

Pilgrim's Progress

At 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 the porter led the pilgrims into the House Beautiful. He said to those who were within, "Here is the wife of Christian, with her children and her young friend Mercy. They have come hither on a pilgrimage."

Then Prudence and Piety and Charity, the good women of the house, hastened to welcome her.

"Come in, Christiana," they said. "Come in, wife of that good man. Come in, blessed woman. Come in, with all that are with you."

So she went in, and the rest followed her. And they were very weary of their journey, and it was late; also they were faint with the fright they had been in because of the giant and the lions. So they desired, as soon as might be, to be shown to their rooms.

"Nay," said Charity and Prudence, "you must first refresh yourselves with a morsel of food."

Then they were led to a table where food was offered them in plenty; and they ate and were refreshed. When they had supped, they were taken to their places of rest; and Christiana and Mercy were given the same room in which Christian had slept when he was there before them; and the name of that room was Peace.

Now as they lay composing themselves to sleep, Mercy suddenly cried out, "Hark! Do you hear that sound?"

"Yes," said Christiana; "I do believe it is the sound of music. They are having music for joy that we are here."

"Wonderful!" said Mercy. "Music in the house, music in the heart, music everywhere for joy!"

So they lay quietly and listened, and soon fell asleep.

Now when the morrow was come, the sisters of the house would in no wise consent that the pilgrims should go forward. "Tarry with us for awhile," they said. "The summer is yet long, and there is no haste that you should finish your pilgrimage."

They, therefore, abode in the House Beautiful, not only one day — but two and many more. And every day they saw some new sight or learned some new and striking truth; and their hearts were filled with joy and peace.

It so chanced that a young man whose name was Mr. BRISK came often to the house to see the sisters and to talk with them about the many things that were of interest to them all. He was a very busy little man, bustling hither and thither, and making believe that he was serving the King.

The maidens of the house had some doubts of him, and Prudence and Piety treated him quite coldly. But Charity said, "Let us think no wrong of him;" and so his visits were continued, and everyone hoped that he might prove to be as good as he pretended.

Now when Mr. Brisk saw Mercy, how fair and gentle she was, he began to admire her very much. He cared no more for the company of Piety or of Charity; but every day he came to see the sweet face of Mercy and to listen to her pleasant voice. But most of all, he took notice that she was never idle; and he said to himself, "A maiden so diligent would make the best wife in the world."

But Mercy's mind was full of thoughts for the good of others; and when she had nothing to do for herself — she would be knitting or sewing and making garments for the needy.

One day when she was alone, Mr. Brisk came in and found her at her old work, making things for the poor.

"What! always at it?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, "either for myself or for others."

"And how much can you earn in a day?" he asked.

"I make these things for the love of others — and not for pay," she answered.

"What do you do with them?" said he.

"I give them to those who are most in need," she said, simply. "It is better to clothe the naked and feed the hungry, than to lay up treasures."

With that, the young man's countenance fell, and he soon took his leave.

Some days afterward, Prudence said to him, "We do not see you at the house any more. Has Mercy no more charms for you?"

"Well, indeed," he answered, "I think Mercy is a pretty girl — but her habits are not such as a busy man can admire."

And that was the last of his visits to the House Beautiful.

About this time Matthew, the eldest of the four boys, fell sick. He was so sick that his mother feared he would die; and so a doctor was called in. The name of the doctor was SKILL; and when he saw the boy he knew at once what ailed him.

"What kind of food has Matthew been eating?" asked Dr. Skill.

"The food that is set before us here by the sisters of the House Beautiful," answered Christiana. "He has had only that which is most wholesome."

"But he is sick of something that he ate before he came to this place," said the doctor. "He has something in his stomach that won't digest, and it has been there a long time."

Then Samuel, the second son, spoke up and said, "Mother, don't you remember the orchard we passed just this side of the Wicket Gate? The trees hung over the wall, and we picked up some of the fruit that had fallen on the highway."

"True, my child," said Christiana. "And I scolded you all for eating of those apples."

"I took only a bite," said Samuel, "but Matthew ate more than one."

"There!" said Dr. Skill. "I knew the symptoms, and it is that fruit that has made him sick. That was Beelzebub's orchard, and the fruit which grows on his trees is very poisonous."

Then the physician made up some pills which he gave to Matthew, and the boy, though he made wry faces and cried bitterly, was forced to swallow them. The next day the sickness began to leave him, and soon he was able to walk about the house and the garden.

And now the time was about come for the pilgrims to renew their journey; but, just as they were getting ready to depart, someone knocked on the door.

The porter opened it, and behold, there was Great-heart, the guide, standing on the threshold. He had on his armor, and his sword and shield were at his side. How joyful the pilgrims were to see him!

"I have come to guide and protect you during the rest of your journey," he said. "And here is a bottle of wine and some parched corn which my master has sent for each of you. He has also sent the boys some figs and raisins, to refresh them on the way."

Soon they were ready to depart. They thanked the porter for his kindness, and again set their feet on the King's highway. And Piety, Prudence, and Charity walked a little way with them.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).