

03. Reformation and Restoration

The flourishing of culture under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I came to a still-stand in the first half of the 17th century. Queen Elizabeth (Tudor dynasty) died in 1603 and was succeeded by James I, the first Stuart on the English throne. James I was King of Scotland; his ascension to the English throne meant a personal union of England and Scotland (the political tendency to unite the two countries was finalized by the Act of Union in 1707). Discontent with the authoritative rule started by Queen Elizabeth did not diminish under James I (1605 the Gunpowder Plot, a radical Catholic attempt to blow up the Parliament and the King) and reached its climax during the reign of James I's son Charles I when he dissolved the Parliament. Finally, the English Civil War (sometimes also called the Puritan Revolution) broke out in 1642; in 1649 Charles I was executed and the country was ruled by Oliver Cromwell as the so-called Commonwealth. Later on Cromwell annexed Scotland and Ireland to the Commonwealth. This period, also called the Interregnum, lasted until 1660 when the political instability became untenable and Charles II was called to ascend to the English throne: the so-called Restoration. These shifts obviously had consequences for the cultural atmosphere of the time period and brought many profound changes. During the Puritan rule most theaters were closed and the flourishing genre of drama that peaked with Shakespeare ended abruptly. But more importantly than that, this period of civil wars was a bridge from one culture and mindset to another. In the Elizabethan period the court was still central: it was the center of power, of indirect influence, and also of art and education (court members were patrons of authors and artists, and art was created for the court members). After the Interregnum the Parliament achieves much greater political power; the power of new king Charles II is greatly restricted by the Parliament. Within just a very few decades the English society transforms from a monarchy where much power is in the hands of the monarch to a constitutional monarchy in which the King's power is substantially limited.

Queen Elizabeth I unified and consolidated the Church of England: she was not the "head" of the Church (that would be God) but she was the governor of the Church. A few theological points made the English Church different from the Roman Church, but on the whole the Church of England was somewhere in between the Catholic church and a Protestant church. Many people even within the Church of England struggled to articulate their own theological convictions amid these changes and some would change positions during the course of their lives. Some, like the Roman Catholics or the more Reformed Protestants, were quite certain of their disapproval of the English Church. Elizabeth I and James I persecuted both, the Catholics and the radical Protestants alike.

Among the Protestants the more thoroughly Reformed groups who disagreed openly with the half-way manners of the English Church were the so-called "dissenters", and later they came to be labeled the Puritans: those who, under the influence of the Reformation and particularly of Calvinism, thought that the English Church was not really Protestant but remained too Catholic. Gradually these groups started to create their own congregations. Their grounds for leaving the English church were theological but of course had many practical implications and outcomes. First of all, the Puritans placed great emphasis on the Bible and disagreed with the Anglican belief that God's revelation in the Bible can be complemented by reason, common sense, learning etc. For the Calvinists, nothing compares to God's revelation in the Bible; the Bible is the only source of knowledge that can help man be redeemed by God. They also believed that man is fundamentally sinful and that he cannot please God in any way by anything he does and can be saved only by the grace of God alone. Moreover, the Puritans believed that each man can come to God personally and directly, through reading the Bible, praying and living a life that pleases God. God does not bestow any special authority on religious leaders other than simply greater responsibility. Consequently, Puritan congregations would elect their ministers, something in complete contrast to the hierarchical, top-to-bottom structure of the Anglican Church. There is a great democratizing element in Reformed Protestantism.

In Scotland, the Reformation also put down roots; the most famous Scottish Reformer was John Knox (1514-1572), founder of the Scottish reformed church, the Presbyterian Church (Kirk) of

Scotland. By this time, Scotland was under a Catholic rule and there had been violent persecution of Protestants; many were killed and Knox himself was sent to the galleys. After he was released Knox spent a period of time in Calvin's Geneva. He wrote a pamphlet against the rule of women, called *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558): it was written with the Catholic Queen Mary in mind, but happened to be published just at the time of the coronation of Elizabeth I. The Scottish Presbyterians, obviously, were theologically very close to the English Puritans.

In England, the Puritans had been ousted, marginalized and persecuted by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I in the second half of the 16th century and later at the beginning of the 17th century so much that some Puritan groups even left England at that time. In 1620 and 1630 the first two groups of Puritans departed from England to settle in America. Toward the end of the 17th century this becomes history. The English Church, while it is re-established in the Restoration as the most powerful and largest religious institution in England, eventually ceases to be the only official church. Protestants who wished to be separate from the Church of England were still discriminated and persecuted, just like the Roman Catholics, but not as violently as before.

One English text in particular needs to be mentioned in this context, and that is the King James Bible, also called the Authorized Version. Commissioned by King James I in 1604 specifically for use in the Church of England and published in 1611, the King James Bible became the standard English Bible translation for centuries, overshadowing the previously published Great Bible (1538) and eventually, not immediately, also the Geneva Bible (1560) which was the Bible known and used by the Elizabethan authors and also by the Puritans. The translation was the work of a team of Anglican authors, supervised by Bishop Lancelot Andrews, the most famous Anglican preacher of the time. Even nowadays praised for its eloquent, powerful style, the language of the King James Bible was one of the defining influences on the English language and literary culture.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Other changes are on the way in English society: the economic prosperity begun in the Elizabethan period and the beginnings of English colonialism also bring an unprecedented rise in business ventures. New entities appear in the English society: joint-stock companies and business corporations, banks, credit unions. The businessman becomes a newly important figure in the society. Wealth is no longer connected exclusively to aristocracy, and this contributes to profound changes in the society.

These various social groups also created their own culture and writing. The new business class was interested in a different type of writing than the older kind written for the court, and the various pressure groups also carried out their political and religious debates in print, in pamphlets. The printing business flourished and texts were produced which were targeted on these different audiences. Gradually, censorship, practiced both by the court (Tudor and Stuart) and by the Parliament in the Interregnum, gives way to a more open, free social debate in print. In the wake of these changes the

new science and philosophy slowly sets in with the work of Isaac Newton (1642/3 - 1727), John Locke (1632-1704), Robert Boyle (1627-1691) and others, inaugurating the Enlightenment.

Overall what takes place in the 17th century is a major and fundamental shift from a hierarchical, centralized society to a much more decentralized, diverse one. While the court was formerly the center of power, influence, culture and religion, and this was believed to be God-given, to be the nature of the world, after the Interregnum this permeating hierarchical view, along with its inevitable pressure to conformity and uniformity, gives way to a more diverse society in which various groups compete and coexist with each other.

Amid these major changes in the society there emerges also a specific kind of poetry by authors who later received the label “**Metaphysical poets**,” although they were not an organized group and did not theorize about creating a new style of poetry. The term refers to a group of 17th century poets, including most famously John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Henry Vaughan. The term suggests the complexity of their poetry, the variety and disparity of their images, the connection between the high and the low, between the religious and the sensual, their use of learning and science, and language puns. They were not much appreciated later in the 18th century in the time of Classicism and Enlightenment, and were restored to fame only at the beginning of the 20th century.

John Donne (1572-1631)

The first and foremost of the Metaphysical poets; the poet who first started to write in a manner different from the Elizabethan poets. He was born into a Roman Catholic family under Elizabeth I; he studied at universities but because of his Catholic origins couldn't receive an academic degree. He was very erudite and apparently also sociable, he was around the court and eventually got a position as a secretary of a high ranking court member. The job ended when he secretly married the daughter of his boss. Afterwards he held many various jobs to support his family. Already in his twenties he quietly renounced his Catholic faith, later became publicly anti-Catholic (he published some anti-Catholic satires) and after many years of hesitation joined the English church and became an Anglican minister. He became very popular as a preacher and eventually was appointed Dean of St Paul's Cathedral. While as a young man he wrote love poetry, which is often quite bold and explicit, later he became famous for his religious, devotional poetry. Both types of poems share the same intensity, boldness, puns and paradox, a daring mixture of the high and the low, of the profane and the sacred, the concrete and the abstract in difficult, concentrated images (conceits). The relatively simple, colloquial language of Donne was also considered unusual in his day. In his times Donne as a poet was known only in small circles of friends and fellow poets; he was more popular as a preacher. His collected *Poems* were published posthumously first in 1633; in later editions the poems were divided into several categories: e.g. “Songs and Sonnets,” “Divine Poems.”

After the Restoration the unusual poetry of Donne and the other metaphysical poets was largely forgotten and their reputation didn't rise again until the beginning of the 20th century. The modernist poets, and particularly T.S. Eliot, appreciated their difficult style; it suited their search for a new kind of literature that would replace Victorian clichés. T.S. Eliot was particularly interested in Donne and praised him for “direct sensuous apprehension of thought,” the unity of thought and perception, of mind and feeling, which he believed was lost in Milton and afterwards (Eliot famously called this loss the “dissociation of sensibility”).

The typical themes of Donne's poetry are love and erotic desire, religious desire and devotion to God, and reflections on death. Here is an example of a short reflective poem, one of Donne's “meditations,” that contains some very famous lines:

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,

A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

An example of Donne's blending of the sensual and the spiritual is his famous poem called "The Ecstasy," which argues that the union of lovers' souls is the highest kind of union. Their souls are joined into one, creating, as it were, a new soul. Yet when a soul is by itself, without being given an expression through feelings and through bodily senses, it is as if "a great prince in prison lies": the union of souls finds appropriate expression in the physical union of the lovers.

Read from poetryfoundation:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44099/the-ecstasy>

Listen on Youtube:

The Ecstasy by John Donne read by Richard Burton; by MrHappySnap; 3 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExNFFG9bCFo>

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

Marvell was, similarly to Donne, an exceptionally educated person, fluent in several languages which he learned during his travels on the Continent. He worked as a tutor in some important families and later held various political appointments, he worked for the Cromwell government and later was a member of the Parliament. He was Anglican. As many other authors of the time, he wrote political pamphlets and satires, and he composed a famous ode on Cromwell ("Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"; 1650), celebrating Cromwell's victories in England, Scotland, and Ireland, but at the same expressing some admiration for the executed king Charles I. His most famous poem is a love poem called "To His Coy Mistress"; its opening lines have remained in public memory and are often quoted and paraphrased. The poem, written in rhymed couplets of iambic tetrameter, focuses on the frequent combination of the theme of love and the passing of time. The first stanza elaborates of the motif of love, the second one counters it with the reality of immanent death, and the poem ends with a bold encouragement of "carpe diem," seize the day. The structure of the poem follows the structure of a logical syllogism: there are two premises and a logical conclusion.

To His Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

coy – shy; Humber – the river Humber in England; note the pun in the final couplet: sun, but also homonymous with “son” (the theme of procreation)

Listen from Poetry Foundation:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44688/to-his-coy-mistress>

John Milton (1608-1674)

Marvell's close friend, John Milton came from a very privileged background, although of no aristocratic ancestry. His father was a wealthy and successful businessman, and John had the privilege of not only acquiring university education but also of continuing his education for six more years

privately by independent reading. On top of this he was also able to travel on the Continent for a year, visiting France, Italy, and Switzerland — something that would typically be done only in noble families. He was fluent in many languages and extremely erudite, and by the time of his Grand Tour he was already a recognized poet. When he returned to England (he ended his Tour because of the news of the civil war) he got involved in the Puritan Revolution. He believed that the church should be reformed according to the standards of the Reformation and that church officials should be elected by church members, not appointed by authorities. Milton was a firm supporter of the Revolution and acted as advisor to Oliver Cromwell and as a prime “PR manager” of the Revolution, defending it in print, and defending the execution of King Charles I. In this period of his life he wrote mostly tracts, pamphlets and political pieces. Besides texts defending the Revolution Milton also wrote a defense of the free press, an argument against censorship (*Aeropagitica*, 1644) and pamphlets arguing for the possibility of divorce on the grounds of incompatibility—this followed from his unhappy first marriage: he married a young girl from a royalist family, she couldn’t stand his political views and left him and returned to her family (after some years when her family lost their property in the Revolution, she returned to Milton). In a very progressive way, Milton argues that if the partners in marriage are not compatible with each other and if there is not mutual love between them, the purpose of their marriage is void, for marriage “was not properly the remedy of lust, but the fulfilling of conjugal love and helpfulness”: marriage was created by God not primarily as an outlet of human sexuality but to satisfy the human need for companionship and love, and when this defining feature of the marital covenant is missing, the contract is empty. With a similarly progressive outlook, Milton argues in *Aeropagitica* against censorship and book banning. The Tudors and the Stuarts also practiced censorship (although it was not always thoroughly reinforced); in 1643 the Parliament, having annulled the previous regulations, passed a new severe regulation regarding the licensing of books. Milton’s tract, modeled on texts of Classical oratory, argues that censorship is done by tyrannical governments, shows historical examples of this and defends free press. The center of his argument is, in fact, theological: God created man with a free will, so we should be free to consider and choose from ideas around us.

(...) when God gave [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions. We ourselves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free (. . .)

For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are. (. . .) Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God’s image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye.

motions—puppet shows

In 1651, Milton went blind as a result of all his strenuous reading and writing. His first wife died shortly after this and Milton remarried two more times. Milton continued to defend the ideals of the Commonwealth to the end and he paid dearly for his opinions after the Restoration. Already blind and old, he lost most of his property and was imprisoned; friends (including Andrew Marvell) helped to get him released. In the final part of his life Milton put all his strength and effort to creating a grand epic poem, one of the greatest texts of English literature, *Paradise Lost* (1667). Written in blank verse and spanning ten books (Milton eventually changed it to twelve), it was immediately recognized and celebrated as an extraordinary achievement—despite the fact that by that time Milton was a social outcast, blind, old, poor, and considered dangerous by many, and despite the underlying theology which was at some moments considered unacceptable or at least problematic by most people.

Paradise Lost is an epic poem, a biblical epos, “justifying,” as Milton says at the beginning, “the ways of God to men.” It tells the biblical story of the fall of Adam and Eve, the first people that God created and who lived in Eden, in paradise, in blissful innocence until they were tempted by Satan, in

the form of a serpent, to eat fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge. Then the story follows the further development according to biblical history: Adam and Eve repent of their disobedience and God sends them away from Paradise. Parallel to the story of Adam and Eve is the story of the fall of Satan, his transformation from an angel of light into the leader of demons; the first two books are mostly about the revolt of Satan and his fallen angels. God doesn't show up in the story until Book Three where the fall of Adam and Eve is foreseen by him, and Adam and Eve enter the scene in Book Four, in their innocence and bliss in Paradise. In the next book God sends archangel Raphael to warn Adam of Satan; Raphael tells him the history of Satan's fall and the heavenly battle after which Satan was cast into hell, then Raphael recounts the story of the creation of the world. The temptation itself, the moment when Eve eats the forbidden fruit and Adam joins her, doesn't come until Book Nine. The final books describe the punishment of Satan, Adam and Eve's repentance, God's forgiveness, including a prediction of Christ's life on earth and his death, and Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise.

Paradise Lost is a very difficult read for the present day reader, not only for the vast learning in the Classics and in the Bible that we no longer generally share but also for its style. We are no longer used to the genre of the epic poem and for the grandeur of style that it demands; Milton was consciously writing in this genre and following its conventions.

There have been attempts to read *Paradise Lost* as a political allegory on Cromwell and the Puritans (Satan and his angels) who revolt against the tyrannous King Charles I (God). This is probably far-fetched but there are clearly elements that do have reference to the political events in which Milton was so deeply involved. Certainly the theme of tyranny is important in the poem, and Milton most likely realized that while Cromwell defeated the King's tyranny, in the end he himself became another tyrant—rebellious pride is what causes the revolt of Satan and also of Adam and Eve, and this is perhaps something Milton saw also in Cromwell.

Here are the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* in which the blending of the Christian tradition with Greek mythology is immediately apparent:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: Or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread
Dovelike sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument

I may assert eternal providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

“one greater man” – reference to Christ; Oreb, Sinai – two names for the mountain where God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses; “that shepherd who first taught the chosen seed” – shepherd: Moses, who passed the Ten Commandment to Israel; chosen seed: Israel; Sion – Zion, a hill close to Old Testament Jerusalem; Siloa – a brook close to Old Testament Jerusalem; “oracle of God” – the tabernacle of the Arc of the Covenant, the holiest part of the Hebrew temple in the Old Testament; Aonian mount – Mount Helicon, the seat of the Muses; “things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme” – a direct reference to the Italian Renaissance epic poem *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto (1516)

These opening lines not only contain references to Greek mythology but their very form and style is an allusion to Classical writers: the invocation of the Muses is similar to Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Other particular expressions in this passage are also intertextual references to classical authors. Similarly, there are references to the language of the Bible and theological concepts. For example, Milton’s reference to “how the heavens and earth rose out of chaos” would have been considered unorthodox or suspect, for the Bible says that God created heaven and earth out of nothing. The Spirit that “dovelike” sat “brooding” on the vast abyss contains a reference to the creation story of Genesis, where we read that “the Spirit of God moved upon the waters” (King James translation) but the literal meaning of the Hebrew verb is indeed closer to “brood,” as Milton uses it here: Milton was familiar with the original Hebrew. “Dovelike” is a reference not only to the image of a bird brooding but is also a reference to the Holy Spirit from the New Testament, when Jesus is baptized and the Holy Spirit descends on him in the form of a dove.

Just a few years before his death Milton wrote something like a sequel, another epic poem called *Paradise Regained* (1671), dealing with the temptation of Christ in wilderness: the theme of the fall of Adam and Eve is, as it were, counterbalanced here by the victory of Jesus, when he is tempted by Satan in the desert. There is another related work, a poetic tragedy called *Samson Agonistes* (ie, *Samson the Warrior*, 1671): another biblical story retold, this time in the form of a tragedy, closely following the classical model of Greek tragedies, written again in blank verse. Milton depicts the Old Testament story of Samson, a Hebrew warrior endowed with supernatural strength by which he was able to always defeat his enemies until his wife treacherously discovered the secret of his strength and revealed it to his enemies. Milton’s story focuses on the last day of Samson’s life when Samson, blinded, is held captive by his enemies, the Philistines, and mocked by them until God restores his miraculous strength one more time and Samson breaks the pillars of the hall, burying both his enemies and himself in the ruins. Written toward the end of Milton’s life when he himself was a blind outcast, *Samson Agonistes* must certainly have been written with a sense of personal affinity with the tragic Old Testament hero; even the motifs of blindness and marital break are directly related to Milton’s own life.

Overall Milton is remembered and recognized as one of the greatest writers in the history of English literature, despite the controversies surrounding his life and the odds that he had to work against and live with. The most striking feature of his writing is a deep and pervasive combination of Classical learning with Reformation ideals. Milton was both a Protestant scholar and a Renaissance humanist: he combines Greek influences, the influence of the Italian Renaissance, biblical learning and a Reformed straightforwardness in dealing with the Bible.

John Bunyan (1628-1688)

A Puritan, but otherwise in many respects Milton’s very opposite: Bunyan came from a poor family (his father was a tinker) and never had more than elementary education. Although his parents were in the Anglican Church, John got involved in the dissenting circles and gradually, over the period of several years, struggled spiritually over his faith and salvation. He was exposed to Puritan ideas when

he was called to serve in Cromwell's army; after he returned from the army he got married and in the following years he underwent a long period of spiritual crisis, despairing over the state of his soul, hearing voices which condemned him—by today's standards this would perhaps be understood as a period of mental illness. Eventually he emerged out the crisis and found comfort in the biblical promises of salvation, joined a local Puritan church and became a lay preacher. After the Restoration, the freedom of the separating churches was over and Bunyan was imprisoned for 12 years. In prison he wrote and published his autobiography called *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666).

His most famous work is an allegorical story called *The Pilgrim's Progress* (in two parts, 1678 and 1684). It is a religious allegory describing the Christian life as a journey from sin and damnation to redemption and finally heaven. It is presented as the author's dream in which he sees a man called Christian and tells of his journey. Christian lives in the City of Destruction; he reads the Bible, feels the terrible burden of his sin and realizes that he is doomed. Desiring salvation, Christian meets Evangelist who points him to a narrow gate which leads to the road toward the Celestial City. Christian leaves his family behind and sets off. The burden of his sin is so heavy that he nearly dies when he reaches the Slough of Despond and nothing helps to ease the burden until he passes the cross on his way. There, the burden falls off and he can walk freely. On his way Christian receives help and meets various other travelers (Faithful and Hopeful become his worthy companions, and they also meet hypocritical characters like Talkative and Ignorance). They pass through places of rest where they are refreshed but also through many places of danger and temptation: the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the town of Vanity and Vanity Fair in which pilgrims are tempted to abandon their way to the Celestial City. They are imprisoned by Giant Despair in the Doubting Castle but Christian remembers that he has a key called Promise, by it he opens the prison and they escape. In the end Christian approaches the Celestial City; the site is very beautiful and Christian experiences intense bliss, and finally he is admitted into the city.

The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* turns to Christian's wife Christiana and their children who go on the same journey. Their road is somewhat easier because they follow in Christian's footsteps and because they have a mighty guard called Great-heart. Their story focuses less on the psychological experience of the spiritual journey but more on the people they meet and their various human weaknesses; with some help, those people, too, can travel toward the Celestial City and be saved. In the end Christiana is reunited with Christian in the Celestial City while their sons stay behind to help other travelers reach the City.

A straightforward Protestant allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is readily understandable to readers acquainted with the Bible. It is a lively story which includes both tragic moments, suspense but also some funny elements, and as such it has been one of the most influential books in English. Until the 20th century *The Pilgrim's Progress* was a staple that virtually everyone knew and read, and some of its phrases have remained in popular memory: the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair. In some ways the book can be compared to Comenius' *Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart*, which dates from roughly the same time period (first version 1623); Comenius' scope is nevertheless much broader than Bunyan's simple story.

Here is a short excerpt from the ending of the first part of book: Christian and his companion Hopeful have come to the Celestial City, they see its gate but they are separated from the city by a river which they must first cross. Here comes the final struggle for Christian: the river represents death, and the horrors of death are such that he nearly drowns. For some time it seems that in the stress and horror of his dying hour Christian's faith is lost, he can't remember any of God's promises, he is overcome with fear and despair. Eventually with Hopeful's help and with help from above, he regains inner strength and resolve.

Now, I further saw, that betwixt them and the gate was a river, but there was no bridge to go over: the river was very deep. (...) The Pilgrims then, especially Christian, began to despond in their minds, and looked this way and that, but no way could be found by them by which they might escape the river. Then they asked the men if the waters were all of a depth. They said: "No; yet they could not help them

in that case; for, said they, you shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place.” They then addressed themselves to the water and, entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, “I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all his waves go over me!”

Then said the other, “Be of good cheer, my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good.” Then said Christian, “Ah! my friend, the sorrows of death hath compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey”; and with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Also here he in great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage. But all the words that he spake still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and heart fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain entrance in at the gate. Here also, as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins that he had committed, both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. It was also observed that he was troubled with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits, for ever and anon he would intimate so much by words. Hopeful, therefore, here had much ado to keep his brother’s head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere a while, he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful also would endeavour to comfort him, saying, “Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us”: but Christian would answer, “It is you, it is you they wait for; you have been Hopeful ever since I knew you.” (...) Then I saw in my dream, that Christian was as in a muse a while. To whom also Hopeful added this word, “Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole”; and with that Christian brake out with a loud voice, “Oh, I see him again! and he tells me, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.”” Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone, until they were gone over. Christian therefore presently found ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow. Thus they got over.

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