

4 - The Neighbours - Obstinate and Pliable

The neighbours also came out to see him run; and, as he ran, some mocked (#Jer 20:10), others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that were 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 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, "Neighbours, wherefore are ye come?" They said, "To persuade you to go back with us." But he said, "That can by no means be. You dwell 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 a place that burns with fire and brimstone: be content, good neighbours, and go along with me."

Obstinate. "What!" said OBSTINATE, "and leave our friends and our comforts behind us !"

Christian. "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 (#2Co 4:18); and if you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there where I go is enough and to spare (#Lu 15:17). Come away, and prove my words."

Obst. What are the things you seek, since you leave all the world to find them?

Chr. I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away (#1Pe 1:4); and it is laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it (#Heb 11:16). Read it so, if you will, in my book.

Obst. "Tush," said OBSTINATE, "away with your book; will you go back with us or not?"

Chr. "No, not I," said the other; "because I have laid my hand to the plough" (#Lu 9:62).

Obst. Come then, neighbour PLIABLE, let us turn again, and go home without him: there is a company of these crazy-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 the good CHRISTIAN says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours: my heart inclines to go with my neighbour."

Obst. What! more fools still? Be ruled by me, and go back; who knows whither such a brainsick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise!

Chr. Nay. but do thou come with thy neighbour 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 this book; and, for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold, all is confirmed by the blood of him that made it (#Heb 9:17-28).

"Well, neighbour 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?"

Chr. 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.

Pli. Come then, good neighbour, let us be going.

Then they went both together.

Obst. "And I will go back to my place," said OBSTINATE; "I will be no companion of such misled, fantastic fellow."

Jer 20:10, 2Co 4:18, Lu 15:17, 1Pe 1:4, Heb 11:16, Lu 9:62, Heb 9:17-28

“For I heard many mocking: "Fear on every side!" "Report," *they say*, "and we will report it!" All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, *saying*, "Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him."” (Jer 20:10 NKJV)

“while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” (2Co 4:18 NKJV)

““But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!’” (Lu 15:17 NKJV)

“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,” (1Pe 1:4 NKJV)

“But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” (Heb 11:16 NKJV)

“But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."” (Lu 9:62 NKJV)

“¹⁷ For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first *covenant* was dedicated without blood. ¹⁹ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This *is* the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." ²¹ Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. ²² And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. ²³ ¶ Therefore *it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— ²⁶ He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” (Heb 9:17-28 NKJV)