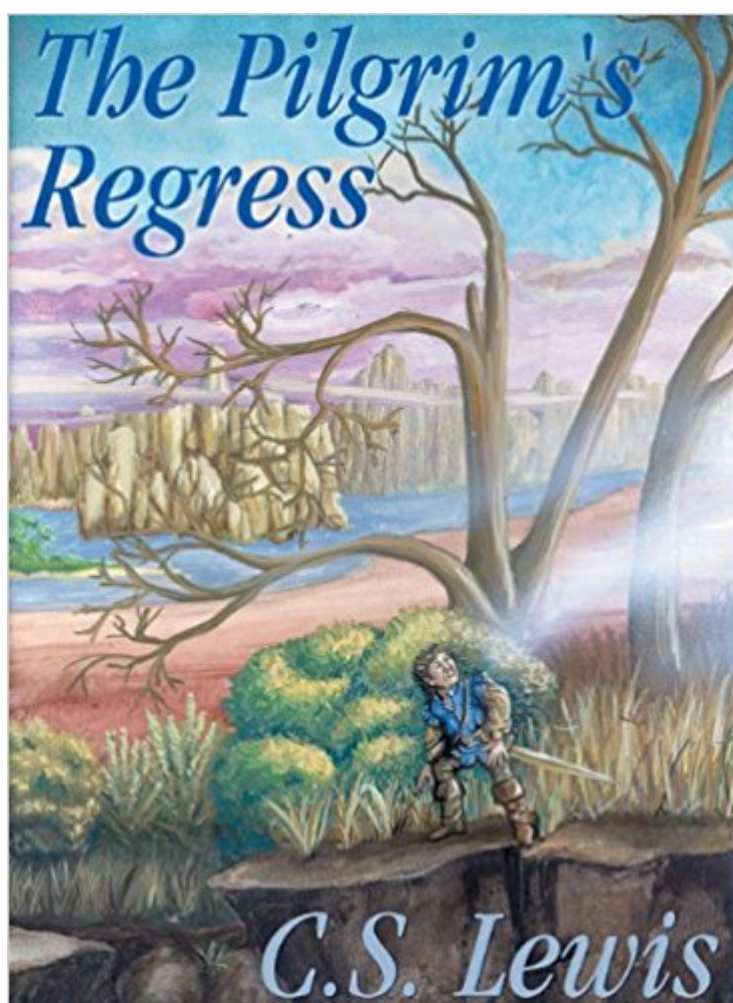


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The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology For Christianity, Reason, And Romanticism



Synopsis

The first book written by C. S. Lewis after his conversion, *The Pilgrim's Regress* is, in a sense, a record of Lewis' own search for meaning and spiritual satisfaction that eventually led him to Christianity. It is the story of John and his odyssey to an enchanting island that has created in him an intense longing, a mysterious, sweet desire. John's pursuit of this desire takes him through adventures with such people as Mr. Enlightenment, Media Halfways, Mr. Mammon, Mother Kirk, Mr. Sensible, and Mr. Humanist and through such cities as Thrill and Eschropolis, as well as the Valley of Humiliation. Though the dragons and giants here are different from those in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Lewis' allegory performs the same function of enabling the author to say in fable form what would otherwise have demanded a full-length philosophy of religion.

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Customer Reviews

In 1933, not long after he became a Christian, Lewis published this third work and his first novel, a portrayal of this spiritual journey. Begun as a poem, *Pilgrim's Regress* thankfully ended up as an allegory that obviously takes its cue from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Every bit as effective as its predecessor, Lewis's book describes the quest of John to reach the enchanted island and describes and satirizes many of the popular philosophies of the author's time, many of which also have more than a little influence in our day. Eloquent, erudite, and often witty, this tale is superbly narrated by Robert Whitfield. No stranger to the writings of Lewis, Whitfield has a well-modulated voice that easily portrays the numerous characters and gives the narrative sections a steady and consistent tempo. There are a number of Latin epigraphs, which are not translated. Public,

religious/theological, and academic libraries should at least consider this audio. Michael T. Fein, Central Virginia Community Coll., Lynchburg Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

-- Chicago Tribune "An excellent book. In its sharp imagery, its clever inferences, its suspense, its characterization, and its occasional grotesque humor, it stands favorable comparison with its great model by John Bunyan." -- New York Times "The allegorical characters are not just abstractions. They are, in every instance, people objectively real and subjectively true to the inner meaning. The language throughout is plain, straightforward and leanly significant. To many it will seem like a fresh wind blowing across arid wastes." --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I am sure that you have reflected from time to time on how far you came in life and what you went through to get where you are. This might be especially true if you were looking for the meaning of life and the pursuit of Truth. The reflections have to take in the twists and turns it involved. There was the good and bad advice. There were those who would have been pleased to trip you up, to dampen your hopes and desires. There were the times of confusion that you had to wade through, with the false starts and retracing of paths. This is C. S. Lewis' journey in allegory form. His creative form allows you to quickly see the difficulties, the starts and stops, he had along the way. If you are familiar with his biography, you can easily insert them as you go. However, in seeing his journey in this way, he also helps you to see your journey. The elements of this story, neutral as they are, can also represent the real events of your life as they happened. This story can act as a mirror to look at yourself and your own life. It certainly has recognizable religious undertones, not unlike *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (The Chronicles of Narnia) and others from the Narnia series, or religion presented with the wit and satire of *The Screwtape Letters*. This is Lewis' genius at work. He makes this something almost everyone can enjoy, or derive benefits from it.

"The Pilgrim's Regress" is an allegorical work by C.S. Lewis that I've read any number of times now. I always enjoy it and get more out of it each time I read it. It was written during a two week interlude visiting his friend of the first kind, Arthur Greeves. "The Pilgrim's Regress" is the first book Lewis wrote after he came back to Christianity. It traces the journey of a young man named John as he searches for the underlying basis of a vision he had as a boy of an "Island" seen as an ideal. He journeys through the world deviating from the main road and encounters many people who

represent ideas and intellectual movements and learns more and more that ultimately leads him back to the Landlord (the figure of God). The book is partly autobiographical, documenting Lewis's own faith journey but Lewis said it was not entirely so. He used the book in part to engage the ideas prevalent at the time it was written around 1932. I very much enjoy this book but it isn't what you're looking for if ideas are not your thing. It is a book filled with ideas and how they contrast to one another.

The Pilgrim's Regress is an example of C.S. Lewis' more obscure philosophical works. It documents fictional character John's life-long journey to becoming a Christian and then returning to the world with a different view. John's story is apparently based on C.S. Lewis' journey, and allegedly deals with more modern-day struggles than the older Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. Through the journey, John meets many characters and has many lengthy and dry discussions, all in allegory. While I think C.S. Lewis had the best of intentions in this book, I found it too obscure to make much sense, especially in the 21st century. Having been a Christian my whole life and having read Pilgrim's Progress only a couple years ago, I have to say The Pilgrim's Regress is difficult even for those who understand the underlying concepts, because the allegories are just too obscure. Lewis even admits this in the epilogue. While I made it all the way through the book, I did not understand it all and raced through some of the more dry sections. We read this for my book club with mixed results. A few readers loved it, and most others found it too difficult and dry to be very enjoyable or thought-provoking. We had a difficult time even having a discussion about it, and no questions were available anywhere online. I believe that I got much more out of the Pilgrim's Progress, ancient as it may be, than The Pilgrim's Regress. I would probably not recommend this book.

In this book, CS Lewis mixes autobiography with the religious/philosophical history of Western culture, and writes about it in the form of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Most of the time, I was quite unclear about the images and symbols Lewis was using in the book, so I was happy to learn that later in life, he regretted the "needless obscurity" with which he wrote this book (p. 200). As a result, I really appreciated the little "summary statements" which are found at the top of each page to explain what is going on. Without these, I would have been hopelessly lost. Lewis said he added these later to compensate for how difficult the plot and images are to follow. Of course, not all is negative. Lewis does write with keen insight and clear logic, and shows that much of what modern people chase after in religion, politics, society, and philosophy, is empty and pointless. That alone makes this book worth reading.

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