

The style of the "Pilgrim's Progress" is enchanting. Bunyan drove his nails with the short hammer of the Saxon, and no wonder. He had studied that Saxon Bible that is the purest English book in the world. The ray of light comes with great clearness through a transparent window-pane, and Bunyan's style is so translucent that his conceptions are never bedimmed in their passage through the medium of transmission. It is not to be thought strange that the "Pilgrim's Progress" is one of the first, if not the first, of all the books which missionaries at home and abroad seek to make accessible to those to whom they preach and among whom they labor. Next to the Bible, upon which it is perhaps the most popular and helpful commentary, it has been the greatest preacher of the gospel which the printing-press has ever created. What a blessing that such preachers can be made by the million! This pictorial representation of a human soul in its spiritual progress from the first awakening consciousness of sin, guilt and peril to the full enjoyment of a conscious salvation, God has made a mighty witness to His word, and a moving witness to the heart of man. And why? Because human nature does not change. Spiritual experience in all the ages is almost as stereotyped as the customs of the Orient. Science and art and letters may change, but humanity still echoes to the humanity of antediluvian ages, and the allegory that faithfully portrays the human soul can never be antiquated or out of date.

Bunyan never dreamed how useful God would make his pen when his tongue was in fetters. It doubtless seemed to him that life's opportunities were almost lost to him behind the doors of Bedford jail, but God saw that the way to make him a missionary for the whole world, and for all the ages, was to lock him up for twelve years—another example how "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." Moreover, Bunyan did not write his book for the public eye, but for his own entertainment and profit. He was like a child that suddenly strikes a rippling rill and unconsciously follows it till it broadens into a river and loses itself in the serene sea.

How would Bunyan's heart have thrilled with joy had he foreseen that the Lord would use his humble allegory in every land beneath the sun to awaken sinners in the city of Destruction, and guide disciples all along the pilgrim's way to the consummation beyond Death's river.

The various stages of the pilgrim's journey are unique in interest and suggestion. Does the sinner ask how to get rid of his burden of guilt? Here he is taught that it is not by the works of the flesh nor the deeds of the law. The *Obstinate* will of sin, the *Pliable* will of the half-persuaded will not get him past the Slough, and Legalism can only bring him into a greater peril. He must go through God's gate and find deliverance at the Cross.

Does the believer ask how he shall grow in grace and knowledge?