

realities and verities to him, and they were ever present to his inventive fancy. His brief experience in the army in 1645 may account for the military captains and martial adventures so abundant in the fascinating fable.

He was about twenty-one years old when the tide of his life took a turn, and its whole direction was changed. Those who would know more of his biography may find it in the guise of allegory in "Pilgrim's Progress." Every step of Christian's way the author had trod before he wrote the book. It was Bunyan himself who fell into the Slough, sought Mr. Legality, fled from the thunders of Law, found help in the Evangelist, entered the wicket gate, was taught and refreshed and equipped at the House of the Interpreter, climbed the Hill Difficulty, fought with Apollyon, got into the Doubting Castle, and reached the Land of Beulah.

From the day when John Bunyan was baptized by Mr. Gifford in the River Ouse, he began to be an evangelist. The tinker had a tongue, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spake. Believing the doctrines of the Reformation, the universal sin and need of man, the reality of eternal life and death, the freeness of grace and the fullness of salvation, he was compelled to speak. In 1655 he began to preach, at first in a private way; but as he showed a genius for preaching, especially to the masses, he could not be hid, and his spreading fame caused the Bedford Church to release him from his duties as deacon, that he might follow, unhindered, his obvious divine calling. His popularity and power were immense. By some he is ranked the foremost preacher of his day. In his annual visits to London twelve hundred people have been known to gather before daylight, thronging the doors of the chapel where he was to preach at early morning.

It is worth while to remark that this remarkable success as a preacher was due to no sensational oddities or heretical notions. He was thoroughly evangelical. He pricked men with the sharp needle of the law, and then drew after it the thread of gospel consolation. He believed in total depravity, and he preached it. He believed in damnation, and his warning trumpet gave no uncertain sound. His theology was that of Paul, and Augustine, and Calvin, and Luther, and Knox, and Wesley. Whatever books he had not read, there are three with which he was thoroughly familiar: the Word of God, the grace of Christ, and the heart of man.

A thoroughly evangelical faith begets an evangelical spirit. He was ready to preach anywhere if he could get at souls. If shut out of chapels, he would go to barns, or the woods, or the green fields, like Whitefield, and he was so much a missionary and a martyr that he would not keep his mouth shut. Even Bedford jail heard his prayers and his preaching, as the Prætorian guard were compelled to hear the gospel from the prisoner to whom they were chained.