

Confessions - Book IX - Chapter Iii

by St. Augustine

Transcript

5. Verecundus was severely disturbed by this new happiness of mine, since he was still firmly held by his bonds and saw that he would lose my companionship. For he was not yet a Christian, though his wife was; and, indeed, he was more firmly enchained by her than by anything else, and held back from that journey on which we had set out. Furthermore, he declared he did not wish to be a Christian on any terms except those that were impossible. However, he invited us most courteously to make use of his country house so long as we would stay there. O Lord, thou wilt recompense him for this "in the resurrection of the just,"[271] seeing that thou hast already given him "the lot of the righteous." [272] For while we were absent at Rome, he was overtaken with bodily sickness, and during it he was made a Christian and departed this life as one of the faithful. Thus thou hadst mercy on him, and not on him only, but on us as well; lest, remembering the exceeding kindness of our friend to us and not able to count him in thy flock, we should be tortured with intolerable grief. Thanks be unto thee, our God; we are thine. Thy exhortations, consolations, and faithful promises assure us that thou wilt repay Verecundus for that country house at Cassiciacum--where we found rest in thee from the fever of the world--with the perpetual freshness of thy paradise in which thou hast forgiven him his earthly sins, in that mountain flowing with milk, that fruitful mountain--thy own.

6. Thus Verecundus was full of grief; but Nebridius was joyous. For he was not yet a Christian, and had fallen into the pit of deadly error, believing that the flesh of thy Son, the Truth, was a phantom.[273] Yet he had come up out of that pit and now held the same belief that we did. And though he was not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of thy Church, he was a most earnest inquirer after truth. Not long after our conversion and regeneration by thy baptism, he also became a faithful member of the Catholic Church, serving thee in perfect chastity and continence among his own people in Africa, and bringing his whole household with him to Christianity. Then thou didst release him from the flesh, and now he lives in Abraham\\

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