

Pilgrim's Progress

The House Beautiful

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

Now I saw in my dream, that as Christian hastened on his way, the sun went down and the shades of evening began to fall. Christian began to feel alarmed, for the forest by the roadside was the home of wild beasts, and he knew not where to find lodging for the night.

As he was grieving and wondering — he lifted up his eyes, and behold, on the hillside before him, he saw a very stately building. It stood right by the roadside, and its name was the *House Beautiful*.

Christian quickened his steps and hurried forward, for he hoped to find lodging. But while he was yet some distance from the gate, he saw *two lions* crouching by the roadside.

He was greatly frightened, and thought that death was before him. He turned and was about to run back — when he heard a voice calling him. It was the voice of the *porter*, whose name was *WATCHFUL*.

Christian paused and listened.

"Have courage, sir!" cried the porter. "The lions are *chained*, and if you will keep in the middle of the path — they cannot touch you."

Then Christian, trembling with fear — went on as the porter directed him. The lions roared dreadfully — but they did him no harm. Soon he was safe at the gateway, and the porter took him by the hand and spoke words of welcome to him.

"What house is this?" asked Christian. "And may I lodge here tonight?"

"It is the *House Beautiful*," answered the porter. "It was built by the Lord of the hill, to serve as a *resting place for weary pilgrims*. Come in! Come inside of the gate."

Christian went through the gateway, and the porter asked him many questions.

"What is your name?"

"My name is now *Christian* — but at first it was *Graceless*."

"Whence have you come?"

"I have come from the City of Destruction, and I am on my way to the Celestial Land."

Then Watchful, the porter, rang a little bell; and a beautiful maid whose name was *DISCRETION* came out of the house to answer to the call.

"Here is a weary pilgrim who would gladly lodge here tonight," said Watchful. "Will you not learn from him, whether he is in truth worthy?"

Then the maiden asked him whence he was, and whither he was going — and he told her. She asked him how he had got into the right way — and he told her. She asked him what he had seen and met on the road — and he told her.

"What is your name?"

"Once it was *Graceless* — but now it is *Christian*. And I am all the more desirous to lodge here tonight, because I am told that the house was built by the Lord of the hill as a resting place for pilgrims."

Then the maiden *smiled* — but as she smiled, the *tears* stood in her eyes.

"I will call some of the others of our household," she said.

She ran into the house and soon returned with three other fair women more beautiful even than herself.

The names of these sisters were *Prudence*, *Piety*, and *Charity*.

"Come in, blessed of the Lord," they said.

So Christian bowed his head and followed them into the beautiful house. They brought him water, with which to refresh himself; and when he had washed himself and brushed the dust from his clothing, they gave him a pleasant seat by the window. And all sat down to talk until supper was ready.

"How did it happen that you started on this journey?" asked *PIETY*.

"Oh, I had a grievous burden on my back," answered Christian, "and there was a dreadful sound in my ears, and I did not know whither to go."

"But who told you to come this way?"

"As I was trembling and weeping, a man whose name is *Evangelist* showed me the way to the wicket gate. And there my feet were set in the right road."

"Did you see the house of the *Interpreter* by the roadside?"

"Oh, yes! And there I was shown many things that I will remember as long as I live. I could have stayed in that good man's house a whole year — but I knew that I had farther to go."

"And what else did you see on the way?"

"See! Why, as I came to the top of a weary hill I saw a *Cross*, and as I went near to it and fell on my knees — the heavy burden which I had borne so long tumbled from my back and rolled far away out of my sight! And as I was rejoicing, behold three Shining Ones came to me with gifts. One of them gave me these *beautiful garments* which you see; for I had nothing but *rags* before. Another gave me this *sealed roll*, which is my passport to the Celestial City."

Then *PRUDENCE* asked him, "What is it that makes you so desirous to reach the Celestial City?"

"Oh, there are many things," answered Christian. "I hope that when I am there I shall be free from the troubles which vex me here. They say that there is no death there — and that we may live with those whom we love best, and fear no evil. So I gladly would be there and sing with those blessed ones who stand around the throne of the King."

Then *CHARITY* asked him, "Have you a family?"

And Christian answered, "Yes, I have a wife and four small children."

"And why did you not bring them with you?" asked Charity.

Then Christian wept bitterly, and said, "How gladly would I have done so — but they would not listen to me. They wished even to hold me back and prevent me from coming."

While they were yet talking, the supper was made ready, and they sat down at the table. And on the table were all sorts of healthful and nourishing food — red-cheeked apples, and purple grapes, and delicious fruits from the gardens of the sun, and whatsoever would make the body strong and beautiful.

The company sat at the table, and all their talk was about the *Lord* of the hill — of his goodness in building the house and in furnishing it with all things necessary to the happiness of those who visited it.

"He is a great warrior," said *Piety*, "for he fought with the greatest enemy of our country, and slew him."

"He is a lover of the poor," said *Charity*, "for he stripped himself of his own glory that he might relieve them of their sorrows."

Thus they sat and talked till late at night. Then they betook themselves to rest, committing themselves to the care of their Lord.

As for Christian, he was given a bed in a large upper chamber where there was a window that opened toward the sun-rising. The name of that chamber was *Peace*; and there he slept till the break of day.

In the morning he arose early, and as he dressed he sang for joy.

After he had breakfasted with the household, he began to talk of renewing his journey; but *Prudence* said, "Nay, you must tarry a day with us. For we would show you some of the rarities of this place."

So they first led him into the *library* and showed him the records of all that had been done in olden times. There, too, they showed him the history of the *Lord* of the hill, and the names of many good men and women who had served him, and pictures of the mansions which he had given them to live in.

And in many books they read of the worthy deeds of those who served the Lord — 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, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Here also were the histories of other famous things, both ancient and modern; and Christian was so pleased with the reading of them, that the day was spent ere he was aware.

The next day, *Watchful* and the four maidens led him into the *armory* of the house and showed him the arms and the curious relics that were there.

They showed him the *sword* and the *shield*, the *helmet* and the *breastplate*, and the *shoes* which the Lord of the hill had provided for the pilgrims who would enlist under his banner. None of these would wear out — and there were so many that all who live in the world might be clothed in armor.

They showed him some of the strange *weapons* that had been used in former times — such as the sling with which David had slain Goliath, and the jawbone with which Samson had done such mighty deeds.

They showed him, also, many other excellent things — and thus the second day was passed.

Early the next morning Christian made ready to go forward; but the good people of the house persuaded him to tarry until the sun was higher.

"Stay," said *Piety*, "and if the air is clear, we will show you the *Delectable Mountains*."

"And where are they?" asked Christian.

"Oh, they are far, far away," answered *Piety*; "but they are much nearer to the Celestial City than this place is. And sometimes we have most delightful views of them."

So Christian consented and stayed.

Towards noon they led him up to the top of the house, and bade him look southward. He did so, and lo! at a great distance he saw a most *beautiful land*. It was a mountainous country, with delightful valleys and fields. There were green woods and pleasant vineyards. There were fruits of all sorts, and flowers of every hue. There were springs and fountains, bright waterfalls, and quiet brooks.

"What is the name of that beautiful country?" asked Christian.

"It is called *Immanuel's Land*," they answered; "and all pilgrims are as welcome there, as they are at this, our House Beautiful."

Then they led him down again into the armory. And they clothed him from head to foot in stout *armor*. They put a *shield* in his hand, and a sharp *sword* in his belt; and on his head they fitted a *helmet* of rarest workmanship.

He was now ready to go forward on his journey; and the maidens went with him to the gate.

"I saw another pilgrim passing, a little while ago," said *Watchful*.

"Did you know him?" asked Christian.

"He told me that his name is *FAITHFUL*," answered the porter.

"Oh, I know him," gladly answered Christian. "He is one of my old neighbors. How far do you think he has gone?"

"He is at the foot of the hill by this time."

"Well, I will hasten and try to overtake him."

Then Christian bade the porter good-by, and began to go forward. But the maidens, Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence, said, "We will go with you to the foot of the hill."

So they went on together, talking as they walked. The hill was very steep and slippery, and at its foot was the *Valley of Humiliation*. So dangerous was the going down, that Christian would have fallen many times had not Discretion and Prudence been with him to direct his steps. Even as it was, he slipped two or three times.

At length, they were at the bottom of the hill. The maidens gave Christian a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and a cluster of raisins. Then they bade him good-by, and he went on his way.

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