



JOHN BUNYAN
AUTHOR OF *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

Christian Biographies
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Second Presbyterian Church

THE TUMULTUOUS 17TH CENTURY IN ENGLAND

1628: William Laud made Bishop of London: sought uniformity in the church and the Book of Common Prayer, persecuting the Puritans.

1642: Parliament rebels against King Charles I, supports the Puritan cause., erects the Westminster Assembly

1649: Charles I beheaded; Cromwell becomes Lord Protector

1658: Death of Cromwell, followed by collapse of his government

1660: Charles II restored to the throne

1662: The Great Ejection: Non-conformist preachers removed from their churches.



THE TINKER OF BEDFORD

John Bunyan born in 1628

Trained by his father as a tinker; no formal education at all

Drafted into the Parliamentary Army for two years

“I had few equals for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God.”

Married at 21; his wife possessed 2 books: Arthur Dent’s *The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven* and Lewis Bayly’s *The Practice of Piety*.

Had 3 daughters (the oldest born blind) and one son



GRACE ABOUNDING TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS

Assailed by doubts and blasphemies: “My heart was a times exceeding hard. If I would have given a thousand pounds for a tear, I could not shed one.”

Tempted by Satan so that he felt doomed: “Oh, the diligence of Satan; oh, the desperateness of man’s heart.” Swallowed by despair.

Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians*: “I found my condition in his experience so largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written out of my heart.”

The Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness: “One day as I was passing into the field. . . This sentence fell upon my soul. Thy righteousness is in heaven. . . . My righteousness was Jesus Christ himself. . . . Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed.”



BUNYAN THE PREACHER

Because of his gospel zeal, Bunyan was asked to “exhort.” A great preacher was discovered: “the Tinker turned Preached.”

Large crowds began attending Bunyan’s preaching:

- It was said that a day’s notice would gain a crowd of 1200 to hear Bunyan preach at 7 am on a weekday morning.
- “Mr. Bunyan preached so New Testament-like he made me admire and weep for joy, and give him my affections.”

When King Charles asked John Owen why he went to hear Bunyan preach: “I would willingly exchange my learning for the tinker’s power of touching men’s hearts.”





BUNYAN IMPRISONED

Arrested in 1660 for preaching without a license

Because he would not agree not to preach, he remained in prison for 12 years.

Chose a clear conscience in prison over a compromised conscience that was free

“I have determined, the Almighty God being my help and shield, yet to suffer, if frail life might continue so long, even till the moss shall grow on mine eyebrows, rather than thus to violate my faith and principles.”

Tormented by the effects on his family

“The parting with my Wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of the Flesh from my bones; . . . The many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor Family was like to meet with, should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child...”

THE VALIANT ELIZABETH BUNYAN

Married Bunyan in 1659, 1 year before his arrest.

First pregnancy miscarried, so she raised 4 step-children while their father was in prison for 12 years.

Her appeal for his release:

- “Would he stop preaching?” “My lord, he dares not leave off preaching as long as he can speak.”
- “He runneth up and down and doeth harm.” “No, my lord, it is not so; God hath owned him and done much good by him.”
- “His doctrine is the doctrine of the devil.” “My lord, when the righteous Judge shall appear, it will be known that his doctrine is not the doctrine of the devil!”



Illustration of Elizabeth Bunyan and her children, as depicted in the original text.



PASTOR OF BEDFORD

Throughout his imprisonment, Bunyan had been serving his church through writings and occasional visits.

Released from prison in 1672 under the Declaration of Religious Indulgence.

Returned to pastor his church of 120, in a converted barn, until his death 15 years later.

Imprisoned against from 1675-76, when many of his church members were harassed or arrested.

Died of fever caught during a trip to London to seek reconciliation between a father and his son.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



Written during prison and released in 1678. An immediate success.

- Considered the best-selling book ever, after the Bible. Translated into 200 languages.

An allegory “from this world to that which is to come.”

George Whitefield: “It smells of the prison. It was written when the author was confined in Bedford jail. And ministers never write or preach so well as when under the cross: the Spirit of Christ and of Glory then rests upon them.”

FAMOUS SCENES IN PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

The City of Destruction, Slough of Despond, Wicket Gate,
and the Burden at the Cross

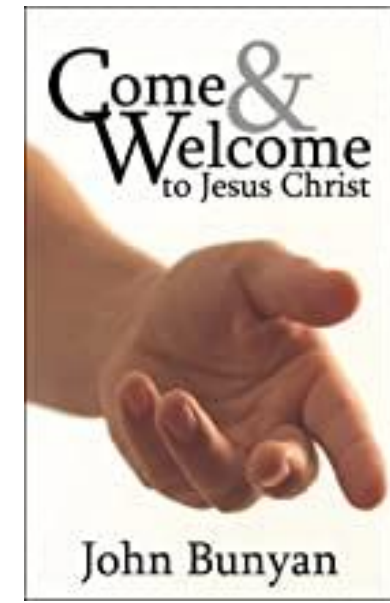
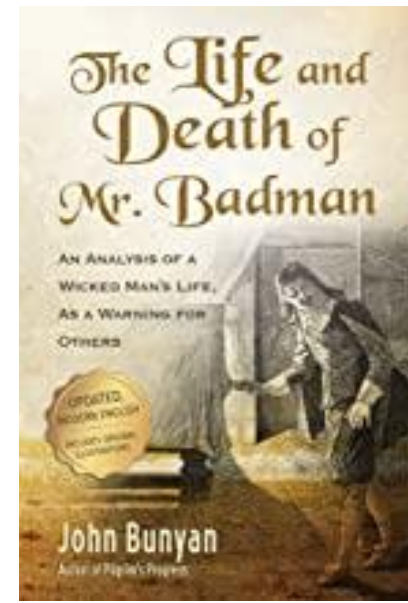
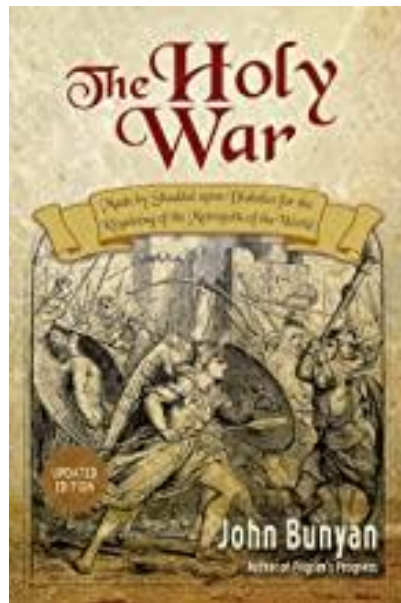
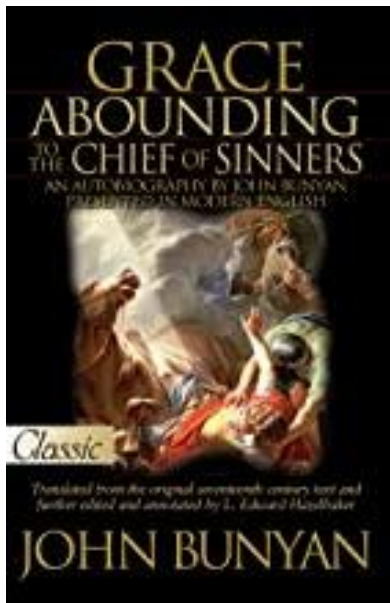
The Hill Difficulty, the Interpreter's House, the Valley of the
Shadow of Death

Vanity Faith, Doubting Castle

The Delectable Mountains, the Land of Beulah, the
Celestial City



OTHER IMPORTANT BOOKS



THE FRUIT OF BUNYAN'S SUFFERING

Revealed his gift of writing, especially for the suffering

Deepened his love for the church

- “Thus have I, in a few words, written to you before I die, a word to provoke you to faith and holiness, because I desire that you may have the life that is laid up for all them that believe in the Lord Jesus” (*Christian Behavior Being the Fruits of True Christianity*).

Gave his labor the fragrance of eternity

- “Conversion is not the smooth, easy-going process some men seem to think. . . . It is wounding work, of course, this breaking of the hearts, but without wounding there is no saving.”

Drawn from Piper, *The Hidden Smile of God*, 60-68.



THE FRUIT OF BUNYAN'S SUFFERING

Confirmed his awareness of the Cross that must be born in following Christ

- “Following of me is not like following. . . Some other masters. The wind sits always on my face and the foaming rage of the sea of this world, and the proud and lofty waves thereof do continually beat upon the sides of the bark or ship that myself, my cause, and my followers are in” (*The Greatness of the Soul*).

Strengthened his reliance on God's sovereignty

- “It is not what enemies will, nor what they are resolved upon, but what God will, and what God appoints; that shall be done” (*Advice to Sufferers*).

Enlarged his capacity for mercy

- “Learn to pity and bewail the condition of the enemy. . . . Never grudge them their present advantages” (*Seasonable Counsel*).



FOR FURTHER READING

