

Pilgrim's Progress

The House of the Interpreter

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 Christian went on until he came to the house of the INTERPRETER.

There he knocked again and again; and at last one came to the door, and asked who was there.

Christian answered that he was a traveler who was on his way to the Celestial City, and that he wished to see the master of the house.

Then the Interpreter himself came to the door and said, "Come in! I will show you some things that will be helpful to you on your journey."

So Christian went in and stood waiting. Then the Interpreter took a lighted candle and bade him follow into the next room. And there the good man showed the pilgrim wonderful portraits and moving pictures, each one of which taught its lesson of truth.

In one of these pictures, two children were shown whose names were passion and Patience. PASSION was always restless and dissatisfied; but PATIENCE was very quiet and contented.

As Christian looked at the picture he saw a man bring a bag of gold and pour out the treasure at Passion's feet. The child was very glad and seized the gold with his hands. He laughed at Patience, and rejoiced in his treasure. But soon it melted away, and he had nothing left but rags!

Christian asked the Interpreter the meaning of this picture.

"I will tell you," he answered. "As the treasure of the child Passion vanished and left him nothing but rags — so shall it be with the men of this world, who desire to have all their good things now."

"Yes," said Christian, "I see that Patience was wiser than Passion — for he was contented to wait."

"You are right," answered the Interpreter; "for he waits for the best things — and in due time will be rewarded."

Thus Christian was led from room to room, and in each he was shown some picture or other wonderful object; and the Interpreter explained the meaning of everything that he saw. At last, he was taken into a very dark room, where he saw a man sitting in a cage.

The man seemed very sad. He sat with his eyes looking down to the ground. His hands were folded, and he sighed as though his heart would break.

"My friend," said Christian, "who are you?"

"I am not what I once was," answered the man.

"Well, then, what were you once?" asked Christian.

The man answered, "I was once a happy man, with bright prospects in life. I had even a joyful hope of going to the Celestial City."

"And what are you now?" asked Christian.

"I am a man without hope," was the answer. "I am shut up in the iron cage of despair. For when I might have done well — I neglected my duty and wasted my opportunities."

Then said the Interpreter to Christian, "Let this man's misery be a warning to you, my friend."

"Yes, indeed!" said Christian. "May God help me to watch and be sober. But, sir, is it not time that I should be going?"

"Tarry till I show you one thing more," said the Interpreter.

So he took Christian by the hand and led him into a chamber where there was a man rising quickly out of bed. The man's face was white with fear — and he trembled and shook.

"What is the matter?" asked Christian. "Why are you afraid?"

"Oh, I have had such a terrible dream," answered the man. "I thought that the heavens were black with storm clouds, and that the thunder and lightning were

most fearful. Then, as the clouds parted, I saw One sitting among them, with the thousands of heaven around him; and all were clothed in garments of fire.

"A trumpet sounded, and a voice cried, 'Arise all ye, and come to judgment!'

"With that, the rocks were rent, and the earth was opened, and all who had ever lived came forth. Some of these were very glad, and looked upward; and some sought to hide themselves under the mountains.

"Then He that sat among the clouds opened a book, and bade all to draw near and be judged. Thereupon, I sought to hide myself — but could not; for the eyes of the Judge were upon me, and my conscience accused me on every side."

"But what was it that made you so afraid of this sight?" asked Christian.

"Why," answered the man, "I thought that the day of judgment was come, and that I was not ready for it! My conscience afflicted me, and I thought that the Judge had always his eye upon me!"

Then the Interpreter led Christian away. "Have you considered all these things?" he asked.

"Yes, and they put me in fear and hope," answered Christian.

So he rested for a short time in this wonderful house of the Interpreter. But he would not tarry long, for he was impatient to go on his way.

"I am thankful to you, good Interpreter," he said; "for you have shown me many things that are both rare and profitable."

"May the Comforter be always with you, to guide you in the way that leads to the City," said the Interpreter.

So Christian, with a lighter heart, renewed his journey.

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