

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

Now I saw in my dream that Christiana and Mercy, with the four boys, went onward in the way they had been shown, and the weather was very comfortable to them.

They had gone only a little distance from the wicket gate when they saw a pleasant orchard on one side of the road. It was full of trees bearing all manner of beautiful fruit, and some of these trees grew so close to the highway, that their branches overhung the wall.

So, as they were walking along, they saw on the ground many ripe *apples* which had fallen from the branches. These apples being mellow and sweet, the boys picked up not a few, and did eat some of them as they went. But soon they began to feel sick, and all day long they suffered pain and were sorry.

"Well, my sons," said Christiana, "the fruit was not yours, and you should not have touched it." But she did not know that the orchard belonged to the giant owner of the castle. If she had, she would have been filled with fear.

So they went on until they came to the *Interpreter's house*, and there Christiana knocked as she had done at the gate before. Now when she had knocked, there came to the door a maid whose name was INNOCENT. The maid opened the door and looked; and behold two women were there.

"What is it that you wish here?" she asked.

Christiana answered, "We are pilgrims, and we have been told we would find a friendly welcome here. The day, as you see, is far spent, and we cannot well go farther tonight."

"Pray, what is your name, that I may tell it to my master?" said Innocent.

"My name is Christiana, and I am the wife of Christian, who passed this way some time ago. These four boys are his sons and mine, and this maiden is my young friend, Mercy, who is going with us on this pilgrimage."

Then Innocent ran joyfully into the house and cried out, "Only think who is at the door! It is Christiana and her children and her companion, and they wait to be lodged and entertained here tonight."

Then the Interpreter himself went to the door and welcomed them.

"Come in, faithful one," he said. "Come, children, come in. Come, maiden, come in."

So he led them into the great room of the house, and bade them sit down and rest. And all who were of the household came in to see them — and one smiled, and another smiled, and all smiled for joy.

Now, while supper was being made ready, the Interpreter took them into the different rooms and showed them the moving pictures and the other wonderful things which he had shown to Christian some time before. They saw the two children, *Patience* and *Passion*, and the *man in the cage*, and the *man and his dream*, and other instructive and curious things.

The Interpreter took them also into a room where there was a man with his eyes always turned towards the ground. This *man had a muck rake* in his hands, and he did nothing but rake to himself the straws and the sticks and the dust of the earth. But above his head there was a golden crown, which he might have taken and worn — had he only looked upward and desired the best gifts.

"Straws and sticks and dust are the great things which many people now spend their time in raking together," said the Interpreter.

Then he led them into the largest room of the house, and a very brave room it was. "Tell me what you see here," he said.

They looked round and round — but there was nothing to be seen but a *big spider* on the wall.

"I see nothing," said Mercy.

"Look again," said the Interpreter.

"Well, I see an ugly spider hanging on the wall," answered Mercy.

"Yes, and this spider teaches us a lesson," said the Interpreter. "For is it not written, 'The spider takes hold with her hands, and is in kings palaces'? So there

are bad and loathly things — even in the highest places."

Then he led them into the barnyard and showed the boys a brood of *chickens* drinking at a trough. And he told them how the mother hen cared for them and called them as she had need.

"She has a *common* call, when she gives them nothing," he said. "She has a *special* call, when she has something good for them. She has a *brooding* call, when she would gather them under her wings. And she has a call of *alarm* to warn them of danger. Even so does our King call us, his children."

Then he led them into his garden and showed them his *flowers*.

"See how different these flowers are," he said. "Some are tall, some are short; some have one color, some another; some are better than the rest, some worse. But they stand where the gardener planted them, and do not complain of their lot."

At length he took them again into the house; and when supper was ready they all sat down to a bounteous feast. And while they ate, one of the household played sweet music, and another sang. Thus the evening passed pleasantly; and that night the pilgrims rested from their weariness and were greatly refreshed.

In the morning they rose with the sun, and were soon ready to renew their journey. But the Interpreter would not let them go until they had *bathed* themselves in a fountain in his garden.

So they went and washed, the women and the boys also. And they came out of that bath not only sweet and clean — but much enlivened and strengthened. And they looked fairer and much more beautiful than they had ever looked before.

Then the Interpreter bade his servants give them new clothing, fine linen, white and clean. And when they were clad in these garments they stood amazed, each looking at the others and wondering because of their beauty.

Finally, the Interpreter called for a man-servant of his whose name was GREAT-HEART.

"Great-heart," said he, "arm yourself with sword and shield. Put on your helmet and your coat of mail. Then go forth with these my daughters and these noble boys, and protect them on their way. Lead them to the House Beautiful, which will be their next resting place."

So Great-heart took his weapons and went out before them. The Interpreter bade them Godspeed, and they went on their way rejoicing.

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