**Notes – “The Pilgrim’s Progress”**

**- John Bunyan**

This famous work was written during Bunyan’s second imprisonment by the Anglican church for his protestant religious views and his support of the Puritan cause during the war. **“The Pilgrim’s Progress”** is the most famous **allegory** in English literature – remember that an allegory is a narrative in which general concepts such as sin, despair, faith are represented as people or as aspects of the natural world.

**“Vanity Fair”**

Paragraph I – **style** – Bunyan was a preacher – traces of that oral style appear in the

firstparagraph – the word “vanity” is repeated six times with much

explanation – one can imagine Bunyan taking pains to make sure his

allegory is clear to the slowest member of the congregation.

**“vanity”** means “empty” or “worthless” – therefore the allegorical meaning

of “fair” deals with the worldly corruption of spiritual life caused by the

attachment to the things of this world.

Paragraph III – some “worldly attachments” from this list might be favorably viewed,

such as wives, husbands, children, lives, bodies, and souls.

Paragraph V – various crimes occur at Vanity Fair

Paragraph VI – the ware and merchandise of Rome refer to Roman Catholicism and

the worldly power of the Catholic Church. As a Protestant and Puritan,

Bunyan distrusted Roman Catholicism – in 1688, the year of Bunyan’s

death, James II was deposed, partly because he favored Catholics.

Paragraph VII – **allusion** - Bunyan here refers to the temptation of Jesus as

Recounted in Matthew 4 and Luke 4.

Paragraph VIII – **allusion** – the description of the pilgrims and the reaction of the

people at the fair to the pilgrims alludes to I Corinthians 2.

Paragraph IX – the implication here is that men and women of the same religion speak

the same language – as believers, they form a community.

Paragraph XII – each member of the 12 man jury is dominated by one of the passions

that abound in Vanity Fair – for example, Mr. Blind-man sees heresy.

Paragraph XIII – the torture of Faithful reminds the readers of how Jesus was treated

– Bunyan’s description uses realistic detail.

Paragraph XIV – **allusion** – Elijah was transported up to heaven in a chariot.

**“The Celestial City”**

Final Paragraph – **allusion** – Bunyan’s vision of the Celestial City depends heavily for

descriptive details on the book of Revelations or Apocalypse.