

By-Path Meadow

Adapted from John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*

In John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*, the two traveling companions, Christian and Hopeful, weary and sore-footed in their travels, come to a place called By-Pass Meadow: "As they went on, they wished for a better way. Now, a little before them, there was on the left hand of the road a meadow, and a stile to go over into it, and that meadow is called By-path meadow.

Then said Christian to his fellow, "If this meadow lieth along by our wayside, let's go over into it... here is the easiest going; come, good Hopeful, and let us go over."

But Hopeful said, "What if this path should lead us out of the way?"

"That is not likely, said Christian. Look, doth it not go along by the wayside?"

So Hopeful, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the stile. When they were gone over, and were got into the path, they found it very easy for their feet; and then, they, saw a man walking as they did, and his name was Vain-Confidence: so they called after him, and asked him which way that path led.

He said, "To the Celestial Gate."

"Look," said Christian, "did not I tell you so? by this you may see we are right."

So they followed, and Vain Confidence went before them. But behold the night came on, and it grew very dark; so that they that went behind lost the sight of him that went before.

And Vain-Confidence, not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep pit, which was made there on purpose by the prince of those grounds, to catch vain-glorious fools, and thus Vain Confidence was dashed in pieces with his fall. Isaiah 9:16: "*For the leaders of this people cause them to err, And those who are led by them are destroyed.*"

Now, Christian and his fellow heard him fall. So they called to know the matter, but there was none to answer, only they heard a groaning.

Then said Hopeful, "Where are we now?"

Then was Christian silent, sensing that he had led [Hopeful] out of the way; and now it began to rain, and thunder, and lighten in a most dreadful manner, and the water rose with violent force.

Then Hopeful groaned in himself, saying, "Oh that I had kept on my way!"

But Christian answered, "Who could have thought that this path should have led us out of the way?"

Hopeful said, "I was afraid of it at the very first, and therefore gave you that gentle caution. I would have spoke plainer, but that you are older than I."

To this, Christian humbly replied, "Good brother, be not offended; I am sorry I have brought thee out of the way, and that I have put thee into such imminent danger. I Pray, my brother, forgive me..."

And Hopeful said, "Be comforted, my brother, for I forgive thee; and believe, too, that this shall be for our good."