

The background of the text is a classical oil painting. It depicts a dark, dense forest with tall, slender trees and thick foliage. In the lower right foreground, a figure, presumably a pilgrim, is seated on a rocky, uneven path. The figure is wearing a simple, light-colored garment and has a staff or walking stick resting on the ground. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the rocks and the figure, contrasting with the deep shadows of the forest. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

Bunyan

The Pilgrim's Progress

*EVERYMAN, I will go with thee,
and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side*

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JOHN BUNYAN

Born at Elstow, near Bedford, in 1628, the son of a brazier. Served in the Civil War on the Parliamentary side. Became a preacher in 1657; and pastor of a congregation in Bedford, 1671. Intermittently imprisoned for unlicensed preaching from 1660 to 1672, and again in 1675. Died in London on 31st August 1688.

JOHN BUNYAN

The Pilgrim's Progress

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
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INTRODUCTION

THE first edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* appeared in 1678. It was one of many hundreds of pious books, pamphlets, sermons, spiritual autobiographies, tracts, and rhymes, written for the edification of their followers by working men turned preacher. Few of the other books or preachers are now remembered even by name; John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is included in any short list of the masterpieces of the English language. It was famous and popular from the first. A second edition, much enlarged, came out in the same year as the first; a third appeared in 1679; the tenth was published in 1685.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a village about a mile from Bedford, in November 1628. His father was a brazier. The family was humble, but respectable. As a boy Bunyan learnt to read and to write, and though no scholar he was certainly a considerable reader of popular books. When he was fourteen the civil war between King Charles I and the Parliament broke out. Two years later Bunyan was called up by the Parliamentary army and served as a soldier from 1644 until the summer of 1647 when he was demobilized. He then became a brazier by trade and married. Little is known from records of his life during the next seven years, but his spiritual difficulties and adventures are set down at length and with fascinating detail in *Grace Abounding* which he wrote in 1666.

A considerable change occurred when Bunyan married. The date of the marriage and the name of his first wife are not known, but he notes with gratitude that she was a very religious woman who greatly influenced him. He became a regular church-goer, an eager Bible reader, and a hot debater on religious matters; but it was a long time before he reached any final state of conviction. At last after years of internal struggle and conflict, he was gradually led to join the community founded in Bedford by John Gifford, a former major in the king's army. Bunyan was received into this congregation as a brother in 1655, and thereafter

became one of its most zealous and successful members. He began to preach with great success. Preaching soon drew him into controversy, and in 1656 his first book was printed; it was an attack on the Quakers entitled *Some Gospel Truths Opened*.

On 3rd September 1658 Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, died. With the passing of the dictator, the control over the many Puritan sects and factions lapsed. In the spring of 1660 General Monck brought an end to chaos by inviting King Charles II to return to England. The supremacy of the saints was thus ended, and the ejected clergy of the Church of England were restored to their livings. The causes of the civil war were various and complex, but the Puritan preachers had been the most zealous of the opponents of the royalist party of the established Church of England. Religion and politics were still inseparable, and it was not surprising that unlicensed and often self-appointed preachers were forbidden to address their congregations, especially as some of them claimed a direct divine call and exhibited a religious enthusiasm which was dangerously exciting in disturbed and hysterical times. Zealots who believed that Christ's Second Coming was close at hand were eager to make practical preparation for the Lord, even by shedding the blood of those whom they regarded as God's enemies, as indeed occurred in London in January 1661.

Whilst the attitude of the newly restored authorities was not unreasonable, and was indeed for the times even tolerant, it was hardly to be expected that a man of Bunyan's stark convictions and courage would compromise on a straight issue between the Law of the Land and what he regarded as God's Law. Much had happened to Bunyan in the six years since he first joined the Bedford congregation. His first wife had died, leaving him four children, one of them blind. He married again, and his second wife was brave and devoted. Bunyan was now a leader of his people with a considerable reputation outside Bedford. He had therefore the choice of submitting to authority or of facing the consequences. On 12th November 1660, in spite of warning, he went to address a meeting. He was arrested and committed for examination to Bedford jail.

There was no violent animus or desire to persecute Bunyan. At his first examination and at his trial many efforts were made

by well-meaning officials to have him set free, but he refused to yield or to make any kind of compromise that he would in any way refrain from his preaching. He therefore remained in jail. Thereafter, for the next twelve years he was legally a prisoner; but, as the records in *The Church Book of Bunyan Meeting* show, he was at first often allowed full liberty to go about his business; he even travelled so far as London. The records are blank between 1663 and 1668, and it is likely that during most of this period he was more closely confined, but his friends were allowed to visit him, and he wrote and read much. After 1668 the records of the congregation were resumed; they show Bunyan taking a full share in the affairs of his church, visiting, admonishing, and attending meetings for worship.

During these years his courage and leadership were growing more and more conspicuous, and at length on 21st January 1672 he was solemnly elected as pastor of the Bedford community. In the following March, the restrictions on preaching were relaxed; by the Declaration of Religious Indulgence nonconformist ministers were allowed to apply for a licence to preach. Bunyan's licence was granted on 9th May 1672, as a 'Teacher of the Congregation allowed by us in the House of Josias Roughed, Bedford, for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, who are of the persuasion commonly called Congregational.'

Shortly afterwards the congregation bought the barn belonging to Josias Roughed for use as a meeting house for fifty. It was conveyed to John Bunyan of the town of Bedford, brazier, John Fenn and Samuel Fenn, of the same town, haberdashers, Thomas Crocker of Kimbolton in the County of Huntingdon, linen draper, Thomas Cooper of the town of Bedford, last maker, and Samuel Hensman of the same town, draper.

Bunyan was formally pardoned on 13th September 1672. He was now fully occupied with preaching, controversy, writing, and visiting a circuit of congregations, and his authority was so widely recognized that he was nicknamed 'Bishop Bunyan.' In 1675 the Declaration of Indulgence was withdrawn and the persecution of nonconformists was for a time renewed. Once more Bunyan was a prisoner for about six weeks. It was during this period of forced idleness that he began to write *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Bunyan was now forty-seven. In his considerable experience of the world, he had encountered a great variety of men and women. As a tinker he visited many houses, great and small, and as a pastor he met most of the spiritual difficulties of the faithful and the wavering. By conviction and experience he was persuaded that, like the apostles of old, he had been specially chosen as a teacher of God's people. To such a man the Bible was not a picturesque record of ancient events but a living and vital guide for all occasions. Moreover, as he detailed in *Grace Abounding*, he was himself assailed by Satan and rescued by the audible voice of God. For more than twenty years Bunyan had been preaching to audiences of unlearned but very critical hearers, and since his conversion he had written more than twenty books in prose and verse. He was thus ripe for a masterpiece.

The Pilgrim's Progress seems almost to have been an accident. Bunyan was writing, as he notes in the rhymed preface,

'of the Way
And Race of Saints, in this our Gospel-day,'

when he fell suddenly into an allegory. The book was apparently *The Strait Gate*, a homely work, intended especially for 'professors,' full of his own experiences of the difficulties and backslidings of the faithful, and written in plain English with some humour. As he wrote, the allegory seemed to form itself in his mind and threatened to swamp the book. Bunyan therefore composed it as a separate piece at odd moments to divert his thoughts. There are from time to time signs of interruption in the narrative; but he continued to the end until Christian had safely arrived at the Heavenly City.

Hitherto Bunyan had not attempted anything so elaborate in this creative kind of writing, and he had some doubts about publishing it lest he should cause offence; it was too like profane fiction, and lacking that solidity to be expected from a well-known preacher. He showed the manuscript to his friends, and their opinions were divided. At last he decided to print it; did not God Himself speak in parables and types? His judgment was immediately justified, and the printer made a fortune.

The form of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is not particularly original. The adventurous journey is the oldest of stories, and the notion

of man's life as a pilgrimage has been common since real pilgrimages were a popular form of religious devotion. The personification of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Cardinal Virtues was a favourite device of preachers and artists in the Middle Ages; and often in portraying the sin, the portrait was recognizably that of a local sinner. Fights with giants were a common feature in popular romance. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan was thus using familiar devices; but the individuality and power are Bunyan's own. The allegory is not so much that of a Christian soul in its earthly journey towards eternity; it is rather the story of the pilgrimage of John Bunyan. He himself is Christian and he relates his own spiritual adventures, temptations, and dangers in the form of allegory, as he had detailed them ten years earlier in direct narrative in *Grace Abounding*. Those who befriend or hinder Christian or share his journey are real people, and they speak as they spoke in life. Bunyan was very English in his imagination: he writes the same kind of literal matter of fact fiction as almost persuades the reader of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Gulliver's Travels* that he is reading the exact truth.

There are, however, considerable differences in style, and the mood often changes. The opening paragraphs might almost be a chapter from an unknown book of the Bible; but whenever Christian meets with a human adversary, particularly of the type of Mr Worldly Wiseman, or Talkative, or Ignorance, the style drops into vivid everyday speech. It is indeed possible to make likely guesses at some of the originals. The arguments of Mr Worldly Wiseman are much the same as those used to Bunyan himself at the time of his first arrest by Mr Paul Cobb, the Clerk. Evangelist encourages Christian as John Gifford had helped Bunyan. *The Church Book of Bunyan Meeting* has many records of the backsliding of unprofitable brethren who were the originals of Obstinate and Pliable, of By-ends, Hold-the-World, and Ignorance; Bunyan met and argued with them all. Vanity Fair, too, with its crowds and bustle is a close picture of the great Stourbridge Fair, held annually at Cambridge.

But the book is not all realistic. The fight between Apollyon and Christian owes something to Bunyan's reading of romances in his unregenerate days, whilst the theological arguments between Christian and Talkative are reminiscences of the

discourses with which Bunyan had edified his flock in sermons or pastoral visits. At other times the allegory is deliberately compounded from texts and passages in the Scriptures, as in the Interpreter's House, which is ingenious rather than spontaneous.

Bunyan's style, except when he is deliberately quoting or imitating the Bible, is the best plain English, which is the chief reason why *The Pilgrim's Progress* is still so readable. He was no scholar, and so was not tempted to write the elaborate polysyllabic latinized English which passed for literary style amongst the learned. He was used to speaking to plain men and women, and very expert in all methods of reaching their emotions, by scaring them with horror of hell-fire, by apt anecdote, by persuasion and homely example. Above all, he passionately believed what he wrote.

The Pilgrim's Progress was followed by two works in which Bunyan again used the methods which he had found so successful. The first was *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, a realistic dialogue between Mr Wiseman—not Mr Worldly of that family but a godly member—and his disciple Attentive, who together consider the wicked life and quiet death of their neighbour Mr Badman. This book was all realism. Bunyan's next important book was all allegory. It was called *The Holy War*, in the form of a history of the war between King Shaddai and Diabolus for the town of Mansoul. The allegory is far more elaborate than in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but the result less successful. The reader can see his own difficulties in Christian's troubles; he cannot so naturally identify himself with a besieged city.

The Holy War came out in 1682. In 1684 Bunyan published the sequel to Christian's adventures in a Second Part to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which tells how Christiana and her children, accompanied by Mercy, follow the same route, and at length cross the river to enter the Holy City. This second part is a more finished work of art, and the style is more consistent. It is, however, less moving, because Christiana's journey is more placid. With Mr Greatheart as escort, guide, and protector, the party is seldom in any great danger, and their success is sure from the first. There is less doctrinal digression and more realism; the characters are very skilfully sketched, and with considerable humour; and the atmosphere of the whole is more kindly and generous hearted.

The difference in time between the two parts reflects Bunyan's own temper. The long fight for liberty of conscience was almost won. It was at last beginning to be recognized that a man who could not conform to the practices of the Established Church was not necessarily plotting revolution. Bunyan himself was now a person of great authority amongst his followers. He had finished with the struggle and was sure of himself. Like the pilgrims at the end of their journey, he was waiting on the bank for his own call. It came four years later. Bunyan died in London on 31st August 1688, and was buried in Bunhill Fields.

His character and appearance were thus described by one who knew him: 'He appeared in countenance to be of a stern and rough temper; but in his conversation mild and affable, not given to loquacity or much discourse in company, unless some urgent occasion required it; observing never to boast of himself, or his parts, but rather seem low in his own eyes, and submit himself to the judgment of others; abhorring lying and swearing, being just in all that lay in his power to his word, not seeming to revenge injuries, loving to reconcile differences, and make friendship with all; he had a sharp quick eye, accomplished with an excellent discerning of persons being of good judgment and quick wit. As for his person, he was tall of stature, strong-boned, though not corpulent, somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling eyes, wearing his hair on his upper lip, after the old British fashion his hair reddish, but in his latter days, time had sprinkled it with grey; his nose well set, but not declining or bending, and his mouth moderate large; his forehead something high, and his habit always plain and modest. And thus have we impartially described the internal and external parts of a person whose death hath been much regretted; a person who had tried the smiles and frowns of time; not puffed up in prosperity, not shaken in adversity, always holding the golden mean.

In him at once did three great worthies shine,
Historian, poet, and a choice divine;
Then let him rest in undisturbed dust,
Until the resurrection of the just.'

1954.

G. B. HARRISON.

(Notes on the text are to be found on page 315.)

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THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY FOR HIS BOOK

WHEN at the first I took my Pen in hand
Thus for to write; I did not understand
That I at all should make a little Book
In such a mode; Nay, I had undertook
To make another, which when almost done,
Before I was aware I this begun.

And thus it was: I writing of the Way
And Race of Saints, in this our Gospel-day,
Fell suddenly into an Allegory
About their Journey, and the way to Glory,
In more than twenty things which I set down.
This done, I twenty more had in my Crown,
And they again began to multiply
Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.
Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast,
I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last
Should prove *ad infinitum*, and eat out
The Book that I already am about.

Well, so I did; but yet I did not think
To shew to all the World my Pen and Ink
In such a mode; I only thought to make
I knew not what: nor did I undertake
Thereby to please my Neighbour; no not I,
I did it mine own self to gratifie.

Neither did I but vacant seasons spend
In this my Scribble: nor did I intend
But to divert myself in doing this
From worser thoughts which make me do amiss.

Thus I set Pen to Paper with delight,

And quickly had my thoughts in black and white.
For having now my Method by the end,
Still as I pull'd, it came; and so I penn'd
It down, until it came at last to be
For length and breadth the bigness which you see.

Well, when I had thus put mine ends together,
I shew'd them others, that I might see whether
They would condemn them, or them justify:
And some said, Let them live; some, Let them die;
Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so:
Some said, It might do good; others said, No.

Now was I in a strait, and did not see
Which was the best thing to be done by me:
At last I thought, Since you are thus divided,
I print it will, and so the case decided.

For, thought I, some I see would have it done,
Though others in that Channel do not run.
To prove then who advised for the best,
Thus I thought fit to put it to the test.

I further thought, if now I did deny
Those that would have it thus, to gratifie,
I did not know but hinder them I might
Of that which would to them be great delight.

For those which were not for its coming forth,
I said to them, Offend you I am loth,
Yet since your Brethren pleased with it be,
Forbear to judge till you do further see.

If that thou wilt not read, let it alone;
Some love the meat, some love to pick the bone:
Yea, that I might them better palliate,
I did too with them thus Expostulate:

May I not write in such a style as this?
In such a method too, and yet not miss
Mine end, thy good? why may it not be done?
Dark Clouds bring Waters, when the bright bring none.
Yea, dark or bright, if they their Silver drops

Cause to descend, the Earth, by yielding Crops,
Gives praise to both, and carpeth not at either,
But treasures up the Fruit they yield together;
Yea, so commixes both, that in her Fruit
None can distinguish this from that: they suit
Her well, when hungry; but, if she be full,
She spues out both, and makes their blessings null.

You see the ways the Fisher man doth take
To catch the Fish; what Engines doth he make?
Behold how he engageth all his Wits;
Also his Snares, Lines, Angles, Hooks, and Nets.
Yet Fish there be, that neither Hook, nor Line,
Nor Snare, nor Net, nor Engine can make thine;
They must be grop'd for, and be tickled too,
Or they will not be catch'd, whate'er you do.

How doth the Fowler seek to catch his Game
By divers means, all which one cannot name?
His Gun, his Nets, his Lime-twigs, Light, and Bell;
He creeps, he goes, he stands; yea who can tell
Of all his postures? Yet there's none of these
Will make him master of what Fowls he please.
Yea, he must Pipe and Whistle to catch *this*;
Yet if he does so, *that* Bird he will miss.

If that a Pearl may in a Toad's head dwell,
And may be found too in an Oyster-shell;
If things that promise nothing do contain
What better is than Gold; who will disdain,
That have an inkling of it, there to look,
That they may find it? Now my little Book
(Though void of all those Paintings that may make
It with this or the other man to take)
Is not without those things that do excel
What do in brave but empty notions dwell.

Well, yet I am not fully satisfied,
That this your Book will stand, when soundly try'd.

Why, what's the matter? It is dark. What tho?