

Pilgrim's Progress

At 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

Now I saw in my dream, that they went onward over the plain in the way which Christian had gone before them. The way was rough and uneven, and they often grew tired; but Mercy was ever at hand to cheer and comfort them, and oftentimes she took the youngest child in her arms and carried him.

They came, by and by, to the great bog, the *Slough of Despond*, and it was even more miry than it had been when Christian fell into it. But they must needs get across it; and Christiana sank deep in the mud more than once or twice. Mercy also came near sticking in the oozy mire. But the boys, being quick of feet and light of heart, went over without knowing that any bog was there.

So they went on until presently they came to the *wicket gate*. Then as they stood before it they began to wonder how they should get through. They saw the words written above it, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." But which of them should do the knocking?

At last Christiana ventured to knock. She knocked and knocked and knocked, just as her poor husband had done. Then, from within, they heard a *dog* barking. It was a large dog, too, and the women and children were much afraid.

What should they do? They were afraid to knock again. They were afraid to run back, lest they should offend the King. They were afraid to stand still and wait.

After a time, Christiana went up, trembling, and knocked again. Then the keeper of the gate came, and having opened the wicket, he asked, "Who is there?"

Christiana answered him truthfully, "I am the wife of Christian who once did pass this way, and these are his children and mine. We would gladly journey onward, through this gate, to the Celestial City."

Then the keeper took her by the hand and led her in. He also lifted the boys over

the threshold and brought them through the gate.

"Suffer little children to come unto me," he said, and with that, he shut the wicket.

Now all this while, Mercy stood outside, trembling and crying; neither did she venture to make herself known. When Christiana saw that the maiden had been left behind, she began to intercede for her. "I have a dear friend who is waiting outside," she said. "She is on the same errand as myself; but she had not the courage to come in, seeing that no one has invited her."

At that moment a sudden knocking at the gate was heard. It was so loud that it startled those who were within.

"Who is there?" cried the keeper.

And Christiana answered, "It must be my friend."

So he opened the gate and looked out. But Mercy had fainted and had fallen upon the ground; for she was afraid that no gate would be opened to her, and the barking of the dog filled her with alarm.

Then the keeper took her by the hand and lifted her up. And when she had revived a little, he led her gently in and welcomed her to the place. So now all were safe on the safe side of the wicket gate; and while the keeper was going about his duties, they began to rejoice.

"How glad I am that we are here!" said Christiana.

"So may we all well be," said Mercy, "but I have indeed cause to leap for joy!"

"When I heard that savage dog, I feared that we were indeed lost," said Christiana. "I had scarcely strength enough to knock."

"It was the same way with myself," said Mercy. "I came near losing all hope."

"I marvel in my heart why the keeper has such an ugly cur," said Christiana. "Had I known it, I would never have had the courage to come near the gate. But now that we are in, we are in, and I am glad."

"Well, the next time he comes near us, I will ask him why he keeps such a filthy beast in his yard," said Mercy.

"Yes, do!" cried all the boys; "and persuade him to kill the ugly thing. We are afraid he will bite us when we go out."

So, presently, when the keeper came again by the place where they were

resting, Mercy asked him, "Good sir, why do you keep that cruel dog in your yard? We are all much afraid of him."

The keeper answered, "The dog is not mine, neither is he in my yard. He belongs to the castle which you see near by, and the castle yard comes quite close to the gate. He has *frightened* many honest pilgrims by his barking; but he cannot get to them to *harm* them."

"We are glad of that," said the boys.

Then Christiana began to talk of their journey, and to inquire after the way. So the keeper of the gate brought them water to wash their feet; he set a table before them and gave them nourishing food; and when they had eaten and were refreshed, he showed them the *narrow way* which Christian had followed before them.

"This is the *King's highway*," he said. "Be sure that you do not wander from it!"

So they thanked him for all his kindness, and he bade them Godspeed on their journey.

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