



*I dreamed I saw a man with a burden  
on his back.*

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I came upon a place where there was a Den. There I lay down to sleep; as I slept I dreamed a dream.

I saw a man clothed in rags, his face turned away from his home, a Book in his hand, and a great burden on his back (Isa. 64:6). I looked and saw him open the Book and read; as he read he wept and trembled. Unable to contain his grief, he broke out in a lamentable cry, "What shall I do?" (Acts 2:37).



*The man tells his trouble to his family.*

In this plight he went home and tried to conceal his grief, not wanting his wife and children to see his distress. But he could not be silent. Finally he poured out his heart to them: "O my dear wife and beloved children. I am in great trouble because of a heavy load pressing down on me. I am told that this city in which we live will be burned by fire from Heaven. If we are caught in that disaster we shall all perish, unless we first find some way of escape."



*His family thinks he is losing his mind.*

His wife and children were amazed and frightened, not that they believed him, but because they thought he was losing his mind. Since it was toward evening, they urged him to go to bed, hoping that a good night's sleep might settle his mind.



*He is so restless he cannot sleep.*

The night was as troublesome as the day. He was so restless he couldn't sleep, but spent the whole night in sighs and tears.



*"How do you feel this morning?"*

In the morning when his wife and children came in to ask how he felt, he answered, "Worse and worse." Then he repeated his fears of the previous day, but they refused to listen.



*They treat him harshly.*

They ridiculed him and rebuked him. Sometimes they ignored him completely.



*He goes to his bedroom and prays for them.*

Having endured this cruel treatment for some time, he went back to his room. Lamenting his own misery and grieving at his family's behavior, he prayed God to have compassion on them.



*Greatly distressed, he walks alone in the fields.*

For several days he walked in the fields, sometimes reading his Book, sometimes praying, but always greatly distressed. As he read he cried aloud, "What must I do to be saved?" He looked this way and that as if he wanted to run; yet he stood still, because he could not decide which way to go.



*He meets Evangelist.*

I saw a man named Evangelist come to him and ask, "Why do you cry?"

He answered, "Sir, I read in this book that I must die, and after death come to judgment. I do not want to die, and I dare not face the judgment."

"Since life is so full of trouble, why are you not willing to die?" asked Evangelist.

"Because I fear that this burden on my back will sink me lower than the grave and I shall fall into Hell."



*Evangelist gives him a scroll.*

"If you are in such trouble, why do you stay here?" asked Evangelist.

"Because I know not where to go."

Then Evangelist gave him a parchment scroll on which were the words, "Flee from the wrath to come" (Matt. 3:7). When he saw the words he turned to Evangelist and asked, "Whither shall I flee?"



*Evangelist points to a \*narrow gate.*

Evangelist stretched out his hand and pointed beyond the plain, saying, "Do you see that narrow gate?"

"No," he replied.

"Do you see that shining light?"

"I do seem to see a light," he answered.

Then said Evangelist, "Fix your eyes on the light, go straight toward it, and you will find the gate. When you knock on the gate, you will be told what to do next."

\*The compiler uses *Narrow Gate* because the word *wicket* means *small gate*, and is not generally used today.



*The man leaves his home to find the  
narrow gate.*

In my dream I saw that the man, obedient to Evangelist's words, began to run. Before he had gone very far, his wife and children began calling after him to return. But the man put his fingers in his ears and ran on, crying, "Life! Life! Eternal life!" He looked not behind, but fled out of the city toward the middle of the plain.



*His neighbors watch him and call to him.*

The neighbors also came out to see him run; and as he ran, some laughed at him, others tried to frighten him, and still others called him to come back. Among them were two that resolved to bring him back by force. The name of the one was Obstinate; the other, Pliable.



*Pliable and Obstinate run after him.*



*They urge him to return.*

Christian, for that was the man's name, asked them, "Good neighbors, why have you followed me?"

"We came to urge you to return with us."

"That can never be," he replied. "You live in the City of Destruction, and I know that that city will be destroyed with fire. If you remain there you will be destroyed with it. My good neighbors, come along with me."

"And leave our friends and comforts behind?" said Obstinate.

"Yes," Christian replied, "that is just what I ask you to do. The friends and pleasures of which you speak cannot compare with the joys which I seek. And if you are willing to go along with me and remain steadfast, you will receive all that I do."



*"What are the things you seek?"*

Obstinate asked, "What are the things you seek, since you are willing to leave all the world to find them?"

"I seek an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away," said Christian (I Peter 1:4). "It is safely laid up in Heaven, and any man who diligently seeks it will receive it. Read this book and you will understand."

"Tush!" said Obstinate. "Away with your Book! Will you go back with us or not?"

"No," answered Christian. "I have already laid my hand to the plough, and I will not turn back."



*Obstinate accuses Christian of insanity.*

"Come, neighbor Pliable," Obstinate urged, "let us go home without him. This crazy person is full of empty words. He thinks he is clever, and no one is his equal."

But Pliable answered, "Don't make fun of him. Christian is a good man. If what he says is true, I think I shall go with him."

"What! More fools still?" exclaimed Obstinate in disgust. "You had better come along with me. Who knows where this crazy fellow will take you? Come back! Don't be a fool!"



*Christian pleads, but Obstinate refuses to listen.*

Christian pleaded with Obstinate, "Don't tell him to go back! Both of you come along with me. The happiness and glory I spoke of are real. If you don't believe me, just read what is written in this Book. Every word is true. The writer of the Book shed His blood for a token."

Then Pliable said to Obstinate, "Friend, I think I will go along with this good man and endure hardship with him." Turning to Christian, he said, "Friend, do you know the way to the place you seek?"

"Evangelist showed me that beyond this plain there is a narrow gate," Christian replied. "When we get there someone will tell us what road to take next."

"Good!" said Pliable. "Let us both be on our way."



*Obstinate returns home.*

"I will not be companion to such crazy, ignorant people," said Obstinate. "I'm going home."

In my dream I saw Christian and Pliable slowly proceed over the plain, walking and talking together.

CHRISTIAN: Neighbor Pliable, I am so glad you listened to me and came along. If Obstinate had felt the powers and terrors of the unseen as I have, he would not so lightly have turned back.

PLIABLE: Now that you and I are alone, neighbor Christian, tell me more about the place where we are going. What kind of pleasures are there and how are they to be enjoyed?

CHRISTIAN: This matter I can feel better with my heart than explain with my lips. But since you wish to understand, I will read you the words of the Book.



*The two men walk along together.*

PLIABLE: Do you think the words of the Book are true?

CHRISTIAN: Certainly, for it was written by Him who cannot lie.

PLIABLE: Tell me, what does it say?

CHRISTIAN: There is an eternal kingdom where death cannot enter and where we shall live forever.

PLIABLE: And what else?

CHRISTIAN: Crowns of glory will be given us, and garments that will make us shine like the sun.

PLIABLE: That is wonderful! And what else?

CHRISTIAN: In that place there is no sorrow nor crying. The Lord of that land will wipe away all tears from our eyes (Rev. 21:4).

PLIABLE: Who will be our companions?

CHRISTIAN: Heavenly creatures whose brightness will dazzle our eyes. Also thousands and ten thousands who have gone before us. Everyone there is pure in heart, loving and holy.



*As they talk they come to the Slough  
of Despond.*

CHRISTIAN: Many of the saints in that kingdom have suffered at the hands of the world because of their love and obedience to the Lord. Some had been cut to pieces, some had been burned in the fire, some had been drowned, and others eaten by beasts. But now they are all clothed with immortality as with a garment.

PLIABLE: What you say thrills me, but how are these things to be enjoyed? How are we to share them?

CHRISTIAN: The Lord has written in the Book that if we are willing to ask Him He will freely give them to us.

PLIABLE: I am glad to hear all this. Come on, let us make haste to get there.

CHRISTIAN: I cannot go so fast because of the burden on my back.

Then in my dream I saw that they drew near to the Slough of Despond, a very miry bog in the middle of the plain.



*They fall into the Slough.*

Busily talking and heedless of the way, they both fell suddenly into the bog. In this mire they wallowed around till their clothes were covered with mud. Because of the burden on his back, Christian began to sink.

"How did we get into this mess?" asked Pliable. Christian replied, "Truly, I do not know."

Beginning to be offended, Pliable said angrily, "Is this the happiness of which you spoke?"



*Pliable returns home in anger.*

PLIABLE: If we have had such a bad beginning, who knows what dangers we shall run into before the journey is over? If I get out of this with my life, you may possess that brave land alone for all I care.

At this he turned back. Struggling desperately, he climbed out of the mire on the side where they had fallen in and returned to his home. Christian saw him no more.



*Christian cannot get out.*

Left to struggle in the Slough of Despond alone, poor Christian dragged himself through to the side which was nearest the narrow gate. But he could not climb out because of the burden on his back, and he began to sink again. Then I saw in my dream that a man named Help came along.