

The Pilgrim's Progress



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN BUNYAN

John Bunyan was born into a working-class family and was not highly educated. He described himself as having been a rebellious child who particularly enjoyed swearing. At 16, Bunyan joined Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army to fight in the English Civil War. A narrow escape from death caused Bunyan to begin shedding his rebelliousness. After marrying a pious young woman, Bunyan increasingly mourned for his sins. Under the influence of a local nonconformist preacher (who rejected the established Church of England) and his reading of Martin Luther's works, Bunyan eventually had a profound conversion experience. Within a few years, he had become a popular preacher in his own right and to publish religious writings. In 1660, however, he was thrown in jail for preaching without the king's permission. He remained in jail for over 12 years (despite never being formally charged or sentenced), spending his time writing and earning a modest income for his family by making shoelaces. Occasionally, sympathetic jailers released him briefly to preach to Baptist audiences in Bedfordshire. He said that he would remain imprisoned "even till the moss shall grow upon my eyebrows, rather than violate my faith and principles." He began work on *Pilgrim's Progress*, by far his most famous book, during his imprisonment. After another spell of imprisonment in the 1670s, Bunyan spent his last years writing and ministering; he published nearly 60 works during his lifetime. He died suddenly of a fever while traveling, at age 59.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Puritanism was a reforming movement within the 17th-century Anglican Church, or Church of England. Puritan theologians sought to "purify" Anglicanism from what they saw as unbiblical practices and doctrines that retained too much Roman Catholic influence. Though Puritanism has a rather dour reputation in the United States, in England the focus of Puritan preaching and literature was on a warm-hearted, practical faith and the gradual transformation of a Christian's life in response to God's grace. Puritan theology was influential in Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist churches, on both scholarly and popular levels; along with Bunyan, some famous 17th-century Puritan authors included Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Flavel. In 1660, when the Stuart monarchy was restored in England, religious toleration was curtailed. Later that year, Bunyan was arrested under the Conventicle Act of 1593, which forbade religious gatherings outside of one's local (Anglican) parish church. During the Stuart king

Charles II's reign, an Act of Uniformity was passed (requiring Anglican ordination for preachers), as well as another Conventicle Act of 1664, which further cracked down on dissenting, or nonconformist, religious gatherings. Under these acts, many nonconforming clergy were arrested, and many left their churches and preached in open countryside in order to avoid persecution, their congregations following them.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, a vastly popular 1611 English translation, is undoubtedly the greatest literary influence on John Bunyan and *Pilgrim's Progress*—nearly every page of the novel is marked by direct quotations or allusions to the KJV, which its original audience would have recognized. Arguably the best-known work of Christian allegorical fiction is Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* ([Inferno](#), [Purgatorio](#), and [Paradiso](#)), written in the 1300s in Italy; it traces Dante's dream-journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. In contrast, the action of *Pilgrim's Progress* takes place in an ordinary Christian's life and doesn't focus on the content of the afterlife, reflecting Bunyan's Protestant differences from medieval Catholic views. However, like the *Divine Comedy*, *Pilgrim's Progress* is a dream that recounts a Christian's journey to finding salvation. Another medieval religious allegory, William Langland's [Piers Plowman](#), provides a closer analogue to *Pilgrim's Progress* in its English origins, use of a long list of characters with allegorical names, and great popularity in its day. A more modern Christian allegory is C. S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia series (including [The Magician's Nephew](#) and [The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe](#)), which allegorizes Christian themes for children. Among his many other writings, Bunyan himself also wrote a spiritual autobiography titled *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World, to That Which Is to Come*
- **When Written:** 1670s, during Bunyan's imprisonment; First Part completed in 1677, Second Part in 1684
- **Where Written:** Bedfordshire, England
- **When Published:** 1678 (First Part), 1684 (Second Part)
- **Literary Period:** Restoration period
- **Genre:** Fiction, Religious Allegorical Fiction
- **Setting:** An allegorical landscape loosely based on 17th-century England, concluding in the Celestial City, or Heaven.
- **Climax:** Christian crosses the River of Death and enters the Celestial City.

- **Antagonist:** Sin, the world, death, and the devil
- **Point of View:** First person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Pilgrim's Popularity. *Pilgrim's Progress* is one of history's best-selling books and has never been out of print. It has been published in more than 200 languages (including Dutch, French, and Welsh during Bunyan's lifetime) and at least 1,500 editions.

Allegorical Impact. *Pilgrim's Progress* has influenced many other literary works. The title of William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* is an allusion to the location in Christian's journey, and in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, the March sisters read the book and refer to its characters and plot. C. S. Lewis's first published work of fiction, *Pilgrim's Regress*, chronicles his own conversion to Christianity in an early 20th-century allegorical setting.



PLOT SUMMARY

Pilgrim's Progress is a Christian allegory, meaning that it has two levels of significance. On the surface, the story follows a man named Christian as he leaves the City of Destruction and journeys to a place called the Celestial City, encountering all sorts of roadblocks and fearsome creatures along the way. But on a deeper level, *Pilgrim's Progress* charts the journey of an average Christian person as they strive to leave behind their destructive, sinful ways and get to Heaven.

The story of Christian's journey is actually a dream that the book's unnamed narrator is having. In the narrator's dream, Christian is carrying a heavy **burden** on his back—the weight of his sins—and doesn't know how to get rid of it. He's also struggling with the knowledge that his hometown, the City of Destruction, will soon be destroyed by a fire. When he tells his wife and kids this, though, they think he's delirious, and they mock and reject him.

Christian soon meets a man named Evangelist who tells Christian that he must escape the impending destruction, and that he must flee by passing through a gate, called the **Wicket-gate**, in the distance. Taking Evangelist's advice to heart, Christian runs eagerly toward the gate, ignoring the cries of his family and neighbors, who think he's crazy.

Before he can reach the Wicket-gate, though, Christian accidentally plunges into a muddy bog called the Slough of Despond. Luckily, a man named Help pulls him out, explaining that sinners' doubts and fears accumulate here in the bog. As he continues on his journey to the gate, Christian meets a gentleman named Worldly Wiseman who claims that Evangelist's advice will only lead Christian into trouble. Instead of worrying about what the Bible says—the book Christian is carrying—Christian should go to the town of Morality and get

his burden removed by a fellow named Legality. Christian begins to heed this advice, but his burden only grows heavier, and he fears being crushed by it entirely. Thankfully, Evangelist finds him again and explains that Christian has been misled; Legality cannot free Christian from his sins and would only trap him in heavier bondage.

When Christian finally arrives at the Wicket-gate, he knocks eagerly and identifies himself as a poor sinner. He receives a warm welcome from a man named Good-will, who directs Christian on the straight and narrow path to the place of Deliverance: the road that will end at the Celestial City, or Heaven. Christian sets out on this highway, stopping at the Interpreter's House, where the Interpreter shows him a series of symbols of a Christian believer's journey through life. After this, Christian runs to the Cross, where, as Good-will promised, he immediately loses his burden, which tumbles from his back and disappears into a tomb. Three angels, called the Shining Ones, greet him. One of them hands Christian a **roll**, or certificate, which he must hand in when he reaches the Celestial Gate. Christian runs on joyfully. Despite briefly misplacing his roll and then having to pass roaring lions, Christian soon arrives at a place called the Palace Beautiful, where he finds rest and encouragement and is sent on his way with a sword.

Christian now enters the Valley of Humiliation, where he is confronted by a hideous fiend named Apollyon. Apollyon tries to discourage Christian with reminders of his past sins, but Christian declares he's been pardoned by Christ, which infuriates Apollyon. After a long, fierce combat, Christian wounds Apollyon with his sword. Then he enters a pitch-dark realm called the Valley of the Shadow of Death, which contains an entrance to Hell. He is heartened in his passage when he hears a fellow pilgrim, Faithful, praying in the distance. The next morning, he catches up with Faithful and hears about his new friend's pilgrimage.

Soon, Christian and Faithful enter the ancient town of Vanity, which boasts a huge Fair selling every imaginable type of goods—including sinful ones. When the pilgrims draw attention by their resistance of the Fair's attractions, the people of Vanity persecute them, and Faithful is cruelly executed. Christian escapes and is joined by a man named Hopeful, who witnessed Faithful's death and decided to seek the Celestial City himself.

Christian and Hopeful wander astray onto the grounds of a Giant named Despair, who imprisons them in the filthy dungeon of his home, Doubting Castle. After being starved and repeatedly beaten, Christian grows depressed, but Hopeful encourages him with reminders of what they've overcome. When he resorts to prayer, Christian discovers a key which releases him and Hopeful from the dungeon.

After a brief detour off the path, Christian and Hopeful reach the Enchanted Ground. The air of the Enchanted Ground lulls people into a deadly sleep, so Christian asks Hopeful about his

conversion in order to keep them both awake. They also try to exhort a man named Ignorance, who believes he'll attain Heaven on the basis of his efforts and good intentions.

Then Christian and Hopeful enter a peaceful land called Beulah, which borders the Celestial City. To reach the City, they must cross the River of Death by the power of their faith. Christian finds the crossing terrifying, and Hopeful must keep his friend's head above water. Once Christian begins to think of Jesus instead of his own sins, he suddenly finds the crossing easy. The pilgrims hand in their certificates and are joyously welcomed into the Celestial City, which gleams with gold and rings with music.

The second part of the book focuses on the pilgrimage of Christian's wife, Christiana. Though Christiana had earlier mocked and rejected her husband's pilgrimage, his death forces her to reconsider. After she receives a letter of invitation from Christ himself, she gathers her four sons and tearfully repents of her unkindness to their father. With their neighbor Mercy, the group sets out on their own pilgrimage. All are warmly received at the Wicket-gate. After receiving instruction at the Interpreter's House, they journey onward in the company of a defender named Great-heart. When they reach the Cross, Christiana asks Great-heart to explain the Christian doctrine of salvation in greater detail.

Christiana, Mercy, and the boys stay at the Porter's Lodge at Palace Beautiful for a month. While there, Mercy rejects a worldly suitor who doesn't like her preoccupation with caring for the poor. Also, Christiana's son Matthew, who'd earlier eaten some stolen fruit along the journey, grows sick and must take a purgative potion blended with tears of repentance.

Rejoined by Great-heart as guide, the group sets off with their hosts' blessings. They pass through the Valley of Humiliation with ease, and in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Great-heart kills a giant on their behalf. Then an elderly pilgrim named Honest joins their party.

Christiana's group lodges for a while at an inn that belongs to a kindly man named Gaius. After slaying another giant, the group also gains pilgrims named Feeble-mind and Ready-to-halt. When they make their way to Vanity, they discover that pilgrims are no longer harshly persecuted here as Christian and Faithful were. After a long stay with a good man named Mnason, the pilgrims progress to Doubting Castle. Here, the men of the group kill the giants and destroy the Castle once and for all, rescuing pilgrims named Dispondency and Much-afraid in the process. Valiant-for-Truth, escaping robbers, and Stand-fast, fleeing a witch's temptation, accompany the group the rest of the way.

Christiana's group—which has swelled in size, as the boys and Mercy are all married now—reaches Beulah and settles on the outskirts of the Celestial City. Before long, Christian summons Christiana to Heaven. Leaving each pilgrim with encouraging

words, she crosses the River and is joyfully led by angels to the Celestial Gate. One by one, each member of her party (with the exception of her sons' families) is summoned by Christ and makes his or her way across the River to enter the rest and celebration in the heavenly City. Meanwhile, Christian's and Christiana's offspring remain behind, resulting in the Church's flourishing.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Christian – Christian is Christiana's husband and the protagonist of the story. He is an "Everyman" character—in other words, he's an ordinary stock character with whom a broad audience is expected to identify. As such (and like most of the characters in *Pilgrim's Progress*), he doesn't have strong distinguishing characteristics. In this case, he represents an ordinary Christian passing through life on the way to Heaven. At the beginning of the book, Christian is distressed by a **burden** on his back (his sin), as well as the news that his hometown, the City of Destruction, will soon be destroyed by fire from heaven. Eventually, Evangelist directs him to flee to the **Wicket-Gate**. Christian's family (Christiana and their sons, Matthew, Samuel, Joseph, and James) mocks and dismisses his fears, so he flees alone. Before reaching the Wicket-Gate, he is briefly diverted by Mr. Worldly Wiseman's advice to get his burden removed by Legality, but he fears being crushed by the mountain on the way, and Evangelist gets him back on the right track. At the gate, he is welcomed as a repentant sinner and pointed along the narrow way to the Celestial City, though he doesn't lose his burden until he sees the place of Deliverance, or the Cross. Alone, he passes through various obstacles, like fighting the demon Apollyon, before joining a fellow pilgrim, Faithful, with whom he faces persecution in Vanity Fair. Later, he journeys with a pilgrim named Hopeful, spending time imprisoned in Doubting Castle. After numerous other detours, delights, and struggles, he crosses the River of Death in harrowing fashion and attains his goal of reaching the Celestial City, where he is welcomed with great joy.

Faithful – Like Christian, Faithful comes from the City of Destruction. He and Christian meet and begin journeying together at the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Faithful has a conversation with Talkative about the transformative power of grace in the soul, correcting Talkative's superficial and hypocritical views. When they reach Vanity Fair, Faithful and Christian are both targeted, abused, and humiliated for their refusal to purchase wares from the Fair. Though Faithful is permitted to defend himself at trial, he is cruelly executed thereafter. His faith and bravery encourage Hopeful and others to become pilgrims.

Hopeful – Hopeful, from the city of Vanity, witnesses Faithful's

brutal execution in Vanity Fair and is encouraged to follow Christian from then on; they become companions for the rest of their pilgrimage. While he and Christian are imprisoned in Doubting Castle, Hopeful is Christian's encourager, reminding him of obstacles he's overcome in the past and trusting that God will rescue them somehow. Later, on the Enchanted Ground, Hopeful is more susceptible than Christian to the sleep-inducing effects of that place, but he stays awake by telling Christian the story of his conversion. He used to love the indulgences Vanity Fair had to offer, but eventually felt a sense of conviction, or shame, over his sins. After much inner struggle, Hopeful had a vision of Christ telling him to believe, and he realized that he must simply trust Christ instead of his own failing efforts to reform his life. Hopeful has an easier time crossing the River of Death, encouraging Christian along the way, and together they enter the Celestial City.

Christiana – Christiana is Christian's wife. In the book's first part, she mocks Christian's faith and refuses to go on pilgrimage with him. In the second part, she repents and decides to follow him to the Celestial City, along with her four sons and her friend Mercy. Over the second half of the book, Christiana gathers various other pilgrims into the group, including Honest, Feeble-mind, and Valiant-for-Truth. Besides retracing much of Christian's path along the narrow way, Christiana has a keen eye for spiritual symbolism and is genuinely curious about theological concepts. For example, at the Cross, she questions her guide, Mr. Great-heart, at length regarding the Christian doctrine of justification. She is also praised by Prudence for having given her sons good religious instruction. When she reaches Beulah, Christiana receives a letter summoning her to the Celestial City and crosses the River of Death after bidding each of her friends farewell.

Evangelist – Evangelist gets Christian on the path to repentance and salvation. In answer to Christian's distress, Evangelist gives him a parchment **roll** that reads, "Fly from the wrath to come" and directs him to the **Wicket-Gate**. He reappears when Christian falls prey to Worldly Wiseman's misdirection and gets Christian back on the right path. He also prophesies Faithful's martyrdom in Vanity Fair.

Pliable – With Obstinate, Pliable tries to force Christian to return to the City of Destruction, but unlike Obstinate, Pliable is moved by Christian's description of Heaven and travels with him for a short distance. However, after getting stuck in the Slough of Despond, Pliable decides the journey will be too unpleasant and returns home.

Mr. Worldly Wiseman – Mr. Worldly Wiseman, from the town of Carnal Policy, meets Christian as Christian is walking toward the **Wicket-Gate**. Mr. Worldly Wiseman denounces Evangelist's advice to go to the Wicket-Gate because Christian will encounter all sorts of dangers and unpleasantness that way. Instead, he urges Christian to visit the village of Morality, where Legality or Civility will remove his **burden** for him.

Christian initially follows his advice before Evangelist intercedes.

Legality – Legality is Civility's father. He's a resident of the village of Morality whom Mr. Worldly Wiseman cites as an honest man, skilled at removing the burdens of people like Christian. Later, Evangelist explains to Christian that Legality is "the Son of the Bond-woman," or Mount Sinai, and in bondage along with her; therefore, Legality can't free Christian from his **burden**.

Good-will/Keeper of the Gate – Good-will is a solemn figure who guards the **Wicket-gate**. However, when Christian knocks and introduces himself as a sinner, Good-will gladly opens the gate for him. He then directs Christian on the straight and narrow path. In the book's second part, when Christiana knocks at the Gate, the figure who admits her is referred to as the Keeper. It is implied throughout that the Keeper is Jesus Christ.

Shining Ones – The Shining Ones are angels who minister to Christian throughout his travels—for example, giving him new clothes and a sealed **roll** after he loses his **burden** of sin at the Cross. A Shining One also disciplines Christian and Hopeful after they heedlessly follow the Flatterer and get caught in a net, but then he lovingly sends them on the correct path. Shining Ones accompany the pilgrims from the River of Death to the Celestial Gate.

Simple – Simple is one of three men, their feet bound with chains, whom Christian meets after the Cross. He would rather sleep than stay alert to the devil's attacks. Later, when Christiana passes by the same spot, she finds him and his companions (Sloth and Presumption) dead, hung in irons for their misdeeds.

Sloth – Sloth is one of three men, their feet bound with chains, whom Christian meets after the Cross. He would rather sleep than stay alert to the devil's attacks. Later, when Christiana passes by the same spot, she finds him and his companions (Simple and Presumption) dead, hung in irons for their misdeeds.

Presumption – Presumption is one of three men, their feet bound with chains, whom Christian meets after the Cross. He would rather sleep than stay alert to the devil's attacks. Later, when Christiana passes by the same spot, she finds him and his companions (Simple and Sloth) dead, hung in irons for their misdeeds.

Formalist – Formalist is a man who climbs over the wall of Salvation to access the narrow way, instead of entering the prescribed way, through the **Wicket-gate**. Christian warns him and Hypocrisy that he is a thief in the Lord's territory and thus will not be welcomed when he reaches the Celestial City. After taking an easy path to avoid the Hill Difficulty, he's never seen again.

Hypocrisy – Hypocrisy is a man who climbs over the wall of Salvation to access the narrow way, instead of entering the

prescribed way, through the **Wicket-gate**. Christian warns him and Formalist that he is a thief in the Lord's territory and thus will not be welcomed when he reaches the Celestial City. After taking an easy path to avoid the Hill Difficulty, he's never seen again.

Apollyon – Apollyon is a horrible winged fiend whom Christian meets after he leaves Palace Beautiful. He tries to persuade Christian to become his subject again. When Christian refuses, Apollyon tries to shame him for his past sins and failures. When Christian isn't discouraged, Apollyon flies into a rage and viciously fights Christian for half a day. Just before Apollyon kills him, Christian wounds the fiend with his sword, prevailing over him.

Adam the First/Moses – Adam the First is an honest-looking old man whom Faithful meets at the foot of the Hill Difficulty. Adam the First invites Faithful to live with him in the town of Deceit and work for him in exchange for good wages and an inheritance. When Faithful declines and walks away, Adam the First attacks him relentlessly, saying he doesn't know how to show mercy, but Christ intervenes. Later, Christian explains to Faithful that Adam the First was really Moses.

Talkative – Talkative is a man whom Christian and Faithful meet on their journey between the Valley of the Shadow of Death and Vanity Fair. He is from the City of Destruction, and Christian is familiar with Talkative's bad reputation. Though Talkative loves talking about spirituality, religion hasn't affected his heart or lifestyle—he's notorious for drinking too much and mistreating his family and servants. Sure enough, when Faithful tries to engage Talkative in a conversation about the gospel's transformative power in a human heart, Talkative avoids the subject. After this, the other pilgrims part company with Talkative.

By-ends – By-ends comes from the wealthy town of Fair-speech and is going to the Celestial City. Christian and Hopeful encounter him after they leave Vanity Fair. Christian recognizes By-ends and warns Hopeful that he's a hypocrite. By-ends says that he never goes against the tide of the world in religious matters, setting him apart from stricter Christians, and that he likes religion best in fancy trappings instead of in poor ones. After By-ends parts ways from Christian and Hopeful (whom he accuses of being overly rigid), he gathers a small group of pilgrims who agree with him that religion and worldly goods are compatible. He and his friends disappear after visiting Demas's silver-mine.

Giant Despair – Giant Despair lives in Doubting Castle, somewhere between Vanity Fair and the Delectable Mountains, with his wife, Diffidence. After wandering off their path to the Celestial City and getting stranded in a storm, Christian and Hopeful accidentally trespass on Giant Despair's land. Giant Despair throws them into a dungeon and denies them food. On his wife's advice, he also beats the prisoners and

tries to provoke them to suicide. Mr. Great-heart and his friends later destroy the giant's castle.

Shepherds – The Shepherds tend their flocks in the Delectable Mountains of Immanuel's Land, overlooking the Celestial City. They show kindness to Christian and Hopeful after the two men escape from Doubting Castle, and they later provide lodging to Christiana, Mercy, and their group. They also warn the pilgrims not to fall asleep on the Enchanted Ground.

Ignorance – Ignorance is a young man whom Christian and Hopeful meet after they descend from the Delectable Mountains. Unlike the other Christian and Hopeful, Ignorance has no **scroll** with which to gain entrance to the Celestial City, meaning he has bypassed the **Wicket-gate**. He claims that he lives a good, religious life and is confident that this is enough to get him into the Celestial City. He also has many thoughts about God, which encourages Ignorance to believe that he will be accepted into Heaven. When Christian explains the Bible's teaching that all human beings have wicked hearts, Ignorance does not accept this. He parts ways with Christian and Hopeful at this point and is later seen trying to enter Heaven without a certificate. He is accordingly cast into Hell.

Temporary – Temporary is a man from the town of Graceless whom Christian and Hopeful discuss. At one time, Temporary felt convicted of his sins, but he went astray after befriending a man named Saveself. Temporary is an example of someone who feels guilty about sin, but doesn't actually follow Christ in response; instead, they drift back into the ways of the world.

Mercy – Mercy, a young woman, is Christiana's neighbor. Mercy agrees to go on pilgrimage with Christiana out of concern both for her neighbor and herself. She is a tender-hearted and compassionate person; she is also rather shy, reluctant to speak about her spiritual experiences. She spends most of her spare time making clothes for the poor. Though Mercy has had a number of suitors, like Mr. Brisk, she refuses to marry anyone who doesn't share her faith in God. Later, she marries Matthew on Gaius's suggestion and has at least one child.

Feeble-mind – Feeble-mind is a weak but determined pilgrim whom Mr. Great-heart rescues from Slay-good the giant. Feeble-mind's health is poor, and he often receives special help from other pilgrims. He is Mr. Fearing's nephew. He hesitates to join Christiana's group of pilgrims, fearing he'll be a burden, but they promise to accommodate him. He becomes friends with Mr. Ready-to-halt.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Obstinate – Obstinate, a neighbor in the City of Destruction, tries to force the fleeing Christian to return home. When Christian tries to persuade Obstinate to flee with him, Obstinate decides Christian is insane to leave the world behind and returns to the city.

Help – When Christian is struggling in the Slough of Despond, Help appears and pulls him out.

Civility – Civility is Legality's son. Like Legality, he purports to help remove people's **burdens** but instead just increases them.

Interpreter – After passing through the **Wicket-gate**, both Christian and Christiana visit the Interpreter's House, where the Interpreter shows them various signs and curiosities whose meanings help the pilgrims on their journeys.

Timorous – Timorous is a fearful pilgrim who flees the lions in the path and tries to get Christian to turn back.

Mistrust – Mistrust is a fearful pilgrim who flees the lions in the path and tries to get Christian to turn back.

Porter/Mr. Watchful – The Porter, or Mr. Watchful, guards the entrance to Palace Beautiful and encourages Christian not to fear the lions along the path.

Discretion – Discretion is a girl who interviews and admits Christian to Palace Beautiful.

Piety – Piety is a resident of Palace Beautiful who encourages guests with her hospitality and conversation. She is especially focused on religious reverence.

Prudence – Prudence is a resident of Palace Beautiful who encourages guests with her hospitality and conversation. She is especially focused on wise judgment. When Christiana and her sons arrive, she asks Christiana's sons catechism questions to test their religious understanding.

Charity – Charity is a resident of Palace Beautiful who encourages guests with her hospitality and conversation. She is especially focused on love.

Shame – Shameful is a figure whom Faithful meets while passing through the Valley of Humiliation. Shame tries to convince Faithful that it's shameful to be religious in the current day and age—after all, most of the rich and powerful don't worry about religion, but only the poor and ignorant.

Beelzebub – Beelzebub, a devil, is the King of Vanity.

Envy – Envy witnesses against Faithful in his trial in Vanity Fair.

Superstition – Superstition witnesses against Faithful in his trial in Vanity Fair.

Pickthank – Pickthank witnesses against Faithful in his trial in Vanity Fair.

Lord Hategood – Lord Hategood is the judge of Faithful's trial in Vanity Fair.

Demas – Demas leads pilgrims astray by inviting them to dig for treasure in his silver-mine in the hill called Lucre.

Diffidence – Diffidence is Giant Despair's wife. She eggs on Giant Despair in his cruelties toward Christian and Hopeful. Mr. Honest later slays her.

Flatterer – Flatterer is a sinister figure who offers to lead Christian and Hopeful to the Celestial City but actually takes

them in the opposite direction, getting them helplessly lost. The Shepherds had warned the pilgrims about the Flatterer, but they failed to heed the warning.

Atheist – Christian and Hopeful meet Atheist on their pilgrimage, and Atheist laughs mockingly when he hears that the pilgrims are headed to the Celestial City. Atheist claims that he spent 20 years searching for the Celestial City and never found any sign of it.

Mr. Sagacity – When the narrator begins dreaming the second part of the book, he initially journeys with a figure named Mr. Sagacity. Sagacity tells the narrator the early part of Christiana's story.

Secret – Secret is a figure who visits Christiana in the City of Destruction with a letter from the King of the Celestial City, inviting her to follow in Christian's footsteps.

Mrs. Timorous – Mrs. Timorous is Timorous's daughter and Christiana's neighbor. She pleads with Christiana not to follow Christian's footsteps by going on a pilgrimage, arguing that the hardships are too great.

Ill-Favored Ones – The Ill-Favored Ones attempt to assault the women pilgrims (Christiana and her group) soon after the latter depart from the **Wicket-gate**, until they are chased off by a Reliever.

Reliever – Reliever comes from the Gate-House to rescue the women pilgrims from the Ill-Favored Ones.

Mr. Great-heart – Mr. Great-heart is the guide and defender, assigned by Interpreter, who accompanies Christiana and her fellow pilgrims from the Interpreter's House all the way to the banks of the River of Death. He defeats giants, leads and protects the women, and gives spiritual advice.

James – Christian's and Christiana's youngest son and Joseph, Samuel, and Matthew's brother. He later marries Gaius's daughter Phebe.

Joseph – Christian's and Christiana's second-youngest son and Matthew, Samuel, and James's brother. He later marries Martha Mnason.

Samuel – Samuel is Christian's and Christiana's second-oldest son and James, Joseph, and Matthew's brother. He later marries Grace Mnason.

Matthew – Matthew is Christian's and Christiana's eldest son and James, Joseph, and Samuel's brother. He gets deathly ill after eating some stolen fruit, but a doctor named Mr. Skill saves him. While staying at Gaius's Inn, he marries Mercy.

Mr. Brisk – Mr. Brisk, a worldly man, is Mercy's suitor while she is staying at the Porter's House. When he finds out that Mercy spends her spare time making clothes for the poor, he rejects her.

Mr. Skill – Mr. Skill is a doctor who makes a purgative potion for Matthew.

Maul – Maul is a giant whom Mr. Great-heart defeats in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Mr. Honest – Mr. Honest is an elderly pilgrim who joins Christiana's group. He comes from the town of Stupidity. Mr. Fearing journeyed with him for a while.

Mr. Fearing – Mr. Fearing is a pilgrim who constantly feared whether he would be accepted by God, thus making his journey needlessly difficult. God mercifully removed many obstacles throughout his pilgrimage, and his crossing of the River was easy.

Mr. Self-Will – Mr. Self-Will is a pilgrim who interpreted the Bible in order to excuse his own vices. Because of this, Great-heart doubts that Self-will was a genuine pilgrim.

Gaius – Gaius is a kindly innkeeper who houses Christiana and her group for a month, having known Christian's family for a long time. He advises Christiana to find godly wives for her sons and even encourages a match between Matthew and Mercy. He warmly praises women's faithfulness as pilgrims.

Slay-good – Slay-good is a fearsome, flesh-eating giant who almost eats Feeble-mind before being slain by Great-heart.

Phebe – Phebe is Gaius's daughter, who marries James.

Mr. Ready-to-halt – Mr. Ready-to-halt is a pilgrim who is infirm and uses crutches; he joins Christiana's group of pilgrims as they're setting out from Gaius's Inn. He and Feeble-mind are good friends.

Mr. Mnason – Mr. Mnason is a disciple from Cyprus who lives in Vanity. Christiana and her fellow pilgrims lodge in his house during their extended stay in that town. He has daughters named Grace and Martha.

Grace – Grace is Mr. Mnason's daughter, who marries Samuel.

Martha – Martha is Mr. Mnason's daughter, who marries Joseph.

Mr. Contrite – Mr. Contrite is Mr. Mnason's friend, who lives in Vanity and helps Mr. Great-heart slay the dragon that harasses the town.

Mr. Dispondency – Mr. Dispondency, Much-afraid's father, is a pilgrim who is found imprisoned in Doubting Castle and taken under Mr. Great-heart's protection.

Much-afraid – Much-afraid is a pilgrim who, with her father, Mr. Dispondency, is found imprisoned in Doubting Castle and taken under Mr. Great-heart's protection. When the time comes for her to cross the River of Death, she sings a joyous song.

Mr. Valiant-for-Truth – Mr. Valiant-for-Truth is a brave pilgrim from Dark-land whom Christiana's group meets just beyond the Delectable Mountains. Despite his family's opposition, he embarked on his pilgrimage after hearing about Christian. Before Christiana crosses the River, she places her children under his care.

Stand-fast – Stand-fast is a pilgrim who joins Christiana's group in the Enchanted Ground, escaping Madam Bubble's temptations.

Madam Bubble – Madam Bubble is an evil witch who has led many pilgrims astray in the Enchanted Ground, though Stand-fast escapes her temptations.

Little-faith – Little-faith is a character in a story Hopeful tells, who was robbed on his pilgrimage and spent the rest of his journey discouraged, though he made it to the Celestial City.

The Narrator – The book's unnamed narrator falls asleep and dreams of Christian's and Christiana's respective journeys. These dreams make up the bulk of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

John Bunyan – Bunyan is the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. In the "Apology" at the beginning of the book, he offers a self-defense for writing about religious themes in a fictional and allegorical style.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



THE BURDEN OF SIN AND SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST

Pilgrim's Progress, a Christian allegory first published in 1678, is one of the most popular works of fiction ever written. John Bunyan's book presents the journey of a man named Christian, who's symbolic of the average Christian person. In the book, Christian flees the City of Destruction, finds salvation from his sins, and progresses toward the Celestial City (Heaven), encountering many obstacles on the way. To understand *Pilgrim's Progress*, it's vital to understand the book's Puritan perspective on sin and the role of Jesus Christ as savior. In this view, not only is everyone a sinner, but none of a sinner's efforts can atone for sin or make a sinner deserving of Heaven—only Christ's sacrificial death on sinners' behalf can accomplish this. To convey this idea, Bunyan portrays Christian as carrying a physical **burden** on his back, which symbolizes his sin. Indeed, Christian is unable to rid himself of this burden, and it's only his belief in Christ's sacrifice that redeems him. By focusing on Christian's inability to rid himself of this burden, Bunyan argues that every Christian believer must, like Christian the pilgrim, be unburdened through believing in Christ's sacrifice and not by looking to his or her own efforts.

In the book, getting rid of the burden of sin is something that the sinner ultimately can't do for him- or herself. However, seeking relief from the burden is still the most important thing

a sinner can do. As Christian tells Worldly Wiseman, who criticizes his journey, “this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than all these things which you have mentioned [danger, pain, weariness, hunger, and death]: nay, methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.” Nothing Christian encounters is more grievous to him than sin itself; he will face anything in order to be free from this burden and his guilt.

Getting rid of sin isn’t a simple matter, though, as it requires wrestling with sin’s gravity. Soon after Christian starts his journey, he falls into a muddy pit called the Slough of Despond and must be rescued by a figure named Help. Help explains that the Slough is “the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run [...] for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions[.]” The Slough, in other words, symbolizes the process of coming to a full realization of the depth of one’s sin. This doubt- and fear-filled process (one wonders if they can truly be saved from sin) is like getting mired in a bog. Bunyan suggests that for most Christians, this “conviction for sin” is a necessary but difficult step toward salvation.

The law (in Puritan theology, the effort to perfectly obey God’s commandments) doesn’t get rid of the burden of sin; it actually makes the burden heavier. At the Interpreter’s House (a place where Christian is shown various symbols of the Christian life), Christian is taken into a dusty, unswept room. When the dust is stirred up chokingly, the Interpreter explains that “this is to show thee, that the law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive, put strength into, and increase [sin] in the soul [...] for it doth not give power to subdue.” This explanation is based on the Protestant teaching that any attempts to adhere to the biblical law only *intensify* a person’s natural tendency to sin rather than eradicating sin. That is, human beings are not capable of ridding themselves of their sinful burden simply by trying harder—this only compounds the burden. Much as a sinner must wrestle with the gravity of sin, then, one must also accept one’s inability to redeem oneself.

Only Christ’s sacrifice on the cross takes away the burden of sin. When Christian sees a cross standing on a hill, “his burden [is] loosed from off his shoulders” and tumbles into the open grave beneath; then Christian is “glad and lightsome” and says, “He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death.” Christian only experiences salvation after he looks away from his own internal struggle and his own efforts and instead looks at what Christ has accomplished as Savior. Only then is he free to begin his pilgrimage in earnest.

Though it’s the most crucial step, looking to Christ as Savior is only the beginning of Christian’s journey to Heaven. As Christian travels, he often gets distracted by thoughts of the world he’s left behind, but “when I think what I saw at the cross [...] that will [help]; and when my thoughts wax warm about

whither I am going, that will do it.” In other words, each time a saved sinner is tempted to look back at the past or become too preoccupied with him- or herself, looking at the Cross, and looking ahead to the promise of Heaven, gets the sinner back on the right path.

It’s noteworthy that Christian’s unburdening at the cross happens relatively early in the book. Though it’s the key to his journey from that time forward, it’s not the climax. Passing through the “**wicket-gate**,” by believing in Christ, is only the entrance into a lifelong journey toward Heaven. Now that the Christian has laid down sin’s burden, it’s possible to become holier—more like Christ—through pilgrimage.



THE WORLD VS. CHRISTIANITY

In 17th-century Christian understanding, “the world” isn’t just referring to earthly existence as a whole, but to all forces that oppose Christ. Thus “the world” and Christ (or sometimes “the Church”) are completely opposite. Historically, Christian teaching held that although a Christian must live within the world and progress spiritually against the backdrop of worldly struggles, a Christian must also categorically reject the world and constantly fight against the temptations it poses. Not only that, but the world actively fights against the Christian. At best, the world misunderstands, scorns, and rejects Christianity; at worst, it seeks to oppress and even destroy Christians. In line with this, Bunyan follows Christian’s and his friend Faithful’s struggles to extricate themselves from the world against the opposition of family and other figures. After initial success, they continue to face the world’s opposition through internal temptation and external persecution. Through opposition from various manifestations of the world, Bunyan warns Christians that they’ll never be totally free of worldly influence and hostility in this life, but that they must always be prepared to resist it and suffer at its hands.

The world doesn’t understand allegiance to Christ. Even Christian’s own family opposes him. When Christian is warned of the coming wrath of God, he is greatly distressed and resolves to leave the City of Destruction. However, even his immediate family interprets his fervor as illness, and they don’t take him seriously: “they [...] thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages [...] sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him[.]” Even Christian’s family, being allied with “the world,” misinterprets his enthusiasm, reacting with harshness and derision. This suggests that, when one undertakes the journey to the Celestial City (Heaven), even a Christian’s dearest acquaintances must be rejected along with the world.

The “wisdom” of the world also opposes Christians. Worldly Wiseman, the embodiment of the world’s “wisdom,” tries to convince Christian that he’s brought his distress upon himself

by reading the Bible: “it is happened unto thee as to other weak men, who meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into distractions; which distractions do not only unman men [...] but they run them upon desperate ventures, to obtain they know not what.” Worldly Wiseman, symbolizing those who accept the world’s view of a good life, tries to dissuade Christian by arguing that only the “weak” are “distracted” by religious pursuits. Like Christian’s family, Worldly Wiseman argues that Christian’s pilgrimage is foolish. Only the ill or “unmanly” would choose to abandon what the world upholds as good.

Even once a Christian has rejected the world, the world is always trying to ensnare a Christian, even to the point of trying to destroy him or her. For one thing, the world tries to entangle Christians from within. For instance, after Faithful’s journey is well underway, a figure named Shame assaults him: “he said it was a pitiful low sneaking business for a man to mind Religion; he said that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing; and that for a man to watch over his words and ways, [...] would make him the ridicule of the times.” By calling the figure “Shame,” Bunyan suggests that the world tries to ensnare Faithful from *within*, in the form of lingering doubts (as here, where Shame tells Faithful his religious concerns make him “unmanly” and laughable). Though Faithful initially blushes at these accusations, he ultimately defends himself by saying that “this Shame tells me what men are; but it tells me nothing what *God* or the *Word of God* is [...] at the day of doom, we shall not be doomed to death or life” according to the world’s view of what’s right, but according to God’s.

The world tries to ensnare Christians from without, too. The book’s most scathing imagery of the world is Vanity Fair, a vast marketplace where every imaginable form of merchandise, sensual pleasure, and sinful indulgence is bought and sold. When Christian and Faithful denounce these “vanities,” they are mocked and imprisoned, eventually put on trial as “enemies to, and disturbers of, [the] trade.” In fact, when Faithful claims that “Christianity and the customs of [...] Vanity [are] diametrically opposite” and irreconcilable, thereby condemning not just Vanity but its people, he is executed. By portraying Vanity Fair as a symbol of the world, Bunyan argues that the world and Christianity are incompatible, and the pilgrims’ condemnation to death by Vanity’s judges shows that the world even seeks to destroy those who reject it.

The world’s hatred for Christians suggests—though Bunyan doesn’t make it explicit—that the world sees its own condemnation reflected in Christians’ rejection of its ways. That’s why the world seeks to ensnare and hurt Christians so relentlessly. The world doesn’t just scorn Christianity, according to Bunyan; it resists the call to give up sin and obey Christ.



OBSTACLES ON THE JOURNEY

The adventure of *Pilgrim’s Progress* only just begins when its main character, Christian, believes in Jesus Christ—after that, he still has a long, arduous journey to the Celestial City (Heaven). It’s filled with unintended wanderings, fearsome creatures, spiritual doubts, and dangers. While Bunyan employs these obstacles in order to create much of the book’s dramatic interest, he also uses them to establish what he sees as the basic pattern of an ordinary Christian’s life. Though Christians won’t experience the identical series of obstacles that the character Christian does, all will face at least some of them, and so they can learn from how Christian faces his challenges. The main way Christian defeats his obstacles is by looking away from his own weakness and instead remembering God’s mercy. This is, in fact, the pattern for the whole Christian life—one of death and rebirth, patterned in turn on Christ’s own death and resurrection. Through Christian’s pattern of facing down obstacles through Christ, Bunyan argues that all Christians must employ the same pattern of forgetting the self and instead remembering Christ’s mercy; if they persist in this, one day they’ll overcome the ultimate foe of death and be freed from obstacles once and for all.

Christians face various obstacles throughout their pilgrimage—things like reminders of past sin, doubt and despair, and spiritual complacency. When facing any such obstacles, Christ is a Christian’s greatest resource.

Although Christians are spared from hell, they are never sin-free until they make it to Heaven; therefore they must fight reminders of their sin. In the Valley of Humiliation, a fiend named Apollyon attacks Christian with reminders of his weaknesses: “Thou didst sinfully sleep [...] Thou wast also almost persuaded to go back at the sight of the lions. And when thou talkest of thy journey [...] thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.” When Christian defends himself by mentioning Christ’s mercy and pardon of his sins, Apollyon attacks Christian in a rage. After a long combat, Christian gains the upper hand only after he accepts his likely death. Grasping his sword, he tells Apollyon, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise,” upon which he gives the fiend a mortal blow. While this episode suggests that demonic opposition is real, its primary point is that Christians still wrestle with doubts about their weakness and lingering sins, and only trust in Christ can overcome such assaults. Moreover, victory is only possible when a Christian refuses to be shamed by reminders of past failure, and instead resists bravely out of faith in Christ, believing they have nothing to lose.

Christians face doubt and despair. When Christian and his companion Hopeful wander astray and wind up imprisoned in Doubting Castle, the Castle’s owner, the Giant Despair, starves the pilgrims and tries to talk them into committing suicide.

Though Christian is crushed by this experience, he eventually redirects his focus from doubt to prayer. After a night of fervent prayer, he exclaims, “What a fool [...] thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will [...] open any lock in Doubting Castle.” Sure enough, he is able to unlock the dungeon and free himself and Hopeful. The sudden appearance of the key suggests that freedom from the dungeon has always been within reach, and that turning from doubt to trusting God is the key.

Christians also face complacency. In particular, weariness can lead to a dangerous lack of vigilance in the Christian life. A group of kind shepherds warns Christian and Hopeful not to fall asleep in a place called the Enchanted Ground. As soon as they arrive there, Hopeful grows drowsy and argues that they deserve a rest, whereupon Christian reminds him of the shepherds’ warning and suggests that they “fall into good discourse” to keep them both alert and engaged until they’ve passed through the dangerous area. He further helps by asking Hopeful specific questions about Hopeful’s conversion, leading to a lengthy discussion that lasts them until they reach Beulah, a safe land of refreshment. This suggests that Christians must remain vigilant, not letting their guard down until they’ve reached a God-given respite; a good way of staying vigilant is to recall God’s goodness, especially sharing that testimony with others.

Death is the Christian’s final—and greatest—obstacle. Indeed, death is the last barrier that Christian the pilgrim must face before entering the Celestial City. Christian and Hopeful have different experiences of crossing over the deep river of death. While it’s relatively easy for Hopeful, Christian struggles against doubt and despair, unable to see before him and fearful that the waters will engulf him. Hopeful encourages his friend, saying, “These troubles [...] are no sign that God hath forsaken you; but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of His goodness, and live upon Him in your distresses.” In other words, Christian shouldn’t interpret his struggle as a sign of God’s rejection, but a last obstacle testing whether he truly trusts in God or in himself.

This final obstacle suggests a few things about the Christian pilgrimage as a whole. It suggests that, though Christians’ journeys may not be identical, they follow a general pattern of wrestling with oneself, followed by being reminded of God’s trustworthiness. The resulting shift to self-forgetfulness and focus on God is the only thing that allows a pilgrim to overcome the obstacle. Finally, it’s hinted that even if death is the most fearful and difficult obstacle of all, the lifelong pattern of wrestling, reminder, and forgetfulness of self is meant to prepare a Christian for this hardest obstacle, after which they’ll enjoy the Celestial City—freed from obstacles once and for all. In that sense, every obstacle is a kind of small death, or a

rehearsal for the pilgrimage’s climactic moment.



THE CENTRALITY OF THE BIBLE

Bunyan’s Protestant faith placed tremendous importance on the Bible—believed by Christians to be God’s word—as the foundation for its beliefs. In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan also portrays the Bible as a practical source of continual encouragement for the everyday Christian. Without the Bible illuminating his path, Christian is unable to even begin his pilgrimage; once he’s underway, he constantly relies on it as a source of comfort, assurance, and strength. When he does this, his journey fares well; when he neglects the Bible, his journey falters. In addition to being a source of strength, the Bible is also pilgrims’ own history—as believers in Christ, their story is a continuation of the biblical story, as Christian learns at various points throughout his journey. This itself becomes a sustaining comfort to him on his way. By emphasizing the centrality of the Bible to the individual Christian’s journey, Bunyan urges his audience to constantly study, trust, and rely on the Bible themselves, seeing it not as a remote, obscure text, but as their personal story and guide to eternal life.

The Bible is both the foundation and fuel for the Christian’s journey. The way to eternal life can only be seen by the light of God’s written word. As Christian sets out from the City of Destruction, a figure named Evangelist points him on the way: “Do you see yonder **Wicket-gate**? [Christian] said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining Light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that Light in your eye [...] so shalt thou see the Gate[.]” Christian is unable to see the Wicket-gate (a symbol of Christ) except through the “shining Light” of the Bible. This sets the tone for his pilgrimage as a whole.

The promises that beckon Christian are those contained in the Bible. Later, he reads to a companion, Pliable, to encourage him to come along on his journey: “an endless kingdom [...] crowns of glory [...] no more crying, nor sorrow [...]” alongside dazzling creatures and thousands of fellow souls. All these things “The Lord, the governor of the country, hath recorded [...] in this book,” and if pilgrims trust what that “book” says, they will receive God’s promises for themselves.

Through embarking on his or her own pilgrimage to Heaven, the Christian becomes part of the Bible’s story. Early in his pilgrimage, while Christian is staying at the Palace Beautiful (a place where he is outfitted for the rest of his journey), he is shown the “rarities” housed there, including the genealogy of Jesus Christ, objects from biblical history, and more: “they read to him some of the worthy acts” of Christ’s followers: “how they had subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness [...] stopped the mouths of lions [...] waxed valiant in fight.” This is an allusion to the New Testament’s Epistle to the Hebrews, as many of Bunyan’s original readers would have recognized. Within the

story, the allusion serves to place Christian within the same historical stream of valiant Christians as those biblical heroes—something to comfort and strengthen him as he undertakes the rest of his pilgrimage. It also serves to remind Christian readers that they, too, are part of a long history that extends from the first Bible stories until the present.

After Christian and Hopeful have died and are overlooking the nearby Celestial City (Heaven), the Shining Ones (angels) tell the pilgrims what they can expect as citizens of that City: “You are going now [...] to the paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life [...] You are going now to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, and to the prophets [...] In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight [...] of the Holy One[.]” Again, these are all biblical allusions which Bunyan’s original audience would have recognized. They are meant to give a rich, inviting portrait of a future life in which Christians enjoy full citizenship in Heaven, the realm inhabited by the heroes of the Bible and its central figure, Christ. The Bible, then, both fuels the Christian journey and images its final destination.

The Bible isn’t the only source of strength and comfort provided to pilgrims—for example, fellow pilgrims’ companionship is emphasized in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, as well as the simple, physical rest and refreshment that God sometimes provides to the weary. However, the Bible is certainly the consummate source of strength and comfort, and the one every Christian is urged to rely on without fail.



WOMEN AS PILGRIMS

The second half of *Pilgrim’s Progress* focuses on Christiana, the late Christian’s wife, as she, her children, and her friend Mercy seek the Celestial City, symbolic of Heaven. Initially, Christiana harshly rejected Christian’s faith and refused to join his pilgrimage to the Celestial City. However, after Christian’s death, she, too, is converted and decides to follow the same path. Although Christiana’s pilgrimage retraces much of Christian’s, Bunyan also portrays her as a pilgrim in her own right, with her own story to tell. In some respects, women are portrayed as being weaker both physically and in their understanding of spiritual matters. Yet this doesn’t hold true throughout the whole novel, as in fact women are portrayed as responsible for their own spiritual growth; what’s more, they should teach others as they receive opportunity. Through female characters’ curiosity, capability as teachers, and perseverance in their calling, Bunyan suggests that, current cultural views notwithstanding, women should strive to be theologically adept pilgrims, too.

In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, women are sometimes portrayed as less formidable pilgrims than men are, reflecting the stereotypes of the day. Women are portrayed as weaker and in need of more help on their pilgrimage. Christiana and Mercy are accompanied by a champion named Mr. Great-heart who fights

off lions, a giant, and other foes on their behalf. In addition, when they visit the Interpreter’s House early in their journey, the Interpreter shows them images of the Christian life that are more domestic in nature than those Christian had been shown in the same place: a hen with her chicks to illustrate God’s call to sinners, a butcher with sheep to illustrate accepting sufferings without complaint, and a robin eating a spider to show that outward beauty can mask insincerity. The Interpreter explains that “I chose, my darlings, to lead you into the room where such things are, because you are women, and they are easy for you.” At first glance, this suggests that women are less capable of understanding spiritual truths than men are and need concepts to be made “easy” for them.

However, in the ways that matter most in the context of the story (and contra the Interpreter’s implication above)—women pilgrims are *not* weaker than their male counterparts. They have the ability to grasp core doctrines and to persevere in their pilgrimage. Women should be curious about theology and strive to understand it. For example, when they pass the spot where Christian’s **burden** of sin fell from his back, Christiana doesn’t just marvel at her husband’s salvation; she asks questions about it in order to better understand the theological doctrines at stake for all Christians. She asks Great-heart to explain the doctrine of justification (the pardon of sinners by Christ) in more detail than it is explored when Christian himself receives salvation: “What the promise [of salvation] is, of that I know something; but what it is to have pardon [...] let us hear your discourse thereof.” To simplify, Christiana asks Great-heart to explain in more detail *how* salvation is accomplished according to Protestant Christian teaching. In other words, she finds it unsatisfying simply to accept a doctrine at face value without *understanding* it for herself. This suggests that women not only can understand theology on a deeper level, but they should strive to do so.

Women can and should be capable teachers of theology to those in their care. When the women and children lodge at a place called the Porter’s House, one of the women there, Prudence, “catechises” Christiana’s children—in other words, she asks them religious questions to determine how well they understand the content of their faith. (Catechisms are documents, laid out in question-and-answer format, which present central religious teachings; in the 17th century, when *Pilgrim’s Progress* was written, catechism memorization was considered a household duty in some Protestant communities.) When the children answer her questions correctly, Prudence praises Christiana for training them so well: “Good boy, Joseph; thy mother hath taught thee well, and thou hast hearkened unto what she has said unto thee.” This section is significant because it shows that women’s authority as household religious teachers was considered important, and Bunyan takes care to highlight it through an extensive section.

Women should not be deterred from their pilgrimage by

worldly concerns like marriage—especially when suitors fail to match women’s spiritual level. While they linger at the Porter’s House, a man named Mr. Brisk becomes interested in marrying Mercy, but when he sees her dedication to caring for others (she spends her time making clothes for the poor), he changes his mind. Mercy is at peace with this development: “I might a had husbands afore now [...] but they were such as did not like my conditions [...] if nobody will have me, I will die a maid, or my conditions [i.e., being dedicated to merciful acts] shall be to me as a husband; for I cannot change my nature.” In other words, Mercy’s core nature isn’t to be a wife; it’s to be a *Christian*—in her case, to be merciful. If a potential husband can’t accept that, Mercy finds it better to remain unmarried. This further suggests that, regardless of their family status, Bunyan urged Christian women to make Christianity their primary allegiance in life.

In the end, the women’s journey isn’t substantially different from the men’s, and they have the same goal: the Celestial City, or Heaven. This suggests that, in Bunyan’s view, men and woman have the same basic spiritual needs and calling. By extension, too, the book takes for granted that “ordinary” Christians, no matter their gender, status, or background, should be pilgrims who read the Bible and who strive to understand Christian theological teachings in detail. In this flattening of gender, class, and lay/clergy distinctions, the book is groundbreaking.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



BURDEN

The heavy burden that Christian carries at the beginning of his journey symbolizes his sin, as well as the guilt and dread of God’s condemnation that accompanies his sin. Christian’s burden is what initially prompts him to seek salvation. During the early stages of Christian’s pilgrimage, the burden slows his progress—causing him to sink in the Slough of Despond, for example. Yet, even when he’s warned of dangers ahead, Christian is undeterred, believing nothing is worse than his burden, and nothing is more important than the burden’s removal. When he enters the narrow way by means of the **Wicket-gate** (symbolizing Jesus Christ the as humankind’s savior), Christian receives Christ’s salvation, but his burden remains with him. It isn’t until he reaches the place of Deliverance, or the Cross, that the burden slides off his shoulders for good. This suggests Bunyan’s view that, even after Christ saves a sinner from his or her sins, the burden of guilt can remain with that person. But once Christian sees the instrument by which he was delivered from his sins—the Cross,

on which Jesus was crucified—he is comforted, and he is never troubled by his burden again.



WICKET-GATE

The wicket-gate symbolizes Jesus Christ as the savior of sinners. When Christian desires freedom from his **burden**—itself symbolic of his sin—Evangelist instructs him to flee to the Wicket-gate, declaring that it’s the only place where Christian will find salvation. Indeed, when Christian knocks at the gate and introduces himself as a needy sinner, he is warmly welcomed without condition. But self-proclaimed pilgrims who try to bypass the Wicket-gate, like Ignorance, are ultimately rejected at the Gate of the Celestial City, or Heaven. This illustrates Bunyan’s belief that Christ and the salvation he offers sinners is indeed the only way to Heaven; sinners who claim other saviors (including their own inherent goodness) will discover that they have been deceived. By making the pilgrims journey through the Wicket-gate, then, and not allowing for other workarounds, Bunyan upholds Christ as the only one able to redeem people from the sin that bars them from Paradise.



ROLL / CERTIFICATE / SCROLL

After Christian loses the **burden** of his sin and guilt at the Cross, an angel gives him a roll to read as he continues his pilgrimage to the Celestial City. The roll, alternately referred to as a certificate or scroll, symbolizes Christian’s assurance of his salvation. In Puritan theology, salvation is viewed as a guaranteed, objective gift from God, yet even a redeemed sinner often experiences doubts and fears about the afterlife, depending on their personal circumstances, temperament, and ongoing sin. The roll, therefore, gives Christian a concrete object to refer to when he’s overcome by doubts. When he negligently loses his roll on the Hill Difficulty, Christian finds his journey much tougher; when he finds it again, he progresses up the Hill with ease, showing how much a pilgrim’s subjective state can impact their outward journey. When he finally arrives at the Celestial Gate, Christian hands in his roll; now that he has attained his heavenly goal, he no longer requires a token of assurance.




QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Dover Thrift Editions edition of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* published in 2003.

Part 1: The Author's Apology Quotes

☞☞ The Prophets used much by Metaphors
To set forth Truth; yea, whoso considers
Christ, his Apostles too, shall plainly see,
That Truths to this day in such Mantles be.
Am I afraid to say that Holy Writ,
Which for its Stile and Phrase puts down all Wit,
Is everywhere so full of all these things,
Dark Figures, Allegories? Yet there springs
From that same Book that lustre, and those rays
Of light, that turns our darkest nights to days.

Related Characters: John Bunyan (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

In this “apology,” or defense of one’s writing, John Bunyan defends his use of allegory in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Allegory is a literary technique in which many details of a text stand for something else. In an allegory, things often have a second moral or spiritual meaning that’s up to the audience to interpret—like in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, in which most people, places, and events stand for stages or milestones in a Christian’s spiritual journey.

Religious fiction wasn’t commonplace in 17th-century England, and Bunyan anticipates that some of his audience might object to his use of allegory as being untruthful. To counter this charge, Bunyan argues that the Bible—by far the most important book in the minds of most of his audience—uses allegory throughout. In the first stanza of the quoted poem, Bunyan points out that the Old Testament prophets used allegory to convey truth, and that the teachings of Christ and the Apostles were dressed in that same “mantle.” In the second stanza, Bunyan doesn’t hesitate to claim that the Bible, which he sees as superior in style and wisdom to all other writings, is “full” of allegory, yet the Bible nevertheless illuminates its readers’ lives with truth. Though Bunyan certainly doesn’t equate his book with the Bible, he does suggest that if the divinely inspired authors of Scripture could use allegory to convey wisdom, then he is free to use allegory as a tool for the spiritual benefit of his own audience.


Part 1: Fleeing the City of Destruction Quotes

☞☞ Then [Evangelist] gave him a Parchment-roll, and there was written within, *Fly from the wrath to come*.

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? The Man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining Light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that Light in your eye, and go up directly thereto: so shalt thou see the Gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

Related Characters: Christian, Evangelist (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

This quote describes the beginning of Christian’s pilgrimage. Christian has learned that his city is soon to be destroyed, and he is also aware of a heavy burden of sin he carries on his back. A figure named Evangelist appears and tells Christian what he must do in order to be spared destruction himself. “Fly from the wrath to come,” which appears in Evangelist’s warning message, is from the New Testament’s Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus asks the hypocritical religious leaders, “Who [...] warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”


Allegorically, according to Bunyan’s Calvinistic Protestant beliefs, this passage describes a person becoming aware of their sinful state, desiring salvation from Hell, and being pointed by some means—whether by a preacher or any other person who “evangelizes,” or utters the “good news” of salvation—to Christ as the way of salvation. In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the narrow “Wicket-gate” symbolizes Christ as the humble yet unavoidably necessary entrance to Heaven. Notably, Christian cannot yet see the Wicket-gate; the “shining Light” by which he finds his way to the Gate symbolizes the Word of God, or the Bible, which contains the teachings of and about Christ. Only the proclamation of this Word was understood to lead a person to Christ, and through Christ to eternal life.

Part 1: Mr. Worldly Wiseman Quotes

☞☞ 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 [...] 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 very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are from their shoulders [...] he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens.

Related Characters: Mr. Worldly Wiseman (speaker), Christian, Legality

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 23

Explanation and Analysis

On his way to the Wicket-gate in search of salvation, Christian meets a man named Worldly Wiseman. When Christian explains his quest, Worldly Wiseman urges him to take the less dangerous route: going to the village of Morality to seek help from a man named Legality, who is an expert in relieving people of their burdensome sins.

Wiseman's advice symbolizes the "world's" perspective—as opposed to the Christian perspective—on how to deal with the guilt of sin. In short, if a person just tries their hardest to abide by the moral law (the Bible's ethical teachings), then they will be freed from sin's burden. While the "world" teaches that a person should simply "be good," however, Christian soon learns that this can't rid a sinner of their burden. That's because, according to Christian teaching, no person can be perfectly moral; in fact, in their attempts to do so, they'll just accumulate a heavier load of sin. That's why Worldly Wiseman's diversion is dangerously misleading. From Bunyan's perspective, it deepens a sinner's debt instead of leading them to the only solution—Christ's atoning sacrifice on the Cross.

Part 1: The Interpreter's House Quotes

☞☞ This parlour is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet Grace of the Gospel: the dust is his Original Sin and inward Corruptions, that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep at first, is the Law; but she that brought water, and did sprinkle it, is the Gospel. Now, whereas thou sawest that so soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did so fly about that the Room by him could not be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choaked therewith; this is to shew thee, that the Law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive, put strength into, and increase it in the soul, even as it doth discover and forbid it, for it doth not give power to subdue.

Related Characters: Interpreter (speaker), Christian

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis


After Christian passes through the Wicket-gate and receives salvation, he visits the Interpreter's House, where he is led through a series of rooms depicting different aspects of a Christian's journey through life. In this room, Christian sees the contrast between Law and Gospel. This is a fundamental distinction in Protestant theology (of which Bunyan's Puritanism was part). In brief, every person is spiritually dead because of the sin they've inherited from their first ancestor Adam ("original"), as well as the sins they've consequently committed themselves ("corruptions"). No one can get rid of the stain of sin or attain salvation through their own moral efforts; only Christ's atoning death is powerful enough to achieve this, through God's grace toward those who put their faith in him. That's why, in the Interpreter's House, the "sweeping" action of the Law only stirs up dust—this symbolizes how trying to overcome sin by adhering to the Old Testament Law only intensifies the power and effects of sin in a person's life. It has no power to "subdue" sin. By contrast, the "sprinkling" of the Gospel cleanses the heart through the atoning power of Christ's blood. The effects that the Law and Gospel have on the soul are totally different, and Bunyan wanted his audience to be in no doubt—only the cleansing of the Gospel is sufficient for sinners.


Part 1: The Cross Quotes

☞☞ 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.*

Related Characters: Christian

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 42

Explanation and Analysis

After Christian passes through the Wicket-gate and visits the Interpreter's House, he approaches a Cross on a little hill. All this time, Christian has been carrying a physical burden on his back, symbolizing the guilt of sin. Nothing Christian does is able to free him from his burden. As soon as he reaches the Cross, however, the burden immediately falls from his shoulders and disappears from sight. Then, for the first time in his pilgrimage, Christian is joyful. This passage symbolizes the Christian doctrine of the atonement. That is, in his sacrificial death, Christ is believed to atone for the sins of the world, redeeming all those who believe in him as their savior (hence Christian's words, "He hath given me [...] life by his death"). Once this happens, a redeemed sinner never bears the burden of sin again, hence the physical burden's disappearance into the grave.

This section has caused confusion to some readers because of the Wicket-gate, which also symbolizes Christ. It's probably best not to take Bunyan's sequence too literally; he would have understood anyone who entered by way of the Wicket-gate (Christ) to have received salvation already. Christian's loss of his burden at the Cross is also Christ's doing, so Bunyan's bigger point remains: salvation, in his view, is all due to Christ and not the sinner himself.

Part 1: Hill Difficulty and Palace Beautiful Quotes

☞☞ So in the morning they all got up, and after some more discourse, they told him that he should not depart till they had shewed him the *Rarities* of that place [...] Then they read to him some of the worthy Acts that some of his servants had done: as, how they had subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, stopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of Fire, escaped the edge of the Sword; [and] out of weakness were made strong[.]

Related Characters: Christian

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 58



Explanation and Analysis

Before leaving the Palace Beautiful, a place of rest and refreshment during Christian's pilgrimage, the palace residents show Christian some antique items. Among these objects are records of Christ's doings (those not mentioned in the Bible) and artifacts from biblical stories. In addition, Christian hears some "worthy Acts" done by other followers of Christ. Notably, these "Acts" are a direct quotation from the New Testament's Book of Hebrews, chapter 11, which is a catalogue of faithful people who "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises [...] were made strong." Though Bunyan doesn't cite the Bible passage directly, his biblically literate, predominantly Protestant audience was undoubtedly meant to recognize the reference and its resonances. The Hebrews chapter is a triumphant evocation of Bible figures who persevered in faith despite not immediately receiving what they sought; therefore, both for readers of *Pilgrim's Progress* and for Christian within the narrative, the quotation is a reminder of the sufferings that accompany faith and of the company of faithful heroes whom the individual pilgrim is invited to join (and be inspired by in the process).

Part 1: The Valley of Humiliation Quotes

☞☞ Christian nimbly stretched out his hand for his Sword, and caught it, saying, *Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy! When I fall I shall arise*; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound: *Christian*, perceiving that, made at him again, saying, *Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us*. And with that *Apollyon* spread forth his Dragon's wings, and sped him away, that *Christian* for a season saw him no more.

Related Characters: Christian, Apollyon

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 64



Explanation and Analysis

As he passes through the Valley of Humiliation, Christian fights a horrible fiend called Apollyon who nearly crushes him. At the last moment, however, Christian is able to grasp his sword and repel his enemy. Christian's cry, "Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy," is a quote from the Old Testament's Book of Micah, while the "more than conquerors" quote is from Paul's Epistle to the Romans in the New Testament. The association of Christian's sword with Bible verses is intentional, alluding to another epistle, the Book of Ephesians, in which Christians are urged to carry "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Just as the sword physically wounds Apollyon, so the words of Scripture (understood to be the words of God) defend the Christian by repelling satanic power. In other words, Bunyan's audience would have clearly understood from this passage that they must diligently study the Bible so that, no matter what temptations and obstacles they encounter, they will be able to draw strength and encouragement from the Bible's teachings, applying them to their personal situations.

Part 1: Christian and Faithful Quotes

☝☝ So soon as the man overtook me, he was but a word and a blow, for down he knocked me, and laid me for dead. But when I was a little come to myself again, I asked him wherefore he served me so? He said, Because of my secret inclining to Adam the First: and with that he struck me another deadly blow on the breast, and beat me down backward, so I lay at his foot as dead as before. So when I came to myself again I cried him mercy; but he said, I know not how to shew mercy; and with that knocked me down again. He had doubtless made an end of me, but that one came by, and bid him forbear.

Related Characters: Faithful (speaker), Christian, Adam the First/Moses

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 75

Explanation and Analysis

When Christian's new companion, Faithful, tells the story of his pilgrimage thus far, he narrates a chilling encounter with a shadowy figure whom he calls Adam the First. Adam the

First beats Faithful mercilessly and declines to show him mercy, claiming he cannot. This confusing passage makes more sense in the context of Protestant Reformed (Puritan) theology. Briefly, Adam was humanity's first ancestor, whose sin corrupted all his descendants with sin, too. All people, therefore—even those who, like Faithful, aim to follow Christ—"[incline] to Adam the first" in their hearts, sinning despite their best intentions. The reason "Adam the first" relentlessly attacks Faithful is meant to symbolize the role of the Old Testament law in a Christian believer's life. No matter how hard a Christian tries to obey that law, they will inevitably fail, and they will be crushed by the effort. That's because the law cannot save a person—only Christ can. This is also why Christian later identifies "Adam the First" with Moses, the giver of the law. Though the law—Moses's Ten Commandments and associated biblical laws—is good in itself, and can provide a guide to holy living, it cannot redeem a person from the sin they commit by virtue of their descent from the first sinner, Adam. The one who "bid [Adam the First] forbear" clearly refers to Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice on the Cross is understood to take away the curse associated with breaking the law.

☝☝ [H]e said it was a pitiful low sneaking business for a man to mind Religion; he said that a tender conscience was an unmanly thing; and that for a man to watch over his words and ways, so as to tie up himself from that hectoring liberty that the brave spirits of the times accustom themselves unto, would make him the ridicule of the times. He objected also, that but few of the Mighty, Rich, or Wise, were ever of my opinion [...] But at last I began to consider [...] this *Shame* tells me what *men* are; but it tells me nothing what *God* or the *Word of God* is.

Related Characters: Faithful (speaker), Christian, Shame

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 78

Explanation and Analysis



In this passage, Faithful continues telling Christian about his pilgrimage thus far. In the Valley of Humiliation, he meets a man named Shame. Appropriately enough, Shame tries to humiliate Faithful about his newfound commitment to religion. He does so by claiming that religion is not a "manly" concern, because it prevents Faithful from doing what he wants. What's more, religion prevents Faithful from keeping up with the times and makes him the laughingstock of his peers. Powerful people, adds Shame, do not tend to be religious like Faithful. At first, Faithful is nearly swayed by

Shame's taunts, showing that in the 17th century as now, social pressure and the desire to go along with the majority can heavily impact people's choices. Faithful is heartened when he remembers the difference between the world's outlook and God's. People feel ashamed when they compare themselves to worldly standards; when they seek to align themselves with God's standards, however (as laid out in the Bible), they are freed from the onslaughts of shame.

Part 1: Vanity Fair Quotes

☞ My Lord, this man, notwithstanding his plausible name, is one of the vilest men in our Country. He neither regardeth Prince nor People, Law nor Custom; but doth all that he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in the general calls Principles of Faith and Holiness. And in particular, I heard him once myself affirm that Christianity and the Customs of our Town of Vanity are diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled. By which saying, my Lord, he doth at once not only condemn all our laudable doings, but us in the doing of them.

Related Characters: Envy (speaker), Faithful, Lord Hategood

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 99

Explanation and Analysis


When Faithful and Hopeful come to the town of Vanity, they are persecuted because they refuse to purchase anything from the town Fair, which overflows with worldly and sinful indulgences. This represents their commitment, as Christians, to turn away from sin and the ways of the world—but the residents of Vanity are offended and outraged by this. When the pilgrims are put on trial before the judge Lord Hategood, a man named Envy testifies against Faithful by portraying him as antisocial. He claims that Faithful disregards the people and customs of the city, trying to convert them to his own subversive ideas (that is, Christian teachings). He even asserts that Faithful portrayed Christianity and the customs of Vanity as totally incompatible. This is especially offensive, claims Envy, because by condemning the practices of Vanity, Faithful condemns the people of Vanity as well. Though Faithful is portrayed through Envy's hostile view, the description supports Bunyan's argument that the ways of the "world" cannot be reconciled with those of Christianity, and that a Christian who desires to pursue holiness must choose one

way or the other. The accusations against Faithful are also reminiscent of the charges made against early Christian martyrs, which often didn't object specifically to Christian doctrines, but interpreted Christians' behavior as disloyal and even atheistic because of Christians' rejection of traditional gods.

Part 1: Giant Despair and Doubting Castle Quotes

☞ My Brother, said he, rememberest thou not how valiant thou hast been heretofore? Apollyon could not crush thee, nor could all that thou didst hear, or see, or feel in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What hardship, terror, and amazement hast thou already gone through, and art thou now nothing but fear? Thou seest that I am in the Dungeon with thee, a far weaker man by nature than thou art; also this Giant has wounded me as well as thee, and hath also cut off the Bread and Water from my mouth; and with thee I mourn without the light. But let's exercise a little more patience[.]

Related Characters: Hopeful (speaker), Christian, Apollyon, Giant Despair

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 121

Explanation and Analysis

When Christian and Hopeful are thrown into Doubting Castle by the Giant Despair, Christian struggles with dejection. Here, Hopeful encourages Christian by reminding him of all the struggles Christian has successfully overcome thus far on his pilgrimage. Christian faced down Apollyon, after all, and the terrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death; so he should not succumb to despair under the present circumstances, which even the weaker Hopeful has been able to endure. He therefore exhorts Christian to persevere a little longer.

Hopeful's encouraging words suggest that Christians will respond to circumstances according to variations in their temperaments. That's why even a determined pilgrim like Christian can become depressed in a dungeon. Indeed, even though Hopeful urges his friend to conquer his despair, he accepts that depression is something which many pilgrims will face in the course of their journey. A key to fighting depression is drawing on one's memory: not allowing present obstacles to obscure the memory of God's faithfulness in past trials. Ultimately, the struggling pilgrim draws on divine strength, not relying on one's own


misleading emotions or limited abilities.

Well on *Saturday* about midnight they began to *pray*, and continued in Prayer till almost break of day.

Now a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out in passionate speech: *What a fool, quoth he, am I, thus to lie in a stinking Dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty.* I have a Key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any Lock in *Doubting Castle*. [...]

Then *Christian* pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the Dungeon door, whose bolt (as he turned the Key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and *Christian* and *Hopeful* both came out.

Related Characters: Hopeful (speaker), Christian, Giant Despair

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 123


Explanation and Analysis

After a long period of suffering in the dungeon of *Doubting Castle*, *Christian* and *Hopeful* finally begin to pray in earnest. After a long night of prayer, *Christian*, who'd been in despair a short time ago, has a triumphant outburst: the key to release has been on his person the whole time. While the key is literal in the story (and its origin is not really explained), its bigger significance is symbolic—*Christian* failed to resort to the greatest resource in his possession, prayer, until it was almost too late. Bunyan's audience is thereby encouraged to make prayer their priority when they feel trapped by any spiritual obstacle—God has the power to free anyone who seeks him. This passage also recalls a story in the biblical *Book of Acts*, in which *Paul* and *Silas* spend the night praying and then are miraculously released from their prison cell. No doubt, too, Bunyan draws on his own experiences of lengthy imprisonment to convey both the despair and hope the pilgrims experience.

Part 1: Ignorance, Little-faith, and Flatterer Quotes

I know my Lord's will, and I have been a good liver; I pay every man his own; I Pray, Fast, pay Tithes, and give Alms [...] Gentlemen, ye be utter strangers to me, I know you not; be content to follow the Religion of your Country, and I will follow the Religion of mine. I hope all will be well. And as for the Gate that you talk of, all the world knows that that is a great way off of our Country.

Related Characters: Ignorance (speaker), Christian, Hopeful

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols:  

Page Number: 129

Explanation and Analysis

After escaping from *Doubting Castle* and passing through the *Delectable Mountains*, *Christian* and *Hopeful* meet a fellow pilgrim named *Ignorance*. They notice that, unlike them, *Ignorance* doesn't carry a certificate or scroll from the *Wicket-gate* for entrance into the *Celestial City*. *Ignorance* explains that he doesn't have a scroll because the *Wicket-gate* was too far from his hometown, and anyway, his religion is different from *Christian* and *Hopeful*'s (though they are fellow pilgrims, the other two look like “utter strangers” to *Ignorance*). He also defends himself by claiming that he's confident he will be granted entrance to Heaven because he has lived a good life, even a religious one: he prays and does good deeds, like giving alms.

Ignorance symbolizes the “good” and well-intentioned person who is not a Christian. In Bunyan's view, everyone is a sinner and incapable of being truly good, which is why Christ's sacrifice is needed. Because *Ignorance* doesn't see his need for that sacrifice, he believes his good deeds will be sufficient to gain his entrance to the *Celestial City*—which, given his name, is clearly an ignorant perspective. His character, then, is intended by Bunyan as a warning to those who think it's possible to be indifferent to Christ. To *Ignorance*, his lack of a certificate is simply a matter of different views. To *Christian* and *Hopeful*, it's a matter of being saved or lost.

Part 1: The Enchanted Ground Quotes

☛ HOPE. [...] Sleep is sweet to the labouring man; we may be refreshed if we take a nap.

CHR. Do you not remember that one of the Shepherds bid us beware of the Incharnted Ground? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping; wherefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

HOPE. [...] I see it is true that the Wise man saith, *Two are better than one*[.]

[...] Now then, said Christian, to prevent drowsiness in this place, let us fall into good discourse.

Related Characters: Christian, Hopeful (speaker), Shepherds

Related Themes: 


Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

In the Delectable Mountains, the Shepherds warned Christian and Hopeful not to fall asleep in the Enchanted Ground, whose atmosphere lulls unwary visitors. Indeed, as soon as they arrive, Hopeful gets sleepy and starts reasoning with Christian that, after enduring such a long journey, they deserve a nap. Christian, more alert, reminds him of the Shepherds' warning and says it's better to remain watchful. With this, Christian doesn't mean that literal sleep is bad. Sleep and watchfulness symbolize contrasting states in a pilgrim's life—basically, obliviousness and presumption versus conscious alertness. A "sleepy" pilgrim is susceptible to sin and temptation, while an alert pilgrim is on guard against these things. Different pilgrims are more inclined to one state or the other, which is why it's beneficial for pilgrims to journey together (that is, Christians should "travel" through life together so that they can watch out for each other, compensating for one another's weaknesses). As Christian suggests, one way of fighting spiritual sleepiness is to encourage each other with edifying conversation, especially reflecting on how God has helped them through obstacles in the past. Such reflection helps pilgrims be alert to dangers in the present.

☛ One day I was very sad [...] and this sadness was through a fresh sight of the greatness and vileness of my sins: and as I was then looking for nothing but Hell, and the everlasting damnation of my Soul, suddenly as I thought, I saw the Lord Jesus look down from Heaven upon me, and saying, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* [...] And then I saw from that saying, *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,* that believing and coming was all one; and that he that came [...] ran out in his heart and affections after salvation by Christ, he indeed believed in Christ.

Related Characters: Hopeful (speaker), Christian

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 147

Explanation and Analysis



As Christian and Hopeful traverse the dangerous Enchanted Ground, they discuss Hopeful's conversion experience in order to keep themselves from falling asleep in the drowsy atmosphere. As this passage shows, Hopeful's conversion isn't instantaneous. He wrestles with a guilty conscience for a long time and is unsure how to resolve the guilt. The turning point comes when he has a vision of Jesus telling him (through Bible verses) to stop focusing on "the vileness of [his] sins" and on Hell and instead to look to Christ himself. When Hopeful says that "believing and coming was all one," he means that believing in Christ is a simple matter of recognizing one's need for salvation and finding it in Christ instead of in oneself. The idea of running in "heart and affections" toward Christ is a classic English Puritan way of describing this experience: belief isn't simply a mental event, but a whole-hearted embrace. This passage reminds Bunyan's predominantly Christian audience that no two people have an identical experience of coming to belief in God, because God works within people's lives in different ways. The pilgrims' conversation also symbolizes the importance of focusing on God in order to avoid becoming complacent (symbolically, falling asleep) in one's spiritual life. If someone stops contemplating God in daily life, they can more easily be led astray.

Part 1: Beulah, the River of Death, and the Celestial City Quotes

☛ They then addressed themselves to the Water; and entering, *Christian* began to sink, and crying out to his good friend *Hopeful*, he said, I sink in deep Waters; the Billows go over my head, all his Waves go over me[.]

Then said the other, Be of good cheer my Brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good. [...] These troubles and distresses that you go through in these Waters are no sign that God hath forsaken you, but are sent to try you, whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses.

Related Characters: Christian, Hopeful (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 161

Explanation and Analysis

To reach the Celestial City, or Heaven, pilgrims must cross the River of Death as their final obstacle. The events in this passage unfold very differently for Christian and Hopeful. Hopeful finds the process easy, but for Christian, it's laborious and frightening. (Deep waters, waves, and billows are an allusion to Psalm 42, which describes the tumult a troubled believer can face.) Hopeful encourages Christian by assuring him that his perceptions of reality don't tell the full story. The bottom is still there—Hopeful can feel it—even if Christian is temporarily convinced otherwise. Hopeful also assures Christian that his difficult experience is not evidence of God's rejection of him; rather, it's a final test of his faith. In other words, will he look to God with trust or keep focusing on his own struggle? Bunyan uses this passage to remind his audience that in any kind of spiritual struggle, it might feel like God is angry or absent, but in such moments, it's important to remember God's past kindnesses and keep going. He also suggests that even a strong Christian, like the protagonist, might find the prospect of death daunting, but this does not necessarily indicate a weakness of faith—death is just one more obstacle to conquer with God's help. Again, no two pilgrimages, including their ends, are identical.

☛ The men then asked, What must we do in the holy place? To whom it was answered, You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your Prayers and Tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear Crowns of Gold, and enjoy the perpetual sight and vision of the Holy one, *for there you shall see him as he is*. There also you shall serve him continually with praise, with shouting, and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the World, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh.

Related Characters: Christian, Hopeful, Shining Ones (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 164

Explanation and Analysis



As Christian and Hopeful prepare to enter the Celestial City, they ask the escorting angels what they can expect from heavenly life. The angels' choice of words is striking: though they present heavenly duties as imperatives ("you must..."), the content of those duties is all comfort. There will be rest from toil, relief from sorrow, all earthly grief and suffering transformed into joy. The culmination of these duties is gazing upon God himself. (The italicized phrase is from the Book of 1 John in the King James Bible, which expresses that though Christians aren't yet in Heaven, they will someday be like God, because "we shall see him as he is.") All this suggests that in Heaven, life is fundamentally different: What was once a matter of painful striving in weakness, based on faith, is now a matter of delight and renewed strength, based on sight. Thus pilgrimage in the world is contrasted with triumph in Heaven. This transformation of existence is what pilgrimage is all about.

Part 2: The Interpreter's House Quotes

☛ Now said he, compare this Hen to your King, and these Chickens to his obedient ones. For answerable to her, himself has his methods which he walketh in towards his People; by his *common call* he gives nothing; by his *special call* he always has something to give; he has also a *brooding voice* for them that are under his wing; and he has an *outcry* to give the alarm when he seeth the Enemy come. I chose, my Darlings, to lead you into the Room where such things are, because you are Women, and they are easy for you.

Related Characters: Interpreter (speaker), Christiana,

Mercy

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 207

Explanation and Analysis



Like Christian did during his own pilgrimage, Christiana and Mercy receive spiritual instruction through symbols at the Interpreter's House. However, Interpreter shows the women additional rooms that Christian didn't see. Here, for example, Interpreter compares a hen's variable calls to the different ways Christ addresses himself to human souls (Christ calls to people in general; to those who will be converted; to those under his protection; to those in spiritual danger). Interpreter claims that he uses more mundane, domestic imagery in order to help women relate to religious teachings more easily. Though this sounds condescending toward women, it's worth noting that the women receive extra spiritual teaching and that the content of that teaching is just as theologically rich as what Christian received.

Even if Bunyan sees men and women as responding to different modes of teaching, he hints at a basic equality in their spiritual needs. Christiana is also praised throughout the Interpreter's lessons for her quickness in understanding spiritual symbols. Though he sometimes suggests that women are intellectually and spiritually inferior, Bunyan doesn't actually bear out this claim strongly in his illustrations.

Part 2: From the Interpreter's House to the Porter's House Quotes

☝☝ Now said *Christiana*, it comes to my mind what was said to us at the Gate, to wit, that we should have pardon by *word* and *deed*: by *word*, that is, by the promise; by *deed*, to wit, in the way it was obtained. What the promise is, of that I know something; but what it is to have pardon by deed, or in the way that it was obtained, Mr *Great-heart*, I suppose you know; wherefore if you please let us hear your discourse thereof.

Related Characters: Christiana (speaker), Mr. Great-heart

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 215

Explanation and Analysis

When Christiana and her fellow pilgrims reach the spot where Christian's burden fell from his shoulders, Christiana

wants to better understand what happened there. In brief, she wants to understand how Christ brings about sinners' salvation. In other words, it's not enough for her to know that salvation is a promised fact; she wants to grasp the theology behind the promise. The greater significance of this quote, then, is what Christiana's question prompts: Mr. Great-heart's "discourse," or discussion, of this doctrine. It isn't necessary to grasp the intricacies of the explanation that follows; the point is that Bunyan portrays his female pilgrim not just taking religious ideas at face value, or superficially tracing her husband's pilgrimage. Rather, he shows her engaging with the events of Christian's pilgrimage, and the ideas behind them, on an even deeper level than Christian did in some instances. Christiana's questions suggest that women pilgrims can—and should—seek to understand their faith more deeply, and that no pilgrim should settle for a superficial understanding of their faith.

Part 2: At the Porter's House Quotes

☝☝ And because *Prudence* would see how *Christiana* had brought up her Children, she asked leave of her to catechise them. So she gave her free consent. Then she began at the youngest, whose name was *James*.

PRUDENCE. And she said, Come *James*, canst thou tell who made thee?

JAMES. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. [...]

Then said *Prudence* to *Christiana*, You are to be commended for thus bringing up your Children.

Related Characters: Prudence, James (speaker), Christiana

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 230

Explanation and Analysis

Pilgrim's Progress is firmly situated in the Puritan, or Reformed Protestant, tradition, which has historically featured the use of catechisms, or teaching aids in a question-and-answer format, to instill basic doctrines in children and adults. In this case, while staying in Palace Beautiful, Christiana's children are quizzed in their catechism knowledge by Prudence, one of the women who lives there. The content of the questions and answers isn't the most interesting thing about this passage (Prudence catechizes each of Christiana's four sons, starting with basic questions for the youngest and progressing to harder ones

for the eldest); it's that Prudence takes for granted that Christiana would have educated her children in this way. Here, Bunyan shows another aspect of women as pilgrims—their role as religious teachers within their families. Mothers like Christiana are entrusted with the work of training their children in foundational doctrines, and the children's knowledge, in turn, reflects directly on her. Prudence's commendation of Christiana can be read as a commendation of this maternal role within Puritan culture more broadly.

Part 2: The Valley of Humiliation Quotes

☞ Then said Mercy, I think I am as well in this Valley as I have been anywhere else in all our Journey, the place methinks suits with my spirit. I love to be in such places where there is no rattling with Coaches, nor rumbling with Wheels. Methinks here one may without much molestation, be thinking what he is, whence he came, what he has done, and to what the King has called him. Here one may think, and break at heart, and melt in one's spirit, until one's eyes become like *the Fishpools of Heshbon*.

Related Characters: Mercy (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 246


Explanation and Analysis

In the first half of the book, when Christian passed through the Valley of Humiliation, he faced many difficulties, like fighting the demon Apollyon. (Note that “humiliation” is used in the archaic sense of “humility,” not of shame and embarrassment.) Mercy's experience is quite different. In fact, the experience “suits with [her] spirit”—in other words, she feels at home. These sharply contrasting experiences suggest that Christians' journeys differ depending on their strengths and weaknesses. Those who struggle with pride may need to undergo humbling conflicts; those who are temperamentally humble, on the other hand, will find parts of the spiritual journey easier to bear. For Mercy, the Valley's peace and solitude permit her to do what she enjoys most: contemplate God. The phrase “fishpools of Heshbon” is a reference to the Song of Songs, also called Song of Solomon, in the Bible—one of the physical traits a bridegroom praises about his bride. Since the Song is often translated allegorically, as a portrayal of the passionate love between Christ and the Church, Mercy's reference implies that spiritual intimacy with God is Mercy's deepest desire, making the Valley of Humiliation a fitting place for her.

Part 2: Honest and Fearing Quotes

☞ And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable, the Water of that River was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life. So he went over at last, not much above wet-shod. [...] I never had doubt about him; he was a man of a choice spirit, only he was always kept very low, and that made his life so burdensome to himself, and so troublesome to others. He was above many tender of sin. He was so afraid of doing injuries to others, that he often would deny himself of that which was lawful, because he would not offend.

Related Characters: Mr. Great-heart (speaker), Mr. Fearing

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 260

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Mr. Great-heart (the guide and defender who accompanies Christiana's group of pilgrims) describes Fearing, a pilgrim he guided previously. Fearing, as his name suggests, was an easily frightened pilgrim—not so much by worldly dangers like lions or giants, but by the possibility that he might not be accepted by God into Heaven. Fearing often felt doubtful about his salvation, in other words, and in Great-heart's view, this made Fearing's pilgrimage needlessly difficult both for himself and others. As Great-heart points out, such people simply worry too much about the state of their own souls and their effects on others (like Fearing, even avoiding permissible things because they dread hurting others). The person whose conscience is “tender of sin,” or inclined to guilt, was of special concern to Puritan writers; they were understood to need particular encouragement, especially by pointing them away from introspection and toward the kindness of God instead. Indeed, in this case, it seems that God was especially gentle with Fearing—for example, when it's time for him to cross the River of Death, God makes the passage as easy as possible for him, and he reaches the Celestial City with no difficulty. Bunyan includes Fearing's story in order to comfort and embolden like-minded souls.

Part 2: At Gaius's Inn Quotes

☛ I will say again, that when the Saviour was come, Women rejoiced in him before either Man or Angel. I read not, that ever any Man did give unto Christ so much as one Groat, but the Women followed him and ministered to him of their Substance. 'Twas a Woman that washed his Feet with Tears, and a Woman that anointed his Body to the Burial. They were Women that wept when he was going to the Cross, and Women that followed him from the Cross, and that sat by his Sepulchre when he was buried. They were Women that was first with him at his Resurrection-morn, and Women that brought tidings first to his Disciples that he was risen from the Dead. Women therefore are highly favoured, and shew by these things that they are sharers with us in the Grace of Life.

Related Characters: Gaius (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 269

Explanation and Analysis

When Christiana's group stays at Gaius's Inn, the kindly innkeeper offers a spontaneous reflection on women's exemplary faith. His speech is interesting because it effectively sums up Bunyan's recurrent theme of women as pilgrims. The speech is prompted by Gaius's advice to Christiana that she find godly wives for her young sons. Yet Gaius is far from seeing women as being wives only. Here, he traces women's activities throughout the life and ministry of Christ. In short, women recognized Christ and his significance before men ever did (alluding to Mary, the mother of Jesus), and they cared for him in sacrificial ways from his birth until his death. They also witnessed and announced his resurrection from the dead before anyone else did—the most honorable role imaginable. Though he does not say so explicitly, Gaius's speech suggests that women, because of their intimate attention and care for him, have special insights into Christ that male followers don't necessarily have. This lines up with the experiences of women in Bunyan's story, like Christiana herself, who often presses to understand theological concepts (like salvation) more deeply.

Part 2: Feeble-mind and a Visit to Vanity Quotes

☛ FEEBLE. Alas, I want a suitable Companion [...] but I, as you see, am weak [...] and shall be offended and made weak at that which others can bear. I shall like no Laughing, I shall like no gay Attire, I shall like no unprofitable Questions. Nay I am so weak a man, as to be offended with that which others have a liberty to do. I do not yet know all the Truth. I am a very ignorant *Christian man*. [...]

GREAT-HEART. 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.

Related Characters: Mr. Great-heart, Feeble-mind (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 278

Explanation and Analysis

This quote captures an aspect of the pilgrim community that's less obvious when it's just one or two pilgrims traveling together. When a whole group travels together (like the one Christiana gradually gathers around herself in the book's second half), it becomes easier for pilgrims to offend one another. Mr. Feeble-mind is a physically weak pilgrim, but his limitations represent spiritual shortcomings, too. When he speaks of "Laughing [...] gay Attire [...] unprofitable Questions," Feeble-mind refers to things which may be permitted to Christians (light-heartedness, cheerful clothes, and speculative discussions), but are not necessarily beneficial to newer or less mature Christians. Aware of his tendency to take offense at such things, Feeble-mind humbly asks the other pilgrims to bear with him patiently. Mr. Great-heart reassures Feeble-mind that the stronger pilgrims will help him by avoiding those things likely to cause him difficulty. Bunyan commends this dynamic among the pilgrims (the stronger being considerate and gentle toward the weaker) as worthy of emulation by everyday Christians.

Part 2: The Pilgrims Cross the River Quotes

☛☛ This River has been a Terror to many, yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me. But now methinks I stand easy [...] The Waters indeed are to the Palate bitter and to the Stomach cold, yet the thoughts of what I am going to and of the Conduct that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing Coal at my Heart.

I see myself now at the end of my Journey, my toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that Head that was crowned with Thorns, and that Face that was spit upon for me.

Related Characters: Stand-fast (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 321

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of *Pilgrim's Progress*, most of the pilgrims make a small speech before crossing the River of Death to reach the Celestial City, which symbolizes Heaven. Stand-fast's speech is one of the most moving. He pauses partway across the River to address those who remain on its earthly banks. Like most people, he says, he has always found death daunting, but now that he is passing through it, he finds it isn't so bad. Death's outward circumstances may be unpleasant, but he is heartened by the promise of what awaits: a warm welcome into Heaven. The pilgrim's life is marked by constant striving, but crossing the River of Death is the final task. The reward is getting to see the savior who suffered for them in order to make their safe passage possible. Stand-fast's speech sums up the ultimate hope of each pilgrim—the hope of being with Christ, no matter the difficulty of getting there—from the beginning of their journey until now. In doing so, he offers hope not just to those listening, but to Bunyan's audience as a whole.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1: THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY

When Bunyan began to write, he didn't expect to write a book "in such a mode." He was writing about the Christian life in his own day, when he "fell [...] into an Allegory" on the subject. He did not expect to show this book to anyone; writing it was just an activity to pass the time.

After his book was finished, Bunyan showed it to others. Some approved of the book and encouraged him to publish it; others didn't like it. He finally decided to publish the book and see what happened. He uses various metaphors to defend his style and method of writing, like a fisherman trying many different means to catch an elusive fish, or a fowler whistling for a particular bird, losing another bird in the process.

Anticipating criticism, Bunyan argues that "feigned" words can cause truth to shine more brightly. He further points out that God's laws were presented as "types" and "shadows." The prophets, too, used metaphors, as did Christ and his apostles. The Bible is filled with allegories, and nobody would deny that it's filled with truth.

Bunyan offers three more points to those who might be offended by his approach. First, he is free to employ allegory in his efforts to put forth the truth. Second, distinguished authors aren't criticized for expressing truth through dialogue form, so God can surely use this "base" method, too. Third, the Bible contains many metaphors.

Bunyan offers a brief summary of his book. It will, he says, make "a Traveller" of the willing reader. His "fancies" will be memorable, and his dialect will be entertaining. In short, if his reader desires both enjoyment and spiritual benefit, the reader should "lay my Book, thy Head, and Heart together."

Bunyan's Apology takes the form of a long poem. In this context, an "apology" is not an admission of wrongdoing, but an attempt to defend one's ideas or method. Bunyan especially defends his allegorical method. He claims he didn't set out to write this book; imprisoned for unauthorized preaching at the time, he was just keeping himself occupied.



Bunyan anticipates objections to his allegorical method, suggesting that it won't be to everyone's liking. For example, not every method of fishing or hunting catches every type of creature; different methods are geared toward particular creatures. In the same way, Bunyan's writing style might not "hook" every type of reader, but nor is it intended to.



Bunyan specifically anticipates objections to the use of allegory to convey religious teachings. His main argument is that the Bible does this, especially in the Old Testament, where laws and ceremonies served as "types," or shadowy symbols, of Christ's coming. And in the New Testament, allegory features heavily in Jesus's teachings, or parables.



Bunyan points to other respected authors and books to defend his approach. Again, his strongest appeal is to the Bible, because it uses metaphors and allegory throughout, and these forms of symbolism do not detract from the communication of truth. Moreover, the Bible is viewed by Bunyan's audience as the authoritative word of God; one cannot object to its use of allegory, so Bunyan's allegory should be unobjectionable, too.



Bunyan invites his readers to become pilgrims as they read, taking his spiritual meanings to heart and benefiting thereby. He also suggests that his entertaining style will stick in readers' minds more easily.



PART 1: FLEEING THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION

The narrator falls asleep and has a dream. He dreams of a raggedly dressed man (later revealed to be the protagonist of the rest of the story, Christian) holding a book and carrying a **burden** on his back. The man reads the book and weeps, crying aloud, “What shall I do?”

The man (Christian) goes home and eventually vents his grief to his wife and children. He explains that he’s overwhelmed by his **burden**. In addition, he has learned that their city is soon to be destroyed by fire from heaven, and unless they discover some way to escape, they will all die. The man’s family thinks he has a delirious fever, so they put him to bed.

However, the next day, the man (Christian) is no better. He keeps warning his family about the coming destruction, but they grow increasingly resistant; they even mock, scold, and ignore him. Over the next several days, the man retreats into solitude, wandering in the fields, reading, and praying.

One day, while reading his book, the man (Christian) cries in distress, “What shall I do to be saved?” A man named Evangelist approaches and asks what’s wrong. The man explains his fear of condemnation, due to the **burden** he carries. Also, he knows he must flee, but he doesn’t know where to go.

Evangelist hands the man (Christian) a roll of parchment containing the words, “Fly from the wrath to come.” Reading this, the man asks where he should flee. Evangelist asks if he can see the **Wicket-gate** in the distance. When the man says no, Evangelist instructs him to follow a shining light, which will lead him to the Gate. The man starts to run. His family and neighbors call him back, but he sticks his fingers in his ears and keeps going, crying, “Eternal Life!”

PART 1: THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND

Two neighbors, Obstinate and Pliable, decide to force the man to return. The man—now called Christian—tries to persuade the two to flee with him. Obstinate refuses, thinking Christian is crazy, but Pliable is intrigued and decides to accompany Christian to the **Wicket-gate**. Obstinate storms back home.

The narrator’s dream provides a frame for the story. The protagonist of his dream, and of the story, appears to be an ordinary Englishman of little status. The man’s greatest concern is the unidentified burden he bears.



The man looks for sympathy from his family, but even his loved ones are skeptical of his fears, establishing a sharp contrast between a Christian’s concerns and those of “the world.” The city symbolizes the fate of the world at large—to be destroyed in a fiery judgment.



The troubled man fails to make headway with his loved ones. Their rejection symbolizes the attitude of the larger world to a Christian’s warnings of the coming judgment, but the man is undeterred.



The man’s cry is a reference to the Bible’s Acts of the Apostles, when the Apostle Paul’s jailer, confronted with God’s power, cries out for salvation. The man feels what the Puritans would call conviction of sin—a consciousness of personal guilt—and he knows the whole world will soon be judged, but he doesn’t know what to do about these things.



Evangelist occupies the role of a preacher, or any other Christian, who tells a troubled sinner how to find relief. That relief comes from the Bible’s teaching (“fly from the wrath to come” is a reference to Christ’s words in the Gospel of Matthew). In this case, the man is directed to flee through the Wicket-gate—symbolizing Christ—in order to be spared condemnation and destruction. The shining light, in turn, symbolizes the Bible’s teaching, through which a person is able to know about Christ.



Obstinate and Pliable symbolize the world’s various reactions to a Christian’s departure from its ways—either stubbornly resistant or willing to listen (at least initially).



Christian and Pliable continue on their way, and Pliable asks Christian to tell him more about where they're headed—can Christian's book be trusted? Christian says yes, because it's God's book, and God cannot lie. He tells Pliable about the everlasting life, angelic company, and many thousands of souls that await them in heaven, according to his book. The Governor of that heavenly land freely gives these things to whomever asks him. Pliable is glad and wants to move faster; Christian explains he can't, because of the **burden** on his back.

While crossing a plain, Christian and Pliable suddenly fall into a miry bog. This place is called the Slough of Despond. They both struggle in the mud, and Christian begins to sink because of his **burden**. Pliable gets angry; this isn't the happy journey Christian had promised him. He fights his way out of the bog and returns home.

Christian, however, keeps struggling in the direction of the **Wicket-gate**. Eventually a man named Help appears and pulls Christian out of the Slough. When Christian asks Help why nobody has gotten rid of this dangerous bog, Help explains that it can't be removed—the “filth,” or fears and doubts that accompany conviction of sin, naturally accumulate here.

Pliable seems receptive to Christian and to the book—implied to be the Bible—at first. Christian's trust in the Bible is based on his belief that it is God's word. In particular, the Bible reveals the truth about eternal life in Heaven, which is granted by its Governor (Christ) to those who seek it. Christian's burden, symbolizing his sin and guilt, keep him from getting to the Wicket-gate as quickly as he'd like.



Here, Christian encounters his first major obstacle on the way to Heaven. The Slough symbolizes the struggles that conviction of sin often brings with it—hence why Christian's burden makes him sink deeper. For his part, Pliable turns back from the pilgrimage as soon as it becomes difficult in the slightest, which is a common “worldly” reaction. The Slough of Despond is said to be based on Squitch Glen, a bog near Bunyan's home.



Though Christian's struggle in the bog is harder than Pliable's, he is also more determined to reach the Gate. Doubt and fear are common experiences for those who are struggling with their sins, and Help suggests that facing such obstacles is inevitable in the quest for salvation—hence why the bog remains.



PART 1: MR. WORLDLY WISEMAN

Soon, Christian crosses paths with a gentleman named Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who is from the nearby town of Carnal Policy. Mr. Worldly Wiseman asks Christian where he's headed, and Christian explains that he's going to the **Wicket-gate** in order to be rid of his **burden**, as per Evangelist's advice. Mr. Worldly Wiseman condemns Evangelist's counsel. The Slough of Despond, he warns Christian, is only the beginning of the troubles he'll meet if he heeds Evangelist.

Mr. Worldly Wiseman says he is older than Christian. If Christian heedlessly follows Evangelist's advice, stories testify that he will encounter weariness, pain, peril, and even death. Christian argues that, no matter what, none of these things are worse than his **burden**.

“Carnal Policy” roughly means “the way the world thinks,” so Worldly Wiseman is a representative of worldly thinking. Unsurprisingly, then, he flatly rejects Evangelist's recommendation for how Christian should deal with his burden—mainly because Evangelist's way will involve danger and discomfort.



Worldly Wiseman also argues that since he's older, he understands the ways of the world better than Christian does. With this, though, the book is suggesting that a Christian shouldn't automatically equate age with wisdom. Also, note that Wiseman advises Christian on the basis of “stories”—basically hearsay—not firsthand knowledge. Christian is so focused on getting rid of his burden that the very worst that the “world” fears—death—cannot deter him.



Mr. Worldly Wiseman asks Christian how he got this **burden**. Christian explains that he got it by reading the Book he carries. Mr. Worldly Wiseman says that Christian has fallen into the trap of other weak men, meddling in things he doesn't understand. He adds that he can direct Christian onto a safer, friendlier path to get his burden relieved—he should go to the nearby village of Morality and visit an honest man named Legality. Legality is skilled at removing the burdens of men like Christian. If Legality isn't there, his son Civility can help Christian just as well.

Christian decides to follow Mr. Worldly Wiseman's advice. He walks past the high hill that Mr. Worldly Wiseman had indicated, but Christian becomes frightened that the overhanging hill will fall on his head and crush him. His **burden** only grows heavier. Just as Christian is growing distressed, Evangelist finds him again.

Evangelist looks at Christian sternly and asks how he got diverted from his path so quickly. Christian shamefully recounts his conversation with Mr. Worldly Wiseman. Evangelist recites Bible verses about those who have turned aside from the path to Heaven, causing Christian to collapse in despair. But Evangelist pulls Christian to his feet, urging him to believe instead of despair.

Evangelist reveals Mr. Worldly Wiseman's true nature. Mr. Worldly Wiseman, he explains, loves worldly doctrines because these allow him to avoid the Cross. Christian must reject Mr. Worldly Wiseman's efforts to get him to reject God's counsel; instead, Christian should treasure the Cross above all things. In reality, Legality is "the Son of the Bond-woman," or Mount Sinai, who, along with her children, is in bondage herself. How can those in bondage free Christian from his **burden**? After Evangelist finishes speaking, Mt. Sinai erupts with fire and a curse.

Grieving his foolishness, Christian is certain that he will die and asks Evangelist if there is any hope for him. Evangelist says that Christian's sin is twofold: forsaking the good path and following a forbidden one. Yet the man at the **Wicket-gate** will forgive him. He kisses and smiles at Christian, urging him on his way.

Worldly Wiseman tries to undercut Christian's conviction of sin. He does so by arguing that weak people read the Bible and get in over their heads, needlessly worrying about things they don't understand. He argues that it's better to just live a moral life and be a good citizen instead of worrying about sin. In other words, the world discredits the Bible's view of sin and sees good behavior as the right solution.



The hill symbolizes Mount Sinai, the place where Moses is believed to have received the Ten Commandments from God, as recounted in the biblical Book of Exodus. Christian's path to the town of Morality involves adhering closely to the burdens imposed by those Commandments. But this only intensifies Christian's burden, because efforts to obey the Commandments only further expose a person's sinfulness.



Evangelist recalls Christian from Worldly Wiseman's advice and back to the Bible. This early diversion suggests that a person just setting out on the path to Heaven is easily tricked and turned aside. However, this isn't reason to despair.



Evangelist explains that the world wants nothing to do with the Cross—that is, human beings naturally look for ways to justify their behavior instead of facing their sin. The "Son of the Bond-woman" refers to an allegorical passage in the Epistle to the Galatians. In short, it means that the Old Testament law (symbolized by Mount Sinai) cannot free a person from sin. Since Legality himself is in bondage, he can be of no benefit to burdened Christian, the Wiseman's claim notwithstanding. Mt. Sinai's curse refers to the curse that falls on all those who fail to keep the law flawlessly.



Christian fears that his distraction by Worldly Wiseman will condemn him, but Evangelist assures him that this sin is forgivable. The episode suggests that newly converted Christians are prone to such mistakes, but that these need not destroy their faith.



PART 1: AT THE WICKET-GATE

Christian hastily makes his way to the **Wicket-gate**. When he gets there, he sees a sign over the Gate reading, “Knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Christian knocks several times, asking if a rebel like himself can be admitted. At last, a solemn person named Good-will answers and asks who’s there. Christian introduces himself as a poor sinner who’s fleeing the wrath to come. Good-will gladly opens the Gate.

Good-will gives Christian a slight pull within the **Wicket-gate**, explaining that Beelzebub, whose castle is nearby, often shoots arrows at those who are approaching the Gate. Then he asks Christian to tell his story. Christian describes everything that’s happened to him so far, including Mr. Worldly Wiseman’s diversion. Good-will tells Christian that nobody’s past misdeeds are held against them when they knock at the Gate, and now that he’s within, he will never be cast out.

Good-will then shows Christian the “narrow way,” which was established by the “Patriarchs, Prophets, Christ, and his Apostles,” and is as straight as a ruler. Many wide and crooked paths intersect with it, but if Christian sticks to the straight and narrow path, he won’t get lost. Good-will also tells Christian that when he reaches the place of Deliverance (the Cross), Christian’s **burden** will fall off.

The sign quotes a verse in the Gospel of Matthew, in which Jesus encourages people to seek him fervently. Indeed, it’s implied that Good-will symbolizes Jesus himself. The gate is readily opened to those who, like Christian, are sincerely sorry for their sins and desire to enter—even if they arrive with fears and doubts.



Beelzebub’s castle is nearby so that he (the devil) can try to destroy sinners who are on salvation’s doorstep, suggesting that, in Bunyan’s view, sinners are in constant danger without Christ’s protection. Now that Christian has made it inside the Wicket-gate, however, he is safe, no matter what he’s done before, and no matter what further dangers he must face en route to the Celestial City.



The “narrow way” refers to the Gospel of Matthew’s description of the path to eternal life, which few people find. Still, that path has existed since the time of the Old Testament (patriarchs and prophets) and extends through the time of Christ’s apostles. Since Christian is securely within the Gate, it’s hard to understand why he still carries his burden. Bunyan’s point seems to be that the Cross (which Christian will soon reach) is the instrument that rids a person of sin.



PART 1: THE INTERPRETER’S HOUSE

Directed by Good-will, Christian travels next to the Interpreter’s house, where he will be shown wonderful things to help him on his journey. The Interpreter welcomes him, and as Christian enters the house, he sees a picture on the wall of a somber-looking man holding a Bible and looking up to Heaven. The Interpreter explains that the man in the picture pleads with sinners, puts the world behind him, and looks forward to glory as his reward. Christian, he says, will meet many people on his journey, but only this man can guide him.

The Interpreter’s House is a waypoint where Christian will receive instruction regarding the struggles that characterize a Christian’s life. The picture of the man with the Bible is meant to teach Christian whom to trust during his journey. Christian will meet many people on his way to the Celestial City, some of whom will try to advise him, but only those who reject the world and follow the Bible are trustworthy guides.



Next, the Interpreter leads Christian into a dusty parlor. When a man comes in to sweep the room, Christian is nearly choked by the flying dust. A girl comes in and sprinkles the room with water, after which it's swept clean. The Interpreter explains that the room symbolizes a heart that has not been purified by the gospel; the dust symbolizes original sin and other sinful "corruptions." The initial sweeping was done by the "Law," and the latter sprinkling by the "Gospel." As Christian has seen, the initial sweeping only revived the dust; it couldn't cleanse the room.

Next the Interpreter shows Christian two children named Passion and Patience. Passion is discontent because his Governor wants him to wait until next year to have his treasures; Patience waits calmly for his own. Someone brings Passion a pile of treasures, and Passion, laughing at Patience, plays with them. But a little later, Passion dissolves into a pile of rags. The Interpreter explains that Passion symbolizes people of this world, while Patience symbolizes people who look for the world to come. Eventually, Patience will be given everlasting glory.

The Interpreter leads Christian into yet another room. There's a fire burning against the wall, and as someone pours water on it, it only burns stronger. The Interpreter explains that the fire symbolizes grace's work in the heart. When the devil throws water on it, trying to extinguish it, the fire burns higher. The Interpreter also points out a man behind the wall who's secretly throwing oil on the fire. He explains that this symbolizes Christ, constantly maintaining the work of grace in the heart.

Next the Interpreter brings Christian to a beautiful palace with gold-clad people walking on the roof. At the door, a crowd of people is waiting; a man sits at the door with a book, taking people's names. As people enter the palace, armed men try to hurt them. A stout man comes to the door, gives his name, and draws his sword against the armed men, hacking his way into the palace. The people on the roof sing a welcome to the valiant man.

Christian is eager to get on his way, but the Interpreter wants to show him more. He takes Christian into a dark room, where they see a man in an iron cage, in despair. When Christian questions him, the caged man explains that he once claimed to be a Christian, and indeed thought he was, but now he's a "man of Despair," trapped and unable to get out. He explains that he became so hard-hearted in his sins, and so focused on earthly delights, that he is now *unable* to repent of his sins. The Interpreter tells Christian to take this sign as a warning.

This room illustrates the contrast between the law and the gospel. A person's inborn ("original") and ongoing sin must be cleansed from the heart. However, in a person who is not yet converted, the law (the Bible's moral teachings) only tends to increase sin and strengthen its power. It can't subdue sin's power or cleanse it from the soul. Only the gospel—the proclamation that Christ has atoned for sinners—can do that.



Passion and Patience symbolize contrasting attitudes toward the world. Passion gets everything he desires in this world and therefore seems to be happier than Patience; however, he ends up being destroyed. Patience, on the other hand, may not get his desires in this world, but he will be given everlasting life in the end.



This room illustrates the dynamics of a Christian's spiritual growth. Though the devil keeps trying to smother a Christian's growth, Christ continually pours grace into the heart which is much more powerful. The man's position behind a wall suggests that a Christian undergoing temptation by the devil can't necessarily see how they're being sustained in the midst of their struggles, yet Christ's presence is nevertheless real.



This scene symbolizes how those who seek Heaven are constantly susceptible to attack by the devil but that, like the valiant man in this passage, they must be alert, brave, and armed to resist the devil at all times.



The despairing, caged man might have been inspired by Bunyan's time in prison. Here, though, the man symbolizes a condemned soul who became hardened, or spiritually resistant, because of his constant indulgence of his sin. In Bunyan's view, someone who constantly resists God's grace reaches a point where they are no longer receptive to it.



Finally, the Interpreter takes Christian into a bedroom and shows him a final sign: a man getting out of bed, trembling. The man explains that he has just dreamed of the final judgment, when the blessed (those bound for Heaven) and the damned (those condemned to Hell) were divided from one another once and for all. The man dreamed that he was unprepared for the day of judgment and was not welcomed among the blessed.

The Interpreter asks Christian if he has considered everything he's seen. Christian says that he has, and that these things have given him cause for both hope and fear. The Interpreter encourages him to keep all these things in mind to spur him on his way.

The final sign reminds Christian of the belief that, at the end of time, the righteous will be separated from the wicked once and for all. This day of judgment could come at any time, so a Christian is supposed to be watchful for it. The dreaming man has presumptuously neglected this duty and risks being caught off guard by its sudden arrival.



Bunyan uses Christian's lessons at the Interpreter's House to remind his audience of key Christian teachings regarding the gospel, temptation, spiritual growth, resisting the devil, and the final judgment—concepts he viewed as practical for everyday life.



PART 1: THE CROSS

Bearing his **burden** with great difficulty, Christian runs along the narrow highway, which is bordered by a wall called Salvation. He runs until he reaches a Cross standing on a small hill; below it stands a Sepulchre. Just as he reaches the Cross, Christian's burden falls from his shoulders. The burden tumbles into the Sepulchre and out of sight.

Immediately, Christian is filled with joy. He gazes at the Cross for a while, amazed at his newfound ease. He even begins to weep. Soon, three Shining Ones appear and greet Christian. The first angel tells him, "Thy sins be forgiven." The second angel takes off Christian's rags and puts new clothes on him. The third angel gives Christian a sealed **roll**, telling him to look at it as he journeys, and to hand it in when he reaches the Celestial Gate. Christian leaps three times for joy and goes on, singing of his salvation.

As Christian goes on his way, he comes upon three sleeping men with chained ankles. Their names are Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. Christian wakes them and warns them to beware of Satan, but the three men think there's no danger, and they settle back to sleep.

Though Christian was saved by Christ when he entered by the Wicket-gate, it seems that he does not lose the subjective (mental and emotional) burden of his sins until he reaches the Cross, which symbolizes Christ's sacrificial death for sinners. When he sees the sign of Christ's death on his behalf, Christian realizes he no longer needs to feel guilty or troubled, because he has been forgiven and redeemed by Christ.



Now that Christian's burden has fallen away, he is happy for the first time in the story. This suggests that, in Bunyan's view, sin is the biggest impediment to joy. The angels' gifts signify Christian's redeemed status—a change of clothes (he's no longer characterized by his sin but by his redemption) and a roll or certificate, which symbolizes assurance of the salvation he's received. Also, the number three is always significant in Christian allegory, evoking the three persons of the Holy Trinity: God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.



Simple, Sloth, and Presumption symbolize common attitudes about the spiritual life. These men are too oblivious, lazy, or arrogant to think that Satan could attack them, so they fail to heed Christian's warning. Their proximity to the Cross suggests that even zealous new Christians can be susceptible to such attitudes.



Just then, two men scramble over the wall beside the narrow way: their names are Formalist and Hypocrisy. They explain to Christian that they're taking a shortcut to Mount Zion. Christian argues that this violates the Lord's expressed will. Formalist and Hypocrisy reply that this will be no problem—they can offer a testimony which an impartial judge will accept, and anyway, as long as they're on the narrow way, does it matter how they got there? Christian warns them that they have entered without the Lord's direction, and as thieves, they cannot expect his mercy at the end. Formalist and Hypocrisy go on their way, laughing. Christian goes on alone, often looking at the **roll** that one of the Shining Ones gave him for reassurance.

The name "Formalist" is a term sometimes used by the Puritans to denounce a merely outward religion, as opposed to religion of the heart. The Celestial City is sometimes referred to as Mount Zion, a biblical metaphor for Heaven. With this in mind, it's clear that both Formalist and Hypocrisy (i.e., one whose practice of religion doesn't match what he professes to believe) think it's possible to reach Heaven by pretense. As long as they appear to have lived religiously, in other words, that should be enough to get them into Heaven. Christian warns them that their pretense will be found out.



PART 1: HILL DIFFICULTY AND PALACE BEAUTIFUL

Christian comes to the Hill Difficulty. The narrow way proceeds directly over it; at its base, other paths diverge to the hill's right and left, named Danger and Destruction. Christian refreshes himself at a spring and then climbs the hill. Formality and Hypocrisy take the other paths, assuming these routes are easier and are bound for the same place. Neither is seen again.

As Christian was warned, the narrow way crosses paths with tempting divergent paths. These paths might appear to be easier, but this is a deception. Formalist and Hypocrisy don't hesitate to take the easier-looking paths—their lack of discernment hints that they're not genuine pilgrims to begin with.



Christian scrambles up the Hill Difficulty on his hands and knees. Halfway up, he stops at an Arbor which the Lord of the Hill has placed there for travelers' refreshment. While there, he studies his **roll** and admires the garment that was given to him at the Cross. Soon, he falls asleep. While he's sleeping, his roll falls from his hand. After being wakened by the words, "Go to the Ant, thou sluggard," Christian jumps up and hurries on his way.

God builds opportunities for rest into a pilgrim's route, suggesting his kindness. However, it's still the pilgrim's responsibility to stay alert to danger. When Christian falls asleep, he loses the symbol of his assurance of salvation. The quote "Go to the ant" is from the biblical Book of Proverbs, contrasting the slothful person with the industrious insect.



At the top of the Hill Difficulty, Christian encounters two men named Timorous and Mistrust, running in the opposite direction. They explain that they encountered a couple of lions blocking their way and immediately fled back in fear. The two men continue down the hill, but Christian decides that certain death lies that way, whereas the way forward promises eternal life. As he continues forward, he fumbles for his **roll** but is distressed to discover it missing. Sorrowfully, he retraces his steps to the spot where he'd fallen asleep. He chides himself for napping instead of just pausing for rest; his failure has made his journey longer and more difficult.

Christian is committed to reaching the Celestial City—to such a degree that even if he must face down lions, he won't be turned aside from his path. However, the loss of his roll, which has given him a lot of reassurance until now, symbolizes the loss of confidence in God's promised salvation. This loss forces Christian to retrace his steps, wasting time and energy. In other words, a Christian's loss of assurance results in needless stagnation and hardship.



Christian finds his **roll** where he'd left it, thanks God, and heads back up the hill joyfully and quickly. However, it's getting dark. Just as he is beginning to worry about the lions he'd been warned about, Christian looks up and sees the Palace Beautiful beside the road in the distance. He also sees two lions in his path and doesn't realize they are chained. The Porter of the Palace's lodge spots Christian and shouts encouragement, promising him that the lions are there to test people's faith, and that as long as he stays in the middle of the path, he'll come to no harm.

Christian obeys the Porter, and though the lions roar at him, they don't hurt him. Reaching the Palace, he identifies himself to the Porter and explains why he's arriving after sundown. The Porter summons a beautiful girl named Discretion to decide if Christian is welcome or not. After interviewing Christian, Discretion invites him inside to meet other members of her family. Three girls named Piety, Prudence, and Charity talk with Christian while they await supper.

Piety asks Christian why he became a pilgrim, and Christian explains how he fled his city's destruction and found his way to the **Wicket-gate** with Evangelist's help. He also talks about the wonderful things he saw at the Interpreter's House and the loss of his **burden** at the Cross.

After Christian finishes describing his journey thus far, Prudence asks him if he ever misses his home country or thinks about what he left behind. Christian replies that remembering his past only brings him grief. However, when he thinks about the Cross, or his garment, or his **roll**, former things don't trouble him. He further explains that he is journeying to Mount Zion so that he can be rid of his remaining grief and live with Christ and with others who worship Christ.

Then Charity asks Christian about his family. Christian weeps as he recalls his wife and four children, who mocked Christian's fears and refused to come with him. During supper, Christian and his companions at the Palace talk about the Lord of the Hill, a "great warrior" who out of love for pilgrims shed his blood and vanquished the power of death. Christian sleeps peacefully that night.

Rediscovering his roll, or assurance in God's promised salvation, makes Christian's journey faster and easier. Even when faced with the lions, he discovers that they are not the threat he had feared—suggesting that an obstacle's first appearance is sometimes more ominous than its reality, so a pilgrim must persevere.



Christian is welcomed to another place of rest and refreshment on his journey. He also finds the company of figures representing religious virtues (piety is religious reverence, prudence is good judgment, and charity is love). Implicitly, the girls' characteristics will strength Christian for his journey.



Christian recounts his journey thus far, providing the audience with a chance to review the important stages and spiritual lessons up to this point.



Bunyan isn't literally suggesting that a Christian will sever all attachments with their earlier life. Instead, he is making another contrast between the concerns of the Christian and those of the world, which are ultimately incompatible. And when a Christian is troubled by worldly attachments, reminders of Heaven should help them refocus.



Though Christian understands the priority of Heaven over the world (showing his prudence, or good judgment), he still cares about those left behind (showing his charity, or love). Bunyan likens Christ to a self-sacrificing warrior who has power over the ultimate enemy of death.



Before Christian leaves the Palace, he is shown some “rarities” kept there. These include ancient records of the Lord’s lineage; more complete records of his acts; and lists of his servants and their deeds. The day after that, Christian is taken into an armory, where he is shown various items from Bible stories, such as the sling and stone with which David slew Goliath. When it’s finally time for Christian to leave, his companions show him the Delectable Mountains in the distance, and they outfit him with a sword and armor. The Porter tells Christian that Faithful, who’s also from the City of Destruction, has just passed by.

The Palace “rarities” are documents of the lives of Christ and his followers, presumably expanding on those in the Bible. These, and the biblical artifacts, remind Christian that he is part of the biblical lineage, too, carrying on an ancient story through his pilgrimage. The Delectable Mountains were probably inspired by the Chiltern Hills of Bunyan’s native Bedfordshire.



PART 1: THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence accompany Christian down the hill toward the Valley of Humiliation, since it’s a challenging descent for someone like him. Then they give him some refreshments and send him on his way. Christian has only journeyed a short distance, however, when he encounters a fiend named Apollyon. Since he has no armor for his back, Christian resolves to stand and face the fiend.

The tricky descent suggests that a pilgrim must practice humility, and that this will come easier to some than to others. What’s more, building humility sometimes requires a process of struggle, as Christian learns when he meets the fiend. “Apollyon” is the name of a destroying angel in the apocalyptic Book of Revelation in the New Testament.



Apollyon, a hideous, scaly, winged creature, interrogates Christian. He observes that Christian used to be his subject and promises to give Christian rewards if he will submit to Apollyon again. Christian explains that he has sworn allegiance to a different Prince, who is far better. Apollyon points out that most of that Prince’s servants come to an unhappy end, and that the Prince never delivers them from their sufferings. Christian argues that the Prince’s servants expect a future reward.

It’s implied that Apollyon is a servant of the devil—hence the fact that Christian was once his servant. Apollyon tries to sway Christian back to his side by insinuating that Christian’s new “Prince” (Jesus) allows his subjects (Christians) to suffer, while Apollyon will treat him better. Christian rejects this temptation by arguing that Jesus’s followers aren’t expecting earthly reward.



Apollyon tries a different approach. He reminds Christian of all his mistakes and failings thus far, like sinking in the Slough of Despond, cowering at the lions, and secretly craving recognition for everything he does. Christian admits these things, but explains that the merciful Prince has pardoned him for them. At this, Apollyon flies into a rage and declares his hatred of that Prince and his servants. He attacks Christian with fiery darts, wounding him in several places. Christian resists for half a day, growing weaker and weaker.

Since promising Christian worldly rewards doesn’t work, Apollyon instead appeals to Christian’s insecurities by reminding him of his past and present sins. While Christian doesn’t deny these, he responds that Christ does not hold them against him—showing that Christian has grown stronger in his faith. Apollyon’s rage also suggests that attacking pilgrims’ weaknesses is one of his go-to methods. Thwarting this line of attack, therefore, is one of the best ways to resist the devil’s power.



Apollyon knocks Christian to the ground, but just before he crushes Christian to death, Christian manages to grasp his sword and give the fiend a deadly blow, declaring that “we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.” The wounded Apollyon flies away. Christian gives thanks to God for delivering him from the fiend. Then a hand appears, giving Christian some leaves from the Tree of Life, which heal his wounds. Christian continues on his journey, sword in hand.

Christian’s sword is associated with the power of the Bible, as his recitation of a verse from the Epistle to the Romans (“more than conquerors” through Christ) signals Apollyon’s defeat. This underscores the importance of knowing and applying the Bible in a pilgrim’s life, especially when fighting obstacles. Keeping his sword at the ready, Christian is better prepared for future obstacles.



PART 1: THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Christian enters another valley called the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He meets two men, sons of those who gave “an evil report of the good land,” hurrying in the opposite direction. They tell Christian that the Valley is dark, filled with fearsome creatures and miserable cries. Christian clutches his sword but presses forward.

“An evil report” refers to a story in the Old Testament Book of Numbers in which men were sent to investigate the Promised Land for the Israelites, bringing back a false report of its terrors. In other words, the men here aren’t to be trusted, even if (as Christian discovers) their report initially seems accurate.



On the right hand of the Valley, there is a deep ditch into which the blind have led the blind throughout history. On the left hand is a bottomless pit into which King David once fell. The path between them is quite narrow, and it’s so dark that Christian can hardly see a step in front of him. In the middle of the Valley stands the entrance to Hell itself, with fire, smoke, and horrible noises issuing from it. Christian’s sword does him no good here, and he falls back on the weapon of fervent prayer. Even when fiends seem to draw near, a Scripture quotation drives them back.

Ominous biblical imagery (the blind leading the blind; the dreaded “pit” of David’s Psalms) surrounds Christian on all sides, and he can barely navigate through the dark valley. The atmosphere is so fearful that only direct prayer to God can get Christian through it. As elsewhere, the power of the Bible repels demonic presences, even on the outskirts of Hell.



Christian is frightened. At one point, as he passes the entrance to Hell, a demon draws behind him and whispers blasphemies. Christian, distressed, believes these thoughts are coming from his own mind. After he has walked for a little while, he hears another voice ahead of him, saying, “Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear none ill, for thou art with me.” Christian cheers up, because he knows that another believer in God must be in this Valley, and that God must be with both of them, though he can’t perceive God’s presence.

The demon’s whispered deception suggests that the devil plays tricks on pilgrims, making them believe they have cursed God when they really haven’t. However, the presence of another pilgrim (recognizable by the recited bible verse, Psalm 23:4) changes Christian’s outlook. A fellow pilgrim’s company makes the journey easier because it becomes easier to discern God’s presence.



The sun rises, and Christian feels relieved. Yet the second half of the Valley is even more dangerous than the first—it’s filled with traps and pitfalls which he could not have seen by night. However, by the light of day, he passes through the valley, and at its end he sees the bones of pilgrims who once passed through here. He also sees a cave guarded by two giants called Pope and Pagan. He is unharmed by them, however, since Pagan is dead, and Pope is too old and feeble to pursue Christian.

The rising of the sun makes the land look less ominous and more navigable, though still dangerous; not all pilgrims have made it through. The giants symbolize two common enemies in Protestant eyes: paganism (especially that which persecuted the earliest Christians) and Roman Catholicism (led by the Pope). Bunyan suggests that he thinks Protestantism is becoming preeminent and that Catholicism is obsolete.



PART 1: CHRISTIAN AND FAITHFUL

Christian sees Faithful a little distance ahead of him, runs ahead, and overtakes him. But Christian suddenly trips and falls and needs Faithful to help him up. Then the two pilgrims walk on happily together, discussing everything that's happened to them so far. They talk about the City of Destruction and the rumors that circulated about Christian; they also discuss Pliable and the town's scorn for him after he turned back from following Christian.

Faithful tells Christian about some of the obstacles he encountered on his journey. He evaded a woman named Wanton who enticed him with promises of pleasure. Worse, at the foot of the Hill Difficulty, he met an honest-looking old man who identified himself as Adam the First from the town of Deceit. Adam the First asked Faithful if he'd be willing to live with and work for him, in exchange for good wages and an inheritance. Adam the First also claimed to have three daughters, Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and The Pride of Life, and that Faithful could marry all of these if he liked.

At first, Faithful was tempted to accept Adam the First's offer. Then he noticed written on Adam's forehead "Put off the old man with his deeds," and Faithful realized that Adam the First would enslave him, no matter what he claimed to the contrary. When Faithful turned to go, Adam the First chased him up the Hill and knocked him down. When Faithful recovered from the blow and asked for mercy, Adam the First replied that he didn't know how to show mercy. He would have beaten Faithful to death, if the Lord hadn't passed by just then (Faithful saw the marks in his hands and side) and made him stop. Christian explains that "Adam the First" was really Moses, who doesn't know how to show mercy to transgressors of the Law.

Faithful further explains that he bypassed the Palace Beautiful, but that in the Valley of Humility, he met a man named Discontent who tried to convince Faithful not to offend other friends like Pride and Arrogancy by passing through the Valley. In reply, Faithful explained that he has disowned these old relations, and that, anyway, Discontent is wrong about the Valley—humility comes before honor, and Faithful would rather pass through humility than choose the path others deem best.

Christian's stumble suggests that he has fallen into the temptation of pride—the Book of Proverbs features the verse, "pride goes [...] before a fall." However, the bigger point is that he is delighted to have a companion on his journey. Because he is from the same town, Faithful can update Christian on Pliable. Though mocked at first for going with Christian, Pliable gained no respect for changing his mind, either, suggesting the world's fickleness.



This passage emphasizes that no two pilgrims have the same journey; much depends on individual circumstances, inclinations to different temptations, and other differences. For his part, Faithful is tempted by sexual pleasure; he is also tempted by a figure named Adam, who is identified with the Old Testament law. Adam offers Faithful work to do (symbolically contrasted with Christ's grace), and his three daughters' names come from the biblical Book of 1 John, a summary of what the world offers.



The quote on Adam's forehead is from the Epistle to the Colossians, which contrasts the works of the old, sinful self with those of the new self that's given by Christ. The Bible verse hints that Adam is identified with the old self which must be rejected, because it can never achieve freedom from sin. That's because Adam, or the Law, requires perfection and cannot show mercy to imperfections. Only Christ shows mercy, as the Lord's intervention shows. This is complex theology, but the gist is that a Christian is often tempted to fall back on the "old self" instead of trusting in Christ's grace.



Faithful continues narrating the parts of his pilgrimage that differ from Christian's. Discontentment, pride, and arrogance all cut against a humble attitude. Faithful resists these temptations with his understanding that humility is an indispensable part of any Christian's progress toward Heaven.



But that wasn't Faithful's only obstacle in the Valley of Humiliation. He also met a figure named Shame, who said that worrying about religion is "unmanly" and exposes a person to ridicule in these modern times. After all, few of the rich and powerful ever followed Faithful's way. Shame also argued that most of today's pilgrims are poor and ignorant. At first, Faithful blushed in response, but then it occurred to him that although Shame could tell him about what *people* value, he couldn't tell him what *God* values. After much effort, he finally shook off Shame's company. Faithful says that the rest of his journey was filled with sunshine. Christian describes his much darker journeys through the Valleys of Humiliation and the Shadow of Death.

Embracing religion requires humility. Shame tries to convince Faithful that modern people, men in particular, shouldn't take religion too seriously, especially if they care about their social status. However, Faithful remembers that God's values and the world's values are not the same. Making this distinction is another key to humility; when Faithful embraces what God values, he is able to pass through the Valley of Humiliation undisturbed.



PART 1: TALKATIVE

Christian and Faithful meet a tall man named Talkative, who is also headed to the Celestial City. Talkative is glad to have their company and to talk together, since he says most people don't enjoy spiritually profitable conversations. Talkative proceeds to talk about the value of profitable conversations—such discourses teach people the worthlessness of earthly things, the importance of Christian doctrine, how to repent, and how to refuse falsehood. It's because people don't discuss such things that so few people understand the importance of faith and eternal life. Faithful interrupts, arguing that knowledge of such things is given by God, not by human conversation.

Talkative is a figure intended to warn the reader, yet there's also something humorous about him. It's clear that he enjoys talking about spiritual matters (even talking about talking), but it's less clear what these matters mean to him. Mostly, he seems to enjoy hearing himself talk. Faithful points out that people only come to understand spiritual topics through supernatural means; just talking about eternal life doesn't mean a person possesses it.



In an aside, Christian tells Faithful that he knows Talkative. He's from the City of Destruction, and despite his pleasant speech, he has a poor reputation—the more Talkative drinks, the more he talks, and there's no religion in his heart or lifestyle. He only knows how to *talk* about Christian teachings; he has not experienced them for himself, and he mistreats his family and servants. He brings shame on the name of religion.

Christian warns Faithful that Talkative is not what he seems and that his religious talk is superficial. His lifestyle contradicts his words, making him a hypocrite.



From Christian's words, Faithful understands that *saying* and *doing* are different things. Christian agrees—the "soul" of religion is in *practicing* it, but Talkative does not understand this. Talkative is self-deceived, believing that hearing and saying are sufficient in order to be a Christian. But his life demonstrates that he doesn't understand the grace of the gospel.

Talkative has never grasped the difference between talk and action. He enjoys discussing religious matters, but these things have not truly affected his soul. The lengthy discussion with and about Talkative suggests that Bunyan saw this as a common problem in his day.



Faithful wonders how to get rid of Talkative. Christian tells Faithful to initiate a conversation with Talkative about the life-changing power of religion and see what happens. Faithful does so, asking Talkative how God's grace "[discovers] itself" within a person's heart. Eagerly, Talkative says that grace causes an outcry against sin. Faithful interrupts, saying that anyone can object to sin, but that only a godly person can hate their own sin. Similarly, Faithful disputes Talkative's claim that knowledge of the gospel is enough. It's possible to possess much knowledge without actually being God's child and a doer of God's will.

Talkative says Faithful is just laying a trap for him, and at any rate, they're not going to agree. Even so, Faithful continues talking about how grace is revealed in a person's life. To an individual, grace convicts a person of their own sin and awakens faith in their Savior and a desire to serve him. To other people, grace is revealed both in an individual's confession of faith and by a life that conforms to that confession—that is, through holiness not just in talk, but in practical acts of faith and love.

Faithful then asks Talkative if his religion is only in word or also in deed. Blushing slightly, Talkative declines to answer, since Faithful is not his judge. Why does Faithful ask him such questions? Faithful says he has heard of Talkative's bad reputation and that he brings shame on all who profess Christianity. Talkative decides that he no longer wants Faithful's company. Christian says that they must let him go. Then he and Faithful, deep in conversation, pass through a wilderness.

PART 1: VANITY FAIR

When Christian and Faithful are nearly through the wilderness, Evangelist catches up with them. They are glad to see him and tell him about their pilgrimage thus far. Evangelist exhorts them to keep striving and not to grow weary in their journey. Christian asks him to tell them what they will encounter in the future. Evangelist prophesies that they will soon enter the town of Vanity, whose residents will kill one or both of them. He encourages them to be brave.

Sure enough, soon Christian and Faithful enter a town called Vanity which is home to a huge Fair that runs throughout the year. The fair is quite ancient—almost 5,000 years old. At that time, Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, seeing many pilgrims passing through Vanity on their way to the Celestial City, decided to set up a fair selling all sorts of merchandise—lands, titles, kingdoms, jewels, and even people. Every kind of sin and crime also happens here. The wares of many different nations are promoted in the streets of the Fair.

Faithful presses Talkative on these subjects to see if they have a deeper meaning for him. There's a fine distinction in Talkative's replies—basically, he says that a gracious person will get upset about sin, but Faithful perceives that there's a difference between condemning sin and repenting of one's own sin. Again, Talkative's faith appears to be hypocritical.



For the audience's sake, Faithful corrects Talkative's deficient understanding. In short, genuine religion provokes a person's conscience and causes them to seek Christ to save them. Only an individual can know if this has happened or not. At the same time, other people can tell if a person's behavior coincides with their claim to be religious.



Talkative avoids answering Faithful's questions, suggesting that Faithful has hit a nerve. Talkative eventually parts ways with the other pilgrims. The episode with Talkative warns Bunyan's audience that even apparently knowledgeable pilgrims might prove to be false, and that everyone should guard against such a superficial religion in themselves.



Encouragement is important for pilgrims because the pilgrimage is seldom smooth for long. Evangelist goes a step further and also tells Christian and Faithful what they can expect in the next stage of their journey. Their visit to Vanity will include the ultimate obstacle—martyrdom, or dying for one's faith.



Vanity symbolizes the world as a whole, especially its opposition to Christianity from the very beginning. The demons established the Fair on purpose to try to divert heavenly minded pilgrims. It contains everything, good and bad, that the world has to offer—anything that could possibly distract and tempt a person on the way to the Celestial City.



It is not possible to reach the Celestial City without passing through Vanity Fair, unless a person goes out of the world altogether. Even Christ passed through it, and Beelzebub offered to make him Lord of the Fair in exchange for Christ's worship of him, but Christ resisted this temptation.

As soon as Christian and Faithful enter the Fair, they cause a commotion. Their clothing is strange; their speech, "the language of Canaan," sounds barbaric to the people of Vanity; and they constantly turn their eyes away and plug their ears against the sellers and merchandise, calling on Heaven for help. When Christian and Faithful say that they're only interested in buying "the Truth," the people of Vanity mock them.

Soon, the commotion grows so large that the leader of the Fair brings the two men to be examined. Christian and Faithful explain where they've come from and where they are going, but the people of Vanity don't believe them—they think the pilgrims have come on purpose to stir up trouble in the Fair. So they beat the pilgrims, smear dirt on them, and put them in a cage, to be a spectacle for everyone.

While in the cage, Christian and Faithful remain patient and kind, despite the insults hurled at them. Soon, the better people of Vanity begin to blame the crueler ones for mistreating the prisoners, and soon the townspeople begin fighting. The pilgrims are brought before the authorities again and charged for causing this uproar, too. They're led through the town in chains as an example to everyone. But they continue to behave meekly toward all, winning some to their cause and further enraging others, who decide that they should be put to death.

While awaiting trial, Christian and Faithful recall Evangelist's words and comfort one another. They agree that whichever of them dies will have the happier fate. At trial, the judge, Lord Hategood, accuses them of disturbing trade, stirring up division in the town, and circulating dangerous opinions. In his defense, Faithful says that he has only opposed those things which oppose God, especially Vanity's King, Beelzebub. Witnesses named Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank testify against Faithful. Envy testifies that he heard Faithful claiming that Christianity and the customs of Vanity are irreconcilable. Superstition says that Faithful claimed their religion is illegitimate, and Pickthank accuses him of denouncing Beelzebub and his nobles.

Anyone who endeavors to live a Christian life must do so within the world. The only way to avoid the world is to die. In the Gospels, Christ was tempted to embrace the world and endured. Everyone who follows him must face the same temptation.



"The language of Canaan" probably doesn't refer to the ancient Hebrew language, but to the spiritual tone of the pilgrims' speech. Everything about them—their appearance, conversation, and behavior—sets them apart from Vanity's residents, underscoring the opposition between the church and the world.



The pilgrims, whose very strangeness marks them as different from the people of Vanity, are blamed for the sensation they've stirred up in the town. Their treatment is likely meant to evoke the suffering Christ and the apostles faced in the New Testament.



Christian's and Faithful's patience under pressure contrasts with the angry, scornful attitude of the world (non-Christians). Their situation provokes violent conflict within the town. The division in Vanity hints that the world at large struggles with a guilty conscience about the things it indulges in and about its treatment of pilgrims. In any case, the pilgrims inspire some to follow their example.



For the pilgrims, death isn't the end, and death for Christ's sake is considered an honor, which helps them put their sufferings into perspective. The judge's and witnesses' names indicate their opposition to everything the pilgrims represent. "Pickthank," for instance, is an archaic word for a flatterer, someone who tries to curry favor with others. Faithful bases his defense on his faithfulness to God and opposition to all things which oppose God, not denouncing the people of Vanity directly. His accusers see it differently.



Faithful is permitted to speak in his own defense. In response to Envy, he states that anything which can be shown to be against the Bible is opposed to Christianity. To Superstition, he responds that only a divinely revealed faith is legitimate. Finally, to Pickthank, he asserts that Vanity's Prince Beelzebub deserves to be in Hell. In conclusion, he entrusts himself to God's mercy. Lord Hategood instructs the jury, and they come back with a unanimous guilty verdict, condemning Faithful to the cruelest death possible.

After this, Faithful is scourged, stoned, and burned at the stake. After he dies, he is taken into a chariot and immediately transported to Heaven. Christian is put back in prison and later miraculously escapes, singing a song about Faithful's triumph.

Faithful's self-defense is grounded on his belief in the Bible as the authoritative basis for his life. Vanity's practices, beliefs, and King (the demon Beelzebub) are not authorized by the Bible or by God, so Faithful must resist them. The jury sees Faithful's opposition as a threat to themselves and their way of life—again suggesting that they persecute him out of a suppressed guilty conscience.



Faithful's cruel death is no doubt intended to remind Bunyan's audience of the suffering that Christ and the apostles endured. He is immediately comforted and rewarded for his sufferings, a reminder that a pilgrim should regard the world's opposition as small compared to the promised reward.



PART 1: CHRISTIAN, HOPEFUL, AND BY-ENDS

As Christian continues on his way, he is joined by a man named Hopeful, who witnessed Christian's suffering and Faithful's martyrdom. Hopeful "rises out of [Faithful's] ashes." He tells Christian that other people from Vanity will follow them.

Christian and Hopeful encounter a man named By-ends, who comes from the wealthy town of Fair-speech and is heading to the Celestial City. However, By-ends refuses to tell them his name. He says that he and his wife, the Lady Feigning's daughter, differ from their stricter peers in that they never go against the prevailing tide in their religious beliefs, and they like religion best "in silver slippers." Christian recognizes By-ends and quietly warns Hopeful that this man is a rascal.

When Christian confronts By-ends, By-ends insists that he was unfairly nicknamed by people who are jealous of his good fortunes. Christian tells By-ends that if he wants to travel with him and Hopeful, he must be willing to resist the tide and also be content with a ragged religion, not just a fancy one that wins popular approval. By-ends accuses them of trying to override his conscience and refuses to accompany them further. Christian and Hopeful continue on their way alone. When By-ends is joined by a small group of fellow pilgrims, he disparages Christian and Hopeful as being overly rigid in their opinions. The group agrees that both Scripture and human reason support the idea that religion and worldly goods go together.

A martyr is someone who is killed for a cause, particularly for their religious faith. Martyrdoms sometimes give rise to new followers. In the case of Hopeful, witnessing the sufferings of Christian and Faithful made him "hopeful" for a better way of life.



The term "by-ends" refers to selfish personal advantage. Indeed, it quickly becomes clear that By-ends only follows religion when it serves him—conforming to the ways of the world, and even to riches ("silver slippers"), as much as possible while remaining outwardly Christian. By-ends doesn't believe that Christianity and the world must be opposed.



The other pilgrims warn By-ends that he cannot be a fellow pilgrim unless he pursues religion for its own sake—that is, being willing to do without riches or the honor of the world. By-ends cannot accept this, accusing Christian and Hopeful of being excessively strict and judgmental. He tells others the same, his action suggesting that when Christians are accused in this way, it is sometimes (as in Vanity) a reflection of the accuser's guilty conscience. By-ends imagines he is more enlightened than the pilgrims in finding a way to reconcile Christianity and the world.



By-ends poses a question to his new companion Money-love: if someone has the opportunity to obtain worldly advantages by becoming more outwardly zealous in their religion, shouldn't they be allowed to use religion as a means to that end? Money-love agrees. Even if a minister, say, has the chance to obtain a more lucrative position by changing his preaching style and opinions, he should do it—there's nothing wrong with wanting a better job, after all, and willingness to change one's opinions suggests a humble temperament! Similarly, there's nothing wrong with a tradesman becoming religious in order to gain a rich wife and more customers. The whole group applauds these answers.

By-end's group decides to pose these same questions to Christian and Hopeful. When they catch up to the others, Mr. Hold-the-world explains the scenarios. Christian immediately replies that it's always wrong to use religion as a means to gain something else. He cites several biblical examples for proof, concluding that someone who becomes religious in order to gain worldly goods will also throw away religion on worldly grounds. By-ends and his friends can make no response to this, and Christian and Hopeful go on their way again.

PART 1: DEMAS AND BY-PATH MEADOW

Christian and Hopeful come to a silver-mine in a hill called Lucre. This area is dangerous: many people have been injured or killed when they ventured too close to the edge of the mine. There, they meet a man named Demas who invites them to dig for treasure. Hopeful wants to take a closer look at the mine, but Christian has heard this place is deadly; he calls Demas an enemy for leading others astray. After Christian and Hopeful continue on their way, By-ends and his friends arrive and accept Demas's invitation. It's uncertain what became of them, but they are never heard from again.

Christian and Hopeful arrive at a strange monument. It looks like a woman who has been turned into a pillar. They decipher the writing on the statue, which says, "Remember Lot's wife," and realize this is the pillar of salt described in the Bible. Christian points out that if they had heeded Demas's invitation, they might have wound up like Lot's wife, too. Hopeful says he is no better than Lot's wife, and it's only by God's grace that he didn't do what she did. If Demas and his companions had only looked ahead to the statue, they would have seen the monument's warning for themselves.

By-ends describes scenarios in which a person should be allowed to use religion for worldly advantage (in his mind, at least)—whether it's a minister changing his opinions for financial gain or a tradesman doing the same. By-ends claims that neither of these shows a lack of integrity and even justifies them as being more ethical. His justifications, and his new friends' applause, suggest that people are eager to find ways to reconcile religion and worldly gain, no matter how flimsy the pretext.



Christian quickly disproves the claims that By-ends and his new friends make. Christian basically argues that once a person gives ground to the world, their religion will always be susceptible to compromise. His response is unsurprising, considering the harsh persecution he has just survived at the world's hands. By-ends' silence confirms that he wasn't a true pilgrim to begin with.



"Lucre" is just a term for money, but it has a negative connotation as money that is disreputable or shameful. In fact, Demas's invitation to dig for silver is fraught with danger—pilgrims who accept end up going astray from the path forever. This suggests that, as Christian predicted, Christians who try to reconcile their religion with riches will, in the end, put money before religion, proving their unfaithfulness.



In the Book of Genesis, God turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt for looking back at her hometown of Sodom while fleeing its destruction. In that sense, she is a prime example of looking to the world with longing instead of toward the promise of Heaven. Those who visit Demas's mine do as Lot's wife did and suffer the consequences.



Christian and Hopeful walk along a pleasant river with fruit trees on its banks. They spend the next few days resting here, gathering fruit and sleeping in a nearby meadow. When they resume their journey, the going becomes rougher, and they grow discouraged. They see a path wandering through a place called By-path Meadow and, though Hopeful fears being led astray, they decide to follow this easier-looking route. They come upon a man named Vain-confidence who says he's also headed to the Celestial City, and the pilgrims follow him.

As the pilgrims have learned all along, one's pilgrimage alternates between times of refreshment and times of discouragement. When things get rough, it's more tempting to become complacent and take shortcuts, as Christian and Hopeful do here. The name "Vain-confidence" reveals that their chosen guide isn't to be trusted (in other words, one places their confidence in vain, or without success).



Soon, not seeing what's in front of him, Vain-confidence falls into a deep pit and lies groaning. Then it begins to storm and flood. Hopeful admits that he'd feared being led astray, but that he didn't speak up more boldly because Christian is older. Christian apologizes for letting this happen, and Hopeful forgives him. The waters are too high to make their way safely back, so they fall asleep in a little shelter for the night.

Sure enough, Vain-confidence proves to be a misleading and ultimately useless guide. Because Christian chooses to trust Vain-confidence and Hopeful defers to Christian, they're all in trouble. This underscores that pilgrims' journeys are interdependent, meaning their difficulties are shared as well.



PART 1: GIANT DESPAIR AND DOUBTING CASTLE

The place where Christian and Hopeful fall asleep is on the grounds of a Giant named Despair, whose home, Doubting Castle, is nearby. Early the next morning, Giant Despair discovers them and forces them into a stinking dungeon for trespassing on his property. They're stuck there, without food or drink, for days. Christian grieves his fault in leading the two of them astray.

Now that they've ventured off the narrow way, Christian and Hopeful stumble into enemy territory. Their lack of material comforts is secondary to the spiritual effects of their isolation, despair and doubt.



That night, Giant Despair asks his wife, Diffidence, for advice about the prisoners. She tells him to beat them mercilessly the next morning, so he does. Christian and Hopeful are left unable to move; they can only lay in the dungeon groaning. The next night, Diffidence advises Despair to provoke the prisoners into killing themselves. So Despair tries—he tells Christian and Hopeful that they're never likely to escape, so they might as well commit suicide. When they refuse, however, Giant Despair falls into one of his occasional fits, which makes him temporarily unable to use his limbs, and leaves.

Christian and Hopeful are cruelly persecuted by Despair. Worse than the physical abuse is the temptation to give up hope and end their lives. However, they find that resisting Despair actually causes Despair harm, suggesting that a despairing state cannot actually hurt a pilgrim unless they choose to believe it—it doesn't reflect reality.



Christian and Hopeful discuss what to do. Christian feels that death is better than life. Hopeful agrees that things are terrible, yet their Lord forbids murder of anyone, including themselves. Besides, they've heard that others have escaped the Giant. How do they know that God won't help them in some way? Hopeful encourages Christian to be patient and courageous.

Christian's experience in Doubting Castle shows that even strong Christians who've endured many hardships can suffer from bouts of extreme depression and despair. Hopeful's temperament, befitting his name, comes to the rescue, a reminder that pilgrims, with their various strengths and weaknesses, need one another.



That evening, Giant Despair visits the dungeon and is furious to see that his prisoners are still alive; he promises them a dreadful fate. Christian becomes dejected again and briefly faints. Hopeful encourages him by reminding him that neither Apollyon nor the Valley of the Shadow of Death could conquer him. Besides, Hopeful adds, he himself is weaker than Christian and yet he still endures. They can both be patient a little longer.

That night, Diffidence advises Despair to take Christian and Hopeful outside and show them the bones of people he's killed before, and warn them that he will kill them within the week. So he does, and after beating them again, sends them back into the dungeon. Despair doesn't know what else to do. Diffidence suggests searching the prisoners to see if they have pick-locks with which they plan to escape.

In the dungeon, Christian and Hopeful spend all night praying. Just before morning, Christian suddenly realizes he has been a fool. All this time, he's had a key called Promise in his bosom, which will open any lock in the Castle. Sure enough, he withdraws a key which immediately opens the dungeon's lock. Christian and Hopeful make their way through the other gates, and when the creaking of the last gate wakes Giant Despair, he suffers another fit which prevents him from pursuing the men. Soon, they're back on the highway again. They build a pillar to commemorate their time in Doubting Castle.

PART 1: THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

Christian and Hopeful arrive at the Delectable Mountains and refresh themselves in the vineyards there. They find Shepherds feeding their flocks. The Shepherds explain that these mountains are in Immanuel's Land, and that they are within sight of the Celestial City. The Shepherds invite the pilgrims to spend the night and rest. The next morning, they show the guests some wondrous sights, starting with a mountain called Error, at the foot of which lie the remains of those who believed in the errors of Hymeneus and Philetus.

Next the Shepherds show Christian and Hopeful a mountain named Caution. At a distance, they can see men, some of them blind, stumbling among tombs. The Shepherds explain that these men were blinded by Giant Despair and left to wander forever among the tombs. Christian and Hopeful cry at this.

When Christian succumbs to despair again, Hopeful reminds him of obstacles he's overcome in the past. Bunyan sees this—especially reminders of God's help in the past—as a key weapon against despair. Honing this weapon, and strengthening the virtue of patience, is one of a pilgrim's primary tasks.



It's clear that Giant Despair is running out of ideas. The prisoners' refusal to give in to despair, despite his best efforts, makes no sense to him. This is because the pilgrims' hope rests on something beyond what's visible.



The unlikely appearance of the miraculous key makes a deeper spiritual point. Fervent prayer reveals the key, suggesting that Christian's hope has been with him all along—the promise of God's salvation. Until now, he has simply failed to access the Promise by prayer. This is meant to remind Bunyan's audience that, no matter what obstacles they face, their hope lies not in their immediate circumstances but in what God has promised to them.



After their ordeal in Doubting Castle, the pilgrims get to enjoy the Shepherds' hospitality and protection. This is fitting: in the Bible, shepherds symbolize those who watch over God's people, with Jesus, the Good Shepherd, being the ultimate example. Hymeneus and Philetus are cited in the New Testament epistle 2 Timothy as false teachers who denied the resurrection of the body.



Here, Christian and Hopeful see what might have become of them if they hadn't resisted and escaped the Giant. The idea of wandering blindly is the opposite of what a pilgrim's journey should be: purposeful, determined, and clear.



Then the Shepherds show Christian and Hopeful a byway to Hell in the side of a hill. Many hypocrites, who appeared to be faithful pilgrims for a long time, ended up entering Hell here—people like Judas. This reminds Christian and Hopeful to ask God for strength.

The pilgrims get a sobering glimpse of Hell. This passage reveals that someone can appear to be a pilgrim, progressing a long distance, but still enter Hell, like Judas, Jesus's betrayer and apostle. Hypocrisy always lurks, and all pilgrims should be wary of it in themselves and others.



Finally, the Shepherds take Christian and Hopeful to the end of the mountains and offer them a perspective-glass through which they can see the Celestial City from a distance. Christian and Hopeful try to look through the glass, but they're so shaken by the glimpse of Hell they've just had that they can only discern the City's Gate. In farewell, the Shepherds give them a sheet of directions and warn them to look out for the Flatterer and not to sleep on the Enchanted Ground.

The Shepherds offer an encouraging glimpse of Heaven, but the contrast between Hell and Heaven is too much for the pilgrims to take. Even though the Celestial City is within sight, there are still obstacles to come—a pilgrim cannot let his or her guard down even in the later stages of the journey.



PART 1: IGNORANCE, LITTLE-FAITH, AND FLATTERER

Below the Delectable Mountains, Christian and Hopeful enter a country called Conceit. Here they meet a young man named Ignorance who's on his way to the Celestial City. Since Ignorance has no **scroll** to hand in at the Gate, the pilgrims ask him how he hopes to gain entrance. Ignorance explains that he lives a good life, gives alms, and pays his tithe, so he is confident he'll get in. When Christian argues that Ignorance can only be admitted to the Celestial City by way of the **Wicket-gate**, Ignorance replies that they should each follow the religions of their respective countries, and anyway, the Wicket-gate is far away from his home.

Ignorance exemplifies the person who sees themselves as good, moral, and even religious and therefore hopes for Heaven. Yet Christian, in alignment with Bunyan's Puritan theology, argues that the only proper gateway to Heaven is Jesus—not a person's moral standing. However, Ignorance sees their disagreement as an indifferent matter of religious disagreement. In line with this, it's implied that he is not a Christian whatsoever—the Wicket-gate is far away.



Christian and Hopeful see that Ignorance is “wise in his own conceit” and decide to walk along without him for now, giving him time to think over what they've discussed. Meanwhile, as they walk down a dark lane, they pass a bound man being led to Hell by devils, a sign on his back labeling him an “apostate.”

The phrase “wise in his own conceit” appears in the King James translation of Proverbs 26:12, stating that a “fool” has more hope than a person who thinks himself wise. An apostate is someone who rejects the faith they once held or claimed to hold.



The sight of the damned man reminds Hopeful of a story. In the town of Sincere lived a good man named Little-faith. While going on pilgrimage to the Celestial City, Little-faith took a nap in a place called Dead Man's Lane, frequented by murderers. Three robbers named Faintheart, Mistrust, and Guilt robbed Little-faith and knocked him unconscious. A champion named Great-grace chased the robbers away. It turned out that although the robbers got Little-faith's spending-money, they didn't get his most valuable jewels, or his **certificate** for the Celestial Gate. However, this was due to God's grace, not Little-faith's wisdom. And Little-faith was so discouraged by the robbery that, for the rest of his journey, he failed to take much comfort in his certificate.

Little-faith symbolizes someone whose faith is assaulted in the course of their pilgrimage. Though Little-faith loses nearly everything, he doesn't lose his certificate—the symbol of his assurance of salvation. This is only thanks to Great-grace, not his own efforts to preserve his treasure. The meaning of the story is that a Christian's faith can be small and battered, but that doesn't mean their salvation is lost. This is because God's grace is believed to keep a true Christian secure. Yet falling prey to such “assaults” can still weaken a person's trust in his salvation, so all pilgrims should stay vigilant.



Hopeful and Christian compare the plight of Little-faith with that of Esau, who sold his birth-right, or inheritance, for a bowl of stew. Christian explains that the difference between Little-faith and Esau is that, though Little-faith had small faith, he still *had* faith, unlike Esau; and he treasured his birth-right more than Esau did his. Little-faith still possessed a saving faith, which meant that he could not give up his inheritance for anything. Christian also defends Little-faith, saying that no one can judge the obstacles another faces, and that not all of Christ's subjects are also champions; strength of faith varies.

Sometime later, Christian and Hopeful arrive at an intersection and aren't sure which way to go. While they're thinking about it, a dark, robed man approaches them and offers to lead them to the Celestial City. They follow him down the intersecting road, which gradually turns away from the City; eventually, he leads them into an entangling net, and they can't free themselves. They know the dark man is the Flatterer the Shepherds had warned of. They also forgot to read the Shepherds' directions.

After a while, a Shining One approaches them, holding a whip in his hand. After Christian and Hopeful explain their predicament, the Shining One releases them from the net, then whips them both to chastise them for failing to heed the Shepherds' warnings and going astray from their path. Then he directs them on the right path. Thanking him, Christian and Hopeful humbly go on their way, singing.

PART 1: THE ENCHANTED GROUND

As Christian and Hopeful continue on their way, they meet an Atheist traveling in their direction. When Atheist hears that they're headed to Mount Zion, he laughs uproariously, calling them fools. He searched for the Celestial City for 20 years, he claims, and never found any evidence of it. That's why he's headed back the way he came. Christian and Hopeful believe that Atheist is wrong. They've glimpsed the Celestial City from the Delectable Mountains—and besides, they are supposed to walk by faith. They continue on their way, ignoring Atheist's laughter.

Next, they come to a place called the Enchanted Ground, where the air tends to make newcomers drowsy. Hopeful immediately gets sleepy and suggests to Christian that they deserve a nap. Christian reminds him of the Shepherds' warning and recommends that they engage in conversation in order to stay awake. He suggests that Hopeful tell the story of his conversion.

Esau appears in the Book of Genesis and is often used to exemplify the surrender of something precious (one's birthright) for something trivial (stew). Little-faith is different from Esau because he didn't willingly give up his inheritance (his faith). According to Bunyan's theology, someone who possesses the gift of true faith—even a tiny, weak glimmer of faith—cannot ultimately lose it. Some, like Great-grace, are “champions” of faith, while others will always struggle.



In a moment of negligence, Christian and Hopeful fall prey to a deceiver. They got preoccupied and forgot the Shepherds' warning about the Flatterer, besides the fact that the Shepherds had given them clear directions to follow. This is another reminder that pilgrims must stay vigilant throughout their entire journey, because there are always devilish forces waiting to entrap them, even at the very last moment.



This passage emphasizes that God is always merciful to wayward pilgrims, yet that doesn't mean that such pilgrims won't encounter hardship and discipline for their failures. Chastisement is meant to set a pilgrim on the right path and is therefore seen as a loving measure; it's not vengeful cruelty.



Even within a predominantly Christian culture, Bunyan takes it for granted that there are nonbelievers around. Yet Christian and Hopeful take Atheist's mockery in stride; it's just one more expression of the world's opposition. The statement that Christians “walk by faith, not by sight” comes from 2 Corinthians 5 in the New Testament. It means that pilgrims don't get a full glimpse of Heaven during earthly life but that, unlike Atheist, they must exercise faith by continuing to progress toward Heaven.



Following the Shining One's chastisement, Christian is more alert to the Shepherds' warnings than he was before. Hopeful is more susceptible to the Enchanted Ground, showing that different pilgrims have different strengths and weaknesses.



Hopeful explains that he used to take delight in those things bought and sold at Vanity Fair. But after witnessing Christian's sufferings and Faithful's death, he realized that these things are worthless and that those who indulge in them deserve God's wrath. It takes a while, because he felt a burdensome conviction of his sins, yet he didn't recognize the workings of God's Spirit within him, and he didn't know how to part with his old friends.

Over time, Hopeful was painfully reminded of his sins—when he met a good person in the street, or heard the Bible being read, or was reminded of death. Each time, he felt guilt and feared future judgment. He kept trying to reform his life but fell short. He also realized that, even if he succeeded in improving himself perfectly (which is impossible), he'd never be able to repay the debt of his former sins.

Overwhelmed by his predicament, Hopeful talked with his friend Faithful, who explained that a sinner can only be justified by trusting in Christ's righteousness and death. Hopeful made various objections, fearing that God's forgiveness could not apply to him personally, but Faithful gave Hopeful a Bible and told him he must pray for God to reveal himself through it. He also instructed Hopeful in how to pray for God's mercy on his soul. Hopeful did so, praying fervently, though at first he was discouraged because he did not seem to receive an answer.

One day, however, while wrestling with the fear of Hell, Hopeful had a vision of Christ looking down on him from Heaven and telling Hopeful to believe. When Hopeful asked what it means for a sinner to believe, he heard Christ say, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and [...] never thirst," and he understood that believing in Christ means running to him. Hopeful wept as more Bible verses passed through his mind, deepening his assurance of Christ's salvation. Hopeful could finally see the beauty of Jesus Christ.

After finishing his story, Hopeful glances back and sees Ignorance following behind them. Ignorance says that he prefers to walk alone. Christian engages him in conversation about his soul. Ignorance says he takes comfort in thoughts of God and Heaven and in the belief that he has left everything to pursue God. Ignorance's heart tells him that he has reason to hope for Heaven. Christian points out that the heart can be deceitful, and that there can be a big difference between belief and reality. Ultimately, what matters is whether a person's beliefs align with what the Bible says.

Hopeful is originally from Vanity Fair and used to be loyal to its customs. Christian's and Faithful's influence shows that faithfulness under persecution can sway others' opinions. But Hopeful didn't immediately become a Christian himself, as he didn't understand the conflict being waged in his soul.



Hopeful's struggle before his conversion likely draws on Bunyan's own conversion story, which was marked by a long period of guilt over sin before arriving at a conscious belief in Christianity. Hopeful tried to address his guilt through better behavior, but this only seemed to deepen his despair over his sins.



It turns out that Faithful himself helped Hopeful out of his struggle (by sharing the truth of the gospel, as Bunyan would have put it). Hopeful explained that only Christ can rescue a person from sin and that a person must study the Bible and take this belief to heart. This reflects the Puritan emphasis on an individual's standing before God and individual Bible reading.



Even after Hopeful heard Faithful's testimony, he did not come to full faith immediately. In the 17th-century Puritan view, a person's conversion was not necessarily instantaneous, but was sometimes marked by intense inner struggle. Yet when it comes, Hopeful's conversion involves an intimate encounter with Christ, who recites John 6:35. It is also marked by familiarity with the Bible—suggesting that it isn't enough for a person to read the Bible, in Bunyan's view, but to internalize its teachings.



After giving the example of Hopeful's conversion, Bunyan implicitly contrasts Hopeful with Ignorance, who does not possess the same kind of faith. In fact, Ignorance believes that his interest in religion, as well as his pilgrimage itself, will gain God's favor and admit him to Heaven. Christian explains that a pilgrim shouldn't look to their own heart to assure them of their soul's fate, but to what the Bible teaches.



Christian goes on to explain the Bible's teaching that *nobody* is righteous, and that the heart naturally produces evil thoughts. Ignorance says he cannot believe that his own heart is that bad. Christian says that the Bible teaches that humanity's ways are wicked. It's only possible for a person to think rightly of himself and God once he understands these biblical teachings. Ignorance protests that he believes in Christ, but Christian argues that this isn't possible unless Ignorance actually sees his *need* for Christ. It isn't enough, as Ignorance says, to believe that Christ justifies a sinner's actions. Ignorance must believe that Christ justifies *him*, and that only on this basis can he be saved.

Ignorance denies Christian's argument—if it were true, he says, then people could live as they chose. Christian says that Ignorance doesn't yet understand the nature of Christ's righteousness. With a final urging, Christian and Hopeful part ways with Ignorance.

PART 1: FEAR AND BACKSLIDING

Christian and Hopeful continue discussing Ignorance, speculating that many people persist in a similar condition of ignorance regarding their souls. Such people might feel fear occasionally, but they stifle it. Christian explains that "right" fear is a good thing. It is caused by a sense of guilt over sin and should drive a soul to trust in Christ. Then fear should cause a person to continue walking in God's ways, avoiding anything that would dishonor God.

Though Christian and Hopeful are well past the Enchanted Ground by this time, they continue their discussion. Christian explains that ignorant people stifle "right fear" by assuming such fear comes from the devil, not from God. Thus they harden their hearts against it. Because they assume they shouldn't fear, such people become overconfident and stifle right fear even more.

Christian changes the subject, asking Hopeful if he remembers a fellow named Temporary from the town of Graceless. Hopeful remembers that Temporary once seemed to feel conviction for his sins and had resolved to go on pilgrimage. But then Temporary met a man named Saveself and began to backslide. Hopeful says that this happens to people for a few reasons: though people's consciences are pricked, their minds aren't truly changed, so when guilt fades, so do their religious feelings; they want to avoid the trouble and embarrassment that religion brings with it; and they simply hate to dwell on their guilt. All these things can cause a seemingly repentant person to revert to worldly ways.

The Bible, according to Christian, teaches that the heart can't really be trusted, because it is corrupted by sin. This is the biggest difference between Christian and Ignorance: Ignorance does not believe that sin has corrupted his heart that badly. Because of this, in Christian's view, Ignorance cannot truly believe in Christ—because he does not see the depth of his personal need for Christ. He cannot, in other words, believe in Christ in an abstract, detached manner; the belief must be deeply personal.



Ignorance continues to believe that human beings' behavior is the most important factor in salvation. If not, he believes, then humans will feel at liberty to do whatever they want.



The point about fear is that, for a person who is trusting in their own goodness instead of in Christ's sacrifice, Bunyan considers fear to be a good thing. For someone who is not yet a Christian, fear should cause them to seek Christ. For a Christian, "fear" is not meant in the sense of a cowering dread; it's similar to a deep reverence.



The hardening of the heart refers to when a person becomes resistant to spiritual truth after engaging in ongoing sinful behavior or refusing to heed spiritual promptings. This is the condition of many who remain unconverted, in the pilgrims' view.



This passage stresses that people face constant temptation from the world. Even those who, like temporary, might appear to be "saved" can "backslide," or revert to a worldly state, proving that they weren't saved to begin with. This is common because people can experience strong religious emotions without truly being converted in their hearts; or they simply discover that practicing religion is more trouble than they'd bargained for.



Christian agrees and then talks about how such backsliding occurs. People refuse to think about the coming judgment, they gradually stop praying and engaging in other religious habits, and they begin criticizing their Christian friends and associating with worldly people instead. And then they begin, little by little, tolerating sins in their own lives. Such people will die without hope, Christian concludes, unless miraculous grace intervenes.

Backsliding—something Bunyan clearly saw as a lurking threat for pilgrims—can happen in a number of ways, all of which stem from the pressures of the surrounding world. Again, a true Christian can backslide (in which case, by Bunyan’s theology, the person will eventually return to active faith), or backsliding can reveal that a person wasn’t truly converted to begin with.



PART 1: BEULAH, THE RIVER OF DEATH, AND THE CELESTIAL CITY

By this time, Christian and Hopeful have entered the country called Beulah. Here, the air is sweet, birds sing and flowers bloom constantly, and the sun never stops shining. Neither the Valley of the Shadow of Death nor Doubting Castle can even be glimpsed from here. Shining Ones walk in Beulah, because it is on Heaven’s border. From here, they can see the golden streets of the Celestial City. Both Christian and Hopeful are so filled with desire for the Celestial City that they become sick with it.

At last the pilgrims reach the outskirts of Heaven, a place where memories of the darkest parts of their journey fade and the Celestial City itself is within sight. The pilgrims’ “sickness” is an allusion to the Bible’s Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon), a poem that is allegorically interpreted to refer to the soul’s lovesickness for Christ.



After they recover, Christian and Hopeful walk among the orchards and gardens of Beulah. After stopping to rest in a vineyard, they resolve to enter the Celestial City. Two Shining Ones accompany them to the Gate, but they explain that the pilgrims must enter the City by means of their own faith. Between themselves and the Gate, Christian and Hopeful see a deep River. There is no bridge, and the angels explain that there is no other way to the City. Only Enoch and Elijah were spared this part of the journey. They also explain to the worried pilgrims that the River’s depth varies, but that their faith in the City’s King will determine whether they find the water deep or shallow.

Christian’s and Hopeful’s dismay at the sight of the River suggests that all human beings must face the dreadful inevitability of death. Enoch and Elijah, whom the angels mention here, are both Old Testament figures who were believed to have been miraculously transported to Heaven without experiencing death. The angel’s point is not that Christians must prove themselves worthy of Heaven—that would go against Bunyan’s theology—but that faith in Christ is the bridge across the “river,” and that nobody can exercise faith on another’s behalf.



Christian and Hopeful wade into the River. At once, Christian starts to sink, and he cries out to Hopeful in fear. Hopeful encourages him, saying that he can feel the bottom. But Christian is consumed by dread and fear, unable to see the way in front of him and believing he will never make it. He forgets all the comforts he encountered throughout his pilgrimage and remembers his past sins instead. Hopeful keeps Christian’s head above water, telling him the Gate is near. He assures Christian that the deep waters are not a sign that God has forsaken Christian; rather, they are meant to test Christian’s faith, to see if he will focus on God’s goodness or on his own distress.

At death, even a strong Christian may face powerful temptations—especially the temptation to focus on one’s sins instead of on God. This is Christian’s experience. The consequence is that he believes he will drown and never make it to the Celestial City. This terror does not reflect reality, as Hopeful keeps reassuring his friend—it is merely a divine testing of his faith. Bunyan uses this scene to reassure his audience that although death can be frightening for anyone, God does not abandon the fearful believer.



Christian is lost in thought for a while. Then, when Hopeful tells him to cheer up because Jesus makes him whole, Christian cries out with new confidence, quoting the Bible: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.” They both finish crossing the River, encountering no more obstacles; even Christian now finds the water shallow. On the opposite bank, they find Shining Ones waiting to greet them.

The Celestial City sits atop a big hill, but Christian and Hopeful find it easy to climb because of the angels’ help. Also, they are no longer burdened by their “mortal garments,” having emerged from the River without them. The journey above the clouds is cheerful and comforting. The angels tell the pilgrims all about Mount Zion, “the heavenly Jerusalem.” They will soon be in God’s Paradise, where they can eat from the Tree of Life and spend eternity walking and talking with the King of the City. They will never be troubled with earthly sorrow, suffering, or death. They will be rewarded for their toil, enjoy the perpetual sight of God, and praise him forever.

As Christian and Hopeful approach the Gate, an entire “Heavenly Host” and a group of the King’s Trumpeters welcomes them with celebratory shouts and music. The Shining Ones tell Christian and Hopeful to seek entrance at the Gate. They see biblical figures like Moses and Elijah looking over the Gate at them. Christian and Hopeful hand in their **certificates**, and from inside, the King commands that the Gate be opened. As Christian and Faithful enter, their appearance is transformed, and they are dressed in golden garments. They are also given harps and crowns. The entire Celestial City gleams like the sun.

Meanwhile, Ignorance crosses the River with little difficulty, thanks to a ferryman named Vain-hope. However, no angels accompany him. When Ignorance knocks at the Gate, the people of the City question him. When the residents of the City ask for his **certificate**, Ignorance has nothing to show them. Then the King tells the Shining Ones to bind Ignorance and take him away; they accordingly place him in Hell, which has an entrance just short of Heaven’s gates. Then the narrator wakes, realizing it has all been a dream.

PART 1: CONCLUSION

The narrator tells the reader to interpret his dream but to be wary of misinterpreting or being “extreme” “in playing with the out-side” of the dream. He tells the reader to take the “gold” and discard the “dross” from what he has written. But if everything is discarded, the narrator might just dream again.

Hopeful’s efforts to recall Christian to his faith are finally successful. He remembers a Bible verse, Isaiah 43:2, which promises God’s presence in the midst of fearsome difficulties. Christian’s change of heart also alters his perception of the River’s depth, making the rest of the crossing easy.



Christian and Hopeful have passed beyond earthly difficulties. The angels tell the pilgrims what they can expect in the Celestial City—a completely new kind of existence in which the world’s opposition will no longer trouble them. Instead of journeying as pilgrims and struggling with obstacles on the way, they will have arrived, and they will bask in the rewards of God’s presence.



Heaven is home to biblical heroes, whose company Christian and Hopeful will now join. After relying on the teachings of the Bible to get them through their pilgrimage, they will now experience the Bible’s story in a direct and immediate way. Christian and Hopeful hand in their certificates of assurance because, having arrived, they no longer require a token to give them courage along the way. Faith has given way to sight.



The proximity to Hell suggests that, chillingly, a person can travel to the very gates of Heaven but not actually be admitted—like Ignorance, they might be found to lack genuine faith, having been self-deceived. As Christian and Hopeful had warned earlier, Ignorance’s lack of a certificate becomes his downfall. The narrator, meanwhile, wakes from his dream of the pilgrims’ progress.



In this poetic conclusion, Bunyan encourages his audience not to take his allegory too literally (“playing with the out-side”). Instead, readers should take from it what spiritual messages (“gold”) they find fit to preserve. He closes with a playful warning that if his story is ignored altogether, his narrator will not give up.



PART 2: INTRODUCTION

Bunyan begins Part 2 with another long poem. He addresses his book in an apostrophe, telling it to go everywhere that the first part has gone, in order to tell Christiana's story. If readers enjoyed Christian's story, then they ought to welcome Christian's wife and boys, who have now become pilgrims, too.

In response to Christiana's objection that she will not be well received because others have circulated counterfeit stories of Christian, Bunyan says that it will be obvious from his book's language that it is authentic. Bunyan further argues that Christiana shouldn't fear rejection, because in all lands—even among "Highlanders and Wild Irish," and in New England—the first part has been warmly received. Young and old, men and women, city and country folk alike have enjoyed the first part.

Bunyan again defends the use of seemingly obscure metaphors to "allure" readers' minds and stick more firmly in their memories. Furthermore, the "Second Pilgrim" will reveal some things which the first left concealed. If people still refuse to read the Second Part, rejecting it as mere romance, then perhaps Bunyan's writing is simply not to their taste.

It's Christiana's job now to introduce not only herself and her sons, but her friends Mercy, Honest, Fearing, and many others with whose stories the reader might find something in common. He closes with the prayer that each "pilgrim," and even some who have gone astray, will find something suited to their needs.

PART 2: CHRISTIANA

The narrator recalls that, in the First Part, Christian's wife and children refused to join him on his pilgrimage. Some time after Christian's story ended, the narrator happened to be near the City of Destruction once again. While sleeping in a nearby wood, he had another dream. In the dream, he was walking along with an old man named Mr. Sagacity. He asks Mr. Sagacity about Christian. Mr. Sagacity reports that Christian's pilgrimage is admired nowadays, even though people called him a fool while he was alive. It's even rumored that someday, the Prince of the Celestial City will come back and demand to know why Christian's neighbors once mocked and mistreated him so, regarding these as insults to himself.

The second part of Pilgrim's Progress was written about six years after the first part had already gained popularity. This sequel will follow Christian's pilgrimage with the story of the family he left behind.



In this part of the poem, Bunyan has his book "speak" in Christiana's voice, expressing misgivings about her reception. Apparently, in response to the popularity of the first part of Pilgrim's Progress across swaths of the English-speaking world (including parts that Bunyan views as "uncivilized"), unauthorized sequels were circulated.



Bunyan returns to the argument presented in the Apology, that allegory is a useful literary method for teaching and entertaining his audience. Although he believes the second part will usefully add to the first, he acknowledges that it won't be to every reader's taste.



Bunyan hopes that the array of pilgrims' experiences will speak to the diverse needs and experiences of his audience, too.



The narrator establishes the setting for the second part, returning to the City of Destruction and the widowed Christiana. (The novel doesn't make it clear how much time has passed since Christian's departure.) It turns out that, though Christian was mocked for going on pilgrimage, people's perspective has since changed. In any case, the mockery of Christian will be avenged by God someday: insults to pilgrims are considered to be insults to Christ as well, because pilgrims are spiritually united to Christ.



The narrator asks about Christiana and her sons, and Mr. Sagacity explains that although they resisted Christian at first, they have since had second thoughts and followed him. He offers to tell their story. After Christian passed over the River of Death, Christiana grieved her loss. She also began to reconsider her unkindness toward her husband before he left. She began to feel guilty and to perceive that Christian was not mentally ill, but might actually have had light from God which she lacks. She and her sons weep together.

The next night, Christiana dreamed that she saw a record of all her sins and some hellish creatures plotting to deceive her. Later, she dreamed of Christian's happiness in the Celestial City. The next morning, a man named Secret visits Christiana. Secret comes with assurance of God's mercy toward Christiana if she repents, and his welcome if she chooses to follow Christian. He hands her a sweet-smelling letter written in gold, from the King of the Celestial City, urging her to do as her husband has done.

Christiana eagerly begs Secret to take her and her children to the Celestial City, but he explains that, like Christian, she must pass through many troubles in order to reach it. He advises her to pass through the **Wicket-gate**, carrying the King's letter with her. So Christiana gathers her sons and confesses her past hard-heartedness toward their father. She says they must prepare to follow Christian to the Celestial City. Christiana's sons cry for joy and do as she says.

Before Christiana leaves, two of her neighbors knock at the door. They are puzzled to hear her say, "If you come in God's name, come in." They enter and ask what Christiana is doing. Weeping, Christiana explains her journey to Mrs. Timorous (Timorous's daughter) and begs her neighbors to come along. She reads them her letter. But Mrs. Timorous says this is madness, and she reminds Christiana of some of Christian's hardships. If he had such a difficult time, then what will she, "a poor woman," face?

Christiana tells Mrs. Timorous to leave rather than tempting her. But the other neighbor, named Mercy, longs both to help Christiana and to consider her own soul's well-being, so she stays. Mrs. Timorous, meanwhile, visits other neighbors and tells them about Christiana's impending departure. One neighbor, Mrs. Bat's-eyes, calls Christiana a fool for not heeding Christian's struggles on his journey. Mrs. Inconsiderate hopes that Christiana will leave, because she will surely become a tiresome neighbor. Mrs. Light-mind tries to distract them all with gossip.

Christian's death forced Christiana to rethink her attitude about his pilgrimage. She and her sons had initially mocked him for being foolish and irrational, but his perseverance and faith impress her, even though she is not yet a believer herself.



Christiana has a series of dreams contrasting Christian's fate with her own possible fate. Then she receives a direct invitation from Heaven itself. Though Christian is the family's first pilgrim and Christiana must follow in his footsteps, she also must do so by her own choice and through her own efforts. In other words, no pilgrim can complete their pilgrimage on another's behalf.



As the book has already shown, there is no shortcut to the Celestial City. Anyone who desires to follow Christ, in other words, must endure life's sufferings instead of going straight to Heaven. Yet there's only one authorized entrance to the pilgrim's life: the Wicket-gate, or Christ himself.



Christiana's neighbors aren't accustomed to hearing her speak of God. One neighbor reacts poorly to her friend's decision to go on pilgrimage, citing the common "worldly" objection that pilgrimage is dangerous. She also suggests that those dangers are more threatening for a woman, an assumption that will be challenged somewhat as the story goes on.



As she prepares to go on her pilgrimage, Christiana faces opposition just like her husband did, suggesting that this is the common lot of pilgrims, whether they're men or women. In contrast to Mrs. Timorous and the other gossiping neighbors, though, Mercy (befitting her name) is sympathetic and concerned.



Meanwhile, Christiana begins her pilgrimage. She invites Mercy to come along as her companion and servant. Mercy is eager to comply but fears she won't be accepted at the **Wicket-gate**. Christiana promises to make inquiries when they get there. So they set out together, though Mercy weeps for those left behind. Christiana says that God caused Christian's tears to benefit her, so she trusts that Mercy's tears will benefit her loved ones someday. Mercy sings as they go.

Not everyone's journey starts the same way, as this passage illustrates. Though Christiana received a direct invitation, Mercy joins her primarily because of friendship; this, too, is considered to be a valid motivation. Pilgrims' prayers and grief on behalf of their loved ones are considered to be powerful.



PART 2: THE WICKET-GATE

Christiana arrives at the Slough of Despond and hesitates, worrying that the bog's condition is even worse than before, but she, Mercy, and the boys succeed in crossing it, making their way to the **Wicket-gate**. (At this point, Mr. Sagacity leaves, and the narrator continues dreaming himself.) They decide that Christiana, as the oldest in the group, should knock first. At first, she is frightened by the sound of a fierce dog barking, but she finally perseveres in knocking until the Keeper of the Gate answers.

From the beginning of Christiana's journey, it's clear that not everyone encounters identical obstacles; unlike her husband, she faces no great trouble in the Slough, and she encounters opposition at the Gate. The dog symbolizes the devil, trying to frighten Christiana from persevering in prayer to Christ.



Christiana introduces herself and her group, and the Keeper welcomes her inside, including the children, adding, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." However, Mercy remains outside, weeping. Christiana intercedes for her friend, explaining that Mercy wishes to come in, but that nobody has sent for her. Meanwhile, Mercy grows impatient and knocks at the Gate herself. When the Keeper opens it, he sees that Mercy has fainted. He takes her by the hand and lifts her to her feet.

The Keeper symbolizes Christ. The quote about children is from the Gospel of Matthew, when Christ says that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to children. Though Mercy fears she won't be welcomed at the Gate because she hasn't been summoned, she gathers her courage to knock, showing that though she's timid, she doesn't lack courage.



Mercy explains that she, like Christiana, has come to the **Wicket-gate** seeking forgiveness of her sins. The Keeper of the Gate gently guides Mercy inside, saying that all who believe in him are welcomed. He further assures Christiana and her boys that their sins are forgiven, and he takes them to the top of the Gate, from which they can see the Cross in the distance—a sight that will comfort them in their journey.

The only requirement for entrance at the Wicket-gate is turning away from one's sins and believing in Christ. Bunyan suggests that it's not important how a person gets to the Gate, but that their desire to enter is genuine.



Christiana and Mercy sit in a parlor, rejoicing. Christiana admires the fervor of Mercy's knocking. She also assures Mercy that the Keeper of the Gate was not disturbed by her knock and that he smiled when he heard it. However, they all agree that the dog is frightening, so when the Keeper returns, they ask him about it. The Keeper explains that the dog is not his; it belongs to Beelzebub's castle nearby. The dog has frightened many pilgrims away. But the Keeper always helps his pilgrims so that they won't be deterred by the dog's barking.

The Keeper, symbolizing Christ, eagerly welcomes those who seek him. The threatening dog at the Gate belongs not to him, but to the devil. The Keeper's response suggests that genuine pilgrims, who are drawn to the Gate by Christ, will be undeterred by the devil, even if they are frightened.



After the Keeper of the Gate has tended to them, the group continues on their way. They pass through a garden which, unknown to them, belongs to Beelzebub. Christiana's boys see some delicious-looking fruits growing there and, ignoring their mother's scolding, they eat some. At the time, they don't know that these fruits belong to the devil.

Even after passing through the Gate, pilgrims still face the deceptions and snares of the devil. The boys' disobedience—stealing and eating the fruit despite their mother's scolding—is reminiscent of Adam and Eve's original sin of disobeying God by eating the forbidden fruit, as recounted in the Book of Genesis. The stolen fruits will recur in the story later to further illustrate this.



After that, two Ill-Favored Ones come down the path toward the group. The Ill-Favored Ones begin trying to assault the women, who angrily kick them and cry for help. A Reliever comes from the nearby Gate-House to help them, and the Ill-Favored ones escape over the wall, where Beelzebub's dog guards them. Reliever checks on the women and says he is surprised that they didn't ask for a Conductor to guide them, seeing that they are "but weak Women"; the Lord would have happily granted them one.

This violent scene suggests that women pilgrims do, in Bunyan's view, face unique dangers on their journey and that they should vigilantly seek God's protection against these.



Christiana admits that they were too distracted by their newfound blessings to ask for a Conductor, and besides, she didn't expect evildoers to be lurking so near the **Wicket-gate**. And if it was so important for them to have a guide, why didn't the Lord just give them one? Reliever says that the women now have a greater appreciation for their folly, so God is bringing benefit out of the situation. God also wants to be asked for the things the pilgrims need. He promises to secure a Conductor for them and leaves.

Though the women's weakness is given as a reason, Bunyan's bigger point is that pilgrims should not be presumptuous—they should not assume that they need nothing further from God, or that he will automatically give them things. Still, God does not hold people's foolishness against them and is always ready to generously give.



Mercy laments that she'd foolishly believed they were past all danger. Christiana takes the blame, saying she should have shown greater foresight. She explains that before leaving on pilgrimage, she'd dreamed of being attacked by two such men. Mercy comforts Christiana by pointing out that their error has given an opportunity for God to show them his grace once again.

The Ill-Favored Ones are the demonic figures who'd appeared in Christiana's earlier dream, so she holds herself responsible for being so unguarded. But missteps are viewed as opportunities for God to prevail over human weakness.



PART 2: THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE

Christiana, Mercy, and the boys arrive at the Interpreter's House. They hear the people inside talking about Christiana, whose pilgrimage has been widely rumored. When they knock, they are met by a young woman named Innocent, who joyfully alerts Interpreter of their arrival. Interpreter warmly welcomes the group inside. Other visiting pilgrims greet them and affectionately dote on the young children.

Like Christian, Christiana and her group make their first stop at the Interpreter's House. Because Christian has preceded her, Christiana is recognized and celebrated along the way.



Before supper, Interpreter leads the group through the same rooms that Christian saw. Then he shows them some different rooms. In the first one, they see a man with a muck-rake. A figure stands nearby offering him a celestial crown, but the muck-raker is so focused on sweeping the straw and dust that he doesn't notice. Christiana observes that the muck-raker is a man of the world, who considers only visible, earthbound things to be real.

In the next room, an especially stately one, the women see nothing at first, but then they notice a huge spider on the wall. The Interpreter asks them if there are any other spiders in this room. Tearfully, Christiana discerns the room's lesson: that *they* are the other spiders, and their "venom" is worse. Interpreter points out that no matter how much "venom" they contain, they may cling by faith to the walls of the King's House, much as this spider clings to the walls.

Next, the group observes a hen with her chickens. They see that the hen uses a variety of calls, which, the Interpreter says, correspond to God's various methods in summoning his people. He adds that he is leading the women through these particular rooms because, as women, they will find such things easier to understand. As the group waits for supper to be ready, the Interpreter, at Christiana's invitation, shares additional edifying sayings.

At supper, Interpreter invites Christiana to talk about her pilgrimage thus far. Christiana gladly recounts the story of her repentance, her dreams, the King's invitation, and the opposition she faced from neighbors and, later, the Ill-Favored Ones. When Interpreter invites Mercy to speak, she is shy and hesitant. Unlike Christiana, she has not experienced dreams or visions. Finally, she is coaxed to describe her visit to Christiana and her decision to go on pilgrimage.

The next day, the women bathe and then are sealed with a mark on their foreheads and dressed in beautiful white linens. Interpreter assigns a champion named Great-heart to accompany the women to their next stop at the Palace Beautiful. They set out singing about the wonders they've seen.

Christiana's pilgrimage will not be identical to Christian's. Though she is regarded as needing to learn the same lessons, she's also given additional learning opportunities. In this one, she sees the cost of being too focused on the world—one can miss the heavenly realities right in front of them.



The spider symbolizes a sinner, and the venom is its "sin." But, as this passage underscores, the presence of sin is not a barrier to the person who clings to God by faith.



The Interpreter suggests that women require "easier" imagery to help them grasp spiritual truths. However, at the same time, Christiana's eagerness to gain as much spiritual instruction as she can suggests that women have no less curiosity and aptitude in this area than men do.



The women's pilgrimages are considered to be stories worth telling. What's more, even humble, comparatively unexciting stories—like Mercy's—are regarded as important. Bunyan here suggests that all pilgrims should be willing to tell their testimonies, or stories of pilgrimage, and that people should be eager listeners to one another's stories.



The marking and new clothes signify the women's pilgrim status and that they belong to God, under his safekeeping. Great-heart's presence suggests that the women require special defense from harm on their journey.



PART 2: FROM THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE TO THE PORTER'S HOUSE

Great-heart, Christiana, Mercy, and the boys arrive at the Cross, where Christian lost his **burden**. Christiana asks Great-heart questions about this. She knows that sinners are pardoned both by word (or promise) and by deed. She understands God's promise, but she asks Great-heart to give a discourse on the subject of *how* pardon occurs.

Great-heart explains that sinners' pardon is obtained by another—namely, the Keeper of the Gate. He “has performed Righteousness to cover you, and spilt Blood to wash you in.” This is possible because there is nobody else like him—a person both human and divine, who possesses a righteousness more than sufficient for all sinners. Because he is perfect, he has no need of that righteousness to justify himself and can give it away as a gift. He ransoms sinners from their own sins by his blood and covers them with his own righteousness. This is what it means to be pardoned by deed.

Christiana is pleased with this explanation. She asks if it was understanding of this teaching that caused Christian's **burden** to fall from his shoulders. Great-heart says yes—it was this that made Christian understand why he need not carry the burden of his sins any longer. A forgiven sinner doesn't just feel joy at the departure of the burden, but a deepened affection for their redeemer as well.

When Christiana and Mercy rejoice at Great-heart's words, Great-heart points out that not everyone who witnessed Christ's death felt similarly—some even mocked him. Therefore they should be all the more grateful for the grace that causes them to love Christ.

The group journeys on. They soon come upon Simple, Sloth, and Presumption hung in irons by the roadside. Great-heart explains that these men hindered others whenever they could, by persuading them away from pilgrimage. They did this by speaking ill of the Lord, his land, and his servants.

Next, they arrive at the Hill Difficulty. Great-heart shows the women the by-ways by which Formality and Hypocrisy got lost. Even though the byways are chained off and filled with ditches, people nevertheless choose them—often supposing the Hill will be too difficult. The group starts up the Hill themselves and soon grow weary, but Great-heart urges them onward until they reach the King's Arbor, where they rest.

Christiana wants to understand the doctrine of salvation in greater detail. Through her questions, she prompts theological commentary, suggesting that, in Bunyan's opinion, women should be as interested in these matters as men are.



Christiana's question prompts an intricate discussion of the doctrines of justification (i.e., how Christ saves a human being from their sins) and of Christ's human and divine natures. In brief, Christ's sacrificial death atones for human sin because he is human like them yet also sinlessly divine, not needing to atone for any sins of his own.



This point clarifies why Christian continued to bear his burden of sin beyond the Wicket-gate. To some extent, Christian's lingering burden is subjective—when he comes to the Cross and understands what Christ's righteousness achieves on his behalf, his burden disappears.



Doctrines aren't an abstract matter for Bunyan; they should touch people's hearts and motivate their actions. Moreover, only a special working of God's grace within a person can cause them to understand and appreciate such teachings.



This passage reveals another change along Christiana's path: some of the sinister figures Christian met have suffered the consequences of their deceit.



As the book has already showed, people naturally incline to take what seems to be the easiest path. If this is true in a physical journey, it's all the more true in a spiritual pilgrimage, Bunyan suggests.



The women and boys refresh themselves, but when they get up to go, Christiana forgets her little bottle of reviving spirits and must send one of her sons back to fetch it. Great-heart explains that pilgrims often fail to keep watch, and they lose things that they've gained along the way.

Going on their way, they come upon the spot where Mistrust and Timorous tried to warn Christian off from the lions; both were burned through their tongues with an iron for this reason. Soon they see the lions for themselves, and a giant named Grim also appears, intending to force them back. But Great-heart draws his sword and strikes Grim down, allowing the women and children to walk safely past the chained lions.

Significantly, this is the same spot where Christian misplaced his certificate. This parallelism suggests that it's common for pilgrims to become forgetful and complacent as they journey.



Mistrust and Timorous, too, met with an unhappy end because of their treachery. Great-heart slays the first of several giants the group will encounter. Though Bunyan suggests in some places that women are weaker pilgrims and stand in greater need of protection, it's also clear that women must progress for themselves, summoning their own courage.



PART 2: AT THE PORTER'S HOUSE

Next the group arrives at the Porter's Lodge, and though the women and the youngest son, James, beg Great-heart to stay with them, he must return to his Lord for the night. He will return to them if he can. Meanwhile, the porter, Mr. Watchful, invites them inside, and a girl named Humble-mind shares the joyful news that Christian's wife has arrived. The rest of Humble-mind's family gathers around to greet them. After supper and prayer, Christiana and Mercy are housed in Christian's old room, and they hear joyful music as they fall asleep.

The next morning, Christiana says that Mercy laughed in her sleep last night. Mercy shares her dream. In it, she was grieving her hardness of heart, while others mocked her. Then, an angel comforted her and led her to a golden gate. Within, Mercy was welcomed by a man on a throne, and she thought she saw Christian there. Christiana agrees that this was a good and true dream, and that God can speak to the heart even when a person is asleep.

After Christiana and Mercy get up, the women of the house, Prudence, Piety, and Charity, invite them to stay at the Porter's Lodge for a while. They agree, staying there for about a month. Prudence wants to see how Christiana has raised her sons, so she asks permission to catechize the boys. Christiana agrees, so Prudence begins with the youngest, James.

The Lord wants his people to ask him for their needs, showing their constant dependence on him; this is why Great-heart goes away and must be summoned again later. The Porter's House, meanwhile, is a foretaste of Heaven, a place where pilgrims can be refreshed in the company of fellow believers.



Bunyan seems to place a lot of stock in dreams as meaningful in the course of the Christian life. Not only is the story told through the framing device of dreams, but characters receive confirmation of their spiritual state through dreams—like Mercy's joy in this case.



The women receive more noteworthy hospitality than Christian did. Notably, too, this extended stay isn't just for leisure's sake—it's for the sake of spiritual instruction. Catechisms are religious teaching tools in a call-and-response form that were especially important in the Protestant communities of Bunyan's day.



Prudence asks James who created him and who saves him. James answers both these questions by naming “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.” Prudence also asks him how each person of the Trinity contributes to his salvation. When James again answers correctly, Prudence commends Christiana for teaching her children so well.

Prudence next catechizes the second youngest, Joseph, asking him questions about human nature, what salvation is, and how it occurs. Then she catechizes Samuel, asking him about Heaven and Hell. Finally, she catechizes the eldest, Matthew, asking him questions about God’s nature, the Bible, and the resurrection of the dead. Pleased with the results, Prudence exhorts the boys to continue learning from their mother and also to study the Bible for themselves.

About a week after the pilgrims first arrived at the Porter’s, a suitor named Mr. Brisk begins visiting Mercy. Mr. Brisk is well-to-do and pretends to be religious, but he cares more about the world than spiritual matters. For her part, Mercy spends most of her time making clothes for the poor. At first, this makes Mr. Brisk think Mercy would make a good housewife. But Mercy finds out that Mr. Brisk isn’t religious, and she loses interest in him.

The next time Mr. Brisk comes to visit and discovers that Mercy spends all her time making clothes for the poor, he is disappointed and decides that she wouldn’t make a good wife after all. In fact, he even tells others that though Mercy is pretty, she is a troubled person. Mercy is unbothered by this. She tells Prudence that she might have been married before now, but that men don’t like her preoccupation with the poor. Since it’s her nature to care for the poor, she is content to die unmarried.

PART 2: MATTHEW’S ILLNESS

About this time, while they are still at the Porter’s House, Christiana’s eldest son, Matthew, becomes sick with a terrible stomachache. An old doctor named Mr. Skill diagnoses Matthew with the “Gripes,” declaring that Matthew will die unless his stomach is purged. Samuel reminds Christiana that Matthew had eaten some forbidden fruits earlier. Christiana is frightened, but Mr. Skill reassures her and makes Matthew a potion “Ex Carne & Sanguine Christi.” He works the potion into pills and prescribes them to be taken along with a pint of repentant tears.

Catechisms are question-and-answer documents that train students to memorize basic doctrines. James’s success in answering these questions reflects well on Christiana, reflecting the important role of mothers as religious teachers in Bunyan’s day.



Each of Christiana’s four sons is catechized, and each successfully demonstrates his sound spiritual upbringing. Prudence also emphasizes that memorizing catechism questions is just a beginning; the boys should begin to take responsibility for their own spiritual studies.



Mercy’s name reflects what’s most important to her: caring for others. This value is a deterrent to Mercy’s potential suitor, who selfishly hopes that Mercy would spend her time caring for him. The portrayal of Mercy suggests that, in Bunyan’s view, women should be concerned about spiritual duties and not just marriage opportunities.



Even when Mr. Brisk spreads unkind rumors about Mercy, she takes the rejection in stride. She is content in her calling to care for the poor, and marriage is a secondary consideration. Again, this suggests that according to Bunyan, women should make their duties to God their primary focus in life—not marriage.



The “gripes” is an archaic term referring to intestinal pain. The Latin phrase describing Mr. Skill’s potion translates as “from the body and blood of Christ.” It’s possible that Bunyan intends this special potion to symbolize the elements of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist (which symbolize Christ’s body and blood), though as a Protestant, he would have viewed the sacrament less literally than his Catholic counterparts.



Matthew resists at first, but Christiana tastes one of the pills and assures Matthew that it's as sweet as honey. After he takes the pills, his stomach is purged, and he is soon on his feet again. Mr. Skill tells Christiana that these pills are good for all pilgrims' diseases, and he makes up a dozen boxes of them, reminding her that they must only be taken as directed.

The purgative effect of the pills (taken with tears of repentance) symbolizes the power of Christ's salvation in the soul of a person who has consumed "forbidden fruit" (i.e., someone who's succumbed to Satan's temptations).



Some time after, Matthew asks Prudence why medicine is usually bitter. She explains that medicine's bitterness shows that the Word of God is unwelcome to a worldly heart. When the Word works in such a heart, the heart and mind are cleansed much as the body is purged by medicine. Prudence also teaches Matthew that the sun, clouds, rainbow, and other elements of the natural world reflect the power of God's word and his grace in various ways.

Prudence likens bitter medicine to the Word of God, or the Bible. Biblical teachings might taste "bitter" when first swallowed, but as they are allowed to work, they cleanse and purify the sinner's mind and heart.



After they've been at the Porter's House for a month, Joseph asks Christiana to send to the Interpreter's House to ask that Great-heart be sent back to them, to serve as their guide for the rest of the way. So Christiana sends a petition to the Interpreter, who agrees to do so. Meanwhile, the family at the Porter's House decides to send the pilgrims off with the sight of some special objects.

After a long stay focused on spiritual learning and healing, it's time for the pilgrims to get underway again. Having learned from her past mistakes, Christiana takes the initiative to seek God's guidance this time, asking for Great-heart's accompaniment.



First, they show the group one of the apples that Eve ate and gave to Adam, resulting in their expulsion from Paradise. They also watch angels ascending Jacob's ladder. The pilgrims are also shown the mountain on which Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac. Soon after, Mr. Great-heart arrives to conduct the group on their journey, and they depart with the Porter's blessing.

Here, the pilgrims are shown items from biblical stories. These encourage the pilgrims by reminding them of their own connection to the Bible's larger story—that is, as followers of Christ, they are continuing the story in a way.



When they've gone only a few steps, Piety remembers she forgot to give the women something, and she runs to get it. While they wait, Christiana hears the birds of that country singing psalm-verses. Then Piety returns with a drawing of all the things the guests have seen at the Porter's House, so that they can be reminded and comforted.

The drawing suggests that pilgrims will always need special reminders of God's grace and power to strengthen and encourage them on their journey.



PART 2: THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

After leaving the Porter's House, the group descends the steep hill into the Valley of Humiliation, where Christian had fought Apollyon. The women enter the Valley with ease, so they don't fear combat themselves—Great-heart explains that Christian's troubles came as a result of his slippery descent.

The Valley of Humiliation isn't haunted; the troubles pilgrims encounter there result from their own lack of humility. This is why Christian was forced to fight the demon. The women's ease suggests that they are humble enough.



The Valley of Humiliation is a beautiful and fruitful place. Christ once had his country estate here. It is a peaceful, solitary place well suited to contemplation.

The narrator suggests that Christ—who is noted in the Gospels to have sought solitude—lived in the Valley of Humiliation during his earthly life.



Great-heart points out a spot called Forgetful Green where Christian's battle with Apollyon took place. However, Mercy observes that passing through this Valley makes her feel happier and healthier than ever. Great-heart says that he has led many pilgrims through this place who have said the same. He quotes from Scripture, saying that God looks "to him that is Poor, and of a Contrite Spirit." They look at the disturbed stones, bloodstains, and stone monument marking the spot where Christian fought Apollyon.

Unlike Christian, who faced special challenges in this Valley, Mercy feels naturally suited to its humble atmosphere. Great-heart's Bible verse (Isaiah 66:2) suggest that God is with the humble in a special way, which is why they find this place especially inviting.



PART 2: THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Next, they enter the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where they hear groanings and feel the earth shake. They see a fiend in the distance, but they draw near to Great-heart, and no sooner does the fiend draw near than it disappears. They remember the words, "Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you." When a lion roars after them, it, too, disappears as soon as Great-heart prepares to fight it.

In the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the women stay close to Great-heart's side, which symbolizes drawing near to God's presence in the midst of trouble. God's presence is sufficient to repel many threats at first sight.



A short time later, they come to a huge pit, and a great darkness settles over them. They hear the noises and see the fires of Hell. Christiana pities Christian having had to face this Valley alone in the dark, realizing that nobody understands this journey until they pass through it for themselves. They pray for deliverance, and God grants light to help them through the rest of the Valley.

Even proximity to the sufferings of Hell is daunting to pilgrims. In company, the women find it easier to bear than Christian did in solitude, emphasizing the importance of a strong Christian community.



After carefully picking their way through some snares, they see a man named Heedless cast into the ditch, his flesh torn. Great-heart says that many pilgrims are killed in this valley because they foolishly venture through it without a guide. If Christian had not been so strong and received help from God, he wouldn't have made it, either.

Most people cannot make it through the Valley without the companionship and help of someone stronger than themselves. Though alone, Christian received supernatural aid.



Then the giant Maul comes out of his cave and confronts the group, accusing Great-heart of kidnapping the women and children from his own kingdom. Great-heart and Maul end up fighting with sword and club, and after more than an hour and much prayer, Great-heart succeeds in beheading the giant with his sword. Rejoicing, they mount Maul's head on a pillar for passersby to see.

Here, Great-heart fights off another giant, this one accusing him of taking the pilgrims away from Satan's kingdom.



They sit and rest and discuss the fight. Great-heart has a small wound, but he says the scar will be a reminder of his love for God. He says that when Maul fought with him, it was his duty to trust in God's strength instead of his own ability, and he also remembered that Christ suffered cruel blows himself, triumphing in the end.

Those who face obstacles on their pilgrimage treasure their scars as markers of loyalty to God. God is the one who ultimately gives pilgrims victory, and pilgrims believe that they suffer in company with Christ.



PART 2: HONEST AND FEARING

The group continues on their way, and they soon encounter an old pilgrim dozing under a tree. Great-heart wakes up the gentleman, who is startled, thinking they might be robbers. He introduces himself as coming from the town of Stupidity, and Great-heart recognizes him as Honest, whom he's heard of before. The people of Stupidity are frozen and senseless unless the Sun of Righteousness shines on them.

The "Sun of Righteousness" is a biblical reference for Christ, who is believed to enlighten those who would not otherwise seek him. This reflects Bunyan's Puritan belief that conversion comes about because of God's initiative toward the undeserving, not human choice.



When Honest meets Christiana, he is overjoyed; he has heard of Christian's honored reputation. After greeting the boys and Mercy, he walks onward with the group, talking about a former companion named Fearing whom Great-heart also guided. Great-heart says that Fearing was frightened of everything he saw or even just heard about—he spent weeks trapped in the Slough of Despond, for example, and hesitated at the **Wicket-gate**.

Honest's companion Fearing represents the anxious pilgrim. Fearing was intimidated by both real and imagined obstacles, and these make his pilgrimage unnecessarily difficult. Instead of passing quickly through the Slough, for example, his anxieties keep him mired in the bog.



Great-heart continues narrating Fearing's pilgrimage. He explains that Fearing wasn't intimidated so much by things like the Hill Difficulty or the lions, but of being accepted in Heaven at his journey's end. He thrived in the Valley of Humiliation but suffered in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, though the demons were quiet, as if God was holding them in check. When they reached the River of Death, the water was lower than Great-heart had ever seen it, and Fearing got over with no trouble.

Many pilgrims struggle to trust in God's salvation. Yet Bunyan suggests that God is especially tender toward these pilgrims, mercifully holding back certain fear-inducing obstacles, like demons and deep waters, to make their already difficult journey a little bit easier.



Great-heart concludes that he never had any doubt that Fearing would make it to the Celestial City. But Fearing made the journey unnecessarily difficult for himself and thus made himself a burden to others, too. Most people's spiritual journey begins in grief, but unlike most, Fearing was seldom able to rise above it. He wasn't weak in spirit, but in confidence about his standing with God.

Just because a pilgrim is fearful and doubtful doesn't mean that he or she won't reach the Celestial City, or Heaven. But Bunyan suggests that, ideally, a pilgrim should not be weighed down by guilt to such a degree. A pilgrim should trust in God, looking away from his or her doubts, and enjoying a smoother journey as a result.



Next, Honest talks about a man named Mr. Self-will, whom he suspected of being a counterfeit pilgrim. Mr. Self-will did exactly what he wanted to do and couldn't be persuaded by others' argument or example. He believed that a pilgrim was allowed to practice vices as well as virtues. He justified this with biblical examples of holy people who had multiple wives, lied, stole, and deceived. Great-heart says that someone who held to such beliefs was not only deluded, but probably did not have genuine faith, either.

Honest says that because he is an old pilgrim, he has seen many who held strange opinions. He has encountered people who believe that repentance should be delayed to the end of life, people who have started out as unpromising pilgrims yet proved to be stalwart, and people who have completed most of their pilgrimage, only to deny their faith at the end.

PART 2: AT GAIUS'S INN

As the group continues on their way, they're warned of robbers ahead, though they see no sign of trouble. By this time, Christiana and her children have grown tired, so they stop at an inn run by a disciple named Gaius. After the pilgrims are given rooms, they sit down to supper, and Gaius is delighted to meet Christian's family. He has been acquainted with the Christian family for a long time—their ancestry can be traced back to Antioch, he says. He names some of them, including the martyrs Stephen, Paul, Peter, Ignatius, and Polycarp.

Gaius thinks that Christiana's sons appear likely to carry on in their father's footsteps, so he advises Christiana to search for good wives for the boys, so that Christian's offspring will spread throughout the world. In fact, he suggests that Matthew and Mercy get married, so they do.

Gaius talks further about women. He says that although women brought death and the curse into the world, they also brought life and health. He claims that the reason that women in the Old Testament desired children so much was that they all hoped they might become the mother of the Savior. When the Savior did come, women were the first to rejoice in him, and they ministered to him much more faithfully than men did. They were even the first to spread the news of Christ's resurrection. All these things demonstrate, Gaius concludes, that women are favored by God and share with men in God's grace.

Honest's other companion, Mr. Self-will, proves to have been a nonbeliever in disguise. This is demonstrated by the fact that Self-will used to Bible to justify his own practices, instead of conforming his practices to the Bible, as Bunyan believes he should.



Because of his long experience, Honest knows that every pilgrim isn't what they seem, and that a single encounter with a pilgrim doesn't tell the full story about his or her ultimate fate.



In the Bible, Antioch is mentioned as the place where Jesus's followers were first called Christians; Bunyan uses "Christian" as a tongue-in-cheek surname for the pilgrims' family. All of the men named are among the earliest recorded martyrs: Stephen, Paul, and Peter are New Testament figures, and Ignatius and Polycarp were martyred in the 2nd century C.E.



The passage of time is ambiguous in the story. One way or another, Matthew is old enough to marry now. Gaius sees marriage as an important way of ensuring the continuation of the Christian faith in the world.



In the Book of Genesis, Eve is tempted to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, passing along its forbidden fruit to her husband and thus helping bring about the fall of humanity. Here, though, Gaius heaps praise on women's role in seeking and serving Jesus Christ. This reflects Bunyan's belief that women are equal to men as pilgrims, even if he doesn't see their strengths as precisely identical to men's.



As they sit down to supper, Matthew observes that just seeing the prepared table increases his appetite. Gaius says it should be this way with all Christian teaching—all “Preaching [...] and Ordinances here” are just setting the table for the feast that Christians will one day enjoy with God.

Preaching and “ordinances,” or sacraments (like baptism and the Eucharist), are earthly things that anticipate heavenly realities, much as a set table whets the appetite for a feast.



When supper is served, they have a shoulder (with which David lifted up his heart to God) and a breast (which David once leaned on his harp). They also drink wine (“Juice of the true Vine”) and eat apples (Gaius explains that sin, not apples, was at fault when humanity fell) and nuts. Gaius likens the nuts to “hard texts” that must be cracked open. The company is so pleasant that the pilgrims decide to stay here for a month, allowing time for Matthew and Mercy to get married.

The contents of the feast are allegorical, reflecting various biblical imagery (the “true Vine,” for instance, is a reference to John 15:1). The nuts symbolize the challenge of interpreting the Bible; not all parts of the Bible are equally simple to understand.



That first night, the older members of the company stay up talking. At one point, Gaius and Honest discuss the relationship between grace and the conquering of sin. Gaius explains that until the soul is overcome by grace, it has no desire to fight sin. He then tells an illustrative story in which an old, naturally decayed man and a young, sin-corrupted man go on pilgrimage. Which one displayed more grace? Honest says the young man would, because grace shines brighter when it overcomes greater oppositions, and older pilgrims sometimes become presumptuous. They also discuss a passage from the Book of Isaiah, about Christ’s unlikely origins and lack of outward beauty.

Gaius and Honest discuss a primary element of the Christian life—how sin is overcome. It’s not something that can happen through willpower alone, Bunyan believes. Only grace can spur a person to resist and overcome their sin, and the worse a person’s sins, the more grace is needed, and the more God is honored as a result.



PART 2: FEEBLE-MIND AND A VISIT TO VANITY

The next morning, they arm themselves and venture out into the fields in search of a troublesome giant named Slay-good. Slay-good is a flesh-eating giant, and they find him preparing to feast on a man named Feeble-mind. Great-heart says they have come to avenge the blood of pilgrims. After a long fight, he finally beheads Slay-good and rescues Feeble-mind. Feeble-mind explains that he has always suffered from ill health, so he decided to embark on pilgrimage, even if he had to crawl the whole way. Throughout his journey, Feeble-mind has received special kindnesses, even being carried by other pilgrims. He thanks Great-heart for saving him, trusting that though he will face further obstacles, he will make it beyond the River at last. Feeble-mind says that Mr. Fearing was his uncle, and that the two of them are very similar. Gaius welcomes him to stay at the Inn.

Like Fearing, Feeble-mind has received special mercy from God along the way, showing that God takes special care for weaker pilgrims. The dragon-slaying pilgrims are the latest instance of God’s favor to him.



Just then, they receive word that a pilgrim named Mr. Not-right, who had been Feeble-mind's companion, has been found dead, having been struck by a thunderbolt. Feeble-mind marvels that Not-right, who was nimbler and escaped Slay-good's clutches, ended up suffering the harsher fate.

Around this time, Matthew and Mercy get married. Gaius's daughter, Phebe, marries James. Before the group travels onward, Gaius gives them a great feast, and he refuses the pilgrims' payment. As they set out, Feeble-mind hesitates. Because he is weak, he fears he will be a burden to the rest; he cannot bear the same things the others can bear, like laughter, flashy clothes, and speculative discussions.

Mr. Great-heart comforts Feeble-mind, reminding him that it's his job to comfort and support the weak. The group will be gentle and charitable towards him. While they're discussing all this, a man named Mr. Ready-to-halt, with crutches in hand, approaches. Feeble-mind is delighted to see a suitable companion. So they all set off together.

As they travel, Honest asks Great-heart to tell them some stories of past pilgrims. Great-heart mentions some of the adventures of Christian and Faithful, pointing out the spot where they met Evangelist, who prophesied the troubles to come in Vanity Fair. They discuss Faithful's martyrdom and Hopeful's resulting conversion. Soon, the group draws within sight of the town of Vanity themselves. They consult and decide to lodge in the home of a "Cyprusian" disciple named Mr. Mnason.

Mr. Mnason warmly welcomes the pilgrims into his home for the night. He sends his daughter Grace to gather some of his friends, including Mr. Contrite, Mr. Holy-man, Mr. Love-saint, Mr. Dare-not-lye, and Mr. Penitent. The friends are delighted to learn that Christiana is Christian's widow. Contrite explains that although the Fair makes life difficult, the people of Vanity have become milder towards the pilgrims ever since Faithful's death, and religion is not scorned as before.

After Great-heart has given an account of their pilgrimage thus far, Mr. Mnason's friends discuss the various traits pilgrims must have in order to progress. The group rests in Mnason's house for a long time. During their stay, Mnason's daughter Grace marries Samuel, and his daughter Martha marries Joseph. Over time, they get to know the people of Vanity, doing good to them. The married couples also bear children, descendants of Christian.

The pilgrims' fates vary for reasons that are not always obvious to human beings. According to human reasoning, it would make more sense for Not-right to survive, yet the book emphasizes that God's ways aren't predictable.



Again, it seems that many years have passed since the beginning of the book. Christiana's elder sons find godly wives. Meanwhile, Feeble-mind, aware of his weaknesses (he is bothered by things which Christians are technically at liberty to enjoy), worries that he'll be a burden.



More mature, seasoned pilgrims bear with the less mature, showing that pilgrims must be patient with one another's weaknesses. Still, Feeble-mind is comforted to have a companion whose pace and struggles will be similar.



Christian's journey serves as a treasury of inspiration for the current group of pilgrims as they retrace his steps. Bunyan gestures to the international character of the Church by having a "Cyprusian," or Cypriot, disciple housing the pilgrims.



Faithful's martyrdom had far-reaching effects that weren't necessarily predictable in his own day. In the aftermath, even Vanity has softened toward pilgrims. This account of Vanity's history suggests that humans' limited perspective can't grasp God's bigger intentions.



The rest of Christiana's sons intermarry with the Christians of Vanity, and it's suggested that they linger there for quite some time. Again, this unlikely development suggests that divine purposes unfold in surprising ways.



During their stay in Vanity, a dragon-like monster with seven heads and 10 horns emerges from the woods and begins killing townspeople, even carrying off children. Many people are also corrupted by the monster's demands. Together with Mr. Mnason's friends, Mr. Great-heart determines to confront this beast, so they gather their weapons and attack him. The beast continues to emerge in its usual seasons, but the brave men continue to fight him when they get the opportunity, and eventually the wounded monster retreats. The people of Vanity are so grateful that their opinion of the pilgrims is much improved.

The dragon is meant to evoke one of the beasts of the Book of Revelation. The beasts' symbolism is disputed but probably represents persecutors of Christians. This particular dragon takes a long time to slay, suggesting that not all the pilgrims' enemies can be eliminated in a single fight. Yet their efforts endear them to the townspeople.



PART 2: DOUBTING CASTLE AND THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

At last, the group of pilgrims departs from Vanity. They pause in remembrance at the spot where Faithful was martyred. They pass the Hill Lucre, Demas's silver-mine, and the pillar of salt. They come to a meadow beside the Delectable Mountains, and Christiana has her daughters-in-law commit their little ones to the care of the shepherd who dwells here, who gently tends young lambs. The women commit their children accordingly and continue on their way.

After an indeterminate amount of time, the pilgrims finally progress onward, retracing more of Christian's journey. The shepherd is an allusion to Isaiah 40, "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom"—a reference to God's tender care of the weak and vulnerable.



When the group arrives at By-path Meadow, where Christian and Hopeful were led astray to Doubting Castle, they argue about how best to proceed. They finally determine that Mr. Great-heart, Honest, and Christiana's four sons will attempt to demolish Doubting Castle altogether. When the group knocks at the gate, Despair and Diffidence arrogantly go forward to fight them. Diffidence is killed by Honest's blow, and Great-heart, after much struggle, beheads Despair at last. Then they spend a week knocking down Doubting Castle.

This passage again emphasizes the importance of a strong Christian community, suggesting that pilgrims are stronger in groups than as individuals. Here, they succeed in eliminating a major threat to all pilgrims, perhaps symbolizing the Church's reforming efforts more broadly.



Within Doubting Castle, they discover two prisoners named Mr. Dispondency and his daughter Much-Afraid, whom they take into their protection. The rest of the group breaks into celebratory music and dancing when they learn of the Giant Despair's demise. They place the Giant's head on a pillar for a monument and warning to others. The group then travels into the Delectable Mountains, where they are welcomed by the Shepherds. Mr. Great-heart says that the Shepherds' warm welcome of the weak and infirm demonstrates that they are true shepherds and not false.

The demolition of Doubting Castle is a major triumph for all pilgrims, especially those who are weaker and more susceptible to the dangers that the giants pose. This theme is carried into the Delectable Mountains, where Great-heart sees kindness to the weak as a major characteristic of good shepherds (or clergy).



The next morning, the Shepherds show the guests the same places they'd shown Christian. They also tour some different places, including Mount Innocent, from which they see a man named Godly-man on whom dirt is constantly thrown, yet whose garment always becomes clean again. From Mount Charity, they see a man who makes clothes for the poor and whose supply of cloth is constantly renewed.

Godly-man's garment displays his life's innocence no matter how others try to besmirch his reputation. The charitable man's efforts are continually blessed by God, suggesting that God's grace is the true fountain of generosity.



Mercy asks permission to peek into the hillside entrance to Hell; she comes back trembling, praising God for her deliverance. Later that day, Mercy (who is pregnant) feels a longing for a certain looking-glass that hangs in the Shepherds' dining-room. She fears that if she cannot have the looking-glass, she will miscarry. It's a special glass that, from a certain angle, will show the face of Jesus. Christiana tells the Shepherds Mercy's request, and they willingly give her the looking-glass. They also give each of the women additional gifts and jewelry.

Mercy's request is an unusual take on a pregnancy-related craving. Bunyan suggests that, after glimpsing Hell, Mercy needs to look to Christ for comfort and reassurance in order to continue bearing fruit for God.



PART 2: VALIANT-FOR-TRUTH

Before the group moves on, the Shepherds send them off with cautions. The group passes the place where Christian was led astray, and a little beyond it, they meet a bloody-faced pilgrim named Valiant-for-Truth. He explains that he was beset by three thieves who asked him to become one of their group, or else turn back, or be killed. Valiant fought them for hours and survived; the thieves fled moments before. Mr. Great-heart praises Valiant-for-Truth and admires his sword. After tending his wounds, they take him along.

Valiant-for-Truth symbolizes resistance of the major temptations faced by every Christian—namely, the temptation to give in to sin or to give up.



Mr. Valiant explains that he comes from Dark-land, having learned of Christian's journey from a man named Mr. Tell-true and eagerly gone on pilgrimage himself. His parents had tried to stop him, telling him about the many obstacles he will face, and that many have suffered and failed in the attempt. None of these efforts succeeded, however, because Valiant believed what he had heard from Mr. Tell-true.

Christian's story has spread throughout the world, inspiring many to follow him on pilgrimage. In contrast to meeker pilgrims like Fearing, Mr. Valiant doesn't shrink before the likelihood of obstacles.



When the group comes to the Enchanted Ground, they make their way carefully with swords drawn. The darkness and mist are so deep that they cannot walk by sight, but are forced to keep track of one another by words instead. At last, muddy, tired, and stuck with briars, they pass the arbor called Slothful's Friend, but heeding Great-heart's warning, they avoid stopping there. With the aid of a map, he also helps them avoid a muddy pit of great depth.

Walking by "words" instead of sight is the normal condition of pilgrims, who cannot see Heaven and therefore must rely on the Bible. Essentially, Christians must have their swords (their knowledge of Scripture) at the ready at such times. This passage may be a reference to 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."



Passing another arbor, the group sees two sleeping pilgrims named Heedless and Too-bold, who talk nonsensically in their sleep but cannot be roused. Sadly and fearfully, the pilgrims continue on their way by the aid of a lantern.

Heedless and Too-bold fell asleep just as Hopeful nearly did in the first part of the book. The pilgrims know that if they aren't vigilant, the same thing could happen to them.



A little later, they encounter a pilgrim named Stand-fast, who is praying desperately. Stand-fast explains that he was tempted by a well-dressed elderly woman named Madam Bubble, the Mistress of the World, who repeatedly offered him money, a bed, and the promise of happiness. When Stand-fast prayed for deliverance, the group of pilgrims arrived. Great-heart explains that Madam Bubble is a witch, and that she is responsible for enchanting this ground. She gossips, tempts others, and loves riches. She has ensnared many would-be pilgrims and helped send many to Hell. The pilgrims tremble and rejoice at Stand-fast's deliverance from the witch.

Madam Bubble represents many of the temptations that the world offers—all of which are best resisted by steadfast prayer. Even strong pilgrims have succumbed to her clutches, making the point that no pilgrim is too strong to neglect prayer and dependence on God.



PART 2: THE PILGRIMS CROSS THE RIVER

Finally, the pilgrims arrive in Beulah, where bells and trumpets sound so beautifully that the pilgrims are unable to sleep, yet they are still refreshed. The water of the place is a little bitter, yet sweet when swallowed. The children of Beulah gather sweet-smelling spices with which the pilgrims anoint their bodies in preparation for their journey over the River.

The bitterness of Beulah's water symbolizes the pain of bodily death, which is nevertheless a gateway to eternal delight. Indeed, everything about Beulah is a preparation for death—yet for a pilgrim, the anticipation of death can be sweet.



After a while, an urgent message is brought for Christiana from the Celestial City. The letter is from Christian. He tells Christiana that her Master is calling for her, and that she will be in his presence within 10 days. She tells Mr. Great-heart, and he welcomes the news and gives her advice about crossing the River. She gives her children her blessing and leaves what little she has to the poor. Christiana asks Mr. Valiant-for-Truth to watch over her children after she is gone. She also says farewell to Honest, Ready-to-Halt, Dispondency, Much-afraid, and Feeble-mind, leaving each of them with encouraging words.

Here, Christiana receives a heavenly letter summoning her to Heaven. At this point in her long journey, it is welcome news. As the leader of her group of pilgrims, she takes leave of each of those she has journeyed with.



On Christiana's last day of life, the road is filled with people accompanying her to the riverbanks. Beyond the River, horses and chariots are waiting to bear her to the Gate of the Celestial City. She waves goodbye to her loved ones and enters the River, quickly passing out of their sight. When she enters the Gate, she is received with joyful ceremonies.

Christiana is accompanied to the River of Death with honor, signifying her prominence and faithfulness as a pilgrim; even Christian did not receive such fanfare.



Sometime later, Mr. Ready-to-halt gets a message from the Celestial City, telling him to prepare to feast with Christ in his Kingdom the day after Easter. When he goes to the bank of the River, he leaves his crutches behind. Mr. Feeble-mind, Dispondency, and Much-afraid follow after, with Much-afraid singing a heavenly song as she goes. Mr. Honest finds the River overflowing in some places, but his friend Good-conscience meets him there and helps him across. Mr. Valiant-for-Truth leaves behind his sword and courage for other pilgrims to claim, taking his scars with him as a witness.

One by one, each pilgrim is summoned to Heaven in his or her own way. Each pilgrim faces their own challenges and blessings along the way. This is a reminder that each pilgrim's journey is different, including the last obstacle of death, but that God supplies the precise helps each person most needs.



When Mr. Stand-fast is summoned from the Celestial City, he asks Mr. Great-heart to go to his family and tell them all that has happened to him. When he steps into the River, it is calm, and he stands in the water talking to his friends. He says that although the River has often frightened him, he can now think only of the joys that awaits him on the other side.

The pilgrims are welcomed into the Celestial City with glorious music. When the narrator leaves that place, it's said that Christian's and Christiana's sons, with their wives and children, are still alive, adding to the growth of the Church.

Mr. Stand-fast's speech movingly comforts those who remain on the earthly side of the River, assuring them that although death is daunting to most, pilgrims have every reason for hope and confidence.



The story ends not with death or even with life in Heaven, but with the thriving of the earthly Church—Bunyan's greatest concern in his own life. Christian's and Christiana's offspring symbolize all those who follow in the pilgrims' footsteps by believing the gospel and obeying God's call.





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