



Pilgrim's Progress



THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE
PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED
WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND
GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.—1 *Peter*, 1:7

AS I WALKED through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den,¹ and 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 rags standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back (Isaiah 64:6; Luke 14:33; Psalm 38:4). 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 break out with a lamentable cry, saying:

PILGRIM: What shall I do? (Acts 2:37; 16:30; Habakkuk 1:2–3).

In this plight, therefore, he went home, and restrained himself as long as he could, that his wife and children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because

¹ *Bedford Jail, in which the author was a prisoner for conscience' sake.*

that his trouble increased. Wherefore at length he break his mind to his wife and children; and thus he began to talk to them:

PILGRIM: O my dear wife, and you my children, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me. Moreover, I am certainly informed that this our city will be burned with fire from Heaven; in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee my wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin, 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 toward night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste 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. He told them:

PILGRIM: 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 carriage 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.

PILGRIM: What must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30–31).

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.

Pilgrim Meets Evangelist

I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, who asked:

EVANGELIST: Wherefore dost thou cry?

PILGRIM: Sir, I perceive by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment (Hebrews 9:27); and I find that I am not willing to do the first (Job 16:21–22), nor able to do the second (Ezekiel 22:14).

EVANGELIST: Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils?

PILGRIM: Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet (Isaiah 30:33). And, sir, if I be not fit to go to prison,

I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

EVANGELIST: If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?

PILGRIM: Because I know not whither to go.

Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, "Flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7).

The man therefore read it, and, looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said:

PILGRIM: Whither must I flee?

EVANGELIST: (Pointing with his finger over a very wide field), Do you see yonder wicket gate? (Matthew 7:13–14.)

PILGRIM: No.

EVANGELIST: Do you see yonder shining light? (Psalm 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19.)

PILGRIM: I think I do.

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, when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, "Life! life! Eternal life!" (Luke 14:26). So he looked not behind him (Genesis 19:17), but fled toward the middle of the plain.

The neighbors also came out to see him run (Jeremiah

20:10); and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return; and among those that did so, there were two that resolved to fetch him back by force.

Obstinate and Pliable Pursue Him

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 overtook him. Then said the man:

PILGRIM: Neighbors, wherefore are ye come?

NEIGHBOR: To persuade you to go back with us.

PILGRIM: That can by no means be. You dwell in the city of Destruction, the place also where I was born: I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later you will sink lower than the grave, into a place that burns with fire and brimstone. Be content, good neighbors, and go along with me!

OBSTINATE: What! And leave our friends and our comforts behind us!

CHRISTIAN: Yes (said Christian, for that was his name), because that *all* is not worthy to be compared with a *little* of that I am seeking to enjoy (2 Corinthians 4:18). If you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there, where I go, is enough and to spare (Luke 15:17). Come away, and prove my words.

OBSTINATE: What are the things you seek, since you leave

all the world to find them?

CHRISTIAN: I seek an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away (1 Peter 1:4); and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there (Hebrews 2:16), to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.

OBSTINATE: Tush! Away with your Book; will you go back with us or no?

CHRISTIAN: No, not I, because I have laid my hand to the plow (Luke 9:62).

OBSTINATE: Come then, neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him. There is a company of these crazy-headed coxcombs, that when they take a fancy by the end are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

PLIABLE: Then 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 neighbor.

OBSTINATE: 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.

CHRISTIAN: Come with me, neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this Book; and for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it (Hebrews 9:17-21).

PLIABLE: Well, neighbor Obstinate, 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?

CHRISTIAN: 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.

PLIABLE: Come then, good neighbor, let us be going.

(Then they went both together.)

OBSTINATE: And I will go back to my place; I will be no companion of such misled, fantastical fellows.

Now I saw in my dream that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the plain, and thus they began their discourse.

CHRISTIAN: Come, neighbor Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me. Had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.

PLIABLE: Come, neighbor Christian, since there are none but us two here, tell me now further what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going.

CHRISTIAN: I can better conceive of them with my mind than speak of them with my tongue; but yet, since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book.

PLIABLE: And do you think that the words of your Book are

certainly true?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, verily; for it was made by Him that cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

PLIABLE: Well said; what things are they?

CHRISTIAN: There is an endless kingdom to be inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us, that we may inhabit that kingdom forever (Isaiah 45:17; John 10:27–29).

PLIABLE: Well said; and what else?

CHRISTIAN: 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 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:5; Matthew 13:43).

PLIABLE: This is excellent; and what else?

CHRISTIAN: There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow; for He that is owner of the place will wipe all tears from our eyes (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:16–17; 21:4).

PLIABLE: And what company shall we have there?

CHRISTIAN: There we shall be with seraphim and cherubim (Isaiah 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 5:11), creatures that will dazzle our eyes to look on them. There also we shall meet with thousands and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving and holy, everyone walking in the sight of God, and standing in His presence with acceptance forever. In a word, there we shall see the elders with their golden crowns (Revelation 4:4); there we shall see the holy virgins with their golden

harps (Revelation 14:1–5); there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces, burned in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love they bare to the Lord of the place (John 12:25); all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment (2 Corinthians 5:2, 3, 5).

PLIABLE: The hearing of this is enough to ravish one's heart. But are these things to be enjoyed? How shall we get to be sharers thereof?

CHRISTIAN: The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this Book (Isaiah 55:1–2; John 7:37; Revelation 21:6; 22:17), the substance of which is, if we be truly willing to have it, He will bestow it upon us freely.

PLIABLE: Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things; come on, let us mend our pace.

CHRISTIAN: I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is on my back.

The Slough of Despond

Now I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew nigh to a very miry Slough that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the Slough was Despond. 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.

PLIABLE: Ah, neighbor Christian, where are you now?

CHRISTIAN: Truly, I do not know.

At this Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow:

PLIABLE: 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 between this and our journey's 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 Slough 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.

Help Comes to the Rescue

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

CHRISTIAN: Sir, 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?

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

HELP: Give me thine hand.

So he gave him his hand, and he drew him out (Psalm 40:2), and 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 travelers might go thither with more security?

HELP: This miry Slough is such a place as cannot be mended. It is 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 (Isaiah 35:3–4). His laborers also have, by the direction of His Majesty's surveyors, been for above these sixteen hundred years employed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might have been mended; yea, and to my knowledge, here have been swallowed up at least twenty thousand cartloads, yea, millions of wholesome instructions, that have at all seasons been brought from all places of the King's 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 (1Samuel 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 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 tails, and began to deride poor Christian behind his back. And thus much concerning Pliable.

Christian Meets Mr. Worldly Wiseman

Now as Christian was walking solitarily by himself, he espied one afar off, come crossing over the field to meet him; and their hap was to meet just as they were crossing the way of

each other. The gentleman's name that met him was Mr. Worldly Wiseman. He dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy, a very great town, and also hard-by from whence Christian came. This man then, meeting with Christian, and having some inkling of him (for Christian's setting forth from the city of Destruction was much noised abroad, not only in the town where he dwelt but also it began to be the town talk in some other places)—Mr. Worldly Wiseman, therefore, having some guess of him, by beholding his laborious going, by observing his sighs and groans, and the like, began thus to enter into some talk with Christian.

WORLDLY: How now, good fellow, whither away after this burdened manner?

CHRISTIAN: A burdened manner, indeed, as ever I think poor creature had! And whereas you ask me, Whither away? I tell you, sir, I am going to yonder wicket gate before me: for there, as I am informed, I shall be put into a way to be rid of my heavy burden.

WORLDLY: Hast thou a wife and children?

CHRISTIAN: Yes; but I am so laden with this burden that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly; methinks I am as if I had none (1 Corinthians 7:29).

WORLDLY: Wilt thou hearken to me if I give thee counsel?

CHRISTIAN: If it be good, I will; for I stand in need of good counsel.

WORLDLY: I would advise thee then, that thou with all

speed get thyself rid of thy burden; for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then: nor canst thou enjoy the benefits of the blessings which God hath bestowed upon thee, till then.

CHRISTIAN: That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden: but get it off myself I cannot; nor is there any man in our country that can take it off my shoulders; therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may be rid of my burden.

WORLDLY: Who bid thee go this way to be rid of thy burden?

CHRISTIAN: A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honorable person. His name, as I remember, is Evangelist.

WORLDLY: I beshrew him for his counsel! There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that into which he hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find, if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something, as I perceive, already; for I see the dirt of the Slough of Despond is upon thee; but that Slough is the beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that way. Hear me; I am older than thou: thou art like to meet with, in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and (in a word) death, and what not. These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. And why should a man so carelessly cast away himself by giving heed to a stranger?

CHRISTIAN: Why, sir, this burden upon my back is more

terrible to me than all these things which you have mentioned; nay, methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.

WORLDLY: How camest thou by thy burden at first?

CHRISTIAN: By reading this Book in my hand.

WORLDLY: I thought so, and it has happened unto thee as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions; which distractions do not only unman men, as thine I perceive have done thee, but they run them upon desperate ventures to obtain they know not what.

CHRISTIAN: I know what I would obtain; it is ease from my heavy burden.

WORLDLY: But why wilt thou seek for ease this way, seeing so many dangers attend it, especially since (hadst thou but patience to hear me) I could direct thee to the obtaining of what thou desirest without the dangers that thou in this way wilt run thyself into? Yea, and the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add, that instead of those dangers, thou shalt meet with much safety, friendship, and content.

CHRISTIAN: Pray, sir, open this secret to me.

WORLDLY: Why, in yonder village (the village is named Morality) there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of a very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine is from their shoulders; yea, to my knowledge, he hath done a great deal

of good this way; aye, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. To him, as I said, thou mayest go, and be helped presently. His house is not quite a mile from this place; and if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man to his son, whose name is Civility, that can do it (to speak on) as well as the old gentleman himself. There, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden; and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation (as indeed, I would not wish thee), thou mayest send for thy wife and children to thee to this village, where there are houses now standing empty, one of which thou mayest have at a reasonable rate; provision is there also cheap and good; and that which will make thy life the happier, is, to be sure, there thou shalt live by honest neighbors, in credit and good fashion.

Now was Christian somewhat at a stand; but presently he concluded.

CHRISTIAN: If this be true which this gentleman hath said, my wisest course is to take his advice. Sir, which is my way to this honest man's house?

WORLDLY: Do you see yonder high hill?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, very well.

WORLDLY: By that hill you must go, and the first house you come at is his.

On the Way to Mr. Legality's House

So Christian turned out of his way to go to Mr. Legality's house for help: but behold, when he was got now hard by the hill, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was next to the wayside did hang so much over, that Christian was afraid to venture farther, lest the hill should fall on his head; wherefore there he stood still, and knew not what to do. Also his burden now seemed heavier to him than while he was in his way. There came also flashes of fire (Exodus 19:16, 18) out of the hill, that made Christian afraid that he should be burned: here therefore he did sweat, and quake for fear (Hebrews 12:21).

And now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. Worldly Wiseman's counsel: and with that he saw Evangelist coming to meet him, at the sight also of whom he began to blush for shame. So Evangelist drew nearer and nearer; and coming up to him, he looked upon him with a severe and dreadful countenance, and thus began to reason with Christian.

EVANGELIST: What dost thou here, Christian?

At which words Christian knew not what to answer; wherefore at present he stood speechless before him.

EVANGELIST: Art not thou the man that I found crying without the walls of the city of Destruction?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, dear sir, I am the man.

EVANGELIST: Did I not direct thee the way to the little wicket gate?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, dear sir.

EVANGELIST: How is it then that thou art so quickly turned aside? For thou art now out of the way.

CHRISTIAN: I met with a gentleman so soon as I had got over the Slough of Despond, who persuaded me that I might, in the village before me, find a man that could take off my burdens.

EVANGELIST: What was he?

CHRISTIAN: He looked like a gentleman, and talked much to me, and got me at last to yield; so I came hither; but when I beheld this hill, and how it hangs over the way, I suddenly made a stand, lest it should fall on my head.

EVANGELIST: What said that gentleman to you?

CHRISTIAN: Why, he asked me whither I was going; and I told him.

EVANGELIST: And what said he then?

CHRISTIAN: He asked me if I had a family: and I told him. But, said I, I am so laden with the burden that is on my back, that I cannot take pleasure in them as formerly.

EVANGELIST: And what said he then?

CHRISTIAN: He bid me with speed get rid of my burden; and I told him it was ease that I sought; and, said I, I am therefore going to yonder gate, to receive further direction how I may get to the place of deliverance. So he said that he would show me a better way, and short, not so attended with difficulties as the way, sir, that you set me in; which way, said he, will direct you to a gentleman's house that hath skill to take off these burdens: so I believed him, and turned out of that way into this, if

haply I might be soon eased of my burden. But when I came to this place, and beheld things as they are, I stopped, for fear (as I said) of danger; but I now know not what to do.

EVANGELIST: Stand still a little, that I may show thee the words of God.

So he stood trembling.

EVANGELIST: See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven (Hebrews 12:25). Moreover, "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38). He also did thus apply them: Thou art the man that art running into misery; thou hast begun to reject the counsel of the Most High, and to draw back thy foot from the way of peace, even almost to the hazarding of thy perdition.

Then Christian fell down at his feet as dead, crying:

CHRISTIAN: Woe is me, for I am undone!

At the sight of which Evangelist caught him by the right hand, saying:

EVANGELIST: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men" (Matthew 12:31). "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

Then did Christian again a little revive, and stood up trembling, as at first, before Evangelist.

EVANGELIST: Give more earnest heed to the things that I

shall tell thee of. I will now show thee who it was that deluded thee, and who it was also to whom he sent thee. That man that met thee is one Worldly Wiseman; and rightly is he so called; partly because he savoreth only of the doctrine of this world (1 John 4:5), (therefore he always goes to the town of Morality to church); and partly because he loveth that doctrine best, for it saveth him from the cross (Galatians 6:12); and because he is of this carnal temper, therefore he seeketh to pervert my ways, though right. Now there are three things in this man's counsel that thou must utterly abhor:

1. His turning thee out of the way.
2. His laboring to render the cross odious to thee.
3. And his setting thy feet in that way that leadeth unto the administration of death.

First, thou must abhor his turning thee out of the way; yea, and thine own consenting thereto, because this is to reject the counsel of God for the sake of the counsel of a Worldly Wiseman. The Lord says: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luke 13:24); the gate to which I send thee; for "strait is the gate ... which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13–14). From this little wicket gate, and from the way thereto, hath this wicked man turned thee, to the bringing of thee almost to destruction. Hate, therefore, his turning thee out of the way, and abhor thyself for hearkening to him.

Second, thou must abhor his laboring to render the cross odious unto thee; for thou art to prefer it before the treasures