

# A Guide to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*



Notes and Commentary by Ken Puls

## Part I

Lord, we pray for those now burdened  
'Neath the weight and guilt of sin,  
Those who read Your Word and tremble  
As conviction grows within.  
Father, help us point to Jesus,  
Those who flee the coming wrath,  
That they find the gate and entrance  
To the cross, Salvation's path.

From **A Prayer for Pilgrims** (a hymn based on Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*)



## 1. Burden and Distress Introduction

*As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream.*

*I dreamed, and, behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and, as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, "What shall I do?"*

*In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he brake his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them: O my dear wife, said he, and you the children of my bowels, I, your dear friend, am myself undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me; moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burnt with fire from heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, except (the which yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.*

*At this his relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head; therefore it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed.*

*But the night was as troublesome to him as the day; wherefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did; he told them worse and worse; he also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened. They thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him. Sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him. Wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber, to pray for and pity them; and also to condole his own misery. He would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time.*

## Notes and Commentary

Since it was first published in 1678, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* has encouraged believers and pointed them to the Scriptures. C.H. Spurgeon said of this work:

Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." I believe I have read it through at least a hundred times. It is a volume of which I never seem to tire; and the secret of its freshness is that it is so largely compiled from the Scriptures. It is really Biblical teaching put into the form of a simple yet very striking allegory.

The book tells the story of man who is clothed in rags who begins reading a Book, the Word of God, and is awakened to the realities of sin and judgment. As his distress and conviction grows, it is represented by a great burden that weighs heavy on his back. He realizes the fearful consequences of sin and knows that he, his family and his city will be condemned unless "some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered."

Bunyan wrote his allegory during the time he spent in the Bedford jail, referred to in his day as "the den." After the Restoration in 1660, Bunyan was arrested for preaching the gospel in a non-conformist church and spent most of the next twelve years in prison. During this imprisonment Bunyan wrote an autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, which told how God had graciously brought him from death unto life. He then began to shape his experiences of coming to faith in Christ and suffering for the gospel into an allegory which he entitled *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

In 1672 Charles II granted a Declaration of Indulgence for Dissenters and Bunyan was released. He began pastoring a group of believers meeting in Bedford. His freedom did not last long, however. In 1675 the king was pressured to recant his declaration. Bunyan was again arrested and thrown in the "den" where he was able to complete his book. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was finally published in 1678 after Bunyan was again released.

I invite you to read through the book with me as I offer my thoughts and commentary along the way. Many riches and insights are contained in Bunyan's work. These posts will seek to draw out a small portion and hopefully encourage you to search after more.



## 2. Met by Evangelist

*Now I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, What shall I do to be saved?*

*I also saw that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a Man named Evangelist coming to him, and asked, Wherefore dost thou cry?*

*He answered, Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to Judgment; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.*

*Then said Evangelist, Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils? Because, I fear that this Burden that is on my back, will sink me lower than the grave; and I shall fall into Tophet. And, Sir, if I be not fit to go to Prison, I am not fit to go to Judgment, and from thence to Execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.*

*Then said Evangelist, If this be thy condition, Why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a Parchment Roll, and there was written within, Fly from the Wrath to come.*

*The Man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully said, Whither must I fly? Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder Wicket Gate? The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder Shining Light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that Light in your eye, and go directly thereto, so shalt thou see the Gate; at which thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.*

### Notes and Commentary

After many days of suffering, distress and prayer Christian is seen walking in the fields, reading his Book (his Bible). He is alone and cries out asking the most important question a man can ask: "What shall I do to be saved?" Romans 10:14 describes Christian's dilemma in this way: "How shall they hear without a preacher?"



As Christian ponders what to do next, we are introduced to a new character in the allegory, a man named Evangelist. God, in His kindness, does not leave Christian to himself, but sends His minister to explain and point the way, as He did when He sent Phillip to teach the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26.

Evangelist is an important means of God's grace in helping Christian in his journey. He is the King's servant, laboring for the sake of the kingdom. When he sees Christian, he is out in the fields, where a laborer expecting a harvest should be. He has compassion for the lost and is alert to Christian's distress and need. Often in the story he comes to Christian with encouragement, rebuke, instruction and correction. But who is this Evangelist? In Bunyan's own pilgrimage it was the faithful pastor of a group of believers in Bedford, John Gifford. According to Bunyan's testimony in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, it was Gifford who "took occasion to talk with me, ...invited me into his house, where I should hear him confer with others, about the dealings of God with the soul..." [par. 77]

Ministers of the gospel are a gift of God. We can rejoice that God gives His church faithful men, like John Gifford. But pastors are not the only ones who are sent out to point the way to Jesus. We read in Ephesians 4:11-12:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Pastors are to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the church. Paul's exhortation to Timothy is "Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). While this command is especially weighty on pastors and teachers, all believers have a ministry "teaching and admonishing one another" (Colossians 3:16). All believers have a mission to tell others to follow Jesus (Matthew 28:19). And we are all to be ready to share the reason for the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

We live in a day when we too often rush by others, hurrying through the fields when we should be laboring. Pray that God will be at work, awakening the hearts of sinners to their need of grace, and stirring His people to go as laborers into the harvest (Matthew 9:37). Pray that He will make you sensitive to the needs of others around you who are burdened and distressed. And pray, that in His providence, you might find opportunity and rich blessing in pointing pilgrims to the Lord Jesus Christ.



### 3. Christian Flees Destruction

*So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, Life! life! eternal life! So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the Plain.*

*The Neighbors also came out to see him run; and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return . . .*

#### Notes and Commentary

After Christian received instruction and encouragement from Evangelist, he wasted no time in pursuing eternal life. Even the cries of family and friends could not persuade him to go back. He had seen the hope of the gospel. Evangelist had pointed him to Jesus Christ. Christian had discovered the pearl of great price and was willing to give up all he had to obtain it (Matthew 13:46).

Jesus said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life shall lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 10:37-39). We must be willing to sacrifice all to follow Christ. Nothing is as important as our love and commitment to God. Paul said, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8).

But leaving all to follow Christ is not often simple. The world is not easily laid aside. It cries and beckons us to turn back. When one enters a strongman's house to plunder his goods (Matthew 12:29), the strongman is bound to object. Satan does not easily give up on those he has blinded and ensnared. He may seek to fetch them back, even by force. But Satan is no match for the advance of God's Kingdom. John reminds us that: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Satan is now restrained, bound at the cross. There the head of the serpent was dealt a fatal blow (Genesis 3:15). There God "disarmed principalities and powers" and "made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it (Colossians 2:15).

Now our God is at work delivering sinners "from the power of darkness and conveying us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). The love Christ has for His bride and the sacrifice He was willing to make for her sake is no match for the devil and the world. It is Christ's love for us that compels us to forsake all and pursue the riches and abundance found in knowing Him)



#### 4. Encounter with Neighbors

*The Neighbors also came out to see him run; and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force. The name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now, by this time, the man was got a good distance from them; but, however, they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him. Then said the man, Neighbors, wherefore are you come? They said, To persuade you to go back with us. But he said, That can by no means be; you dwell, said he, in the City of Destruction, the place also where I was born. I see it to be so; and, dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the grave, into the place that burns with fire and brimstone: be content, good neighbors, and go along with me.*

*What! said Obstinate, and leave our friends and comforts behind us?*

*Yes, said Christian (for that was his name), because that all which you shall forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that that I am seeking to enjoy; and if you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as myself; for there, where I go, is enough to spare. Come away, and prove my words.*

*Obstinate: What are the things you seek, since you leave all the World to find them?*

*Christian: I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and it is laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.*

#### Notes and Commentary

No sooner had Christian taken leave of Evangelist to pursue eternal life than his actions were noticed by the world. He was forsaking the pleasures and ways of the world to find "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled,

and that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 1:4). Not willing to lose one of its own so easily, the world pursued him, to mock and ridicule, and if possible "fetch him back by force."

Christian was soon overtaken by two citizens of the City of Destruction: Obstinate, a stubborn, close-minded man who would have nothing to do with the gospel; and Pliable, a man easily swayed and led by those of a stronger character. These two engaged Christian in a conversation to make sport of him and his religion. Though having only a little light and instruction, and in fact, not even yet converted at the cross, Christian gladly and earnestly spoke with them. Having heard the truth from Evangelist, he now becomes an evangelist to spread the warning of coming judgment and the hope of the gospel.

Herein we can find hope and encouragement. Often we think of an evangelist as one with a special gift and calling who devotes his life and ministry to the spread of the gospel across the world. But, in fact, all Christians can and should be evangelists. Christian took the scorn of the world and seized upon it as an opportunity to share the light he had been given. He did not run from the world, afraid that he would be laughed at or fearing he knew too little doctrine to face the world's opposition. Instead he invited Obstinate and Pliable to "go along with me" and tells them "Come away, and prove my words."

We must pray for the same love that Christian had for his neighbors. They lived on the brink of destruction and Christian had received warning and hope of the way to escape. Like Christian, how could we possibly not speak when God brings the lost across our path?



## 5. Ridiculed by Obstinate

*Obstinate: What are the things you seek, since you leave all the World to find them?*

*Christian: I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and it is laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.*

*Obstinate: Tush, said Obstinate, away with your Book; will you go back with us, or no?*

*Christian: No, not I, said the other; because I have laid my hand to the Plough.*

*Obstinate: Come then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him. There is a Company of these crazed-headed coxcombs, that when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a Reason.*

*Pliable: Then said Pliable, Don't revile; if what good Christian says, is true, the things he looks after are better than ours; my heart inclines to go with my Neighbor.*



*Obstinate: What! More Fools still? Be ruled by me, and go back; who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back and be wise.*

*Christian: Nay, but do thou come with me, neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more Glories besides; if you believe not me, read here in the Book, and for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold all is confirmed by the Blood of him that made it.*

*Pliable: Well, neighbor Obstinate, (said Pliable) I begin to come to a point, I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my Lot with him; but, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?*

*Christian: I am directed by a man whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little Gate that is before us, where we shall receive instructions about the Way.*

*Pliable: Come then, good neighbor, let us be going. Then they went both together.*

*Obstinate: And I will go back to my place, said Obstinate: I will be no companion of such misled fantastical fellows.*

## Notes and Commentary

As Christian begins his discussion with Obstinate and Pliable, he wastes no time in warning them of their danger. They desire him to return to the ways of the world, but Christian, being warned in his Book and by the words of Evangelist of the coming destruction, does not heed their counsel. He tells Obstinate he will not go back with them, heeding the words of Jesus from Luke 9:62, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The comforts and friendship of the world cannot compare to the blessings promised in Scripture. Christian is determined to escape the wrath to come and find eternal life; and he attempts to persuade the two worldlings to go with him in his journey.

In his appeal, Christian continually uses the Bible as his defense. He tells them: "Read it so, if you will, in my Book" and "if you believe not me, read here in the Book." He does not try to persuade them with his opinions or by force, rather his appeal is to God's Word. Paul tells us in Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Bunyan highlights this truth by placing the Bible in the center of his allegory.

As the conversation unfolds, there appears to be two distinct responses to the Gospel. To Obstinate the Gospel is foolishness and he will have nothing to do with it. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Corinthians 1:18). "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him..." (1 Corinthians 2:14). Obstinate ridicules Christian saying, "away with your Book." Pliable, however, has become enamored with the joys and rewards promised in Christian's Book. He is moved and swayed by Christian's zeal and steadfastness in the pursuit of eternal life. As Christian and Obstinate vie for his company, Pliable makes an outward profession: "I intend to go along with this good man and cast in my Lot with him." Seeing his opinion is now the minority, Obstinate refuses to stay with them, saying, "I will be no companion to such misled, fantastical fellows."

In contrast to Obstinate, Pliable appears eager for the journey. He urges Christian on, saying, "Come then, good neighbor, let us be going." But something was lacking in Pliable's seemingly good decision. Although they part ways here, Obstinate and Pliable soon end up in the same place, back in the City of Destruction. In the next post we will examine Pliable's brief and fruitless pilgrimage and seek to discover why he did not persevere to the end.



## 6. Forsaken by Pliable

*Now I saw in my dream, that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the plain; and thus they began their discourse.*

*Christian: Come, neighbor Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me; and had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.*

*Pliable: Come, neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further, what the things are? And how to be enjoyed, whither we are going?*

*Christian: I can better conceive of them with my mind than speak of them with my tongue: But yet since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book.*

*Pliable: And do you think that the words of your book are certainly true?*

*Christian: Yes verily, for it was made by Him that cannot lie.*

*Pliable: Well said, what things are they?*

*Christian: There is an endless Kingdom to be inhabited, an everlasting Life to be given us, that we may inhabit that Kingdom forever.*

*Pliable: Well said; and what else?*

*Christian: There are crowns of glory to be given us; and garments that will make us shine like the sun in the firmament of Heaven.*

*Pliable: This is very pleasant; and what else?*

*Christian: There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow; for He that is Owner of the place will wipe away all tears from our eyes.*

*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. 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. In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns. There we shall see the holy*

*virgins with their golden harps. 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.*

*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 truly be willing to have it, He will bestow it upon us freely.*

*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 nigh 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 dirt; and Christian, because of the Burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.*

*Pliable: Then said Pliable, Ah! neighbor Christian, where are you now?*

*Christian: Truly, said Christian, I do not know.*

*Pliable: At that 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 between this and our Journey's end? May I get out again with my Life, you shall possess the brave Country alone for me. And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got 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.*

## Notes and Commentary

After the departure of Obstinate back to his Destruction, Pliable finds himself at the high point of his brief pilgrimage with Christian. The path is easy. The conversation is pleasant. Pliable has "tasted of the heavenly gift" as Christian reads the rewards of the Gospel from his Book. For a time he appears eager as though he is advancing in the faith. Seeing the two travelers on the road from a distance one might presume that it is Pliable who is the "more spiritual." He is zealous, ready to race to heaven's gates, bidding Christian to tell him more, exhorting him with the words, "come on, let us mend our pace."

Pliable, however, lacks some important distinctions. He is ravished with the "hearing" but not the "doing." He is concerned over the talk of a coming destruction, and is delighted with the delights written in Christian's book; but he is also unwilling to face the suffering, obedience, and struggle that must come before glory.

While Christian's heart appears tender and concerned, Pliable's is carefree and undisturbed. Their conversation begins with Christian speaking of the powers and terrors he feels because he has been warned of the coming destruction. Pliable, however, brushes the comment aside and asks Christian to explain the way to enjoyment. Christian can hardly speak it in his condition of conviction, but he begins to read in his Book. Soon Pliable is a zealous follower. But though the Gospel may appear to spring up and flourish for this brief moment upon the way, it does not take root and is destined to wither and fade at the first sign of trouble. It is like the seed in the parable of the sower that falls on stony ground. Jesus explains, "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles" (Matthew 13:20–21).

What is the evidence of Pliable's hard, stony heart? He lacks the distinction that has set Christian apart from others since the beginning of Bunyan's allegory; he has no burden. He has not been confronted with his sin or faced his guilt. He feels light as air, ready to run straight way to the gates of heaven. Christian, however is under conviction. He feels the weight of his burden. He knows he is guilty and unfit for heaven. This knowledge slows him, even while Pliable is urging him forward.

But Pliable's shallow commitment to seeking Zion is soon to be tested. His conversion is spurious. His fall waits only for the first sign of difficulty along the way. For it is not enough to fear death and the terrors of hell. Salvation requires repentance from the sin that merits death and hell. It is not enough to want the comforts and joy of heaven. Salvation requires faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and points the way first to the cross.

As Christian's thoughts turn from promised rewards to contemplating his unfitness and guilt, doubts and despair begin to rise in his heart. It is here Christian faces the first great difficulty of his pilgrimage as the two travelers fall unaware into the Slough of Despond.

The Slough represents the uncleanness and shame felt by Christian because of his sin. He feels dirty and wicked in light of the beauty of heaven. He begins to sink, despairing that God would save one such as him.

But Christian is not alone. His despondency is so great, his companion falls in with him. But confronted with the vileness of sin, Pliable wants no part of its unpleasantness. He becomes offended that Christian would lead him into such a place, and with no burden to drag him down, he soon pulls himself from the mire and departs. Bunyan later describes what becomes of Pliable:

Now I saw in my dream that by this time Pliable was got to his house again. So his Neighbors came to visit him; and some of them called him wise man for coming back; and some of them 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.

When we next hear of Pliable, he has returned to the Destruction in which he was born. But now he is in a worse state than before. His heart has hardened further as he joins the others to ridicule Christian. He himself becomes the object of scorn. He had started down the way toward eternal life and then turned back. Believers lament his shallow profession and lack of perseverance in the face of difficulty. The world mocks him for even venturing out at the beginning. He is called Fool and Coward and is treated as a hypocrite. For a time he loses his confidence and sits "sneaking among them." This is the sad and fruitless pilgrimage of a vain professor—at first flourishing and zealous; but headed for a certain shameful fall.

In the next post we shall return to the Slough to discover more of its nature and to learn what becomes of Christian.





## 7. Slough of Despond

*Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavored 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 directed 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 you not 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 solid Ground, and bid him go on his way.*

*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 Travelers 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 arises 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.*

*It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad; his laborers also have, by the directions of his Majesties Surveyors, been for above this sixteen hundred years employed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might have been mended: Yea, and to my knowledge, said he, here has 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.*

*True, there are, by the direction of the Lawgiver, 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 does against change of weather, these steps are hardly seen, or if they be, men, through the dizziness of their heads, step besides; 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.*

## Notes and Commentary

Now alone after the desertion of Pliable, Christian continues in Despondency. He still feels the shame and filth because of his sin. Yet he is determined to find the Wicket Gate. It is much better to go through the shame and grief of facing your sin than to go back to certain Destruction. Christian, however, finds he is unable by his own power to pull himself out.

God is then faithful to send Help to his aid. Some have identified Help as another minister like Evangelist. Alexander Whyte calls him simply another preacher, pastor or evangelist. Spurgeon says he is a brother who has the gift of "helps." It seems clear, however, that Bunyan refers here to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Slough was lifted from David's imagery in Scripture as he cries to the Lord in Psalm 40: 1–2,

I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined to me,  
And heard my cry.  
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,  
Out of the miry clay,  
And set my feet upon a rock,  
And established my steps.

Here it is the Lord Himself who lifts David out of the pit. He sets his feet upon a rock and establishes his steps. As the Psalm ends, David says in verse 17,

But I am poor and needy;  
Yet the Lord thinks upon me.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
Do not delay, O my God.

God Himself is David's Help. In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is called our Help and it is He who leads us to the Rock of our salvation.

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26).

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:7–8).

It is God's Spirit who not only convicts us of sin, but also keeps us from sinking under the weight of its burden by testifying to our hearts concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the allegory Help asks Christian, "But why did you not look for the steps?" These steps represent the promises of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. They are many: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37), "But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15), to name but a few. Bunyan points out several truths concerning these promises:

1. They are placed "by the direction of the Lawgiver." God has given us these promises as they are His revealed Word.

2. They are "good and substantial." They are true and can be trusted for they come from One who cannot lie.
3. They are placed "through the very Midst of this Slough." Even when we struggle and despair over sin, the promises of God in His Word remain true. They are always present and always there for our comfort and hope.
4. Although they are always present, "at such times as this place doth much spew out its filth, as it does against change of weather, these steps are hardly seen." Often our sin so overwhelms us with despair and guilt, the promises may seem distance or even removed. Thoughts of hopelessness may spew over and hide them: "Your sin is so great, why would God want to save you? You have committed this sin so many times, how can there be any forgiveness left? Surely God has thrown up His hands and given up on you!" As we are confounded by this "dizziness," we fall and begin to sink in despondency. But thank God the steps remain, "good and substantial," and thank God for His Spirit who is our Help in time of need, who points us always to where "the ground is good."

Once Christian is out and on his way, Help further explains the Slough. It is more than a mere pond, but a wide gulf that divides the City of Destruction from the Way to Life. We must face the shame and evil of our sin against God on our way to the Cross. Only then can we fully adore our Savior and understand the great price He paid for our salvation. According to Help the Slough cannot be mended. In spite of millions of instructions given by the King's laborers (pastors and teachers) under the direction of His Majesties Surveyors (the prophets and apostles who have written down for us God's revealed plan in the Scriptures), sin remains and continues to be filthy and dirty. Even the best a man can do is but "filthy rags" in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6). Our efforts can never make us right before God. He alone can lift us up and save us.

In the second part of the allegory the Slough appears worse than before:

*But when Christiana came 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 Laborers, and that say, they are for mending the King's highway, that bring dirt 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 bet staggeringly over.*

*Christiana had like to have been in, and that not once nor twice. Now they had no sooner gotten over, but they thought they heard words, that said unto them, Blessed is she that believes, for there shall be a performance of the things that have been told her from the Lord.*

*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.*

Many of those who claim to be teachers of God's truth are in fact pretenders and deceivers. They bring the "dirt and dung" of false teaching and make the Way more treacherous rather than safe. As Christiana and Mercy approach the Slough of Despond, there is a similar turn of conversation as had happened between Christian and Pliable. Christian and Pliable fell into the Slough as Christian's thoughts turned from the promises of rewards and glory to contemplating his own unfitness and guilt. His doubts and despair plunged him and his companion into the mire. Christiana and Mercy, however, have been warned of the Slough by Christian's own testimony. In their pilgrimage they reach the Slough just after Mercy has grieved over the lost condition of her friends left behind in the City of Destruction. She tells Christiana:

*Alas! 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.*

Christiana then comforts her that as God heard the prayers of Christian, her husband, and now was making them fruitful as she and her children were following after him, God may also hear and bless her prayers. It is then after the tears shed for the lost and depraved relations in Destruction that they approach the Slough.

Christiana is almost too fearful to proceed, knowing how much her husband struggled before her. But she has Mercy to boldly encourage her and they together look for the Steps. "If I say, 'my foot slips,' Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up" (Psalms 94:18). Likewise we must remember when facing the unspeakable filth of our sin, that our God is a merciful God. We were dead in trespasses and sins, "but God, who is rich in mercy" has loved us (Ephesians 2:4–5). He shall pardon, forgive and receive all who come to him by faith in Jesus Christ.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive,  
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You (Psalms 86:5).

In Christ, all God's promises are true and Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20).



## 8. Yonder Shining Light

*Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder Wicket Gate? The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder Shining Light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that Light in your eye, and go directly thereto, so shalt thou see the Gate; at which thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.*

### Notes and Commentary

Some have found reason in *The Pilgrim's Progress* to criticize Bunyan for his sequence of events. Why did Evangelist point Christian to the Gate rather than the cross? Why did he send Christian along a path that would bring him near, even into the Slough?

But take note, as you read through the story. Bunyan often uses different characters and events to highlight specific truths or aspects about God and His ways. We have already seen how Bunyan portrayed the ministry of the Holy Spirit as "Help" at the Slough. Later the Spirit is shown in His role as the "Interpreter," the One who teaches and illumines the Holy Scriptures to our minds and hearts. At the cross Christian will learn of the importance of Christ's death as an atonement for sin on his behalf. He will find freedom from the guilt of sin portrayed by his burden as it falls from his shoulders. But before Christian comes to the cross, he is prepared in God's providence to fully appreciate its beauty and worth.



Consider again Bunyan's sequence of events:

First, Evangelist points Christian to the Wicket Gate. The Gate represents the exclusiveness of Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). Peter proclaimed this in the book of Acts: "Nor is their salvation in any other, for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). On his way to the cross, Christian is first taught that Jesus is his only hope. No other way leads to life.

When Christian says he cannot see the Gate, Evangelist points him to the Shining Light. The Light represents the Word of God as it lights our path (Psalm 119:105). It is "a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19). God's Word reveals to us the way to eternal life. The Bible reveals the truth about Jesus: who is He, what He has done, and why it matters. If we are to know Jesus, we must know Him as He is revealed in God's Word.

The Bible, however, also reveals the truth about us. While on his way to the Gate, guided by the Light, Christian draws near to the Slough. He comes face to face with the vileness and shame of his sin. He is convinced even further of his desperate need for a Savior. In the mire of grappling with his own unworthiness and wickedness, Christian's heart is further broken and made ready for conversion. Tasting the vile bitterness of our sin prepares our hearts for the sweet glory of the cross.

To those who believe themselves to be basically good and upright, who are unaware of the true depth of their sin and need, the cross may appear as a mere token of God's love to the world, a good example for us of courage and sacrifice. But to those who have seen their sin for what it truly is—wicked rebellion deserving of condemnation and everlasting torment—and who have grappled with it in the miry Slough, the cross will shine forth as precious—a real death making real atonement for real sins committed by real sinners.

Modern evangelism is often too willing to rush people to the cross before they are by God's grace ready and able to appreciate its worth. We tell of the joys of heaven and do not warn of the coming wrath. We offer hope before there is distress (or even concern). We hold out forgiveness to those who are yet without guilt or shame. We must be faithful as Evangelist to point sinners to the cross in a way that directs them to the light of God's Word, confronts them with the vileness of their sin, and helps them see that Jesus is the only way to peace. May God be pleased, as we endeavor to proclaim the gospel, to open eyes, soften hearts, and grant sinners the gifts of faith and repentance, that they will see the cross as precious, turn from sin and flee to Christ for life.



## 9. Met by Worldly Wiseman

*Now as Christian was walking solitary by himself, he espied one afar off, come crossing over the field to meet him, and they happened 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). Master 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: Has thou a Wife and Children?*

*Christian: Yes; but I am so laden with this Burden, that I cannot take that Pleasure in them formerly: methinks, I am as if I had none.*

*Worldly Wiseman: Wilt thou hearken to 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 rid of they Burden; for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then: Nor canst thou enjoy the Benefits of the Blessings 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 a Man in our country, that can take it off my shoulders; therefore am I going that 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 honorable person; his name, as I remember, is Evangelist.*

*Worldly Wiseman: 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 are 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 careless 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.*

## Notes and Commentary

Thus far in the journey Christian has faced and conquered two trials that threatened to turn him back to Destruction. First, he was bid to return by his family and even chased by his neighbors who sought to bring him back. Christian, however was intent upon fleeing the wrath to come and Bunyan tells us: "the Man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, Life! Life! Eternal Life! So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the Plain." When his neighbors overtook him, he witnessed to them and even convinced one, Pliable, to go with him for a while. Soon, however, a second trial met them, the Slough of Despond. This trail proved too much for Pliable, but Christian "endeavored to struggle to that side of the Slough that was further from his own house, and next to the Wicket Gate." Neither the world's ridicule nor facing the filth of his sin could turn Christian from seeking the Way of Truth. Now, as he continues his journey, Christian faces a far worse trial, a trial in which for the first time he will find himself headed the wrong way. He could not be turned back, so now the enemy seeks to turn him aside.

So what made Christian such a vulnerable target? Notice first that he is alone. Christian was walking "solitary by himself." He did not have the wise Evangelist at his side, nor the comfort and counsel of another Pilgrim. He did not even have Pliable in his company. Later in the story Christian will learn the value of walking together with godly companions. But for now, the enemy finds opportunity while he is walking alone.

Second, notice that the meeting between Christian and Mr. Worldly Wiseman was unavoidable. They were crossing the way of each other—traveling in opposite directions. Christian's face was towards Eternal Life, the other's was set towards the world. Mr. Worldly Wiseman dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy. He was fleshly minded and thus hostile to God (Romans 8:5-8).

And third, notice that the encounter was by design. Christian espied one far off, come crossing over the field to meet him. Mr. Worldly Wiseman had heard news of Christian's departure and had set out to meet him. As Worldly Wiseman satisfies his curiosity by questioning Christian, Satan spins his first trap that will lead Christian astray.

As the conversation begins, Worldly Wiseman offers Christian counsel concerning the grief and trouble his Burden has caused him. Christian has just come out of a difficult struggle in the Slough. Though he was faithfully walking in the Way that Evangelist told him to go, he fell headlong into trouble. An easier path or solution now appears tempting. The advice of the world is alluring. Christian has a ready ear, though he is ill prepared for the deceit the world is about to spew upon him.

In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul has much to say, warning us not to pursue the wisdom of the world. First, the wisdom of the world cannot help us find or know God. "For since in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save

those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). The wisdom of the world tries to discount God, redefine God, or even deny His existence. Though Christian is told to *bespew* (wish a curse upon) Evangelist for his counsel, it is actually Evangelist who has the true message of life. God's wisdom and power are made known at the cross (1 Corinthians 1:24) through the faithful preaching of Gospel. This Gospel appears foolish to Worldly Wiseman, but it proves in the end to be salvation for Christian.

Second, the wisdom of the world cannot be trusted. "Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:5). Evangelist pointed Christian to seek Jesus Christ, who is the only Way, Truth, and Life (John 14:6). Christ's exclusiveness is symbolized in Bunyan's story by the narrow gate. It is through this gate that we find the cross and witness the power of God. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). God's Word has the only answer for getting rid of Burdens. If we place our faith in any other supposed or purported solution, we will perish in our sin.

Finally, the wisdom of the world is the real foolishness. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Corinthians 3:19). Worldly Wiseman warns of many dangers along the way seeking to persuade Christian from continuing his present course. Running away from danger seems the wise thing to do—Save your life! But Jesus taught that "if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). The very dangers that Worldly Wiseman spoke of (Romans 8:35), in the plan and mind of God, prove His love and strengthen our faith as we are made more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). We must trust God and walk in His Way, and be snared by folly that seems wise at the time. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

One final point is worth noting in this opening portion of the conversation between Christian and Worldly Wiseman. After Worldly Wiseman offers to give Christian counsel, Christian tells him that he will accept it if it be good. Worldly Wiseman thus begins with some good counsel: "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 Blessings which God hath bestowed upon thee till then." It is true that Christian will not have peace of mind so long as he is under the weight and guilt of sin. It is also true that he should deal with his guilt "with all speed." Christian is drawn by the truth in Worldly Wiseman's statement, and says: "That is that which I seek for." Only after Christian has taken the bait does the Worldly Wiseman begin to lead him astray, first by denouncing God's servant, Evangelist, and then by denouncing God's message which Evangelist had spoken.

We must learn to be cautious and watch for Satan's ploys when interacting with worldviews that are hostile to God and contrary to the gospel. The devil is seldom outright with lies and heresy. When he desires to attack pilgrims with error, he most often works through deceit and deception. Paul warns us that Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. The devil can give what is black an appearance of white. Paul expresses his concern that the Corinthian church not stumble into this trap:

But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)

Satan can take a lie and enfold it with enough truth to cover, soften and hide it. By doing this, the devil sets a deadly trap. If we fail to see error because it's adorned in truthful wrapping, we swallow it to our hurt, just as Christian was swayed with Worldly Wiseman's counsel and, as we shall see, ends up straying out the Way into a perilous place.



There is also an interesting use of irony found in this dialog. Worldly Wiseman goes on for several lines decrying Evangelist for his previous advise to Christian. He closes with the argument: "And why should a man so careless cast away himself, by giving heed to a Stranger?" Yet Christian is about to do just this in listening to Worldly Wiseman! The world does not easy lose its own. Worldly Wiseman here claims Christian as a friend and speaks of ministers of the Gospel as outsiders.

As the story continues Christian is soon to learn a valuable lesson: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1). "The thoughts of the righteous are right, but the counsels of the wicked are deceitful" (Proverbs 12:5).



## 10. The World's Scorn of the Word

*Worldly Wiseman: How camest thou by thy 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 so 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.*

### Notes and Commentary

Despite the warnings of trouble and danger in the Way, and the scorn and ridicule heaped upon Evangelist, Christian is still persuaded to continue on and find deliverance. Worldly Wiseman thus raises another argument to win Christian to his side. He asks Christian about the origin of his burden. When was it that he began to feel guilty and weighed down with sin? Christian answers him truthfully; reading the Bible gave rise to his conviction. God's Word itself confirms in Psalm 19:7-11:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;  
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.  
More to be desired are they than gold.  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
Moreover by them Your servant is warned.  
And in keeping them there is great reward.

Worldly Wiseman, however, denounces the Bible and its impact on the life of Christian. He condemns reading the Scriptures on three grounds. **First**, he claims it is a sign of weakness. To the World, all religion is weakness, suitable perhaps for women or children, but certainly not a characteristic of manliness. Men are supposed to be strong and in control, not admitting helplessness under the weight of a burden. In the world's eyes Christian is a failure.

**Second**, Worldly Wiseman asserts that reading the Bible is distracting. He believes Christian should be out making a name for himself, seeking pleasure and wealth, enjoying himself, pursuing fame and fortune. Instead, Christian stands before him grieved and weighed down by his sin. Again, Christian is a failure in his eyes.

**Finally**, Worldly Wiseman insinuates that following the Bible's Way is pointless. He refers to Christian's pursuit to find peace by way of the Gospel as "desperate." The world would have men live by sight, holding and clinging to what they can see. Those who would live by faith "to obtain they know not what" are counted as foolish.

Again, behind Worldly Wiseman's ridicule and scorn, we can detect the ploys of the devil. Satan has long had contempt for God's Word. His first words to Eve in the garden were "Has God indeed said...?" (Genesis 3:1). Even today his attack continues. The words of Scripture are often ridiculed and set aside as being mythological, inaccurate, irrelevant or out-dated.

But to the Christian the Bible is a precious book. Bunyan, himself describes in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*:

"The Bible was precious to me in those days. And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and especially the epistles of the apostle Paul were sweet and pleasant to me; and indeed, I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation; still crying out to God that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory." [end of par. 45 and 46]

If we are to find this Way of Truth, it must be from the words of Scripture. The whole of Scripture points us to Jesus (Luke 24:27), who alone has "the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Paul tells us: faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Let us hold fast to the Words of Life and proclaim them in spite of the world's scorn.



## 11. Directed to the Village of Morality

*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 these dangers, thou shalt meet with much Safety, Friendship, and Content.*

*Christian: 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 a very good name) that has skill to help men off with such Burdens as thine is, 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 may'st go, and be help'd 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 may'st be eased of the Burden, and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation, as indeed I would not wish thee; thou may'st 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.*

*Now was Christian somewhat at a stand; but presently he concluded, If this be true which this gentleman hath said, my wisest course is to take his advice; and with that he thus further spoke.*

*Christian: Sir, which is my way to this honest man's house?*

*Worldly Wiseman: Do you see yonder high Hill?*

*Christian: Yes, very well.*

*Worldly Wiseman: By that Hill you must go, and the first house you come at is his.*

### Notes and Commentary

Though hardly begun in his journey, Christian is already weary from his struggle in the Slough. He is yet inexperienced in his pilgrimage and feels the weight of his burden now more than ever. In his desperation to

rid himself of his burden he is ripe for the tempting, beguiling speech of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who offers him a short-cut, a refuge away from the daily battles with sin.

This refuge is the Village of Morality. The Village of Morality represents that great host of people who seek to avoid the appearance of evil and practice good apart from any fear of God or judgment. They hope by being good people and doing good things that all will turn out right in the end. They keep the law outwardly in the eyes of men and can say along with the rich young ruler, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth" (Mark 10:20). The World's advice to Christian is essentially be a good person and all will be well.

The citizens of Morality look to Mr. Legality to ease their consciences. They cling to an outward keeping of the law, a works righteousness that continually seeks to outweigh any bad with the good. If Legality is not home (ie. moral laws are not upheld within the present culture) then Civility will do. Simply try to get along with people, act with decency and benevolence towards your fellow man and again all will be well. Bunyan describes his own stay in this Village:

"Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I also did strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again, for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England." [*Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, par. 30]

This town, however, is in even greater danger than the City of Destruction. In Destruction the danger was manifest; the wickedness and enmity against God was apparent. In this city, however, burdens are discarded. Guilt is smothered and silenced. Its citizens are deceived into believing all is well. They say peace, peace! When there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).

Let us shun the hellish lie that tells us that man can solve his own problems, that striving to do good can remove the guilt of sin. Only the cross, only the shed blood of Christ can bring peace and atone for sin (Colossians 1:20). Christian will soon learn that to stray from the Way to the cross is perilous indeed.



## 12. Beneath the High Hill



*So Christian turned out of his way, to go to Mr. Legality's house for help: But behold, when he was got now hard by the Hill, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was next the Wayside did hang so much over, that Christian was afraid to venture further, lest the Hill should fall on his head; wherefore there he stood still, and he did not know what to do. Also his Burden now seemed heavier to him than while he was in his Way. There came also flashes of fire out of the Hill, that made Christian afraid that he should be burned: Here therefore he sweat and did quake for Fear. And now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. Worldly Wiseman's counsel; and with that he saw Evangelist coming to meet him; at the sight of whom he began to blush for Shame. So Evangelist drew nearer and nearer; and coming up to him, he looked upon him with a severe and dreadful countenance, and thus began to reason with Christian. Evangelist: What doest thou here, Christian? said he: At which words, Christian knew not what to answer; wherefore at present he stood speechless before him. Then said Evangelist farther, Art not thou the Man that I found crying without the walls of the City of Destruction?*

*Christian: Yes, dear Sir, said Christian.*

*Evangelist: How is it then that thou art so quickly turned aside? For thou art now out of the way.*

*Christian: I met with a gentleman so soon as I had got over the Slough of Despond, who persuaded me, that I might, in the village before me, find a man that could take off my Burden.*

*Evangelist: What was he?*

*Christian: He looked like a gentleman, and talked much to me, and got me at last to yield; so I came hither: But when I beheld this Hill, and how it hangs over the way, I suddenly made a stand, lest it should fall on my head.*

*Evangelist: What said that gentleman to you?*

*Christian: Why, he asked me whither I was going? And I told him.*

*Evangelist: And what said he then?*

*Christian: He asked me if I had a family? And I told him: But, said I, I am so laden with the Burden that is on my back, that I cannot take pleasure in them as formerly.*

*Evangelist: And what said he then?*

*Christian: He bid me with speed get rid of my burden; and I told him 'twas Ease that I sought: And, said I, I am therefore going to yonder Gate, to receive further direction how I may get to the place of deliverance. So he said that he would show me a better way, and short, not so attended with Difficulties, as the Way, Sir, that you set me in; which way, said he, will direct you to a gentleman's house that hath skill to take off these Burdens: So I believed him, and turned out of that Way into this, if haply I might be soon eased of my Burden. But when I came to this place, and beheld things as they are, I stopped for fear (as I said) of danger: But I now know not what to do.*

*Evangelist: Then (said Evangelist) stand still a little, that I may show thee the words of God. So he stood trembling. Then said Evangelist, See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven. He said, moreover, Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. He also did thus apply them, Thou art the man that art running into this misery. Thou hast begun to reject the counsel of the Most High, and to draw back thy foot from the Way of Peace, even almost to the hazarding of thy Perdition.*

*Then Christian fell down at his foot as dead, crying, Woe is me, for I am undone! At the sight of which, Evangelist caught him by the right hand, saying, All manner of Sin and Blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men; be not faithless, but believing: Then did Christian again a little revive, and stood up trembling as at first, before Evangelist.*

This portion of Bunyan's allegory has a dark beginning. Christian now strays from the Way, swayed by the counsel of Mr. Worldly Wiseman. As he travels toward the Village of Morality, it is not long before he begins to realize his foolishness. The closer he gets to the High Hill, the more he fears it will fall on his head and crush him. He has forsaken the Way of the cross and is now pursuing a works-righteousness salvation. He soon learns that his attempts to please God by an outward form of morality are as filthy rags before God. His works can never measure up to the perfect standard of God's Law. Christian finds himself in great fear, not knowing what to do or which way to turn. The Lord is merciful, however, and sends His servant Evangelist once again to warn and comfort Christian. Evangelist is faithful to his King and comes to find and warn his brother. The passage closes in the Light of the Gospel as Christian shows the fruits of repentance and Evangelist encourages him to be not faithless, but believing.

Let's look more closely at the three persons involved in this episode in *The Pilgrim's Progress*: the King's mercy, Evangelist's faithfulness, and Christian's response.

### **I. The King's Mercy**

Notice first, the mercy of the King to send His servant Evangelist to warn Christian of his error. Evangelist is representative in the allegory of a pastor, a shepherd, a watchman—one who serves the Kingdom of God by caring for and instructing the people of God. God Himself promised: "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15).

God has also promised that He will not leave those whom He loves in error. He will come and bring correction. We are told in Proverbs 3:11-12, "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights."

Notice that this error does not take God by surprise. He is prepared for our stumbling and wandering. God knows the heart of man. He tells us in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Isaiah describes us as being like sheep who have turned and gone astray, everyone of us going our own way (Isaiah 53:6). Even when the way is clearly set before us, we are too easily distracted and waylaid. As the hymn writer has said, we are "prone to wander."

It is significant that throughout the allegory in all the times Christian stumbles, falls or strays from the path, the King is always prepared to find him and bring him back. When Christian was in the field reading his Book, convicted of sin and not knowing which way to go, God sent Evangelist to warn him to flee the wrath to come and flee to the Gate, to Jesus Christ and His Gospel. When Christian fell into the Slough, mired by his sin wondering if God could ever save one as wicked as he, Help was nearby to come and pull him out. And now, when Christian forsakes the right path and strays from the Way, Evangelist is sent again to warn and instruct Christian.

### **II. Evangelist's Faithfulness**

Second, consider the faithfulness of Evangelist to serve His King as a faithful shepherd. He is not afraid to confront Christian with his sin and warn him of its consequences. He tells him plainly, "thou are now out of the Way." Though the work can be difficult and costly, Ezekiel 33:1-6 reveals the grave importance of confronting men with their sin and proclaiming the Gospel:

Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the

sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand."

The watchman knows the weight of his responsibility before God. He understands the realities of hell and the coming judgment and wrath of God. This knowledge burns in his heart to warn and plead with men to flee Destruction and seek the Narrow Gate.

But notice what the watchman is to say. He is not, as Worldly Wiseman, told to offer his own opinions and counsel. He is not to coddle men in their sin with deceptive remedies and false assurance. Instead, the watchman must be faithful to preach God's Word. "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me" (Ezekiel 33:7). We are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 that God's Word is profitable for doctrine (teaching us truth about God, about ourselves and about the world in which we live, so we will know the Way in which to go), for reproof (confronting us when we sin and fall into error and go astray), for correction (showing how to get back to the Way), and for instruction in righteousness (teaching us how to remain in the Way). Here Christian is in need of all that Scripture can offer and Evangelist tells him, "Stand still a little that I may show thee the words of God."

But notice also, that while Evangelist does not slight the heinousness of Christian's sin, he speaks the truth to Christian in love. His stern warning is mixed with a heart of compassion, comfort and tenderness. Upon hearing his sin exposed Christian falls down at Evangelist's feet as dead. As the fruits of repentance are manifest, Evangelist is quick to bring the balm of the Gospel. He tells him, "All manner of Sin and Blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men; be not faithless, but believing." He takes Christian by the hand and helps him to stand.

### **III. Christian's Response**

Notice finally, Christian's response to the warning he was given. He accepted it humbly. When the watchman sounded the trumpet, Christian heeded the call and repented of his sin. Jeremiah 6, speaking of the Fall of Judah, presents an example of the grave consequences of rejecting God's Word and not heeding His watchmen. Here we are told: "Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.' Therefore hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words nor My law, but rejected it" (Jeremiah 6:17-19). We must accept the correction God brings to us from His Word. Proverbs 15:10 reveals what the result would have been had Christian not considered the warning of Evangelist: "Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, and he who hates correction will die" (Proverbs 15:10).

We must be thankful for those watchmen God has given to care for us. Paul encourages us:

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Later in the story Christian is with Faithful and they encounter Evangelist, who has again come to warn and instruct them. Consider the way the pilgrims esteem their shepherd in love:

Now, when they were got almost quite out of this wilderness, Faithful chanced to cast his eye back, and espied one coming after them, and he knew him. Oh! said Faithful to his brother, who comes yonder? Then Christian looked, and said, It is my good friend Evangelist. Ay, and my good friend too, said Faithful, for it was he that set me in the way to the gate. Now was Evangelist come up to them, and thus saluted them:

Evangelist: Peace be with you, dearly beloved; and peace be to your helpers.

Christian: Welcome, welcome, my good Evangelist, the sight of thy countenance brings to my remembrance thy ancient kindness and unwearied laboring for my eternal good.

Faithful: And a thousand times welcome, said good Faithful. Thy company, O sweet Evangelist, how desirable it is to us poor pilgrims!

God's ministers are an important means in our sanctification. We must pray for them and appreciate them for they warn and comfort us as those who must give an account.



### 13. Admonished by Evangelist

*Then Evangelist proceeded, saying, Give more earnest Heed to the things that I shall tell thee of. I will now show thee who it was that deluded thee, and who it was also to whom he sent thee. The man that met thee, is one Worldly Wiseman, and rightly is he so called; partly, because he savoreth only the doctrine of this world; (therefore he always goes to the town of Morality to church) and partly, because he loveth that doctrine best; for it saveth him from the Cross; and because he is of this carnal temper, therefore he seeketh to pervert my ways, though right. Now there are three things in this man's counsel that thou must utterly abhor.*

- 1. His turning thee out of the Way.*
- 2. His laboring to render the Cross odious to thee.*
- 3. And his setting thy feet in that way that leadeth unto the administration of death.*

*First, Thou must abhor his turning thee out of the Way; yea, and thine own Consenting thereto; because this is to reject the counsel of God for the sake of the counsel of a Worldly Wiseman. The Lord says, Strive to enter in at the Strait Gate, the gate to which I sent thee; for strait is the Gate that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it. From this little Wicket Gate, and from the Way thereto, hath this wicked man turned thee, to the bringing of thee almost to destruction: hate, therefore, his turning thee out of the Way, and abhor thyself for hearkening to him.*

*Secondly, Thou must abhor his laboring to render the Cross odious unto thee; for thou art to prefer it before the treasures in Egypt: Besides, the King of Glory hath told thee, That he that will save his life shall lose it: And, he that comes after him, and hates not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple. I say therefore, for a man to labor to persuade thee that That shall be thy Death, without which, the Truth hath said, thou canst not have Eternal Life: This doctrine thou must abhor.*

*Thirdly, Thou must hate his setting of thy feet in the way that leadeth to the ministration of Death. And for this thou must consider to whom he sent thee, and also how unable that Person was to deliver thee from the Burden.*

*He to whom thou wast sent for Ease, being by name Legality, is the son of the Bondwoman which now is, and is in bondage with her children, and is in a mystery this Mount Sinai, which thou hast feared will fall on thy head. Now if she with her children are in Bondage, how canst thou expect by them to be made free? This Legality, therefore, is not able to set thee free from the Burden. No man was as yet ever rid of his Burden by him; no, nor ever is like to be: Ye cannot be justified by the Works of the Law; for by the deeds of the law no man living can be rid of his burden: Therefore Mr. Worldly Wiseman is an alien, and Mr. Legality a cheat: And for his son Civility, notwithstanding his simpering looks, he is but a hypocrite, and cannot help thee. Believe me, there is nothing in all this noise that thou hast heard of this sottish man, but a design to beguile thee of thy Salvation, by turning thee from the Way in which I had set thee.*

## Notes and Commentary

In this portion of Pilgrim's Progress Evangelist makes good on his promise to show Christian "the words of God." He proceeds to quote Scripture after Scripture, exposing Christian's error, teaching him to recognize and hate his sin, and explaining to him why it was foolish to depart from the Way. Worldly Wiseman spoke out of "the doctrine of this world," as 1 John 4:5 teaches: "They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them." For Christian to have listened to and heeded Worldly Wiseman's counsel is a serious matter, for the world hears and follows its own. Had Christian known more of God's Word, he would have been better equipped to recognize the world's contempt of God's ways. Worldly Wiseman was of that company who desires ease and pleasure, avoiding persecution and suffering that come to those who seek the Cross (Galatians 6:12).

Evangelist reminds Christian that there is only one way to life, and that through the Straight and Narrow Gate:

"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:24).

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" Matthew 7:13–14).

When Christian had first cried out: "What shall I do to be saved?" Evangelist had pointed the way. But Christian had lost sight of the Way that would take him to the cross. So Evangelist directs him again to heed the warnings of Scripture.

He warns Christian to count the cost, as Moses did when he identified himself with the people of God:

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward" (Hebrews 11:24–26).

And as Jesus did when He taught His disciples:

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26–27).

Christian had turned away from the cross. He had forsaken the Way to Grace to search after ease in the Law. But again, the warning is clearly sounded in Scripture:

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband." Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (Galatians 4:21–31).

Even Paul in his instruction emphasizes the crucial question: What does the Scripture say? Verse after verse, warning after warning, truth after truth, God's servant lovingly corrects and reproves this wandering Pilgrim by bringing him again and again to God's Word.

Bunyan reveals in this dialog the great benefit of knowing and understanding Scripture. Evangelist finds a brother in need, indeed, a brother who is about to stray from the Way into grave danger. But Evangelist is prepared and ready to help. He has the Word of God hidden in his heart. He has kept the Sword of the Spirit sharpened at his side and now draws it for the good of his brother. May we be just as prepared and equipped, that we might keep ourselves from straying down erroneous paths as well as teach and admonish one another in truth and love.



## 14. Christian Returns to the Way

*After this, Evangelist called aloud to the Heavens for confirmation of what he had said; and with that there came Words and Fire out of the Mountain under which poor Christian stood, that made the hair of his flesh stand up: The words were thus pronounced, As many as are of the Works of the Law are under the Curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.*

*Now Christian looked for nothing but Death and began to cry out lamentably; even cursing the time in which he met with Mr. Worldly Wiseman; still calling himself a thousand fools for hearkening to his counsel: He also was greatly ashamed to think that this gentleman's arguments, flowing only from the Flesh, should have that prevalency with him as to cause him to forsake the right Way. This done, he applied himself again to Evangelist in words and sense as follows:*



*Christian: Sir, what think you? Is there Hopes? May I now go back, and go up to the Wicket Gate? Shall I not be abandoned for this, and sent back from thence ashamed? I am sorry I have hearkened to this man's counsel; but may my Sin be forgiven?*

*Evangelist: Then said Evangelist to him, Thy Sin is very great, for by it thou hast forsaken the Way that is good, to tread in forbidden paths; yet will the man at the Gate receive thee, for he has good will for men; only said he, take heed that thou turn not aside again, lest thou perish from the Way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.*

*Then did Christian address himself to go back; and Evangelist, after he had kissed him, gave him one smile, and bid him God speed; So he went on with haste, neither spake he to any man by the way; not if any asked him, would he vouchsafe them an answer. He went like one that was all the while treading on forbidden ground, and could by no means think himself safe, till again he was got into the Way which he left to follow Mr. Worldy Wiseman's counsel.*

## Notes and Commentary

Upon learning of the seriousness of his sin, for he had departed from the Way, Christian was struck with sorrow and shame. In mercy God had sent Evangelist to warn his brother of the dangers that await those who would try and earn God's favor by their own merits. Evangelist confirmed the truthfulness of his words with the authority of God's Word, quoting from Galatians 3:10:

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

In this verse Paul quotes from the Old Testament:

Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law. And all the people shall say, Amen! (Deuteronomy 27:26)

God requires perfection. "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). To stumble and fail to keep any portion of God's Law is to fail to keep the whole Law. The Law is holy, just and good (Romans 7:12). But we are sinful: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And so Paul affirms "by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Our only hope, if we are to be forgiven and declared righteous in God's sight, is to believe on Jesus and receive by faith God's righteousness in Him. Only the shed blood and perfect works of Jesus can cleanse and save us. Our own works, ever tainted with sin, can only condemn us.

Christian sees the foolishness of abandoning the Way and wonders now if he can turn back and seek the Wicket Gate once again. As the gifts of faith and repentance are brought to full flame in Christian's heart, Evangelist is with him to bring truly wise counsel. Evangelist's counsel includes reproof, comfort, and a warning.

Evangelist begins his answer to Christian's plea: "May my sin be forgiven?" with a reproof. He does not slight the seriousness of Christian's sin, but claims it "is very great." It is heinous for two reasons. First it caused Christian to forsake the Way. It hindered him from pursuing and finding the Lord Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But not only did the fleshly counsel persuade Christian from the Way, it also turned him into forbidden paths. Rather than seeking the Cross, Christian was now bound for a Curse.

Reproof is then followed with comfort. A contrite heart is a sacrifice pleasing to God (Psalm 51:17), and Evangelist assures Christian that he will by no means be cast out. This comfort is later confirmed with both a kiss and a smile as Evangelist sends Christian once again to seek the Gate.

The genuineness of Christian's repentance is seen in his humility and his haste. He is diligent to obey the Word of God and indignant toward his sin. He doesn't trifle with sin, but distances himself from what he knows to be wrong. He makes no attempt to defend or justify his sin before others, or allow others to give him false comfort or hope, as Worldly Wiseman had done. Christian regards sin as "forbidden ground" and with all swiftness he flees from it to return to the Way (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

Evangelist's love and care for his brother is also manifest in a warning. Quoting from Psalm 2:12, he instructs Christian to learn from his error and not turn aside again:

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,  
And you perish in the way,  
When His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.