Chapter Four

A TRUTH WITHIN A FABLE

Art thou for something rare, and profitable?
Would'st thou see a truth within a fable?
Art thou forgetful? Wouldest thou remember
From New Year's day to the last of December.
Then read my fancies, they will stick like burrs,
And may be to the helpless, comforters.

(*PP 37*)

*The Pilgrim's Progress* is a book that has won the general and continued approbation of humankind ever since it was written. It has transcended time and cultural barriers. No wonder Froude states that “Bunyan’s writings have for two centuries affected the spiritual opinions of the English race in every part of the world more powerfully than any book or books except the Bible” (qtd. in Bridges 110). Critics are divided in their views as to what it is that has helped it to thrive marvellously. While F.R. Leavis may feel, “It is possible to read *The Pilgrim’s Progress* without any thought of its theological intention” (204), many critics agree that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* has great theological acumen. The greatest tribute comes from S.T Coleridge who says:

I know of no book, the Bible excepted, as above all comparison, which I according to my judgment and experience, could so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving truth according to the mind that was in Christ Jesus. (qtd. in Sharrock, *A Casebook 53*)
The nature of the text lends itself to be categorized under the form allegory, and as it deals with spirituality, ‘spiritual allegory’. But the extent to which it is a perfect allegory is questioned. Brain Nellist finds *The Pilgrim’s Progress* less close to traditional allegory, and he says, “At the centre of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* there stands not a coherent body of thought or a process of developing reflection, as in traditional allegory, but a consciousness” (133). Sharrock in his “Character and Dream” points out that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is “something different from true allegory, thinking in abstracts and psychological entities and using touches of realism as embroidery” (192).

Many characteristics of a novel have been detected in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, leading critics to call it the first novel. Wolfgang Iser is of the view that “Christian's story is one of increasing self awareness, and in this respect it is indisputably a novel, or at least a novel in the making (qtd. in Mailloux), and Venables says, “Intensely religious as it is in purpose *The Pilgrim’s Progress* may be safely styled the first English novel” (ch. ix). Hallam considers Bunyan “the father of our English novelists” (qtd. in Venables ch. ix). Allon with strong conviction says, “The claim to be the father of English romance which has been sometimes preferred for Defoe really belongs to Bunyan” (qtd. in Venables ch. ix). George Latham also towards the close of his review of *The Pilgrim's Progress* says that “the same minuteness of detail, the same unconcerned colloquialism, and the same apparent absence of straining for effect” present in Bunyan, Defoe and Swift have made some critics call *The Pilgrim’s Progress* the first English novel, for through his devices Bunyan anticipated Defoe and Swift.
Certain episodes and descriptions of monsters, giants, valleys and palaces have led critics to call *The Pilgrim's Progress* a romance and also folk tale. Sharrock in his introduction to *The Pilgrim's Progress* refers to the book as a “folk epic” (26). Bernard Beatty finds “Bunyan drawing formally on Romance and folk tale precedents, and doctrinally on St. Paul who describes the dangers he has been through and constantly warns his readers against dangers of all kinds” (266). But at the same time there is Nick Davis who noticing the need to refer to the Bible to interpret *The Pilgrim's Progress* says that “The Pilgrim's Progress is so unlike a folktale in so far as it offers to supply a final interpretation of the events which compose it by reference to this external authority” (194).

To some critics *The Pilgrim’s Progress* sounds like a story. Sharrock in his “Life and Story in the Pilgrim’s Progress” disapproves of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as “an imitation of a chivalric romance and as the first modern novel” (56). According to him, “A story . . . is useful and contains counsel. This is why Bunyan’s dogmatism and his scholastic interchanges are absorbed in the narrative” (56-57).

There is however another critic who finds *The Pilgrim’s Progress* a realistic story contemporary and authentic. In her “Christian Allegory in the Seventeenth Century – A comparison of George Herbert and John Bunyan,” Dimon expresses her opinion that Bunyan has combined his “gift for detail and anecdote, for the description of scenery and the invention of conversation . . . with his allegory, so that his narrative, despite all its spiritual meanings, is a realistic story, contemporary and authentic.” On a total analysis it can be found that *The
*Pilgrim’s Progress* has given rise to diverse criticism. Sharrock says in his introduction to *The Pilgrim’s Progress: A Casebook*, that “The Pilgrim’s Progress represents a highly idiosyncratic blending of personal experience, transmuted into fiction, traditional form, dramatised theology and earnest preaching to the reader with nothing imaginative about it” (16). Richard Dutton talks about “the difficulty of trying to read *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as a coherent piece either of fiction or of doctrine, much less a fusion of the two” (444). He holds the view that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is “a book for an “awakened” reader as much as it is about the “awakened” condition, and only for such a reader is it genuinely intelligible” (444). He says that “it is a “guidebook for the elect in a world peopled by ignorance” (445).

What is obvious from the critical studies then, is that, critics find something uncomfortable in the book. They are neither able to appreciate it as a novel fully, or a folk tale, or romance because they sense a theological ground plan nor are they able to overlook the romantic elements.

The theology in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is often referred to as being a Calvinistic theology. Dutton finds the texture of the work to range “from a graphic vividness to desperate obscurity, from a simplistic hand-book on Christian behaviour to intense Calvinist dogma, from sheer clumsiness to dexterous paradox” (445). An anonymous writer in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* has written that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* contains “a most excellent epitome and illustration of the Calvinistic divinity, under an allegory highly entertaining and affecting” (qtd. in Sharrock, *A Casebook* 51).
The Calvinist theology in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* appears less rigorous to Philip Edwards, that he while commenting on two incidents in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* says, “Bunyan was able in these two incidents to drive home his harsh doctrinal points” (112). Coleridge also says “I could not have believed beforehand that Calvinism could be painted in such exquisitely delightful colours” (qtd. in Sharrock, *A Casebook* 53). Calvinism in the *The Pilgrim’s Progress* appears so accommodating that Macaulay points out Southey’s comment: “. . . if Calvinism had never worn a blacker appearance than in Bunyan’s works, it would never have become a term of reproach” (qtd. in Sharrock, *Macaulay* 74).

Not all critics accept a Calvinist theology there. “We should be ill-advised to search for Bunyan’s theology in the Pilgrim’s Progress” says Gordon Campbell (260-61). According to him in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan “eliminates the truths that are set in the mind to God, such as the doctrine of election, and presents a theology accommodated to the experience and limited perspective of man” (261). Talon finds Bunyan in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, unconsciously showing “how free will and fate may be reconciled” (“Space and the Hero” 164).

The universality of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* has been widely disseminated. Sharrock in his introduction to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* insists that it is, “a folk epic of the universal religious imagination” (26). But Dutton argues, “The book is not . . . in conception, “universal,” but focuses on what is special and different about Christian” (442). He finds that Christian is not everyman, for not everyone can succeed in the pilgrimage as Christian does. According to him Christian is singled out for election. So he feels that all attempts to universalize *The Pilgrim’s*
Progress will miss one dimension – predestination. His conclusion is that: “The book is about the race of saints – the Puritan elect – not ordinary mankind” (441).

It can be only surmised that it is true as Roger Sharrock in his “Life and Story” says, “Bunyan criticism has always been confronted by a paradox: the contrast between the universal appeal thus demonstrated and the uncompromising dogmatism of the author’s religious belief” (50). But again how far the theology can be accused as an uncompromising one, poses a question. Many critics have started denying a Calvinist theology there. Michael Davies feels that The Pilgrim’s Progress is punctuated by Bunyan’s covenantal theology. He says:

Bunyan’s text repeatedly recounts and recapitulates a basic covenantal lesson in law and grace, urging the readers not towards an introspection in matters of election or reprobation but a need to understand, accept, and have faith in a justification by imputed righteousness through Christ. (229)

With so many contradictory opinions, the obligation to ferret out the theological principles by decoding the allegory rests on the reader. And for that, the reader has to read Bunyan’s words in his Apology and lay his heart and head together.

“My dark and cloudy words they do but hold / The Truth, as cabinets enclose the gold,” says Bunyan in his apology to The Pilgrim’s Progress (34). In this double metaphor, the truth of Bunyan’s book is pictured like gold in a closet and also like fertile rain within a cloud. In the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, Paul refers to the word of truth as ‘the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13). As is clear from Some Gospel Truths Opened, for Bunyan too, truth means “the
gospel of your salvation” (9). Bunyan’s doctrine of salvation contains the essence of Paul’s views on salvation as expressed in his different Epistles. That Bunyan follows Paul is very clear from the emblem showed to Christian in the Interpreter’s house. Christian is first shown the picture of a grave person, the only man whom the Lord of the palace has authorized to be his guide. The words of the Interpreter are:

I have showed thee this picture first, because the man whose picture this is, is the only man whom the Lord of the Palace whither thou art going hath authorized to be thy guide in all difficult places thou mayest meet within the way; wherefore take good head to what I have showed thee . . . lest in thy journey thou meet with some that pretend to lead thee aright, but their way goes down to death. (PP 61)

Even though Nellist finds the interpretation provided for the picture “more perplexing than the emblem itself” (141), it can be found that the interpretation clearly points to Paul. Michael Davies feels that the man “could even be interpreted as much a biblical figure, Paul or even Christ . . .” (250). The description of the man in the picture who can “beget children, travail in birth with children, and nurse them himself when they are born” sounds more like Paul's words in his Epistle to Galatians, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be informed to you” (4:19) and Epistle to Corinthians, “. . . even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat” (I Cor. 3:1-2). The man in the picture has the best of books in his hands, has the law of truth writ
on his lips, and his mission is to “unfold dark things to sinners” (*PP* 61). It is Paul who claims that the truth of Christ is in him, and speaks about “the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim. 1:11). He says, “I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. For which I am an ambassador in bonds” (Eph. 6:19-20), and testifies:

> Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not; . . . . (I Tim. 2: 4-7)

Beyond doubt, the picture refers to Paul, and in all fairness to Paul and Bunyan, it may be surmised that Bunyan is advocating Paul’s doctrines only. And Bunyan guides the readers of *Pilgrim’s Progress* to interpret everything in terms of the truth, the gospel of salvation, Paul is authorized to preach.

Bunyan expresses the truth through allegories, metaphors, similitudes and figures because he is sure of its precedence in the Bible. In fact any under-rating of the use of these, as he makes it clear in his Apology to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is an assault on “the heavenly wisdom” (34). Bunyan had known that the only place, where the word ‘allegory’ is used in the King James Version of the Bible, is the epistle of Paul to the Galatians:

> For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the
bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all . . . Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (Gal. 4: 22-26, 30-31).

Here Paul delineates the difference between the covenant of law given to Moses on mount Sinai, practised by the Jews in the temple at Jerusalem and the covenant of grace – dispensed from the spiritual Jerusalem which is of heaven. It sounds proper when Brainerd P. Stranahan says that, “Paul composed a short allegory about Abraham” and Bunyan attempts “a longer one in which a man imitates the actions described by the author of Hebrews” (283). And an allegorical reading of The Pilgrim’s Progress having Paul’s allegory in mind will not make the “allegory within the allegory” as in the account of the “bondwoman and Mount Sinai” “hopelessly obscure” as George Latham comments in his review of The Pilgrim’s Progress, but rather illuminating.

The Pilgrim’s Progress begins with “the grim realization of the reality of sin perpetrated by every embodied soul here and the consequent suffering death
and judgment” (Samraj, “A Comparative Study” 66). Tension ebbs away when the Evangelist suggests a way out. There is a steady progress towards the new covenant or the Covenant of Grace which is formed on the promises of God. The promise is: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12). Sharrock aptly says in his introduction to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* that

. . . it is his [Christian's] tremendous need to find a righteousness not his own by which to be saved that we encounter in the very first paragraph, and which is the force irresistibly driving Christian along the road to his final entry into the Celestial City. (11)

But Christian who is called Graceless first takes an alternative track, that which is a detour leading to Mount Sinai, whereas the course of the narrow way has been heading towards Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem. In spite of Evangelist’s instruction to go to the Wicket Gate which signifies Christ, Christian falls an easy victim to worldly wisdom. He is misguided by Worldly Wiseman towards the village Morality where his son Civility lives. Worldly Wiseman has actually guided him towards a more generalized form of morality instead of the righteousness gained by the experience of the truth, thereby rendering the cross odious to him. Soon Christian’s burden only grows unbearably heavier, urging him to flee the avalanching Mount Sinai. With the warning of Evangelist, to beware any doctrine that takes him away from the truth, for the truth only will take him to the Wicket Gate (*PP* 54), Christian’s covenantal lessons commence. Christian is made to understand that any attempt to fulfil all the laws will keep the
person under bondage only. Only a faith in the new covenant will alleviate the burden. Here Christian discovers the “spirituality” (*DLGU* 65) of the law, that is he learns how law will muster sins before him and put such strength into them so that he will be overmastered by the guilt of them. To the repentant Christian, Evangelist reminds Christ’s comforting words, “All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men” (53).

With the passing of Christian through the Wicket Gate which stands for Christ the mediator of the new covenant established on better promises, the transition into the new covenant starts. At the Interpreter’s house, he is given experimental teaching in covenantal lessons, in the form of similitudes, symbols and emblems, all signifying Paul’s doctrines found in his different Epistles. The dusty parlour teaches Christian how “the law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin doth revive, put strength into, and increase it in the soul, even as it doth discover and forbid it, for it doth not give power to subdue” (61). He learns that only the sweet gospel could vanquish and subdue the sin and make the soul clean through the faith of it.

The ever-burning fire teaches how Christ, continually, with the oil of his grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart so that “notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of his people prove gracious still” (63). The man armed with the helmet of salvation and sword of faith who makes his way successfully through the armed men reminds Christian of the need for salvation and faith. The man in the iron cage serves as a reminder of the condition of one who despises Christ’s righteousness and counts his blood an unholy thing, and
withdraws himself from the Covenant of Grace. In short, the emblems showed in Interpreter’s house are all covenantal lessons on the nature and essentials of Covenant of Grace, what it is to be the under the Covenant of Grace, and what it is to be when fallen from grace. The Interpreter’s sequence of emblems as Michael Davies quotes, provides “a tool for dramatically representing the new covenant of salvation which Christian has entered in passing through the Wicket Gate” (253).

At the cross, Christian’s burden rolls away. The reason behind the rolling away of Christian’s burden though not explained in Pilgrim’s Progress Part I is revealed by one Great-heart to Christian’s wife in Pilgrim’s Progress Part II. Belief in the way “Pardon was granted by deed” that is, belief in the truth, cut those strings that could not be cut otherwise. In Part II Great-heart expatiates that “pardon by deed” is obtained in a double way – by performing righteousness to cover a person, and spilling blood to wash him in. Christ has two natures, in one person, one Godhead and another manhood, and their righteousness respectively. He has a third righteousness with which he covers the sins of sinners. In order to pardon by deed, something has to be paid as price, as well as something to cover the sinner. Sin has allowed everybody to the just curse of the righteous law, and the blood of Jesus is the price paid. “Thus” says Great-heart “he has ransomed you from your transgression by blood, and covered your polluted and deformed souls with righteousness for the sake of which God passeth by you and will not hurt him when he comes to judge the world” (PP 260). According to Great-heart it is the knowledge gained by Christian of the justification through the imputed
righteousness of Christ that loosened his burden and made him leap with joy at the cross (261). And Michael Davies opines that Great-heart’s explanation of the nature of imputed righteousness through the mediational redemption by Christ as both man and God is clearly “a distinct revelation of the theological meaning of Christian’s release from his burden before the emblem of Christ’s sacrifice” (333).

The ecstatic experience at the cross is followed by the appearance of the three Shining Ones. The first announces forgiveness for sins, the second clothes him with a change of raiment, and the third sets a mark on his forehead and gives him a roll with a seal on it. The roll sealed is often interpreted to be one of election. Dutton opines: “The mark is the sign of his salvation, the seal of his election, and from that point on there is no real doubt as to the outcome of Christian’s journey . . .” (448). Isabel Hofmeyr says:

In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian and other characters are given scrolls or other types of documents which are the signs of their election. These they have to hand in when they arrive at the Celestial City. Those without documentary proof of their election go to hell. (6-7)

Nellist speaks about Christian’s garments, his roll, and the mark on his forehead as “indicating the mysteriously redundant symbolism of election” (146). Sharrock too in his “Character and Dream” refers to the roll as “the roll of election” (188).
There is every possibility to believe and to consider the roll as the new covenant or the promises of the Covenant of Grace. It can be found that the idea that the roll with a seal is the promise of the new covenant accords well, both narratively and theologically. Paul speaking about this promise says:

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation in whom also ye believed ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:13-14)

In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian is given a roll with a seal to comfort him by reading as he goes in the way. He is instructed to hand over the roll at the Celestial Gate, and until then keep it in his bosom. Bunyan in his *Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded* speaks of the man to whom the Covenant of Grace has been extended: “. . . that man is sealed with the very spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ” (168). So, Christian being given the roll with the seal, clearly means Christian has come under the Covenant of Grace. Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Christian progresses towards the Promised Land.

Actually the new covenant or the Covenant of Grace is of “the character of a promise, an unconditional arrangement made by God” (Vine 84). As J. Davis says, it incorporates four promises (81). God’s laws will be the inner guide of the recipient’s actions, not a code imposed externally. God and the recipient will belong to one another. There will be a universal inner knowledge of God, not
dependent on human teaching and there will be complete forgiveness for sins.

The nature of the new covenant is clearly depicted in Hebrews:

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:

and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people . . .

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and
their iniquities will I remember no more. (8:10,12)

“Righteousness,” as Barry E. Horner says in his “Christian and the Law,”
“is produced by a vital relationship of the heart, not a legal proclamation.” The
‘For’ in “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,” as Vine says, shows that
what is now being promised gives the reason for the preceding assurance, “I will
be to them a God and they shall be to me a people” (86). At the Arbour, Christian
is distressed to have lost his pass into the Celestial City but overjoyed on
retrieving it, for it was “the assurance of his life, and acceptance at the desired
haven” (PP 77) Campbell is not willing to accept that the roll represents
assurance as he feels that “one clearly does not submit one’s assurance at the
Heavenly Gate” (260). But it can be understood that when Christian is talking
about the assurance, it is the assurance, of the new covenant: “I will be to them a
God and they shall be to me a people.” Definitely when Christian who carries the
assurance, which has also the promise of forgiveness of sins annexed with it,
reaches the Celestial City, he will be accepted by God and given eternal life by
God.

There is yet another evidence to show that the roll sealed signifies the new
covenant and not election. While incarcerated in the Doubting Castle, Christian
suddenly remembers that there is a key in his bosom called ‘promise’. Critics may wonder how this key appears suddenly when no one has been told earlier about this key in the bosom at all. For instance, Robert Bridges asks, “But what is the key of promise by which prisoners escape from the Castle of Doubt?” (110). Actually there are reasons to believe that Christian by the term “key” means the roll which is in his bosom. For instance, in the story it is found that Christian is asked to keep the roll in the bosom. This roll has to be taken now and then and read so that Christian will be comforted. On the way Christian and Hopeful digress into a By-Path Meadow and are imprisoned in the Doubting-Castle. They are comfortless and in despair. At that time Christian suddenly remembers a thing, the key called promise which can open any lock. This key is in the bosom. And Michael Davies strongly believes that this key is synonymous with the roll. To endorse his opinion, he quotes Luxon who “reads the 'Roll' as synonymous with the ‘key’ Christian remembers possessing in Doubting-Castle” (237). If the key and the roll are the same, then the roll could also be taken to mean the promise. In the new-covenant promise only, the law has to be written in the heart. So, the key in the bosom and the roll in the bosom both refer to new-covenant promise and not election.

A third evidence can be got from the story of Little-faith told by Christian to Hopeful. Little-faith was robbed of his gold by three rogues, Faint Heart, Mistrust and Guilt. The best jewel, that is, the certificate by which Little-faith had to “receive his admittance at the Celestial Gate” (PP 165) was not stolen. Little-faith was comforted whenever he thought of that jewel, that certificate (166).
Little-faith was not a person like Esau, for he didn’t sell his birthright. Here the certificate and birthright are brought on the same line. Birthright means “the right to regeneration and blessing to eternal inheritance” (Nussbaum 25). In *The Barren Fig Tree*, Bunyan has written that “the birthright, in those days, had the promise and blessing annexed to it” (30). So here, certificate refers to the promise and blessings. The new covenant only, has promise and blessing. In other words, the certificate unmistakably and incontrovertibly points to the new covenant only. Thus it becomes clear that the scrolls or other documents given to characters are not signs of election. They signify the new covenant or Covenant of Grace made with them.

As Christian journeys, he meets so many characters on the way. According to Dutton, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* shows “men’s inadequacy to meet God's purposes” (446). It aims to make “the believer's life easier to bear, by sharing and discussing the problems attendant upon the specially aware” (446-54). Pooley in his “Pilgrim’s Progress and the Line of Allegory” is of the opinion: “Everyone that Christian meets is there for the purpose of either hindering or forwarding his journey” (15). Still, it can be found that not only the central thread of the story line but the characters themselves whom Christian meets on the way, manifest in all their enormity as well as in their intensity, the contrast between what it is to be under the old covenant or Covenant of Works and the new covenant or the Covenant of Grace.

A thematological reading makes it clear that by introducing many characters, Bunyan conveys many doctrinal truths. There are two covenants
which all men are under, either the one or the other. One can detect two types of characters in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, one, the children of Agar or the children of the bondwoman undergoing slavery under the Covenant of Works, and the other, the children of Sarah, or the children of the freewoman enjoying the promises of the Covenant of Grace. The children of promise move in the right way towards the Promised Land. Christian, Faithful, Hopeful, Little-faith, Christiana and her retinue are such children. It is, as Bunyan says in his *Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded*, the way of “life and salvation” (88, 93). The children of promise pass through the Wicket Gate, that is, they go through a new living way which Christ has consecrated through the veil, that is, his flesh.

Other characters like Talkative, Formalist, Hypocrisy, and Ignorance also travel with the aim of reaching Sion. But they lose their labour and die. It is because, though they aim at the same destination, they labour in vain as they do not know the right way. Formalist and Hypocrisy come in the wrong way of laws and ordinances. Pliable forsakes the way. By-ends refuses to step into the correct way, deserting his old principle. Mr. Hold-the world, Mr. Money-love, Mr. Save-all, all travel putting on a guise of religion. But after Demas’ silver mine they are never seen in the way. Demas himself is an enemy to the right ways of the Lord of the Way. Ignorance comes through a crooked lane. Atheist runs with his back towards Sion.

The significance of the way is acknowledged by many critics. As Kierkegaard says, “But the eternal is not a thing which can be had regardless of the way, in which it is acquired; no, the eternal is not really a thing, but is the way
in which it is acquired. The eternal . . . can be acquired only in a single way” (qtd. in Frye 147). Augustin also says, “Christ as man is the way by which we go” (qtd. in Frye 146). And Fry’s conclusion is that “Eternal life, then is the way in which it is acquired and that way is the Christ - Gate which provides the only ultimate means of reconciliation” (147). The above characters don’t come through Christ Gate, and no doubt there can be no transition from the Covenant of Works to the Covenant of Grace. So what is obvious is, whereas the children of the freewoman freely shake off the worldly pleasures and run for the incorruptible crown through the Wicket Gate, the children of bondage are tied down by sin, death, hell and the flesh.

Several other purposes are served through the meeting of these characters. Bunyan uses Christian’s meeting with several other characters in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part I, and the dialogue between several characters both in Part I and Part II, to express his views on works righteousness, imputed righteousness, false faith and the need for true justifying faith. As Millaux says, “Bunyan also guides his readers to his interpretation of biblical truth by presenting a series of good and evil persuasions both within and among his characters.”

Beth Lynch opines, “Christian’s progress is defined by his meeting with, dealing with, and overcoming of antagonists” (113). He has to overcome Apollyon and Giant Despair, deal with Pliable, Talkative, By-ends, Athiest and Ignorance. Pooley says, in “*Pilgrim’s Progress* and the Line of Allegory,” “Everyone that Christian meets is there for the purpose of either hindering or forwarding his journey” (15).
An indepth study of certain characters like Talkative, Formalist, Hypocrisy and Ignorance from a point of view as it relates to the developments of the major theme of the narrative will show why these characters face damnation even though they appear religious and speak sense. Only interpreted in the light of the old covenant or the Covenant of Works, can we understand the reason for their damnation.

Formalist and Hypocrisy come tumbling over the wall on the left hand of the narrow way. They don’t come through the Wicket Gate, that is, they don’t look upon Christ and his imputed righteousness to attain eternal life. Instead they rely on laws and ordinances to merit salvation. According to Bunyan, “Gospel ordinances, as baptism, breaking of bread, praying, meditating or the like . . . if not done in the right spirit, they are thereby used as a hand by the devil to pull thee under the Covenant of Works” (DLGU 86). Both Formality and Hypocrisy are persuaded that God will have mercy on them, if only they obey particular things as commanded in the Word. Their subjection is outward only. So they are rank hypocrites. They think that unless they do the particular things, they can’t become heirs of God’s kingdom. Bunyan is of the view that “That man doth act from a legal spirit who maketh the strictness of his walking, the ground of his assurance for eternal life” (87). So from Bunyan’s point of view, Formalist and Hypocrisy who don’t have a proper knowledge of the nature of the Covenant of Works, sense only a commanding power, and build the ground of salvation upon their strictness. As a result, they remain in the old covenant only, and not get planted into the Covenant of Grace. And they lack the coat, the mark, and the roll
with the seal. Not receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ, with which they have to be justified, they never progress with faith in the promises towards the Promised Land. And they meet with their inevitable ends.

Talkative of course thinks that by just talking, a man may “get knowledge of many things . . . learn the necessity of the new birth, the insufficiency of our works, the need of Christ’s righteousness . . . learn what are the great promises and consolations of the Gospel, to his own comfort” (PP 111). At first thought, one cannot discern any difference between Bunyan’s and Talkative’s doctrines. But why Bunyan calls him ‘Talkative’ is because, his conversation and religion don’t testify the same. Talkative’s religion is in word or tongue and not in deed and truth. His religion is just “to make a noise therewith” (113). What is missing is the ‘practic’ (115) part of religion. It is not that Talkative’s religion is condemned because Bunyan who has deviated from his theology of righteousness through faith, into one of works, finds no works-righteousness here. The fact is, as ever, Bunyan gives importance to justification by faith. Christian says, “Not that anything can be accepted that is not of faith” (115).

Actually Bunyan wants to show how insignificant the profession of Talkative will be on the judgment day. The problem with Talkative is, he, like the hare, “cleweth the cud”, that is, “he seeketh knowledge, he cheweth upon the Word” but not “divideth the hoof”, that is, “he parteth not with the way of the sinners” (116). To use Paul’s comparison, he is a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal without life (I Cor. 13:1) that is, without the true faith and grace of the Gospel. He may think he is under the Covenant of Grace because he cries, “all is
of grace, not of works” (PP 112). His tongue is so largely tipped with the
profession of the Covenant of Grace. He knows to distinguish only in tongue
between the law and the Gospel. He is a notionist without experimental
knowledge. He can discourse on several points of the Gospel mysteries. But
when asked about the “heart-work” (122), which means “the work the Gospel
hath wrought on him” (DLGU 31) he is not able to answer, because he has no
experimental knowledge. He does not have the experience of the influence of
Gospel on his soul and conscience.

According to Bunyan, when a person comes into the Covenant of Grace,
he will be convinced of his sin and defilement of his nature and of the necessity of
“closing with him [the Saviour] for life” (PP 119). In proportion to his faith will
be “his love to holiness and desires to know him more, and also serve him in this
world” (119). In short, a man under grace will have “heart-holiness”, “family-
holiness” and “conversation-holiness,” so that he would abhor sin, and promote
holiness in the world, not just like hypocrites or talkatives may do, but “by a
practical subjection in faith and love to the power of the Word” (119). So this
‘practic’ part does not refer to works-righteousness attained under Covenant of
Works. The lesson inculcated by Bunyan is that, mere notional knowledge of the
Covenant of Grace is not enough. Life should be such that grace is manifested in
the life of the person concerned.

Another important pilgrim under the Covenant of Works is Ignorance, the
only pilgrim who is supposed to have “talked sense” according to James Foster
(qtd. in Sharrock, A case book 51). He thinks he is perfect. He has known God’s
will. He has been a good liver. He prays, fasts, pays tithes and gives alms. But it is pointed out to him that he has not come through the Wicket Gate. That is, he has not looked for Christ’s righteousness. He seems to be self-satisfied with his self righteousness. It is clear from the story that Ignorance is given time to ponder over Christian’s and Hopeful’s counsel, to come through the Wicket Gate.

The tragic end of Ignorance comes as a shock to many. “His damnation at the end comes as a shock to modern reader’s idea of moral, as well as literary, propriety” says Sharrock (John Bunyan 93). It has even led to Samuel Butler’s castigation of the whole text as “a blasphemy against certain fundamental ideas of right and wrong which our consciences most instinctively approve” (qtd. in Greaves, “Reflections” (117). But even on the face of it, it will be evident that there is nothing shocking or imaginative about Ignorance’s end. As is the end of Formalist and Hypocrisy, Ignorance’s end is inevitable. Just prior to Ignorance’s condemnation by Christian, Hopeful gives his conversion story. His account is not only a means of keeping the pilgrims from lapsing into spiritual drowsiness, but is also, as Michael Davies says, “a doctrinal summary of law and grace carefully situated in The Pilgrim’s Progress to ensure that there can be no misunderstanding as to why Ignorance is finally damned” (236).

Hopeful’s account is in direct opposition to Ignorance’s belief. What Hopeful has found out at the end is: “If all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags; if by the deeds of the law, no man can be justified; and if, when we have done all, we are yet unprofitable, then it is but a folly to think of Heaven by the law” (PP 179). Hopeful admits sadly: “. . . if I look narrowly into the best of what I do
now, I still see sin, new sin mixing itself with the best of that I do” and “unless I could obtain the righteousness of a man that never had sinned, neither mine own, nor all the righteousness of the world, could save me (180). He believes that “God the Father, though he be just, can justly justify the coming sinner” (183). He understands that the world “notwithstanding all the righteousness thereof, is in a state of condemnation” (183). Not only that, Hopeful accepts that he is ashamed of the vileness of his sense of his own ignorance. He also rectifies his ignorance and undergoes conversion.

Ignorance of course, doesn’t recognize his ignorance. Ignorance is ignorant of the real nature of the spirituality of the old covenant. Actually he thinks that God will be pleased with him as he obeys the ‘Ten Commandments’. But what he does not know is that “To do the works of the law to the end we may be accepted of God, or that we may please Him, and to have our desires of him, is to do things from a legal or old-covenant spirit” (DLGU 86). For such a person who works in that way, the reward “is not reckoned of grace but of debt; that is, he appears before God through the law and his obedience to it” (DLGU 86; Rom.4:4-5). Christ will do nothing there, because Christ will justify a person’s person only, and not a person’s action. Ignorance is ignorant of this. Also by subjecting himself to ordinances and religious duties, he runs himself under the old covenant. He thinks that because he follows the ordinances he is better than others and more religious than others. What he is ignorant of is that, “it is the legal and the old covenant spirit that secretly urges the soul that . . . it must be fitted for Christ by its getting of a good heart and good intentions to do this and
that for Christ” (*DLGU* 87). He is ignorant that “such a soul looks upon Christ rather to be a painted Saviour or a cypher than a very real Savior” (87), and he does not realize that he has to come to Him as the basest sinner.

Ignorance’s talk during his second meeting with Christian betrays his ignorance. Unlike Christian and Little-faith who read the roll or certificate, which stands for God’s promises, and derive comfort, Ignorance enjoys comfort from the good notions that come into his mind. He trusts his heart better than God’s word. He flatters himself as his heart dictates. He can never accept there is none that does good, never accept that the imagination of the heart is only evil, and never accept that his heart is bad. So there is the remote possibility of his realizing the need for justification for his supposed good heart. Also there is no point in his saying that he believes in God for justification.

The “fantastic faith” (*PP* 188) or the false nature of Ignorance’s faith is blatant when he expresses his faith. He says:

. . . I shall be justified before God from the curse through his gracious acceptance of my obedience to his law: or thus, Christ makes my duties that are religious, acceptable to his Father by virtue of his merits; and so I shall be justified. (187)

So, just as Talkative’s faith is not a true faith, Ignorance’s faith is also a fantastic faith because it takes justification from the personal righteousness of Christ and makes it his own. That is, Ignorance considers himself righteous and obedient because he follows religious duties. So, instead of thinking that Christ’s righteousness will justify his unworthiness, he thinks Christ’s righteousness will
justify his action and his obedience and religious duties for gaining the eligibility and qualification for God’s acceptance. In short, it may be said that he relies on his religious duties for justification. It is tragic because he fails to count him as a sinner in need of Christ’s righteousness to justify his person and not action. He does not have “the true justifying faith” which “puts the soul (as sensible of its lost condition by the law) upon flying for refuge into Christ’s righteousness . . . and by it presented as spotless before God” (188) and accepted and acquitted from condemnation. Just because Ignorance comments “. . . for what matter, how we live if we may be justified by Christ’s personal righteousness from all, when we believe it?” (188), he cannot be said to speak sense. That precisely is his worst ignorance. So, for his self-righteousness, for his belief in justification by works and for the false faith only, he is condemned. Till the end he refuses to accept his ignorance and refuses to change. So it is not only because of his soteriological blindness but also because of his “willful dismissal of the ‘Truth’ of Bunyan’s faith” (M. Davies 236) that he perishes. That is why, Michael Davies holds that in The Pilgrim’s Progress “. . . ignorance is a choice made and sustained and not foreordained” (236).

Unlike the characters like Formalist, Hypocrisy, Talkative and Ignorance who refuse to change from the Covenant of Works, there are some characters who freely allow themselves to be planted in the Covenant of Grace. Hopeful’s and Faithful’s conversion accounts also are modelled to suit the theme content. Hopeful had tried to follow religious duties as praying, reading the Bible, weeping for sin and speaking truth to his neighbours. But then he had understood that all
our righteousness are as filthy rags and that there is no chance of being justified by the works of the law. It was then that he learnt from Faithful that he must “obtain the righteousness of a man that never had sinned” (PP 180). He also learnt that Christ’s righteousness “could be of that efficacy to justify another before God” (180) because he “died the death . . . for me to whom his doings and the worthiness of them should be imputed if I believed on him” (180). As a result, he felt encouraged to go to the mercy seat, where God sits to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come. As he was praying, with the eyes of his understanding he could see Jesus telling him “My grace is sufficient for thee” and also “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (182).

In Faithful’s account also, the rigorousness of law and the gentleness of grace is stressed. Faithful had come across Adam the first, who had offered fleshly comfort and security, including marriage to his three daughters, Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and The Pride of Life. Because of his secret inclining to Adam the first, that is original sin, Moses the embodiment of the law responded with condemnation and assailed the guilty pilgrim, (Faithful), but the man with the nail prints, that is, Christ beat him off with his saving righteousness. As Barry Horner suggests in his “The Christian and the Law” the impotency of the law and the strength of grace with regard to sanctification is what is signified here.

The story ends with the way leading up to the Promised Land. As is written in the Epistle to Hebrews, how “. . . ye are not come unto the mount . . . that might be touched and that burdened with fire,” that is, not to mount Sinai but “. . . unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,
and to an innumerable company of angels . . .” (12:18, 22), Christian who has fled from Mount Sinai, and has passed through the Wicket Gate, progresses towards Mount Sion. And he is taken by the Shining One to the Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where each one is “walking in his righteousness” (PP 200). On production of the certificate the king commands to open the Gate so that “the righteous nation that keepeth truth may enter in” (203). As Christian progresses, the reader who has laid the book and heart and head together also progresses in his knowledge of the truth or the gospel of salvation, Paul preaches, and which Bunyan has incorporated in *The Pilgrim’s Progress.*

*The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part II has sufficient thematic continuity with Part I. It cannot be denied there is a firm theological conviction governing Christiana’s pilgrimage. Even though Christina’s regret at having hardened her heart against all entreaties and having hindered her children of life, make her remorseful, still, Christiana is spurred on to pilgrimage only because of the ringing of her husband’s question, “What shall I do to be saved? in her ears” (223). As is stated in the margin, “Convictions seconded with fresh findings of God’s readiness to pardon” (224) act as good reasons for Christiana’s pilgrimage. Christiana tells the Interpreter that she has embarked on the journey “for I am convinced that no way is right but this” (246). The Interpreter's emphatic reply, “Thy setting out is good, for thou hast given credit to the truth” (255), marks the importance of truth in Part II also.

The promise of God to Christiana is, he is ready to forgive and multiply pardon to offenses. A letter promising entertainment and carrying instructions to
her, to come in the way Christian has come, to dwell in his presence with joy forever, has to be kept in her bosom, and has to be delivered at the further Gate. One Mercy is sent to Christiana. As Margaret Soense Breen opines in his “The Sexed Pilgrim’s Progress,” “Mercy’s appearance bears out the promise of divine mercy; by offering her company, she guides Christiana toward the acceptance of that promise.” The promise itself is proof that Christiana’s calling does not refer to election but to the Covenant of Grace. This idea of Christiana’s calling as one under Covenant of Grace is further strengthened by the words of Great-heart to Christiana when she marvels at the love of Christ. Great-heart tells her that this feeling is not communicated to everyone. “This you have therefore by a special grace,” Great-heart adds (PP 262). So it is beyond doubt that Bunyan here means the Covenant of Grace, made with Christiana. When Mercy begs if there is any grace and forgiveness of sins to spare, the Lord replies, “I pray for all them that believe on me, by what means soever they come unto me” (237). Here the mediatory office of the Lord and his readiness to accept any believer is evident, thereby clearing the doubt that this book is written for a particular sect only.

The Reliever rescues Christiana and Mercy from the ill-favoured ones, addresses Christiana and Mercy as weak ones, and tells them they could have avoided troubles and dangers if only they had petitioned for a conductor. And the Interpreter sends one man-servant, Great-heart with them. As Breene says:

Together, the Reliever and Christiana reiterate the Pauline view of women . . . Women must not only become conscious of their
spiritual inferiority, they must also actively call forth and submit to those social relations which enable their spiritual progress.

The lessons given to Christiana in the Interpreter’s house along with the picture of the grave person, point beyond doubt, Bunyan is once again preaching the doctrines of Paul. What Bunyan left saying in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part I, he had included in Part II. In addition to the emblems shown to Christian, Christina is also shown a man with a muck rake, raking to himself straws, sticks and dust, quite unmindful of the crown above. That man signifies a man of this world whose mind is carried away from God by earthly things. From the riddle of the ugly spider hanging by her hands upon the wall, Christiana learns the importance of faith that “how full of the venom of sin soever you be, yet you may by the hand of faith lay hold of, and dwell in the best room that belongs to the King’s House above” (*PP* 248).

Great-heart’s expatiation on pardon by deed, is a doctrinal lesson on the fundamentals of Bunyan’s whole theology of justification by imputed righteousness. The catechetical instructions of James, Joseph and Matthew, by Prudence, and the questions asked to Prudence by Matthew, all serve to bring the key tenets of Bunyan’s views of the Covenant of Grace: God the father saves by his grace, God the Son by his righteousness, death, and blood, and life, and God the Holy Ghost by his illumination, by his renovation, and by his preservation (274); Man by sin has brought himself into a state of captivity and only God can pull him out . . . Those that accept of his salvation will be saved (275); Like the sun reaching down with its beams, the Saviour, of the world, though high, reaches
down with his grace and love to us below (282); Ministers should fetch their doctrines from God (282); The Covenant of God’s Grace is confirmed to us in Christ (283); The grace of God comes to us through the body of Christ. (283); The Spirit of Grace will spring up in great and mighty as well as poor and low (283).

It is clear from the key tenets, that Bunyan’s idea is that ministers should fetch their doctrines from God. So Bunyan’s doctrines are not Calvin’s doctrines but what has been formulated by him, by reading the Scripture, which as Bunyan believes is the Word of God. Thus, if at all there is any influence, it can be biblical and Pauline only. This is evident from the way Bunyan has used Paul’s key tenets to model his doctrines.

Many misstatements are made about the sequel to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part II. For instance, often this sequel has been upheld as one advocating works righteousness. One of the reasons for such a conclusion is because, Mercy says, “I do these things that I may be rich in good works, laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold on eternal life” (*PP* 278). But the fact is, rather than advocating works-righteousness, Bunyan here brings in Paul’s counsel to rich people to do good: “... that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (I Tim. 6: 18-19). It does not mean Bunyan is reverting to salvation by works. Always Bunyan holds that works should follow justification not proceed from justification because he knows that when God’s righteousness is imputed, good
works have to follow. As Christian says, the soul of the religion is the ‘practic’ part (PP 115).

*The Pilgrim’s Progress* Part II also stresses the importance of the Covenant of Grace over the Covenant of Works. The sickness caused to Matthew by the eating of the apples itself, is allegorical. As Breen says “In a pattern of events that echoes the biblical account of the Fall, Matthew’s consumption of the “forbidden fruit” leads directly to his illness.” Matthew is actually sick of the original sin. The purge made from the sacrifices of the blood of a goat and ashes of heifer, and juice of hyssop, symbols of the sacrifices associated with the old law of Moses, offer no remedy for him. Only the purge *‘ex carne et sanguine Christi’* (PP 280) offers a remedy showing that only Christ as mediator in the new covenant brings relief to a sinner.

Thus, it can be found that both the parts of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* deal with salvation. There is no change whatsoever in Bunyan’s vision of salvation and spirituality. The thematic re-reading of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* proves otherwise the misunderstood trait of Bunyan that he is Calvinistic, predestinarian and advocating matters of election and reprobation. It cannot be denied that at the backdrop Bunyan expresses his belief in election, but at the same time he makes it clear that man has to be willing. It is not that Bunyan is unconsciously showing how freewill and fate may be reconciled. He always assigns a role to the will. The very first question of Christian “What shall I do to be saved” (40) shows Bunyan does give importance to the will of a person. “If we be truly willing to have it, He will bestow it upon us freely” (45), Christian assures Pliable on his way to the
Wicket Gate. Also Christiana tells Timorous, “I have now a price put into mine hand to get gain, and I should be a fool of the greatest size, if I should have no heart to strike in with the opportunity” (229).

So no doubt, willingness is stressed. “And Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out” (183) is the music pervading the whole book. The eternal prize, heaven is there, but one has to run, otherwise one has to go away without a prize. One has to allow himself to be planted in the Covenant of Grace. He has to progress through the Wicket Gate, having the promises in his mind, with the mind set on hope to reach the Promised Land, without relying on himself but having faith in Christ’s grace and imputed righteousness. Such dependence on grace will not go unrewarded.

Bunyan’s pastoral motive makes him use various devices to see that the truth or the gospel of salvation reaches desired places. That is why he has introduced sermon methods like enumeration of points, listing and outlining, manner of spiritual conversation, formal discourse often arranged under numbered heads as in the sermons, also parallel comparison, scriptural references and dramatization. He uses catechism to promote memory and recall his key tenets. As rhyme and metre lessons could be remembered, he introduces brief explanatory interludes after every event. In his marginalia, Bunyan offers, whenever he feels, summaries, explanation, commentaries, interpretation of the events, scriptural references, and exegetical explanations, or a more generous religious or moral comment. A reader will be forced to stop and consider its doctrinal meaning whenever there is marginalia.
Bunyan’s manna had been the Bible. So marvellous was his acquaintance with the Bible and so great was his flair to speak the biblical truth, that in literary recrudence, his style and language has very much the vocabulary and the spirit of the biblical language. Also his acquaintance with the common language of the people helped him to purposefully use in several places, the colloquial style which was “most likely to appeal to the readers, he wished to react” (Firth 85). Bunyan’s life-like power of characterization through the colloquial language is such that, the characters of Bunyan are literal portraits not fancy pictures. So even when they speak sometimes in elevated biblical language they sound real.

True Bunyan’s pastoral devices to some extent hinder the allegorical design. Sharrock finds the allegory of The Pilgrim’s Progress “not intellectual or highly organized as in the sophisticated religious allegory of Dante or Spenser” (Introd. PP 16). Actually, Bunyan’s concern was primarily doctrinal and not literal, and so, now and then he had allegorical slips. There is no need to defend him saying it is difficult to maintain a perfect allegory. It has only to be remembered that Bunyan is not unconscious of his allegorical slips. In order to convey a theological truth or doctrine, he is willing to sacrifice literary perfection. After undergoing severe torture in the Doubting-Castle Christian suddenly says, “I have a key in my bosom called promise that will open any lock in Doubting-Castle” (156). Stanley Fish and U.M. Kaufman see “the act of liberation, the remembering of the key of promise,” as “wholly discontinuous with the preceding sequence of events” (qtd. in Newey 24). But as Michael Davies says “Bunyan, in order to teach the forgiving efficiency of promises, does not bother about literary
perfection” (30). In his introduction to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Sharrock points out that Bunyan has “simply slipped out of the allegorical mode and declared directly that prayer is the chief weapon against temptation” (17). But then he comes to the conclusion that “If Bunyan is blundering here, he is blundering with his eye on the object and avoiding the mistakes of an over-classified and mechanical spiritual allegory” (17). However, what is obvious is, it is possible that here, the word ‘All-Prayer’ is consciously used by Bunyan. It is because, in Paul’s list of the armoury, whereas allegorical weapon names are given for truth, salvation, faith, righteousness and word of God, no name is given to the weapon allegorizing prayer. Paul has simply said, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18). Absence of an allegorical name for prayer can be found in *The Holy War* where Bunyan writes about an instrument which went without a name. In the footnote, the editor Wilbur Smith has commented: “This nameless machine is prayer, its power is wonderful beyond description and therefore it went without a name; no man can sufficiently describe the use and power of prayer” (*HW* 186; Matt. 21:22)

Actually Bunyan was interested in the propagation of the doctrines and not in the construction of story at all. As Michael Davies opines, Bunyan's view is that “even the narrative and its allegorical frame can be contravened in order to teach the reader more baldly about spiritual matters” (261-62). That is why he does not bother about the obstruction in the smooth flow of the narration by the recapitulations of Christian, the repetition of questions from many characters, the same set of answers from Christian, and the intrusion of new subplots like the
story of Faithful’s pilgrimage or Little-heart’s experience which actually precede that point in the main narrative. The long dialogue of Christian and Hopeful when they cross the enchanted ground though commented by Lewis as one “causing drowsiness” (195) is brought in by Bunyan, because he deemed it greatly essential for spiritual awakening. Even in writing about Ignorance’s end he cares for doctrinal perfection and not literary perfection.

Bunyan has used all other devices through which truth may be best expressed. The whole of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is written in the similitude of a dream. Sharrock in his “Character and Dream” refers to the dream, as “the process by which the naïve imagination is able to crack the narrow sectarian pattern and free the Biblical truths to describe the way of the people of God in living terms” (194).

As Stranahan says, “The life of a Christian – the process of getting from one city to the other – is compared to a journey along a Way, a race from start, to finish, and a re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt to the promised land” (284). In the figurative sense these metaphors suggest “a complete account of Christian experience” (284).

Even though the way may appear as a “common seventeenth-century high-road” (Firth 86), it may be inferred that Bunyan uses the way as a metaphorical representation of the words of Christ “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14: 6). The way also reminds one of the routes to the Promised Land through which the Israelites passed and where Deborah arose “a mother in Israel” (Judg. 5: 6-7). Christian refers to the way as “the king’s highway, the way
of holiness” (*PP* 93) when he opposes Apollyon’s assaults. Great-heart calls it “the king’s highway” (269) when he is encountered by Giant Grim. Christiana also expresses her resolution to walk in the highways now that she has risen “a mother in Israel” (268).

In *The Pilgrims’ Progress*, Bunyan has incorporated most of the journey metaphors available in the Bible, and his skill lies in the way he has combined them remarkably. The pilgrimage of Christian and Hopeful recalls the pilgrimage of the forefathers who “confessed they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth” (Heb. 11:13) and might have had opportunities to return if they had been mindful of that country, and who also died for their faith. Christian’s escape at Evangelist’s counsel reminds of Lot’s escape from Sodom, the land which was to be burned with fire and brimstone. Stranahan says, “Like Abraham, Christian leaves one city, seeks another and is a pilgrim between” (283). Christiana is also like Abraham who, believing the covenant of God, left everything and went to the land, which God showed him. The journey of Christiana with Mercy reminds one of the journey of Naomi with her daughter-in-law. Mercy resembles Ruth who for the love she bore to Naomi and to the Lord her God, left her land and people, and went with her.

Finally, the journey of Christiana and her company is a journey like that of the Israelites from Egypt after a Passover. They are set with a seal which was “the contents and sum of the Passover which the children of Israel did eat when they came out of the land of Egypt” (*PP* 256). But as Stranahan says, “whereas the old Exodus journey was a journey to Mount Sinai, the place where Moses
received the law and to earthly Jerusalem, the Promised Land, this journey is to Mount Sion and the New Jerusalem as exemplified in Hebrews” (294; Heb 12:12).

Bunyan has also made use of the athlete image of Paul “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor. 9:24) and also “Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). Christian is directed by Evangelist to run for the crown (PP 123). The whole life of a Christian is a race for the eternal prize.

The method and manner of writing are all Bunyan’s own. Bunyan uses fiction methods to convey his doctrines not because he was able to forego the affinity he had towards them even after he became religious. All he wanted was, to write in such a method that readers who were not interested in knowing about salvation, should be made interested. In two beautiful metaphors Bunyan has given the reason for his narrative method. A fisherman unable to catch fish with snares, lines, angles and hooks, has to grope for, and tickle the fish to catch it. The fowler who fails in his usage of guns, nets, light and bell has to pipe and whistle in order to capture them. Similarly Bunyan’s method is to make interested, readers who are not interested in matters of salvation (PP 33).

In his preface Bunyan extends a clarion call “Would’st thou see a truth within a fable? . . . Then read my fancies” (37). The term ‘fable’ comes from the Latin “fabula” (“a story”) itself derived from “fan” (“to speak”). “A fable is a feigned story of tale intended to instruct or amuse; a fictitious narration intended
to enforce some useful truth or precept” (“fable” def.). A fable is a succinct story, in prose or verse that features animals, mythical creatures, plants, inanimate objects or forces of nature which are anthropomorphized and that illustrate a moral lesson less (“fable” def.). The fable is one of the most enduring forms of folk literature. In the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible, the word ‘mythos’ is translated as fable. The word “myth” itself comes from the Greek “Mythos” which originally meant “speech” or “discourse”. In the study of folklore, a myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form (“myth” def.).

In whatever sense, he used, one thing is certain. Bunyan must have read Paul’s Epistle to Timothy where Paul asks him not to let people waste time in endless speculation over ‘myths’, translated as ‘fable’ in KJV. In the *Life Application Bible* it is explained:

> Thinking it would aid in their salvation, some Ephesians constructed mythical stories based on Old Testament history or genealogies. The false teachers . . . embroiled the Church in endless and irrelevant questions of controversies, taking precious time away from the study of the truth. (1927)

Bunyan wants the reader to understand that though *The Pilgrim’s Progress* has the elements of a story or fable or folk tale, what is wrapped up is the truth or the gospel of salvation.

It is a mistaken idea that Bunyan’s interest in Romances blended with his affinity to the Bible and resulted in the novel. By introducing a romantic episode
or a folk-tale episode, Bunyan is actually teaching a theological truth. For instance, Christian’s encounter with Apollyon bears all romance traits. Apollyon is a hideous monster who has wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and mouth like a lion (PP 90). His accusation of Christian as having changed his allegiance, is rebutted by Christian, who states his preference for the Prince’s wages, service, servants and government. He is in fact on the Prince’s highway, the highway of holiness. In the ensuing fight, Christian defends Apollyon’s darts with the shield in his hand. With the sword, he gives Apollyon his mortal wound, so that he flies away. Through this episode, Bunyan teaches a lesson that any attempt by the devil to entice a Christian who has been freed from law and has entered the Covenant of Grace, is thwarted when the Christian takes up of the sword of God’s Word and the shield of faith.

The Doubting Castle episode has all the features of a folk tale. The giant imprisons Christian and Hopeful in a dark dungeon, nasty and stinking, beats them with a crab-tree cudgel, and threatens to tear them to pieces and tempts them to commit suicide. But the sudden remembrance of a key in the bosom that would open any lock in Doubting Castle makes good their escape. Here also the lesson is that God’s promises of pardon in the Covenant of Grace are engraved in the heart of the person. It has only to be remembered in times of doubt and despair.

The Valley of the Shadow of Death with its flame and smoke and hideous noises, doleful voices and fiends, in description, is romantic and may even remind of St. George’s journey in Richard Johnson’s *The Seven Champions of
Christendom, but through that experience only Bunyan teaches the value of Prayer, by showing the supremacy of the powerful weapon called All-Prayer.

True, the descriptions of the behavior and the fighting methods of the giants in the present tense have vague associations of the folk-tale situation (Pascal 169-70). But Bunyan makes use of these incidents to drive home what effects are wrought when a person resorts to prayer, as for instance in the fight between giant Maul and Great-heart when Great-heart, resorts to prayer (PP 297).

Christian’s getting healed with the magical leaves may remind one of St. George in Richard Johnson’s The Seven Champions of Christendom who was “healed of the wounds he got from the Egyptian dragon, by the virtues of the fruit of a miraculous tree that grew near the site of the battle” (qtd. in Firth 89). But Bunyan could have also had in mind the “Tree of Life” found in Mount Sion (PP 200. Rev. 22:2).

Bunyan himself says that the book contains nothing but honest gospel strains. The curtain has to be removed, the veil has to be put by to find the truth. He makes an earnest request not to misinterpret, for by misinterpreting evil ensues (PP 32). The figure or similitude should not create “laugher or a feud” (207). So correct interpretive digging will be necessary to find the valued meaning of his words. Like gold which is wrapped with ore, or the better part of the apple with the unwanted core, the truth will be mixed with dross.

As the artist himself quite aptly concludes, the reader will be able to get at the truth of the fable only if the reader on his or her own experiential endeavour chooses to throw away the dross and retain the truth.