

Slough of Despond & Help

PLIABLE And what company shall we have there?

CHRISTIAN There we shall be with seraphims and cherubims, creatures that will dazzle your eyes to look on them. **Isaiah 6:2** There also you shall meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving and holy; every one walking in the sight of God,

...and standing in his presence with acceptance for ever. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 5:11**
In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns **Revelation 4:4**, there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden harps **Revelation 14:1-5**, there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burnt in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love that they bare to the Lord of the place, all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment.

- **John 12:25**
- **2 Corinthians 5:2-4**

- **PLIABLE** The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart. But are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get to be sharers thereof?
- **CHRISTIAN** The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this book; the substance of which is, If we be truly willing to have it, he will bestow it upon us freely.
- **Isaiah 55:1-2**
- **John 6:37**
- **John 7:37**
- **Revelation 21:6**
- **Revelation 22:17**

- **PLIABLE** Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things: come on, let us mend our pace.
- **CHRISTIAN** I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is on my back.
- Now I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk they drew near to a very miry slough, that was in the midst of the plain; and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.

- **PLIABLE** Then said Pliable; Ah! neighbour Christian, where are you now?
- **CHRISTIAN** Truly, said Christian, I do not know.
- **PLIABLE** At this Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect betwixt this and our journey's end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me.
- What does **Luke 9:57-62** say about looking back?
- What does **Matthew 10:22** say about endurance?

- And, with that, he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house: so away he went, and Christian saw him no more.
- Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone: but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough that was still further from his own house, and next to the wicket-gate; the which he did, but could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back: but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him, What he did there?

- CHRISTIAN Sir, said Christian, I was bid go this way by a man called Evangelist, who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come; and as I was going thither I fell in here.
- HELP But why did not you look for the steps?
- CHRISTIAN Fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way, and fell in.
- HELP Then said he, Give me thy hand.

So he gave him his hand, and he drew him out, and set him upon sound ground, and bid him go on his way. **Psalms 40:1-4**

- Then I stepped to him that plucked him out, and said, “Sir, wherefore, since over this place is the way from the City of Destruction to yonder gate, is it that this plat is not mended, that poor travellers might go thither with more security?” And he said unto me, “This miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond;

- for still, as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place. And this is the reason of the badness of this ground.
- Why can no one else see the burden on Christian's back? **Romans 7:7-9**
- “It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad. **Isaiah 35:3,4** His labourers also have, by the direction of His Majesty's surveyors, been for above these sixteen hundred years employed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might have been mended: yea, and to my knowledge,” said he,

- “here have been swallowed up at least twenty thousand cart-loads, yea, millions of wholesome instructions, that have at all seasons been brought from all places of the King's dominions, and they that can tell, say they are the best materials to make good ground of the place; if so be, it might have been mended, but it is the Slough of Despond still, and so will be when they have done what they can.
- The slough is depression caused by guilt at the realization of sin. What is the remedy for people caught in this depression? **Isaiah 35:3-4**

- “True, there are, by the direction of the Law-giver, certain good and substantial steps, placed even through the very midst of this slough; but at such time as this place doth much spew out its filth, as it doth against change of weather, these steps are hardly seen; or, if they be, men, through the dizziness of their heads, step beside, and then they are bemired to purpose, notwithstanding the steps be there; but the ground is good when they are once got in at the gate.” **1 Samuel 12:23**
- **1 Corinthians 10:13; Romans 3:23-26**
- **Matthew 13:1-23** What soil type is Obstinate? Pliable? Christian?

Mr. Worldly Wiseman

Now, I saw in my dream, that by this time Pliable was got home to his house again, so that his neighbours came to visit him; and some of them called him wise man for coming back, and some called him fool for hazarding himself with Christian: others again did mock at his cowardliness; saying, Surely, since you began to venture, I would not have been so base to have given out for a few difficulties. So Pliable sat sneaking among them. But at last he got more confidence, and then they all turned their tales, and began to deride poor Christian behind his back. And thus much concerning Pliable.

- Now, as Christian was walking solitarily by himself, he espied one afar off, come crossing over the field to meet him; and their hap was to meet just as they were crossing the way of each other. The gentleman's name that met him was Mr. Worldly Wiseman, he dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy, a very great town, and also hard by from whence Christian came. This man, then, meeting with Christian, and having some inkling of him,--for Christian's setting forth from the City of Destruction was much noised abroad, not only in the town where he dwelt, but also it began to be the town talk in some other places,--Mr. Worldly Wiseman, therefore, having some guess of him, by beholding his laborious going, by observing his sighs and groans, and the like, began thus to enter into some talk with Christian.

- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** How now, good fellow, whither away after this burdened manner?
- **CHRISTIAN** A burdened manner, indeed, as ever, I think, poor creature had! And whereas you ask me, Whither away? I tell you, Sir, I am going to yonder wicket-gate before me; for there, as I am informed, I shall be put into a way to be rid of my heavy burden.
- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** Hast thou a wife and children?

- CHRISTIAN Yes; but I am so laden with this burden that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly; methinks I am as if I had none.
- 1 Corinthians 7:29
- WORLDLY WISEMAN Wilt thou hearken unto me if I give thee counsel?
- CHRISTIAN If it be good, I will; for I stand in need of good counsel.

- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** I would advise thee, then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden; for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then; nor canst thou enjoy the benefits of the blessing which God hath bestowed upon thee till then.
- **CHRISTIAN** That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden; but get it off myself, I cannot; nor is there any man in our country that can take it off my shoulders; therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may be rid of my burden.

- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** Who bid thee go this way to be rid of thy burden?
- **CHRISTIAN** A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honourable person; his name, as I remember, is Evangelist.
- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** I beshrew him for his counsel! there is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that unto which he hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find, if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something, as I perceive, already;

- for I see the dirt of the Slough of Despond is upon thee; but that slough is the beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that way. Hear me, I am older than thou; thou art like to meet with, in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and, in a word, death, and what not! These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. And why should a man so carelessly cast away himself, by giving heed to a stranger?

- CHRISTIAN Why, Sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than all these things which you have mentioned; nay, methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.
- WORLDLY WISEMAN How camest thou by the burden at first?
- CHRISTIAN By reading this book in my hand.

- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** I thought so; and it is happened unto thee as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions; which distractions do not only unman men, as thine, I perceive, have done thee, but they run them upon desperate ventures to obtain they know not what.
- **CHRISTIAN** I know what I would obtain; it is ease for my heavy burden.

- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** But why wilt thou seek for ease this way, seeing so many dangers attend it? especially since, hadst thou but patience to hear me, I could direct thee to the obtaining of what thou desirest, without the dangers that thou in this way wilt run thyself into; yea, and the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add, that instead of those dangers, thou shalt meet with much safety, friendship, and content.
- **CHRISTAIN** Pray, Sir, open this secret to me.

- **WORLDLY WISEMAN** Why, in yonder village--the village is named Morality-- there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are from their shoulders: yea, to my knowledge, he hath done a great deal of good this way; ay, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. To him, as I said, thou mayest go, and be helped presently.

- His house is not quite a mile from this place, and if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man to his son, whose name is Civility, that can do it (to speak on) as well as the old gentleman himself; there, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden; and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation, as, indeed, I would not wish thee, thou mayest send for thy wife and children to thee to this village, where there are houses now stand empty, one of which thou mayest have at reasonable rates; provision is there also cheap and good; and that which will make thy life the more happy is, to be sure, there thou shalt live by honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion.

How do we know if Mr Worldly Wise is truly wise?

- 1 John 4:1-6
- James 1:5
- What does Jesus say about people like Pliable? Luke 9:62

Is there any reason to think Legality and Civility are wise advisors?

- Romans 2:5-11

Sounds right, but...

- Romans 2:13, 16

3:10-20 21-25

So, no law?

Romans 3:31 Galatians 3:8-11, 21-25