

The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come is a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) and published in February, 1678. It is regarded as one of the most significant works of English literature, has been translated into more than 200 languages, and has never been out of print.

Setting out

As I walk'd through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Denn; And I laid me down in that place to sleep: And as I slept I dreamed a Dream. I dreamed, and behold *I saw a Man clothed with Raggs, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own House, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his Back.* [Isa 64.6; Luke 14.33; Psalm 38.4; Hab. 2.2; Act. 16.30,31] I looked and saw him open the Book, and Read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled: and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry; saying, *what shall I do?*

In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his Wife and Children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased: wherefore at length he brake his mind to his Wife and Children; and thus he began to talk to them, *O my dear Wife, said he, and you the Children of my bowels, I your dear friend am in my self undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me: moreover, I am for certain informed, that this our City will be burned with fire from Heaven, in which fearful overthrow, both my self, with thee, my Wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruine; except (the which, yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.* At this his Relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed, that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought, that some frenzy distemper had got into his head: therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all hast they got him to bed; but the night was as troublesome to him as the day: wherefore instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did; and he told them worse and worse. He also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened; they also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him: sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him: wherefore he began to retire himself to his Chamber to pray for, and pity them; and also to condole his own misery: he would also walk solitarily in the Fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time.

Now, I saw upon a time, when he was walking in the Fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, *What shall I do to be saved?*

I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named *Evangelist* coming to him, and he asked, *Wherefore dost thou cry?* He answered, Sir, I perceive, by the Book in my hand, that I am Condemned to die, and after that to come to Judgment [Heb. 9.27]; and I find that I am not willing to do the first [Job 16.21,22], nor able to do the second [Ezek. 22.14].

Then said *Evangelist*, Why not willing to die? since this life is attended with so many evils? The Man answered, Because, I fear that this burden that is upon my back, will sink me lower then the Grave; and I shall fall into *Tophet* [Isa. 30.33]. And Sir, if I be not fit to go to Prison, I am not fit (I am sure) to go to Judgement, and from thence to Execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

Then said *Evangelist*, If this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go, Then he gave him a *Parchment-Roll*, and there was written within, *Fly from the wrath to come* [Matt. 3.7].

The Man therefore Read it, and looking upon *Evangelist* very carefully; said, Whither must I fly? Then said *Evangelist*, pointing with his finger over a very wide Field, Do you see yonder *Wicket-gate?* [Mat. 7] The Man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining light?

[Psalm 119.105; 2 Pet. 1.19.] He said, I think I do. Then said *Evangelist*, Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the Gate; at which when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

So I saw in my Dream that the Man began to run; Now he had not run far from his own door, but his Wife and Children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return: [Luke 14.26] but the Man put his fingers in his Ears, and ran on crying, Life, life, Eternal Life: so he looked not behind him [Gen. 19.17.], but fled towards the middle of the Plain.

The Neighbors also came out to see him run [Jer. 20.10.], and as he ran, some mocked, others threatned; and some cried after him to return: Now among those that did so, there were two that were resolved to fetch him back by force. The name of the one was *Obstinate*, and the name of the other *Pliable*. Now by this time the Man was got a good distance from them; But however they were resolved to pursue him; which they did and in a little time they over-took him. Then said the Man, Neighbours, *Wherefore are you come?* They said, To perswade you to go back with us; but he said, That can by no means be: You dwell, said he, in the City of *Destruction*, (the place also where I was born) I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower than the Grave, into a place that burns with Fire and Brimstone: Be content good Neighbours, and go along with me.

What! said *Obstinate*, and leave our Friends, and our Comforts behind us!

Yes, said *Christian*, (for that was his name) because that all, which you shall forsake, [2 Cor. 4.18.] is not worthy to be compared with a little of that that I am seeking to enjoy, and if you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there where I go, is enough [Luke 15.], and to spare; Come away, and prove my words.

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

Chr. I seek an *Inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away* [1 Peter 1.4]; and it is laid up in Heaven, and fast there [Heb. 11:16], to be bestowed at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.

Obst. *Tush, said Obstinate, away with your Book; will you go back with us, or no?*

Chr. No, not I, said the other; because I have laid my hand to the Plow [Luke 9.62.].

Obst. *Come then, Neighbour Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him; there is a company of these Craz'd-headed Coxcombs, that when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.*

Pli. Then said *Pliable*, Don't revile; if what the good *Christian* says is true, the things he looks after are better than ours; my heart inclines to go with my Neighbour.

Obst. *What! more Fools still? be ruled by me and go back; who knows whither such a brain-sick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.*

Chr. Come with me Neighbour *Pliable*, there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more Glories besides; If you believe not me, read here in this Book; and for the truth of what is exprest therein, behold, all is confirmed by the blood of him that made it [Heb. 13.20,21.].

Pli. *Well Neighbour Obstinate (said Pliable) I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him: But my good Companion, do you know the way to this desired place?*

Chr. I am directed by a man whose name is *Evangelist*, to speed me to a little Gate that is before us, where we shall receive instruction about the way.

Pli. *Come then, good Neighbour, let us be going:* Then they went both together.

Obst. And I will go back to my place, said *Obstinate*: I will be no Companion of such mis-led, fantastical Fellows.

Now I saw in my Dream, that when *Obstinate* was gon back, *Christian* and *Pliable* went talking over the Plain; and thus they began their discourse,

Chr. Come Neighbour *Pliable*, how do you do? I am glad you are perswaded to go along with me; and had even *Obstinate* himself, but felt what I have felt of the Powers, and Terrours of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.

Pliable. *Come Neighbour Christian, since there is none but us two here, tell me now further, what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going.*

Chr. I can better conceive of them with my Mind, then speak of them with my Tongue: But yet since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book.

Pli. *And do you think that the words of your Book are certainly true?*

Chr. Yes verily, for it was made by him that cannot lye [Tit. 1.2.].

Pli. *Well said; what things are they?*

Chr. There is an endless Kingdom to be Inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us; that we may Inhabit that Kingdom for ever [Isa. 45.17. John 10.27,28,29.]

Pli. *Well said, and what else?*

Chr. There are Crowns of Glory to be given us; and Garments that will make us shine like the Sun in the Firmament of Heaven [2 Tim. 4.8. Rev. 3.4. Matth. 13.]

Pli. *This is excellent; And what else?*

Chr. There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow; For he that is owner of the place, will wipe all tears from our eyes [Isa. 25.8. Rev. 7.16,17. Chap. 21.4.].

Pli. *And what company shall we have there?*

Chr. There we shall be with *Seraphims*, and *Cherubins* [Isa. 6.2. 1 Thess. 4.16,17. Rev. 5.11.], Creatures that will dazle your eyes to look on them: There also you shall meet with thousands, and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving, and holy; every one walking in the sight of God; and standing in his presence with acceptance for ever: In a word, there we shall see the Elders with their Golden Crowns [Rev. 4:4]: There we shall see the Holy Virgins with their Golden Harps [Chap. 14.1,2,3,4,5.]. There we shall see Men that by the World were cut in pieces, burnt in flames, eaten of Beasts, drowned in the Seas, for the love that they bare to the Lord of the place [John 12.25.]; all well, and cloathed with Immortality, as with a Garment [2 Cor. 5.2,3,5.].

Pli. *The hearing of this is enough to ravish ones heart; but are these things to be enjoyed? how shall we get to be Sharers hereof?*

Chr. The Lord, the Governour of that Countrey, hath Recorded *that* in this Book [Isa. 55.12. John 7.37. Chap. 6.37. Rev. 21.6. Chap. 22.17.]: The substance of which is, If we be truly willing to have it, he will bestow it upon us freely.

Pli. *Well, my good Companion, glad am I to hear of these things: Come on, let us mend our pace.*

Chr. I cannot go as fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is upon my back.

The Slough of Despond

Now I saw in my Dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew near to a very *Miry Slow* that was in the midst of the Plain, and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bogg. The name of the Slow was *Dispond*. Here therefore they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; And *Christian*, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the Mire.

Pli. *Then said Pliable, Ah, Neighbour Christian, where are you now?*

Chr. Truly, said *Christian*, I do not know.

Pli. At that *Pliable* began to be offended; and angerly, said to his Fellow, *Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? if we have such ill speed at our first setting out, What may we expect, 'twixt this and our Journeys end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave Country alone for me.* And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the Mire, on that side of the Slow which was next to his own House: So away he went, and *Christian* saw him no more.

Wherefore *Christian* was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavored to struggle to that side of the slough that was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket-gate; the which he did, but could not get out because of the burden that was upon his

back: but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him what he did there.

CHR. Sir, said Christian, I was bid to go this way by a man called Evangelist, who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come. And as I was going thither, I fell in here.

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

CHR. Fear followed me so hard that I fled the next way, and fell in.

HELP. Then, said he, Give me thine hand: so he gave him his hand, and he drew him out, [Psalm 40:2], and he set him upon sound ground, and bid him go on his way.

Then I stepped to him that plucked him out, and said, "Sir, wherefore, since over this place is the way from the city of Destruction to yonder gate, is it, that this plat is not mended, that poor travellers might go thither with more security?" And he said unto me, "This miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended: it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond; for still, as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there arise in his soul many fears and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place: and this is the reason of the badness of this ground.

"It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad. [Isa. 35:3,4.] His laborers also have, by the direction of his Majesty' surveyors, been for above this sixteen hundred years employed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might have been mended: yea, and to my knowledge," said he, "there have been swallowed up at least twenty thousand cart loads, yea, millions of wholesome instructions, that have at all seasons been brought from all places of the King' dominions, (and they that can tell, say, they are the best materials to make good ground of the place,) if so be it might have been mended; but it is the Slough of Despond still, and so will be when they have done what they can.

"True, there are, by the direction of the Lawgiver, certain good and substantial steps, placed even through the very midst of this slough; but at such time as this place doth much spew out its filth, as it doth against change of weather, these steps are hardly seen; or if they be, men, through the dizziness of their heads, step beside, and then they are bemired to purpose, notwithstanding the steps be there: but the ground is good when they are once got in at the gate." [1 Sam. 12:23.]

Now I saw in my dream, that by this time Pliable was got home to his house. So his neighbors came to visit him; and some of them called him wise man for coming back, and some called him fool for hazarding himself with Christian: others again did mock at his cowardliness, saying, "Surely, since you began to venture, I would not have been so base as to have given out for a few difficulties:" so Pliable sat sneaking among them. But at last he got more confidence, and then they all turned their tales, and began to deride poor Christian behind his back. And thus much concerning Pliable.

Cross and sepulchre

Now I saw in my dream, that the highway up which Christian was to go, was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. [Isaiah 26:1.] Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.

Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death." Then he stood still a while, to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks. [Zech. 12:10.] Now as he stood looking and weeping, behold, three Shining Ones came to

him, and saluted him with, "Peace be to thee." So the first said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," [Mark 2:5]; the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment, [Zech. 3:4]; the third also set a mark on his forehead, Eph. 1:13, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bid him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the celestial gate: so they went their way. Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing,

"Thus far did I come laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither. What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!"

Finally after many more adventures, Christian arrives at the Heavenly City after crossing the river of death.

Arrival

Now, while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them: to whom it was said by the other two shining ones, These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world, and that have left all for his holy name; and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy. Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." Rev. 19:9. There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who, with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world; and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

This done, they compassed them round on every side; some went before, some behind, and some on the right hand, and some on the left, (as it were to guard them through the upper regions,) continually sounding as they went, with melodious noise, in notes on high; so that the very sight was to them that could behold it as if heaven itself was come down to meet them. Thus, therefore, they walked on together; and, as they walked, ever and anon these trumpeters, even with joyful sound, would, by mixing their music with looks and gestures, still signify to Christian and his brother how welcome they were into their company, and with what gladness they came to meet them. And now were these two men, as it were, in heaven, before they came to it, being swallowed up with the sight of angels, and with hearing of their melodious notes. Here also they had the city itself in view; and they thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereto. But, above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there with such company, and that for ever and ever; oh, by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! Thus they came up to the gate.

Now when they were come up to the gate, there was written over it, in letters of gold,

"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE
RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE
CITY."

Then I saw in my dream, that the shining men bid them call at the gate: the which when they did, some from above looked over the gate, to wit, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, etc., to whom it was said, These pilgrims are come from the City of Destruction, for the love that they bear to the King of this place; and then the pilgrims gave in unto them each man his certificate, which they had received in the beginning: those therefore were carried in unto the King, who, when he had read them, said, Where are the men? To whom it was answered, They are standing without the gate.

The King then commanded to open the gate, "That the righteous nation (said he) that keepeth the truth may enter in." [Isa. 26:2.]

Now I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honor. Then I heard in my dream, that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them,

"ENTER YE INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD."

I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying,

"BLESSING, AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB, FOR EVER AND EVER."

Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord. And after that they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them.

Ignorance is cast away from the gates of the city

Now, while I was gazing upon all these things, I turned my head to look back, and saw Ignorance come up to the river side; but he soon got over, and that without half the difficulty which the other two men met with. For it happened that there was then in that place one Vain-Hope, a ferryman, that with his boat helped him over; so he, as the other I saw, did ascend the hill, to come up to the gate; only he came alone, neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement. When he was come up to the gate, he looked up to the writing that was above, and then began to knock, supposing that entrance should have been quickly administered to him; but he was asked by the men that looked over the top of the gate, Whence come you? and what would you have? He answered, I have ate and drank in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets. Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the King: so he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then said they, Have you none? but the man answered never a word. So they told the King, but he would not come down to see him, but commanded the two shining ones, that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the city, to go out and take Ignorance, and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gate of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a dream.