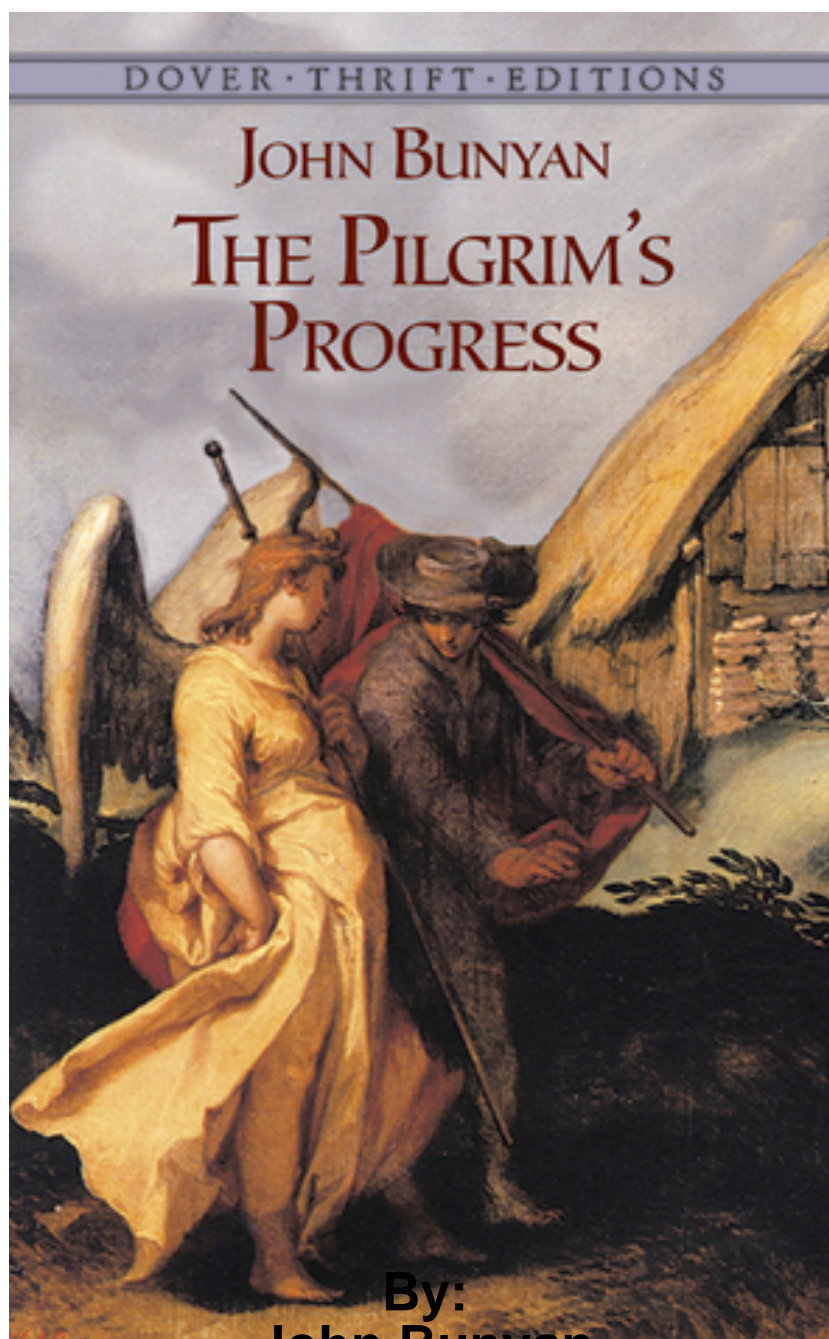


The Pilgrim's Progress Book PDF Download



By:
John Bunyan

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What people Say:

Paul Bryant

In the dawn of the day

began his quest for the

with a glad heart, his countenance suffused by the

and unburthened by

He knew he should soon pass threwh

which was said to be very Malevolent yet still he feared not and sang out hymns and epithalamions addressed to the Archangels Proust, Joyce and Bolano which should look over him as he ventured. Eftsoons, he met with

, who thrust at him pretty volume

In the dawn of the day

began his quest for the

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Paul

I read this book during my second deployment to Iraq as well and it took me quite a while to finish it. I had seen this book referenced often and I wanted to read it on my own. The overall consensus is that it is a very compelling book and will pull at your soul's emotional strings with its simplicity and candor. But also there were three major hurdles to finishing this book--for me, at least:

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It was first published in 1678 so it is not an easy read. The diction is alien to me, but also one does not fall into the parlance of Mr. Bunyan's time as easily as even the made-up language of *A Clockwork Orange*. Here is an example of the text: "Mercy. Then said Mercy, I confess my ignorance: I spake what I understood not: I acknowledge that thou doest all things well." Yikes. Also, the original was not written like a screenplay so it is at times confusing who is speaking to whom. Luckily, the Penguin Classics version marks all dialog with the speaker as a preface in italics.

Secondly, the allegory is very simple. The characters names are the likes of: "Mr. Great-Heart, Mr. Timorous, Mr. Feeble-Minded, the Giant Despair," etc. The situations that all the characters face are definitely unique, but not so riveting as a result of surprise. This barrier for me though is acceptable: the stark simplicity of the journey actually increases the voracity of Bunyan's words. The story is not for the sake of story-telling; the allegory actually need not be so imaginative in this case.

Finally, and this may seem superficial, but Bunyan's poetry skills are pretty awful. The poem opens with a long bit of rhyming poetry that almost made me quit reading. Ironically, the poem is an apology of Bunyan's allegorical shortcomings. I still didn't enjoy reading the poems. I actually found myself skipping even the shortest attempts at rhyme in the plot by the first 30 pages of the book. I find it interesting that Bunyan's prose can be so powerful that he felt the need to attempt ABAB style poetry in his work. Maybe he felt the need to counter the beautiful epic style of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (published first about 12 years before TPP). I don't know, but either way--it is a serious barrier.

Bunyan earns most of his Paul Dollars (approximately worth 5 Shrewt bucks or 1000 Stanley Nickles, for you Office fans) in the transcendence of the story into the heart of the Christian reader. I felt Bunyan's soul guiding Christian through his pilgrimage. At the beginning of the story when Christian tells his plans to his family, they chastise him and mock him--after ignoring him of course. As he finally departs alone, his family and neighbors snub him and hurl curses from both sides of the road. This forces Christian to "put his fingers in his ears" and run as quickly as possible away from the City of Destruction. You can't help but be captivated by Christian's steadfast loyalty to his mission: going to Heaven, or the "land beyond the river that has no bridge."

Here are some examples of Bunyan's greatest words:

"No man can tell what in combat attends us but he that hath been in the battle himself." (Page 113) after he fights the demon Apollyon.

In reply to Christian's query, "tell me particularly what effect this [a vision of Christ] had upon your spirit," Hopeful answers with conviction that almost wrought me with tears:

Ryan

So you know when you hear that Citizen Kane is the best movie ever because of how revolutionary it was during its time period, and then you watch it and you realize that the key phrase is "during its time period"? Well, reading Pilgrim's Progress is likely to leave many with the same feeling. No doubt one of the greatest modern religious texts in terms of what it provided for early Puritans (an easy and concrete representation of their theology and daily living practices), it leaves a little to

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Alex

Pilgrim's Progress is about two delusional assholes wandering around being dicks to people, so it's basically a takeoff of

But the dreaming narrator seems unconscious of the fact that the pilgrims are both jerks. I suppose it's possible that they're not supposed to be jerks at all, but...no, that can't be right. They're

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It starts with a guy named Christian abandoning his family to wander off in search of a magical city. "His wife and children...began to cry after him to return, but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying Life! Life! Eternal life!" It's pretty funny, in a mean kind of way.

So he takes off and immediately falls into the Slough of Despond (translation: "Marsh of Bummers"), and we immediately see that he's not only a dick (see above) but not very bright. He flails away through the mud, and as he's finally struggling out of it, some other guy comes by like what's up, and Christian is all "as I was going thither I fell in here," and the dude is like, "But why did you not look for the steps?" Christian's all, "There were

" Womp womp.

And then he runs across some virgins. "Come, good Christian, since we have been so loving to you, to receive you in our house this night..." Woohoo, virgins! I guess it was pretty smart after all for him to run out on his family.

He picks up his very own Sancho Panza along the way, a dude named Faithful - people have funny names in this book - and they recognize kindred dick spirits in each other; they will have great fun being mean to everyone else they meet for the rest of the book. Right away, for example, they run into a dude named Talkative, and they're just pricks to him for basically no reason. I guess Talkative's name is ironic or something because he actually does very little of the talking, and whenever he does open his mouth they just bag on him mercilessly:

Mike (the Paladin)

I have a few versions of this on my shelves from the nicely bound hard back to paper backs I can hand out (you know "loan").

This is (as I'm sure most already know) an allegorical journey depicting the struggles of living the Christian life. John Bunyan was a Baptist imprisoned when it was against the law to be a Baptist. He was imprisoned for (aprox.) twelve years for refusing to convert to Anglicanism (Church of England)...this sort of thing by the way is the reason for the first amendment,

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While he was imprisoned Bunyan wrote this book. Even if you disagree with his doctrine (I and many other Christians do in some places) this work is well worth reading.

Pilgrim lives in the City of Destruction. He's one of the few who realizes that the City of Destruction is actually destined for destruction. He learned this by "reading the book in his hand". Setting out for the Celestial City he must first go to and through the Wicket Gate and to the Cross. There the huge burden that weighs him down, (his sin) falls away and his name is changed to Christian.

The book then follows Christian's journey, in allegorical form giving account of his trials, his mistakes and ultimate destination.

The book was written in 1678 and sometimes the language may stymy a bit, but it's a wonderful book. Even if the theology may not be spot on for all Christians it is true to the basic teachings. It will encourage Christians and by existing at all endorses freedom of speech.