Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

My sword, I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill, to him that can get it. (PP 370)

John Bunyan, the renowned allegorist of the seventeenth century, whose sole aim was to declare unto others the message of salvation, in his *Heavenly Footman* records:

So then thy business is, if thou wouldst have salvation, to see if Christ be thine, with all his benefits; whether he hath covered thee with his righteousness, whether he hath showed thee that thy sins are washed away with his heart blood, whether thou art planted into him, and whether thou have faith in him, so as to make a life out of him, and to conform thee to him. (12)

The theme of salvation in English literature is as old as the Bible. It has found a place in classical works like Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, William Langland’s *The Piers Plowman* and Spenser’s *Fairie Queene*. It is the integral part of all the writings of John Bunyan.

Bunyan’s intense spirituality, coupled with his creative skill and imaginative genius led to the writing of three theologic-literary works, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Holy War* which may rightly be termed his ‘spiritual trilogy’ for the simple reason that the central focus of all these books is Bunyan’s undying quest for salvation and
spirituality, one dealing with the inner quest of the artist in realizing his personal salvation, another dealing with the spiritual quest of a Christian for the everlasting prize, to be in eternal union with the Almighty, the God of heaven and earth and the maker of mankind, and the third dealing with the incessant struggles, that the human soul has to undergo in general, in spiritually encountering the most sublime experience of salvation of the human soul.

It is fascinating to learn how this literary genius evolved from an ordinary tinker-preacher to a great preacher and literary artist. Born in a tinker family, opportunities for high education were scanty. Army experience exposed him to rigid discipline even at the age of sixteen. His early marriage with a girl whose father was counted godly opened out a way to reading religious books. Following a period of spiritual conflict Bunyan joined a Nonconformist body which met in St. John’s Church, Bedford. He rendered service in the church as a deacon, and with his gift of exhortation soon gained fame as a preacher. His belief that the Bible is literally the Word of God was at odds with the Quaker belief in the individual conscience as the only safe guide to conduct. His religious and moral fervour promoted him to react. So, as Henri Talon says, in his *John Bunyan*, Bunyan “became a writer less from a taste for writing . . . than from a sense of duty and a need to act; for with him, writing was primarily a form of action” (35). And Roger Pooley says in his introduction to the *Pilgrim’s Progress* that Bunyan

---

1 Quakers are members of a group with Christian roots that began in England in the 1650’s. Quakers believe that there is something of God in everybody and that each human being is of unique worth. Quakers seek religious truth in inner experience, and place great reliance on conscience as the basis of morality.
had the ability “to convey spiritual truth with the force of felt experience” and had
the gift “to convey that experience through a variety of genres: autobiography,
sermon, treatise and fiction” (xx).

Bunyan’s career as an author began with his earliest and controversial
work, Some Gospel Truths Opened (1656), in which he tried to vindicate the
gospel truths against the mysticism of the teaching of the Quakers. His second
book, A Vindication of Gospel Truths (1657), partly defensive and partly pastoral
was a response to one Burrough’s True Faith. The third book, Sighs from Hell
(1658) is on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In 1659 The Doctrine of the
Law and Grace Unfolded was published. On the restoration of Charles II, the old
acts against Nonconformists were revived, and on 12 Nov 1660, John Bunyan was
arrested and put in prison, though he could have attained freedom if only he had
played the coward by refusing to preach. But he was not for spiritual servitude.
The enforced leisure brought out his prison works, Ebal and Gerizzim (1662),
Profitable Meditations (1663) followed by I will Pray with the Spirit (1663),
Prison Meditations (1663), Christian Behaviour (1663), The Holy City (1665),
The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment (1665), Grace Abounding to
the Chief of Sinners (1666), The Four Last Things (1663) and Defence of the
Doctrine of Justification by Faith (1676), an attack on the book The Design of
Christianity (1671) which was written by the Rev. Edward Fowler. The Pilgrim’s
Progress Part I (1668) was also written during his imprisonment. Bunyan’s last
work before his release was the Confession of my Faith and Reason of my
Practice (1672).
John Bunyan was released consequent to Charles II’s suspension of all penal statutes against Nonconformists and popish recusants. On release he was made the pastor of the Nonconformist congregation at Bedford. His ministerial work did not hamper his writing. *The Barren Fig Tree* (1673), *The Strait Gate* (1675), *Saved by Grace* (1676), *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ* (1678), *Treatise of the Fear of God* (1679), *The Life and Death of Badman* (1680), *The Holy war* (1682), *The Greatness of the Soul* (1682), *The Pharisee and the Publican* (1682), *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part II (1684) were all written after his release. His last work was *The Acceptable Sacrifice* (1689) which he revised on his death-bed. Charles Doe, Bunyan’s devoted friend set about a folio edition of the collected works of Bunyan.

Had Bunyan not penned *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, he would have remained an obscure literary artist, or would have been remembered only as a sectarian pastor, or an energetic preacher gifted with great verbal facility, or a theological writer. But today he is remembered not only for his *The Pilgrim’s Progress* but also for his spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, where some passages are written as if with a pen of fire. *The Holy War* (1682) is also none the less inferior, for Macaulay says, “. . . if there had been no Pilgrim’s Progress, The Holy War would have been the first of religious allegories” (qtd. in Latham), and James Anthony Froude rightly comments: “The Holy War would have entitled Bunyan to a place among the masters of English literature” (120). Christopher Hill calls *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan’s *Odyssey*, and *The Holy War*, his *Iliad* (qtd. in Swaim, Rev.). Interestingly enough, Robert Samraj refers
to John Bunyan as “Bunyan/The Onion,” in his poem “Dartmouth Diologues” (10) implying that Bunyan unravels meaning after meaning and ideas after ideas in all his writings.

Before Bunyan joined the Bedford Congregation, he had had a deep spiritual struggle. It was the time when there was “the penetratation of Calvinist thought into the minds of seventeenth-century believers” (qtd. in Campbell, “Persecutory Imagination”). They were made to believe that God not only adopted some for himself for salvation but also destined others for eternal ruin. While the reprobate are the vessels of the just wrath of God, and the elect, the vessels of his compassion, the ground of the distinction is to be sought in the pure will of God which is the supreme rule of Justice (Reid 179). And Bunyan too had religious doubts about salvation, election, predestination, reprobation,

---

2 John Calvin was a French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism. The five points of Calvinism include (1) Total Inability or Total Depravity, (2) Unconditional Election, (3) Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement, (4) The Efficacious Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace, (5) Perseverance of Saints.

3 The Christian Doctrine of Election, teaches that due to the corrupted nature and spiritual depravity of man, God according to his Sovereign Grace and Will, and for his own purpose, has chosen (elected), those who will receive salvation, that without Election, an act of Mercy (Love) on God’s part, all men will reap the fruits of their corruption and depravity, which is eternal damnation, basically, that it is the action of God, and God alone, which brings one to salvation, and that this sovereign act is irresistible and irrevocable.

4 Predestination is the biblical teaching that God predestines certain events and people to accomplish what he so desires. However, the Reformed doctrine of predestination is that God predestines whom he wants to be saved, and that without this Predestination, none would be saved. The non-Reformed camp states that God predestines people to salvation, but that these people freely choose to follow God on their own. In other words, in the non-Reformed perspective God is reacting to the will of individuals and predestining them only because they choose God, where by contrast the Reformed position states that people choose God only because He has first predestined them. John Calvin interpreted Predestination to mean that God willed eternal damnation for some people and salvation for others.
Grace, the day of grace (the time of probation, when the offer of forgiveness is made and may be accepted of grace) and faith, the key tenets of Calvinism. It was four years before he emerged from his spiritual turmoil. And the more he was exposed to temptation, the more was his experience of divine grace. All the more convinced of God’s grace, when he gladly and willingly accepted incarceration, his recollections offered such spiritual comfort that he wrote, “a literary masterpiece” (John Bunyan 16) as Henri A Talon appropriately christens Bunyan’s Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, in prison, to strengthen his faith as well as to edify the brethren from whom he was separated, and also to comfort those who were passing through a similar spiritual struggle.

In Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners he relates the merciful working of God upon his soul with inimitable earnestness and simplicity. Throughout the work, his characteristic disregard of all facts or dates for anything other than what concerned his spiritual history is obvious. Bunyan confesses that during his youth he had few equals for cursing, swearing and blaspheming the holy name of God. Later, however, affrighted with fearful dreams and afflicted

---

5 Reprobation, in Christian theology, is a corollary to the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election which derives that some of the humankind (the elect) are predestined by God for salvation. Therefore, the remainder are left to their fallen nature and eventually to eternal damnation. This same state of unbelief is also known as reprobation. In Calvinist terminology, the non-elect are often referred to as the reprobate. Similarly, when one is so hardened as to feel no remorse or misgiving of conscience, it is considered as a sign of reprobation.

6 In Christian theology, Grace is an attribute to God, a spontaneous, unmerited gift of divine favour for his children – a favour most manifest in the salvation of sinner. It is understood by Christians to be the “free gift” of an unchanged and overflowing love and mercy – ‘totally undeserved’ by humanity. The Calvinist idea of irresistible grace says that a person cannot resist the efficacious call of God to salvation.
with the thoughts of the Day of Judgment, he was overcome with despair of life and heaven. But he delighted in all transgression against the law of God. Two books, *The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*, brought by his wife, ‘begot’ within him “some desires to religion” (*GA* 21), effecting some outward reformation. But he was quite ignorant of the consequences of sin, if he was not found in Christ. A sermon on the evils of Sabbath breaking brought feelings of guilt for the first time. A voice which seemed to dart from heaven into his soul in the midst of his game of tip-cat, whether he would leave his sins and go to heaven, or keep his sins and go to hell, and a vision of Christ looking down on him with threatening countenance gave him a feeling that it was too late and it was past pardon (23). A godly neighbour’s influence instilled desire in reading the historical parts of the Bible if not scriptures like Paul’s Epistles.

Ignorant of the corruptions of his nature and the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save him, he set the ‘Ten Commandments’ before him for his way to heaven. While there was inward suffering whenever he broke one, outwardly he was admired for changing from “prodigious profaneness to something like a moral life” (27), though of course it amounted to nothing short of establishing his own righteousness. A godly conversation between some poor Bedford women about their new birth, the work of God, Satan’s temptations and their righteousness as filthy and insufficient to do them good, not only made him aware of his want of the true tokens of godliness, but also take interest in the salvation of

---

7 Day of Judgement or the Day of the Lord in Christian theology, is the final and eternal judgement by God of every nation. It will take place after the resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ.
his soul. Paul’s Epistles were now sweet scripture and his prayer was “to know the truth, and way to heaven and glory” (33).

Continual meditation on the scriptures, though of course without proper guidance led to misinterpretation and misapplication. Fear that he would be a castaway if devoid of faith, plunged him into wreckless trials. Fresh doubts whether he was elected or not, whether the day of grace was past and gone, whether he overstood the time of mercy harassed him. Even the happiness derived from the scripture “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” and “yet there is room” (GA 40; Luke 14: 23,22) was drowned by the doubt whether he was truly called by God. Not that he was unaware of the great promises of God, but because he thought that, with his heart that would sin and which lay under a law that would condemn, it would be difficult to appropriate them. Unbelief shut his heart against the Lord and against his holy Word. He was convinced that what was needed was a “perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God, and this righteousness was nowhere to be found, but in the person of Jesus Christ” (GA 46). But only the feeling of despair was uppermost as he feared he was unfit to stand with a state of grace, with his inward wickedness and pollution. He even feared God had given him to the devil and to a reprobate mind.

The worst temptation came upon him in the form of blasphemous thoughts about the very being of God and of the holy Scriptures. But for the comforting scriptures like “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (GA 57; II Cor. 5:21), he would
have collapsed. God really delivered him from guilt and doubts. The temptation was removed and he was put into his right mind again. Consolation ensued when he understood that the justice of God and his sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other through Christ’s blood.

Soon he faced an extraordinary temptation “to sell and part with Christ” (GA 67). However much he struggled, his heart consented to the passing thought, “Let him go, if He will” (67), and that plunged him into great guilt and despair. He equated himself with Esau\(^8\) and feared he would be rejected eternal inheritance. For two years he found his soul fettered. Even the promising verse “All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men wherewith soever they shall blaspheme” (GA 69; Mark 3.28), seemed inapplicable to him, for he considered himself as one who had slighted Christ, after receiving light and mercy. He concluded he had committed the “unpardonable sin” (76).

What followed was an alternating period of hope and fears created by the scriptural verses. At one time he could discern the God of grace following him with a pardon in His hand. The next moment Esau’s plight would haunt his thoughts. The mysterious voice he heard one day, “Didst ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ” (GA 80) at last gave him the hope that notwithstanding his heinous sin he could venture his salvation upon the Son of God, and that his soul had the “blessed privilege” (80) to flee to Jesus. But

---

\(^8\) Esau is a biblical character who willingly and foolishly sold his birthright to Jacob his younger brother in exchange for a mess of pottage, thereby showing his lack of appreciation for the-long term value of such an intangible right when he was more interested in fulfilling his immediate needs. He is depicted in the Book Hebrews as unspiritual for thoughtlessly throwing away his birthright (12:15, 16).
strangely enough he began to despair again, thinking his prayer would be futile after his backsliding. Being an offence against the Saviour, his sin did not appear within the bounds of that pardon wrapped up in a promise. The words “This sin is not unto death” (GA 88) gave him some hope that his sin was pardonable, and after that, he felt encouraged to come to God through Christ for mercy, to consider the promise of forgiveness. But at times, the scriptures seemed to point at him as a castaway. So his heart refused to be comforted unless there was a concurrence and agreement in the scriptures.

Finally the saying of Esau’s birthright began to wax weak and withdraw and vanish, and that scripture about the sufficiency of grace prevailed with peace and joy (98). In Bunyan’s own words: “. . . the word of the law and wrath must give place to the word of life and grace” (98). At last the verse “And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out” (GA 99; John 6.37) expelled all doubts and temptations, because it implied that he was to come as he was, “a vile and ungodly sinner” only to “fall at the feet of mercy, condemning myself for sin” (GA 99). After this, the visage of the threatening texts changed. The scriptures could agree in the salvation of his soul. At the realization that his righteousness was Christ himself, that Christ’s merits and victory was his, the chains that bound his legs fell off and he was loosed from his afflictions and irons (100).

If Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners was written for spiritual edification, The Pilgrim’s Progress was begun for personal gratification and diversion from worse thoughts. But the creative genius in him encased the ‘truth’ within the fable so artistically and creatively that it has led to S.T. Coleridge’s
recommendation of it as one he could “so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving truth according to the mind that was in Jesus Christ . . .” (Sharrock, A Casebook 53). *The Pilgrim’s Progress* objectifies the athlete metaphor he has enumerated in *The Heavenly Footman*, a work on the race of saints in the gospel day, most likely the book alluded to in “The Author’s Apology for his book” (*PP* 3) and which Beth Lynch calls “the blue print of Bunyan’s first great allegory” (77). *The Heavenly Footman* is about the race, a Christian has to run, in order to obtain the prize. The text is based on the Pauline text: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain” (I Cor. 9.24) and also “. . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth easily so beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12.1).

In his *Heavenly Footman*, Bunyan enumerates the requisites to attain the prize, heaven. The runner has to run swiftly and in a pressing manner, a long and tedious journey through the wilderness, though chased by the devil, law, sin and death. He has to run in the way of Christ, and shed all covetousness, pride and lust and every weight and sin that besets him. He has to shun all by paths and crooked lanes that lead to death and damnation, learn the true righteousness, and persevere to the very end, and not turn back like Lot’s wife. The athlete metaphor in *The Heavenly Footman* became an extended metaphor, or allegory of a pilgrimage in his mind and the result was *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

*The Pilgrim’s Progress* is written in the similitude of a dream. The narrator is also the dreamer. He dreams of a man clothed in rags, having a book
in his hand and uttering a lamentable cry “What shall I do to be saved?” Instructed by the Evangelist to go to the Wicket Gate, Christian, as that man is called, begins his pilgrimage crying, “Life, life, eternal life” (PP 41). Enticed by one Worldly Wiseman to seek the assistance of Legality in the town of Morality, to get his burden eased, he journeys only to return terror-stricken on seeing the avalanching Mount Sinai. Redirected to the Wicket Gate by Evangelist, Christian gains entry. At the Interpreter’s house Christian receives useful lessons on law and grace. Traversing a highway fenced with a wall called salvation, he reaches the cross, where the burden rolls away. Three Shining Ones appear and assure forgiveness of sins, give a new clothing, a mark on his forehead and a roll to be given at the Celestial Gate, an incident which is often misinterpreted as being symbolic of election (Sharrock, John Bunyan 80). On the way he meets two wall-tumblers, Formalist and Hypocrisy, reliants on laws and ordinances for their salvation, who meet with tragic ends as they take wrong routes. Christian keeps to the highway. In the Arbour, half way up the hill, he loses his roll, while sleeping, and has to retrace his steps sorrowfully from the top of the hill to retrieve it.

Fully harnessed with the armoury provided in the House Beautiful, he reaches the Valley of Humiliation, where he has a conquering victory over the monster Apollyon whose description is derived almost literally from the book of Job and Revelation. The narrow Valley of the Shadow of Death with a ditch and quagmire on either side, is really irksome. He finds a new company in Faithful. Evangelist encourages them to run, that they may obtain the incorruptible crown.
At the Vanity Fair, a trial judges them guilty, and Faithful is cruelly put to death. Christian is joined by a new companion, Hopeful, and they meet By-ends, one who is “always most zealous when religion goes in his silver slippers” (*PP* 136). They cross the delicate plain called Ease, and escape Demas’ temptation to dig from a silver mine at Lucre hill. Soon they digress into By-Path meadow and is caught sleeping, by the Giant Despair, who throws them into a dark dungeon. Christian’s remembrance of a key called promise, in his bosom, unexpectedly brings them freedom. In the Delectable Mountains, they meet four shepherds by names Knowledge, Experience, Watchful and Sincere. Through a perspective glass, they think, they see something of the gate of the Celestial City.

The narrator, at this juncture, awakes from his dream and dreams his dream again. Christian and Hopeful meet Ignorance, a very brisk lad, who has not come through the Wicket Gate, but hopes to reach the Celestial City as he had been a “good liver” (162). They proceed, and in a dark lane they see one wanton professor and damnable apostate dragged by seven devils to the door of hell. A Shining One frees them from the grip of a Flatterer. They encounter one Athiest “with his back towards Sion” (174). To keep themselves awake in the Enchanted Land, they have a discourse about their spiritual experience, a discourse which critic C.S. Lewis feels, “will not prevent drowsiness on the part of many readers” (195).

They cross the country of Beulah and finally the River. Two Shining Ones lead them to the Celestial Gate, and on production of the certificates, the king commands the Gate to be opened, and they enter in. The dream ends with the
inevitable tragic end of Ignorance, which will be not something shocking if viewed in the thematic and theological perspective.

John Bunyan produced *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part II much later in 1684 in which also the dream technique is followed. Part II has the same thematic continuity with Part I, and as R.M. Frye says, “By the device of two juxtaposed narratives, Bunyan provides a stereoscopic view of the Christian life, fully three dimensional and vital in its perspectives, expressing both the individual and the corporate aspects of the pilgrimage” (145). In Mullet’s opinion Part II “may be considered, in literary terms as Bunyan’s masterpiece” (259). In his dream the dreamer has a conversation with an aged gentleman Mr. Sagacity, who tells him about Christiana’s pilgrimage with her four children and her neighbour Mercy. Christiana is visited by Mr. Secret, who tells her, how she is much talked about in the Celestial City as being repentant for hardening her heart and keeping her babes in ignorance. He tells her that God is delighted to multiply pardon to offences. She is also instructed to come to His City and to dwell in His presence with joy for ever. With the letter given by Mr. Secret in her bosom, she starts on her pilgrimage with her four children and companion Mercy.

They pass by all the places which Christian has traversed. The way is the same, but their experiences different. They walk carefully across steps and cross the Slough of Despond. At this point the narrator and dreamer declares that he is left by Mr. Sagacity to dream out his dream by himself. The dream continues. On knocking, the group is let through the Wicket Gate. The Lord feeds the pilgrims and washes their feet. The same lessons on law and grace are inculcated upon
them in the Interpreter’s house. With a seal on their foreheads and with white garments they are conducted by one Great-heart with sword, helmet and shield to the House Beautiful.

At the place where Christian’s burden fell off, Great-heart expatiates on imputed righteousness (PP 258-59), and relates how knowledge of that had made Christian’s burden fall off his shoulders. On the way, they see the hanged bodies of Simple, Sloth and Presumption. The by-ways taken by Formalist and Hypocrisy are now barred. In the pleasant Arbour where Christian left his roll, Christiana leaves her bottle of spirit behind her. As a punishment for hindering Christian in his journey, Mistrust and Timorous are burned through the tongue with hot iron. Great-heart wins a fight with Grim or Bloodyman. In the House Beautiful, the boys are catechized by Prudence. Mercy is courted by one Mr. Brisk, a man “that pretended to religion but struck close to the world” (276), but later forsakes her, finding her inclined to help poor people. Matthew, the eldest son of Christiana, falls sick because of the apple which has been eaten by him in Beelzebub’s garden. He is cured by the medicine made of “ex carne et sanguine Christ” (280) prepared by Dr. Skill.

With Great-heart as their conductor they proceed to the Valley of Humiliation which does not pose any danger for them. The Valley of the Shadow of Death is comparatively easy for them to cross. It is only at the end of the Valley, Great-heart has to encounter Giant Maul, whom he overcomes by resorting to prayer. Great-heart and the four sons of Christiana kill Giant Despair and his wife Diffidence, and demolish his castle. After seeing some rarities at the
Delectable mountains, they cross Mount-Marvel, and Mount-Innocent. At Mount Charity, Mercy is given a looking glass which shows her feature one way, but shows the face and similitude of the prince of pilgrims turned another way. One Valiant-for-truth, and later one Stand-fast join them. At the call of the king, the pilgrims cross the River at the appointed time to the Celestial City. Christiana’s sons with their wives remain there for the increase of the church.

Bunyan is one with St. Paul in seeing salvation as freedom from spiritual foes. His careful reading of the Epistles of Paul had taught him how a Christian ought to fight not only against the principalities of the earth but also against the principalities of the sky. He himself had experienced the temptations of the devil. His reading of the Bible had taught him how perseverance is essential to have an overwhelming victory over the devil. So he portrays life as a constant battle to be fought. His conviction is that a soul has to continuously fight against the spiritual foe.

The battle image to represent life is not an uncommon thing. As Henri Talon says, “Since the middle ages, the spiritual life of man has often been likened to a pilgrimage or a battle” (21). The two great stock metaphors of the Christian life, as a pilgrimage and as a war to the death against a ruthless foe, both abounded in Puritan sermons (Sharrock, *John Bunyan* 95). Having met with success using a pilgrimage metaphor in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan ventured to write a second allegory with the battle metaphor. *The Holy War* is an allegorical representation of the war, every individual soul has to wage to attain salvation. Literary critics discern multiple layers of allegory in *The Holy War*. 
Henri Talon finds in it Bunyan writing about “the story of his conversion and of his inner conflicts, enlarging his scope still further” (33-34). Roger Sharrock finds the same allegory “sustaining the narrative of the redemption as well as the saga of an individual conversion” (John Bunyan 122)

The Holy War begins with Satan and the rebel angels resolving to seize the town of Mansoul, the creation of Shaddai (one of the Judaic names of God meaning, God Almighty who is all sufficient). Among the five gates to the town of Mansoul, the Ear-gate provides easy access to Diabolus. Captain Resistance is slain and Lord Innocency dies. Diabolus gains admission into the town and reorganizes the corporation. Diabolus builds a tower to shut out the sun from the Lord Mayor’s house, and puts a new Lord Mayor, the Lord Lusting in his place. The Lord Willbewill takes service under the new governor. In heaven, Shaddai reminds Emmanuel of their design, according to which, at a certain time Emmanuel must give his blood for the sake of Mansoul and lay a foundation for Mansoul’s perfect deliverance, and at a convenient time wage a war against Diabolus, and redeem Mansoul.

Shaddai then sends an army of 40,000 men under four captains, Captain Boanerges, Captain Conviction, Captain Judgment and Captain Execution. Unable to bring the Mansoulians to submission, the captains send a petition, and Emmanuel comes with Captain Good-hope, Captain Charity and Captain Patience. In the battle between Emmanuel and Diabolus, Emmanuel wins, and Diabolus is held captive. Mansoul petitions Emmanuel to remember not their former transgression, and Emmanuel offers a free pardon. He then remodels the
corporation. Captain Credence is put in charge of the castle which represents the heart of the soul. A nameless instrument is to throw stones from the castle of Mansoul. The diabolonians are convicted. The Prince renews the charter and the new charter grants: “Free, full and everlasting forgiveness of all wrongs, injuries, and offences done by them against my Father, me, their neighbour, and themselves” (HW 209). He appoints Lord Chief Secretary from Shaddai’s court as the chief dictator of all Shaddai’s laws, and Mr. Conscience, well skilled in the government of the town of Mansoul to deliver his Master’s will in “all terrene and domestic matters” (212). He also instructs them to keep their robes always white. Good relationship is maintained between Emmanuel and Mansoul.

Due to the influence of one Carnal-Security, Mansoul soon forgets the love of Shaddai and Emmanuel. Emmanuel is offended, and Lord Chief Secretary is grieved and leaves. Warned by Godly-fear, Mansoul regrets his mistake, but is not able to win Emmanuel’s love. The Diabolonians send the Lord Covetousness under the name of Prudent-thrifty, the Lord Lasciviousness under the name of Harmless-mirth and the Lord Anger under the name of Good-zeal to get easy access into Mansoul. Their plan is to make the Mansoulians vulnerable and overcome them with the army of Doubters. Through Mr. Prywell Mansoul comes to know of the Diabolonian plot. Mansoul does not fall a prey to Diabolus’ false promise to enlarge their old charter. They are resolved not to yield to Diabolus as long as their Prince is alive but to maintain war till the end. But still through Feel-gate, the Diabolonians break inside, and the houses of Lord Willbewill and Lord Mayor Understanding are filled with doubters. For two and a half years the
condition prevails. Mansoul beseeches the secretary to draft a petition. The petition stating the utter helplessness of Mansoul is sent. Soon Emmanuel arrives, and in the fierce battle, all the doubters fall. Ten thousand more doubters and fifteen thousand blood-men are sent. Emmanuel rearranges the army. The blood-men are captured alive and the doubters are killed.

Before leaving, Emmanuel tells them that he has chosen them to himself not for their worthiness, but for his own sake, and also that he has redeemed them not only from the dread of his Father’s law but also from the hand of Diabolus. He has accepted them even after their rebellion many times. “The way of backsliding was thine but the way and means of thy recovery was mine” (331), Emmanuel tells them. He promises to come back and take them to the place where there will be no sorrow. Till that they must watch, pray and strive and hold fast (336).

All the three narratives as is evident from the very conceptions of the plot point to Bunyan’s theme and vision of salvation and spirituality. Almost all Bunyan critics have acknowledged the theme of salvation in his three narratives. And they are not insensitive to theological and doctrinal elements being unravelled by Bunyan. S.T. Coleridge who finds great theological acumen in The Pilgrim’s Progress says, “It is, in my conviction, incomparably the best Summa Theologiae Evangelicae ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired” (qtd. in Sharrock, A Casebook 53).

It cannot be denied that the theology sounds uncomfortable to some critics. Donald Davie, for instance, finds the soteriology of Bunyan as one
“difficult to stomach” (qtd. in M. Davies 18). Gordon Campbell views Bunyan’s theology as “an apparently abhorrent theology” extolling a “cruel God”, at whose whim “most mankind is condemned to eternal torment” (qtd. in M. Davies 18). Worden comments that “Sim confronts the strictness of Bunyan's Calvinist predestinarianism.” C.S. Lewis on reading the *Pilgrim’s Progress* says, “The faith is limited to one small sect and all are damned beside” (201). F.R. Leavis in his “Bunyan’s Resoluteness” says that he finds the same themes, the same theology in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, which, according to him reflect:

. . . those of the Puritan sectarian’s intensely fostered Calvinistic preoccupations: the terrifying realization of one’s total depravity, conversion and joyful hope, infinitely subtle promptings of the devil, recurrent despair, the paradoxical struggle for faith, the difficulty of keeping the narrow doctrinal way, the assurance of Election and of salvation by Imputed Righteousness – over and again. (211)

However, Richard Greaves and Michael Mullet feel that Bunyan while expressing his covenant theology\(^9\) betrays more of Lutheran\(^10\) influence than of Calvinistic influence. In *Glimpses of Glory*, Greaves says:

---

\(^9\) The standard description of covenant theology views the history of God’s dealings with mankind in all of history, from Creation to Fall to Redemption to Consummation, under the framework of three overarching theological covenants – the covenant of redemption, of works, and of grace.

\(^10\) Martin Luther, the German Augustinian Friar, who inaugurated the movement called Protestantism. The core of Luther’s teaching was the doctrine of justification of Faith: Man is not seen to be justified before God through his own efforts to be good or to be religious or to be pious.
Notwithstanding the indisputable Calvinist influence on Bunyan’s exposition of the covenants, the spirit of Luther looms large, as reflected in Bunyan’s pronounced contrast between the law as “a ministration of death and condemnation” and the gospel as “the ministration of life and salvation. (108-09)

Michael Mullet also speaks of the comparatively greater influence of Luther by saying that “Bunyan had also been influenced by Luther, for whom justifying faith was more important than election and for whom predestination was not as explicitly salient as it became for the Calvinist school, especially in England” (48). But Michael Davies’s analysis projects something different for he finds Bunyan’s “no more an overtly Lutheran theology . . . than it is Calvinist” (41). It is Michael Davies’s conviction that “Bunyan’s covenant theology (while undoubtedly sharing basic similarities with both Luther’s and Calvin’s doctrines of salvation as well as their discussion of law and grace) is of a distinctly English Calvinist tradition” (41).

But even those critics who view Bunyan as a Calvinist taking into consideration his belief in election and predestination, find Bunyan’s stress on personal effort, struggle or labour, and also his invitation to embrace the biblical promises of salvation, all incompatible with his theology. They always find some sort of tension between Bunyan’s belief in election, and the importance he gives

He meets enemies – sin, death, the devil, and even the wrath of God – against which he, as a “spiritual heir of Adam,” is powerless. God’s law is not a rule for living; instead it comes to him as an accuses and tyrant, driving him to the mercies of God. Here God’s activity in Jesus Christ’s sacrifice of himself on the cross and his subsequent Resurrection is determinative. The Father accepts this sacrifice and justified those who by faith accept the gift of grace, which identifies them with him (Cf. Encyclopedia Americana 18.863)
to man’s will. Mullet, for instance, finds in works like *The Strait Gate* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the theme of a personal struggle to be saved. This, according to him is a theme “difficult to square with strict predestinarianism” (185).

Greaves also detects the tension between individual effort and election in most of Bunyan’s writings. Bunyan’s stress on grace and faith extended to sinners, and stress on the doctrine of election as well, appears incongruous to him (*Glimpses* 149). Therefore Bunyan’s concern to convert unbelievers makes Greaves detect an ‘evangelical face’ along with his idea of Calvinism, and he terms it “Pastoral Arminanism” (171). Mullet also feels that Bunyan has softened the rigour of hyper-determinist predestinarianism. Michael Davies however finds Bunyan’s doctrine of law and grace “as firmly in place as ever during his late years” (328). As a result of the diverse opinions, need has risen to reconcile Bunyan’s so called “predestinarian doctrine” (Mullet 189) with a sense of “human responsibility” in Bunyan’s literary works.

Also one can notice Bunyan’s works being appreciated or condemned only after separating theology and reading them. For instance, while reading *The Pilgrim’s Progress* there is a tendency to segregate its theology and appreciate it as a mere literary piece having great literary worth and universal acclaim. And in reading *The Hoy War*, there is a tendency to read it without the correct theological meaning and consider it as “the superb failure of a great ambition, the failure of a vigorous and courageous intelligence” (Talon 34).
A thematic re-reading of the ‘spiritual trilogy’ in the light of Bunyan’s vision of salvation and spirituality will help resolve all conflicts regarding the interpretation of his works. As Michael Davies has pointed out:

To sidestep the specifics of Bunyan’s doctrine in any of his writings is . . . to stray from the way of Bunyan’s literary purpose . . . it leads to a poor interpretive practice, one that willfully ignores not only theological context but also the very words on the page which, in Bunyan’s case invariably point the reader towards a particular form of salvation” (20).

So an earnest attempt is made to objectively correlate the thematic reading of the Bunyan trilogy with the unique theological perceptions needed to unravel Bunyanian vision of spirituality and salvation. It is found that all the three narratives incorporate the biblical plan of salvation in their plots. It is also found that whether to write about his views on ‘works righteousness’, whether to write about election or predestination, whether to write about the old covenant or the new covenant or the promises, whether to write about the spiritual qualities involved in the process of salvation, it is to the Bible, especially Pauline scriptures that Bunyan turns.

The thematological re-reading and re-interpretation obviously results in a thematological comparative analysis of *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Holy War*, and the unearthing of the common thread that unifies the ‘spiritual trilogy,’ the plan of salvation, which is purely
biblical. It is also found that through different techniques of narratology, Bunyan has transformed the same spiritual raw materials to create specific narrative plots.

Thus, the re-reading shows that Bunyan's theme of salvation and spirituality as expounded in the three works has a well defined regular plan for which the source is the Bible or Scripture only, that in spite of his belief in election and predestination, he is not a Calvinist advocating election and predestination, or a sectarian advocating salvation for a selected few, but a humanitarian advocating salvation for all who are willing even if they be the chief of sinners, and that all the works when read in this light prove to be perfect literary pieces with a definite teleology.

There is a fourth narrative of Bunyan in dialogue form, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* which tells about one wicked man Mr. Badman, who lives a gratuitously sinful life and dies in his sins quietly. Without recourse to allegory, metaphor or fable, or dream technique, Bunyan manages to inculcate in this narrative, the same spiritual effect that he has effected in his other narratives. But there is a major difference between *Mr. Badman* and the other three narratives that constitute the ‘spiritual trilogy’. In the other three narratives the progress is from sin to grace, and there is the necessity of conversion and of living in faith and grace. Also the telos of the journey, or battle of the protagonist is fulfilled. Bunyan sees the Mount Sion, Christian reaches the Celestial city and Mansoul waits for the day of transportation to the Father’s Kingdom. In short, there is a grand scheme for salvation. But throughout his life, Mr. Badman ascribes the glory of God’s providences to fortune, intellect, change, labour, care, cunning,
and does not desire to undergo conversion unto salvation, even in the throes of his last moments. And Mr. Badman has so sense of soteriological finality. As Mr. Wiseman says, “He died that he might die, he went from life to death, and then from death to death, from death natural to death eternal” (Badman 10). Being a complete antithesis to the other three, this narrative is not included in the ‘spiritual trilogy.’

Before the re-reading of the ‘spiritual trilogy’ is attempted in the third, fourth and fifth chapters, the biblical theology, Calvinist theology and Bunyan’s theology as is evident from his other writings are discussed in the second chapter to show how much his theology is biblical and not Calvinistic. The sixth chapter makes a comparative analysis of the three narratives, and the seventh chapter gives a summation.