



CHAPTER 1



As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I came upon a certain place where there was a den,¹ and I laid 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 turned away 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 from it. And as he read, he wept and trembled. Not being able any longer to contain himself, he broke out with a mournful cry, saying, “What shall I do?”

In this condition, he went home and restrained himself as long as he could, so that his wife and children should not see his distress. But he could not be silent long, because his trouble increased. Therefore, after a while he shared his mind with his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them: “Oh my dear wife,” said he, “and you my sweet children, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone because of a burden that weighs me down. Moreover, I am told with certainty that this our city will be burned with fire from heaven with a

1. Bedford Jail, in which Bunyan was imprisoned for twelve years.

fearful overthrow. Both myself, with you, my wife, and you, my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, unless by some way of escape we may be delivered."

At this all his family were greatly amazed; not because they believed what he had said to them was true, but because they thought some frenzy or madness had gotten into his head. Therefore, as night was approaching, and they hoped that sleep might settle his brain, they quickly got him to bed. But the night was as troublesome to him as the day. Therefore, instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when morning came, they wanted to know how he was doing. He told them, "Worse and worse." He also began talking to them again; but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his madness by harsh and unkind treatment. Sometimes they would ridicule, sometimes they would scold, and sometimes they would just ignore him. Therefore he would withdraw himself to his chamber, to pray for and pity them, and also to sorrow over his own misery. He would also walk alone in the fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying. Thus for some days he spent his time.

Christian's Distress of Mind

Now I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as usual) reading in his book and was greatly distressed in his mind. 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 he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming toward him, who asked, "Why do you cry?"

He answered, "Sir, I have read in the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment. But I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second."

Then said Evangelist, "Why are you not willing to die, since this life is troubled with so many evils?"

The man answered, "Because I fear that this burden upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Hell.

And sir, if I am not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from there to death. Thinking about these things makes me cry.”

Then said Evangelist, “If this is your condition, why do you stand still?”

He answered, “Because I know not where to go.”

Then he gave him a parchment roll in which was written, “Flee from the wrath to come.”²

The man read it, and looking intently at Evangelist, asked, “Where 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 walk directly toward it. In time, you will see the gate; at which, when you knock, you will be told what to do.”

So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now, he had not run far from his own door, when his wife and children saw it and began to cry after him to return. But the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, “Life! Life! Eternal life!” He did not look behind him, but fled toward the middle of the plain.

Christian Flees From the City

The neighbors also came out to see him run. As he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some called after him to return. Among those who did so there were two who 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 had run a good distance from them. But they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a short time they overtook him.

Then said the man, “Neighbors, why have you 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

2. Matthew 3:7

Destruction, the place where I was also born. Dying there sooner or later, you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone. Please, good neighbors, go along with me."

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

"Yes," said Christian (for that was his name), "because all that you would forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of what I am seeking to enjoy. If you will go along with me, and persevere, you will fare as well as I will. For where I am going there is room to spare. Come with me and prove my words."

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

CHRIS. I seek a place that can never be destroyed, one that is pure, and that does not fade away. It is laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be given, at the time appointed, to those who seek it with all their heart. Read about it, if you will, in my book.

OBST. No! Away with your book; will you go back with us or not?

CHRIS. No, not I, because I have put my hand to the plough.

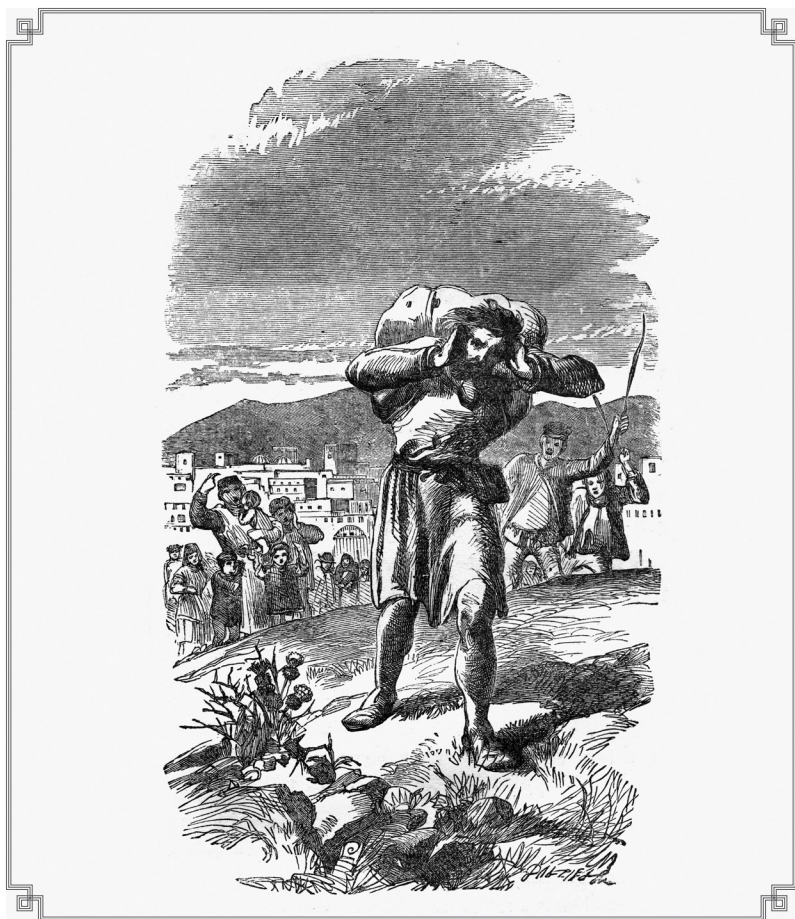
OBST. Come then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn around and go home without him. There is a company of these crazy-headed fools who, when they take a fancy, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

PLI. Don't revile; if what good Christian says is true, the things he looks for are better than what we have. My heart is inclined to go with my neighbor.

OBST. What! More fools still? Listen to me, and go back. Who knows where such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

CHRIS. No, but come with your neighbor, Pliable. There are such things to be had as I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you don't believe me, read here in this book. If you doubt what it says, all is confirmed by the blood of Him who wrote it.

PLI. Well, neighbor Obstinate, I have reached a decision. I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him.



Christian Commences His Journey

But, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

CHRIS. I am directed by a man, whose name is Evangelist, to hurry to a little gate that is ahead of us, where we shall receive directions about the way.

PLI. Come then, good neighbor, let us be going.

“And I will go back to my place,” said Obstinate; “I will be no companion of such misled crazy fellows.”

Now, I saw in my dream, that, when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went on together over the plain talking; and thus they began:

Discourse With Pliable

CHRIS. Come, neighbor Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you have decided to go along with me. Had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not have left us so confidently.

PLI. Come, neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me more about the things we are to enjoy where we are going.

CHRIS. I can better understand them with my mind than speak of them with my tongue. But since you want to know, I will read about them in my book.

PLI. And do you think that the words of your book are certainly true?

CHRIS. Yes, certainly; for it was written by Him who cannot lie.

PLI. Well said; what things are they?

CHRIS. There is an endless kingdom to be enjoyed, and everlasting life to be given us, that we may live in that kingdom forever.

PLI. Well said; and what else?

CHRIS. There are crowns of glory to be given us, and garments that will make us shine like the sun in the sky.

PLI. This is very pleasant; and what else?

CHRIS. There will be no more crying nor sorrow, for the owner of the place will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

PLI. And what company shall we have there?

CHRIS. There we shall be with seraphim and cherubim, creatures that will dazzle your eyes to look upon. There also you will meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place. None of them are hurtful, but all are loving and holy; every one walking in the sight of God, and standing in His presence with favor forever. In a word, there we will see the elders with their golden crowns. There we will see the holy women with their golden harps. There we will see men that were cut in pieces, burnt in flames, eaten by beasts, and drowned in the seas by the world, because of their love for the Lord of the place. But there they will all be well and clothed

with everlasting life as with a garment.

PLI. Hearing this is enough to delight one's heart. But how are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get them?

CHRIS. The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath written about that in this book. The gist of it is, if we are truly willing to have them, He will give them to us freely.

PLI. Well, my good companion, I am glad to hear of these things. Come on, let us quicken our pace.

CHRIS. I cannot go as fast as I would like, because of this burden on my back.

The Slough of Despond

Now, I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew near to a very miry slough or swamp that was in the middle of the plain. And they, being careless, both fell suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. They wallowed for a time in this swamp, and were caked with mud. Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink into the mire.

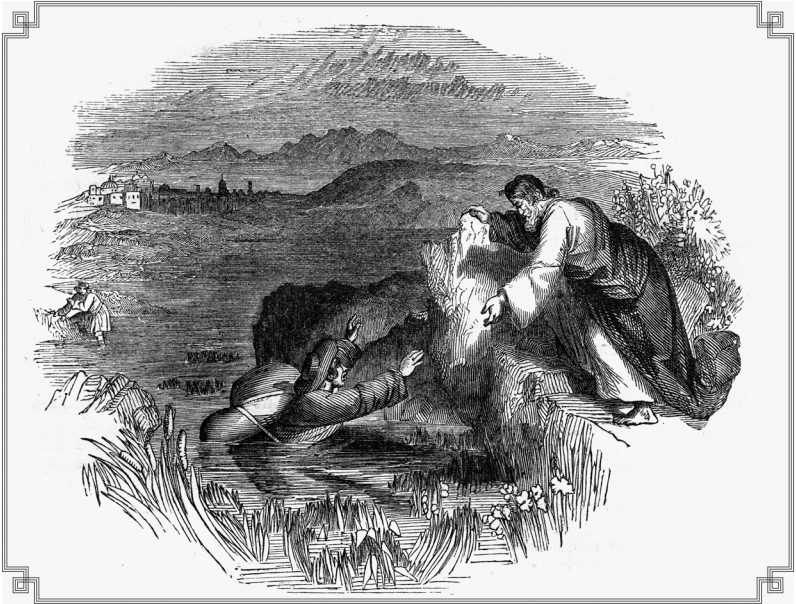
Then said Pliable, "Ah! neighbor Christian, where are you now?"

"Truly," said Christian, "I do not know."

At this Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, "Is this the happiness you have been telling me of? If we have such trouble at our first setting out, what may we expect between this and our journey's end? If 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 out of the mire on the side of the swamp nearest to his own house. Away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Therefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone. He struggled to the side of the slough that was furthest from his own house and closest to the wicket-gate. But he could not get out of it because of the burden that was on his back. But I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him whose name was Help and asked him, "What are you doing here?"

CHRIS. Sir, I was told to go this way by a man called Evangelist,



Christian in the Slough of Despond

who directed me also to yonder gate that I might escape the wrath to come. As I was going there, I fell in here.

HELP. But why did you not look for the steps?

CHRIS. Fear followed me so hard that I fled and fell in.

Then Help said, "Give me your hand." So he gave him his hand, and he drew him out, and set him upon solid ground, and bade him go on his way.

Then I³ stepped up to him who plucked him out and said, "Sir, since this is the way from the City of Destruction to yonder gate, why is this place not mended so poor travelers could go to the gate with more safety?"

He said to me, "This miry slough cannot be mended. It is the hollow where the scum and filth that go with the feeling of sin constantly run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond. For as the sinner is awakened by his lost condition, many fears, doubts, and discouraging alarms arise in his soul. All of these get together and

3. The narrator

settle in this place. This is the reason why the ground is so bad.

“It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad. By the direction of His Majesty’s surveyors, his laborers have been trying to improve this patch of ground for about sixteen hundred years. I know that at least twenty thousand cartloads and millions of wholesome teachings have been swallowed up here. They were the very best materials brought at all seasons from all places of the King’s dominions to improve the ground, but to no avail. It is still the Slough of Despond, and will remain so when they have done what they can.

“True, there are, by the direction of the Lawgiver, some good and substantial steps, placed even through the very midst of this slough. But when the weather changes and this place spews out much of its filth, the steps can barely be seen. And even when men see them, through the dizziness of their heads, they often miss them and fall into the mire, even though the steps are there. But the ground is good once you get in at the gate.”

Now, I saw in my dream that by this time Pliable had returned to his house. So his neighbors came to visit him. Some of them called him a wise man for coming back, and some called him a fool for risking himself with Christian. Others mocked him for cowardice, saying, “Surely since you began the journey, I would not have been so base as to turn back after a few difficulties.” So Pliable sat ashamed among them. But eventually he became more confident. Then they all began to revile poor Christian behind his back. And thus much concerning Pliable.

Worldly Wiseman’s Counsel

Now, as Christian was walking alone by himself, he saw one afar off coming over the field to meet him. They met as they were crossing each other’s paths. The name of the gentleman who met him was Mr. Worldly Wiseman. He dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy, a very great town that was near where Christian came from. This man had heard about Christian. The news that Christian had set forth from the City of Destruction had spread far and wide, not

only in the town where he had lived, but also in some other places. Mr. Worldly Wiseman therefore, having some idea who he was, by observing his laborious going, by noticing his sighs and groans, and the like, began to talk with Christian:

WORLD. How now, good fellow! Where are you going in such a burdened manner?

CHRIS. A very burdened manner indeed it is! Since you ask me, "Where are you going?" I will tell you, sir, that I am going to yonder wicket-gate ahead of me. For there I am told I will learn how to get rid of my heavy burden.

WORLD. Do you have a wife and children?

CHRIS. Yes; but I am so weighed down with this burden that I cannot enjoy them as I used to. In fact, it is as if I didn't have them.

WORLD. Will you listen to me if I give you counsel?

CHRIS. If it be good, I will; for I am in need of good counsel.

WORLD. I would advise you, then, to get rid of your burden with all speed. For you will never be settled in your mind until you do, nor will you be able to enjoy the blessings God has given you.

CHRIS. This is what I seek for, to be rid of this heavy burden. But I cannot get it off myself, nor is there any man in our country who can take it off my shoulders. Therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may get rid of my burden.

WORLD. Who told you to go this way to get rid of your burden?

CHRIS. A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honorable person. His name, as I recall, was Evangelist.

WORLD. I curse him for his counsel! There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than that which he has directed you to take. You will find this to be so, if you take his advice. I notice you have met with something already. I see the mud of the Slough of Despond is upon you. That slough is only the beginning of the sorrows that attend those who go on in that way. Hear me, I am older than you. You are likely to meet with, in the way in which you are going, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, death, and who knows what else?

These things are certainly true, having been verified by the words of many people. And why should a man like you so carelessly cast himself away, by listening to a stranger?

CHRIS. But sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than all the things you have mentioned. I care not what I meet with in the way, if I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.

WORLD. How did you come to have this burden in the first place?

CHRIS. By reading this book in my hand.

WORLD. I thought so. It has happened to you as to other weak men who, meddling with things too high for them, suddenly fall into crazy thoughts. Not only do these thoughts unman men, as yours, I see, have done to you, but they drive them to desperate efforts to obtain they know not what.

CHRIS. I know what I would obtain. It is relief from my heavy burden.

WORLD. But why will you seek for relief this way, seeing so many dangers attend it? Especially since (had you the patience to



Christian Meets Wordly Wiseman

hear me,) I could show you how to get what you desire, without the dangers that you will run yourself into in the other way. And the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add that, instead of those dangers, you will meet with much safety, friendship, and content.

CHRIS. Sir, please tell me this secret.

WORLD. In a nearby village named Morality there lives a gentleman named Legality. He is a very wise man, and a man with a very good reputation. He has the skill to help men remove such burdens as yours from their shoulders. Yes, to my knowledge he has done a great deal of good in this way. Besides, he has the skill to cure those who are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. To him you may go and be helped quickly. His house is not quite a mile from this place. If he is not at home, he has a handsome young man as his son, whose name is Civility, who can do it as well as the old gentleman himself. There, I say, you may be eased of your burden. And if you are not inclined to go back to your former house (as indeed I would not wish), you may send for your wife and children to join you in this village, where there are houses now standing empty, one of which you may have at a reasonable rate. Provision there is also cheap and good. And to make your life even happier, you can live there next to honest neighbors, in credit and good fashion.

Now Christian was unsure what to do. But eventually he concluded, "If what this gentleman says is true, my wisest course is to take his advice." Having decided this, he thus further spoke:

CHRIS. Sir, what is the way to this honest man's house?

WORLD. Do you see yonder high hill?

CHRIS. Yes, very well.

WORLD. By that hill you must go, and the first house you come to will be his.

Evangelist and Christian

So Christian turned out of his way to go to Mr. Legality's house for help. But, when he had come near the hill, it seemed very high, and that side of it that was next to the road hung over it. So Christian was afraid to go any further lest the hill should fall on his head.

So there he stood still, not knowing 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, which made Christian fear he would be burned. Here, therefore, he sweated and quaked for fear. Now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. Worldly Wiseman's counsel. Suddenly, he saw Evangelist coming to meet him, and he began to blush for shame. Evangelist drew nearer and nearer. Coming up to Christian, Evangelist looked upon him with a severe and dreadful countenance, and thus began to reason with him:

"What are you doing here, Christian?" Evangelist said. At these words Christian knew not what to answer. So he stood speechless before him. Then said Evangelist further, "Are you not the man who I found crying outside the walls of the City of Destruction?"

CHRIS. Yes, dear sir, I am the man.

EVAN. Did I not show you the way to the little wicket-gate?

CHRIS. Yes, dear sir.

EVAN. How is it, then, that you have so quickly turned aside? For you are now out of the way.

CHRIS. As soon as I had gotten over the Slough of Despond, I met with a gentleman who persuaded me that I might, in the village before me, find a man who could take off my burden.

EVAN. Who was he?

CHRIS. He looked like a gentleman, and talked much with me, and persuaded me at last to yield. So I came here, but when I saw this hill, and how it hangs over the way, I suddenly stopped, lest it should fall on my head.

EVAN. What did that gentleman say to you?

CHRIS. He asked me where I was going, and I told him.

EVAN. And what did he say then?

CHRIS. He asked me if I had a family, and I told him. "But," said I, "I am so weighed down with the burden that is on my back, that I cannot enjoy them like I used to."

EVAN. And what did he say then?

CHRIS. He told me to get rid of my burden with all speed. And I told him it was relief that I sought. And I said, "I am therefore

going to yonder gate to receive further direction on how I may get to the place of deliverance." So he said that he would show me a shorter better way, that was not as hard as the way, sir, that you had sent me. He directed me to a gentleman's house that he said had the skill to take off these burdens. So I believed him, and turned out of that way into this, hoping I might soon be eased of my burden. But when I came to this place, and saw things as they are, I stopped for fear of danger. But I now know not what to do.

Then said Evangelist, "Stand still a little, that I may show you the words of God." So Christian stood trembling. Then said Evangelist, "God says in His book, 'See that you refuse not him who speaks; for if they did not escape who refused him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.'⁴ He said, moreover, 'Now, the righteous man shall live by faith in God, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'⁵ He also applied them in this way: "You are the man who is running into misery; you have begun to reject the counsel of the Most High, and to draw back your foot from the way of peace, almost to the danger of your everlasting ruin."

Then Christian fell down at his feet 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 evil words shall be forgiven men.⁶ Be not faithless, but believing."⁷

Then Christian revived a little and stood up trembling, as at first, before Evangelist.

Then Evangelist proceeded, saying, "Give more earnest heed to the things that I will tell you. I will now show you who it was that led you astray, and also who it was to whom he sent you. That man who met you is Worldly Wiseman, and rightly is he so called. Partly because he seeks only for the things of this world (therefore he al-

4. Hebrews 12:25

5. Hebrews 10:38

6. Matthew 12:31

7. John 20:27

ways goes to the town of Morality to church), and partly because he loves that way best, for it saves him from the Cross. And because he has this evil character, he seeks to turn you from my way although it is the right way.

“He to whom you were sent for relief, whose name is Legality, is not able to set you free from your burden. No man was ever rid of his burden by him; no, nor ever shall be. You 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 enemy, and Mr. Legality is a cheat. As for his son Civility, notwithstanding his good looks, he is a fraud and cannot help you. Believe me, there is nothing in all this talk that you have heard about these wicked men, but a plan to rob you of your salvation by turning you from the way in which I had set you.”

After this, Evangelist called aloud to the heavens for proof of what he had said. And with that there came words and fire out of the mountain under which poor Christian stood, which made the hair of his flesh stand up. The words were these: “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.”⁸

Now Christian looked for nothing but death, and began to cry out bitterly. He cursed the time in which he met Mr. Worldly Wiseman and called himself a thousand fools for listening to his counsel. He was also greatly ashamed to think that this gentleman’s arguments should have persuaded him to forsake the right way. After this, he spoke again to Evangelist, in these words:

CHRIS. Sir, what think you? Is there any hope? May I now go back, and go up to the wicket-gate? Shall I not be abandoned for this, and sent back from there ashamed? I am sorry I have listened to this man’s counsel. But may my sins be forgiven?

EVAN. Your sin is very great, for by it you have committed two evils. You have forsaken the way that is good, to tread in forbidden paths. But the man at the gate will still receive you, for He has good will for men. But take heed that you do not turn aside again, lest you perish from the way, when His anger is kindled but a little.