

## Pilgrim's Progress

### The Flatterer

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 the two pilgrims went down the mountain along the King's highway. Near the foot of the mountain they saw a crooked little lane which opened into the highway; and as they were wondering whither it led, they saw a finger board at the side of it on which was written: THIS WAY LIES THE LAND OF CONCEIT.

While they were reading the sign, a very brisk young man came down the lane into the highway.

"Good morning, strangers," said he. "Whither are you going?"

"We are on our way to the Celestial City," answered Christian. "Who are you, and whither are you bound?"

"People call me IGNORANCE," answered the young man, "though I don't know why I should have that name. I have come out of the Land of Conceit — and I, too, am going to the Celestial City."

"Do you think you will get into the city?" asked Christian.

"Well, I don't know," answered Ignorance. "Other good people get in, and I think I can do so."

"Why didn't you come into the highway through the wicket gate?" asked Hopeful.

"The wicket gate is a long way from our country," answered the young man. "And indeed, what is the use of a wicket gate when one can come in by way of a pleasant green lane like this?"

Then the pilgrims walked onward, and Ignorance followed them a long way, calling to them now and then to ask a question.

They went on till they came to a place where another road joined itself to the King's highway. It seemed as straight and as well-built as the highway itself; and they were not sure which was the right road — and which was the wrong.

As they stood, uncertain which way to go, a man of dark skin but wearing a snow-white robe came up with them.

"Well, my worthy friends," said he, "whither are you journeying?"

"We are journeying to the Celestial City," answered Christian. "But these two roads are so nearly alike, that we know not which to take."

"I am going thither," said the man, "and I know the way very well. If you will follow me, I will be your guide."

So they followed him. But he led them by a way which after a while began to turn a little, and a little away from the city. It kept turning, until in time their faces looked away from the Celestial Land; yet they kept on following him.

"You are very wise men," said the stranger, "and there is no one who can walk with surer steps than you."

But after a time they found themselves caught in a net. The net was so tangled about them, that they could not get out. Then the white robe fell off the dark man's back, and they saw where they were!

They lay struggling and helpless for some time. "Now," said Christian, "I see my error. We have been following the FLATTERER. For is it not written that he that flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet?"

"Didn't the shepherds warn us against this fellow?" said Hopeful. "And didn't they give us a pocket-map of the way?"

Thus they lay bewailing and blaming themselves in the net.

After a long time, they looked up and saw a Shining One coming towards them with a whip of cords in his hand. He came up and asked them who they were and how they came to be there.

"We are pilgrims to the Celestial City," answered Christian; "but we were led out of our way by a dark man clothed in white. He told us to follow him, for he knew the way."

"The dark man was Flatterer — in the garb of an angel of light," said the Shining One; and he cut the net to pieces and set the men free.

"Now follow me," said he, "and I will set you in your way again."

So he led them back to the King's highway. Then he asked them sharply, "Did you not stay a little while with the shepherds on the Delectable Mountains?"

They answered, "We did."

"And did not one of the shepherds give you a pocket-map on which was shown every part of the King's highway?"

"He did," answered Christian.

"Did you, when you were uncertain, look at this map and read the directions that are printed upon it?"

"Alas, no!" they both answered.

"Why?"

"We forgot about it."

"Did the shepherds warn you against any person?"

"Yes, against the Flatterer. But this man talked so pleasantly that we did not imagine it was he."

Then the Shining One bade them lie down upon the ground; and he whipped them sorely with his whip of cords. "As many as I love — I rebuke and chasten," he said.

Then he raised them up, and bade them go on their way; and they thanked him for his kindness — and went softly along the right road, rejoicing that their faces were once more set towards the Celestial Land.

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