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THE TEACHINGS OF JOHN BUNYAN IN THE LIGHT OF  
RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM

By

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A Thesis

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Dedicated to

TIGGER

(Charles Walker Townsend III)

Who woke me up in the mornings so I could  
work on my thesis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

INTRODUCTION.....	iv
A. The Problem Stated and Justified.....	iv
B. Subject Delimited.....	v
C. Procedure.....	v
D. Sources.....	v
I. THE RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM.....	1
A. Introduction.....	1
B. The Sovereignty of God.....	1
C. The Total Depravity of Man.....	3
D. Predestination and Election.....	5
E. Limited Salvation.....	8
F. Irresistible Grace.....	9
G. Perseverance of the Saints.....	10
H. Summary.....	11
II. BUNYAN'S TEACHINGS REGARDING THESE RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM.....	13
A. Introduction.....	13
B. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding God's Sovereignty.....	13
1. God's Sovereignty in Bunyan's Life.....	13
2. God's Sovereignty in the Lives of Christians as Seen in the Pilgrim's Progress.....	16
3. God's Sovereignty in the Lives of Non-Christians.....	17
4. An Exception.....	18
5. Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Sovereignty of God.....	18
C. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Total Depravity of Man.....	19
1. Total Depravity as Found in Bunyan's Confession of Faith.....	19
2. Total Depravity as Bunyan Sees it in His Own Life.....	19
3. Total Depravity as Found in The Pilgrim's Progress...	21
4. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Freedom of the Will.....	23
5. Summay of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Total Depravity of Man.....	26
D. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election...	26
1. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election as Found in His Confession of Faith.....	26
2. Bunyan's Beliefs Regarding Predestination and Election as He Saw it in His Own Life.....	28
3. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election as Found in The Pilgrim's Progress.....	30
4. Teachings Which Appear to Deny Predestination and Election.....	31
5. Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election.....	33

Gift of the Author

32492

May 1954

E.	Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Limited Salvation.....	34
1.	Bunyan's Teachings Which Indicate a Belief in Limited.. Salvation.....	34
2.	Bunyan's Teachings Which Seem to Indicate a Belief in.. Unlimited Salvation.....	36
3.	Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Limited..... Salvation.....	38
F.	Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Irresistible Grace.....	38
G.	Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Perseverance of the Saints.....	42
1.	Bunyan's Teachings as Found in His Confession of Faith..	42
2.	Bunyan's Teachings as Found in His Grace Abounding.....	43
3.	Bunyan's Teachings as Found in Pilgrim's Progress with. Contradictions Which Appear.....	46
4.	Bunyan's Teachings: A Suggestion Solution and Summary.	54
H.	Summary.....	57
III.	A COMPARISON OF BUNYAN'S TEACHINGS WITH THE CALVINIST TENETS.....	58
A.	Introduction.....	58
B.	A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings the Sovereignty of God with the Calvinist Tenet.....	58
C.	A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Total..... Depravity of Man with the Calvinist Tenet.....	59
D.	A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination.. and Election with the Calvinist Tenet.....	60
E.	A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Limited..... Salvation with the Calvinist Tenet.....	61
F.	A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Irresistible..... Grace with the Calvinist Tenet.....	62
G.	A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Perseverance of the Saints with the Calvinist Tenet.....	63
IV.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....,.....	65



## INTRODUCTION

THE TEACHINGS OF JOHN BUNYAN IN THE LIGHT OF  
RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Stated and Justified

Robert Southey, in his *Life of John Bunyan*, says that: "Calvinism would never have become a term of reproach, nor have driven so many pious minds, in horror of it, to an opposite extreme, if it had never worn a blacker appearance than in Bunyan's Works."<sup>1</sup> Yet Robert Philip remarks that many would be surprised to learn that Bunyan was a Calvinist at all.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Louis L. Martz, in his Introduction to The Pilgrim's Progress, says:

"The theology of *Pilgrim's Progress* may be slighted, but it cannot be forgotten; Bunyan's religious conceptions are essential to the power of individual details and to the structure of the whole. Thus the nature of every incident in Part I, and indeed the exact placing of each incident along the road, are determined fundamentally by Bunyan's Puritan theology, by his Calvinistic and Lutheran views of the truly religious life."<sup>3</sup>

Seeing that John Bunyan's writings, and especially The Pilgrim's Progress, have greatly influenced large numbers of people, both Christian and non-Christian, it is of real importance to determine the beliefs of Bunyan. Therefore, since Bunyan has been called a Calvinist, his beliefs will be studied in comparison with the recognized tenets of Calvinism in order to determine whether Bunyan was a Calvinist at all; and if so, to what extent his beliefs were Calvinistic. Thus it is hoped that the true

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1. Quoted, Robert Philip: *Characteristics of John Bunyan*, p. 478.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
3. Martz: *Introduction to the Pilgrim's Progress*, p. vii.



theology of Bunyan, which Philip considers to be not true Calvinism,<sup>1</sup> will be discovered so that the reader of The Pilgrim's Progress can understand the meaning of the book more intelligently.

#### B. Subject Delimited

It is not the purpose of this thesis to study all of the writings of John Bunyan, or to cover the whole field of Calvinism. But it is the purpose of this thesis to study the teachings of John Bunyan as found in his major work, The Pilgrim's Progress, in his autobiographical book, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, and in his "A Confession of My Faith," and to compare them with the recognized tenets of Calvinism.

#### C. Procedure

A statement of the core of the recognized tenets of Calvinism, i.e., the sovereignty of God, the total depravity of man, predestination and election, limited salvation, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints, will be followed by a study of Bunyan's teachings regarding these tenets as found in The Pilgrim's Progress, Grace Abounding, and "A Confession of My Faith." Following this, the teachings of Bunyan will be compared with the Calvinist beliefs in order to determine whether Bunyan is a Calvinist; and, if so, to what extent his teachings are Calvinistic.

#### D. Sources

The major source for Calvinist beliefs is John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion. Bunyan's teachings will be studied from his

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1. Philip: op. cit., pp. 481, 485.

greatest book, The Pilgrim's Progress, and his autobiographical book on religious experiences, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, and his "A Confession of My Faith."

Because John Bunyan's literary works include fifty-three books and tracts,<sup>1</sup> most of which are almost unknown to the public today, no attempt will be made to cover the evidences of Bunyan's beliefs in all of these works. Two of his books, The Pilgrim's Progress and Grace Abounding, and his short confession of faith, will be studied for this purpose. The first two sources are chosen because they are the works of Bunyan which are most widely known and read; and are, therefore, the books which most influence the general public. His confession of faith is used because it contains various of his beliefs. Pilgrim's Progress, which Coleridge terms "the best summa theologiae evangelicae ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired,"<sup>2</sup> is regarded by Philip as a fair representative of the spirit of Bunyan's Calvinism.<sup>3</sup> Grace Abounding, another more popular book by Bunyan, is chosen because it is the history of Bunyan's early religious experience by the author himself, and is for that reason likely to contain his beliefs.

1. John Brown: John Bunyan, Vol. II, pp. 237-238, Chronological List of Bunyan's Works. Thomas S. Kepler, in his Introduction to The Spiritual Riches of John Bunyan, gives the number as 60 on page xxi.
2. William Henry Harding: John Bunyan: Pilgrim and Dreamer, p. 206.
3. Philip, op. cit., p. 485.

## CHAPTER I

### THE RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM

## CHAPTER I

### THE RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM

#### A. Introduction

It is rather obvious that in order to understand the true Calvinist meaning of the recognized tenets of Calvinism, it is necessary to go to the source of these beliefs as such. Therefore, these beliefs will be studied as they are presented in the Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin. The grouping of these points is from the order in which they are placed by Bastian Kruithof in his book, The High Points of Calvinism. Therefore, Calvin's teachings will be studied under the headings: the sovereignty of God, the total depravity of man, predestination and election, limited salvation, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. The Sovereignty of God<sup>2</sup>

Bastian Kruithof says that the sovereignty of God is the core of Calvinism and is the foundational basis for each of the other recognized tenets of Calvinism.<sup>3</sup> John Calvin considers the sovereignty of God as such in the first book of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, but this belief permeates the whole of his subsequent teaching in this work.

But what does Calvin mean by the sovereignty of God? He means that God, the Creator, also governs and preserves; though not in a general and overall way. Rather "by a special providence," he sustains, cherishes, and superintends everything he has made "to the very minutest, even to a sparrow."<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. The Articles of the Synod of Dort, and Bastian Kruithof: The High Points of Calvinism.
2. Cf. Calvin: Institute of the Christian Religion, Book I, chs. XVI-XVII, 5.
3. Bastian Kruithof: The High Points of Calvinism, p. 23.
4. John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. I, Book I, ch. XVI, p. 231.

Even inanimate objects exert their force only as God directs, and are merely instruments in his hand.<sup>1</sup> Nothing happens which God has not "knowingly and willingly decreed."<sup>2</sup> God "from the remotest eternity... decreed what he was to do, and now by his power executes what he decreed,"<sup>3</sup> so that not only inanimate things are under his control, "but also the counsels and wills of men are so governed as to move exactly in the course which he has destined."<sup>4</sup>

In all of human life, success is God's blessing and adversity his curse so that there is no place for either fortune or chance.<sup>5</sup> But though there is adversity, nothing comes from God's providence which is not right, although the reasons for the events may not be revealed.<sup>6</sup> Even those things which men or Satan devise to do are under God's control, and he "makes all their efforts contribute to the execution of his judgments."<sup>7</sup> Calvin himself summarizes this point thus:

"The sum of the whole is this, since the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, all the counsels and actions of men must be held to be governed by his providence; so that he not only exerts his power in the elect, who are guided by the Holy Spirit, but also forces the reprobate to do his service."<sup>8</sup>

In the outworking of his providence, God may indeed use evil men to perform his righteous will, but this does not mean that God is evil any more than the sun's rays stink because they cause a stinking odor from a putrifying corpse.<sup>9</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 233.

2. Ibid., p. 235.

3. Ibid., p. 242.

4. Ibid.

5. Cf. Ibid.

6. Cf. Ibid., p. 251.

7. Cf. Ibid., ch. XVIII, p. 269.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., ch. XVII, pp. 254-255.

Calvin says that the absolute sovereignty of God is a great comfort to Christians, who are relieved of despair in adversity since they know that all that happens to them has been ordained by God, and that they are actually under his hand.<sup>1</sup> In all of life, the Christian

"can rest secure in the protection of Him to whose control everything that could do them harm is subject, by whose authority, Satan, with all his furies and engines, is curbed as with a bridle, and on whose will everything adverse to our safety depends."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin believes that the Christian must ascribe to God all the good that comes to him, even though God uses men as the instruments through whom to give the good. Also, when evil comes to the Christian, he can know that it is from God and is useful to teach patience.<sup>3</sup>

Thus it may be seen that the Calvinist belief is that all of creation, both animate and inanimate, is controlled directly and inclusively by God, who is absolute sovereign in the universe which he created. This is the Calvinist belief in the sovereignty of God.

#### C. The Total Depravity of Man<sup>4</sup>

Another recognized tenet of Calvinism is belief in the total depravity of man. Calvin teaches that man is entirely devoid of good due to the sin of Adam which has affected the whole race of mankind.<sup>5</sup> The heavenly image of man was destroyed when Adam sinned; and man not only lost all virtue, wisdom, and holiness, but also gained in their place "blindness, impotence, vanity, impurity, and unrighteousness."<sup>6</sup> This

. . . . .

1. Ibid., ch. XVI, p. 234.

2. Ibid., p. 235.

3. Cf. Ibid., ch. XVII, p. 257.

4. Cf. Calvin's Institutes, Book II, ch. III, sections 1-5.

5. Cf. Ibid., ch. I, p. 287.

6. Ibid., p. 288.

impurity, which first characterized Adam, has been transmitted to all, and all are "originally depraved."<sup>1</sup>

In defining original sin, Calvin says that it is

"a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh."<sup>2</sup>

He adds:

"Our nature is not only utterly devoid of goodness, but so prolific in all kinds of evil, that it can never be idle...everything which is in man, from the intellect to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, is defiled and pervaded with this concupiscence; ...the whole man is in himself nothing else than concupiscence."<sup>3</sup>

Calvin leaves no place for any freedom of will in man. He teaches that man is completely a slave to sin; and that the will, because it is the principle seat of sin, is "bound with the closest chains."<sup>4</sup> Man, indeed, is "under the necessity of sinning."<sup>5</sup> The will of fallen man "is dragged by necessity to evil."<sup>6</sup> Therefore the grace of God is not preceded by any will on the part of man.<sup>7</sup> Because man is totally depraved and there is absolutely nothing good in man's nature,<sup>8</sup> there is salvation for man only in God's mercy. In order for man to do any truly good works, his old depraved will must be destroyed by God and a good will from God must be put into its place.<sup>9</sup> It is Calvin's belief that man cannot even will to move toward goodness. When a movement toward goodness occurs, it is the beginning of conversion to God which is entirely by divine grace, and not due in the least to the enslaved will of man.<sup>10</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 289.

2. Ibid., p. 292.

3. Ibid., p. 293.

4. Ibid., ch. II, p. 332.

5. Ibid., ch. III, p. 243.

6. Ibid., p. 342.

7. Ibid., ch. II, p. 332.

8. Cf. Ibid., ch. III, p. 338.

9. Cf. Ibid., p. 346.

10. Cf. Ibid., p. 341.

Calvin puts the matter simply: "To will is the part of man, to will ill the part of corrupt nature, to will well the part of grace."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin adds the further statement that not only can man's will not turn to God, but also it cannot continue in God except by the grace of God.<sup>2</sup>

Calvin teaches that God puts men under restraint so that they cannot commit all of the crimes to which their nature, utterly devoid of good, would lead them.<sup>3</sup> The virtues which appear in natural man are God's special gifts to otherwise profane men, and not endowments of nature given to all men.<sup>4</sup> But even these virtues are of no value as righteousness before God's judgment seat.<sup>5</sup>

In summing, Calvin says:

"Let it stand, therefore, as an indubitable truth, which no engines can shake, that the mind of man is so entirely alienated from the righteousness of God that he cannot conceive, desire, or design anything but what is wicked, distorted, foul, impure, and iniquitous; that his heart is so thoroughly envenomed by sin that it can breathe out nothing but corruption and rottenness; that if some men occasionally make a show of goodness, their mind is ever interwoven with hypocrisy and deceit, their soul inwardly bound with the fetters of wickedness."<sup>6</sup>

#### D. Predestination and Election<sup>7</sup>

A third recognized tenet of Calvinism is the doctrine of predestination and election. Bastian Kruithof says of this:

"From the Bible we learn that predestination is the eternal counsel of God whereby He determines the eternal destiny of all men. It includes the sovereign election of some to eternal life through Jesus Christ, and the most righteous reprobation of others for their sins."<sup>8</sup>

Calvin himself defines predestination thus:

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 342.

2. Ibid., p. 352.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 339.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 340.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 341.

6. Ibid., ch. V, p. 394.

7. Cf. Calvin's Institutes, Book II, ch. III, section 8; ch. V, sections 3-5; Book III, ch. XXI-XXIV; Book IV, ch. I, section 3.

8. Kruithof, op. cit., p. 44.



"By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin leaves no loopholes in his doctrine of predestination and election, but rather considers it as being absolute. He will not allow of prescience as the cause of predestination.<sup>2</sup> He considers that no pious man would think to deny that God by predestination "adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death."<sup>3</sup>

This predestination extends both to individuals and to nations. God's choosing Israel as his inheritance is an example of predestination with regard to nations.<sup>4</sup> As to individuals, God not only offers them salvation, but assigns it to them in such a way that there is no doubt of their accepting it.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, God's choice is determined, not by the worth of any person, but by God's pleasure, his "free mercy."<sup>6</sup> Those who are excluded from salvation are so excluded "from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible, judgment."<sup>7</sup> God makes known the judgment awaiting these whom he reprobates by excluding them "from the knowledge of his name or the sanctification of his Spirit."<sup>8</sup> So the cause of election is entirely in God himself, and not in the individuals in the least.<sup>9</sup>

. . . . .

1. Calvin, op. cit., Vol. II, Book III, ch. XXI, p. 534.

2. Cf. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 534, 535.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 538.

6. Ibid., p. 540.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Cf. Ibid., ch. XXII, p. 552.

Calvin insists that reprobation is performed by God at his pleasure. He says, "Those, therefore, whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other cause but because it pleases him to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children."<sup>1</sup> Against objections that this is evidence of unrighteousness in God, Calvin says: "The will of God is the supreme rule of righteousness; so that everything which he wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of his willing it."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, he states that, since all are vitiated by sin and therefore hateful to God, this reprobation is just and is not evidence of tyrannical cruelty on God's part. All are naturally, even those elected to life, justly deserving the sentence of death;<sup>3</sup> so it is not remarkable that some are reprobated. The great wonder is that any are saved.

Calvin also says that the fall of man was predestined. He says: "The decree, I admit, is dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before he made him, and foreknew, because he had so ordained by his decree."<sup>4</sup> God also, at his own pleasure, foresaw the fall of Adam and the ruin of all his descendants in him. God not only foreknew this, "but also, at his own pleasure, arranged it."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, according to Calvin, divine providence ordains man's fall "but he falls by his own fault."<sup>6</sup> And "God inflicts due punishment on those whom he reprobates, and bestows unmerited favour on those whom he calls..."<sup>7</sup> Not only the power of being able to believe

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1. Ibid., ch. XXIII, p. 560.
2. Ibid., p. 562.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 563.
4. Ibid., pp. 568, 569.
5. Ibid., p. 569.
6. Ibid., p. 570.
7. Ibid., p. 573.

is given to man, but faith itself is given. Faith is simply the evidence of election.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin's view of predestination is as absolute as is his view of the sovereignty of God. All that happens is predestined by a sovereign God; and all men are elected by God either to life or to death simply as a result of God's righteous will, and not as a result of anything in any individual person.

#### E. Limited Salvation<sup>2</sup>

Another recognized tenet of Calvinism is the belief that salvation is limited to the elect. Christ did not die for all men, but for the elect alone.<sup>3</sup>

As has been shown before, the Calvinist believes that man does not have free will. In order to be saved, he must be elected to be saved; so that salvation is therefore limited to those whose wills God changes.<sup>4</sup> Calvin says that God does not adopt all to the hope of salvation, but he "gives to some what he denies to others."<sup>5</sup> So Calvin maintains that the doctrine of salvation is "for the sons of the Church only."<sup>6</sup> It is an abuse of the doctrine of salvation to represent it "as effectually available to all."<sup>7</sup> It is true that the gospel is addressed to all people in a general way; but faith, which is a gift from God, is rare.<sup>8</sup>

The Calvinist, therefore, maintains that salvation is limited

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1. Cf. Ibid., ch. XXIV, p. 584.
2. Cf. Calvin, op. cit.
3. Cf. Kruithof, op. cit., p. 55.
4. Ibid., p. 62.
5. Calvin, op. cit., ch. XXI, p. 529.
6. Ibid., ch. XXII, p. 555.
7. Ibid., p. 555.
8. Cf., Ibid.

to the elect alone, that Christ died only for the elect, and not for all men.

### F. Irresistible Grace<sup>1</sup>

Another outgrowth of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, slavery of the will, predestination and election, is of necessity, the doctrine of irresistible grace. The Calvinist believes that the grace of God to the elect is irresistible.<sup>2</sup> If fallen man could possibly resist God's grace, he would do so; but he cannot.<sup>3</sup>

Calvin divides the call of God into two kinds, universal and special. The universal call is to all, even to those who are not elected to eternal life; and some of these are actually enlightened, though only for a time.<sup>4</sup> The special call is only to those who do come to believe, and this call always results in salvation.<sup>5</sup>

Calvin, in order to state his view in this matter, quotes St. Augustine thus:

"...When he is pleased to save, there is no free-will in man to resist. Wherefore, it cannot be doubted that the will of God..cannot be resisted by the human will, or prevented from doing what he pleases since with the very wills of men he does so."<sup>6</sup>

As Kruithof puts it so logically: "If God is Absolute Sovereign and if predestination and election are sure, then the doctrine of irresistible or efficacious grace must follow."<sup>7</sup>

The Calvinist doctrine, therefore, is that God does not merely

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1. Cf. Calvin, Book III, chs. XXI, 7; XXIII, 14; XXIV, 1-11.
2. Cf. Kruithof, op. cit., p. 67.
3. Cf. Ibid.
4. Cf. Calvin, op. cit., ch. XXIV, p. 591.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 592.
6. Ibid., ch. XXIII, p. 577.
7. Kruithof, op. cit., p. 66.

offer salvation to the elect. Much more than that, he assigns it to them, so that the result is certain, irresistible.<sup>1</sup>

### G. Perseverance of the Saints<sup>2</sup>

Bastian Kruithof, in explaining this last recognized tenet of Calvinism, the perseverance of the saints, quotes the Westminster Confession, which states:

"They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."<sup>3</sup>

Calvin himself says that no one whom Christ has ingrafted into his body will ever be permitted by Christ to perish.<sup>4</sup> The salvation of the elect is always certain. God can say this for the very reason that he guards their salvation by his invincible power.<sup>5</sup> Calvin puts it aptly thus:

"Moreover, it cannot be doubted, that since Christ prays for all the elect, he asks the same thing for them as he asked for Peter, viz., that their faith fail not, (Luke xxii:32) Hence we infer, that there is no danger of their falling away, since the Son of God, who asks that their piety may prove constant, never meets with a refusal. What then did our Saviour intend to teach us by this prayer, but that just to confide, that whenever we are his own eternal salvation is secure."<sup>6</sup>

Calvin admits that many who do appear to belong to Christ revolt and fall away; but he contends that these people "never adhered to Christ with that heartfelt confidence by which...the certainty of their election is established."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Cf. Calvin, op. cit., ch. XXI, p. 538.

2. Calvin: Institutes, Book III, XXIV, 10; Book IV, I, 21.

3. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, ch. XVII, p. 74. Also Kruithof, op. cit., pp. 74, 75.

4. Cf. Calvin, op. cit., ch. XXII, p. 552.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 557.

6. Ibid., ch. XXIV, pp. 589-590.

7. Ibid., p. 590.

According to Calvin, the Christian's hope extends beyond death itself, and nothing could be more contrary to the nature of this hope than to doubt this future destiny.<sup>1</sup> As has been noted before, the Calvinist believes the human will to be enslaved. Therefore, it is necessary for the Lord to begin the good work and also to perfect it. As the beginning was entirely due to his power, so the continuation is entirely of him. For this reason, the work cannot fail, so that the Christian will of necessity persevere to the end.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, the Calvinist belief is that the true Christian can never fall from the state of grace, but will of necessity persevere to the end. This confidence is based on belief in the slavery of the human will which makes all of the work of grace entirely dependent upon God, who cannot fail.

#### H. Summary

Through a study of the recognized tenets of Calvinism, it was found that the Calvinist bases his theology on the absolute sovereignty of God in the universe, a sovereignty which does not overlook the least detail. From this belief he arrives by logical steps at his other basic beliefs. Study revealed that the Calvinist believes that man is totally depraved and his will is enslaved to sin. It was seen that everything is believed by the Calvinist to be predestined by this sovereign God, so that nothing happens which he has not determined should happen. Calvinism states that all people are elected by God to life or to death and that

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 591.

2. Cf. Ibid., Vol. I, Book II, ch. III, p. 350.

salvation is limited to the elect, for whom alone Christ died. It was seen, moreover, that the Calvinist teaching is that it is impossible for man to resist the grace of God, who assigns salvation to the elect; and that none of these elect can ever fall from grace but must of necessity persevere to the end.





## CHAPTER II

### BUNYAN'S TEACHINGS REGARDING THESE RECOGNIZED TENETS OF CALVINISM

## CHAPTER II

### BUNYAN'S TEACHINGS REGARDING THESE RECOGNIZED

#### TENETS OF CALVINISM

##### A. Introduction

In order to learn what are John Bunyan's teachings regarding these six recognized tenets of Calvinism, Bunyan's teachings will be studied under each of these six headings. The evidence of Bunyan's teachings will be taken from three major sources: his "A Confession of My Faith"; the autobiographical work, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners; and his most famous and widely read piece of allegorical fiction, The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which is to Come.

##### B. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding God's

###### Sovereignty

###### 1. God's Sovereignty in Bunyan's Life

John Bunyan does not speak of the Sovereignty of God in these specific words, though he does make use of the words "providence";<sup>1</sup> "providences";<sup>2</sup> and the word capitalized, "Providence."<sup>3</sup> In Grace Abounding he continually attributes the things that befall him to the working or providence of God. He attributes his being sent to school to God's pleasing to put it into his parents' hearts to send him.<sup>4</sup> He attributes to God the judgments "mixed with mercy"<sup>5</sup> which befell him when he was very young. These include his being rescued from drowning in a creek of the sea, his falling from a boat into the Bedford River (but mercy yet preserved me), and his surviving the plucking of an

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1. John Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 19.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

3. Bunyan: The Pilgrim's Progress, p. 282.

4. *Cf.*, Bunyan: Grace Abounding, pp. 7-8.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

adder's sting from its mouth with his fingers.<sup>1</sup> Later, when Bunyan was a soldier, another soldier asked to take his place in a siege and was killed. Bunyan attributes his being kept alive then to God's mercy.<sup>2</sup>

It was through hearing some Christian women talking at Bedford that Bunyan first realized that he lacked "the true tokens of a godly man."<sup>3</sup> He attributes his first hearing these women to God's good providence in calling him to Bedford to work at his calling there.<sup>4</sup>

At one time Bunyan, who thought he had committed the sin that is unpardonable, desired to flee from God, whom he saw as a dreadful judge; but he knew he could not escape God's hand,<sup>5</sup> remembering Hebrews 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."<sup>6</sup> This surely has some basis in a belief in God's sovereignty.

Bunyan, as is well known, was imprisoned at various times for his preaching and non-conformity.<sup>7</sup> He was imprisoned three times altogether.<sup>8</sup> In prison, he waited to see what "God would suffer" those who had imprisoned him to do with him.<sup>9</sup> So it appears that even there he considered himself to be under God's sovereign control.

But it is in spiritual matters that Bunyan speaks of God's teaching him, and therein teaches God's sovereignty in making spiritual truths known, and in giving spiritual information at the time it is needed. When he was being taught by "holy Mr. Gifford," he says

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1. Cf. Ibid.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

3. Ibid., p. 20.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 19-20. His calling was that of a tinker. Cf. Brown, Vol. I, p. 153.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 60.

6. Ibid., p. 67.

7. Cf. Brown, Vol. I, p. 146.

8. Cf. Ibid., p. 161.

9. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 109.

his soul was led "from truth to truth by God."<sup>1</sup> He says that God set him "down in all the things of Christ; yea, and also...He did open His words unto me, and make them shine before me, and comfort me over and over..<sup>2</sup> But the course which he says it pleased God to take in thus teaching him was first to make him doubt the things, and then to reveal them to him.<sup>3</sup> When Bunyan was longing to read the experiences of some godly man who had lived many years before, he says "the God in whose hands are all my days and ways did cast into my hand one day a book of Martin Luther's; it was his comment on the Galatians..<sup>4</sup>

During the two and one half years,<sup>5</sup> of terror and sorrow which Bunyan suffered because he had yielded to a long temptation to let Christ go, having thought, "Let Him go if He will go,"<sup>6</sup> he began to see more and prize greatly God's preservation of his people.<sup>7</sup> He writes:

"Now I saw that as God had His hand in all the providences and dispensations that overtook His elect, so He had His hand in all the temptations that they had to sin against Him, and also to leave them for a time to such things only that might not destroy, but humble them, as might not put them beyond, but lay them in the way of the renewing His mercy. But, oh, what love, what care, what kindness and mercy did I now see mixing itself with the most severe and dreadful of all God's ways to His people! He would let David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Peter and others fall, but He would not let them fall into the sin unpardonable nor into hell for sin."<sup>8</sup>

This appears to be a very clear statement that Bunyan believed in God's complete sovereignty over Christians. Furthermore, he describes

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1. Ibid., p. 48.
2. Ibid., p. 51.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 51.
4. Ibid., p. 52.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 81.
6. Ibid., p. 56.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 61.
8. Ibid.

himself as during this time "trembling under the mighty hand of God, continually torn and rent by the thundering of His justice.." <sup>1</sup>

He proposes near the end of Grace Abounding to tell of other of the Lord's dealings with him. <sup>2</sup> He attributes, as before, his understanding of spiritual things to the Lord's teaching it to him. <sup>3</sup> His phraseology is unusual, for he makes use of such statements as "the Lord did come down upon my conscience with the discovery of His death for my sins.." <sup>4</sup> and "The Lord came in upon my soul with that same scripture by which my soul was visited before.." <sup>5</sup>

During his imprisonment he found that God prevented him from suffering great affliction from Satan, saying, "God, as being very tender to me, hath not suffered me to be molested, but would, with one scripture or another, strengthen me against all.." <sup>6</sup>

## 2. God's Sovereignty in the Lives of Christians as Seen in The Pilgrim's Progress

In The Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan tells of similar instances in God's intervening on the behalf of Christian. When Christian lost his roll which he had to have as a pass at the gate of the Celestial City, he found it again because God directed his eye to the place where it lay. <sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it was by "God's mercy" that Evangelist came to direct Christian from the mountain by Mr. Legality's house to the wicket-  
gate. <sup>8</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 100.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 103.

3. Cf. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 104.

6. Ibid., p. 111.

7. Cf. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, p. 45-46.

8. Cf. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

In Christian's battle with Apollyon, the battle was very severe, so that Christian was almost destroyed; but, "as God would have it,"<sup>1</sup> when the fiend was about to destroy Christian, Christian grabbed his sword, and Apollyon had to flee. God also delivered Christian from all the dangers in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.<sup>2</sup> Further, God so tempered the spirits of Christian and Faithful that they could be companions on the way;<sup>3</sup> took Great-heart, Christiana, and Christiana's companions safely through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; and delivered the giant, Maul, to be destroyed by Great-heart.<sup>4</sup> About these last two things, Matthew, one of Christiana's sons, says that "God has been wonderful good unto us, both in bringing us out of this Valley, and in delivering us out of the hand of this enemy..<sup>5</sup>"

So, according to these things, Christians are protected by God from all their enemies that would completely destroy them. As Mr. Feeble-mind put it, no pilgrim captured by violent hands "if he keeps heart-whole toward his Master, is by the laws of Providence to die by the hand of the enemy."<sup>6</sup> He added, "Robbed I looked to be, and robbed to be sure I am; but here I am, as you see, escaped with life; for the which I thank my King as author, and you as the means."<sup>7</sup>

### 3. God's Sovereignty in the Lives of Non-Christians

Bunyan extends God's sovereignty to the enemies of God and of the pilgrim also. Bunyan in prison, as has been seen, was waiting to see

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1. Ibid., pp. 61-2.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 68.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 69.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 255-257.
5. Ibid., p. 259.
6. Ibid., p. 282.
7. Ibid.

what God would suffer those who had imprisoned him to do with him. Faithful surmized that God had stirred up his own enemies against the faithless Pliable, who had started on pilgrimage but turned back at the Slough of Despond. In Vanity Fair, though Faithful was put to death by the enemies of Christian, Bunyan states that "he that overrules all things, having the power of their rage in his own hand, so wrought it about that Christian for that time escaped them and went his way."<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. An Exception

There is one point which might indicate lack of belief in the complete sovereignty of God. This is the fact that the Slough of Despond remains the slough still even though it is "not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad."<sup>2</sup> Into this slough runs all the filth that attends conviction of sin.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5. Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Sovereignty of God

So it can be seen that Bunyan teaches that God is sovereign ruler over the lives of Christians; that all good which comes to them is from him, that spiritual understanding is from him alone, that he controls and dispenses all of the temptations they fall into with the sins attending them, and that he allows their enemies and his to do to them only those things which he wills. Also, Bunyan teaches that God controls all of the difficulties that confront the Christians, and has the power of the enemies' rage in his hand. God is seen to have control over his enemies to some extent, but whether this extends to things they

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1. Ibid., p. 100.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 16.

do which have no relation to Christians is not clearly stated.

### C. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Total

#### Depravity of Man

John P. Gulliver, in his "Introduction to the Complete Works of John Bunyan," states that Bunyan, in The Pilgrim's Progress, clearly sets forth all of the great doctrines "from total depravity to the resurrection.." <sup>1</sup> His teachings with regard to total depravity will be studied in his writings.

#### 1. Total Depravity as Found in Bunyan's Confession of Faith

In his "A Confession of My Faith," Bunyan's teachings on man's depravity are given rather clearly. He says:

"I believe, we being sinful creatures in ourselves, that no good thing done by us can procure of God the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but that the imputation thereof is an act of grace, a free gift without our deserving." <sup>2</sup>

#### 2. Total Depravity as Bunyan Sees it in His Own Life

In his autobiographical work, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, he stresses his belief that he is the worst of sinners, so that it is difficult to know what his teachings on the subject are in regard to man in general. Concerning himself, he says that he delighted, before he was a Christian, in being "taken captive by the devil at his will.." <sup>3</sup> and that few were his equal for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming. Though at times his sins were a miserable affliction to him, he could not let them go. But later he became callous, and delighted in vice and ungodliness. <sup>4</sup>

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1. Bunyan, The Complete Works of John Bunyan, John P. Gulliver: "Introduction to the Complete Works of John Bunyan," p. 6.
2. Bunyan: Ibid., A Confession of My Faith, p. 820.
3. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 8.
4. Ibid., pp. 8-9.



At length Bunyan concluded that it was too late for him to be forgiven. Therefore he resolved to continue sinning, concluding that it was as good to be damned for many sins as for few. He decided that the **only** comfort he would ever receive would be what he would get in sin; so he wished to take his fill of sin, that he might taste the sweetness of it. Therefore he hurried in order to sin as much as possible, lest he should die before he had done all that he desired to do.<sup>1</sup> He states then his belief that many have this temptation, and secretly conclude that there is no hope for them "for they have loved sins, therefore after them they will go."<sup>2</sup>

Bunyan did not believe reform to be possible, for he tells of his own outward reform, in which he continued for about a year, insisting that he was but "a poor painted hypocrite"<sup>3</sup> who loved to be talked of as a godly man.

Later, after he had become more aware of his own sinfulness, Bunyan saw the state of happiness of those good Christians of Bedford in a "kind of a vision,"<sup>4</sup> and saw that a very narrow gap in a wall prevented him from going to them. The gap was Jesus Christ, but the way was so narrow that there was room only "for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin."<sup>5</sup>

But his longings for God, after seeing the happiness of these people, began to fail; and he perceived that he "had a heart that would sin and that lay under a law that would condemn."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 14, 15.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Ibid., p. 17.

4. Ibid., p. 25.

5. Ibid., p. 26.

6. Ibid., p. 34.

Then he speaks of his "original and inward pollution,"<sup>1</sup> for he says he saw that sin and corruption "would as naturally bubble out of my heart as water would out of a fountain."<sup>2</sup> Still, he believed himself to be far more wicked than anyone else, and that only the devil was his equal for wickedness.<sup>3</sup> It is to be remembered that his book is entitled Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinner.

### 3. Total Depravity as Found in The Pilgrim's Progress

In The Pilgrim's Progress Bunyan is writing of others, so it is here perhaps that his teachings on the total depravity of man can best be found and understood.

Christian, whose name at the first had been Graceless,<sup>4</sup> explains to Evangelist, "I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first, or able to do the second."<sup>5</sup> He explains that he is unwilling to die because he fears that the burden, his sin, that is upon his back will sink him lower than the grave.<sup>6</sup>

During the first part of the book, Christian complains greatly of his burden, and seeks to be released from it, for it is very heavy. But as he comes to the Cross his burden falls off and rolls into the mouth of the Sepulchre.<sup>7</sup> Then Christian says:

"Thus far did I come loaden with my sin;  
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in  
Till I came hither.."

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1. Ibid., p. 35.

2. Ibid.

3. Cf. Ibid.

4. Cf. Bunyan: The Pilgrim's Progress, p. 47.

5. Ibid., p. 10.

6. Cf. Ibid.

7. Cf. Ibid., p. 38, 18-20, 22, 50.

Bunyan teaches that man is polluted by original sin, and inwardly corrupt. In the house of the Interpreter, Christian is shown a parlor full of dust. This dust cannot be swept away by the law, but must be sprinkled with water (the gospel) before it can be swept and cleansed.<sup>1</sup> The Interpreter explains the dust by saying that it is the "original sin and inward corruption that have defiled the whole man."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, at the palace called Beautiful, Christian is told that Christ makes princes of many pilgrims, though they were by nature beggars born, and their origin the dunghill.<sup>3</sup>

In The Pilgrim's Progress Bunyan again teaches the futility of mere reform. Hopeful says that when he was convinced that he had sinned, he reformed, though he knew that would not pay off the old debt. But, even after reform, he found that sin cleaved to his best performance; so that he committed enough sin in the doing of one duty to send him to hell, even though his former life had been faultless.<sup>4</sup>

Christian speaks of sin in his conversation with Ignorance, saying: "The word of God saith of persons in a natural condition, 'There is none righteous, there is none that doth good.' It saith also that 'every imagination of the heart of man is only evil, and that continually.' And again, 'the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.'"<sup>5</sup> This clearly shows that Bunyan believed man to be greatly depraved.

There might be added as further evidence of Bunyan's teachings

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 54.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 141-144.

5. Ibid., pp. 149-150. Romans 3:10, 12; Genesis 6:5; 8:21.

with regard to the total depravity of man, the strong statement of Christian's son, Joseph, that "man by sin has brought himself into a state of captivity and misery,"<sup>1</sup> and that "sin is so great and mighty a tyrant, that none can pull us out of its clutches but God..<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Bunyan's Teaching Regarding Freedom of the Will

As to man's will, there are rather clear statements in Bunyan's writings which indicate his teachings on that score. In his confession of faith, Bunyan likens effectual calling to Christ's word which raised Lazarus from the dead, "a word attended with an arm that was omnipotent."<sup>3</sup> He says that it is a word to the dead and for the dead; that, "as it is a strange thing for a man that lay long dead, or never saw the light with his eyes, to be raised out of the grave or to be made to see that which he could not so much as once think of before, so it is with effectual calling."<sup>4</sup> This seems to indicate that Bunyan believed man to be completely dead in sin, so that when God calls him he is like one raised from the dead.

In his own life, did Bunyan believe that he had the will to break from his lusts of which he spoke? Clearly he believed he did not, for he says:

"Yea, such prevelancy had the lusts of the flesh on my poor soul that had not a miracle of precious grace prevented I had not only perished by the stroke of eternal justice, but also laid myself upon to the stroke of those laws which bring some to disgrace and shame before the face of the world."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 235.

2. Ibid.

3. Bunyan: The Complete Works, Confession, p. 822.

4. Ibid.

5. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 9.

In speaking of his schooling, Bunyan says that he lost nearly all he had learned "long before the Lord did work His gracious work of conversion upon my soul."<sup>1</sup> This indicates that he believed it was God who worked his conversion, and not himself who willed it.

There are some indications in Grace Abounding that Bunyan did will toward righteousness. When he had learned, through listening to the conversation of those Bedford women, that he was not a truly godly man, he began to plead with God for eternal life.<sup>2</sup> He studied the Bible so avidly that he was constantly either reading it or meditating upon it, crying to God to be shown "the truth and way to heaven and glory."<sup>3</sup> He desired to be one of that number of the godly, and prayed wherever he was. He says later, "I cannot now express with what longings and breathings in my soul I cried to Christ to call me. Thus I continued for a time, all on a flame to be converted to Jesus Christ, and did also see at that day such glory in a converted state that I could not be contented without a share therein."<sup>4</sup> This might appear to be a belief in the freedom of the will, were it not evident from his confession of faith that he believed such longings to be the result of effectual calling.<sup>5</sup> For example, he says:

"In effectual calling there are great awakenings about the world to come and the glory of unseen things. The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, the salvation that God hath prepared for them that love him, with the blessedness that will attend us and be upon us at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, are great things in the soul that is under the awakening calls of God."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 8.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 20-21.

3. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 32.

5. Cf. Bunyan: Complete Works, Confession, pp. 822-823.

6. Ibid., p. 822.

Christian also, clothed in rags, is first seen to be weeping and trembling with a great burden on his back. From his condition and actions it would appear once more that he was under the power of effectual calling, rather than exerting his own will; for Bunyan, in his confession writes that a man who is under the power of effectual calling has "heaven and hell before his eyes."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Faithful tells Talkative that heavenly knowledge of the need for faith and of the need for a work of grace in the soul is the gift of God and may not be attained by human industry. He says that the grace of God in the heart "shows itself by inclining the soul to abhor its sin,"<sup>2</sup> and adds that a work of grace in the soul makes itself known to the one who has it by giving "conviction of sin, especially of the defilement of his nature and the sin of unbelief."<sup>3</sup> But Gaius is perhaps even more clear on this point, when he says:

"...until grace displays itself and overcomes the soul with its glory, it is altogether without heart to oppose sin; besides, if sin is Satan's cords, by which the soul lies bound, how should it make resistance, before it is loosed from that infirmity?"<sup>4</sup>

As to those who try by their own will and means to get to the Celestial City, the evidence shows that they never arrive there. Pliable, Formality, Hypocrisy, By-ends, Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, Mr. Save-all, Ignorance, and Atheist are some of these who started out but never arrived.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this can best be explained by Christian's words to Formalist and Hypocrisy: "You came in by yourselves without his

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1. Ibid., p. 823.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. Ibid., p. 85.

4. Ibid., pp. 278-279.

5. Cf., p. 15, Ibid., pp. 5, 111, 9, 167, 168, 138, 139.

(the Lord of the way) direction, and shall go out by yourselves without his mercy."<sup>1</sup>

## 5. Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Total Depravity of Man

Through an examination of Bunyan's teachings regarding the total depravity of man, it can be seen that he teaches the reality of original sin which corrupted man's nature, and that he teaches that man cannot himself do any good, but that, rather, every act of his is full of sin, even his best acts. The whole man is depraved by his original sin and inward corruption according to Bunyan. Regarding man's will, it has been seen that Bunyan teaches that man is completely dead in sin, that he is bound by sin, and that he can make no resistance while he is thus bound. The first resistance to sin comes after grace begins to work in the man.

### D. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election

#### 1. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election as Found in His Confession of Faith.

In his confession of faith, Bunyan gives the clearest statements of his teachings regarding predestination and election. In speaking of man's having righteousness imputed to him, Bunyan says that "the power of imputing righteousness resideth only in God by Christ,"<sup>2</sup> and then goes on to quote Romans 9:15, 16: "I will have mercy on whom I will

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1. Ibid., p. 41

2. Bunyan: Confession, p. 820.

have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not in him that willeth nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy."<sup>1</sup>

He believes that the faith which justifies a sinner in the sight of God "is not to be found in any but those in whom the Spirit of God, by mighty power, doth work it,"<sup>2</sup> and that "this faith is effectually wrought in none but those which, before the world, were appointed unto glory."<sup>3</sup> He continues, "But of the rest he saith, 'Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. As I said,' which latter words relate to the 16th verse, which respecteth the election of God. 'Therefore they could not believe because...he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts, and I should heal them.'"<sup>4</sup> He states in the section of his confession entitled "Of Election," that he believes election to be "free and permanent, being founded in grace and the unchangeable will of God."<sup>5</sup> He believes "this decree, choice, or election was before the elect themselves had being in themselves; for God,...having all things present to him, in his wisdom he made his choice before the world was."<sup>6</sup> As to the basis for election he believes the decree of election to be "so far from making works in us foreseen the ground or cause of the choice that it containeth in the bowels of it not only the persons, but the graces that accompany their salvation."<sup>7</sup> It is for this reason, he

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1. Ibid., p. 820.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 821.

4. Ibid. The verses quoted are John 10:26; 10:16; 12:39-40.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.



believes, that it is said "'we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son;' (Romans 8:29) not because we are, but 'that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.'"<sup>1</sup> He continues: "And hence it is again that the salvation and calling of which we are now made partakers is no other than what was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."<sup>2</sup>

But Bunyan concludes these statements of his belief concerning election with the statement:

"I believe that no man can know his election but by his calling, and I believe therefore, that election doth not forstall or prevent the means which are of God appointed to bring us to Christ, to grace, and to glory, but rather putteth a necessity upon the use and effect thereof, because they are chosen to be brought to heaven that way; that is, by the faith of Jesus Christ, which is the end of effectual calling. 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give dilligence to make your calling and election sure.'"<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Bunyan's Beliefs Regarding Predestination and Election As He Saw It in His Own Life

These are Bunyan's formal statements concerning predestination and election. In Grace Abounding his beliefs are also evident. He speaks of his conversion as a work of the Lord.<sup>4</sup> He speaks at various times of God's elect.<sup>5</sup> In speaking of those whom he calls ranters, a group who were antinomian, and one of whom even denied the existence of God, Bunyan says that these temptations the ranters presented "were suitable" to his flesh; but that God, "who, had, as I hope, designed

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1. Ibid., p. 821.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 822., II Peter 1:10.

4. Cf. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 8.

5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 61, 96.

me for better things, kept me in the fear of His name, and did not suffer me to accept such cursed principles."<sup>1</sup>

Later, Bunyan finds himself assaulted with doubts concerning whether or not he is elected.<sup>2</sup> His questioning of his election he speaks of thus:

"I found that though I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and nothing could beat me off from this, yet this question did so discourage me that I was, especially sometimes, as if the strength of my body had been taken away by the force and power thereof."<sup>3</sup>

The scripture that seemed "to trample upon" all his desires was Romans 9:16 "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."<sup>4</sup> In this he saw that unless God had voluntarily chosen him to be a vessel of mercy, "though I should desire, and long, and labor until my heart did break, no good could come of it."<sup>5</sup> He believed truly that only the elect obtain eternal life.<sup>6</sup> But his doubts concerning his election were solved many weeks later when one day "that sentence fell with weight upon my heart, 'look at the generation of old and see: did ever any trust the Lord and was confounded?'"<sup>7</sup> which he later found in the Apocrypha but accepted as true because he believed it to be the "sum and substance of many of the promises."<sup>8</sup>

At another time he feared Christ would not call him, for he had read that Christ called "whom he would."<sup>9</sup> But later God gave him faith in all the things of Christ, gave him understanding of scripture, and comforted him concerning "His own being, and the being of His Son,

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1. Ibid., p. 22.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Ibid., p. 27.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 28.

8. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

9. Ibid., p. 32, Mark 3:13.

and Spirit, and Word, and Gospel."<sup>1</sup> It is apparent from his words that all of this was God's doing, not his own.

### 3. Bunyan's Teaching Regarding Predestination and Election as Found in The Pilgrim's Progress

In The Pilgrim's Progress, Christian tells Formalist and Hypocrisy, who had come over the wall rather than in at the wicket-gate that anyone who comes in by any way other than the gate, Christ, is a thief and a robber. He warns them that they came in by themselves without God's direction and shall go out by themselves without his mercy.<sup>1</sup> Faithful tells Talkative that no man attains to knowledge of the need of faith and necessity of a work of grace in the soul for eternal life, except through the gift of God.<sup>2</sup> Christiana says that she had once supposed that her husband's troubles sprang from foolish fancy, but now she sees that they sprang from another cause entirely, that being that the "Light of Life was given him, by the help of which...he has escaped the snares of death."<sup>3</sup> And Christiana herself goes on pilgrimage because she has received a message from God, inviting her into his presence.<sup>4</sup> These things are at least some indication of belief in election and predestination.

Another statement regarding election might be seen in the words of Honest, whom the pilgrims found asleep along the way. Mr. Great-heart waked him, and in the conversation which followed told Honest

. . . . .

1. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, p. 41.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 79.
3. Ibid., p. 185.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 186-189.

that he wondered how it was that any pilgrims come from Stupidity, the town from which Honest has come, since it is even worse than the City of Destruction.<sup>1</sup> Honest replies: "Yes, we lie more off from the sun, and so are more cold and senseless; but was a man in a mountain of ice, yet if the Sun of Righteousness will arise upon him, his frozen heart shall feel a thaw; and thus it hath been with me."<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Teachings Which Appear to Deny Predestination and Election

All of these things above indicate that Bunyan taught and believed that God elects whom he will to eternal life; and that the elect were chosen before the world began, that good works foreseen in them are definitely not the basis for election, but rather the result of election; and that the choice is not a result of man's will but of God's choice. But though these things are evident, there are some things in *The Pilgrim's Progress* which would, at least at first glance, appear to teach to the contrary. Pliable asks Christian how it is possible to become sharers of the glories of the Celestial City.<sup>2</sup> Christian replies "The Lord, the Governor of the country, hath recorded that in this book, the substance of which is: If we be willing to it, he will bestow it upon us freely."<sup>3</sup> Over the wicket-gate, these words are written: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."<sup>4</sup> But the part of the story which seems most to contradict belief in election, is that part which concerns Mercy. She longs to go with Christiana to the Celestial City,

. . . . .

1. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 25, Matthew 7:8.

though she has had no invitation from the King, as has Christiana.<sup>1</sup> Christiana urges her to go nevertheless, saying, "Nor shalt thou be rejected, though thou goest but upon my invitation."<sup>2</sup> And Mercy is welcomed by Christ at the gate, and taken in. She there states her case, that she comes without invitation from the King, but only with invitation from Christiana.<sup>3</sup> The Keeper, Christ, replies, "I pray for all them that believe on me, by what means soever they come unto me."<sup>4</sup>

How is this to be accounted for? There is one piece of evidence at least in the story itself, for Mercy tells the Interpreter that while Christiana was telling her of the Celestial City, her heart burned within her, and she wanted to go with Christiana.<sup>5</sup> It was also said that Mercy "yearned over her own soul."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Faithful's explanation of how the grace of God in the heart shows itself throws further light on the situation. He says it first shows itself "by inclining the soul to abhor its sin."<sup>7</sup> Then comes a revelation of the Saviour of the world and a realization of the necessity of receiving life from him which leads to hungering for him.<sup>8</sup> And the promise of Matthew 5:6, he says, is made to such hungerings.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, her desires to go and the burning of her heart are those things which are to be expected in effectual calling according to Bunyan's view of it.<sup>10</sup> Mercy's coming on Christiana's invitation may show the use of means to bring a person

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 197.

2. Ibid., p. 193.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 197.

4. Ibid., p. 198.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 215.

6. Ibid., p. 191.

7. Ibid., p. 83.

8. Cf. Ibid., p. 85.

9. Cf. Ibid. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

10. Cf. Bunyan: Confessions, p. 822-823. Ante, p. 24.

to Christ which Bunyan states are to be used since they are appointed by God for that purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps this coupling of election with the means used in effectual calling is best explained by Christian's words to Ignorance. He says:

"I will boldly affirm...that no man can know Jesus Christ but by the revelation of the Father: yea, and faith too, by which the soul layeth hold upon Christ (if it be right), must be wrought by the exceeding greatness of his mighty power; the working of which faith, I perceive, poor Ignorance, thou art ignorant of. Be awakened then, see thine own wretchedness, and fly to the Lord Jesus; and by his righteousness, which is the righteousness of God (for he himself is God), thou shalt be delivered from condemnation."<sup>2</sup>

##### 5. Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election

So it has been seen that Bunyan taught that God elects those whom he will for eternal life, that the elect were chosen by God before the world began and without regard to any foreseen good works in them. Only those whom God has elected before the world began have justifying faith worked in them by the Holy Spirit. He teaches that God's appointed means of bringing men to Christ are to be used. He teaches that none have justifying faith but the elect; that those truly desire forgiveness and eternal life are those who are the elect and who are made to desire these things by effectual calling. But this teaching concerning election is never to preclude warnings to repentance, for such warnings are to be given.

As W. Hale White explains it, Bunyan's theory that God had judged people from eternity never held him back in his efforts to

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 822. Ante

2. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, p. 153

turn the wicked from their ways. He adds: "He knew, although not explicitly, that we must accept both the reasoning and the impulse to interfere and must not trouble ourselves with their apparent contradiction."<sup>1</sup>

## E. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Limited Salvation

### 1. Bunyan's Teachings Which Indicate a Belief in Limited Salvation

Bunyan says in the confessions of his faith, that he believes that the faith which justifies a sinner in God's sight

"is not to be found in any but those in whom the Spirit of God, by mighty power, doth work it; all others, being fearful and incredulous, dare not venture their souls and eternity upon it. And hence it is called the faith that is wrought by the exceeding great and mighty power of God, the faith 'of the operation of God.' And hence it is that others are said to be fearful, and so unbelieving. These, with other ungodly sinners, 'must have their part in the lake of fire.'"<sup>2</sup>

Though the statement is put rather vaguely, it seems to indicate a belief in limited salvation. A clearer statement is the following:

"I believe that...faith is effectually wrought in none but those which, before the world, were appointed unto glory...But of the rest he saith, 'Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said,' which latter verse relates to the 16th verse, which respecteth the election of God. 'Therefore they could not believe because...he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and I should heal them.'"<sup>3</sup>

He speaks of the elect as the "vessels of mercy which God afore prepared unto glory,"<sup>4</sup> and it is these who are effectually called.<sup>5</sup> Further he states that whosoever "miseth of effectual calling miseth of

. . . . .

1. W. Hale White; John Bunyan, p. 214.
2. Bunyan: Complete Works, Confession, p. 820.
3. Ibid., p. 821.
4. Ibid.
5. Cf. Ibid.

eternal life, because God justifieth none but those whom he calls."<sup>1</sup>  
Clearly Bunyan believes salvation to be limited to the elect.

In Grace Abounding, Bunyan says that if God had not voluntarily chosen him as a vessel of mercy, no good would have come of any desiring or laboring on his part.<sup>2</sup> He believed heartily that only the elect obtain eternal life.<sup>3</sup> He also says that he learned that those who are to be Christ's in another world must be called by him here,<sup>4</sup> and it has already been seen that only the elect are called according to his teaching.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, according to his statement, the Lord showed him that he would be called.<sup>6</sup>

It is to be remembered that in The Pilgrim's Progress Christian tells Pliable that the Lord will bestow eternal life freely upon those who are truly willing to have it,<sup>7</sup> but here what at first appears to be unlimited salvation, has been seen to be otherwise. For Bunyan believed no one could truly will to have eternal life unless he had been effectually called by God,<sup>8</sup> and that only the elect are effectually called.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, evidently, this is not making salvation limitless.

Also, as has been noted before, Christian tells Formalist and Hypocrisy that they, who had climbed over the wall rather than coming in at the gate,<sup>10</sup> came in by themselves without God's direction, and

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 823.

2. Cf. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 27.

3. Cf. Ibid.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 31.

5. Cf. Bunyan: Complete Works, Confession, pp. 821-823, Ante

6. Cf. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 33.

7. Cf. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, p. 14, Ante

8. Cf. Bunyan: Complete Works, Confession, pp. 822-823, Ante

9. Cf. Ibid., p. 822. He says that effectual calling is the fruit of electing love.

10. Cf. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, p. 40.



would go out by themselves without his mercy.<sup>1</sup> This happened later, as Christian said it would.<sup>2</sup>

At the Cross, in a conversation with Great-heart, Christiana says that she wishes Mercy's parents, Mrs. Timorous, and Madam Wanton were there, for, she says, "Surely, surely their hearts would be affected; nor could the fear of the one, nor the powerful lusts of the other, prevail with them to go home again, and to refuse to become good pilgrims."<sup>3</sup> But Great-heart says to her:

"...this is not communicated to every one, not to every one that did see Jesus bleed. There was that stood by, and that saw the blood run from his heart to the ground, and yet was so far off this that, instead of lamenting, they laughed at him, and instead of becoming his disciples, did harden their hearts against him. So all that you have, my daughter, you have by a peculiar impression made by a divine contemplating upon what I have spoken to you...This you have...by a special grace."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Bunyan's Teachings Which Seem to Indicate Belief in Unlimited Salvation

There are some statements in The Pilgrim's Progress which would seem to indicate belief in unlimited salvation. The following are the major ones: At the wicket-gate, Good-will tells Christian, who is rejoicing over his having been admitted: "We make no objections against any, notwithstanding all that they have done before they come hither: they 'in no wise are cast out.'"<sup>5</sup> At the palace called Beautiful, the people who received Christian read to him from the records of the house, "where it was showed how willing their Lord had been to receive into his

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 41.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 43.

3. Ibid., p. 222.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 28. John 6:37.

favour any, even any, though they in time past had offered great affronts to his person and proceedings."<sup>1</sup> Hopeful, in a conversation with Christian, says that he had told Faithful he thought God was unwilling to save him.<sup>2</sup> But Faithful told him to go to God and see, for he was invited to come; and urged him to ask the Father to reveal his Son to him. After Hopeful had prayed thus many times, his prayer was answered.<sup>3</sup> Then Hopeful wondered that so great a sinner as he was would be accepted and saved, but he heard the Lord say, "'and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'"<sup>4</sup> In another place Joseph, Christiana's son, tells Prudence that those who must be saved are those who accept salvation.<sup>5</sup>

It will be noticed however that Good-will's statement is that entrance is not dependent upon the previous good works of those who come; that the records of the palace called Beautiful state the same thing in different words; and that Hopeful's fears are based on his awareness of his being so great a sinner. And, as for the willingness of God to receive those who come to him, it has been noted that Bunyan teaches that willingness to go to God for salvation or to pray for it is the fruit of electing love,<sup>6</sup> so that those who come are the elect whom he is very willing to receive. Therefore, these difficult sections of The Pilgrim's Progress really do not contradict Bunyan's teachings regarding limited salvation.

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 55.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 145.

3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 145-146.

4. Ibid., p. 146. John 6:37.

5. Ibid., p. 235.

6. Bunyan: The Complete Works, Confession, p. 822. Ante

### 3. Summary of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Limited Salvation

It has been seen that, in regard to limited salvation, Bunyan never uses the term itself, but does appear to teach that salvation is limited to the elect, who alone are effectually called. But Bunyan does not emphasize this teaching, so that a person who read only The Pilgrim's Progress, might not realize that he even held this belief. He emphasizes the teaching that whoever will come to God will be received by him, and though it has been seen that he considers effectual calling to be the cause of their coming to God, he does not emphasize this teaching, but rather emphasizes God's willingness to receive those who will come to him.

### F. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Irresistible Grace

Bunyan, in his confession of faith, states his belief that the faith that justifies is found only in those in whom the Spirit of God works in "mighty power."<sup>1</sup> He also says he believes there is no impediment which can hinder the conversion and eternal salvation of the elect of God.<sup>2</sup> To substantiate this statement, Bunyan quotes Roman 8:30: "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."<sup>3</sup> He states his belief that "effectual calling is like the work of Christ that raised Lazarus from the dead - a word attended with an arm that was omnipotent..<sup>4</sup> According to his belief, effectual calling must produce repentance. It is a "heart-drawing invitation"<sup>5</sup> to appropriate forgiveness of sins. These are his clearest statements on irresistible grace, and these do indicate that Bunyan believed grace

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1. Ibid., p. 820.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 820.

3. Romans 8:30.

4. Bunyan: Complete Works, Confessions, p. 822.

5. Ibid., p. 823.

to be irresistible. The study of his teachings regarding freedom of the will indicates that he believed man's will to be enslaved.<sup>1</sup> His belief in irresistible grace is almost necessitated by his belief that man's will is not free.

Bunyan, in writing of his own life, used phrases that indicate the likelihood of a belief in irresistible grace. He calls Grace Abounding his "relation of the merciful working of God upon"<sup>2</sup> his soul. He speaks also of his having forgot nearly all he had learned in school, "long before the Lord did work His gracious work of conversion upon my soul."<sup>3</sup> He states that he was so controlled by the lusts of the flesh that he would have been destroyed by God's justice "had not a miracle of precious grace prevented."<sup>4</sup> In these statements he indicates God's power in working upon his soul, which makes it appear to be all a result of God's power and not a result of anything in Bunyan. This might not be usable as conclusive evidence were not Bunyan's statements in his confession of faith so definite on this point.

It has been noted that Bunyan's beliefs regarding effectual calling indicate that he was under the power of effectual calling at the time he longed and pleaded for eternity.<sup>5</sup> He says his mind "was so turned that it lay like a horse-leech at the vein...so fixed on eternity and on the things about the kingdom of heaven...that neither pleasures nor profits nor persuasions, nor threats could make it let go its hold."<sup>6</sup> It would have been as hard for him then, he says,

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ante, pp. 19-23.
2. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. 9. Ante
5. Cf. Ante, pp. 24-25.
6. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 20.

to have taken his mind from heaven to earth as he often afterwards found it to get it from earth to heaven.<sup>1</sup> Later, when he was troubled over his little faith, he says that God would not allow him to destroy his soul thus, but created in him "such suppositions that I could not rest content until I did come to some certain knowledge whether I had faith or not..<sup>2</sup> After his vision of the Bedford people who were with Christ, he was "provoked to vehement hunger to be one with that number that did sit in the sunshine."<sup>3</sup> These things indicate that Bunyan did not believe he could turn away from these desires; but again, without the material in the confession for background, no definite conclusions could be drawn here as to whether he considered this grace to be irresistible or whether, on the other hand, he simply had a strong desire and a will to know and have these things. All of these things must be studied in the light of Bunyan's beliefs concerning effectual calling and freedom of the will.<sup>4</sup>

In The Pilgrim's Progress these same things must also be kept in mind in order to understand that which is said and done in the light of Bunyan's meaning. Christian, when first awakened to his sins, tries to refrain himself so that his family will not see his distress, "but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased."<sup>5</sup> It is to be remembered that Bunyan said that a man who is under the power of effectual calling has heaven and hell before his eyes.<sup>6</sup> Christian becomes more and more unable to endure his burden (his sin) and has to find a way to

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 21.

2. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

3. Ibid., p. 26.

4. Ante, pp. 24-25.

5. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, p. 9.

6. Ante, p. 25., Bunyan: Confession, p. 823.

be rid of it.<sup>1</sup> His words show how much he feels the need for deliverance, for he says, "Methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden."<sup>2</sup> Obstinate and Pliable try to persuade Christian to go back, but they cannot.<sup>3</sup> Christian explains that none of his neighbors went with him because they did not see their danger as he saw his. As has been seen, he saw his because he was under the power of effectual calling. Faithful's reason for going on pilgrimage also shows this matter of those who are effectually called having heaven and hell, in this case hell, before their eyes.<sup>4</sup> Mercy yearns to go to the Celestial City because the things Christiana had told her about it have taken some hold on her mind.<sup>5</sup> Gaius says that grace overcomes the soul with its glory, giving it the heart to oppose sin, which is a more definite statement.

But there are even more definite teachings regarding irresistible grace than these. Christian tells Piety that he was driven out of his native country by a dreadful sound which told him that unavoidable destruction awaited him if he remained there.<sup>6</sup> Faithful explains to Talkative how a work of grace in the soul is known to one who has it. First he is convicted of sin which is followed by sorrow and shame of sin, which is worked in him by the realization of his guilt. Then he finds the Savior revealed, and the necessity of receiving life from him. Finally he hungers and thirsts for him, and receives his desires.<sup>7</sup> Even

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1. Cf. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, pp. 9-10, 18-20.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 27.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 26, 29.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 191.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 49.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 85.

clearer is Christiana's explanation of why she went on pilgrimage in the first place. She says she saw her guilt, had a dream of her husband's well-being, and received a letter from the King to come to him. She says, "The dream and the letter together so wrought upon my mind that they forced me to this way."<sup>1</sup> Honest's explanation of how any come on pilgrimage from Stupidity has been noted previously.<sup>2</sup>

These things, especially Christiana's being forced into the way and Christian's being driven out of his country, indicate Bunyan's teaching regarding irresistible grace. Bunyan teaches that the grace of God cannot be resisted, though he does not fail to look at it from the human side also, showing the hungerings and awareness of guilt. In his allegory and his autobiography, he emphasizes these things from man's side, so that his teachings that grace is irresistible must be chiefly drawn from his confession of faith and from comparison of his beliefs concerning effectual calling with the events which he describes in Grace Abounding and The Pilgrim's Progress. Such a comparison shows that these longings occur because God's grace cannot be resisted. Bunyan clearly teaches that nothing can hinder the conversion and eternal salvation of the elect.

#### G. Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Perseverance of the Saints

##### 1. Bunyan's Teachings as Found in His Confession of Faith

Bunyan's formal statement of belief will be noted first, and used, at least in part, as the basis for evaluating the material found

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1. Ibid., p. 214.

2. Cf. Ante, p. 31.

in Grace Abounding and The Pilgrim's Progress on the perseverance of the saints.

In his confession of faith, Bunyan says, "I believe that election is free and permanent, being founded in the grace and unchangeable will of God."<sup>1</sup> He also says, as has been seen before, that he does not believe that there is any "impediment attending the elect of God that can hinder their conversion and eternal salvation."<sup>2</sup> and quotes the scripture noted before to substantiate his statement. He says that effectual calling "hath annexed to it, as its inseparable companion, the promise of thorough sanctification."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Bunyan's Teachings as Found in His Grace Abounding

In Grace Abounding Bunyan tells of his horrible temptation to sell Christ, and of his eventually yielding to the temptation and saying, "Let Him go if He will."<sup>5</sup> Throughout the narrative of this time and of the misery which followed his yielding, he appears to fluctuate between belief in perseverance of the saints and disbelief in it. When he was first tempted, he was greatly vexed by the temptation and by blasphemous thoughts against Christ, but still he believed that those who are once effectually in Christ can never lose him forever.<sup>6</sup> He hoped he had seen himself effectually in Christ, so trusted he would

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1. Bunyan: Confession, p. 821.

2. Ibid., p. 821.

3. Ante, p. 25.

4. Bunyan: Confession, p. 822.

5. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 56.

6. Cf. Ibid., p. 54. To support this belief he quoted Leviticus 25:23 "For the land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine, saith God."



not lose Christ forever. But after he had yielded to the temptation, he says: "I felt myself shut up unto the judgment to come; nothing now, for years together, would abide with me but damnation and an expectation of damnation.." <sup>1</sup> Either his belief in perseverance of the saints waned, or he began to believe that he had never been effectually in Christ. From what follows, it appears that his belief in perseverance had waned for the time, for he did believe he had received light and mercy. <sup>2</sup>

He was then especially troubled by Hebrews 12: 16, 17:

"Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears." <sup>3</sup>

He believed himself to be like Esau. Scriptural promises of pardon did not satisfy him. The promise of Mark 3:28 "All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme," <sup>4</sup> seemed to him to relate to those in a natural state, and not to him, "who had not only received the light and mercy, but that had, both after and also contrary to that, so slighted Christ as I had done." <sup>5</sup> Therefore he feared his sin was the unpardonable sin spoken of in Mark 3:29. <sup>6</sup> Then, when he was convinced that such was his sin, he believed that it was impossible for his transgressions to be forgiven, and that he would not be saved from the wrath to come. <sup>7</sup> Then he thought, "God hath let me go, and I am fallen.

. . . . .

1. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 56.
2. Post, pp. 44-45.
3. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, pp. 56-57. Post,
4. Ibid., p. 58.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."
7. Ibid., p. 59.

Oh...that it was with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me."<sup>1</sup> But even then he did not appear to believe that his case was common, for he began to prize God's preservation of his people, and says concerning it:

"Ah how safely did I see them walk, whom God had hedged in! They were within His care, protection, and special providence; though they were full as bad as I by nature, yet, because He loved them, He would not suffer them to fall without the range of His mercy: but as for me, He would not preserve me nor keep me, but suffered me, because I was a reprobate, to fall as I had done."<sup>2</sup>

He says that God overrules all that happens to his elect, so that they are not destroyed or put beyond his mercy; and though he let some fall, he does not let them fall "into the sin unpardonable, nor into hell for sin."<sup>3</sup> This trouble lasted nearly two years, and then he began to believe that his sin was not unpardonable,<sup>4</sup> and that it could not be compared to Esau's sin; for he saw Esau's sin as being comparable only to those who despise the things needed for a birth-right to heaven, that is the things God begins in the soul that lead to a new birth, but later want to inherit the blessing without the birth-right.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, he no longer applies such falling as this to Christians, but to those who despise the offer of eternal life from the beginning.<sup>6</sup> Seemingly the problem is solved, and belief in perseverance is at least probable but it arises again near the end of Grace Abounding when Bunyan says that one thing that makes him venture all for God even

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1. Ibid., p. 59. Job 29:2.

2. Ibid., p. 61.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 81-93.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 93.

6. This creates difficulties as far as his belief in irresistible grace is concerned. It is an inconsistency that perhaps cannot be resolved.

when it comes to imprisonment or death is the "the dread of the torment of hell, which I was sure they must partake of that for fear of the cross do shrink from their profession of Christ, His words and laws, before the sons of men."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Bunyan's Teaching As Found in Pilgrim's Progress, with Contradictions Which Appear

Difficulties in determining Bunyan's teaching on perseverance of the saints abound in The Pilgrim's Progress.

Christian sees a man in a cage at the Interpreter's house who had once been a "fair and flourishing professor,"<sup>2</sup> and been, as he thought, going to the Celestial City. But now he is shut into the iron cage because, as he explains it, "I left off to watch and be sober; and I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the Word and the goodness of God;"<sup>3</sup> and continues

"I have grieved the Spirit, and he is gone; I tempted the Devil, and he is come to me; I have provoked the anger of God, and he has left me: I have so hardened my heart that I cannot repent."<sup>4</sup>

The man insists that there is no hope for him at all; that he has crucified Christ to himself afresh; that he has despised Christ's person and righteousness, counting his blood an unholy thing; and "done despite to the Spirit of Grace."<sup>5</sup> For this reason he is shut out from all the promises, and God has denied him repentance. The Bible gives him no encouragement to believe, and God himself has shut him into the iron

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 114.

2. Ibid. p. 35.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

cage. This is shown to Christian as a warning.<sup>1</sup>

In a song Faithful repeats to Christian, the dangers of falling away are set forth. It contains the spirit of warning that is often repeated throughout the book. The words are:

"The trials that those men do meet withal  
That are obedient to the heavenly call,  
Are manifold and suited to the flesh,  
And come, and come, and come again afresh;  
That now, or sometime else, we by them may  
Be taken, overcome, and cast away.  
O, let the pilgrims, let the pilgrims then  
Be vigilant, and quit themselves like men."<sup>2</sup>

Similar warnings are given Faithful and Christian by Evangelist. They are told that they must be very careful, and that they are not out of gun-shot of the devil.<sup>3</sup> But here they are given a gleam of hope, for Evangelist adds, "set your faces like a flint; you have all power in heaven and earth on your side."<sup>4</sup>

A more fearful warning is found in the castle-yard of Doubting Castle where Giant Despair shows Christian and Hopeful the bones of those whom he has killed; and says, "these...were pilgrims as you are once, and they trespassed in my grounds as you have done; and when I thought fit, I tore them to pieces."<sup>5</sup> How can these warnings and fatalities be consistent with a belief in perseverance of the saints? But it does not end with these. Much nearer the Celestial City, Christian and Hopeful come to the Shepherds, who ask the pilgrims how they have persevered in the way so far as those mountains.<sup>6</sup> Then the Shepherds show the pilgrims some men wandering among tombs who had once been

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1. Cf. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 76.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 89.

4. Ibid., p. 90.

5. Ibid., p. 120.

6. Cf. Ibid., p. 123.

pilgrims, but, having been captured by Giant Despair, are now left "in the congregation of the dead."<sup>1</sup> There are still more indications of teaching concerning falling from grace. Christiana is told by the Interpreter that it is "easier for one to begin to profess well, than to hold out as he should to the end."<sup>2</sup>

At the place in the Valley of the Shadow of Death where the snares are, Great-heart tells Christiana and the others: "You cannot imagine how many are killed hereabout, and yet men are so foolishly venturous as to set out lightly on pilgrimage."<sup>3</sup> Honest says, "I have seen some that have set out as if they would drive all the world afore them, who yet have in few days died as they in the wilderness, and so never got sight of the promised land."<sup>4</sup> He says that he has known some who started on pilgrimage running, but returned running as fast as they had first run forward. He has known others who, when they were almost there, came back saying there was no such place.<sup>5</sup> Others he has known who boasted of what they would do if opposed who "even at a false alarm fled faith, the pilgrim's way, and all."<sup>6</sup> Later, Mr. Holyman tells the pilgrims that people who go on pilgrimage must have courage or "they can never hold on their way."<sup>7</sup> Mr. Stand-fast, in speaking of the Enchanted Ground, says that many go that far on pilgrimage, and then are stopped and destroyed. "Those who die there, he says, die of no violent thing, but go away in a sleep, for they

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1. Ibid., p. 125.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 256.

4. Ibid., p. 271.

5. Cf. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 271.

7. Ibid., p. 291.

"acquiesce in the will of that disease."<sup>1</sup> These things appear to teach that it is possible for Christians to fall from grace.

Perhaps these things can better be understood through a study of those who fail to reach the Celestial City and of those who persevere to the end. Faithful, Christian, Hopeful, Christiana, Mr. Valiant-for-truth, and Mr. Stand-fast persevere to the end. It is perhaps even more strange that Mr. Fearing, Mr. Despondency, Much-afraid, Mr. Ready-to-halt, and Mr. Feeble-mind persevere to the end. But a look at the names of those who do not persevere to the end shows how entirely different is the quality of their characters. Among those who do not persevere to the end are, as has been noted before, Formalist, Hypocrisy, By-ends, Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, Mr. Save-all, Ignorance, and Atheist.<sup>2</sup> Others who do not persevere are Obstinate, Pliable, Mistrust, Timorous, Turnaway, and Atheist, who start on pilgrimage, but later turn back.<sup>3</sup> Here at least is some indication that those who do not persevere to the end are not true pilgrims in the beginning even though they do start on the pilgrimage and expect to be received at the Celestial City. In the introductory poem there are some lines about those in the story who fail to reach the Celestial City. The lines are:

"It shows, too, who set out for life amain,  
As if the lasting crown they would obtain;  
Here also you may see the reason why  
They lose their labor and like fools they die."<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 317.

2. Ante p. 25.

3. Ibid., pp. 310-311. The difference between Timorous and Mr. Fearing may not be so evident. Timorous did not find advantage in going, while Mr. Fearing's difficulty was fear that he would not be accepted in the end, pp. 311, 266-267

4. Ibid.

As to Money-love, Mr. By-ends, and their friends, it is true they believed that they were all going on pilgrimage, but Christian's words of them show that they were not true pilgrims, for he says of them, "neither will it out of my mind, but that that man that takes up religion for the world will throw away religion for the world."<sup>1</sup> The quality of those who fail is seen later when the Shepherds take Christian and Hopeful to see a by-way to hell wherein hypocrites go; such as sell their birthright as did Esau; those who sell their master as did Judas; those who blaspheme the gospel; and those who "lie and dissemble,"<sup>2</sup> as did Annanias and Sapphira. But even at this place Christian and Hopeful are warned to be careful. Hopeful says to the Shepherds that he sees each one of those who fell had "a show of pilgrimage, as we have now,"<sup>3</sup> and the Shepherds replied, "Yes, and held it a long time too."<sup>4</sup> Hopeful then asks how far these could go on pilgrimage since they were cast away thus nevertheless, to which the Shepherds reply that some can come further even than these Delectable Mountains, and some not so far.<sup>5</sup> Whereupon the pilgrims say to each other that they have need to cry "to the strong for strength,"<sup>6</sup> and the Shepherds assert that they will also have need to use that strength when they have it.

That some could go even further than the Delectable Mountains and yet be cast away is seen in the case of Ignorance, who is cast into hell in the end, though he had gone as far as the gate of the Celestial City and knocked there for admittance. But Ignorance was not a true

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1. Ibid., pp. 108-109.

2. Ibid., p. 125.

3. Ibid., p. 125.

4. Ibid.

5. Cf. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

pilgrim, though he had gone on pilgrimage that far, for he had not come in in the proper way, through the wicket-gate. That people such as Ignorance are nevertheless treated as pilgrims by Bunyan is shown in a conversation between Christian and Hopeful in which Hopeful says that in his town, Vanity Fair, there are whole streets of people such as Ignorance, "and that of pilgrims too."<sup>1</sup>

But, through a discussion of such men as Ignorance, Temporary and others who fall, Christian and Hopeful explain the reason for their failing to persevere, and also point to a solution of the whole problem of Bunyan's teaching regarding perseverance of the saints. Christian first asks Hopeful if he thinks such men as Ignorance have at any time conviction of sins, and, since Hopeful declines to answer, Christian answers his own question, saying that he believes they sometimes do have such convictions but stifle them, not knowing that they tend to their good.<sup>2</sup> Then Christian speaks of Temporary from Graceless, who, he says, was much awakened once. He says, "I believe that then he had some sight of his sins, and of the wages that was due thereto."<sup>3</sup> Hopeful replies that he also had had hope of the man, and suggests that they inquire into the cause of the sudden backsliding of men such as Temporary.<sup>4</sup> Hopeful proposes four reasons for this, which are as follows:

First, though their consciences are awakened, their minds are not changed; so when the power of guilt wears off, the thing which provoked them to be religious is gone. Therefore they naturally turn

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 154.

2. Cf. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 156.

4. Cf. Ibid.



back, for they want heaven only because they fear the torment of hell. When this fear cools, their desire for heaven also cools.

Secondly, their fears of men overcome them, and so their fears of hell cool.

Thirdly, they cannot endure the shame that attends religion, so when their sense of hell and wrath is gone, they go back to their old course.

Fourthly, they do not like guilt or to think of terror, therefore, they shun thoughts of guilt and terror, and so, "when once they are rid of their awakening about the terrors and wrath of God, they harden their hearts gladly, and choose such ways as will harden them more and more."<sup>1</sup>

Christian concedes that Hopeful is "pretty near the business, for the bottom of all is, for want of a change in their mind and will."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, he says, they are like the felon before the judge, who trembles and seems to repent heartily, but really it is all fear of being hanged and not detestation of his offense. If he is freed he will be a thief still, "and so a rogue still."<sup>3</sup> If his mind had been changed it would have been otherwise. This at least accounts for the majority who fail to persevere to the end.

But the words of Honest throw another light on the subject. Honest had been sleeping when the pilgrims came upon him. When asked what he would have done had Great-heart and the pilgrims been robbers, he replied:

. . . . .

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 157.

3. Ibid., pp. 157-158.

"Why I would have fought as long as breath had been in me, and had I so done, I am sure you could never have given me the worst on't; for a Christian can never be overcome, unless he shall yield himself."<sup>1</sup>

Great-heart says that this is true. Therefore, it can scarcely be denied that Bunyan admits the possibility of a pilgrim's giving himself up.

But, when Christian explains to Hopeful why Little-faith did not sell his jewels, he says that he could not, like Esau, sell them, for it is nowhere said that Esau had faith at all, "no, not so much as a little,"<sup>2</sup> and adds, "therefore no marvel if, where the flesh only bears sway (as it will in that man where no faith is to resist), if he sells his birthright, and his soul, and all, and that to the Devil of hell..<sup>3</sup>" But he explains that though those without faith can sell what they have and themselves also for carnal lusts; "yet they that have faith, saving faith, though but a little of it, cannot do so."<sup>4</sup>

But still, this is not an end of seeming contradictions, for Feeble-mind, who had been captured by the giant Slay-good, and then rescued, says he had heard "that not any pilgrim that is taken by violent hands, if he keeps heart-whole towards his Master, is by the laws of Providence to die by the hand of the enemy."<sup>5</sup>

Here, the words "if he keeps heart-whole...is...to die"<sup>6</sup> should be noted. Bunyan appears to allow of the possibility that a pilgrim may not keep heart whole, and if the pilgrim does not, spiritual death

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1. Ibid., p. 259.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 132.
5. Ibid., p. 282.
6. Ibid.

appears to be his end. But then, it might perhaps be argued that Bunyan has in mind those pilgrims whose hearts were never right, and who naturally would fall. But, opposed to this view is the argument between Apollyon and Christian in which Apollyon tells Christian that the Lord has not delivered people whom he, Apollyon, has taken back from the Lord. Christian replies "His forbearing at present to deliver them is on purpose to try their love, whether they will cleave to him to the end."<sup>1</sup> Here the possibility of not cleaving to him is indicated, and the people spoken of have belonged to the Lord of the way.

Perhaps, to all of these statements which point now to teaching of perseverance and then to teaching that falling from grace is possible; there might be added one more. The Interpreter shows Christian a place where there is a fire burning, and someone throwing water on it. Nevertheless the fire burned better yet, because someone back of the wall throws oil on the fire to keep it burning.<sup>2</sup> The Interpreter then explains that Christ, "with the oil of his grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart; by the means of which, notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of his people prove gracious still."<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Bunyan's Teachings: A Suggested Solution and Summary

Through a study of Bunyan's teachings regarding the perseverance of the saints, it has been found that he appears to teach perseverance in his confession of faith, and that it is also evident in Grace Abounding though he here teaches that any Christian, who shrinks from profession

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1. Ibid., p. 60.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 33.

3. Ibid.

of Christ and his words and laws before men due to fear of the results of such profession will be tormented in hell.<sup>1</sup> It was found that in The Pilgrim's Progress Bunyan teaches that those who turn back after starting on pilgrimage were never truly pilgrims, but that he gives warnings to pilgrims to beware lest they also fail to persevere to the end, and shows the possibility of a Christian's being able to give himself up and so perish. Therefore, though Bunyan appears to believe in the perseverance of the saints generally, he does not completely deny the possibility that some may fall from grace. Though there may appear to be an inconsistency between his confession of faith and the other books, nevertheless such seems to be his teaching. There may be a possibility that his teachings changed slightly over a period of years. Grace Abounding appeared in 1666,<sup>2</sup> the confession of faith was written in 1672.<sup>3</sup> The first part of The Pilgrim's Progress was written in 1676<sup>4</sup> and the second part was published in 1685,<sup>5</sup> three years before his death. However, John Brown says that in the confession Bunyan "sets forth his belief in the main doctrines of Scripture..<sup>6</sup> and Brown gives no indication that Bunyan's belief ever changed. Bunyan wrote this confession so his enemies could see his teachings, which are these, and judge whether there is heresy in them or rebellion that would make him worthy of almost twelve years of imprisonment or deserving to be hanged or banished.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, there is little doubt that these are his true

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1. Ante
2. John Brown: John Bunyan, Vol. I, p. 178.
3. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 13.
5. White: *op. cit.*, p. 106.
6. Brown, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 231.
7. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

teachings as he gave them to the world; and in the light of this, it is evident that Bunyan believed in the perseverance of the saints. But, Bunyan also warns people to make certain that they truly are Christian,<sup>1</sup> and will not have any live so confidently as to stop being watchful. He also teaches the possibility that a Christian may fall from grace, though this is not found in his confession of faith, and it has been seen that those who failed to persevere to the end had never been true pilgrims (The Pilgrim's Progress), with the possible exception of the man in the iron cage. These appear to be Bunyan's teachings even though there is a slight inconsistency in them.

#### H. Summary

Through a study of Bunyan's teaching regarding the recognized tenets of Calvinism, it was found that Bunyan taught that God is sovereign ruler over the lives of Christians, overruling the things that befall them; and especially overruling their spiritual lives. It was seen that Bunyan taught that man is totally depraved, and that his will is enslaved to sin. It was found that Bunyan believed that God elects those whom he will for eternal life, and that the elect were chosen by God before the world began. But it was seen also that Bunyan emphasized the necessity of using God's appointed means for bringing men to Christ, and of giving warnings to repent. It was found that Bunyan taught that salvation is limited to the elect, but that he emphasized God's willing-

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1. Bunyan: Confession of Faith, p. 822. Bunyan's belief that election should not prevent use of the means God has appointed to bring men to Christ, but rather makes the use and effect of them necessary has been noted before. Ante, p. 28. Bunyan concludes the statement saying there is this necessity "because they are chosen to be brought to heaven in this way; that is, by the faith in Jesus Christ, which is the end of effectual calling. 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.'" II Peter 1:10.

ness to receive those who come to him. It was found that Bunyan taught that the grace of God cannot be resisted; though he placed emphasis on the human side also, showing the hungerings and the awareness of guilt. It was noted that Bunyan taught that these who are once truly Christians generally persevere to the end, but that he also taught that it is possible for a Christian to fall from grace.

A COMPARISON OF BUNYAN'S TEACHINGS WITH THE CALVINIST  
TENETS

CHAPTER III  
A COMPARISON OF BUNYAN'S TEACHINGS WITH THE  
CALVINIST TENETS

A. Introduction

How do these teachings of John Bunyan compare with the Calvinist teachings on these six tenets which have been studied? A comparison of these teachings will now be made in order to discover whether John Bunyan was, or was not a Calvinist; and if he was, to what extent his beliefs and teachings were Calvinistic.

B. A Comparison of Bunyan's Teaching Regarding the Sovereignty of God  
with the Calvinist Tenet

It was found, after a study of Calvinist belief regarding the sovereignty of God, that Calvinism teaches that all of creation, both animate and inanimate, is controlled directly and inclusively by God, who is absolute sovereign in the universe which he has created.<sup>1</sup> How do Bunyan's teachings compare with this?<sup>2</sup> It has been seen that Bunyan believes God to be sovereign ruler over the lives of Christians, ordaining both the good and the evil which comes to them; both their understanding of spiritual truth and the temptations which they have to sin against him.<sup>3</sup> He controls all that his enemies and theirs do to them. But Bunyan emphasizes spiritual sovereignty chiefly. He makes no mention of control of inanimate things or of God's sovereignty over his enemies

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1. Ante p. 3.

2. Ante pp. 13-19.

3. This teaching of temptations as sin is evident in Bunyan's wording, Grace Abounding, p. 61.



in things that do not affect Christians. He makes no mention of sovereignty over nations or peoples. His teachings concern individuals, and do not extend to nations or the universe. What he would teach concerning these things cannot fairly be surmised since there is no real evidence. But it is evident that, concerning Christians and all that concerns them, Bunyan's teaching is truly Calvinistic.

#### C. A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Total Depravity of Man With the Calvinist Tenet

As it has been found, Calvinism teaches that man is totally depraved; that he cannot desire, do, or think anything but what is completely envenomed by sin; and that even a show of goodness in man is hypocrisy and no sign that men are free from the power of sin in any way.<sup>1</sup> Calvinism also teaches that man's will is enslaved to sin, so that man must sin of necessity and that God's grace is not preceded by any will toward it on man's part, for man cannot even will to move toward goodness. Any movement toward goodness is the beginning of conversion to God which is due entirely to God's grace.<sup>2</sup>

It has been seen that Bunyan teaches that man's nature is completely defiled so that he cannot do any good thing, his very best acts being so sinful that even one such act is enough to send him to hell if he had been faultless all his life before.<sup>3</sup> He teaches that man is so completely bound to sin that he can make no resistance until the grace of God begins to work in him.<sup>4</sup> He makes no mention of God's

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1. Ante pp. 3-5.

2. Cf. Ante, ch. I, C.

3. Cf. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress, pp. 143-144.

4. Cf. Ante, Ch. II, Sec. C.

putting men under restraint so that they cannot commit all of the sins to which their totally depraved nature would lead them, which teaching is found in Calvinism. But apart from the absence of teaching concerning this point, it is evident that the teachings of John Bunyan are essentially the same as the teachings of Calvinism. Bunyan teaches that man is totally depraved, though he does not use these words, and that his will is entirely enslaved to sin.

#### D.A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Predestination and Election With the Calvinist Tenet

It was found that the Calvinist belief regarding predestination and election is that all that happens is predestined by God, and that all men are predestined by God either to eternal life or to eternal damnation simply as a result of God's righteous will, and not as a result of anything in any individual person.<sup>1</sup> Predestination extends to nations as well as to individuals, and the fall of man was predestined.

Bunyan's teaching regarding predestination and election has been seen also to include God's electing those whom he will to eternal life before the world was, and without regard to any foreseen good works in the elect, but simply according to his will. The elect were "appointed unto glory."<sup>2</sup> His teaching regarding predestination to damnation is not so clearly stated, except his quoting John 12:39, 40 in connection with election, the statement that God has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they could not believe.<sup>3</sup> That

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1. Cf. Ante, Ch. I., Sec. D.

2. Confession, p. 821. Ante, Ch. II, p.

3. Cf. Ibid.

he believed in reprobation is rather evident from the manner in which he uses this reference, but he certainly does not emphasize it, whereas he does emphasize election. Philip says that in his confession, "Reprobation is not even named; and there is no article on the subject in his Confession."<sup>1</sup> However, as has been seen, reprobation is intimated even though it is not named or given a special section in the Confession; and Bunyan himself had once feared that he was a reprobate.<sup>2</sup>

Bunyan has been seen to believe that only the elect obtain eternal life,<sup>3</sup> but that those who are awakened to a desire for it and a sense of sin are the elect who are thus being called so that there is no possibility of anyone's truly desiring forgiveness and eternal life without obtaining it. For that reason he can teach that anyone who is willing to have forgiveness and eternal life will have it bestowed upon him freely.<sup>4</sup>

Bunyan does not mention predestination with regard to nations or with regard to the fall of man. His teaching is, therefore, chiefly positive, while Calvin states clearly both the positive and the negative sides of predestination and election, both predestination to eternal life and predestination to eternal damnation. Therein appears to lie the chief difference, which may well be no real difference in belief but rather a difference in emphasis.

#### E. A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Limited Salvation with Calvinist Tenet

It was found, through a study of Calvinist teaching regarding limited salvation, that the Calvinist teaches that salvation is limited

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1. Philip: The Life, Times, and Characteristics of John Bunyan, p. 483.
2. Cf. Bunyan: Grace Abounding, p. 37.
3. Cf. Ante p. 33.
4. Cf. Ante pp. 32-33.

to the elect, for whom alone Christ died.<sup>1</sup> Study revealed that, though Bunyan never used the term, he does appear to teach that salvation is limited to the elect, who alone are effectually called. But whereas the Calvinist teaching is definitely set forth, Bunyan emphasizes this teaching so little that the reader of The Pilgrim's Progress would very likely never suppose Bunyan ever held the belief. Bunyan's emphasis is on the teaching that God will receive whoever comes to him; and it is only in his confession of faith that he makes it really clear that only those who are effectually called by God, that is, only the elect, come to God.<sup>2</sup>

#### F. A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding Irresistible Grace with the Calvinist Tenet

It was found that the Calvinist doctrine teaches that God does not merely offer salvation to the elect, but, rather, assigns it to them so that they must accept it.<sup>3</sup>

Study of Bunyan's teaching revealed that he also believed the grace of God to be irresistible, a natural outgrowth of his belief in man's depravity. Nevertheless, Bunyan was found to emphasize the human response to God's grace, the hungerings and awareness of guilt, the prayers and pleadings for salvation. This emphasis was found to have as its background, however, Bunyan's belief that these hungerings and awareness of sins are the result of the effectual calling of God. Bunyan does not teach this doctrine very clearly and some statements

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1. Cf. Ante, Ch. I, Sec. E.
2. Cf. Ante, Ch. II, Sec. E.
3. Cf. Ante, Ch. I, part F.

in The Pilgrim's Progress appear to deny the doctrine, but in light of the confession of faith, these may be considered natural inconsistencies of which the author himself was probably unaware. And furthermore, it has been seen that Bunyan tries always to emphasize the positive side in such matters as the sovereignty, predestination and election, limited salvation, and irresistible grace, which may account for some differences.

#### G. A Comparison of Bunyan's Teachings Regarding the Perseverance of the Saints with the Calvinist Tenet

The Calvinist teaching regarding perseverance of the saints was seen to be that the true Christian can never fall from grace, but will persevere to the end; since all the work of grace is believed to be entirely dependent upon God, who cannot fail.<sup>1</sup> However, it was seen that Calvin admits that many who appear to belong to Christ revolt and fall away; but he believes these people never were Christians "with that heartfelt confidence by which...the certainty of their election is established.."2

It was found that John Bunyan's statements appear often to be a contradiction, but at a closer examination showed that he agrees with the Calvinist belief in general. It was found that he believes true Christians will persevere to the end, unless, and the possibility is very slight, they give up Christ of their own will. He appears to teach thus as a warning to Christians to watch and be very careful. Like Calvin, he was seen to teach that those who start on pilgrimage, but

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1. Cf. Ante, Ch. I, Sec. G.

2. Ante, p. 10.

turn back were never true Christians, never adhering to Christ in such a way that they were shown to be true Christians. Therefore, there is little difference between Bunyan's teaching and the Calvinist teaching except for Bunyan's intimation that there is a possibility of a Christian's falling of his own will, and this belief is not evident in Bunyan's confession of faith.

CHAPTER IV  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The teachings of John Bunyan were compared with the recognized tenets of Calvinism in order to discover whether or not Bunyan's teachings were Calvinistic, and if they were, to what extent they were Calvinistic. It was found that Bunyan taught that God is sovereign over all that he has created, Bunyan emphasized spiritual sovereignty chiefly, sovereignty over Christians. It was seen however, that Bunyan also taught that God controls all things pertaining to Christians including their enemies' rage against them. However, it was found that Bunyan did not teach anything concerning God's sovereignty over inanimate things or his enemies except wherein these affect Christians. But, since Bunyan was not setting forth a system of theology, or a history of nations, it cannot be construed that he disbelieved in such sovereignty simply because it did not form a part of his teaching.

A comparison of Bunyan's teaching with the Calvinist belief in man's total depravity revealed that his teaching was almost identical with the Calvinist teaching, both in asserting that man is totally depraved and in teaching that man's will is enslaved to sin. The only difference between the two teachings was found to be Bunyan's omission of teaching as to whether God puts men under restraint so that they cannot sin as greatly as their nature would lead them to sin. But once more, this was seen to be only a matter of absence of definite teaching and it cannot be said that Bunyan did or did not believe this to be true.

It was found that Bunyan's teaching regarding predestination and election were essentially the same as the Calvinist teachings, with the difference that Bunyan placed his emphasis on the positive side, not



emphasizing predestination to damnation and not mentioning predestination with regard to the fall of man. However, he was found to teach reprobation, even though he did not emphasize it. It was also found that Bunyan did not mention predestination as it affects nations, but his writings were not about nations. Therefore, Bunyan's teachings were found to agree with the Calvinist tenet, though his emphasis was found to be different.

It was found that, though Bunyan did not emphasize the Calvinist teaching that salvation is limited to the elect, this teaching held a minor position in his confession of faith, while his emphasis was on God's willingness to receive all who come to him.

Though it was found that Bunyan taught that the elect cannot resist the grace of God, as is the Calvinist teaching, his emphasis was on the hungerings for righteousness of the people; though these hungerings were found to have their basis in effectual calling and to be a result of irresistible grace.

The point at which Bunyan differed most from the Calvinist teaching was in the matter of perseverance of the saints; for, whereas the Calvinist teaching leaves absolutely no room for a permanent falling from grace, Bunyan taught that this is possible, even though it forms a very minor part of his teaching and his confession of faith teaches perseverance.

Therefore, it has been seen that John Bunyan's teachings were Calvinistic; that he did teach that God is sovereign, that man is totally depraved, that God elected before the world those who would be saved according to his own will and not because of any foreseen good works in them, that salvation is limited to the elect, and that the grace of

God cannot be resisted. However, it was noted that Bunyan emphasized only the positive side of the doctrines, and that his teachings concerning the perseverance of the saints allowed of exceptions to the rule which the Calvinist teaching does not allow. The difference may be accounted for by George B. Cheever's statement that Bunyan did not draw his theology from the teachings of John Calvin or from any man's system of theology, but rather from the Bible itself.<sup>1</sup> Therefore only in so far as he found the same things the Calvinists found would he agree with their teachings. However, he has been found to agree with them on most points. It appears from this study that John Bunyan could be called a Calvinist, though a Calvinist of milder sort. However, the writer of this thesis does not feel free to use that term in speaking of John Bunyan in view of the following statement by Bunyan himself, with which this thesis closes:

"You ask me next, How long is it since I was a Baptist? I must tell you I know none to whom that title is so proper as to the disciples of John, and since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, a CHRISTIAN, and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those titles of Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or the like, I conclude that they come neither from Jerusalem, nor Antioch, but rather from hell and Babylon, for they naturally tend to divisions. You may know them by their fruits."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cf. George B. Cheever, *Lectures on the Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 196.
2. Brown: Vol. I, p. 229 from Bunyan's reply in a controversy over open communion.

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