

miscarried, then your Duty is to trust to God, and not to concern yourself about Election, which is a secret Thing.

Another Temptation that violently assaulted him, was; *How if the Day of Grace should be past and gone?* And to aggravate this, the Tempter suggested to him, That the Good People in *Bedford* (before named) being converted already, they were all that God would save in those Parts, and therefore he was come too late, for they had got the Blessing before him. This was a very cutting Thing to him, for he verily thought it might be so; And those Thoughts made him wander up and down in the Bitterness of his Spirit, bemoaning his sad Condition, and crying out, *O that I had turned sooner! O how have I trifled away my Time, till Heaven and my Soul are lost.* But after he had passed, many Days in this disconsolate state, it pleased the Father of Mercies to shine upon his Soul, by that blessed Word, *Luke xiv. 23, 24. Compel them to come in, that my House may be filled: AND YET THERE IS ROOM.* The last Words gave him abundant Consolation, and were a full Answer to Satan's Suggestions, *That the Day of Grace was past.*

But this Holy Man had been a great Sinner, which he always aggravated against himself on all Occasions; reckoning up, like *Paul*, his own Vileness before his Conversion: *I was mad against the Saints*, says that blessed Apostle in one Place; and in another, *I persecuted the Church of God.* So in the like Manner our worthy Mr. Bunyan, cries out of himself, *I was a Town-Sinner; I*

I was the vilest in the Country, a Jerusalem Sinner; murdering the Son of God afresh, by my ungodly Deeds, and putting him to open Shame. This I say, made him undergo many of the Buffetings of Satan, and the Hiding of God's Countenance for Months and Years together, still mourning as a Dove, and Chattering as a Crow. And yet in this also, behold the Wisdom and Goodness of God: For by these Things Men live, and in all these Things was the Life of his Spirit. God wonderfully fitted him by all these Temptations, to be a Support to many others that laboured under those or other Temptations. For by this Means he was one that knew how to speak a Word in Season to the weary and fainting Soul, administering to others those Comforts wherewith he himself had been Comforted of God.

But to return where we left off, even to his Temptations: He was mightily buffeted by the Enemy of Souls, about effectual Calling; for that being one of the Links of that Golden Chain of Salvation, mentioned by the Apostle in the ixth. of the *Romans*, *If that be left out, the whole Chain was broken*: This made him pant, and breathe, and cry, with all the Longing of an enamoured Soul to Christ, to call him; for then he saw such a Beauty in a converted and called State, that he could not be contented without it: And I have heard him affirm, that at that Time, had he had the whole World, it had all gone; yea, Ten Thousand Worlds, could he have purchased the Blessing of a called and converted State with them!

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For such were the only lovely Persons in his Eyes. But that Word of Christ, *Mark iii. 13.* stood like a Brazen Wall against him, to shut him out from all the Hopes of Happiness: His Words were these: *He (Christ) went up into a Mountain, and CALLED to him WHOM HE WOULD.* This Word made him faint and fear, and yet it kindled a Fire in his Soul: That which made him fear was, lest Christ should have no liking to him; for *HE CALLED WHOM HE WOULD.* And God was pleased to let him lie many Months in that Condition; and then he gave him Comfort, by that Word in *Joel iii. 21.* *I will cleanse their Blood that I have not cleansed.* Encouraging him thereby still to wait upon God; and though he was not already, yet he might still be called.

About this Time he began to make his Condition known to those poor People, whose Discourse had been the first Occasion of his real Conversion: When they had heard him, they told Mr. *Gifford*, who was the worthy Pastor of that Church, who was himself willing to be well persuaded of him, and he invited him to his own House, where he heard him converse with others about the Dealings of God with their Souls: From which he still received further Convictions, and saw more of the Deceitfulness of his own Heart.

After this, a very great Storm of Temptation fell upon him, whereof he had some Warning before, from that Scripture following of him, *Simon, Simon, when thou art converted, strengthen*

thy Brethren; although then he understood not the Meaning of it. This Temptation was a Flood of blasphemous Thoughts poured in upon him, inasmuch that he questioned the very Being of God, and of his Beloved Son, doubting whether there was at all in Truth, a God or Christ, and whether the Holy Scriptures were not rather cunningly devised Fables, than the pure Word of God.

The Tempter also assaulted him with this, *How can you tell but the Turks may have as good a Scripture, to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove that our Jesus is?* With many, the like blasphemous Suggestions.

Under this sore Affliction and Disertion he went a great while: But when God's Time to comfort him was come, he heard one preach a Sermon on Canticles iv. 1. *Behold thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair.* But at that Time the Minister made these two Words, *My Love*, the Subject of his Sermon: From which, after he had a little opened the Text, he observed these several Conclusions:

1. That the Church, and so every sacred Soul, is Christ's Love, when loveless.
2. Christ's Love without a Cause.
3. Christ's Love when hated of the World.
4. Christ's Love when under Temptation and Desertion.
5. Christ's Love from First to Last.

The Sermon (though very excellent) was nothing to him: But that which most affected him, was the Application of the Fourth Particular, which was, *If it be so, that the saved Soul, is Christ's Love, when under Temptations, and under Desertion, then poor tempted Soul, when thou art assaulted and afflicted with Temptations, and the Hidings of God's Face, yet still think on these two Words, My Love.* And as he was going Home, these Words came into his Thoughts again, insomuch that he said in his Heart, *What shall I get by thinking on these Words?* And this Thought had no sooner past, but these Words began to kindle on his Spirit, *Thou art my Love, Thou art my Love,* twenty times together; and still as they ran in his Mind, they grew stronger and warmer; and began a little to revive him: But being still between Hope and Fear, he said in his Heart, *But is it true? But is it true?* ingeminating the Words. At which that Sentence darted into his Mind, *He wist not that it was true that was done unto him of the Angel, Acts xii. 6.* And then he began to give Place to the Word which made this joyful Sound within his Soul: *Thou art my Love, Thou art my Love, and nothing shall separate thee from my Love.*

Many more were his Temptations at sundry Times, and on divers Occasions, but God delivered him out of them all, and at last set his Feet in a large Place, filling his Soul with Joy and Gladness.

About the Year 1655 he was Baptiz'd, and admitted a Member of the Church at *Bedford*; who having had Experience of the Grace of

God that was in him, and how eminently God had fitted him for the Work of the Ministry, he was earnestly desired by the Congregation, to communicate to them those Spiritual Gifts with which God had blessed him. He at first very modestly excused himself, out of a Sense of his *own Weakness and Inability*; but being further pressed unto it by them, he consented: but though his Bashfulness, did at first decline a publick Assembly, and dispensed his Gift only in private among Friends; but it was with so much Life and Power, and so exceedingly to their Edification, that they could not but give Thanks to the Father of Mercies, for the great Grace he had bestowed upon him.

After this, when some of the Congregation were sent forth into the Country to teach, they desir'd Mr. *Bunyan* to go along with them, which accordingly he did; and by their Persuasions, did exercise his Gift (but still privately) among the good People where he came: Which they also received, with rejoicing at the Mercy of God shewed toward him, professing their Souls very greatly edified thereby.

Some Time after which, he was by solemn Prayer to the Lord, and Fasting, more particularly called forth, and set apart for the more publick Preaching of the Word of God; which he entered upon with great Fear and Trembling, and with a deep Sense of his own Unworthiness: And God was pleased to bless and prosper the Work of his Hand, so that many Souls were every where brought to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus,
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by believing, and to the receiving of the Truth in the Love thereof, through his Ministry, to the Praise and Glory of God's Grace.

One remarkable Instance I cannot omit, and that is, That being to Preach in a Church in a Country Village (before the Restoration of King Charles) in *Cambridgeshire*, and the People being gather'd together in the Church-yard, a *Cambridge* Scholar, and none of the soberest of them neither, enquired what the Meaning of that Concourse of People was (it being upon a Week-Day;) and being told that one *Bunyan*, a Tinker, was to Preach there, he gave a Boy Two-pence to hold his Horse, saying, He was resolved to hear the Tinker prate: And so he went into the Church to hear him. But God met him there by his Ministry, so that he came out much changed, and would, by his Good-will, hear none but the Tinker for a long time after, he himself becoming a very eminent Preacher in that County afterwards. This Story I know to be true, having many Times discoursed with the Man, and therefore I could not but set it down as a singular Instance of the Power of God, that accompanied his Ministry.

But a powerful Ministry, being the greatest Enemy to the Devil's Kingdom, as that which plucks his Vassals out of the very Jaws of Hell, no Wonder that he rallied all his Force against Mr. *Bunyan*; for he having Preached the Gospel about Five Years, was apprehended at a Meeting, and carried before a Justice of Peace, who committed him to Prison, though he offered

Security for his appearing at the next Sessions; his Reason for it being, because his Security would not consent to being bound up that he should Preach no more to the People.

At the Sessions he was indicted for an Upholder and Maintainer of Unlawful Assemblies and Conventicles, and for not conforming to the Church of *England*. Mr. *Bunyan* was a Man of a free and open Spirit, and would not dissemble to save himself, especially in his Master's Cause, and therefore frankly owned his being at a Meeting, and Preaching to the People; and that he was a Dissenter from the Established Worship, acknowledging (as the Apostle *Paul* had done before him) *That after the Way which they called Heresy, so worshipped he the God of his Fathers*. The Justices took this open and plain Dealing with them, for a Confession of the Indictment, and sentenced him to perpetual Banishment, because he refused to conform, in Pursuance of an Act made by the then Parliament. Upon which he was again committed to Prison, where, tho' his Sentence of Banishment was never executed upon him, yet he was kept in Prison for Twelve Years together, bearing that tedious Imprisonment in an uncomfortable and close prison, and sometimes under cruel and oppressive Goalers, with that Christian Patience and Presence of Mind, as became a Minister of Jesus Christ, and such a Cause as he was engaged in, and suffered for.

But tho' his Enemies stirred up thereto were very many, yet were they with-held by a Divine Power from executing the Sentence of his Banishment;

nishment: For God had other Work for him to do in *England*: And then his Bonds and Imprisonment, through the over-ruling Providence of that God, who is both wonderful in his Counsel, and excellent in Working, tending much to the Furtherance of the Gospel; and by his Suffering here, he confirmed and sealed the Truth, which before he had Preached.

It was by making him a Visit in Prison, that I first saw him, and become acquainted with him; and I must profess, I could not but look upon him to be a Man of an excellent Spirit, zealous for his Master's Honour, and chearfully committing all his own Concernments unto God's Disposal. When I was there, there was above Three-score Dissenters besides himself there, taken but a little before, at a Religious Meeting at *Kaisboe*, in the County of *Bedford*; besides two eminent Dissenting Ministers, to wit, Mr. *Wheeler*, and Mr. *Dun*, (both very well known in *Bedfordshire*, though long since with God;) by which Means the Prison was very much crouded. Yet in the midst of all that Hurry, which so many New-Comers occasioned, I have heard Mr. *Bunyan* both Preach and Pray with that mighty Spirit of Faith, and Plethory of Divine Assistance, that has made me stand and wonder.

Nor did he, while he was in Prison, spend his Time in a supine and careless Manner, or eat the Bread of Idleness; for there I have been Witness that his own Hands have ministred to his, and to his Families Necessities, making many Hundred Gros of long Tagged Thread Laces,

to fill up the Vacancies of his Time, which he had learned for that Purpose, since he had been in Prison. There also I surveyed his Library, the least, and yet best that ever I saw, consisting only of two Books, a Bible, and the Book of Martyrs. And during his Imprisonment (since I have spoke of his Library) he writ several excellent and useful Treatises; particularly, *The Holy City; Christian Behaviour; The Resurrection of the Dead; and Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners;* with several others.

I cannot leave the Subject of his Imprisonment, till I have given the Reader a Taste of some of his Experience there. He professed he never had so great an Inlet in all his Life, into the Word of God as then. Those Scriptures that he saw nothing in before, were then in Prison made to shine upon him. Jesus Christ also was never more real and apparent to him, than then: *For there said he, I have seen him and felt him indeed.* And that Word, 2 Pet. i. 16. *We have not preached unto you cunningly devised Fables,* was a blessed Word unto him there. He has some times been so carried up above all Fears and Temptations, that he has been able to laugh at Destruction, and to fear neither the Horse nor his Rider. There it was that God gave him sweet and precious Sights of the Forgiveness of his Sins, and of his being with Jesus in another World. Yea, here it was that he found, upon every Temptation, that God stood by him, and rebuked the Tempter.

But notwithstanding all this, he found he was a Man compassed with Infirmities, and that a
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Concernment for his poor Wife and Children, would now and then be thrusting, in the Parting from whom, would be to him like the pulling off the Flesh from his Bones; for he was both a loving and Tender Husband, and an indulgent Father, perhaps somewhat to a Fault;) and the many Miseries, Hardships and Wants that his poor Family was like to meet withal, if he should be taken from them, would often come into his Mind, especially his Daughter, who was blind, which lay nearer his Heart than all the rest: And the Thoughts of her induring Hardship, would at some times be almost ready to break his Heart: But he found God gracious to him, even in this Particular also, greatly supporting him, by these two Scriptures, *Jer. xxxix. II. xv. II. Leave thy fatherless Children, I will preservethem alive: And let thy Widows trust in me: The Lord said, Verily it shall go well with thy Remnant: Verily I will cause the Enemy to intreat thee well in the Time of Evil.*

After this blessed Man had suffered Twelve Years Imprisonment, for the Testimony of a good Conscience, and stopt the Mouths of his greatest Enemies, by his Holy, harmless, and inoffensive Conversation, it pleased God to stir up the Heart of Dr. Barlow, Bishop of *Lincoln*, to be a Means of his Deliverance; which I mention to this Bishop's Honour.

After his being at Liberty, he made it a great Part of his Business, to visit the Saints of God Abroad, paying his Christian Acknowledgments to them, especially such whose Hearts God had drawn forth to support him under his Sufferings,
Preaching

Preached the Gospel where-ever he came, and exhorting all, not to be afraid or ashamed of taking up the Cross of Christ, or to forsake the Assembling of themselves together, tho' the Laws were against it, as knowing that God ought to be obeyed before Man. And for such as were under Sufferings upon that Score, he made it is particular Care to get and send Relief to them. He also took great Care to visit the Sick, and to support them both externally and internally, according to their Wants, and his Ability. And God so blessed his Ministry, and accompanied it with his special Presence, that many Souls were brought to the Acknowledgement of the Truth, as it is in Jesus.

He was also very ready and successful in reconciling the Differences that were among God's People, where-ever he found them; and by that Means often saved many Families from Ruin; being an Ambassador of Peace in every respect.

He would frequently look back upon former Deliverances, and blessed God; of which some were exceeding remarkable, and none more so, than that which I am now going to relate. Being a Soldier in the Parliament's Army, at the Siege of *Leicester*, in 1645, he was drawn out to stand Centinel, but another Soldier voluntarily desired to go in his room; which Mr. *Bunyan* consented to, he went; and, as he stood Centinel there, was shot into the Head with a Musket-Bullet, and died. This was a Deliverance that Mr. *Bunyan* would often mention, but never without Thanksgiving to God.

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He was a Man of a piercing Judgment, and had a great Insight into Things; as appeared in the late Reign, when *Liberty of Conscience* was so unexpectedly given by King *James II.* to Dissenters of all Pertuasions. He saw it was not out of Kindness to Dissenters, that they were so suddenly set at Liberty, and freed from the hard Persecutions that had so long lain so heavily upon them. He acknowledged, That *Liberty of Conscience* was good, and was every Man's Birth-Right, by a Divine Charter; but he could not believe it was then given out of a good End: and that the bright Sunshine of the present Liberty, was but to introduce a black Cloud of Slavery upon us, when once the Designs then laying, were ripe for Execution; and therefore exhorted his Congregation at *Bedford*, and others also, to make use of the *Ninevines* Remedy, to avert the impending Storm.

It was his constant Practice, when he had his Liberty, to come up once a Year to *London*, and to Preach in several Places there; but more particularly in *Southwark*, near the *Faulcon*; and his Labours met with a general Acceptance from all his Auditors. And from *London* he used to ride his Circuit in the Country, visiting the Saints, and strengthening their Hands, in the Ways of God.

In his Family he kept up a daily and constant Course of Prayer, Reading and Exhortation; instructing his Children; and exhorting them to walk in the Ways of God. He had the Blessing that *Agar* prayed for, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*; But God always gave him Food convenient. I once told him of a Gentleman

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in *London*, a wealthy Citizen, that would take his Son *Joseph* Apprentice without Money, which might be a great Means to advance him: but he replied to me, *God did not send him to advance his Family, but to preach the Gospel.*

The last Act of his Life was a *Labour of Love and Charity*: For a young Gentleman, who was *Mr. Bunyan's* Neighbour, having fallen into the Displeasure of his Father, he desired *Mr. Bunyan* to be the Instrument of making up the Breach, which he both undertook, and happily effected. But in his Return to *London*, being overtaken with excessive Rains, and coming to his Lodgings very wet, (which was at *Mr. Straddock's*, a Grocer, at the *Star* upon *Snow-Hill*) he fell Sick of a violent Fever, which he bore with much Constancy and Patience, resigned himself up to the Will of God, and desiring to be dissolved, that he might be with Christ; looking upon Life as a Delay of that Blessedness which his Soul was aspiring to, and thirsting after: And in this holy longing Frame of Spirit, after a Sickness of Ten Days, he breathed out his Soul into the Hands of his Blessed Redeemer, following his happy Pilgrim from the City of *Destruction* to the Heavenly *Jerusalem*.



A Short

E L E G Y

In Memory of

Mr. *JOHN BUNYAN,*

Who departed this Life, *August 17th,*
1688, and in the 59th Year of his Age.

Written by a Friend of his, &c.

THE Pilgrim travelling the *World's vast Stage,*
At last does end his weary *Pilgrimage:*

He now in pleasant *Valleys* does sit down,
And for his *Toil* receives a glorious *Crown;*
The *Storms* are past, the *Terrors* vanish all,
Which in his *Way* did so affrighting fall.

He grieves not, sighs no more, his *Race* is run
Successfully, that was so well begun.

You'll say, He's dead: *Alas,* he cannot die;

He's only chang'd to *immortality:*

Weep not for him who has no cause of *Tears:*

Hush then your *Sighs,* and calm your endless *Fears.*

If

A Short Elegy, &c.

If any Thing in Love to him is meant,
Tread his last Steps and your own Sins repent.
If Knowledge of Things here at all remains,
Beyond the grave to please him for his Pains
And Sufferings in this World, then live upright,
And that will be to him a grateful Sight.
Run such a Race, as you again may meet,
And find your Conversation far more sweet,
When purg'd from Dross, you shall, unmixt, possess
The purest Essence of Eternal Bliss.

F I N I S.



