

**THE BOOKE OF THE
PYLGREIMAGE
OF THE SOWLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649496570

The Booke of the Pylgremage of the Sowle by Guillaume de Guileville

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GUILLAUME DE GUILVILLE

**THE BOOKE OF THE
PYLGREIMAGE
OF THE SOWLE**

THE BOOKE OF THE
PYLGREMAGE OF THE SOWLE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

GUILLAUME DE GUILVILLE

AND PRINTED BY WILLIAM CAXTON AN. 1483 WITH ILLUMINATIONS

TAKEN FROM THE MS. COPY IN THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

EDITED BY KATHERINE ISABELLA CUST



LONDON
BASIL MONTAGU PICKERING

196 PICCADILLY

1859

Prefatory Note by the Editor.



IN submitting the second "*Pilgrimage*" of De Guileville to the Public, the Editor must again express her thanks to Edward Levien, Esq. M. A., F. S. A. of the British Museum, for the assistance he has rendered her throughout the work.

She also returns her grateful acknowledgments to the Rev. Edward Polehampton, M. A. and the Rev. Thomas S. Polehampton, M. A., Fellows of Pembroke Coll. Oxford, who have written a Preface, which she feels will not only enhance the value of the work by its own intrinsic merit, but also, by inducing many to master the quaint language in which the "*Pilgrimage*" is written, will lead them to become acquainted with the rich store of hidden beauties that are contained therein. To those who have perused the Memoir, in which they have recorded a brother's sincere endurance even unto death, as exemplified in his ministerial labours as a true soldier of the Cross, their names may be an additional encouragement to study the following pages, in which the same blessed course is shadowed forth in the writings of an ancient Chronicler, manifestly witnessing that, in every age, thoughtful and loving minds have recognized the fact that happiness in its highest degree consists in that singleness of heart and devotedness to Christ, which cannot be more lucidly and, at the same time, more beautifully expressed, than in the following passage of the late Sir Humphrey Davy: "I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others; not genius, power, wit, or fancy; but, if I could choose what would be most delightful to me, and, I believe, most useful, I should prefer 'a firm religious belief' to every other blessing: it makes life a discipline of goodness; creates new hopes, when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay—the destruction of existence—the most gorgeous of all lights; awakens life even in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity, making torture and sorrow the means of ascent to Paradise."

Advertisement to the Reader.

THIS translation of the "Pylgremage of the Sowle" was made from the French, with additions, in the year 1413. The translator, or at least the author of the "additions," (which consist of poetry in seven-lined stanzas,) was in all probability Lydgate; for the 34th chapter of Lydgate's metrical "Life of the Virgin Mary" is literally repeated in the 34th chapter of this translation of "The Charter of Mercy."

The parts omitted in the present volume relate entirely to Mariolatry or the worship and adoration of the Virgin Mary, as an intercessor with God for mankind, and contain quaint descriptions of purgatory and abstruse metaphysical doctrines, which it was felt could neither be of advantage nor interest to the general reader.

The Editor is indebted to friends for facsimiles of the drawings which have been copied from the originals, and lithographed by Mr. Vincent Brooks. Those in colour being from the illuminated MS. translation in the British Museum (Egerton 615), and those in block printing from the prose French edition of the "Pylgremage of the Sowle," printed by Verard, at Paris, in 1499.



Preface.

TWO feelings are there very natural to man—two errors, into which he is apt to fall. The first is the love of this world, in which, finding many pleasant things, he fancies he is ever to remain: the other is the desire to know more of the future life, in which, in his moments of calmer and deeper thought, he feels that he must soon be, and of the nature of which so little has been revealed. From the latter of the two arises the fondness for such works as this volume contains. Five hundred years ago, we have reason to suppose, they who read, loved much to read the following strange pages. The ground on which they stood was uncertain: they would try the promise of that which was before them. Here and there, in the curtained stillness of their chambers, lay a Body—but a few days ago full of life, bright with beauty, ready for action:—now silent and still; cold and waxen to the touch; more lovely perchance in features, but ever the same; no thought beaming from its closed eyes; no pride, or gentleness, or love hovering about its lips; no eagerness lifting the hand or hastening the foot. “Life and thought here no longer dwell.”* “Where is the Soul,” they ask, “which lately animated this motionless figure? To what lands has it fled? With what companions holds it converse? What fears or hopes, what joys or sorrows does it feel? ’Tis said that it has to give account of all that it and the Body thought and said and did together. If, as we believe, this be true, but the day of that account be not yet come, what does it, what shall it do, where does it sleep, or whither does it wander during

* Tennyson.

“ those years, which must complete their course, ere the dread trumpet shall sound and call it to the Assize ? ” In some such way probably they of the 13th Century would question their teachers or their own minds. And, if the answer came somewhat dark, somewhat fanciful, who shall wonder ? Do not *we* experience the same longing ? Do not *our* teachers sometimes return the same doubtful answer ? And yet are we not, as it were, spell-bound by what we learn ? Have not the replies, which thoughtful men among us return to our questionings, something of the same mysterious charm which hung about the oracles and fates of long-forgotten days ? There is surely in our nature, and far more in our renewed than in our unrenewed nature, a desire, which religion checks, but does not extinguish, of looking beyond the veil which parts the seen from the unseen. Time hurries on, and some minds among us open as the years advance, but not all. Here and there a master-spirit, after much apparently fruitless toil, in a bright moment itays and follows out a thought, and thence come improvements in science or in art, for which the world has long been waiting, without knowing its want : and soon the whole face of things is changed. Men are enabled to pass to and fro at a speed which their grandfathers would have deemed fabulous : a new agent, akin to the lightning of heaven, and more wondrous in its powers than the tongue itself, flashes their thoughts from continent to continent ; day after day brings forth, as from an inexhaustible storehouse, the means of recruiting or prolonging life, and fearful engines for its destruction. So far as the connection of soul and body in this life is concerned, these things, and such as these, expand the minds of the educated classes, and indirectly perhaps, to some extent, those of the uneducated also ; but yet the knowledge of all alike is bounded by the day of Death.

Since the last drop of ink dried on the pages of the Apocalypse, the veil between the seen and the unseen worlds has been no further drawn aside. The Beloved Disciple's chamber in Patmos held as much knowledge of the future as the most learned halls of our English Universities hold now. St. John was allowed to see more than any one of mortals before or since, and what he saw he was bidden to write in a Book ; but what is it ? Of infinite beauty, and importance so great that a heavenly blessing is attached to its prayerful and reverential study : but it is limited to a few points : making clear the final results to which our deeds here will lead : showing us, with the simple majesty of inspired language, the Angels flying forth from Heaven to summon all souls to judgment, and to seal the Redeemed with the Seal of

God; the Judge on His Throne; the binding of Satan; the fate of those who shall have died in his accursed service: but the space between death and judgment was left dark by St. John, and is dark still. His eye was not suffered to trace, nor may the eye of the holiest or the most learned trace now the flight of any disembodied spirit. We know something of what the Souls are while in the Body, and much of what they shall be after the last Great Day: but the cloud is over all the rest; and it will hang there impenetrable, till before the Brightness of Christ's Presence it shall remove, when He comes in His glory.

Of course, even the Faithful, humbly though they bow to the will of Him who has veiled and alone can unveil the future, must ever and anon desire to look into the state which shall be theirs when the burden of the flesh is laid aside. Death, I know, shall remove me from the state in which I now am: if the Bible were silent, all within me says there is another state to follow; and what this is I *must* wish to know. We, however, who, by inheritance, as well as by our own happy experience, have learnt the value of the Bible, will not go beyond its plain teaching, or the unforced inferences which follow from it. De Guileville was not so held back. It seemed his duty to weave into his story of the "Pilgrimage of the Sowle" the legends of his branch of the Church. And while we, living in times when the Book of God may be in the hands of all, and is thought worthy of the deepest study of the most learned of every rank, cannot but judge that much of what he wrote is unwarranted by Scripture, we cannot help feeling that so serious and earnest a book as that, which we here rescue from forgetfulness, told to our fathers and may tell to ourselves many a lesson, to which if we attend, we shall be sadder perhaps, but certainly wiser, and better, and more careful Christians. For aught we are told in holy Scripture, much of what he describes may be our lot after we have yielded to death. We cannot but walk to some extent in darkness. That "the souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them," we know. They are safe, and we need know no more. That we too may be safe, if we cast ourselves on the mercy of the Almighty and follow His commands, while we live here, with loving diligence, we are assured also; and any further speculations must be refrained within a reverent limit. But what wonder if, when ingenious men have dreamed and recorded their dreamings about the soul, simpler minds in all ages, no less deeply interested in the subject, should read of their visions with eagerness? Marvels must always attract children: and are we not all children

in our knowledge of these topics? The twilight in which the early Christians walked was twilight still in the days of De Guileville; its shadows were unremoved in the time of John Bunyan: and, if we are nearer to the dawn, the difference is, as yet, scarcely perceptible.

Of late years it seems that John Bunyan's works have come into more notice than for sometime they had received. The cause of this we need not inquire; but one of the results has been that those writings from which he may have borrowed have met also with more attention. The present reprint is a continuation of a work on which it has with much reason been supposed that the "Pilgrim's Progress" was based, viz. "The Booke of the Pylgrymage of Man," published by Mr. Pickering in 1858. There are between the work of John Bunyan and the earlier work of De Guileville many points of resemblance. But Bunyan, wisely perhaps, stopped short at the Death of his Pilgrims; telling, indeed, how they were led by the Shining Ones, who received them beyond the River, to the Gate of Heaven, but passing over in silence the intermediate state. De Guileville, however, living at an earlier period and in the Romish Communion, is restrained by no such scruples. He does not hesitate to answer that question, which must have occurred to many, "What is the Soul doing between the moment of its departure from the body, and the final Judgment?" Or again, the question, "Is there any previous Judgment?" His reply to the latter question, on which the Bible is wholly silent, is, of course, mere fancy; but in his answer to the former there is enough of truth to fix the attention of thoughtful readers, and to deserve it as well. He writes in a reverent manner, and, if he adds to Scripture, he may certainly be acquitted of all charges of wresting or obscuring the real Gospel.

A brief sketch of this and the former work will, we think, establish this assertion, and at the same time enable us to draw attention to a few of the more striking and beautiful passages.

The Pilgrim, like Bunyan's *Christian*, having being allowed a glimpse of the wondrous beauty of the Celestial City, desires to take his journey thitherward. While he is meditating how to proceed, he is accosted by "a lady of ful gret ffayrnesse," named *Grace-Dieu*, who asks him why he "wepyth;" and on his answering that it is because he knows not how he may reach heaven, she says:—

" To pylgrymes day and night
" I enlumine and give light