘Let the Most Blessed be my guide,
If it be his blessed will,
Unto his gate, into his fold,
Up to his holy hill.

And let him never suffer me
To swerve or turn aside
From his free grace and holy ways,
Whate’er shall me betide.

And let him gather them of mine
That I have left behind.
Lord, make them pray they may be Thine,
With all their heart and mind.”

Now my old friend proceeded, and said, "But when CHRISTIANA came up to the Slough of Despond, she began to be at a stand: ‘For,’ said she, ‘this is the place in which my dear husband had like to have been smothered with mud.’ She perceived also, that notwithstanding the command of the King to make this place for pilgrims good, yet it was rather worse than formerly." So I asked if that was true? "Yes," said the old gentleman, "too true. For that many there be that pretend to be the King’s labourers, and that say they are for mending the King’s highway, that bring din and dung instead of stones, and so mar instead of mending. Here CHRISTIANA therefore, with her boys, did make a stand. But said MERCY, ‘Come, let us venture, only let us be wary.’ Then they looked well to the steps, and made a shift to get staggeringly over.

"Yet CHRISTIANA had like to have been in, and that not once nor twice. Now they had no sooner got over, but they thought they heard words that said unto them, ‘Blessed is she that believes; for there shall be a performance of those things that have been told her from the Lord’ (#Lu 1:45).

"Then they went on again. And said MERCY to CHRISTIANA, ‘Had I as good ground to hope for a loving reception at the wicket gate as you, I think no Slough of Despond would discourage me.’

"‘Well,’ said the other, ‘you know your sore, and I know mine, and, good friend, we shall all have enough evil before we come at our journey’s end. For can it be imagined, that the people that design to attain such excellent glories as we do, and that are so envied that happiness as we are, but that we shall meet with what fears and scares, with what troubles and afflictions, they can possibly assault us with that hate us? ‘"

Ps 126:5,6 Lu 1:45

“5 Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. 6 He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves *with him*.” (Ps 126:5-6 NKJV)

““Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”” (Lu 1:45 NKJV)