

## Pilgrim's Progress

### The Wicket Gate

By [John Bunyan](#)

*The Pilgrim's Progress from this world — to that which is to come, in the similitude of a dream*

*Retold for Children and Adapted to School Reading, by James Baldwin, 1913*

Then I saw in my dream that the man Graceless came, by and by, to the wicket gate. Now, over the gate there was written, "*Knock — and it shall be opened unto you.*" So he knocked, more than once or twice. And as he knocked he kept saying to himself, "May I now enter? Will he that is within open to sorry me?"

By and by, there came to the gate a man with a grave but kindly face, whose name was *GOOD-WILL*. He looked out, and when he saw a stranger standing there, he asked, "Who are you? And what do you wish?"

"I am a man with a burden," answered Graceless. "I have come from the City of Destruction, and am going on towards the mountains and the shining light, where I hope to be delivered. I have been told that the way lies through this gate; therefore, I ask if you are willing to let me in."

"I am willing with all my heart," said Good-will; and with that he opened the gate.

Graceless stepped in — but not fast enough for Goodwill, who took him by the arm and pulled him quickly.

"Why did you do that?" asked the man.

Then Good-will told him that there was a castle full of wicked giants on the hillside near by, and that often when these giants saw a man about to enter the wicket gate — they would shoot at him with their arrows. In this way many persons had been killed before they could enter in.

"How glad I am that I am here!" said Graceless; "and yet I tremble from the dangers I have passed through!"

"Who sent you here?" asked Good-will.

"A good man, called Evangelist," was the answer. "He told me to knock, and he

said that you would show me what to do to be delivered from this heavy burden."

"Why did you come alone?" asked Good-will.

"Because none of my neighbors would come. They did not see their danger as I saw mine."

"Did anyone know of your coming?"

"Oh, yes. My wife and children saw me start, and they called after me to come back. Some of my friends saw me and followed me a little way."

"And did you come straight hither?"

"Alas, no! For I listened to the words of Mr. Worldly Wiseman and was persuaded to turn aside into a dangerous way."

"Oh, did he meet you? And I suppose he advised you to seek ease from Mr. Legality — did he not?"

"He did," answered Graceless, "and I foolishly listened to his advice."

"Well, Mr. Wiseman is a cheat, and so is Mr. Legality," said Good-will. "What did Mr. Legality say?"

"I went by the broad road to find him," said Graceless; "but the *mountain* which stands by his house was about to fall upon me, and I was forced to stop."

"That mountain has been the death of many, and it was lucky that you escaped," said Good-will.

"Indeed, I would have perished had not Evangelist met me there. He turned my feet again into the narrow way, and my face toward the shining light. And now I am come, unworthy as I am, into this place. How kind you were to open the gate for me!"

"We refuse none who come and knock. Therefore, come with me, and I will teach you that which you need most to know. But first I will give you a *new name*. You shall no longer be called *Graceless* — but CHRISTIAN, for you are now a *pilgrim* on the road to the Celestial Land."

"Oh, tell me about that road," said Christian.

"Look before you," answered Good-will. "See that *narrow highway*. It was cast up and built by the great and good men of old. It is the way by which you *must* go."

"I see it," answered Christian; "but are there no windings in it by which one might lose his way?"

"Not in the way itself," answered Good-will; "but there are many crooks and turnings which join on to it at different places. You may always know the *right* way — for it is never any other than *straight* and *narrow*."

"This burden on my back is very grievous," said Christian. "Can you not in some way help me to get rid of it?"

"Be content to bear your burden yet a little while," answered Good-will. "You will come, by and by, to the place of *deliverance*; and there it will fall from your back of itself."

"Very well, then," said Christian, "I will go forward on my journey."

"Go," said Good-will, "and you will soon see a beautiful house by the roadside. It is the house of the *Interpreter*. Knock at the door, and he will open and bid you enter. Tell him your name and whither you are going, and he will show you many excellent things."

So Christian bade his friend farewell, and joyfully renewed his journey.

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