

**THE WONDERFUL  
JOURNEY**

**STORIES ON THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS**

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**PILGRIM'S PROGRESS**

**FOR CHILDREN**

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# THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia

*The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come; Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream* is a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan and published in February, 1678. It is regarded as one of the most significant works of religious English literature, and has been translated into more than 200 languages, and has never been out of print. Bunyan began his work while in the Bedfordshire county gaol for violations of the Conventicle Act, which prohibited the holding of religious services outside the auspices of the established Church of England. Early Bunyan scholars like John Brown believed *The Pilgrim's Progress* was begun in Bunyan's second, shorter imprisonment for six months in 1675, but more recent scholars like Roger Sharrock believe that it was begun during Bunyan's initial, more lengthy imprisonment from 1660-1672 right after he had written his spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

The English text comprises 108,260 words and is divided into two parts, each reading as a continuous narrative with no chapter divisions. The first part was completed in 1677 and entered into the stationers' register on 22 December 1677. It was licensed and entered in the "Term Catalogue" on 18 February 1678, which is looked upon as the date of first publication. After the first edition of the first part in 1678, an expanded edition, with additions written after Bunyan was freed, appeared in 1679. The Second Part appeared in 1684. There were eleven editions of the first part in John Bunyan's lifetime, published in successive years from 1678 to 1685 and in 1688, and there were two editions of the second part, published in 1684 and 1686.

## PLOT

### First Part

Christian, an everyman character, is the protagonist of the allegory, which centres itself in his journey from his hometown, the "City of Destruction" ("this world"), to the "Celestial City" ("that which is to come": Heaven) atop Mount Zion. Christian is weighed down by a great burden, the knowledge of his sin, which he believed came from his reading "the book in his hand" (the Bible). This burden, which would cause him to sink into hell is so unbearable that Christian must seek deliverance. He meets Evangelist as he is walking out in the fields, who directs him to the "Wicket Gate" for deliverance. Since Christian cannot see the "Wicket Gate" in the distance, Evangelist directs him to go to a "shining light," which Christian thinks he sees. Christian leaves his home, his wife, and children to save himself: he cannot persuade them to accompany him. Obstinate and Pliable go after Christian to bring him back, but Christian refuses. Obstinate returns disgusted, but Pliable is persuaded to go with Christian, hoping to take advantage of the Paradise that Christian claims lies at the end of his journey. Pliable's journey with Christian is cut short when the two of them fall into the Slough of Despond, a boggy mire-like swamp where pilgrim's doubts, fears, temptations, lusts, shames, guilts, and sins of their present condition of being a sinner are used to sink them into the mud of the swamp. It is there in that bog where Pliable abandons Christian after getting himself out. After struggling to the other side of the slough, Christian is pulled out by Help, who has heard his

cries and tells him the swamp is made out of the decadence, scum, and filth of sin, but the ground is good at the narrow Wicket Gate.



Burdened Christian flees from home

On his way to the Wicket Gate, Christian is diverted by Mr. Worldly Wiseman into seeking deliverance from his burden through the Law, supposedly with the help of a Mr. Legality and his son Civility in the village of Morality, rather than through Christ, allegorically by way of the Wicket Gate. Evangelist meets the wayward Christian as he stops before Mount Sinai on the way to Mr. Legality's home. It hangs over the road and threatens to crush any who would pass it; also the mountain flashed with fire. Evangelist shows Christian that he had sinned by turning out of his way and tells him that Mr. Legality and his son Civility are descendants of slaves and Mr. Worldly Wiseman is a false guide, but he assures him that he will be welcomed at the Wicket Gate if he should turn around and go there, which Christian does.

At the Wicket Gate begins the "straight and narrow" King's Highway, and Christian is directed onto it by the gatekeeper Goodwill who saves him from Beelzebub's archers at Beelzebub's castle near the Wicket Gate and shows him the heavenly way he must go. In the Second Part, Goodwill is shown to be Jesus himself. To Christian's query about relief from his burden, Goodwill directs him forward to "the place of deliverance."

Christian makes his way from there to the House of the Interpreter, where he is shown pictures and tableaux that portray or dramatise aspects of the Christian faith and life. Roger Sharrock denotes them "emblems".

From the House of the Interpreter, Christian finally reaches the "place of deliverance" (allegorically, the cross of Calvary and the open sepulchre of Christ), where the "straps" that bound Christian's burden to him break, and it rolls away into the open sepulchre. This event happens relatively early in the narrative: the immediate need of Christian at the beginning of the story being quickly remedied. After Christian is relieved of his burden, he is greeted by three angels, who give him the greeting of peace, new garments, a golden key called Promise,

and a scroll as a passport into the Celestial City — these are allegorical figures indicative of Christian Baptism. Encouraged by all this, Christian happily continues his journey until he comes upon three men named Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. Christian tries to help them, but they disregard his advice. Before coming to the Hill of Difficulty, Christian meets two well-dressed men named Formality and Hypocrisy who prove to be false Christians that perish in the two, dangerous bypasses near the hill named Danger and Destruction. Christian falls asleep at the arbour above the hill and loses his scroll, forcing him to go back and get it. Near the top of the Hill of Difficulty, he meets two weak pilgrims named Mistrust and Timorous who tell him of the great lions of the Palace Beautiful. Christian frightfully avoids the lions through Watchful the porter who tells them that they are chained and put there to test the faith of pilgrims.

Atop the Hill of Difficulty, Christian makes his first stop for the night at the House of the Palace Beautiful, which is a place built by God for the refresh of pilgrims and godly travellers. Christian spends three days here, and leaves clothed with the Armour of God (Eph. 6:11–18), which stands him in good stead in his battle against the demonic dragon-like Apollyon, (the lord and god of the City of Destruction) in the Valley of Humiliation. This battle lasts "over half a day" until Christian manages to wound and stab Apollyon with his two-edged sword (a reference to the Bible, Heb. 4:12). "And with that, Apollyon spread his dragon wings and sped away."



William Blake: Christian Reading in His Book

As night falls, Christian enters the fearful Valley of the Shadow of Death. When he is in the middle of the Valley amidst the gloom, terror and demons, he hears the words of the Twenty-third Psalm, spoken possibly by his friend Faithful:

Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4.)

As he leaves this valley the sun rises on a new day.

Just outside the Valley of the Shadow of Death he meets Faithful, also a former resident of the City of Destruction, who accompanies him to Vanity Fair, a place built by Beelzebub where every thing to a human's tastes, delights, and lusts are sold daily, where both are arrested and detained because of their disdain for the wares and business of the Fair. Faithful is put on trial, and executed by burning at the stake as a martyr. Hopeful, a resident of Vanity Fair, takes Faithful's place to be Christian's companion for the rest of the way.

Along a rough, stony stretch of road, Christian and Hopeful leave the highway to travel on the easier By-Path Meadow, where a rainstorm forces them to spend the night. In the morning they are captured by Giant Despair, who is known for his savage cruelty and his wife Diffidence and takes them to his Doubting Castle, where they are imprisoned, beaten and starved. The Giant and the Giantess want them to commit suicide, but they endure the ordeal until Christian realises that a key he has, called Promise, will open all the doors and gates of Doubting Castle. Using the key and the Giant's weakness to sunlight, they escape. Christian and Hopeful then come to a mining hill called Lucre its owner named Demas offers them all the silver of the mine but Christian sees through Demas's trickery and they avoid the mine. Afterwards, a false pilgrim named By-Ends and his friends, who followed Christian and Hopeful only to take advantage of them, perish at the Hill Lucre, never to be seen or heard again.

The Delectable Mountains form the next stage of Christian and Hopeful's journey, where the shepherds show them some of the wonders of the place also known as "Immanuel's Land". As at the House of the Interpreter, the pilgrims are shown sights that strengthen their faith and warn them against sinning like the Hill Error or the Mountain Caution. On Mount Clear they are able to see the Celestial City through the shepherd's "perspective glass", which serves as a telescope. This device is given to Mercy in the Second Part at her request. The shepherds tell the pilgrims to beware of the Flatterer and to avoid the Enchanted Ground. Soon they come to a crossroad and a man dressed in white comes to help them. Thinking he is a shining one, the pilgrims follow the man, but soon get stuck in a net and realise their so-called angelic guide was the Flatterer! A true shining one comes and frees them from the net. The Angel punishes them for following the Flatterer and then puts them back on the right path. The pilgrims meet Atheist, who tells them Heaven and God don't exist, but Christian and Hopeful remember the shepherds and pay no attention to the man. Christian and Hopeful come to a place where a man named Little-Faith is chained by the ropes of seven demons who take him to a shortcut to the Lake of Fire (hell).

On the way, Christian and Hopeful meet a lad named Ignorance, who believes that he will be allowed into the Celestial City through his own good deeds rather than as a gift of God's grace. Christian and Hopeful meet up with him twice and try to persuade him to journey to the Celestial City in the right way. Ignorance persists in his own way that he thinks will lead him into Heaven. After getting over the River of Death on the ferry boat of Vain Hope without overcoming the hazards of wading across it, Ignorance appears before the gates of Celestial City without a passport, which he would have acquired had he gone into the King's Highway through the Wicket Gate. The Lord of the Celestial City orders the shining ones (angels) to take Ignorance to one of the byways of Hell and throw him in.

Christian and Hopeful make it through the dangerous Enchanted Ground (a place where the air makes them sleepy and they never wake up) into the Land of Beulah, where they ready themselves to cross the dreaded River of Death on foot to Mount Zion and the Celestial City. Christian has a rough time of it because of his past sins wearing him down, but Hopeful helps him over; and they are welcomed into the Celestial City.

## Second Part

The Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* presents the pilgrimage of Christian's wife, Christiana; their sons; and the maiden, Mercy. They visit the same stopping places that Christian visited, with the addition of Gaius' Inn between the Valley of the Shadow of Death and Vanity Fair; but they take a longer time in order to accommodate marriage and childbirth for the four sons and their wives. The hero of the story is Great-Heart, a servant of the Interpreter, who is the pilgrims' guide to the Celestial City. He kills four giants called Giant Grim, Giant Maul, Giant Slay-Good, and Giant Despair and participates in the slaying of a monster called Legion that terrorises the city of Vanity Fair.

The passage of years in this second pilgrimage better allegorises the journey of the Christian life. By using heroines, Bunyan, in the Second Part, illustrates the idea that women as well as men can be brave pilgrims.

Part 2, which appeared in 1684, is much more than a mere sequel to or repetition of the earlier volume. It clarifies and reinforces and justifies the story of Part 1. The beam of Bunyan's spotlight is broadened to include Christian's family and other men, women, and children; the incidents and accidents of everyday life are more numerous, the joys of the pilgrimage tend to outweigh the hardships; and to the faith and hope of Part I is added in abundant measure that greatest of virtues, charity. The two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in reality constitute a whole, and the whole is, without doubt, the most influential religious book ever written in the English language.

This is exemplified by the frailness of the pilgrims of the Second Part in contrast to those of the First: women, children, and physically and mentally challenged individuals. When Christiana's party leaves Gaius's Inn and Mr. Feeble-Mind lingers in order to be left behind, he is encouraged to accompany the party by Greatheart:

But brother...I have it in commission, to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak. You must needs go along with us; we will wait for you, we will lend you our help, we will deny ourselves of some things, both opinionative and practical, for your sake; we will not enter into doubtful disputations before you, we will be made all things to you, rather than you shall be left behind.

The pilgrims learn of Madame Bubble who created the Enchanted Ground and Forgetful Green, a place in the Valley of Humiliation where the flowers make other pilgrims forget about God's love. Christiana, Matthew, Joseph, Samuel, James, Mercy, Great Heart, Mr. Feeble Mind, and Mr. Ready-To-Halt come to Bypath-Meadow and after much fight and difficulty; slay the cruel Giant Despair and the wicked Giantess Diffidence and demolish Doubting Castle for Christian and Hopeful who were oppressed there. They free a pale man named Mr. Despondency and his daughter named Much-Afraid from the castle's dungeons.

When the pilgrims end up in the Land of Beulah, they cross over the River of Death by appointment. As a matter of importance to Christians of Bunyan's persuasion reflected in the narrative of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the last words of the pilgrims as they cross over the River of Death are recorded. The four sons of Christian and their families do not cross, but remain for the support of the church in that place.

## CHARACTERS



Main characters are in capital letters.

## First Part



**CHRISTIAN**, whose name was Graceless at some time before, the protagonist in the First Part, whose journey to the Celestial City is the plot of the story.

**EVANGELIST**, the religious man who puts Christian on the path to the Celestial City. He also shows Christian a book, which readers assume to be the Bible.

**Obstinate**, one of the two residents of the City of Destruction, who run after Christian when he first sets out, in order to bring him back.

**Pliable**, the other of the two, who goes with Christian until both of them fall into the Slough of Despond. Pliable escapes from the slough and returns home.

**Help**, Christian's rescuer from the Slough of Despond.

**MR. WORLDLY WISEMAN**, a resident of a place called Carnal Policy, who persuades Christian to go out of his way to be helped by a Mr. Legality and then move to the City of Morality.

**GOODWILL**, the keeper of the Wicket Gate through which one enters the "straight and narrow way" (also referred to as "the King's Highway") to the Celestial City. In the Second Part we find that this character is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

**Baal Zevuv**, literally "Lord of the Flies," is one of Satan's companion arch-devils, who has erected a fort near the Wicket Gate from which he and his soldiers can shoot arrows of fire at those about to enter the Wicket Gate. He is also the Lord and Prince of Vanity Fair. Christian calls him "captain" of the Foul Fiend Apollyon.

**THE INTERPRETER**, the one who has his House along the way as a rest stop for travellers to check in to see pictures and dioramas to teach them the right way to live the Christian life. He has been identified as the Holy Spirit. He also appears in the Second Part.

**Shining Ones**, the messengers and servants of "the Lord of the Hill," God. They are obviously the holy angels.

**Formalist**, one of two travellers on the King's Highway, who do not come in by the Wicket Gate, but climb over the wall that encloses it, at least from the hill and sepulchre up to the Hill Difficulty. He and his companion Hypocrisy come from the land of Vainglory. He takes one of the two bypaths that avoid the Hill Difficulty, but is lost.

**Hypocrisy**, the companion of Formalist. He takes the other of the two bypaths and is also lost.

**Timorous**, one of two men who try to persuade Christian to go back for fear of the chained lions near the House Beautiful. He is a relative of Mrs. Timorous of the Second Part. His companion is Mistrust.

**Watchful**, the porter of the House Beautiful. He also appears in the Second Part and receives "a gold angel" coin from Christiana for his kindness and service to her and her companions. "Watchful" is also the name of one of the Delectable Mountains' shepherds.

**Discretion**, one of the beautiful maids of the house, who decides to allow Christian to stay there.

**Prudence**, another of the House Beautiful maidens. She appears in the Second Part.

**Piety**, another of the House Beautiful maidens. She appears in the Second Part.

**Charity**, another of the House Beautiful maidens. She appears in the Second Part.

**Apollyon**, literally "Destroyer;" the lord of the City of Destruction and one of the devil's companion arch-devils, who tries to force Christian to return to his domain and service. His battle with Christian takes place in the Valley of Humiliation, just below the House Beautiful. He appears as a dragon-like creature with scales, mouth of lion, feet of bear, second mouth on his belly, and bats' wings. He takes fiery darts from his body to throw at his opponents.

**Giants "Pope" and "Pagan"**, allegories of Roman Catholicism and paganism as persecutors of Protestant Christians. "Pagan" is dead, indicating the end of pagan persecution with Antiquity, and "Pope" is alive but decrepit, indicating the then diminished power and influence of the Roman Catholic pope. In the Second Part, Pagan is resurrected by an evil spirit from the bottomless pit of the Valley of The Shadow of Death, representing the new age of pagan persecution, and Pope is revived of his deadly wounds and is no longer stiff and unable to move, representing the beginning of the Christian's troubles with Roman Catholic popes.



**FAITHFUL**, Christian's friend from the City of Destruction, who is also going on pilgrimage. Christian meets Faithful just after getting through the Valley of The Shadow of Death. He dies later in Vanity Fair for his strong faith, and first reaches the Celestial City.

**Wanton**, a temptress who tries to get Faithful to leave his journey to the Celestial City. She may be the popular resident of the City of Destruction, Madam Wanton, who hosted a house party for friends of Mrs. Timorous.

**Adam the First**, "the old man" (representing carnality) who tries to persuade Faithful to leave his journey and come live with his 3 daughters: the Lust of the flesh, the Lust of the eyes, and the Pride of life.

**Moses**, the severe, violent avenger (representing the Law, which knows no mercy) who tries to kill Faithful for his momentary weakness in wanting to go with Adam the First out of the way. Moses is sent away by Jesus Christ, who can truly save us from our sins.

**TALKATIVE**, a pilgrim that Faithful and Christian meet after going through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He is known to Christian as a fellow resident of the City of Destruction, living on Prating Row. He is the son of Say-Well and Mrs. Talk-About-The-Right Things. He is said to be better looking from a distance than close up. His enthusiasm for talking about his faith to Faithful deceives him into thinking that he is a sincere man. Christian lets Faithful know about his unsavoury past, and in a conversation that Faithful strikes up with him he is exposed as shallow and hypocritical in his Christianity.

**Lord Hate-Good**, the evil judge who tries Faithful in Vanity Fair. Lord Hate-Good is the opposite of a judge, he hates right and loves wrong cause he does wrong himself. His jury are vicious rogue men.

**Envy**, the first witness against Faithful who falsely accuses that Faithful shows no respect for their prince, Lord Beelzebub.

**Superstition**, the second witness against Faithful who falsely accuses Faithful of saying that their religion is vain.

**Pick-Thank**, the third witness against Faithful who falsely accuses Faithful of going against their prince, their people, their laws, and the judge himself.

**HOPEFUL**, the resident of Vanity Fair, who takes Faithful's place as Christian's fellow traveller. The character HOPEFUL poses an inconsistency in that there is a necessity imposed on the pilgrims that they enter the "King's Highway" by the Wicket Gate. HOPEFUL did not; however, of him we read: "...one died to bear testimony to the truth, and another rises out of his ashes to be a companion with Christian in his pilgrimage." HOPEFUL assumes FAITHFUL'S place by God's design. Theologically and allegorically it would follow in that "faith" is trust in God as far as things present are concerned, and "hope," biblically the same as "faith," is trust in God as far as things of the future are concerned. HOPEFUL would follow FAITHFUL. The other factor is Vanity Fair's location right on the straight and narrow way. IGNORANCE, in contrast to HOPEFUL, came from the Country of Conceit, that connected to the "King's Highway" by means of a crooked lane. IGNORANCE was told by CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL that he should have entered the highway through the Wicket Gate.

**MR. BY-ENDS**, a pilgrim met by Christian and Hopeful after they leave Vanity Fair. He makes it his aim to avoid any hardship or persecution that Christians may have to undergo. He supposedly perishes in the Hill Lucre (a dangerous silver mine) with three of his friends, Hold-the-World, Money-Love, and Save-All, at the behest of Demas, who invites passers-by to come and see the mine. A "by-end" is a pursuit that is achieved indirectly. For By-Ends and his companions, it is the by-end of financial gain through religion.

**Demas**, a deceiver, who beckons to pilgrims at the Hill Lucre to come and join in the supposed silver mining going on in it.

**GIANT DESPAIR**, the owner of Doubting Castle, where Christians are imprisoned and murdered. He is slain by GREAT-HEART in the Second Part.

**Giantess Diffidence**, Despair's wife known to be cruel, savage, violent, and evil like her husband. She is slain by OLD HONEST in the Second Part.

**Knowledge**, one of the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains.

**Experience**, another of the Delectable Mountains shepherds.

**Watchful**, another of the Delectable Mountains shepherds.

**Sincere**, another of the Delectable Mountains shepherds.

**IGNORANCE**, "a brisk young lad", who joins the "King's Highway" by way of the "crooked lane" that comes from his native country, called "Conceit." He follows Christian and Hopeful and on two occasions talks with them. He believes that he will be received into the Celestial City because of his doing good works in accordance with God's will. For him, Jesus Christ is only an example, not a Saviour. Christian and Hopeful try to set him right, but they fail. He gets a ferryman, Vain-Hope, to ferry him across the River of Death rather than cross it on foot as one is supposed to do. When he gets to the gates of the Celestial City, he is asked for a "certificate" needed for entry, which he does not have. The King, then, orders that he be bound and cast into Hell.

**The Flatterer**, a deceiver dressed as an angel who leads Christian and Hopeful out of their way, when they fail to look at the road map given them by the Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains.

**Atheist**, a mocker of CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL, who goes the opposite way on the "King's Highway" because he boasts that he knows that God and the Celestial City do not exist.

## **Second Part**

**Mr. Sagacity**, a guest narrator who meets Bunyan himself in his new dream and recounts the events of the Second Part up to the arrival at the Wicket Gate.

**CHRISTIANA**, wife of CHRISTIAN, who leads her four sons and neighbour MERCY on pilgrimage.

**MATTHEW**, CHRISTIAN and CHRISTIANA's eldest son, who marries MERCY.

**SAMUEL**, second son, who marries Grace, Mr. Mnason's daughter.

**JOSEPH**, third son, who marries Martha, Mr. Mnason's daughter.

**JAMES**, fourth and youngest son, who marries Phoebe, Gaius's daughter.

**MERCY**, CHRISTIANA's neighbour, who goes with her on pilgrimage and marries MATTHEW.

**Mrs. Timorous**, relative of the Timorous of the First Part, who comes with MERCY to see CHRISTIANA before she sets out on pilgrimage.

**Mrs. Bat's-Eyes**, a resident of The City of Destruction and friend of Mrs. Timorous. Since she has a bat's eyes, she would be blind or nearly blind, so her characterisation of Christiana as blind in her desire to go on pilgrimage is hypocritical.

**Mrs. Inconsiderate**, a resident of The City of Destruction and friend of Mrs. Timorous. She characterises Christiana's departure "a good riddance" as an inconsiderate person would.

**Mrs. Light-Mind**, a resident of The City of Destruction and friend of Mrs. Timorous. She changes the subject from Christiana to gossip about being at a bawdy party at Madam Wanton's home.

**Mrs. Know-Nothing**, a resident of The City of Destruction and friend of Mrs. Timorous. She wonders if Christiana will actually go on pilgrimage.

**Ill-favoured Ones**, two evil characters CHRISTIANA sees in her dream, whom she and MERCY actually encounter when they leave the Wicket Gate. The two Ill Ones are driven off by GREAT HEART himself.

**Innocent**, a young serving maid of the INTERPRETER, who answers the door of the house when Christiana and her companions arrive; and who conducts them to the garden bath, which signifies Christian baptism.

**MR. GREAT-HEART**, the guide and body-guard sent by the INTERPRETER with CHRISTIANA and her companions from his house to their journey's end. He proves to be one of the main protagonists in the Second Part.

**Giant Grim**, a Giant who "backs the [chained] lions" near the House Beautiful, slain by GREAT-HEART. He is also known as "Bloody-Man" because he has killed many pilgrim's or sent them on mazes of detours, where they were lost forever.

**Humble-Mind**, one of the maidens of the House Beautiful, who makes her appearance in the Second Part. She questions Matthew, James, Samuel, and Joseph about their godly faith and their hearts to the Lord God.

**Mr. Brisk**, a suitor of MERCY's, who gives up courting her when he finds out that she makes clothing only to give away to the poor. He is shown to be a foppish, worldly-minded person who is double minded about his beliefs.

**Mr. Skill**, the godly physician called to the House Beautiful to cure Matthew of his illness, which is caused by eating the forbidden apples and fruits of Beelzebub which his mother told him not to but he did it any way.

**Giant Maul**, a Giant whom GREAT-HEART kills as the pilgrims leave the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He holds a grudge against GREAT HEART for doing his duty of saving pilgrim's from damnation and bringing them from darkness to light, from evil to good, and from Satan, the Devil to Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

**OLD HONEST**, a pilgrim from the frozen town of Stupidity who joins them, a welcome companion to GREAT-HEART. OLD HONEST tells the stories of Mr. Fearing and a prideful villain named Mr. Self-Will.

**Mr. Fearing**, a fearful pilgrim from the City of Destruction whom GREAT-HEART had "conducted" to the Celestial City in an earlier pilgrimage. Noted for his timidness of Godly Fears such as temptations and doubts. He is Mr. Feeble-Mind's uncle.

**Gaius**, an innkeeper with whom the pilgrims stay for some years after they leave the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He gives his daughter Phoebe to JAMES in marriage. The lodging fee for his inn is paid by the Good Samaritan. Gaius tells them of the wicked Giant Slay-Good.

**Giant Slay-Good**, a Giant who enlists the help of evil-doers on the King's Highway to abduct, murder, and consume pilgrims before they get to Vanity Fair. He is killed by GREAT HEART.

**Mr. Feeble-Mind**, rescued from Slay-Good by Mr. Great-Heart, who joins Christiana's company of pilgrims. He is the nephew of Mr. Fearing.

**Phoebe**, Gaius's daughter, who marries JAMES.

**Mr. Ready-to-Halt**, a pilgrim who meets CHRISTIANA's train of pilgrims at Gaius's door, and becomes the companion of Mr. Feeble-mind, to whom he gives one of his crutches.

**Mr. Mnason**, a resident of the town of Vanity, who puts up the pilgrims for a time, and gives his daughters Grace and Martha in marriage to SAMUEL and JOSEPH respectively.

**Grace**, Mnason's daughter, who marries SAMUEL.

**Martha**, Mnason's daughter, who marries JOSEPH.

**Mr. Despondency**, a rescued prisoner from Doubting Castle owned by the miserable Giant Despair.

**Much-Afraid**, his daughter.

**Mr. VALIANT**, a pilgrim they find all bloody, with his sword in his hand, after leaving the Delectable Mountains. He fought and defeated three robbers called Faint-Heart, Mistrust, and Guilt.

**Mr. Stand-Fast FOR-TRUTH**, a pilgrim found while praying for deliverance from Madame Bubble.

**Madame Bubble**, a witch whose enchantments made the Enchanted Ground enchanted with an air that makes foolish pilgrims sleepy and never wake up again. She is the adulterous woman mentioned in the Biblical *Book of Proverbs*. Mr. Self-Will went over a bridge to meet her and never came back again.

### **Places in *The Pilgrim's Progress***

**City of Destruction**, Christian's home, representative of the world (cf. Isaiah 19:18)

**Slough of Despond**, the miry swamp on the way to the Wicket Gate; one of the hazards of the journey to the Celestial City. In the First Part, Christian falling into it, sinks further under the weight of his sins (his burden) and his sense of their guilt.

**Mount Sinai**, a frightening mountain near the Village of Morality that threatens all who would go there.

**Wicket Gate**, the entry point of the straight and narrow way to the Celestial City. Pilgrims are required to enter the way by way of the Wicket Gate. Beelzebub's castle was built not very far from the Gate.

**House of the Interpreter**, a type of spiritual museum to guide the pilgrims to the Celestial Ciblematic of Calvary and the tomb of Christ.

**Hill Difficulty**, both the hill and the road up is called "Difficulty"; it is flanked by two treacherous byways "Danger" and "Destruction." There are three choices: CHRISTIAN takes "Difficulty" (the right way), and Formalist and Hypocrisy take the two other ways, which prove to be fatal dead ends.

**House Beautiful**, a palace that serves as a rest stop for pilgrims to the Celestial City. It apparently sits atop the Hill Difficulty. From the House Beautiful one can see forward to the Delectable Mountains. It represents the Christian congregation, and Bunyan takes its name from a gate of the Jerusalem temple (Acts 3:2, 10).

**Valley of Humiliation**, the Valley on the other side of the Hill Difficulty, going down into which is said to be extremely slippery by the House Beautiful's damsel Prudence. It is where Christian, protected by God's Armour, meets Apollyon and they had that dreadful, long fight where Christian was victorious over his enemy by impaling Apollyon on his Sword of the Spirit (Word of God) which caused the Foul Fiend to fly away. Apollyon met Christian in the place known as "Forgetful Green." This Valley had been a delight to the "Lord of the Hill", Jesus Christ, in his "state of humiliation."

**Valley of the Shadow of Death**, a treacherous, devilish Valley filled with demons, dragons, fiends, satyrs, goblins, hobgoblins, monsters, creatures from the bottomless pit, beasts from the mouth of Hell, darkness, terror, and horror with a quick sand bog on one side and a deep chasm/ditch on the other side of the King's Highway going through it (cf. Psalm 23:4).

**Gaius's inn**, a rest stop in the Second Part of the Pilgrim's Progress.

**Vanity Fair**, a city through which the King's Highway passes and the yearlong Fair that is held there.

**Plain Ease**, a pleasant area traversed by the pilgrims.

**Hill Lucre**, location of a reputed silver mine that proves to be the place where By-Ends and his companions are lost.

**The Pillar of Salt**, which was Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. The pilgrim's note that its location near the Hill Lucre is a fitting warning to those who are tempted by Demas to go into the Lucre silver mine.

**River of God** or **River of the Water of Life**, a place of solace for the pilgrims. It flows through a meadow, green all year long and filled with lush fruit trees. In the Second Part the Good Shepherd is found there to whom Christiana's grandchildren are entrusted.

**By-Path Meadow**, the place leading to the grounds of Doubting Castle.

**Doubting Castle**, the home of Giant Despair and his Giantess wife, Diffidence; only one key could open its doors and gates, the key Promise.

**The Delectable Mountains**, known as "Immanuel's Land." Lush country from whose heights one can see many delights and curiosities. It is inhabited by sheep and their shepherds, and from Mount Clear one can see the Celestial City.

**The Enchanted Ground**, an area through which the King's Highway passes that has air that makes pilgrims want to stop to sleep. If one goes to sleep in this place, one never wakes up. The shepherds of the Delectable Mountains warn pilgrims about this.

**The Land of Beulah**, a lush garden area just this side of the River of Death.

**The River of Death**, the dreadful river that surrounds Mount Zion, deeper or shallower depending on the faith of the one traversing it.

**The Celestial City**, the "Desired Country" of pilgrims, heaven, the dwelling place of the "Lord of the Hill", God. It is situated on Mount Zion.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES**

### **BEHIND THE FICTIONAL PLACES**

Scholars have pointed out that Bunyan may have been influenced in the creation of places in *The Pilgrim's Progress* by his own surrounding environment. Albert Foster describes the natural features of Bedfordshire that apparently turn up in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Vera Brittain, in her thoroughly researched biography of Bunyan, identifies seven locations that appear in the allegory. Other connections are suggested in books not directly associated with either John Bunyan or *The Pilgrim's Progress*. At least twenty-one natural or man-made geographical or topographical features from *The Pilgrim's Progress* have been identified — places and structures John Bunyan regularly would have seen as a child and, later, in his

travels on foot or horseback. The entire journey from The City of Destruction to the Celestial City may have been based on Bunyan's own usual journey from Bedford, on the main road that runs less than a mile behind his Elstow cottage, through Ampthill, Dunstable and St Albans, to London.

In the same sequence as these subjects appear in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the geographical realities are as follows:

The plain (across which Christian fled) is Bedford Plain, which is fifteen miles wide with the town of Bedford in the middle and the river Ouse meandering through the northern half.

The "Slough of Despond" (a major obstacle for Christian and Pliable: "a very miry slough") is the large deposits of gray clay, which supplied London Brick's works in Stewartby, which was closed in 2008. On either side of the Bedford to Ampthill road these deposits match Bunyan's description exactly. Presumably, the road was built on the "twenty thousand cart loads" of fill mentioned in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. However, the area beside Elstow brook, where John grew up, may also have been an early inspiration - on the north side of this brook, either side of the path to Elstow was (and still is) boggy and John would have known to avoid straying off the main path.

"Mount Sinai", the high hill on the way to the village of Morality, whose side "that was next the way side, did hang so much over,"<sup>[20]</sup> is the red, sandy, cliffs just north of Ridgmont (i.e. "Rouge Mont");

The "Wicket Gate" could be the wooden gate at the entrance to the Elstow parish church or the wicket gate (small door) in the northern wooden entrance door at the west end of Elstow Abbey Church.

The castle, from which arrows were shot at those who would enter the Wicket Gate, could be the stand-alone bell tower, beside Elstow Abbey church.

The "House of the Interpreter" is the rectory of St John's church in the south side of Bedford, where Bunyan was mentored by the pastor John Gifford.

The wall "Salvation" that fenced in the King's Highway coming after the House of the Interpreter is the red brick wall, over four miles long, beside the Ridgmont to Woburn road, marking the boundary of the Duke of Bedford's estate;

The "place somewhat ascending ... [with] a cross ... and a sepulchre"<sup>[22]</sup> is the village cross and well that stands by the church at opposite ends of the sloping main street of Stevington, a small village five miles west of Bedford. Bunyan would often preach in a wood by the River Ouse just outside the village.

The "Hill Difficulty" is Ampthill Hill, on the main Bedford road, the steepest hill in the county. A sandy range of hills stretches across Bedfordshire from Woburn through Ampthill to Potton. These hills are characterised by dark, dense and dismal woods reminiscent of the byways "Danger" and "Destruction", the alternatives to the way "Difficulty" that goes up the hill.

The pleasant arbour on the way up the Hill Difficulty is a small "lay-by", part way up Ampthill Hill, on the east side. A photo, taken in 1908, shows a cyclist resting there.



The "very narrow passage" to the "Palace Beautiful" is an entrance cut into the high bank by the roadside to the east at the top of Ampthill Hill.

The "Palace Beautiful" is Houghton (formerly Ampthill) House, built in 1621 but a ruin since 1800. The house faced north; and, because of the dramatic view over the Bedford plain, it was a popular picnic site during the first half of the twentieth century when many families could not travel far afield; The tradesman's entrance was on the south side looking out over the town of Ampthill and towards the Chilterns, the model of "The Delectable Mountains". There is also an earlier source of inspiration; As a young boy, John would have regularly seen, and been impressed by, "Elstow Place" - the grand mansion behind Elstow Church, built for Sir Thomas Hillersden from the cloister buildings of Elstow Abbey.

The "Valley of the Shadow of Death" is Millbrook gorge to the west of Ampthill.

"Vanity Fair" is probably also drawn from a number of sources. Some argue that local fairs in Elstow, Bedford and Ampthill were too small to fit Bunyan's description but Elstow's May fairs are known to have been large and rowdy and would certainly have made a big impression on the young Bunyan. Stourbridge Fair, held in Cambridge during late August and early September fits John Bunyan's account of the fair's antiquity and its vast variety of goods sold and sermons were preached each Sunday during Stourbridge Fair in an area called the "Dodderey." John Bunyan preached often in Toft, just four miles west of Cambridge, and there is a place known as "Bunyan's Barn" in Toft, so it is surmised that Bunyan visited the notable Stourbridge Fair.

The "pillar of salt", Lot's wife, is a weather-beaten statue that looks much like personised salt pillar. It is located on small island in the river Ouse just north of Turvey bridge, eight miles west of Bedford near Stevington.

The "River of the Water of Life", with trees along each bank is the river Ouse east of Bedford, where John Bunyan as a boy would fish with his sister Margaret. It might also be the valley of river Flit, flowing through Flitton and Flitwick south of Ampthill.

"Doubting Castle" is Ampthill Castle, built in the early 15th century and often visited by King Henry VIII as a hunting lodge. Henry, corpulent and dour, may have been considered by Bunyan to be a model for Giant Despair. Ampthill Castle was used for the "house arrest" of Queen Catherine of Aragon and her retinue in 1535-36 before she was taken to Kimbolton. The castle was dismantled soon after 1660, so Bunyan could have seen its towers in the 1650s and known of the empty castle plateau in the 1670s. Giant Despair was killed and Doubting Castle was demolished in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The "Delectable Mountains" are the Chiltern Hills that can be seen from the second floor of Houghton House. "Chalk hills, stretching fifty miles from the Thames to Dunstable Downs, have beautiful blue flowers and butterflies, with glorious beech trees." Reminiscent of the possibility of seeing the Celestial City from Mount Clear, on a clear day one can see London's buildings from Dunstable Downs near Whipsnade Zoo.

The "Land of Beulah" is Middlesex county north and west of London, which had pretty villages, market gardens, and estates containing beautiful parks and gardens): "woods of Islington to the green hills of Hampstead & Highgate".

The "very deep river" is the River Thames, one thousand feet wide at high tide; however, in keeping with Bunyan's route to London, the river would be to the north of the city.

The "Celestial City" is London, the physical centre of John Bunyan's world—most of his neighbours never travelled that far. In the 1670s, after the Great Fire of 1666, London sported a new, gleaming, city centre with forty churches. In the last decade of Bunyan's life (1678–1688) some of his best Christian friends lived in London, including a Lord Mayor.

### CONTEXT IN CHRISTIANITY

The explicit Protestant theology of *The Pilgrim's Progress* made it much more popular than its predecessors. Bunyan's plain style breathes life into the abstractions of the anthropomorphised temptations and abstractions that Christian encounters and with whom he converses on his course to Heaven. Samuel Johnson said that "this is the great merit of the book, that the most cultivated man cannot find anything to praise more highly, and the child knows nothing more amusing." Three years after its publication (1681), it was reprinted in colonial America, and was widely read in the Puritan colonies.

Because of its explicit English Protestant theology *The Pilgrim's Progress* shares the then popular English antipathy toward the Roman Catholic Church. It was published over the years of the Popish Plot (1678–1681) and ten years before the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and it shows the influence of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Bunyan presents a decrepit and harmless giant to confront Christian at the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death that is explicitly named "Pope":

Now I saw in my Dream, that at the end of this Valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of Pilgrims that had gone this way formerly: and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a Cave, where two Giants, *Pope* and *Pagan*, dwelt in olden times, by whose Power and Tyranny the men whose bones, blood ashes, etc. lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place *Christian* went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learnt since, that *Pagan* has been dead many a day; and as for the other, though he is yet alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his Caves mouth, grinning at Pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails, because he cannot come at them.

When Christian and Faithful travel through Vanity Fair, Bunyan adds the editorial comment:

But as in other *fairs*, some one Commodity is as the chief of all the *fair*, so the ware of *Rome* and her Merchandise is greatly promoted in *this fair*. Only our *English Nation*, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat.

In **the Second Part**, while Christiana and her group of pilgrims led by Greatheart stay for some time in Vanity, the city is terrorised by a seven-headed beast which is driven away by Greatheart and other stalwarts. In his endnotes W.R. Owens notes about the woman that governs the beast: "This woman was believed by Protestants to represent Antichrist, the Church of Rome. In a posthumously published treatise, *Of Antichrist, and his Ruin* (1692), Bunyan gave an extended account of the rise and (shortly expected) fall of Antichrist."

### The Third Part



Tender-Conscience, hero of Part Three,  
awakens from sleep in the palace of Carnal-Security

*The Third Part of the Pilgrim's Progress* was written by an anonymous author; beginning in 1693, it was published with Bunyan's authentic two parts. It continued to be republished with Bunyan's work until 1852. This third part presented the pilgrimage of Tender-Conscience and his companions.

### MUSICAL SETTINGS

The book was the basis of an opera by Ralph Vaughan Williams, premiered in 1951; see *The Pilgrim's Progress (opera)*. It was also the basis of a condensed radio adaptation starring John Gielgud, including, as background music, several excerpts from Vaughan Williams's orchestral works. This radio version, originally presented in 1942, was newly recorded by Hyperion Records in 1990, in a performance conducted by Matthew Best. It again starred Gielgud, and featured Richard Pasco and Ursula Howells.

English composer Ernest Austin set the whole story as a huge narrative tone poem for solo organ, with optional 6-part choir and narrator, lasting approximately 2½ hours.

### REFERENCES IN LITERATURE

Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1838) is subtitled 'The Parish Boy's Progress'.

In 1847 William Makepeace Thackeray entitled his work *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero* with the Vanity Fair of *Pilgrim's Progress* in mind.

Mark Twain gave his 1869 travelogue, *The Innocents Abroad*, the alternate title *The New Pilgrims' Progress*. In Twain's later work *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huckleberry Finn mentions *The Pilgrim's Progress* as he describes the works of literature in the Grangerfords' library. Twain uses this to satirise the Protestant southern aristocracy.

E. E. Cummings also makes numerous references to it in his prose work, *The Enormous Room*.

"The Celestial Railroad", a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, recreates Christian's journey in Hawthorne's time. Progressive thinkers have replaced the footpath by a railroad, and

pilgrims may now travel under steam power. The journey is considerably faster, but somewhat more questionable...

John Buchan was an admirer of Bunyan, and *Pilgrim's Progress* features significantly in his third Richard Hannay novel, *Mr Standfast*, which also takes its title from one of Bunyan's characters.

Alan Moore in his *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* enlists *The Pilgrim's Progress* protagonist, Christian, as a member of the earliest version of this group, *Prospero's Men*, having become wayward on his journey during his visit in Vanity Fair, stepping down an alleyway and found himself in London in the 1670s, and unable to return to his homeland. This group disbanded in 1690 after Prospero vanished into the Blazing World; however, some parts of the text seem to imply that Christian resigned from Prospero's league before its disbanding and that Christian travelled to the Blazing World before Prospero himself. The apparent implication is that; within the context of the League stories; the Celestial City Christian seeks and the Blazing World may in fact be one and the same. In Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, whose protagonist Jo reads it at the outset of the novel, and tries to follow the good example of Bunyan's Christian.

The cartoonist Winsor McCay drew an allegorical comic strip entitled "A Pilgrim's Progress" in the *New York Evening Telegram*. The strip ran from 26 June 1905 to 18 December 1910. In it, the protagonist Mr. Bunion is constantly frustrated in his attempts to improve his life by ridding himself of his burdensome valise, "Dull Care".

C. S. Lewis wrote a book inspired by *The Pilgrim's Progress* called *The Pilgrim's Regress*, in which a character named John follows a vision to escape from The Landlord, a less friendly version of The Owner in *Pilgrim's Regress*. It is an allegory of C. S. Lewis' own journey from a religious childhood to a pagan adulthood in which he rediscovers his Christian God.

Henry Williamson's *The Patriot's Progress* references the title of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the symbolic nature of John Bunyan's work. The protagonist of the semi-autobiographical novel is John Bullock, the quintessential English soldier during World War I.

The character of Billy Pilgrim in *Slaughterhouse-5: The Children's Crusade*, by Kurt Vonnegut, is a clear homage to a similar journey to enlightenment experienced by Christian, although Billy's journey leads him to an existential acceptance of life and of a fatalist human condition. Vonnegut's parallel to *The Pilgrim's Progress* is deliberate and evident in Billy's surname.

Charlotte Brontë refers to *Pilgrim's Progress* in most of her novels, including *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, and *Villette*. Her alterations to the quest-narrative have led to much critical interest, particular with the ending of *Jane Eyre*.

A classic science fiction fan novelette, *The Enchanted Duplicator* by Walt Willis and Bob Shaw, is explicitly modelled on *The Pilgrim's Progress*; it has been repeatedly reprinted over the decades since its first appearance in 1954, in professional publications, in fanzines and as a monograph.

Enid Blyton wrote *The Land of Far Beyond* as a children's version of *Pilgrim's Progress*. First published in 1942 by Methuen.

John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* mentions *The Pilgrim's Progress* as one of an (anonymous) character's favourite books. Steinbeck's novel was itself an allegorical spiritual journey by Tom Joad through America during the Great Depression, and often made Christian allusions to sacrifice and redemption in a world of social injustice.

The book was commonly referenced in African American slave narratives, such as "Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom" by Ellen and William Craft, where it would serve to emphasise the moral and religious implications of slavery.

## **THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN FILMS, TELEVISION, VIDEO GAMES, AND MUSIC**

The novel was made into a film, *Pilgrim's Progress*, in 1912.

In 1950 an hour-long animated version was made by Baptista Films. This version was edited down to 35 minutes and re-released with new music in 1978. As of 2007 the original version is difficult to find, but the 1978 has been released on both VHS and DVD.

In 1978, another film version was made by Ken Anderson, in which Liam Neeson played the role of the Evangelist and other smaller roles like the crucified Christ. Maurice O'Callaghan played the Pilgrim, and Peter Thomas played Worldly Wiseman. A sequel *Christiana* followed later.

In 1985 Yorkshire Television produced a 129-minute 9-part serial presentation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with animated stills by Alan Parry and narrated by Paul Copley entitled *Dangerous Journey*.

In 1989, Orion's Gate, a producer of Biblical/Spiritual audio dramas produced *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a 6 hour audio dramatisation. This production was followed several years later by *Christiana: Pilgrim's Progress Part 2*, another 8 hour audio dramatisation.

In 1993, the popular Christian radio drama, *Adventures in Odyssey* (produced by Focus on the Family), featured a two-part story, titled "Pilgrim's Progress: Revisited."

In 1994, "The Pilgrim's Progress" and the imprisonment of John Bunyan were the subject of the musical *Celestial City* by David MacAdam, with John Curtis, and an album was released in 1997.

In 2003 the game *Heaven Bound* was released by *Emerald Studios*. The 3D adventure-style game, based on the novel, was only released for the PC. A 2006 computer animation version was made, directed and narrated by Scott Cawthon.

In 2008, a version by Danny Carrales, *Pilgrim's Progress: Journey to Heaven*, was produced.

At the 2009 San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival, the adaptation *Pilgrim's Progress: Journey to Heaven* received one nomination for best feature length independent film and one nomination for best music score.

British music band Kula Shaker released an album called *Pilgrim's Progress* on 28 June 2010.

Jim Winder performs a live telling of *Pilgrim's Progress* (the first part) with contemporary Christian songs based on the story line and Biblical content.

Season 7, episode 16 of *Family Guy* (17 May 2009) is a parody of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "Peter's Progress."

In 2010, FishFlix.com released the Ambassador Films production "A Pilgrim's Progress — The Story of John Bunyan" to DVD. A documentary about Bunyan's life, filmed on location in England and narrated by Derick Bingham.

In 2013, Puritan Productions company announced the premiere of its dramatisation with ballet & chorus accompaniment in Fort Worth, Texas at the W.E. Scott Theatre on October 18–19

In 2014, a Kickstarter supported novel called "The Narrow Road" was published. It is based on "The Pilgrim's Progress", and was written by Erik Yeager and illustrated by Dave delaGardelle.

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*The Children's Pilgrim's Progress*. The story taken from the work by John Bunyan. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1866.

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*John Bunyan's Dream Story: the Pilgrim's Progress retold for children and adapted to school reading* by James Baldwin. New York: American Book Co., 1913.

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*The Land of Far-Beyond* by Enid Blyton. Methuen, 1942.

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*The New Amplified Pilgrim's Progress* (both book and dramatised audio) - as retold by James Pappas. Published by Orion's Gate (1999). A slightly expanded and highly dramatised version of John Bunyan's original. Large samples of the text are available

"Quest for Celestia: A Re-imagining of *The Pilgrim's Progress*" by Steven James, 2006

Stephen T. Moore (2011). "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" *A very graphic novel*. 150. ISBN 978-1461032717.





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## CHAPTER 1

### THE HERO OF THE STORY, AND HOW HE BECAME A PILGRIM

THE book which we are to study is one of the most widely read books in the world. There is only one that has been translated into more languages, and read by more people, and that is the Bible.

It is a book full of pictures — pictures which chiefly concern the hero of the story, and the strange and wonderful experiences that happened to him on his pilgrimage.

Today, we are to think of the hero as he was just before he became a pilgrim, and as John Bunyan tells us he saw him in his dream. And a very miserable-looking hero he was, such a man as you would pity if you met him clothed in rags, with trouble and terror in his face, and on his back a heavy burden, which pressed him down night and day.

The worst of it was that, as you know, no one could help him, or even understand him; no one in his own home, none of his neighbours. First of all, it puzzled them that he should go about sighing and moaning, and that he should show in the morning that he had been weeping all the night. They wondered, too, why he should carry that big burden about with him everywhere, and why he could not be merry and gay like the rest. For most of us like merry people, and dislike people who are sad and sorrowful. Then they became vexed and angry with him; some of them mocked him, and some thought he was crazy.

At length, he, one day, met a person who did understand him and to whom he told all his troubles; who moreover assured him that he could get rid of his troubles, rags, burden, and everything, if he would but do a certain thing. He was, so Evangelist told him, to go as straight as possible to a Wicket Gate and a shining light. As to what would happen afterwards, save that he would be told what to do, Evangelist said nothing.

So this unhappy man, in spite of the cries of his friends and neighbours, started to run with all his might towards the Wicket Gate. What happened on the way to the Gate we must leave for another chapter.

I am most anxious that we should understand this great book as we go along; and that boys and girls who are reading it should, if old enough, see its meaning. So we must ask ourselves some questions.

Who is this unhappy man, who can find no comfort in his home or his children, who cannot sleep or eat? What makes him miserable? Whom does he represent?

Well, he is a man who has lived all his life without Jesus. He has not obeyed the calls of Jesus. He has lived to please himself, and not to please God. But he has read in his Bible that God hates and punishes sin; he feels how wicked his life has been and how guilty he is. His rags and burden do not belong to his body but to his mind and soul.

Well, no, there are some people who do not have the burden.

In the second part of this book there are four boys who start on pilgrimage with their mother and her friend, and not one of them has either rags or a burden. Indeed, those boys start as happily as can be, all eager to be pilgrims.

What I would say very lovingly therefore to all girls and boys who read the *Pilgrim's Progress* is: Do not wait for the burden. If you have it, do not wait till it is gone. If you are happy, do not wait until you are miserable; and if you are miserable, do not wait till you are happy. It is not a question of whether you are happy or wretched, but whether you are willing to go to the Wicket Gate, to become a pilgrim, to yield up your life to the Lord Jesus.

## CHAPTER 2



## OBSTINATE AND PLIABLE

THE miserable man, with his burden and his rags, who had started for the little Gate and the shining light had many adventures by the way, some before he reached the Gate and many after.

To begin with, two of his neighbours started out determined to fetch him back by main force. They are so unlike and such a curious couple to be together that I must say a few words about them.

The name of the first is not strange to us. It may have been given at some time or other to some of us. We may even have deserved it. Obstinate was a person who *would not* be persuaded. If he had set his mind on a thing, no one — not even though he were older and wiser and better — could turn him.

He *would* have his own way, and he *would* keep on contradicting you, even though you proved by the Bible itself that he was wrong. He would laugh and scoff at people who differed from or blamed him, and call them all manner of hard names. No one could advise him for his good, because he thought he knew better than anybody else. He was always sure that he was right, and when he was *proved* to be in the wrong he never owned it, but only grew angry and still sullenly muttered that he knew he was right.

When Obstinate was a child he gave his father and mother no end of trouble, and, since they were afraid to punish him, he became a very stubborn and troublesome man.

Now, Obstinate thought that by calling Christian hard and mocking names he could turn him back, so he took his neighbour along to help him.

Pliable is a name that we do not know so well, but perhaps we know the person or the character. He was just the opposite of Obstinate in this. He could always be persuaded, especially to anything that was not very hard to do. He was persuaded sometimes six times a day to do six contrary and opposite things. It all depended who got hold of him first and pleaded with him the hardest. If he were in company with people who all drank wine he would drink it. If, on the contrary, most people declined it, he would say that he thought it best to be an abstainer. If he were with people who laughed at good things he would laugh too; while if he went next day among people who lived a little way off and declared that such laughter was foolish, he would quite agree with them. If he made up his mind to go on one side to-day, because that was right tomorrow. When he was a boy at school, if he sat between two well-behaved boys all was well. But if he sat next to an idle and talkative boy he was ruined for the term.

That was the man who went with Obstinate to help him to bring Christian back; but as Christian was firm, and because he pleaded harder than Obstinate, Pliable parted from Obstinate, and

went on with Christian. It seemed so right and delightful a thing to go on pilgrimage, and Christian drew such a beautiful picture of it, that Pliable became quite excited.

But Pliable never got as far as the little Gate; and if he had he would, in all probability, never have got up the Hill Difficulty. As soon as he and Christian got into trouble in the miry bog into which they fell, he turned back and went home as fast as he could; for he was unable to bear difficulty, and he had been looking for an easy path all his life.

Now, if I were asked which was the worse of these two characters, Obstinate or Pliable, I should hardly know what to answer. I hope you will be neither of these characters. It is very bad to be so obstinate as always to think you know best, and that no one can give you good advice; while it is bad to be so pliable that any one can easily lead you even into wrong. What is wanted is that you be both pliable and obstinate, not altogether one nor altogether the other.

That was what Christian was. He could be persuaded when he was wrong; he was willing to be directed from the wrong to the right. Then he could be obstinate in resisting temptation and threatening. It was because he knew that he was right, and because he could not be persuaded by any temptation or difficulty to turn from the resolve — at least not yet — that he became a pilgrim.

Obstinate and Pliable were both selfish, each in a different fashion. The one wanted his own way, and could not bear that any one should differ from him; and the other could not bear to differ from anybody, and only wanted a way that was easy. Christian sought God's way, not his own, and resolved to walk in it whatever came. And that is the spirit of the true pilgrim, which may God give to you!

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND AND MR. HELP

YOU all know about the Slough of Despond, the miry bog into which Christian and Pliable fell as they were hastening on their way to the Wicket Gate. You have all felt sorry for poor Christian. It was bad enough to have the burden, but to be struggling about in slippery and filthy mud with a burden on his back was worse still.

When we come to ask what John Bunyan means by this terrible place, the answer is: It is something like the burden on Christian's back. The struggling figure in the bog points to somebody who is extremely miserable, and hopeless about himself.

And the Slough of Despond, like the burden, *not necessary for* everybody. John Bunyan says there are steps over it; some-times they are covered by the mud, but even when they are not covered people often fail to see them, and so go plunging into the mire.

I have seen people in the Slough of Despond, and it is enough to make any one weep to see them. They are people who say, 'I shall never be good; I shall never get to heaven; I am much too wicked for God to forgive me.' It would not surprise me to hear that some of the girls and boys who read these words have felt like that at times, and so have struggled in the Slough of

Despond. There are many Sloughs of Despond besides this one, many in the City of Destruction itself, and some just outside Vanity Fair.

There are two great things to be remembered about this Slough of Despond. One is that we need not get into it. If we could only keep in mind God's great mercy and His exceeding great promises and believe them, then, however bad we are, we should not

fall into the Slough. The promises are the great stepping-stones on which we can walk through it in safety, instead of tumbling into the mire.

The other thing for people who get in to remember is, that everything depends on how they get out. They can scramble out, as Pliable did, on the wrong side. That is, they can say, 'It is no use troubling about trying to be good; it is hopeless; we will give up trying, forget all about it, and just be contented as we are.' That is what Pliable did, and it is the wrong way. Christian in all his misery struggled towards the side of the slough that was farthest from his own house, and nearest to the Wicket Gate.

But, after all, the most wonderful thing about that Slough in this part of Bunyan's story is the way Christian got out. A man named Help came to his assistance, gave him his hand, and pulled him on to sound ground. The wonderful part of the story to me is that this Mr. Help had evidently taken up his residence close to the bog, and on that side of it which was next to the Wicket Gate. Now I do not know which is your favourite character in the *Pilgrim's Progress*; some of you like Christian, some Hopeful, and some Greatheart. But I think that Help is my favourite. All of his own free will, for no one had compelled him, he went to live by that disagreeable pond, just because people had a habit of falling into it, and that he might have the chance of helping them out. There may be greater characters in the *Pilgrim's Progress* than this man, but there is no one more lovable.

Most of us try to keep as far away from the Slough of Despond as possible. We do not like people who get into it — sad people, people who are miserable and low-spirited, who cannot laugh and play and be merry. We complain sometimes about them, and when we hear of them we pity others who have always to be with them. Now, if the Lord Jesus were to come to live on earth again, I feel sure that these are just the sort of people He would go and live by. Why? That He might help and cheer them. In the Old Testament it is said of Him that He would give 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' That is just helping people out of the Slough of Despond; and we may be quite sure that the Lord of the way loved Mr. Help as much as any of His servants, because Mr. Help chose to live in the dreary and disagreeable place in order to aid the people who were just beginning to be pilgrims. Help was the kind of person who did *what he could*. He could not be a Greatheart, going before pilgrims to fight their battles; nor could he be an Interpreter, explaining things to people; nor even an Evangelist, preaching to people; but he could just watch by that horrid slough, and when anybody fell in he could give him his hand and help him out.

The last word I have to say about this good man is that he has a name that every boy and girl may wear. Sometimes father and mother are nearer the Slough of Despond than you know, and you can be either Hindrance or Help. You can even push people into the Slough of Despond.

Sometimes your teacher is very near; sometimes a child may be almost in despair. Always there are somewhere people in trouble, and you can be a *help*. You can speak a kind word and do a helpful act. You might even remind somebody of God's love, or if you told them that you loved them it might cheer them. I do not know how people would live in this world if there were not a great army of Helps. I pray, dear children, that you may be among them, and that you will strive to be a Help, as you may, for the sake of Him Who died to save and lives to help us all.

## **CHAPTER 4**

**MR. WORLDLY WISEMAN**

IN our last talk we saw how Christian got out of the Slough of Despond by the aid of Mr. Help. Now, we have to think of him trudging on towards the Wicket Gate. But before he reaches the Gate there are, unhappily, some other adventures.

Though he had got out of the Slough of Despond, Christian was very unhappy. His burden was heavy, his clothes were now not only ragged but muddy, and as he went on his way in this plight he saw a man coming across the field to meet him. The man was so well dressed, and looked so comfortable and spoke so kindly, that Christian was quite taken with him. He asked all about Christian's wife and family, about the burden, and where he was going, and seemed so interested in him that Christian thought he had met a real friend; so he told him where he was going and all.

Then this man, whose name was Mr. Worldly Wiseman, assured him he was altogether wrong; that the path he was looking for was full of dangers and troubles; that there were dragons and lions, and darkness, and hunger to be met by the way, and that perhaps he would be killed. And when Christian replied that his burden was worse than all these things put together, Worldly Wiseman said that there was a very easy way of getting rid of that. He told him the name of the gentleman who would willingly help him off with his burden, and that he could send for his wife and children and live very happily in that village for the rest of his life. In fact, as you know, he told such a wonderful story that Christian was persuaded by him and turned out of the path to seek the house of Mr. Legality, who was said to be very clever at taking off burdens from people as unhappy as Christian was.

Christian never got to the house; for the path to it led past an overhanging hill, so overhanging that when Christian reached it he became suddenly afraid — and no wonder, for flashes of lightning came out of the hill, and it seemed as if he might be killed; so there he stood, afraid to move one way or the other. I do not know whether he was glad or sorry — probably he was both — when he saw coming towards him Evangelist, who, you remember, had directed him to the Wicket Gate. However, it was a happy thing for him that Evangelist did find him; for though he was very stern and blamed Christian for listening to such a cheat as Mr. Worldly Wiseman, he got him back into the path again; and so, without any more adventures, though with a very sad heart, Christian reached the Wicket Gate.

And now who is this Mr. Worldly Wiseman who tempted Christian out of the way? and what does this incident mean? Well, for one thing, Worldly Wiseman is a person who tells you that you need not trouble about your sins. 'Of course,' he will say, 'you will be nothing in the world to trouble about.'

You see, dear children, that in the village of Morality they do not think it a sin to be selfish, and they do not think it a sin not to love God, and they do not think of sin as a serious matter at all, and they do not see that God is grieved when we fail to strive for a beautiful and holy character like that of Jesus, who came to show us how to live. They do not think of the pleasures of goodness, nor anything about the world to come, but only how to get plenty to eat and drink and wear and spend in this life.

What Christian felt was that he had not loved Jesus, nor had he served Him; he had lived entirely to please himself, and had done all manner of things that had grieved and displeased God, and what he needed was forgiveness, the taking away of his burden. Evangelist told him the way to that was through the Wicket Gate. And Evangelist was right, while Mr. Worldly Wiseman was wrong. When we are unhappy about our sins, the thing to do is not to forget them, nor merely to leave off doing them, but to carry them to Jesus, who can take them away and give us peace.

I said that if people got into the Slough of Despond, much depended on the way they got out. So, if people have a burden, there is a right and a wrong way of getting rid of it. And the right way is the way from which poor Christian was tempted by Mr. Worldly Wiseman, and to which happily he got back again.



## CHAPTER 5

### CHRISTIAN AT THE WICKET GATE

YOU will remember that Evangelist's first direction to Christian was to go as straight as possible to the Gate which could be seen on the other side of the plain, and that Christian had not done so. First he had fallen into the Slough of Despond. Then he had been persuaded by Mr. Worldly Wiseman to turn out of the way. So, when he found the Gate shut, and had to knock more than once or twice, and when he considered what a very disreputable figure he made with his rags and mud and burden and all, I suppose he began to be afraid that he would not be let in. Perhaps he thought that some-body was looking at him through the window, and had taken him for a tramp or a beggar

At all events, I should not be surprised if, considering all that he had come through, he feared that, after all, he was not going to be let in.

At last, however, there came a person to the Gate. But, when he came, he looked so grave that at first poor Christian's courage almost failed him. Then he found, to his great relief, that grave people can be very kind people. For Mr. Goodwill was kind and sympathetic, asked Christian after his wife and children and neighbours, and helped him in at the Gate. Indeed, Christian was soon talking to him as if he had known him quite a long time; and we may be sure that he never forgot the kind welcome given him by Mr. Goodwill.

Now, there are two or three things very important to be said about the Wicket Gate. To begin with an explanation. The Gate means *the real beginning of the Christian life*, giving up the

life to Jesus, beginning to do everything for His sake. The narrow way, that lies beyond it, is the way of obedience to His will.

Some people do not try to get in at the Gate. They see it closed, and perhaps they give just a faint knock and no one comes, and then they go away. They do not knock again and again, as Christian did; they are not really in earnest about it. Some do not want to go in. They think it such a hard path that lies the other side. They want to please themselves, and not to give up their own way. Others hope to go in some time — but not yet. They do not see that the Gate is the entrance to a truly happy life.

Now, there are two things that John Bunyan mentions about this Gate — things that Mr. Goodwill, the grave man at the Gate-house, told him.

*Anybody may go in.* ‘We make no objections against any.’

*Nobody is too young.* Indeed, children can get in much more easily than older people.

Mr. Goodwill knows the knock of little children; and I think that when Christiana came, if she had let the children knock instead of doing it herself, they would all have got in much more quickly. Even as it was, we read that when they went in, Mr. Goodwill ordered the trumpet to be sounded for joy that they had come. The knocker is low enough for the youngest child to reach it, and there is a special word for children written on the door—‘Suffer the lithe children to come.’ So we are perfectly sure that nobody is too young.

*Then, nobody is too naughty.* If the worst boy or girl you have ever known wants to go in at that Gate, he may. Goodwill said to Christian, ‘Whatever people may have done before they come here, they may come in.’ You boys and girls who think you cannot be Christians till you are very much better make a great mistake; you can begin today.

And there is one other thing which is very important. Christian did not lose his burden when he got in at the Gate. One of the questions which he asked Goodwill when he got in, you *may* be sure, was whether he could help him off with his burden. And Goodwill said ‘No.’ That means that people are not to wait till *they feel* very good and very happy before they give themselves to Jesus. They must go in at the Gate and along the narrow way, whether they feel happy or not.

It means also, dear girls and boys, that you may be true Christians even though you feel for a time very bad and very wretched. Perhaps some of you who read this *may* feel that you have behaved ill and have done evil things even this week. There will be a whisper in your hearts that now you had better give up thinking about the Wicket Gate, that it is not for you just yet.

You must not listen to the whisper. The Wicket Gate is for all who want to enter it. There you will get just the help and encouragement you need and a very warm welcome. You may begin today by giving up your life to Jesus Christ.

## **CHAPTER 6**

## AT INTERPRETER'S HOUSE

THE first place Christian came to after he left the Gate-house and Mr. Goodwill was the Interpreter's House, where he had been told that he would see excellent things. And a very wonderful house it was, with all sorts of curious rooms in it and all kinds of living pictures, not for Christian's entertainment or amusement, but for his instruction. The fact is, Interpreter's House was a school to which Christian went to be taught.

Now, I want to say very earnestly to boys and girls who wish to follow Jesus, *that to be a Christian is to go to school. A good* many people forget that. One of the earliest names for Christians was 'disciple,' and that means scholar, one who goes to school. And the school stands inside the Wicket Gate, not outside it. There are pictures in the Interpreter's House that only pilgrims can understand and only pilgrims care about. There are some people who want to understand everything before they give themselves to Jesus. But only the Lord Jesus can explain these things to us, and there are many things that even He does not explain because we should not be able to understand them. And when you ask all sorts of questions as to how this and that can be, the answer often is, 'You must go in at the Wicket Gate before you can understand.'

Then people who go in at the Wicket Gate *need* the Interpreter's House. It takes a good deal of teaching to shove you how to be a Christian. You want to know something about yourself and about sin, and about God. You do not know how to be a Christian, any more than you know how to speak French or English, without being taught.

I suppose that — in a way — the Church is an Interpreter's House, and a minister ought to be an Interpreter. I suppose, too, that a Sunday-school class is a kind of Interpreter's House, and that every teacher ought to be an Interpreter. If it be so, sometimes the minister and the teacher (who, of course, must be inside the Wicket Gate) will talk about things that only those who have gone in at the Wicket Gate can understand.

When that happens, when you are not interested in the lesson or the sermon, and cannot understand it, say, 'I wonder whether it is because I have not gone in at the Wicket Gate, and because I have not been really trying with all my heart to follow Jesus?'

For instance, there was one picture which Christian saw — it is the only one I will speak to you about in this chapter — which I wonder whether any of you will understand. There was a place in the Interpreter's House where there was a fire against a wall, and one was throwing water on it, and trying to put it out. But the more he threw water on it the higher and hotter the fire burned. The secret of this strange thing was that someone behind the wall was pouring oil into the fire, and that oil, which is so excellent a thing to burn, was stronger than the water.

Well, this simply means that all sorts of temptations come to Christian boys and girls every day, to provoke them to evil thinking and evil speaking, to idleness and anger, to low and sinful thoughts, as though these were water trying to put out the flame of love and pure desire in your heart; but that Jesus can all the time give those who trust and pray to Him grace and help to overcome the temptations, to keep from idleness, and carelessness, and anger, and evil speech, and to be loving.

I am so glad that John Bunyan did not make Christian perfect. If he had, some of us would not love the *Pilgrim's Progress* as well as we do. For example, Christian was very eager to get into the Interpreter's House; so eager — as you are when you come home from school — that when the door of the house was not opened in a moment he knocked again and yet again.

I do not know boys who are so eager to go to school as that. But then Christian was just as eager to get out again. Twice over he said, 'I have seen enough now,' and the Interpreter replied, 'I have still something else to show you,' and 'There is something more that you must see.' Christian was as impatient as some of us are with our lessons, or with the book that we want to put by when we have only read half of it.

I hope that those of us who have not read the *Pilgrim's Progress* through, but only bits of it, will turn to the book again, and patiently read to the end, and that those who have read it all will go through it once more. For really it is one of the houses of Mr. Interpreter, and no one can read it carefully without learning many excellent and profitable things.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE TWO BOYS

WHEN Christian was in Interpreter's House he saw, as I said, many strange things, some of which are easy to understand and some difficult. One of the most interesting to children was a room in which were seated two boys, each one in his chair. Both their names began with the same letter, and for anything I know they were brothers; but they were very unlike, as brothers often are. Passion, says Bunyan, was *very* discontented, restless, and impatient. Patience was very quiet.

I never knew a boy called Passion. Parents sometimes give children strange names; but I never came upon anybody whose father had been so cruel as to give him that name, are going to have in an evening. One is work, the other play; one is duty, the other pleasure.

Now, I believe that it is not only a test of what we call character, but that it makes a great deal of difference to character, which comes first of the two. And I also believe that it makes a good deal of difference to real pleasure. I believe those who do the duty first, and do it well, have far the greater pleasure after. Not only is the work better done, but the joy is purer and sweeter, and they lie down at night with a happier heart. The people who say, 'Let us have the game first, and

let the work take care of itself,' are not really happy people, or, if they are, they ought not to be. Passion, says John Bunyan, was very discontented.

There are so many people in the world — I hope you will not be amongst them when you grow up—who cannot wait for a thing until they have worked for it, or until they can pay for it. They say, 'Let us have it first and work for it after,' or 'Let us have it first and pay for it after.' There are boys who think of something they want, a camera or a cricket-bat, or a football, and, instead of patiently saving up their pocket-money week by week until they can buy it, ask somebody to advance them the money, with a promise to pay it back out of their pocket-money. It looks like the same thing as waiting until you have the money, but it is not.

First of all, they miss the pleasures of anticipation, which are very real, and the pleasures of self-denial for a purpose — which are really delightful to look back upon. And, secondly, the thing is sometimes worn out before they have finished paying for it. The football is burst, or the bat is split, or the camera is broken, and all their pleasures are gone, and there is left only the dreary duty of paying for them. In Interpreter's House the boy called Passion came to rags in the end, and I am not greatly surprised at it.

It is well for you to be able to wait for a thing until you have done something to deserve it, and until you can call it all your own. It is a great thing in life, if there is a disagreeable thing to be done and an agreeable, to do the disagreeable thing first with the other in prospect to be enjoyed after.

But there is a deeper meaning to the picture of the two boys. Passion is one who has no self-control, who cannot bear to be crossed, or not to have his own way, or to be rebuked; one who is greedy and selfish and bad-tempered and unclean.

Patience is one who can bear taunts, teasings, slights, without fierce anger and without complaining.

Most of all, Bunyan says Passion cares only for the pleasures of the body, while Patience cares for the things of the soul, the character, and will let the one go for the sake of the other.

Passion thinks only of this life, and that the chief thing is to have a good time now. Patience looks right on, as even boys and girls can, and says: 'There is another life after this, filled with all good and beautiful things, for those who love goodness and long to be like Jesus! So we can do without some of the pleasures of *now* for the sake of the pleasures that come oiler, and that will last for ever more. I trust we shall all strive to earn the name, not of Passion, wilful, selfish, and much more, but of Patience, who waits and works and even suffers for the good that is to come.





## CHAPTER 8

### HOW CHRISTIAN LOST HIS BURDEN

WE have to remember that all the time Christian was in the Interpreter's House he had his burden and his rags on his back. No doubt there were times when he forgot them, probably while he was looking at the wonderful pictures, but as soon as he had finished looking at these he would feel again the pressure of his burden. As soon as he tried to run he found it a *difficulty*, because of the burden on his back. The road meant climbing all the way, and climbing with a heavy load is hard work. Christian doubtless often wondered when he should lose the burden.

Well, you know how he lost it. There was a mound by the wayside, and on the mound there stood a cross, and as soon as Christian had climbed the mound to look at the Cross, without anybody helping him, without tugging at it himself, the burden that he had carried so long simply fell off his back and rolled down the hill into a pit like a grave at the foot, and there it disappeared, and the writer says that he saw it no more.

That was wonderful enough, but even that was not all, as you will remember. Three beautiful beings came to him; 'Shining Ones' Bunyan calls them, because he does not know what better name to give them. Their robes were shining, I suppose, and certainly their faces were shining with gladness and joy. Whether they were men or women, and why there were three of them, I do not know.

Each of them had an errand to Christian. The first said, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The second stripped him of his rags and gave him a suit of new clothes. The third gave him a roll of parchment, in which he was to read by the way, and to hand in at the gate when he came to the Celestial City; and this same Shining One also set a mark on his forehead.

And now the man who at one time had been so miserable was one of the happiest men on earth. His burden was gone and his rags. Bunyan says he gave three leaps for joy, and went on his way singing. He could hardly contain himself for gladness; he had to do something to find expression for his happiness.

I do not know how *many* people who read this are like that — so glad that they want to leap and sing. Not many, it is to be feared. And perhaps there are not many who have carried Christian's burden. They have not been troubled about their faults and sins, except when they have been punished, and then they have perhaps troubled more about the punishment than about the faults. People are not nearly as much troubled about their sins now as they used to be in Bunyan's time. Many think now that sin does not matter, though the Bible never says that. And because of this, they have not the great happiness which people used to have when they felt that God had

forgiven their sins. They are very happy if some one gives them a great deal of money, or praises them very highly, or lets them off some hard task; but if you were to tell them that God had forgiven them all their sins, they would not be filled with joy as Bunyan's pilgrim was, because they have never troubled about their sins.

The strange thing is that people can neglect God's love and disobey His will, and live quite useless and idle lives and not trouble about it at all. And that is chiefly because they do not read carefully the Bible that Christian read, but listen to their own foolish thoughts or somebody else's foolish thoughts instead. But if any one is troubled as Christian was — any boy or girl or grown-up person — troubled because they have not loved God, because they have not been true and pure and kind and loving, the *Pilgrim's Progress* would say to them: 'You must still press on, trying to serve and follow Jesus. Try to obey Him every day. There are some Shining Ones waiting by the way farther on to give you comfort and peace.'

There is a wonderful book which I hope you will read when you get older. It was written *by* the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is called *Grace Abounding*, and it is the story of Bunyan's life, written by himself. In it, he tells us that he was very unhappy and miserable about his sins, but that one day he realised that Jesus Christ died to take his sins away, and that then he became happy. Just in the same way, dear children, many thousands of people have lost the burden from their minds and have been filled with gladness.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **THE THREE MEN ASLEEP**

WHEN last we thought about Christian and his pilgrimage, you remember that he was met at the Cross by three Shining Ones; you remember what they did to him, and how, when they left him, he went on his way leaping and singing for joy.

After that he saw three very different people, and the sight must have stopped his singing and have filled him first with wonder and then with sadness. They were three men lying by the side of the narrow way fast asleep, and when Christian came quite close to them, he saw that they had irons on their legs.

Now, I never saw a man in irons until some time ago, when, away in Tangier, we were taken to the prison, and there were allowed to look through a hole in the door. There were men, some sitting, some lying on the floor, some attempting to walk about with irons on their ankles. They could only take very short steps, and at every step they took there was the clank of the irons. One

felt very sorry for such sufferers, and wondered what they had done, and whether they were sorry for themselves.

For the remarkable thing about the men whom Christian saw sleeping by the side of the narrow way was that they were not at all sorry. I suppose the very idea of putting a man in irons is to make him sorry for what he has done, and to make him resolve that he will never do the like again. But, so far from being sorry, these men did not seem to know that they were in irons. They were fast asleep, and, like some of you in the morning, they objected to being awakened, and indeed refused to be woken up by Christian.

Now, here is a thing to be very carefully thought about. Here are people who are on the narrow way, but are not walking in it. Instead of walking they are sleeping, like children who go to school with a satchel of books every morning, but who never really learn anything because they never work. Do you know anything of boys who are at school but who have left off working?

These three men were on the way of pilgrimage, but they had left off being pilgrims, and had gone to sleep.

So, dear children, it is possible to start being a pilgrim, and to leave it off, to be like the man of whom the Psalmist says, 'He left off to be wise and to do good.'

What was it that stopped these three men and put them into irons? I think Bunyan tells us. The first man was just *silly*, always doing senseless things and saying foolish words. He did not realise that it requires much sense and wisdom to be a pilgrim, and he had just talked silly talk and sung silly songs till he had laughed and sung away all his love for good things, and his foolishness had become a habit which held him fast.

The second man was *idle*. He had plenty of ability and plenty of strength; but he was too idle to read his Bible or any other good book; too idle to climb the Hill Difficulty or any other hill; too idle to fight the wicked things in his own heart; and too idle to fight his own idleness. Thus, though one day he roused himself, and summoned up energy enough to go in at the Wicket Gate, so that everybody who knew him thought that he had made a new start, yet it soon became too much fag for him to keep on trying to be good, and when Christian saw him he was fast asleep. The irons were fastened on his legs, and they had the name "idleness" stamped on them for everybody who passed by to see.

The third man had been *conceited*. He thought that he knew everything, and there was no need for *him* patiently to learn. He thought, too, that he was good enough for anything, now that he had begun to be a pilgrim, and that there was no need for him to strive to be any better. He thought also that, being a pilgrim, he could behave just

as he pleased; and so he got laid in fetters. It was just his pride that stopped him from being a real pilgrim.

Here, then, we get these three people, all of them foolish, all of them a little idle, one of them very proud, and all of them so satisfied that Christian had to leave them, and I am afraid they never got any farther. They were a warning to Christian, as they should be to us. First, they remind us of the fact that it is not enough to begin to be Christians; we must keep on and on and on, beginning afresh every day; and, secondly, that it is a *serious thing* to be a Christian, a thing needing all our thought and care, all our prayer and endeavour, and all the grace and help that God gives to those who humbly seek them at His hands.

## CHAPTER 10

### UP THE HILL DIFFICULTY

KEEPING on our way through the story of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, we find that soon after leaving Simple, Sloth, and Presumption asleep in their irons Christian came to a very steep, rough hill, and the narrow path led straight up the face of it. Whenever I read this story I do so sympathise with this lonely pilgrim — I am glad and thankful that Christian lost his burden before he came to the hill. How he would have clambered up it with that burden one cannot tell. It seems certain that he never could. As it was, it was terribly hard. Still, I am always glad that Bunyan put the Hill Difficulty in *Pilgrim's Progress*. If some people had had the writing of the book, they would not have put it in. Of course it would have been in the pilgrim's way, whether Bunyan had put it in or not; but to feel that it is there shows what a true teacher the Bedfordshire tinker was, and how wise God had made him. For we all know, who have tried it — and those who have tried it longest and most earnestly know best — how hard it is to be good. It is not always so; Bunyan did not make the path *all a Hill Difficulty*. But *sometimes it is so*; when people provoke us, and blame us when we do not deserve it; when we have disagreeable duties; when we wake up with a very cross temper and a very wicked spirit; sometimes, too, when no one praises us; and when we are disappointed of some pleasure to which we had looked forward. Then how hard it is!

I want to tell you that it is hard to be a Christian. It is hard to be anything that is worth being. The Lord Jesus always told people it was not easy to follow Him. He warned His disciples to expect difficulties.

Paul told Timothy the same thing, and bade him not to be afraid of them.

And Christian was *not* afraid of the hill. He began to go up it singing; and, though he had no breath for singing before he got to the top, or even half-way up, he did not complain. He was so thankful to have lost his burden and to have his beautiful clothes and his book that I think he would have climbed, or tried to climb, twenty hills.

Now, some of you perhaps have a Hill Difficulty before you. There is something *right* that you ought to do, and it will be very hard to do it. But God wants you to do it; He knows what is best,

and He wants you to do it because He loves you. Do not shirk it. You like to do hard things, brave things, for those whom you love, and you always admire the people you read of who *do* the hard and the brave things, and you look down on the people who have not courage enough to face them. Do not act so that you will have to look down on yourself.

There were two men walking with Christian, who had come tumbling over the wall just before, who would not climb the hill. There were two other paths at the foot — easy paths without any climbing; and when they saw these they chose them.

There are people who always choose the easy path. They do not ask about a path or a thing 'Is it right?' but 'Is it easy?' They are not good people. They may pretend to be good, like one of the men Christian met. They may *think* they are good, like the other person. They may even do some good things. But they are not really and genuinely good. The good man, and the man who really wants to be good, always asks 'What is right?' and, though it be a very big steep hill, he will go up it.

Boys and girls, keep watch against the lazy spirit, the spirit that does not want to climb hills; fight against it, and ask God to help you to conquer it. You know what happened to the two men who would not 'fag' up the hill. One wandered into a great wood, where I suppose he was lost; the other found himself among some dark mountains, where he fell and rose no more. Something like that always happens to people who will not go up the steep hill of duty.

Climbing is very hard, but it is very inspiring. You often get some wonderful views by climbing. And you know that Christian found something very lovely indeed a little beyond the top of the hill. The Palace Beautiful was there, with all its delights. We will not think about that now, except to say that there is something like it at the top of every steep hill of duty. There was also a wonderful spring of water at the foot of the hill, and an arbour to rest in half way up.

So I would say to you who see great difficulties in the path of obedience to Jesus. Do not be afraid — go straight for them with a song of cheer, with trust in Jesus, who will help you over them all. Remember Bunyan's words —

Better though difficult the right way to go  
Than wrong though easy where the end is woe.

## CHAPTER 11

### SLEEP AND WHAT CAME OF IT

I THINK I have said before that we may be very thankful that, in drawing the portrait of a Christian pilgrim, Bunyan does not show us a man who does always what he ought to do. If he had done so, we should, some of us, have been much discouraged; we should have said, 'There is no use in our trying to be Christian pilgrims.' The *Pilgrim's Progress* is like the Bible in this, and not one of the men and women in it is perfect. They all do sometimes what they ought not to do. So it was with Christian.

We saw in our last study that he went straight up the Hill Difficulty, and went at it with a song. Then, when he was more than half way up, and the worst of the climbing was over, he did what he ought not to have done; he went into an arbour, a cool and beautiful place for pilgrims to rest in, which was perfectly right; but there he went fast asleep, which was perfectly wrong. I do not know how long he would have slept, but some one looked in at the door, and shouted, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.' Then Christian woke up with a great start, and found that he had slept till it was nearly night.

Now, where was the harm of going to sleep? Of course, there is no harm in going to sleep at the right time and in the right place. The harm was that Christian went to sleep at the wrong time and the wrong place. The arbour on the hill was not intended to sleep in, only for the pilgrims to sit down and rest in for just a little while, and then to go on climbing. It is all very well for an errand boy with a load of parcels to sit and rest for a few minutes, on his round, on a warm day, but to go to sleep on the footpath, or to start playing a game, is quite a wrong thing. He should leave that till his parcels are delivered and his work is done.

It was well for Christian to take a rest, but not a long rest, because his climbing was not finished.

Now, I have no doubt that there are boys and girls who sleep physically when they ought not, especially in the morning. But there are some people who seem to be drowsy in their mind all the day long. They seem half asleep in everything but eating and playing, and it would be a great thing for us all to realise that there is a time and place for sleep. The time is night, the place is your bed. But when the day has begun, with its duties, then is the time to be wide awake and earnest — that is, to put your whole heart into what you are doing and not to be dreaming about other things.



There is a great danger, especially with some of us, of going to sleep at the wrong time. I once knew a lad who used to go to sleep walking along *the* road and when he stood still at his work. I have even seen people asleep in church. Indeed, one of the great troubles that some parents have with their children, and one of the great troubles that some people ought to have about themselves, is that they are awake when they ought to be asleep, and asleep when they ought to be awake.

But there is another kind of sleep, and that is the kind that Bunyan tells us of, that is, the sleep of the soul. We are in earnest for a little while about being good; we strive and climb, and then we leave off. How is it?

I tried to find out how it was that Christian went to sleep and I think I succeeded. First, he read his roll; then he looked at his beautiful embroidered coat and admired it. Then, I fancy, he thought of the three men he had seen asleep; then of the two men who would not climb the hill; then of his own climbing; until he was quite pleased with himself for being so good, and so 'pleasing himself', Bunyan says, he fell asleep; and so, except that he woke up when he was called, he was no better for the time being than Simple, Sloth, and Presumption; at any rate, he fell into their fault.

It was just a little self-satisfaction and conceit that sent Christian off to sleep. And that is a complaint that we easily catch, especially when we have done a bit of climbing and somebody praises us. Both in the ladder of school life and the ladder of character we often fail to see that there is a great deal of climbing still to be done.

Now think what came of Christian's sleep. He lost the precious roll that the Shining One had given him, which he was to read on the way, and give in at the gate of the Celestial City. Nor did he discover his loss till he got to the top of the hill. You know how distressed he was about it, and how he had to retrace his steps down to the arbour again, and so to go over the ground three times that he need only have trodden once; and how he found his roll under the bench in the arbour; and how eagerly he snatched it up; and how thankfully he went forward, though it was nearly night, and pressed on till he came to the palace. You know it all, or, if you do not, I hope you will not be too sleepy to read it. And remember that we nearly always lose something when we go to sleep as Christian did, and often we do not find it again. Some people never find out their loss till they come to the end of their journey. It is well to keep in mind the words of Paul : 'Let not sleep as do others; let us watch and be sober.'

## CHAPTER 12

### THE PALACE AND THE LIONS

BEFORE Christian discovered that he had lost his roll, he met two men, named respectively Mistrust and Timorous, running as fast as they could. When Christian expressed his surprise at their running in the wrong direction, they told him that they had tried to go on pilgrimage. But,' said they, 'the farther we go the more trouble we get into, and so we have made up our minds to give it up and go back. For example, we had no sooner climbed up this terrible hill, than what should we see but two lions lying in the way. Whether they were asleep or awake we did not wait to see. We don't know what we should come to next, if we went on; so we made up our minds to return.'

What these men said greatly frightened Christian, and after he had got his roll and had hurried on, and the sun had set, so that it was growing dark, he was nearly driven back himself; for there in front of him, in the narrow way that led past the Palace Beautiful, he saw the thing that had terrified Mistrust and Timorous — two lions, one on each side of the path between him and the palace. I think that he would have gone back, but that Watchful, the porter, saw him, and shouted to him that the lions were chained, and that if he would keep in the middle of the path, no harm would come to him. So, hardly daring to breathe, Christian walked between the lions, who roared and looked very fierce, but did him no harm; and thus he came to the palace.

All this means, my dear children, that, though many difficulties and dangers lie in the pathway of duty, no harm will come to him who walks bravely on and trusts in God.

But what shall we say of the Palace Beautiful? It was lovely, when Christian once got safely settled in it. He had a bed-room, which looked towards the sunrise, and was called Peace, and where the bed was so soft and comfortable that Christian slept in it till break of day and then woke, singing. There was a museum there, too, in which were all manner of interesting and curious things; and there was an armoury into which Christian was taken when he was ready to start, and where he was fitted out with all the armour and the weapons that he needed to defend

him against the dangers of the way. Altogether it was one of the most delightful experiences that Christian had in all his pilgrimage.

So, then, going on pilgrimage, which means, of course, living the Christian life — following Jesus every day — is not all made up of Hill Difficulties and Sloughs of Despond and lions. There are some quiet, restful, beautiful experiences where we feel that it is blissful and the happiest thing in the world to be a Christian.

But they are very difficult to get at; people what we should come to next, if we went on; so we made up our minds to return.'

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But they are very difficult to get at; people must be very real, very brave, and very persevering to get into the Palace Beautiful. There was not only the Hill Difficulty and the lions, but also the porter Watchful, who was almost like a lion himself. Watchful asked Christian so many questions — where he came from, where he was going to, what his name, why he was so late; and Christian had to tell all about his sleep. Then he called out one of the damsels of the place, and she asked quite as many questions as Watchful. Then she summoned two or three more

members of the family, and they asked him the questions over again. And even when he was called in, before supper was ready, they put to him so many questions about his wife and family and why he had not brought them, about the Interpreter's House, and much more, that if Christian had not been a real pilgrim, he would either have been unable to answer the questions or would have been offended that so many were asked.

Now, I daresay some of you who are really trying to understand the *Pilgrim's Progress* are ready to ask, 'What does the Palace Beautiful stand for?' Some think it stands for the Church, like the Interpreter's House, and perhaps it does in some things. At any rate, it means the company, the real and happy company, of the very best people in the world, not the richest people, but the really good people of pure and beautiful character. Such people do not easily let any one into their closest friendship. They want to know all about you, and they ask many questions, and expect a good deal from you; but those they do admit find much happiness and help. For in all this world there is nothing so helpful as a pure and high and beautiful friendship. I hope that you will try to make friends with those who are really good, not who flatter you, who rather expect much from you, but who will help you to be better and truer and braver pilgrims.

## CHAPTER 13

### THE FIGHT WITH APOLLYON

ALL readers of the *Pilgrim's Progress* remember the fight of Christian with Apollyon. If Christian wondered why the people in the Palace Beautiful armed him from head to heel, he understood it when he reached the Valley of Humiliation. There took place one of the fiercest fights that we read of in the whole of this book, a fight in which Christian was in great peril, a fight in which it seemed at one time as if he would lose his life.

An awful monster, clothed with scales like a fish, with feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion, and yet able to talk like a man, came to meet Christian, told him he belonged to him, that he had escaped from his service and he had come to fetch him back again. Then, when Christian told him he had engaged himself to another Master and refused to go back, and especially when he would not be persuaded by threats or promises to return, Apollyon flew into a great rage, and determined there and then to kill Christian. And for a time it seemed that he would succeed.

For half a day they fought and Christian was wounded in head and hand and foot. His sword flew out of his hand, but by God's good providence he caught hold of it once again and actually wounded the monster.

Now, I do not know what you think of this part of the story. You will never see, and no one has ever really seen, such a hideous creature as Apollyon. The portrait is intended to set before us the awful ugliness of sin; and that great battle is a picture of a great temptation, the temptation of one who has got away out of sin's clutches, one whom sin wants to get back again. It is intended also to teach what the New Testament teaches, that there is a great and terrible spirit of evil, who is allowed to tempt men and lead them astray, and who, when they have escaped from wrong ways and habits, tries to lead them back again. Sometimes this tempter appeals to us through a companion or friend, who wants us to join him in doing what we ought not to do, though we may have done it before. Everybody who has tried to be good, to follow Jesus, knows what it is to be tempted. Everybody who has got away from bad habits — such as idleness, carelessness, untruthfulness, or rudeness — knows what it is to be tempted to go back to them again. We have days when we feel how delightful it is to be good — days like those which Christian spent in the Palace Beautiful. Then we have days when it seems as if we really must give up trying to be good; it is such a hard battle that we feel we shall be obliged to yield. And some of us *do* give up and we go back. We try for a time to work hard, to be attentive, and truthful, and unselfish, but we do not keep it up.

Now, you will remember that Christian *conquered*. It was a very, very hard battle, but he won. And we may all win. God intends us to win; He will help us to win. The great danger with many of us is that we may not fight, that we may yield as soon as we see Apollyon. But I will tell you why Christian fought. He saw Apollyon just as he was, in all his ugliness. If he had not been in the Palace Beautiful, perhaps he would not have seen him so. He might have been deceived

into thinking that Apollyon was not so very ugly after all; he might even have thought that he was a beautiful angel.

You know, boys and girls, that is how we are generally tempted. We get away from bad ways and thoughts as Christian got away from the City of Destruction; and then one day somebody suggests to us that they were not so very bad after all. We tell ourselves that it is not such a terrible thing to be lazy, to waste time, to neglect duty, to say what is not quite true, to think what is not quite pure, that there is no great harm in leaving off prayer, in pleasing ourselves rather than listening to the voice of Conscience, which says, `You ought.'

Very often our danger lies in the fact that Apollyon is rather good-looking. By this I mean that we do not see how ugly and horrid sin is. To a serpent and a dragon the Bible likens it, and we may well pray that God will open our eyes to see how hideous it is.

Now remember, dear children, that every one who truly follows Jesus will have a battle to fight, often a hard and fierce battle, with temptation and sin, but that we may win the victory as Christian did, Let us pray God to open our eyes to see how evil sin is, and to give us strength and courage to fight against and overcome it.

## CHAPTER 14

### THE TERRIBLE VALLEY

I SOMETIMES wonder what sort of a story John Bunyan would have made of the *Pilgrim's Progress* if he had told it to children on Sunday mornings. You know that John Bunyan was a preacher, and that he was sent to Bedford Jail for preaching. No doubt he had children in his congregation, but his preaching was not to children, and one sometimes thinks that if he had written a children's version of the *Pilgrim's Progress* he would have left out of it the Valley of the Shadow. But he has put it in, and we have to look at it. A terrible enough place it is — a place worse for Christian than the fight with Apollyon.

There was a long, dark valley like a tunnel, but worse than any tunnel you ever saw. There was a narrow path, with a deep ditch on one side, and on the other a dangerous bog, which, if he had fallen into it, would have swallowed him up.

What is more, to Christian it seemed to be full of all sorts of horrid shapes and sounds. Dreadful creatures seemed to whiz past him, and one of them whispered all manner of terrible things in

his ears; while the latter part of the way was full of snares and traps, in any of which poor Christian might have been caught and held fast, so that he could not go on his way.

Now, when one reads this chapter in the pilgrim's experience, one can imagine boys and girls thinking, 'What a dreadful thing it must be to be a Christian, to have to fight with a horrid monster like Apollyon, and then to have to pass through such a gloomy and truly frightful place as this valley! 'Why, that was what two men thought whom Christian met at the beginning of the valley. They were running back; for the very sight

of the valley had frightened them. It was worse than the Slough of Despond and the Hill Difficulty put together; 'and we always thought it was such an entirely happy thing to be a Christian, that people went singing on all the way till they came to heaven!'

Well, dear children, *nobody gets through this world without trouble*. Sometimes it is trouble of body, sometimes trouble of soul; and the Valley of the Shadow means trouble of soul. It means a time of dark temptation, when all sorts of horrid thoughts are suggested to the mind, and all sorts of fears possess the soul. A really good boy or man may have detestable thoughts come into his mind, thoughts that are like ugly, crawling things that only come out in the night-time.

Of course there are people who would not think these things horrid. I have heard of a boy who carried a toad in his pocket, and of a man who made a great pet of a pig and would have it in his dining-room. So, I suppose, there are people who would *welcome* thoughts into their hearts that are really ugly, and they would be quite at home in the Valley of the Shadow.

For another thing, the valley is much worse to some people than to others. When Faithful, whom Christian overtook a little farther on, went through it, he had sunshine all the way, and these horrid shapes that Christian felt or imagined were neither seen nor heard. When the boys came through they had company, and Greatheart to guide them; and things are not nearly as bad to bear when you have company.

One wonders sometimes how it is that some people have so much more trouble of body and of mind than others. It is not necessarily because they have been worse people. I do not think that Christian had been worse than Faithful. He came from the same town, but he seems to have had much less trouble till they got to Vanity Fair.

Perhaps it is that God sometimes says to people, 'Now I want you to show others how much you can bear, and how I can help you through and out of the greatest troubles and dangers.' And, you know, I really think Faithful could not have borne as much as Christian did. I question if he could have fought Apollyon, for he had no armour and no sword; and if it had been dark in the valley it is impossible to say what would have happened. Then he missed the delightful time that Christian had in the Palace Beautiful. What I, at any rate, think John Bunyan means to teach is that no two pilgrims fare just the same. Something depends on the time they go on pilgrimage, something on themselves, something on God.



After all I am not sure that you would like a life that had no adventure, no trouble in it. It may be very pleasant, but it is not very thrilling or interesting. When Christiana and her children were going through the valley, and it was rather dark, one of the boys said, 'Well, anyhow, we shall prize the light all the more when it comes.' It came almost directly, and they all felt rather glad and brave that they had had a taste of the darkness. We often are when it is past.

After all, the chief thing is not whether the good way be dark or light, but that we keep on in it, never turning back, never doubting that clouds will break and light will come, and never doubting that at the end there is the Celestial City, where there is no more night.

## **CHAPTER 15**

### **CHRISTIAN FINDS A COMPANION**

FOR two chapters, we have seen Christian in very distressing circumstances, and have been made quite sorry for him. First, there was his fight with Apollyon, then his dreary and horrid journey through the terrible valley. No small part of the trouble in both these experiences was that he was quite alone. I suppose that most people have to go quite alone through such experiences as those set forth by these two parables.

No sooner, however, has Christian escaped from the valley than he overtakes another pilgrim. What is most interesting about this other pilgrim is that he comes from the same place as Christian and is going to the same city. Christian recognises in him an old neighbour.

Now, there is one very remarkable thing about this part of the story. Although Christian and Faithful came from the same town and were going the same way, they were scarcely a bit alike.

After Christian had inquired about his old friends, especially about Pliable, who went back, they began to compare notes. Then they saw how widely they differed from each other, and what a different thing going on pilgrimage had been for Faithful from what it had been to Christian. Faithful had had no burden on his back; he had not fallen into the slough; he had not so much as seen Apollyon, not to speak of fighting him; and, last but not least, he had had sunshine all though the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

It is a very remarkable thing in this story that when it is night with one man it is day with the other. What *does* it mean? Well, partly this, that good people are not all alike. Even good boys are not, any more than bad boys are. We sometimes try to make them alike, but we cannot succeed; or, if we think we do, the results are artificial and not real. God does not make two flowers alike; but He makes all flowers beautiful. So he does not make two pilgrims alike, though every real pilgrim has some beauty. We say that people cannot be Christians unless they do this and that and the other. God seems to say everybody is a Christian who loves Jesus and strives to follow Him; and we differ, just as children differ in the colour of their hair and eyes, in their tastes and habits, though they are born of the same father and mother, like Jacob and Esau and like Mary and Martha. One is good in one way, another in another, and the best of us is not good altogether.

I wonder what it is that makes Christian and Faithful so different. There is some-thing, no doubt, in the name. Look at the name of Christian's companion, 'Faithfull' as Bunyan originally spelt it — two *ells* at the end — meaning, not only one who could be relied on to do what he undertook, but one who was full of faith, or if you like full of trust. That meant, of course, that he was of a bright and sunny disposition and Christian was not. Christian had many fears and was often very sad. Then Faithful's temper was calm like the sea when there is not a ripple on it, and Christian's nature was very stormy and passionate.

But they were both pilgrims, and they went on very lovingly together. Neither of them thought that the other was not a pilgrim. Neither of them said, 'Well, it was not fair that you should have had

this and I should not have had it.' There were compensations. There were some things that Faithful had not had. He had not had the great joy of losing his burden, which Christian had. He had not gone between the lions; but he had not stayed at the Palace Beautiful. He had not seen Apollyon; but he had been cruelly pinched and knocked down, and he would have been killed, he thought, but for One who passed by with prints of nails in His hands, who stopped the man who was apparently going to kill him. And he had met two curious people in the Valley of Humiliation called Discontent and Shame, who had done their best, the one to set him grumbling, and the other to make him ashamed of being a pilgrim. So even he had not been without his trials, though they had differed greatly from those of Christian.

Then these two men were a great comfort and help to each other, and when one reads this part of Bunyan's wonderful story one thinks what a blessing a good companion is when you are trying to be good. I remember well two lads, not more than ten years old, as many as forty years ago, sitting on a stile in the lovely country, one Sunday afternoon after school, and talking about being Christians, and what a help they were to one another. You know Christian badly wanted a companion. He tried to get one in Pliable, but he had to part with him because Pliable would *not* go on; and then God gave him Faithful.

And these two were all the more help to each other because they were different. It is always a pity when a boy who is lazy gets into company with another lazy boy. Christian needed Faithful. Christian seemed to be that sort of man who, if there was any trouble about, was sure to fall into it — always in hot water, as people say. No sooner had he overtaken Faithful than he fell down, and how he would have got up but for the help of his friend no one knows.

And Faithful needed Christian. If Christian had not been with him when Talkative came up with them, he was so simple and trustful that Talkative would quite have deceived him, and no one knows what the end would have been.

The great thing about these two pilgrims is that they helped one another. They did not flatter each other. On the contrary, they spoke very plainly and sharply. But they loved one another, and they learned from and encouraged each other; and, dear children, one of the greatest things that we can do in this world, and most pleasing to God, is to help each other to be good.

## CHAPTER 16

### MR. TALKATIVE

SHORTLY after Christian overtook Faithful on his way to the Celestial City, they both fell in with a man named Talkative, who appeared at least to be a pilgrim. He was such a nicely-spoken gentleman that Faithful was at first quite charmed with him, and was almost ready to take him to his heart at once and make a close friend and companion of him. Indeed, he would have done so, but that Christian knew Talkative and saw through him. When Faithful inquired what was wrong with so pleasant a man, it seemed there were two things wrong.

Talkative was, of course, as his name implies, a great talker; and these were the two things wrong: (1) He liked to agree with everybody with whom he talked. So he was ready to talk to Faithful on things heavenly or earthly, things sacred or profane, high or low.

But he also liked everybody to say, 'What a nice fellow he is!' He could not bear to leave a disagreeable impression on anybody except the people who lived with him, his wife and children and servants. To them he was as disagreeable as could be.

Now, unhappily there are people like that, both grown up and growing up people. They look so pleasant and speak so politely and nicely, and behave so agreeably when they are out, that people think how nice and sweet and beautiful they are. But if they could only see these persons at home with their children, or their parents, or their younger brothers and sisters, they would not know them for the same people.

Of course, it means that these people are not really nice, or sweet, or good, because where people are really so they are so everywhere. It means that they want to be thought nice and agreeable and good. So they sometimes make promises, and then

The other thing about Talkative is this — (2) He does *nothing but talk*. There again is one of our dangers—to talk a great deal and do very little, to put talking in the place of doing. Perhaps you know people who talk about what ought to be done, but who never think that it is their business to do it; who talk quite eloquently of what others should do, but do not think of what they have failed to do; or who boast of what their school or their society or their church has done, and all the time, if the truth were known, it would be seen that they have had no part in it.

And then there are those, a very large number, who talk much of what they *are going* to do. They are going to get up early in the morning, to work hard at their lessons, to read certain books, to learn how to do certain things; but it all ends in talk. After a certain amount of talk there is a great silence, and somehow or other the books are not read, the useful things are not learned, the early rising is not done, and they become very angry if any one reminds them of what they were going to do.

So, dear children, let us remember that there may be something very deceitful in talk, and that there is danger in talking too much. Our Lord said of some people, '*They say and do not.*' There is an old proverb which warns us that 'great talkers are little doers.' We none of us need to guard against doing too much; we do need to guard against *talking* too much.

Here is good and sound advice: Do as much good as ever you can; say as little about it as ever you can, whether you are going to do it or have already done it; keep silent and let others talk about it. Do not earn the name of Talkative.



## CHAPTER 17

### IN VANITY FAIR

ONE of the strangest places that Christian passed through was Vanity Fair, where, as every reader of the *Pilgrim's Progress* knows, Christian lost his companion Faithful. It is just possible that some children who read about this 'Fair'. with its booths and shows and stalls and noisy crowds, and see how the people bothered, and tempted, and teased, and persecuted Christian and Faithful, are puzzled by it, and wonder what it means.

Bunyan tell us that every pilgrim must go through the Fair, even as he must go through the Dark Valley; and when we read how Christian and Faithful were mocked and ill-treated, smeared with dirt, and put into a cage, and then tried before a judge and jury, and that Faithful was condemned to death and killed, we may well ask what the 'Fair' means.

We shall not understand Bunyan's Vanity Fair unless we remember something of the time in which he lived and of his own experiences. In the latter part, at any rate, of Bunyan's life England was very much like a great noisy pleasure fair. People seemed to have gone mad on pleasure. They went to church, but I am afraid that, in the case of many, it was not to worship. There was a great outburst of foolish frivolity and a great deal of wickedness. The new king and the people seemed to forget God. And really good people, earnest Christian people, had a very hard time of it.

John Bunyan himself was sent to jail, not for doing anything wicked, but because he was a true and good man — chiefly because he would preach the gospel as he felt called to do, and because he would not join in the ungodly pleasures of his time but kept as far away from them as he could.

Those of you who know the *Pilgrim's Progress* know the name of the judge who sentenced Faithful to death. Hate-good was his name, and there was a judge in England who deserved to be so-called, who really did hate all good and love all manner of evil. Many people were hated and persecuted and imprisoned in England in those days, because they said, 'We must be true to God and to the voice within which tells us what is right.' Just because they would not do as the world wanted them, but would do as they believed God wanted them, they were hated and persecuted and imprisoned, and some of them killed. And that was what made John Bunyan write of 'Vanity Fair.'

You will say, 'Well, is there a Vanity Fair for us, and if so, where is it?'

Well, I do not think you are likely to be put into a cage and dragged through the streets to prison. But, if you are really bent on following Jesus with all your heart, there will be some people who

will try to tempt you away from Him — people who only care for their own pleasure and not at all for you are doing what Jesus bids; people who never think of asking what He would have them do, but only of doing what they like, whether it be right or wrong. They will try to get you to go with them, and if you will not go, they will think you very strange, and perhaps make fun of you; they may even hate you. Such things have been known as boys at school being mocked because they read their Bible and prayed by their bedside night and morning, and because they refused to do certain things, and when asked why, answered, 'Because I do not think it right.'

It is to be feared that there are still people in the world who if you are interested in good things, good books, good causes — if you read missionary books, for example — and try to be an earnest Christian, will think you very odd. They do not understand how anybody except old people can really enjoy anything of that sort: the chief thing they care for is some entertainment; and anything to do with religion they cannot bear

I am very much afraid that there are people in the world who really dislike and even hate goodness. And, what is more, there is a tempter within us who suggests that it is quite right that you should please yourself rather than please God, and urges you to leave the path of duty and go after pleasure. So we need to watch. Vanity Fair is much nearer to us than we suppose. I earnestly pray that when you are going through its temptations God will give you strength to be true to Him and to obey the voice within.



## CHAPTER 18

### JUDGE AND JURY

OF all the people whom Christian encountered on his journey not one was worse than the Judge and Jury who tried Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair. Of the Judge I told you something last time. Now we will think about some of the jury. Not all of them —because it would take us too long, and they are hardly worth thinking about — but some, e.g., Mr. Blind-man, Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Hate-light, and Mr. Cruelty.

What a terrible set of people to fall into the hands of! We may be sure that when the pilgrims looked at their faces, and the face of the judge, they would conclude that there was very little hope for them. Where was the use of trying to show what was right to Mr. Blind-man, who could not see, and Mr. Hate-light, who would not? And what justice could be expected from Mr. No-good, or mercy from Mr. Malice or Mr. Cruelty?

The sad thing is that there were such people in the world in the days of John Bunyan, and these names are all portraits of people whom he had met. And a still sadder thing is they did not all die in John Bunyan's time. There are some of them living now or their relatives. You ask, How was it that the people of Vanity Fair were so angry with the pilgrims? Why should Mr. Malice say of Faithful, 'I hate the very look of him.'? They had harmed nobody; all they asked to be allowed to do was to go quietly on their way through the town.

The only reasons I can find are, first, that the pilgrims would not buy any of the things that were for sale in Vanity Fair, because they had no use for them, and because some of them were hurtful and dangerous to people who had them. But, secondly, they would not do as the people of the town did. But, thirdly, and worst of all, a few people in the town said, 'These people are quite right, and we are quite wrong, and we shall go with them.'

Now, while we are thinking of all these horrid people who hated and persecuted the pilgrims and killed Faithful, let us ask a question, that is: Are we at all like them? It is rather a startling question, and you are surprised at me for suggesting it. But now think; we do not naturally like people who differ from us, who do not like the things we like, and will not do the things we do. They may have good reasons for differing from us, better reasons than we have for *our* actions, but we do not generally like them. We are apt to think them queer, and to make fun of them. And if we would not claim relation to these unlovely people, Mr. Blind-man and Mr. Hate-light, we should ask, when people are different from us, 'Is it possible after all that they are right and I am wrong?'

Another thing to be remembered, and a very sad thing, is that we do not *always* like the people *who are better than we are*. The lazy boy is not particularly fond of the boy who works hard and faithfully, and he is not always delighted to hear him praised. The boy who behaves badly really does not like the boy who puts him to shame by his good behaviour. Bad people do

not like good people as a rule, and especially if the good people say, 'We think you are wrong, and we shall not go with you', and if others are won from their side by those who do well.

No one has ever lived so beautiful a life as the Lord Jesus, and He said to His friends, 'Do not be surprised if the world hate you; it hated Me before it hated you.' And of the men of His time He said, 'They hated Me without a cause.' It seems the saddest thing in human nature that men could look at the pure and lovely life of Jesus and hate Him. About other good people it might be possible to say, 'People disliked them because of their faults,' because all good people have faults; but that could never be said about our Lord, and yet people hated and killed Him.

Dear children, it is possible for us to hate people who reprove us, who tell us they think we are wrong. Let us watch our hearts carefully, and if we find dislike of any-body springing up there, let us be quite honest, let us ask, 'Is it because they are really better than I am — more earnest, more truthful, more helpful, more prayerful?' 'If for these reasons we allow dislike, envy, malice to spring up in our hearts, so that when these people are praised we speak unkind and damaging words, and if when they are blamed or get into trouble we are glad, then we belong to this dreadful jury. That is just the spirit, hating people who were better than they, that put Faithful to death.

It is just possible that some of you, on the other hand, will have to endure suffering because you will not turn aside from what you know to be right. If that should be your lot, then remember Faithful, how steadfast and brave he was; and that though they put him to death, there was a chariot waiting to take him to the Celestial City; and what is more, a number of the people of Vanity Fair who saw his sufferings and his patience resolved to leave the town and start on pilgrimage. Even the people who mock the right may be won by it. Most of all we should remember *Him who*, when He was reviled, reviled not again.

## CHAPTER 19

### MR. BY-ENDS

YOU know that after Christian lost Faithful in Vanity Fair another companion was given to him, whose name and nature were quite as delightful, and who went with him quite to the end of his journey. The name of the new companion was Hopeful.

It is not about him, however, that I shall speak just now, but about another man, whom Christian and Hopeful overtook, and with whom they had some talk. He was one of the many strange people they met with in their journey.

He was a good deal like Talkative; and though John Bunyan does not tell us so, I suspect myself that he was a relative of Talkative. He came from the town of Fair-speech, and in that town there were many relations of his. Their names are very curious — My Lord Turn-about, Lord Time-server, Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways were some of them. As for the minister, he was called Mr. Two-tongues, and he was the uncle of Mr. By-ends. The latter had greatly prospered in life, for his great-grandfather was only a boatman, who spent most of his time looking one way and rowing another. Mr. By-ends refused to tell the pilgrims his name; and when Christian guessed who he was, he said that this was not his real name but a nickname given to him by people who did not like him, just as boys give each other nicknames at school.

He may have been right about that; but then a nickname is sometimes truer to the character of a boy than his real name, and it was so in the case of Mr. By-ends.

But what does the name mean? Well, it implies that there was nothing noble about this man. Even when he did what seemed to be a right thing and a good thing, like going on a pilgrimage, he did it in a wrong spirit, and for a wrong and mean and selfish reason. Indeed, in the town where he lived you could never tell what people meant or what they believed. They would say one thing and mean another. Nobody was sincere. Even the minister never asked whether a thing that he said was true, but only whether it would please the people who were there that morning, or the richest people present; and if he preached to another set of hearers in the evening, who thought differently, then he would try to preach what they believed. It made things pleasant all round, and he was very popular, because he never disagreed with anybody.

I will try to tell you what sort of a person By-ends was. If you had been at school with him, and you had been a rich or clever boy, he would have done anything for you. He would have praised you and flattered you and fagged for you, and shared his tuck with you — not because he loved you, or because you were noble and good, but because he hoped you would notice him, and help him, and share your 'tuck' with him, and perhaps ask him to your nice home in the holidays.

And if you asked him which side he was on, his answer would depend on which side the majority were on or which side is likely to win.

If the majority of the boys in his dormitory knelt down to say their prayers at night and it was considered bad form not to do it, he would kneel down; and if only two or three knelt down and the rest joined in making fun of them, you may be sure that little By-ends would not be among the two or three.

Mr. By-ends never asked whether a thing was right and noble, or whether Jesus wished it, but whether it was easy and pleasant, and whether many did it or only a few. And when he did right, it was either because he would get into trouble for not doing it, or because he expected to get something out of it for himself, and never because he loved it. When he did a kind thing it was not out of a good and kind heart, but because he believed it paid to be kind. So you see, dear children, By-ends was always thinking about himself and doing all things for his own sake and not for the sake of Jesus or for the sake of others' good.

How did he come to go on pilgrimage? Well, for one thing, a number of his friends were going, and for a little while it was fashionable. They all thought there was something to be got out of the journey, and they were taking it very easily. They never travelled when it rained, but waited for fine weather; and they found out all manner of short cuts and pleasant by-ways so that they avoided the Valley of Humiliation and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. They walked on the narrow way where it was smooth and easy and went off it where it became rough. By-ends had no love for pilgrimage itself and no love for the King.

*And he never got to the Celestial City.* Near to the King's highway there was a silver-mine, and a man named Demas stood by it trying to tempt pilgrims to leave the path to come and look and make themselves rich. Christian and Hopeful refused to go, but By-ends went. He thought he might fill his pockets with silver, and did not stop to ask whether it was right. Whether they fell

down the shaft and were killed, or whether they stopped there, and became silver-miners instead of pilgrims, Bunyan does not quite know. One thing he does know. The silver-mine was the end of the pilgrimage of By-ends. He was never seen again in the way. He would never get to the Celestial City, for only those who love the King, and have the pure heart and desire, go there.

When I read Bunyan's story over again, I prayed for myself and for the children who read this that God would give us clean and true hearts, help us to love the right, and deliver us all from all pretence and falsehood and selfishness, that we all may be, not in appearance, but in reality, pilgrims and disciples of the Lord Jesus.

## CHAPTER 20

### THE GIANT OF BY-PATH MEADOW

ONE of the best known parts of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is that which tells how the pilgrims left the highway and ventured over a stile into By-path Meadow.

They had been having a lovely time. The road had run along by the side of a beautiful river, with shady fruit-trees on either side, and whose banks were adorned with flowers, and the pilgrims had been as happy as the days were long. Then there came a change. The road led away from the river and the trees and flowers, and it became very rough and very hot. And the pilgrims did not like it. We do not generally like work after holidays, or being blamed after we have been praised.

Both Christian and Hopeful grew footsore and tired — and I am afraid rather cross.

All at once they came to a break in the fence, and there was a stile, and over the stile a pleasant, grassy meadow, and through the meadow a path. They looked at the hard, hot, rough road on one side of the fence and at the green meadow that seemed so tempting on the other; and finally Christian said, 'Why, there is a path going along just in the same direction as the road, and it is so much easier; let us go over.' And though Hopeful was a little doubtful as to their getting into the road again, Christian persuaded him, and over they went.

It was one of the most foolish and sad things they ever did, for the path was very deceitful. It did really lead away from the highway. It came on dark; and in the darkness there was a terrible thunderstorm and the meadow became flooded; and though they tried all they knew to get back to the stile over which they had come they could not find it. Moreover, the floods were out, and nine or ten times they were nearly drowned.

At last, as tired and frightened as two lost children, they sat down, and fell asleep, and there early in the morning a huge and cruel giant found them, who told them in a surly voice that they were trespassing on his grounds and must go with him.

So he took them to his castle, and locked them up in a dark, nasty, and evil-smelling dungeon, where he kept them from Wednesday morning till Saturday night without one bit of bread or drink of water. That is what they got, besides a terrible beating, for going out of the way into By-path Meadow.

Now, I thought several things when I read this story, and I will tell you what they were.

I. That wrong-doing sometimes looks very much like right-doing, as the path looked like going in the same direction. Playing when you ought to be at work and playing in play-time look very much alike; but they are totally different. The one is right and the other is wrong. Christian and Hopeful had just before been in a beautiful meadow where they could walk or lie down in perfect safety; but that was all right, the highway led right through it.

Sometimes we find ourselves wishing it were not wrong to do certain things. We say, 'Well, they are not so very wrong, after all,' and we try to persuade ourselves that they are next door to being right. That is By-path Meadow, and whenever we are tempted to go along it, let us remember the experience of Christian and Hopeful.

II. The second thing I thought was: It often seems much *easier and pleasanter* to do wrong than right. It is so hard sometimes to be kind, and true, and obedient, and unselfish, to give up for the sake of others, to forgive people. It seems much pleasanter to be selfish, to have your own way, to pay people back again, to be idle and careless. Perhaps some children and even some grown-up people who are reading this book have grown very tired in trying to do right. They are asking, perhaps, 'Must I keep on and on and on, not pleasing myself, fighting against wrong, doing my best, doing my duty, when there seems no reward and no one to say, "Well done"? May not I go into the forbidden path for a while? May not I slack down and be idle a bit?' You are at the stile, you are just about to leave the high-road. Now, before you do it, ask, not which is pleasanter, but which is right — 'What would Jesus have me do?'

III. Another thought that came to me from this story is this, that it is very difficult to get into the right road again when once you have got out of it. It is very hard to be industrious after you have been idle, and faithful when you have been careless. It is so perfectly true, as you have often been told, that when you have done one wrong thing you seem obliged to do another, and that when you have once given way to an evil temper it is terribly easier to give way a second time and terribly hard not to give way.

I dare not say you will *never get right again* after you get wrong, because Christian and Hopeful got right again. But everybody does not. There was a man walking before the two pilgrims who fell into a deep pit. He was seen no more. And Giant Despair had the bones of many pilgrims about his castle who had died there, and of course had never got on to the right way again.

Dear children, there are plenty of people who begin by going a little way astray from the right. They do *little* things that are not right, take little things that do not belong to them, and say words that are not quite true but that look nearly true, and neglect little duties for their own pleasure, *and they never get right again.*

Even some of those who do get right again only do so through much sorrow. Christian never ceased to be sorry for leaving the highway for By-path Meadow. He left because the way was so rough; but think what a trying time he had — the dark night and the storm, the cruel giant,

and the dark and nasty dungeon. Why, if he had only pressed on along the rough way, he would soon have got past the rough road to the Delectable Mountains, one of the loveliest places in the whole journey.

And if you keep on the pathway of obedience, the path of right, following Jesus, you will soon come to a smoother and more delightful part of the way. There is something wondrously sweet in doing right, in following Jesus, in keeping on in the pathway of service for others. There is something so sad about departing from it. Such terrible things may happen, that I pray you may keep on the King's Highway, and never stray off into By-path Meadow, which may land you in the dungeon of Doubting Castle, and in the cruel hands of Giant Despair.

## **CHAPTER 21**

### **THE ESCAPE FROM DOUBTING CASTLE**

THE last talk we had about the pilgrims was a very sad one. They had behaved very foolishly. They had left the narrow path because it was rough, and had gone over a stile into a meadow, where they were trespassing. Darkness came on, and a fearful storm, and they lost their way. The end of it was they were found asleep, and carried off to a castle by a cruel giant, and locked up in a dark dungeon, where they were kept for days without food or drink, and were beaten with a heavy cudgel until they were almost dead.

As a matter of fact the giant intended either to kill them himself, or to make them so wretched that they would take their own lives in their misery. Every morning, when he went to see them, and found them still alive, he seemed to be more and more puzzled and angry. Now we are to learn how they escaped.

Each night the giant's wife asked him how his prisoners were; and each night his wife and he expressed their surprise and vexation that they were still alive. On the Saturday night, Mrs. Diffidence suggested to her husband that the pilgrims were stubbornly living on in the hope that somebody would come to let them out, or that they had some picklock about them with which they could open the doors and escape. 'Well,' said the giant, 'I will go to sleep now, and tomorrow I will search them and see.'

But the giant, as you know, never got the chance of searching them. If he had, it is impossible to see how they could ever have got away. That very night the pilgrims did what they ought to have done long before. They prayed to God. Hour after hour in their misery they prayed. And I suppose it was while Christian was clasping his hands or beating his breast in prayer that he felt



something in his pocket. Putting his hand in, he found it was a key, and the thought at once flashed into his mind that this key might open any lock in the castle.

Strangely enough it did — first the door of the cell, then the door of the castle itself, then the outer gate that led into the free country. At the last there was a very narrow escape. The lock went so desperately hard, and the gate made such a horrid creaking noise, that it woke the giant, and the pilgrims would have been captured and killed, but that the giant had one of his fits, which used to seize him in sunshiny weather. Before he had come out of it Christian and Hopeful were safe back on the King's Highway.

Now, I do not suppose that many boys and girls get into Doubting Castle; but if they do they stay there a very little while. It is grown-up people who more often get there, either through their own wrong-doing or the wrong-doing of others, or because things go wrong, or through disappointment or ill-health.

But children do find themselves there occasionally. I heard only a few days ago of a boy who, I think, was in Doubting Castle for a time. He had done wrong, very wrong. He had not intended to do it, but he *had* done it, and more than once. His father was told of the wrong, and he was very grieved and very angry. He sent the lad upstairs. It was the middle of the day. In about an hour the father went up to the boy and punished him, and then told him he must lie in bed for the rest of the day. I am told that the boy was very miserable, and I know his father was; for it was more painful for his father to punish him than for the boy to be punished.

I expect that that afternoon he was in Doubting Castle. First he was angry, and thought he would run away. Then he was defiant, and thought he would do the wrong again. Then he thought that it was never any use his trying to be good — he must just go on doing wrong always. Yes, I think he was in Doubting Castle.

But this part of Bunyan's story shows that there is a way out. I do not know whether that boy found it, because I had to come away before the story was finished. But the way out for him would have been for him to steal downstairs to his father, and tell him how miserable and sorry he was, and how he had not intended to do the wrong, and would try never to do it again, and then for them both to kneel down and ask God to forgive the wrong. After that I think that boy would have been the happiest boy in London.

Nothing is more certain than that people who have got wrong with one another and wrong with God may get right again. Nothing is more certain than that God forgives and receives people who have gone furthest wrong, for He wants them to come back again.

The other day there was great excitement in a house not far from here. Such excitement, and such trouble! If you had been there, you would have thought that something terrible had happened, the people in that house were in such distress. What do you think it was? A canary had escaped. And there it was on the tree, and then in the neighbour's garden, and then farther

off on a high tree, and then right across the road on the gable of the opposite house. And the more those people tried to catch it the farther it went.

The people were sorry, not for their own sake only, but for the foolish bird's sake, because it was so helpless and would be sure to come to harm.

I cannot tell you the joy there was in that house when the foolish little bird had been enticed into its cage and was brought safely back. Well, if there is such pleasure as that about the return of a helpless and foolish bird, how much more is God our Father glad when we who have strayed from His loving arms come back to Him again; when we who do wrong come right again!

John Bunyan says that it was Sunday morning when the pilgrims got out of Doubting Castle — a lovely, sunny Sunday morning. It is a good time to begin again; everything seems to call to us to make a new start.

The key with which Christian opened the doors and the gate was called Promise. Here is one of the promises which John Bunyan in another book tells us brought him gladness and peace: 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' That golden promise is for us; and I hope we shall use it.

## CHAPTER 22

### UPON THE MOUNTAINS

WE have seen how Christian and Hopeful escaped from Doubting Castle, and the great lesson we learned from it was that people who go wrong may get right again. Let us now think of the pilgrims on the Mountain of Delight, or, as Bunyan calls them, the Delectable Mountains.

The coming of the pilgrims to those mountains shows that many people who go wrong get right again, and that they may have a most happy time. I do not expect that the canary, about which I told you, has been kept short of food and in a dirty cage since he came back. I expect, if possible, he has been better looked after than ever, and the people would not like to see him moping and fretting, as though he were sorry he had come back; they would like to hear him sing as if he were really glad to be safe in his cage once more.

However that may be, it is certain that the shepherds on the Delectable Mountains were delighted to see the pilgrims, and especially delighted to see how happy they were.

I do not know how many of you have been on or seen a mountain. Some of you, perhaps, have seen — for little people travel far nowadays — Snowdon, or Cader Idris, or Ben Lomond. Perhaps some of you have even seen the snowy-crested giants of Switzerland. There is something very beautiful and wonderful in mountains. The Lord Jesus was very fond of them. How often we read that He went into a mountain; and sometimes, rising up before it was day, while the people were asleep, He went up into a mountain.

Very beautiful it must have been for these pilgrims, after the narrow and evil-smelling dungeon, to be in the pure air, and to have the splendid view to be obtained from the mountains. They slept on the mountains in the shepherds' tents, and, I expect, saw the sun rise and saw it set.

It is a great thing, when you do climb a mountain or a high hill, to have some one who knows the places you can see, to tell you their names and to point out to you objects of interest. The shepherds who welcomed the pilgrims were placed there for that very purpose, and they gave the pilgrims a most happy and restful time.

I am not going to talk to you of all the things Christian and Hopeful saw — I have no doubt they could see the way they had come, By-path Meadow and all, perhaps, right back to Hill Difficulty. Let us think only of two, one of which they saw very plainly, the other only very dimly.

*Sight Number 1.* was a number of people groping about in a graveyard. They were running up against each other, and stumbling over the tombs, and wandering helplessly about, apparently in great distress. When the pilgrims asked what it meant, they were told that these people were once pilgrims, but that they wandered out of the way, getting over a stile into By-path Meadow, where a cruel giant imprisoned them, and that after they had been kept in his dungeon a little while he had put out their eyes, led them to this dreadful place, and left them there.

You do not wonder that, on hearing this, Christian and Hopeful looked at each other with their eyes full of tears, as they thought how near they had come to such a fate.

*Sight Number 2,* which they saw very dimly, because their hands were shaking too much for them to hold the telescope steadily, was the Celestial City. If their hands had been quite steady, they would have seen the gate clearly; and even as it was, they saw something that looked like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place — enough to assure them that it was real.

Now, my dear children, the pilgrims would learn two great lessons from these two sights. The first would be — and it is a lesson for all of us — how dangerous it is to go out of the right way, to leave off following Jesus, fighting with wrong thoughts, striving to be true, and pure, and loving, just because it is often so very hard. Our last lesson was that those who go wrong may get right. The lesson this time is, They may *not* get right. There are some who go out of the right way who never get into it again. That was one of the lessons which the wise and true shepherds taught the pilgrims.

The other lesson was that the beautiful city — where there would be no Giant Despair and no Apollyon and no dark valley, but where Jesus would be and it would be easy to be good, where everybody would be happy and good and satisfied, where tired people would find rest and sick people be made well — was a great reality, and not just a dream. The pilgrims would have many dangers to go through; but, if they kept on the highway, they would be sure to come to the Golden Gate at last, and it would be opened to give them welcome.

I do think that children sometimes get on to the Delectable Mountains--some Sunday afternoon, perhaps, when you are reading a book like the *Pilgrim's Progress*, or when some wise friend, like your own mother, talks lovingly to you about the danger of doing wrong and the readiness of God to forgive, or how happy and beautiful a thing it is to belong to Jesus and to try every day to follow Him, and about the wonderful Home not far away where Jesus is, and all the good and holy people who have lived on the earth, until you long to be good and pure and true, and to be made fit to enter that beautiful home — well, then I think you are on the Delectable Mountains. Only, remember that the Shepherds gave the pilgrims a map of the way, and told them of the dangers they had yet to watch against, and that it is a long march even from the Delectable Mountains to the Celestial City.

But all the way you go you may have the help and company of Jesus, and the happiness of heaven in your heart, if you will keep on the narrow way, and watch and pray.

## CHAPTER 23

### YOUNG MR. IGNORANCE

WE are to think now of one of the people Christian and Hopeful fell in with on their pilgrimage. A rather unusual person he was, a young man, very good-looking and very well dressed. Bunyan calls him a brisk young man, by which I suppose he means a smart young man, very particular about his clothes and his gloves and his hair and his walking-stick.

I quite expect that by the side of him Christian and Hopeful looked shabby and old-fashioned. When he began to go on pilgrimage some people, who were interested in pilgrims, said: 'How nice it is to see young people, especially young men, and especially such a respectable and well-dressed and nicely-spoken young man, going on pilgrimage!' I daresay they told him so; and I have no doubt that he thought himself, from what we know of him, that it really was very nice of him to be a pilgrim, when there were so many shabby and poor and broken-down people on the road like the two men who had been shut up in Doubting Castle.

I do not think he liked Christian and Hopeful at all; I believe he thought them rather rude old men. They did not seem to care a bit for his fine clothes. They spoke to him as plainly and familiarly as if he had been a poor and ill-dressed lad, with no money in his pocket. They asked him all sorts of questions — where he came from, why he did not come in at the Wicket Gate, what he should do when he came to the gate of the Celestial City, and many other things, till he got quite angry with them for their interfering questions.

The fact is, these plainly dressed men knew a great deal more than the richly attired youth; and they asked him questions that he could not answer, and *that* made him uncomfortable and angry. You know the name of the young man and where he came from. His name was Ignorance and he came from the country of Conceit. Though he had deceived some people by his nice dress and his polite manners, Christian and Hopeful found him out by their questions.

Now, boys and girls, it is a good thing to be well and neatly dressed and to be polite in your manners; but when beneath all this there is an ignorant mind, it is very sad.

And there are people in the world — I hope you will not belong to them — who care very much more about clothes and polite manners than they care about a well-furnished mind or a beautiful soul. I suppose if some of them were to build a house they would line the walls with mirrors in which they could continually see their faces and dresses rather than with books from which they could fill their minds with knowledge. It is to be feared there are a good many young people, and older people too, like this smart young man. They are all right until you come to talk to them, to set them to do something, or write something. Then they make all sorts of grammatical mistakes, and if you speak to them about history, or geography, or the lives of great and noble men of the past or the pre-sent, or beautiful books, they know nothing at all. They are just like a room that has lovely curtains and blinds at the windows and has nothing inside but a ragged carpet and dirty and broken chairs.

It is a good thing when some plain-spoken person like Christian comes along and asks a string of questions, and does it kindly; because that may show such a person how ignorant he or she is, and may make him or her ashamed and resolved to pay more attention to the mind than the body, and to reality than appearance.

Ignorance comes from the country of Conceit. He is often very self-satisfied. The ignorant lad often thinks he knows far better than his father and far more. And the girl, who has learned a few things at school, thinks sometimes that she is far wiser than her mother. Ignorance not only deceives a good many people, but most of all he deceives himself.

I would say to all the children I can get at: Whatever else happens, do not you grow up ignorant. Whether you have poor clothes or rich clothes, much money or little, determine that you will have knowledge. It is the one thing you can have as much as you like of. No one can keep it from you if you are determined to have it and are willing to work for it. There is no excuse for anybody being ignorant today. Learn to *do* something — something that will be of use to you and to others, and get to know all there is to be known about something. Do not be called Ignorant, and do not live in the country of Conceit.

But you know quite well that grammar and history and geography, etc., were not the subjects that young Ignorance knew nothing about. He really knew nothing properly about being a pilgrim — which is being a Christian. He had not come in at the Wicket Gate, he had no parchment like Christian had to show at the Celestial City.

He thought being a pilgrim was just walking along the road pilgrims walked on, just going to Church and Sunday School, and reading his Bible now and then, and behaving as nicely as he could. And he had never given himself to Jesus, and had never taken His yoke, did not know that his sins were forgiven or even that he had any sins.

That is the worst ignorance of all. If people do not know God and love Him and trust Him, theirs is the worst ignorance in the world, and I pray that whatever else you know or do not know you may know Him as your Lord and Saviour, and give up your lives altogether to His service.

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## CHAPTER 24

### THE PRISONERS OF THE NET

THERE is very much in the *Pilgrim's Progress* to encourage and help all the children and grown-up people who find it hard to keep on doing right. Because those really good men, Christian and Faithful, did some very foolish and wrong things, such as going into Bypass Meadow, and so on. They were like the first disciples of Jesus in this respect, and not a bit like those people whom we find in story-books sometimes who never do anything wrong. When we read of the foolish and wrong things that these good people do, we must not say, 'Ah! we may do them.' We should note carefully that wrong-doing generally got them into trouble, and we should beware of, and keep away from, the wrong things.

On the other hand, when we do fall into wrong, we must not give up, and say, 'It is of no use trying.' The disciples did not, nor did the pilgrims. They went on again, and by and by they came to the Celestial City.

We are to think now of another adventure of the pilgrims. You remember what a lovely time they had on the Mountain of Delight, and that afterwards they fell in with that well-dressed and self-satisfied youth who came from the Country of Conceit, and whose name was Ignorance.

After they had had a talk with him, and found out how really ignorant he was, I think a little breeze from the Country of Conceit must have blown into their own faces. For they began to feel thankful that they were better than he was, and to pity him a little; and that is a very dangerous state of mind to be in, as Christian and Hopeful found. I do not know whether Ignorance saw them just afterward. If he did, he must have pitied them and perhaps laughed to himself when he thought how they had both lectured him.

You know what happened. They got puzzled about the right road, as people who walk, or cycle, or motor do sometimes, and while they stood puzzling and wondering, a man in a beautiful white robe came along. I suppose they could not see his face, but he was a very nicely spoken man and told them he would show them the way to the Celestial City, and I suppose he praised them a little for going on pilgrimage. At any rate, they were greatly pleased with him, as we generally are with people who praise us, and followed him without asking a single question.

But all of a sudden they found themselves entangled in a net. It tripped them up; and the more they tried to get out the worse they were entangled. Then their false guide walked off and left them. As he was going, however, the white robe slipped down from his head and shoulders, and they saw that he was an ugly black man.



And now they seemed to be just as helpless as when they lay in the dungeon of Giant Despair. Oh ! how miserable they were; and they were more unhappy still when the Shining One, such as Christian had seen at the Cross, came and questioned them.

‘Where did you sleep last night,’ said he?

‘Oh, at the Delectable Mountains.’

‘And did not the shepherds give you a note of the way?’

‘Yes.’

‘Then why did you not pull it out and examine it?’

Then they hung down their heads, and said, as you sometimes say, ‘Oh, we forgot.’

‘Did they not,’ he went on, ‘tell you to beware of the Flatterer?’

‘Oh, yes; but we had no idea that this fine-spoken man was he.’

Then, having let them out of the net, the Shining One whipped them as if they had been naughty children, and sent them along the right way.

Now, I do not know whether boys and girls understand that when they have done well and are very good and are praised for it, they are in danger; but so it is. When you have had a good week at school and are praised by your parents and your teacher, and everybody who loves you is delighted, you are in danger of something. I will tell you what it is: you are in danger of getting into the road that leads to Ignorance’s country — that is, Conceit. And you do not need any black man or boy in a white robe to come along and flatter you. That black man is likely to be in your own heart and your own thoughts; and he will turn those sweet praises into flattery and say to you, ‘How good you are ! how much better you are than those careless and idle fellows whom you so easily beat last week!’

Then you go to your school the next week so pleased with yourself and proud of your-self, and so conceited, thinking more about yourself than your lessons, that, before you know it, you are tripped up, unable to answer a question or doing something you ought not to do. The week after tells a very different story. That is why people say of some children, ‘It is quite dangerous to praise them; they always do worse after it.’

Now, just two words in the ears of boys and girls: (1) If you have really done well and have had much praise, or even if, as sometimes happens, you have been over-praised, and somebody has really flattered you, and told you how nice and good and clever you are, just think of it in this way; Well, if there has been any good in me, it was God who put it there, and if I am at all clever, it is God's gift, and if I have done well, He has helped me, and I must kneel down and thank Him.' And then none of us has done so well but that we might have done better; and there have been wrong things in us which the people who praise us have not seen. So, instead of being conceited, we must be so thankful that we have done well that we must resolve to do better, and be more careful still *in time to come*.

(2) The other word is: If we have failed, if we have 'come a cropper,' as boys say, and have had a really bad time, we must not give up. Remember Christian and Hopeful. They got wrong, but they got right again. As we thank God for our successes, so we must confess to Him our failings. He loves boys and girls who have failed, and delights to help them to get right. He can help us out of any net, and lead us into the right path, and help us to beware of any flatterer within or without us.

## **CHAPTER 25**

**POOR MR. LITTLE-FAITH**

ONE of the stories which Christian told to Hopeful is that of a man who went on pilgrimage, but was not very successful. He was not conceited, like Ignorance, nor was he a great talker, like Talkative. He was rather sad, and, I am afraid, a little fretful. And sad and fretful people, and especially sad and fretful children, are a great trial to everybody.

This is how he became sad and fretful. Shortly after he became a pilgrim he sat down one day by the roadside, and went to sleep. While he was asleep three very villainous men — I suppose you would call them highway robbers — saw him. The noise of their coming awoke him, but he was so confused and so cowardly that he allowed them to do what they pleased without making any resistance.

So they took his purse out of his pocket, and then one of them knocked him down with a cruel club. What else they would have done it is impossible to say, but that they heard someone, as they thought, coming, so they took to their heels and ran off, leaving the poor man bleeding and unconscious on the ground.

Happily, they had not killed him, and after a while he managed to get up and to scramble on his way. But he made a very poor pilgrim. He was always fretting about his lost money, especially when he came to any towns where useful things could have been bought, or where he could have got comfortable lodgings. Then, unless somebody helped him, he had to go without the nice things, and to lodge in any poor place. Thus he was generally rather miserable, and seemed to be always asking people to pity him.

The wonder is that he ever kept on, and that he got to the Celestial City. He never would have done but for the help of other pilgrims, for he was frightened at a mere shadow. He never killed or even fought with a giant. He never did any great harm, but he never did any great good. He never helped or comforted any other pilgrim. He never cheered up anybody; he always wanted comforting and helping and cheering up himself. And it all seems to have begun with his going to sleep. I suppose that he was a pilgrim without much energy to begin with — a sleepy pilgrim, and not wide awake, or else he would have seen those robbers, and perhaps, if he had been nimble, he might have got away from them. It seems to be a bad thing for pilgrims to go to sleep by the wayside. You remember that Simple, Sloth, and Presumption fell asleep, and that they got fetters fastened on their limbs, and were made fast where they were; you remember that Christian fell asleep in the arbour on the Hill Difficulty, and lost his roll of parchment, and that Little-faith fell asleep and lost his money.

In Congo Land, when people meet each other, instead of saying, 'How do you do?' as with us, they say, 'Are you awake?' Perhaps that has reference to the sleeping sickness from which the people in that country suffer. But it is also a question we might ask one another, 'Are you awake — wide awake? Are you in earnest in your work and in your reading? Do you see what there is in it? Do you do it with all your heart?'

Sleep means carelessness: it means idleness; sometimes it means that we are not quite well, and want the doctor. But it is when we are careless and idle that ugly temptations come to us, for that is what those highwaymen were who robbed poor Little-faith. They rob us of our courage, and our brightness and our gladness, and much more.

Of course, Little-faith ought not to have gone to sleep. Afterwards he ought either to have run away as fast as his nimble legs would carry him, or he ought to have fought against those three rogues and robbers who came to him. As there were three of them, perhaps he had better have run away, because one can run as fast as three. But a brave knight of King Arthur, named Geraint, twice overcame three robbers who tried to stop him; and I believe that, if Little-faith had fought, he would have won. At all events, I am sure that, if we fight, we can overcome our temptations, though they are often very strong.

So, too, when Little-faith had lost his money, he need not have kept on fretting and moaning about it. I think I would have gone to the people at the Palace Beautiful, or to the shepherds, and I would have said, I have lost nearly all my money through my carelessness. Now will you let me do some work, either sweep the house or wash the dishes, or look after the sheep — anything so that I can earn a little money to help me to go on pilgrimage properly.’ And if they could not have given me work, I would have said, ‘Well, I must make the best of it, and put a cheerful face on it, and not go fretting and doleful, making everybody miserable.’

It is quite true that Little-faith got to the Celestial City; but we do not want any of us to be like him. We may well pray, ‘O God, make me a watchful pilgrim, not sleepy nor idle; and make me brave, so that I may not be afraid to fight against wrong; and make me cheerful, that by my brightness I may help to win some into the way of the pilgrimage.’

There are some kinds of laughter that we should guard against. I am not sure that we ought to laugh at people who are cowardly or mean, or boastful. We might find perhaps some better way of curing them. But I am quite sure we should never laugh at people’s sufferings and misfortunes, as I heard of some boys laughing when a poor woman’s stall was turned over, and her oranges and sweets were ruined, by some other mischievous boys. If they had furnished her stall again, they might have laughed; but it is poor and sad work to laugh at the troubles and sufferings of others.

And it is still more sad to laugh at people who are very earnest in trying to do right, and to fight wrong, and to do good to others. That boy or girl is far gone who can mock at goodness and who can make merry at some one who says his prayers and reads his Bible and is afraid to do what he believes to be wrong.

That is what Atheist did whom Christian and Hopeful met. He had his back towards the Celestial City, and he seemed to be spending his time in laughing at people who were walking towards it. He made it his business to laugh people out of being pilgrims. I do not know how long he had been at it. He *said* that he had been looking for the Celestial City for twenty years, but that he had given it all up, and he wanted to persuade everybody else to do the same.

'You are silly people,' he said to Christian and Hopeful, 'to go looking for a city that does not exist. It is not a bit of good your going,' he added; and when they went on, he burst out laughing again.

Now you know, boys and girls, it is hard to be laughed at, and it is hard work going on with a thing when somebody, who seems to know, says, 'It is of no use, you will never do it, and you are very foolish to try.'

But I have so often been told that by people who seem to know, that I do not take much notice of it now. If I ask how they know, they say they tried and failed. That was just what Atheist said. But you ought to know that what one person fails to do another *may* succeed in. Some time ago I was told at Crouch End Station that I could not catch a certain train at Paddington, there was not time enough; and I said to the official who told me, 'Well, I shall try to do it.' And I did it. Many and many a time people have been told that they can never do what they set out to do, because other people have tried to do it and have failed. And they have done it after all.

I do not know how Atheist succeeded with the other pilgrims that he laughed at, and I do not know how he would have got on with Christian and Hopeful if he had met them earlier. As it was, he laughed too late. They may not have been quite so clever as Mr. Atheist in some things, but they had actually seen the gates of the city which he said was not to be found. And when you have seen a thing, it may vex you to hear people laughing at you for believing in it, but they will not laugh you out of your belief.

We are very happy, dear children, if when any one laughs at us for trying to be good, and do good — telling us there is nothing in it, and it is all of no use, and there is no reward for I — we can say, I have found the use and the reward. I know that I am far happier in my heart when I have tried than when I have not tried. Heaven is not far up in the sky; it is in my heart, with its peace and gladness.'

We are very happy if we can say that. But until we *can* say it, let us believe the word of Jesus. He is far worthier to be trusted than the people who laugh at us. His word is truth, and we must believe Him before all others, and believe that to follow Him is to have heaven in the soul now and the soul in heaven by and by.

I pray that no one may laugh you out of trying to follow Jesus.

## CHAPTER 27

### THE ENCHANTED GROUND

ONE of the most curious places that the pilgrims had to pass through was the Enchanted Ground. It was also one of the most dangerous parts of the way. It was all the more dangerous because it did not seem so. Everybody could tell that the Valley of the Shadow was dangerous, because there were pits there, and hobgoblins, and all manner of evil things; but on the Enchanted Ground there seemed to be nothing particularly perilous — no wild beasts, no deep pits, no giants. All that the pilgrims saw apparently were arbours; with beautifully soft, cushioned couches in them, where anybody might lie down — these and the fact that the air was very drowsy and inclined to make people sleepy. So that Hopeful wanted to lie down and sleep, and it took Christian all his time and skill to keep him from doing it.

Well, it was just there that the danger lay. We have noticed before how unsafe it was for pilgrims to go to sleep, and that whenever they did, mischief or trouble seemed to come of it. But here the danger was that if anybody went to sleep, he never woke up again. I do not know whether you have ever heard of that sort of thing. I remember reading of two men who were lost in the snow in Switzerland one night. They were bitterly cold, and one of them just wanted to lie down and sleep, but the other would not let him. He shook and beat his companion, and made him quite angry, but he kept him awake till daylight came. His fear was, that if his friend went to sleep he would never wake again.

I have heard, too, of some one who had swallowed some laudanum by mistake. The doctor said, 'Whatever happens, he must not be allowed to go to sleep. You must rouse him up, and make him walk up and down, and do everything you can do to keep him awake. If he goes to sleep he may never wake again!'

That was the case with the pilgrims on the Enchanted Ground. When Greatheart and his company went through, they saw two men, named Heedless and Too-bold, asleep, and, though the guide shook and beat them, he could not wake them up. The most he could make them do was to talk in their sleep.

I wonder if boys and girls know anything about this. You have read, of course, of enchanted castles and palaces, where people came under a spell, and were either put to sleep or made to suppose themselves other than they really were; but Enchanted Ground, what does that mean?

Well, I think it is a place where people think they have done enough, and need not do any more. They have marched far, they feel they need not march any farther. They have tried to be good for a long time, and now they may have a holiday and be careless. They have fought very hard against their passions, and now they need not fight any longer.

The enchanted ground is the place where people are satisfied with themselves, and think themselves just about as perfect as they need be.

Perhaps it is the place where some of you are just now. When a Sunday-school teacher urges his class to give themselves to Jesus, you think you are all right, because you did that long ago. You have had your fight with Apollyon, and with some of the giants, and you have won some victories, and now you think you can rest and go to sleep.

Here is your warning. You must not be satisfied, you must keep marching on. You must not make up your mind that everything is all right. You must still press forward. You must not give way to idleness, nor indulge for a moment in sinful pleasure. You must never think you are good enough, and that you can give up striving. You must never be too sure that all is right; always say, 'There is something better.' The Christian race never ends while life lasts, and the Christian's fight is never over. Everyday, watch and pray and persevere.

What a wonderful place! Where can it be? Well, there never was such a place in the wide world, where the sun shines night and day, and all these wonderful things are to be seen and heard and felt. It is a beautiful parable, like the parables of Jesus, a picture of the happy heart. If anybody asks where Beulah is to be found, the answer is that it may be found in your heart and soul.

You know the green fields and singing birds and sunshine and orchards do not make everybody happy. In the most beautiful scenery there are some very unhappy people. Selfishness and sin



will make the most costly home ugly and miserable, while a happy heart can make a garden in the wilderness.

So Beulah is the happy heart, with the love of Jesus shining and singing in it and around it every day — happy in the knowledge that He is with us now, and that, when this life is over, we shall go to be always with Him.

Now, in Bunyan's story Beulah does not come till very nearly the end of the pilgrimage. Christian and Hopeful only passed through it just before they came to the dark river. That sets us on asking, 'Do we have to wait till we grow quite old before we come to Beulah? Must we wait till just before we die to have this happy heart? Is not Beulah just the place for boys and girls to play in? Do they not love flowers and birds and sunshine and orchards full of fruit?'

These are the sort of questions I have been asking myself, and if I could speak to John Bunyan, I should ask him these questions and a good many more. I should ask him what he meant; and if he said that this lovely place is only for people who are old, or people who are just going to die, I should feel disposed to contradict him. I believe that there are some older people who never come to the land of Beulah, even just before they die, and that children may know much more about it.

But there is no need to contradict John Bunyan. For when we come to the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* we read that all the children of Christiana and their little children too came to the land of Beulah; but they did not go over the river. The dreamer left them there, and some time after he left off dreaming he says he heard that they were yet alive; and I suppose they lived in the land of Beulah all the rest of their lives.

I fancy that that is what happens when people begin young to go on pilgrimage — which is to say, boys and girls, that people who give themselves early in life to Jesus know much more of happiness and peace and joy in their hearts than people who begin in later life. They may live in the land of Beulah almost all the time.

I wonder how many of you have begun, and how many are willing to begin today! Be sure it is not a weary, joyless life, but a life filled with peace and gladness. The life given up to Jesus becomes itself a flower-garden and a fruitful orchard and a glad, sweet song.



## CHAPTER 29

### THE DARK RIVER

WE have just seen in what a happy and lovely place the pilgrims were — in a land where it was always sunshine; where were flowers and fruit and singing birds and everything that children love. And you know what we said about it: that it was in the heart and nowhere else; that it meant the happy soul, where Jesus reigns and His love shines in all the day long.

The thing now to be remembered is that the pilgrims were told that there was a far happier place than Beulah. I suppose it must have seemed to them that no place could be happier or more beautiful. What could they want better than this? Well, my dear children, there is a life far better than any life we can know here — a better, fairer, brighter world than this.

We know, of course, that there are many, many more worlds than this in which we live. We can see numbers of them at night, when the stars are shining, and many of them are so far away from us that it would take us hundreds of years, travelling in an express train, to get to them — if we could so travel. But no one knows where this world is that Bunyan calls the Celestial City. It is invisible and it is quite near to us.

Almost everybody believes there is such a world, both the rudest savage and the most learned man. What the *Pilgrim's Progress* and the New Testament say is that, for those who follow Jesus, it is ever so much better than anything that we can know here. That is the thing to be remembered. However great our happiness here may be, there is a happiness which is far, far greater. People there are better, truer, purer, more loving, than here. No one is selfish, or quarrelsome, or unkind. Everybody wears a white robe, which means that everybody has a clean heart.

Even children ought to try to remember this, because sometimes children are called away, and we never see them again.

Now, what troubled Christian and Hopeful, and what has troubled people long before and ever since, is this: The way to the Beautiful land or City lies through a river, and there is no other way. And the river is where we lose sight of people. It is a river of sickness and pain and death, and it is so solemn that we none of us like to think much about it.

I do not know that we need to dwell much on the thought of the river. What we do want to think much about is the beautiful life on the other side. If one of you were ill and had to go through a serious operation, I do not suppose your father and mother would talk a great deal to you about the operation and what the surgeon would do. What they would tell you would be that it would be over in a very little while and then your weakness would be gone, and you would always be strong and well after, and they would say: 'Think of that — always strong and well, able to throw a cricket-ball, and run upstairs, and play at any game as you once did.' So I do not think it necessary or natural for boys and girls to think much and often of death and the grave. But they might think that, however great the happiness they have here, there is a happiness greater than anybody knows for those who love and follow Jesus. You know what Jesus called the city of which John Bunyan writes — '*My Father's house*', God's home. And it will be a beautiful home for all who love Jesus.

If you were at school — say in Switzerland, where a good many English and Scotch children go — you would be among very beautiful scenery. You would see grand snow mountains and glaciers and wonderful lakes, and no doubt would have very happy times. But I do not believe that one of you would be sorry when the time came for you to come home. Some of you might dread the journey; for there are people whom travelling both by land and by sea makes quite ill and miserable; but I imagine the thought that you were coming home would make you very brave. If people pitied you because you had such a long and tiresome journey, you would say, 'Oh well, it will soon be over, and then I shall be at home.'

Now, in reality, boys and girls, we are all at school here — all of us, the oldest as well as the youngest; we are here to learn how to live, and this life is only a bit of life. The great life is beyond, and if we have begun to be pilgrims we need not be afraid. Of course we know what our own home is like because we have lived there. And that makes the difference, for we do not know what heaven is like. All we know really is what Jesus has told us.

Now, what makes home is this: There are people who love us there better than any other people in the world. Well, that is true of the Beautiful City. No one has ever loved us or can as Jesus has done; and He is there, and He says that those who love Him will be with Him always.

I do not suppose that boys and girls think much of the dark river. If anybody does, please remember you need not be afraid of it. The beautiful home lies just on the other side, and the sure way to its happiness is to be a pilgrim — to follow Jesus in trust and obedience.

## **CHAPTER 30**

### **THE END OF THE JOURNEY**

WE come today to the end of John Bunyan's first dream about the pilgrims. We have been thinking of Christian, his companions, his troubles, and his joys. It seems a long time since we first saw him, clothed in rags, with a heavy burden on his back, getting into the Slough of Despond and, after great trouble, passing in at the Wicket Gate.

Very different is the end from the beginning. A miserable being, clothed in rags, Christian was at the first. The last we see of him he is clothed in raiment that shone like gold, entering into a city that shone like the sun, too glorious to describe. And better than all was the warm and loving welcome that the pilgrims received. Evidently they were expected. The trumpets sounded and the bells of the city rang for joy, and the shining streets seemed crowded with people who welcomed Christian and Hopeful as if they were kings. The whole scene was so wonderful that the dreamer says, 'When I had seen it I wished myself among them.' That was the end of the journey — brightness and love, welcome and joy, in a city that dazzled the eyes with its beauty.

That is how John Bunyan tries to tell us boys and girls and grown-up people what happens to Christian pilgrims after death. And he can only try to tell us. We may be sure that it will be better and brighter and more glorious than anybody knows. There are some things that people cannot describe to those who have not seen them. I had often heard about the sea and seen pictures of it when I was a child. And I heard about the wonderful snow-clad Alps; but I never knew how glorious they were until I saw them, and then I almost held my breath with wonder. So no one can tell us what heaven is like. Our Lord tells us something, and John gives us some wonderful pictures. But we shall never know till we arrive there how truly glorious and wonderful it is. We shall never know how happy we may be till we come to heaven. I have heard people say before now that they have felt God to be so near and His love for them to be so very wonderful that their happiness was almost greater than they could bear.

I must confess that to me the best part of the end of the story is not the golden streets and the shining hosts, but the loving welcome the pilgrims received — so loving that it made them forget all their sorrows. We can, all of us, understand that the grandest place would be miserable without love. The whole city might be built of gold and diamonds, and we should soon be very sad and lonely in it if we did not love the people there and they did not love us. There are many unhappy and lonely people living in mansions and driving in carriages.

I wish we could understand that no place can make us happy. It is the people about us and the state of our own selves that make us happy or miserable.

You may paint as beautiful a picture of heaven as you like, and you will see at once that only the people who are fit to enter it can be happy in it. The people in heaven are all and always serving and praising Jesus. That is the great glory of the place. But there are some people who want neither to serve nor to praise Jesus, and they would be both lonely and unhappy in heaven. If you are neither good nor want to be good, you could not be happy among people who want to be good more than they want anything else. What made Christian and Hopeful so happy was that they

found in the Celestial City everything they had most desired. Everybody was good and pure and loving, and lived with Jesus day and night. So it is the people who have heaven in their hearts who are happy in heaven.

I have said something about children going home from school, and not minding the long journey, because all the way they would be thinking of the loving welcome awaiting them at home. Let me say another thing now. While they were thinking of home the home people would be thinking much more of them. And while Christian and Hopeful thought much of the Celestial City, we *may* be sure that the people in the Celestial City thought a great deal more about them. They not only watched for them as they came up from the dark river, but they had been watching them all through their journey. Because while they could not see the Celestial City, the shining people could see them. You know what Jesus said, 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth' — that is, over everybody who begins to be a pilgrim. There is not only joy when they end their journey, but when they begin. Then, to use John Bunyan's language, the trumpets blow and the bells ring, and all along the journey Jesus watches over the steps of the pilgrim. If you were to begin to be a pilgrim today, if you were to say, 'Lord Jesus, I will obey your call, and I will be your disciple,' there would be gladness in heaven. And all the way as you went along Jesus, who lives, and with whom children can speak, would think about you as if you were the only pilgrim. And He is thinking about you now, and calling you to begin.

It would be a sad and strange thing if, after we have talked about these pilgrims for all these weeks, no one should start, if we were just satisfied to think of others going on pilgrimage and did not go ourselves.

There was a Christian lady whom I knew who, when years ago I used to talk about the pilgrims and their journey, would say to such boys and girls as she met after the service, 'Will not you begin to be a pilgrim?' And I believe that some children started then. That dear friend long ago went to the Golden City where everybody who follows Jesus goes, and I feel sure she thinks about us sometimes. I would repeat her words, though I cannot say them as nicely as she used to. 'Will you not start for the Beautiful City, and will you not start today?'