

The Pilgrim's Progress  
John Bunyan

An Evangelical Apologetic  
THEMES & ISSUES

Barry E. Horner

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## PREFACE

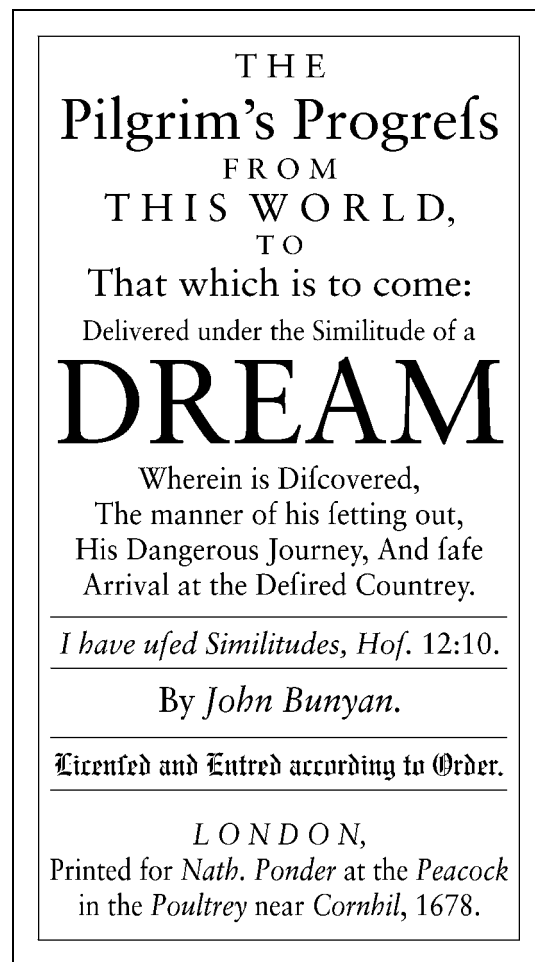
OVER the last few years, interest in seminars that I have conducted on *The Pilgrim's Progress* has greatly increased. Hence, it has been a privilege to speak at churches, family camps, colleges, and seminaries, in England, Australia, New Zealand, and many parts of America. During the course of these meetings, I have been stimulated in a large measure by the intense interest that has been shown in the substance of John Bunyan's allegory. On many occasions people have wanted to talk for hours on the numerous intricacies of Bunyan's weaving. So often I have been stimulated by various enquiries concerning details of the text, and related doctrinal matters, and as a result have been forced to do further study. However, there have been those times when people asked the same questions time and time again. Then there have been those who have admitted their prior misunderstanding of what Bunyan purposed to teach, and as a result have become so enthused and captivated by the depth of Bible teaching that he intended.

Through all of this, and it is very much an ongoing journey, many matters have arisen which I felt needed clarification before an evangelical world that sadly, to its shame, hardly knows Bunyan. Hence, this book is the product of such concern. While some chapters may include more scholarly substance than others, it is felt that all of the issues raised are of considerable importance. I do not apologize for being critical of the general aura of Bunyan studies during this twentieth century which, while contributing much with regard to textual and historical matters, has yet been politely distant, even sometimes disdainful, concerning evangelical warmth born of evangelical doctrine, which for Bunyan was unquestionably of supreme concern.

This writer reveres the ministry of John Bunyan principally because of the Bedford preacher's unswerving commitment to the gospel of God's sovereign grace as well as his winsome portrayal of that truth. If anyone loses sight of this priority, for whatever reason, he emasculates the allegory of its most vital feature. The reality is that at an academic level, many want to admire Bunyan selectively, while at the same time repudiating his doctrine as at best passé and at worst fundamentalist. In this situation, such assessments are usually filtered through the presuppositions of

secular humanism, religious liberalism or neo-orthodoxy. However the biblical truth of *The Pilgrim's Progress* stands firm, whatever modern man may say. Therefore, the need of the hour is not detachment grounded upon the pretense of scholarly objectivity, but instead the recovery of that intelligent and heartfelt pursuit of the truth which does not stop short of personal embrace. Rather it acknowledges Bunyan as a whole, and gives the Bedford tinker that regard which esteems his evangelical truth priority above all else.

*Barry E. Horner*



Original Title Page, First Edition

## THE WRITINGS OF JOHN BUNYAN

FOR one hundred and fifty years, the standard publication of *The Works Of John Bunyan* has been the three volume set edited by George Offor. More recently *The Banner of Truth Trust* has reprinted this work, except that *A Map showing the Order and Causes of Salvation and Damnation* has been omitted. The original Offor edition contained fifty-nine separate compositions, though it appears that even this warmly appreciative editor had serious doubts about the inclusion of *An Exhortation To Peace And Unity*. In deference to the judgment of others he included it, yet expressed eight reasons why he questions its authenticity, and even offers the suggestion that it was written by Paul D'Anvers, a leader among London Baptists who opposed Bunyan's views on baptism.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, *Oxford Press (Clarendon)* has completed the publication of a totally new edition of Bunyan's writings, though sadly, it is very expensive. This scholarly production commenced with the publication of the definitive text of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1960, edited by J. B. Wharey and later revised by Roger Sharrock. Subsequently *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* was published in 1962, then *The Holy War* in 1980 and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* in 1988. Finally in 1994, the thirteen volume set of Bunyan's *Miscellaneous Works* was completed. In this overall Oxford Edition enterprise, the late Roger Sharrock was the General Editor.

In the Oxford Edition, it should be noted that the more recently discovered *Profitable Meditations*, first published in 1661, is included.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, *An Exhortation To Peace And Unity*, *Reprobation Asserted*, and *Scriptural Poems* have been omitted. With regard to *Reprobation Asserted*, John Brown, Bunyan's foremost biographer to date, rejected the work as spurious.<sup>3</sup> Richard Greaves has written an article in which he cautiously agrees with this opinion. He also declares: "Henri Talon and G. B. Harrison rejected Brown's arguments and instead

<sup>1</sup> John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor, II, pp. 742-3. John Brown likewise expressed considerable doubt concerning the authenticity of this work, *John Bunyan*, pp. 433-4.

<sup>2</sup> John Brown, *John Bunyan*, pp. 161-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

affirmed Bunyan's authorship, whereas Roger Sharrock, while rejecting Brown's arguments as inconclusive, decided after a more intensive analysis that the work was, in fact, not Bunyan's."<sup>4</sup> In this regard, one thing remains certain, and it is that quite apart from this disputed work which represents high Calvinism, considered in more detail in Chapter 9, Bunyan's convictions concerning the sovereignty of grace remain both pervasive and substantial.

With regard to *Scriptural Poems*, Offor writes: "This very interesting little volume of poems, we believe, has not been reprinted since the year 1701, nor has it ever been inserted in any edition or catalog of Bunyan's works. . . . The style and substance of these scriptural poems are entirely Bunyan's."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Graham Midgley, editor of Volume VI of the recent Oxford Edition, and no doubt with Sharrock's agreement, omits this work.<sup>6</sup> It has to be admitted that based on Midgley's evidence, together with the supporting opinion of John Brown, this rejection seems warranted.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As the years pass, indebtedness has grown with regard to those who, out of love for the truth of God as Bunyan expressed it, have contributed in so many encouraging ways. In particular, I must mention my wife Ann, Jeff Kendal, John and Leona Heffelfinger, and Galen Johnson, as well as the late Henry and Naomi Ansell, and John Coleman.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Greaves, *John Bunyan and English Nonconformity*, p. 185. In this essay Greaves also responds to an article by Paul Helm in *The Baptist Quarterly*, XXVIII, April, 1979, pp. 87-93, which, with considerable persuasion, attempts to defend Bunyan's authorship of *Reprobation Asserted*. Refer here to Chapter 9, pp. 153-8.

<sup>5</sup> Bunyan, *Works*, II, p. 386.

<sup>6</sup> John Bunyan, *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, "The Poems," ed. Graham Midgley, VI, pp. xxii-xxv.