

**NAXOS**
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC
FICTION**

**THE
GREAT EPICS**

John Bunyan

The Pilgrim's Progress

Read by **Edward de Souza**



NA417112D

1	The City of Destruction	5:41
2	The Neighbours – Obstinate and Pliable	5:50
3	The Slough of Despond – ‘a very miry slough’	3:48
4	Mr Worldly Wiseman and the village of Morality	5:43
5	The Evangelist	5:20
6	The Wicket Gate and Mr Good-will	3:50
7	The House of the Interpreter	5:38
8	Christian arrives at The Cross.	4:27
9	Christian meets Formalist and Hypocrisy	5:49
10	Christian meets Timorous and Mistrust	4:29
11	The Palace Beautiful	10:09
12	Christian eats and discourses	4:22
13	The Valley of Humiliation	8:27
14	After the battle – the Valley of the Shadow of Death	5:30
15	In the midst of the valley	6:02
16	Christian meets his old friend Faithful	4:11
17	Vanity Fair	6:19
18	Christian and Faithful are charged and tried	9:17
19	Judge and Jury – and sentence	4:35
20	Christian and Hopeful meet By-ends	6:32

21	Lucre, a silver mine, and Demas	4:43
22	A pillar of salt and By-path Meadow	7:59
23	Doubting Castle, Giant Despair and his wife	7:37
24	The Delectable Mountains	2:47
25	Walking with the Shepherds	5:21
26	The Athiest with his back towards Zion	5:16
27	The country of Beulah	5:27
28	Crossing the river	5:22
29	The sight of the Celestial City	6:35
30	At the gate	5:31
31	The Pilgrim's Progress – The Second Part	5:11
32	Christiana confides in her children and has a dream	5:39
33	Christiana makes up her mind	9:10
34	The dreamer changes	7:25
35	The boys, Christiana and Mercy encounter obstacles	5:08
36	The House of the Interpreter	5:44
37	The Interpreter calls for his man-servant, Great-Heart	6:35
38	The party meets the lions and Grim	3:01
39	At the porter's Lodge	5:56
40	Matthew falls sick – and Mr Skill arrives	7:13

41	Mr Great-Heart returns	5:53
42	The Valley of the Shadow of Death	8:18
43	The party meets the giant Maul	4:48
44	The old pilgrim Mr Honest	5:14
45	At the Inn – the inkeeper Gaius	5:58
46	In the morning	5:36
47	The town of Vanity	5:50
48	The journey continues	8:52
49	On to the Delectable Mountains	3:01
50	Valiant-for-truth	6:49
51	The Enchanted Ground – and on	4:16
52	Mr Stand-Fast joins the party	7:37

Total time: 5:06:22

John Bunyan

The Pilgrim's Progress

The Pilgrim's Progress was first published in 1678, and swiftly achieved the popularity which it has retained ever since. Further editions and revisions soon followed, and in 1684 Part Two was added. Its author, John Bunyan, wrote much of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in prison, probably in the county gaol rather than in the tiny lock-up in Bedford which legend used to claim as its birthplace.

Bunyan had been imprisoned because he refused to accept the demands for religious conformity imposed after the Restoration of 1660. He had in earlier years served in the Civil War on the Parliamentary side; he had also undergone a severe crisis of faith in which he struggled to hold on to his religious belief. The first literary fruit of this crisis was *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, an intense autobiographical account of his period of spiritual turmoil. *The Pilgrim's Progress* followed, in which he turned this personal material into the great work of fiction we know today.

The Pilgrim's Progress is an allegorical account of the heroic journey of Christian

towards heaven and salvation. The story clearly has something of the quality of an epic, and also echoes the older English tradition of the knightly romance – much of it is couched in terms of a holy war between Good and Evil. There is, too, an obvious echo of *Everyman*, the medieval morality play, yet its memorable opening – ‘As I walked through the wilderness of this world...’ – has a poetic urgency which recalls that other medieval classic of spiritual journeying, *Piers Plowman*. That urgency, that yearning for salvation set against the terror of damnation, is to sustain the narrative throughout.

As an allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* inevitably relies on personification, but there is nothing strict or pedantic about Bunyan's equivalents: the characters Christian encounters frequently rise above mere function to become vividly realised figures – people like the self-serving, hypocritical By-ends, whose language is full of smooth, would-be courtly evasions. For him, religion must be made an easy thing: ‘My wife is a very virtuous woman, the daughter of a

virtuous woman. She was my Lady Faining's daughter, therefore she came of a very honourable family, and is arrived to such a pitch of breeding, that she knows how to carry it to all, even to prince and peasant. Tis true, we somewhat differ in religion from those of the stricter sort...'

Modern readers may be shocked by Christian's abandonment of wife and children. We should remember, however, the powerfully personal emphasis on Calvinist doctrine: Christian must create his own relationship with his God, achieve his own salvation – and perhaps there is a recollection, too, of the way in which Christ's disciples had to be ready to give up family and work to follow Him. At any rate, Christian passionately urges his family to accompany him, but the appeal falls on stony ground.

Thereafter, Christian goes through the various stages of full conversion to the faith. He begins by becoming 'convicted of sin' – aware of his moral and spiritual shortcomings – and moves on to a process of instruction (the House of the Interpreter), before shedding the burden of his sin by the Cross and receiving the roll which represents his guarantee of salvation as one of the elect. From now on he must resist all

temptation as he travels the hard road to the Gates of Heaven.

Part Two tells how Christiana (his wife) and their four children follow his example and, indeed, his road. Some of Part One's dramatic power is sacrificed for a gentler, more pastoral, narrative. Accompanied and protected by Great-Heart, Christiana, her friend Mercy and the children never seem to be in real danger, but Bunyan's thoughtful treatment of 'the problems of the small urban community of Nonconformists' (Roger Sharrock) offers much in compensation for this reduction in intensity. The natural, almost domestic, way in which the pilgrims are eventually called to their reward provides a moving conclusion: 'So he passed over, and the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.'

What of Bunyan's language? His style is a triumph of dignified colloquialism, always able to achieve a plain tenderness – as in the description of the Delectable Mountains – or a domestic simplicity which owes much to the Authorized Version of the Bible: 'Now while they lay here and waited for the good hour, there was a noise in the town that there was a Post come from the Celestial City...the contents whereof was, Hail, good woman, I bring thee tidings that the Master

calleth for thee, and expecteth that thou shouldest stand in his presence, in clothing of immortality, within these ten days.' Yet Bunyan is also equal to the demands of the sinister, the smoothly hypocritical, or the depiction of vigorous action, as in the great fights with Giant Despair and Apollyon. Throughout, he makes the ordinary extraordinary – suffusing the simple good things of everyday life with a sense of their ultimate source, God.

John Bunyan was born in 1628 at Elstow in Bedfordshire. His father's family, originally of yeoman stock, had fallen on harder times, but John was nevertheless educated at the local school. At the age of 16 he was called up into the Parliamentary army, in which he served for two years. Married in 1649, his wife bore him four children and encouraged his interest in religious reading; his earliest writings were pamphlets attacking the Quakers. His wife died in 1656 and he married again in 1659. Following his arrest in 1660 for nonconformist preaching, he spent most of the subsequent twelve years in Bedford prison. Here he produced *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) and began *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In his later years he became a pastor noted for the energy and power of his preaching. Other works include *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1682). Bunyan died in 1688.

Notes by Perry Keenlyside

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John Bunyan

The Pilgrim's Progress

Read by **Edward de Souza**

For three hundred years *The Pilgrim's Progress* has remained perhaps the best loved and most read of devotional fictions. In plain yet powerful and moving language, Bunyan tells the story of Christian's struggle to attain salvation and the Gates of Heaven. He must pass through the Slough of Despond, ward off the temptations of Vanity Fair and fight the monstrous Apollyon... In Part Two, his wife and children follow the same path, helped and protected by Great-Heart, until for them too 'the trumpets sound on the other side'.



Edward de Souza has played leading roles in over a dozen West End plays and in several seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford, at the Old Vic and the National Theatre. His film credits include *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*. For Naxos AudioBooks he has also read *Don Quixote*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Composers' Letters*, *The Island Race*, *The New Testament*, *Hamlet*, *The Life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*.

CD ISBN:
978-962-634-171-1

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Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Recording.

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Total time
5:06:22