

sneer at Christian's hopes, he returns to the city of Destruction, and Christian sees him no more.

We part with Pliable with about as much pain as Christian did; for although but an imaginary personage, the picture recalls to our recollection so many who have run his course, that he becomes to us more a *reality* than an *allegory*. They have gone back to walk no more with us! They once put their hand to the plough, but then looked back and are not fit for the kingdom of God! The God of infinite love have mercy on them, and restore them to the paths of righteousness for his name's sake!

Christian was now "left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone;" but, unlike Pliable, his great concern was "to struggle to that side of the Slough which was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket gate." The object of his pursuit was not *peace* only, but *safety*. He knew that his peace of mind would be restored as soon as he reached the divinely appointed refuge. He *would not*, therefore, if he *could*, get out as his companion had got out, by returning to his former indifference; so he struggled for the other side, "but could not get out for the burden that was upon his back," until a man whose name was Help came, and asked him what he did there? Christian told him that he had fallen into the Slough while fleeing to the wicket-gate. Help then, gently chiding him for not looking for "the steps," extended his hand to him, and drew him out, "and set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings," (Psalm xl. 2.) Bunyan explains in a marginal note, what he means by these steps, viz.,—"the promises,"—and intimates that had the pilgrims walked upon these, they would have found no difficulty in crossing the bog. The Slough of Despond, therefore, represents the ignorance and unbelief, and wretchedness in which the convicted sinner stumbles on until he looks away from self, and human merits, and human helpers, to the promise of God to save "every one that believeth." A *deep dark bog* is that of *unbelief*! So natural is it for a depraved heart to put confidence in the flesh, and to disbelieve God's free offer of mercy on the sole account of what his beloved Son has done and suffered in our stead, and so skilful are the devices of the devil to deceive us, that we should wallow in the bog forever, were it not for help sent from heaven,—in other words, were it not for the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit, whom Help represents! The whole aim of the adversary is to prevent men from "believing the record that God has given of his Son;" for if he can only accomplish *that*, he destroys the soul which God by his grace would save. Some persons in Christian's state of mind he tempts to despair of pardon,—to think that their sins are too many, and too great to be forgiven. *You have sinned*, he suggests, *against light and knowledge, and abounding mercy*;—sinned so *often*,—sinned so *long*,—that "God's mercy is clean gone forever from you!" Thus does he push the man aside from Paul's precious step of promise, broad enough and firm enough to support the tread of the whole world upon it: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,"—and the poor convicted and anxious sinner sinks in the Slough! Others he tempts in the *opposite* direction, leading them to regard God as so indulgent as not to require a mediator, or an atonement for sin; and so conceals from them John's step of promise.—"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Others, again, he induces to think themselves *not good enough yet* to apply to Christ, and to resolve on coming to Him *when they have washed away some of their sins* by repentance, and good works, thus making the words of Jesus of none effect.—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And still others he perplexes and distresses with the much abused and perverted doctrine of election, filling their minds with apprehension lest they should not be among the number of the elect, or persuading them that whether elected or not, God's decree puts the matter altogether out of their controul, to the total disregard of the gracious assurance that he that believes "makes his calling and election sure." And these are not a tithe of the sources of doubt and perplexity