

# A RELATION OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF MR. JOHN BUNYAN,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT BEDFORD, IN NOVEMBER 1660. HIS EXAMINATION  
BEFORE THE JUSTICES; HIS CONFERENCE WITH THE CLERK OF THE PEACE; WHAT  
PASSED BETWEEN THE JUDGES AND HIS WIFE WHEN SHE PRESENTED A PETITION  
FOR HIS DELIVERANCE, ETC.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, AND NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

*“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”* Matthew 5:10-12.

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# THE RELATION OF MY IMPRISONMENT

## IN THE

### MONTH OF NOVEMBER 1660.

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When, by the good hand of my God, I had for five or six years together, without any interruption, freely preached the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and had also, through his blessed grace, some encouragement by his blessing thereupon; the devil, that old enemy of man's salvation, took his opportunity to inflame the hearts of his vassals against me, insomuch that at the last I was laid out for by the warrant of a justice, and was taken and committed to prison. The relation thereof is as followeth:

Upon the 12th of this instant November 1660, I was desired by some of the friends in the country to come to teach at Samsell, by Harlington, in Bedfordshire. To whom I made a promise, if the Lord permitted, to be with them on the time aforesaid. The justice hearing thereof, whose name is Mr. Francis Wingate, forthwith issued out his warrant to take me, and bring me before him, and in the meantime to keep a very strong watch about the house where the meeting should be kept, as if we that were to meet together in that place did intend to do some fearful business, to the destruction of the country; when, alas, the constable, when he came in, found us only with our Bibles in our hands, ready to speak and hear the Word of God; for we were just about to begin our exercise. Nay, we had begun in prayer for the blessing of God upon our opportunity, intending to have preached the Word of the Lord unto them there present;<sup>[1]</sup> but the constable coming in prevented us; so that I was taken and forced to depart the room. But had I been minded to have played the coward, I could have escaped, and kept out of his hands. For when I was come to my friend's house, there was whispering that that day I should be taken, for there was a warrant out to take me; which when my friend heard, he being somewhat timorous, questioned whether we had best have our meeting or not; and whether it might not be better for me to depart, lest they should take me and have me before the justice, and after that send me to prison, for he knew better than I what spirit they were of, living by them; to whom I said, No, by no means, I will not stir, neither will I have the meeting dismissed for this. Come, be of good cheer, let us not be daunted; our cause is

good, we need not be ashamed of it; to preach God's Word is so good a work, that we shall be well rewarded, if we suffer for that; or to this purpose; but as for my friend, I think he was more afraid of [for] me, than of himself. After this I walked into the close, where, I somewhat seriously considering the matter, this came into my mind, That I had showed myself hearty and courageous in my preaching, and had, blessed be grace, made it my business to encourage others; therefore, thought I, if I should now run, and make an escape, it will be of a very ill savour in the country. For what will my weak and newly converted brethren think of it, but that I was not so strong indeed as I was in word? Also I feared that if I should run, now there was a warrant out for me, I might by so doing make them afraid to stand, when great words only should be spoken to them. Besides, I thought, that seeing God of his mercy should choose me to go upon the forlorn hope in this country; that is, to be the first, that should be opposed, for the gospel; if I should fly, it might be a discouragement to the whole body that might follow after. And further, I thought the world thereby would take occasion at my cowardliness, to have blasphemed the gospel, and to have had some ground to suspect worse of me and my profession than I deserved. These things with others considered by me, I came in again to the house, with a full resolution to keep the meeting, and not to go away, though I could have been gone about an hour before the officer apprehended me; but I would not; for I was resolved to see the utmost of what they could say or do unto me. For blessed be the Lord, I knew of no evil that I had said or done. And so, as aforesaid, I began the meeting. But being prevented by the constable's coming in with his warrant to take me, I could not proceed. But before I went away, I spake some few words of counsel and encouragement to the people, declaring to them, that they saw we were prevented of our opportunity to speak and hear the Word of God, and were like to suffer for the same: desiring them that they should not be discouraged, for it was a mercy to suffer upon so good account. For we might have been apprehended as thieves or murderers, or for other wickedness; but blessed be God it was not so, but we suffer as Christians for well doing: and we had better be the persecuted than the persecutors, &c. But the constable and the justice's man waiting on us, would not be at quiet till they had me away, and that we departed the house. But because the justice was not at home that day, there was a friend of mine engaged for me to bring me to the constable on the morrow morning. Otherwise the constable must have

charged a watch with me, or have secured me some other ways, my crime was so great. So on the next morning we went to the constable, and so the justice.<sup>[2]</sup> He asked the constable what we did, where we were met together, and what we had with us? I trow, he meant whether we had armour or not; but when the constable told him, that there were only met a few of us together to preach and hear the Word, and no sign of anything else, he could not well tell what to say: yet because he had sent for me, he did adventure to put out a few proposals to me, which were to this effect, namely, What I did there? and why I did not content myself with following my calling? for it was against the law, that such as I should be admitted to do as I did.

**John Bunyan.** To which I answered, that the intent of my coming thither, and to other places, was to instruct, and counsel people to forsake their sins, and close in with Christ, lest they did miserably perish; and that I could do both these without confusion, to wit, follow my calling, and preach the Word also. At which words, he was in a chafe,<sup>[3]</sup> as it appeared; for he said that he would break the neck of our meetings.

**Bun.** I said, it may be so. Then he wished me to get sureties to be bound for me, or else he would send me to the jail.

My sureties being ready, I called them in, and when the bond for my appearance was made, he told them, that they were bound to keep me from preaching; and that if I did preach, their bonds would be forfeited. To which I answered, that then I should break them; for I should not leave speaking the Word of God: even to counsel, comfort, exhort, and teach the people among whom I came; and I thought this to be a work that had no hurt in it: but was rather worthy of commendation than blame.

**Wingate.** Whereat he told me, that if they would not be so bound, my mittimus must be made, and I sent to the jail, there to lie to the quarter-sessions.

Now while my mittimus was making, the justice was withdrawn; and in comes an old enemy to the truth, Dr. Lindale, who, when he was come in, fell to taunting at me with many reviling terms.

**Bun.** To whom I answered, that I did not come thither to talk with him, but with the justice. Whereat he supposed that I had nothing to say for myself, and triumphed as if he had got the victory; charging and condemning me for meddling with that for which I could show no warrant; and asked me, if I had

taken the oaths? and if I had not, it was pity but that I should be sent to prison, &c.

I told him, that if I was minded, I could answer to any sober question that he should put to me. He then urged me again, how I could prove it lawful for me to preach, with a great deal of confidence of the victory.

But at last, because he should see that I could answer him if I listed, I cited to him that verse in Peter, which saith, “As every man hath received the gift, even so let him minister the same,” &c.

**Lind.** Aye, saith he, to whom is that spoken?

**Bun.** To whom, said I, why, to every man that hath received a gift from God. Mark, saith the apostle, “As every man that hath received a gift from God,” &c. And again, “You may all prophesy one by one.” Whereat the man was a little stopt, and went a softlier pace: but not being willing to lose the day, he began again, and said:

**Lind.** Indeed I do remember that I have read of one Alexander a Coppersmith, who did much oppose and disturb the apostles; — aiming, it is like, at me, because I was a tinker.

**Bun.** To which I answered, that I also had read of very many priests and Pharisees that had their hands in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Lind.** Aye, saith he, and you are one of those scribes and Pharisees: for you, with a pretence, make long prayers to devour widows’ houses.

**Bun.** I answered, that if he had got no more by preaching and praying than I had done, he would not be so rich as he now was. But that scripture coming into my mind, “Answer not a fool according to his folly,” I was as sparing of my speech as I could, without prejudice to truth.

Now by this time my mittimus was made, and I committed to the constable to be sent to the jail in Bedford, &c.

But as I was going, two of my brethren met with me by the way, and desired the constable to stay, supposing that they should prevail with the justice, through the favour of a pretended friend, to let me go at liberty. So we did stay, while they went to the justice; and after much discourse with him, it came to this; that if I would come to him again, and say some certain words

to him, I should be released. Which when they told me, I said if the words were such that might be said with a good conscience, I should, or, else, I should not. So through their importunity I went back again, but not believing that I should be delivered: for I feared their spirit was too full of opposition to the truth to let me go, unless I should in something or other dishonour my God, and wound my conscience. Wherefore, as I went, I lifted up my heart to God for light and strength to be kept, that I might not do anything that might either dishonour him, or wrong my own soul, or be a grief or discouragement to any that was inclining after the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, when I came to the justice again, there was Mr. Foster of Bedford, who coming out of another room, and seeing of me by the light of the candle, for it was dark night when I came thither, he said unto me, Who is there? John Bunyan? with such seeming affection, as if he would have leaped in my neck and kissed<sup>[4]</sup> me, which made me somewhat wonder, that such a man as he, with whom I had so little acquaintance, and, besides, that had ever been a close opposer of the ways of God, should carry himself so full of love to me; but, afterwards, when I saw what he did, it caused me to remember those sayings, "Their tongues are smoother than oil, but their words are drawn swords." And again, "Beware of men," &c. when I had answered him, that blessed be God I was well, he said, What is the occasion of your being here? or to that purpose. To whom I answered, that I was at a meeting of people a little way off, intending to speak a word of exhortation to them; but the justice hearing thereof, said I, was pleased to send his warrant to fetch me before him, &c.

**Foster.** So, said he, I understand; but well, if you will promise to call the people no more together, you shall have your liberty to go home; for my brother is very loath to send you to prison, if you will be but ruled.

**Bun.** Sir, said I, pray what do you mean by calling the people together? My business is not anything among them, when they are come together, but to exhort them to look after the salvation of their souls, that they may be saved, &c.

**Fost.** Saith he, We must not enter into explication or dispute now; but if you will say you will call the people no more together, you may have your liberty; if not, you must be sent away to prison.

**Bun.** Sir, said I, I shall not force or compel any man to hear me; but yet, if I come into any place where there is a people met together, I should, according to the best of my skill and wisdom, exhort and counsel them to seek out after the Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of their souls.

**Fost.** He said, that was none of my work; I must follow my calling; and if I would but leave off preaching, and follow my calling, I should have the justice's favour, and be acquitted presently.

**Bun.** To whom I said, that I could follow my calling and that too, namely, preaching the Word; and I did look upon it as my duty to do them both, as I had an opportunity.

**Fost.** He said, to have any such meetings was against the law; and, therefore, he would have me leave off, and say I would call the people no more together.

**Bun.** To whom I said, that I durst not make any further promise; for my conscience would not suffer me to do it. And again, I did look upon it as my duty to do as much good as I could, not only in my trade, but also in communicating to all people, wheresoever I came, the best knowledge I had in the Word.

**Fost.** He told me that I was the nearest the Papists of any, and that he would convince me of immediately.

**Bun.** I asked him wherein?

**Fost.** He said, in that we understood the Scriptures literally.

**Bun.** I told him that those that were to be understood literally, we understood them so; but for those that were to be understood otherwise, we endeavoured so to understand them.

**Fost.** He said, which of the Scriptures do you understand literally?

**Bun.** I said this, "he that believeth shall be saved." This was to be understood just as it is spoken; that whosoever believeth in Christ shall, according to the plain and simple words of the text, be saved.

**Fost.** He said that I was ignorant, and did not understand the Scriptures; for how, said he, can you understand them when you know not the original

Greek? &c.

**Bun.** To whom I said, that if that was his opinion, that none could understand the Scriptures but those that had the original Greek, &c., then but a very few of the poorest sort should be saved; this is harsh; yet the Scripture saith, “That God hides these things from the wise and prudent,” that is, from the learned of the world, “and reveals them to babes and sucklings.”

**Fost.** He said there were none that heard me but a company of foolish people.

**Bun.** I told him that there were the wise as well as the foolish that do hear me; and again, those that are most commonly counted foolish by the world are the wisest before God; also, that God had rejected the wise, and mighty, and noble, and chosen the foolish and the base.

**Fost.** He told me that I made people neglect their calling; and that God had commanded people to work six days, and serve him on the seventh.

**Bun.** I told him that it was the duty of people, both rich and poor, to look out for their souls on those days as well as for their bodies; and that God would have his people “exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day.”

**Fost.** He said again that there was none but a company of poor, simple, ignorant people that came to hear me.

**Bun.** I told him that the foolish and ignorant had most need of teaching and information; and, therefore, it would be profitable for me to go on in that work.

**Fost.** Well, said he, to conclude, but will you promise that you will not call the people together any more? and then you may be released and go home.

**Bun.** I told him that I durst say no more than I had said; for I durst not leave off that work which God had called me to.

So he withdrew from me, and then came several of the justice’s servants to me, and told me that I stood so much upon a nicety. Their master, they said, was willing to let me go; and if I would but say I would call the people no more together, I might have my liberty, &c.

**Bun.** I told them there were more ways than one in which a man might be said to call the people together. As, for instance, if a man get upon the market

place, and there read a book, or the like, though he do not say to the people, Sirs, come hither and hear; yet if they come to him because he reads, he, by his very reading, may be said to call them together; because they would not have been there to hear if he had not been there to read. And seeing this might be termed a calling the people together, I durst not say I would not call them together; for then, by the same argument, my preaching might be said to call them together.

*Wing.* and *Fost.* Then came the justice and Mr. Foster to me again; we had a little more discourse about preaching, but because the method of it is out of my mind, I pass it; and when they saw that I was at a point, and would not be moved nor persuaded,

Mr. Foster, the man that did at the first express so much love to me, told the justice that then he must send me away to prison. And that he would do well, also, if he would present all those that were the cause of my coming among them to meetings. Thus we parted.

And, verily, as I was going forth of the doors, I had much ado to forbear saying to them that I carried the peace of God along with me; but I held my peace, and, blessed be the Lord, went away to prison, with God's comfort in my poor soul.

After I had lain in the jail five or six days, the brethren sought means, again, to get me out by bondsmen; for so ran my mittimus, that I should lie there till I could find sureties. They went to a justice at Elstow, one Mr. Crumpton, to desire him to take bond for my appearing at the quarter-sessions. At the first he told them he would; but afterwards he made a demur at the business, and desired first to see my mittimus, which run to this purpose: That I went about to several conventicles in this county, to the great disparagement of the government of the church of England, &c. When he had seen it, he said that there might be something more against me than was expressed in my mittimus; and that he was but a young man, and, therefore, he durst not do it. This my jailer told me; whereat I was not at all daunted, but rather glad, and saw evidently that the Lord had heard me; for before I went down to the justice, I begged of God that if I might do more good by being at liberty than in prison, that then I might be set at liberty; but if not, his will be done; for I was not altogether without hopes but that my imprisonment might be an awakening to the saints in the country, therefore I could not tell well which to

choose; only I, in that manner, did commit the thing to God. And verily, at my return, I did meet my God sweetly in the prison again, comforting of me and satisfying of me that it was his will and mind that I should be there.[\[5\]](#)

When I came back again to prison, as I was musing at the slender answer of the justice, this word dropt in upon my heart with some life, “For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.”

Thus have I, in short, declared the manner and occasion of my being in prison; where I lie waiting the good will of God, to do with me as he pleaseth; knowing that not one hair of my head can fall to the ground without the will of my Father which is in heaven. Let the rage and malice of men be never so great, they can do no more, nor go no further, than God permits them; but when they have done their worst, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom 8:28). Farewell.

**Here is the sum of my Examination before Justice Keelin, Justice Chester, Justice Blundale, Justice Beecher, and Justice Snagg, &c.**

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After I had lain in prison above seven weeks, the quarter-sessions was to be kept in Bedford, for the county thereof, unto which I was to be brought; and when my jailer had set me before those justices, there was a bill of indictment preferred against me. The extent thereof was as followeth:

‘That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, labourer, being a person of such and such conditions, he hath, since such a time, devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the King,’ &c.

**The Clerk.** When this was read, the clerk of the sessions said unto me, What say you to this?

**Bun.** I said, that as to the first part of it, I was a common frequenter of the church of God. And was also, by grace, a member with the people over whom Christ is the Head.

**Keelin.** But, saith Justice Keelin, who was the judge in that court? Do you come to church, you know what I mean; to the parish church, to hear Divine service?

**Bun.** I answered, No, I did not.

**Keel.** He asked me why?

**Bun.** I said, Because I did not find it commanded in the Word of God.

**Keel.** He said, We were commanded to pray.

**Bun.** I said, But not by the *Common Prayer Book*.

**Keel.** He said, How then?

**Bun.** I said, With the Spirit. As the apostle saith, “I will pray with the Spirit, and — with the understanding” (1 Cor 14:15).

*Keel.* He said, We might pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding, and with the *Common Prayer Book* also.

*Bun.* I said that the prayers in the *Common Prayer Book* were such as were made by other men, and not by the motions of the Holy Ghost, within our hearts; and as I said, the apostle saith, he will pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding; not with the Spirit and the *Common Prayer Book*.

*Another Justice.* What do you count prayer? Do you think it is to say a few words over before or among a people?

*Bun.* I said, No, not so; for men might have many elegant, or excellent words, and yet not pray at all; but when a man prayeth, he doth, through a sense of those things which he wants, which sense is begotten by the Spirit, pour out his heart before God through Christ; though his words be not so many and so excellent as others are.

*Justices.* They said, That was true.

*Bun.* I said, This might be done without the *Common Prayer Book*.

*Another.* One of them said (I think it was Justice Blundale, or Justice Snagg), How should we know that you do not write out your prayers first, and then read them afterwards to the people? This he spake in a laughing way.

*Bun.* I said, It is not our use, to take a pen and paper, and write a few words thereon, and then go and read it over to a company of people.

But how should we know it, said he?

*Bun.* Sir, it is none of our custom, said I.

*Keel.* But, said Justice Keelin, it is lawful to use Common Prayer, and such like forms: for Christ taught his disciples to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And further, said he, cannot one man teach another to pray? "Faith comes by hearing"; and one man may convince another of sin, and therefore prayers made by men, and read over, are good to teach, and help men to pray.

While he was speaking these words, God brought that word into my mind, in the eighth of the Romans, at the 26th verse. I say, God brought it, for I thought not on it before: but as he was speaking, it came so fresh into my mind, and was set so evidently before me, as if the scripture had said, Take

me, take me; so when he had done speaking,

**Bun.** I said, Sir, the Scripture saith, that it is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with [sighs and] groanings which cannot be uttered. Mark, said I, it doth not say the *Common Prayer Book* teacheth us how to pray, but the Spirit. And it is “the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities,” saith the apostle; he doth not say it is the *Common Prayer Book*.

And as to the Lord’s prayer, although it be an easy thing to say, “Our Father,” &c., with the mouth; yet there are very few that can, in the Spirit, say the two first words in that prayer; that is, that can call God their Father, as knowing what it is to be born again, and a having experience, that they are begotten of the Spirit of God; which if they do not, all is but babbling, &c.<sup>[6]</sup>

**Keel.** Justice Keelin said, that that was a truth.

**Bun.** And I say further, as to your saying that one man may convince another of sin, and that faith comes by hearing, and that one man may tell another how he should pray, &c., I say men may tell each other of their sins, but it is the Spirit that must convince them.

And though it be said that “faith comes by hearing,” yet it is the Spirit that worketh faith in the heart through hearing, or else they are not profited by hearing (Heb 4:12).

And that though one man may tell another how he should pray; yet, as I said before, he cannot pray, nor make his condition known to God, except the Spirit help. It is not the *Common Prayer Book* that can do this. It is the Spirit that sheweth us our sins, and the Spirit that sheweth us a Saviour (John 16:16); and the Spirit that stirreth up in our hearts desires to come to God, for such things as we stand in need of (Matt 11:27), even sighing out our souls unto him for them with “groans which cannot be uttered.” With other words to the same purpose. At this they were set.

**Keel.** But, says Justice Keelin, what have you against the *Common Prayer Book*?

**Bun.** I said, Sir, if you will hear me, I shall lay down my reasons against it.

**Keel.** He said, I should have liberty; but first, said he, let me give you one

caution; take heed of speaking irreverently of the *Common Prayer Book*; for if you do so, you will bring great damage upon yourself.

**Bun.** So I proceeded, and said, My first reason was, because it was not commanded in the Word of God, and therefore I could not use it.

**Another.** One of them said, Where do you find it commanded in the Scripture, that you should go to Elstow, or Bedford, and yet it is lawful to go to either of them, is it not?

**Bun.** I said, To go to Elstow, or Bedford, was a civil thing, and not material, though not commanded, and yet God's Word allowed me to go about my calling, and therefore if it lay there, then to go thither, &c. But to pray, was a great part of the Divine worship of God, and therefore it ought to be done according to the rule of God's Word.

**Another.** One of them said, He will do harm; let him speak no further.

**Keel.** Justice Keelin said, No, no, never fear him, we are better established than so; he can do no harm; we know the *Common Prayer Book* hath been ever since the apostles' time, and is lawful for it to be used in the church.

**Bun.** I said, Show me the place in the epistles where the *Common Prayer Book* is written, or one text of Scripture that commands me to read it, and I will use it. But yet, notwithstanding, said I, they that have a mind to use it, they have their liberty;<sup>[2]</sup> that is, I would not keep them from it; but for our parts, we can pray to God without it. Blessed be his name.

With that, one of them said, Who is your God? Beelzebub? Moreover, they often said that I was possessed with the spirit of delusion, and of the devil. All which sayings I passed over; the Lord forgive them! And further, I said, blessed be the Lord for it, we are encouraged to meet together, and to pray, and exhort one another; for we have had the comfortable presence of God among us. For ever blessed be his holy name!

**Keel.** Justice Keelin called this pedlar's French, saying, that I must leave off my canting. The Lord open his eyes!

**Bun.** I said, that we ought to "exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day," &c. (Heb 3:13).

**Keel.** Justice Keelin said, that I ought not to preach; and asked me where I had

my authority? with other such like words.

**Bun.** I said, that I would prove that it was lawful for me, and such as I am, to preach the Word of God.

**Keel.** He said unto me, By what scripture?

I said, By that in the first epistle of Peter, chapter 4, the 10th verse, and Acts 18 with other scriptures, which he would not suffer me to mention. But said, Hold; not so many, which is the first?

**Bun.** I said, this: “As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God,” &c.

**Keel.** He said, Let me a little open that scripture to you: ‘As every man hath received the gift’; that is, said he, as every one hath received a trade, so let him follow it. If any man have received a gift of tinkering, as thou hast done, let him follow his tinkering. And so other men their trades; and the divine his calling, &c.

**Bun.** Nay, Sir, said I, but it is most clear, that the apostle speaks here of preaching the Word; if you do but compare both the verses together, the next verse explains this gift what it is, saying, ‘If any man speak *let him speak* as the oracles of God.’ So that it is plain, that the Holy Ghost doth not so much in this place exhort to civil callings, as to the exercising of those gifts that we have received from God. I would have gone on, but he would not give me leave.

**Keel.** He said, We might do it in our families, but not otherwise.

**Bun.** I said, If it was lawful to do good to some, it was lawful to do good to more. If it was a good duty to exhort our families, it is good to exhort others; but if they held it a sin to meet together to seek the face of God, and exhort one another to follow Christ, I should sin still; for so we should do.

**Keel.** He said he was not so well versed in Scripture as to dispute, or words to that purpose. And said, moreover, that they could not wait upon me any longer; but said to me, Then you confess the indictment, do you not? Now, and not till now, I saw I was indicted.

**Bun.** I said, This I confess, we have had many meetings together, both to pray

to God, and to exhort one another, and that we had the sweet comforting presence of the Lord among us for our encouragement; blessed be his name therefore. I confessed myself guilty no otherwise.

**Keel.** Then, said he, hear your judgment. You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following; and at three months' end, if you do not submit to go to church to hear Divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm: and if, after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, &c., or be found to come over again without special license from the king, &c.,<sup>[8]</sup> you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly; and so bid my jailer have me away.

**Bun.** I told him, as to this matter, I was at a point with him; for if I was out of prison to-day I would preach the gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God.

**Another.** To which one made me some answer; but my jailer pulling me away to be gone, I could not tell what he said.

Thus I departed from them; and I can truly say, I bless the Lord Jesus Christ for it, that my heart was sweetly refreshed in the time of my examination; and also afterwards, at my returning to the prison. So that I found Christ's words more than bare trifles, where he saith, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke 21:15). And that his peace no man can take from us.

Thus have I given you the substance of my examination. The Lord make these profitable to all that shall read or hear them. Farewell.

## The Substance of some Discourse had between the Clerk of the Peace and myself, when he came to admonish me, according to the tenor of that Law by which I was in Prison.

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When I had lain in prison other twelve weeks, and now not knowing what they intended to do with me, upon the 3rd of April 1661, comes Mr. Cobb unto me, as he told me, being sent by the justices to admonish me; and demanded of me submittance to the Church of England, &c. The extent of our discourse was as followeth: —

**Cobb.** When he was come into the house he sent for me out of my chamber; who, when I was come unto him, he said, Neighbour Bunyan, how do you do?

**Bun.** I thank you, Sir, said I, very well, blessed be the Lord.

**Cobb.** Saith he, I come to tell you that it is desired you would submit yourself to the laws of the land, or else at the next sessions it will go worse with you, even to be sent away out of the nation, or else worse than that.

**Bun.** I said that I did desire to demean myself in the world, both as becometh a man and a Christian.

**Cobb.** But, saith he, you must submit to the laws of the land, and leave off those meetings which you was wont to have; for the statute law is directly against it; and I am sent to you by the justices to tell you that they do intend to prosecute the law against you if you submit not.

**Bun.** I said, Sir, I conceive that that law by which I am in prison at this time doth not reach or condemn either me or the meetings which I do frequent; that law was made against those that, being designed to do evil in their meetings, making the exercise of religion their pretence, to cover their wickedness. It doth not forbid the private meetings of those that plainly and simply make it their only end to worship the Lord, and to exhort one another to edification. My end in meeting with others is simply to do as much good as I can, by exhortation and counsel, according to that small measure of light which God hath given me, and not to disturb the peace of the nation.

**Cobb.** Every one will say the same, said he; you see the late insurrection at

London, under what glorious pretences they went; and yet, indeed, they intended no less than the ruin of the kingdom and common-wealth.[\[9\]](#)

**Bun.** That practice of theirs I abhor, said I; yet it doth not follow that, because they did so, therefore all others will do so. I look upon it as my duty to behave myself under the King's government, both as becomes a man and a Christian, and if an occasion were offered me, I should willingly manifest my loyalty to my Prince, both by word and deed.

**Cobb.** Well, said he, I do not profess myself to be a man that can dispute; but this I say, truly, neighbour Bunyan, I would have you consider this matter seriously, and submit yourself; you may have your liberty to exhort your neighbour in private discourse, so be you do not call together an assembly of people; and, truly, you may do much good to the church of Christ, if you would go this way; and this you may do, and the law not abridge you of it. It is your private meetings that the law is against.

**Bun.** Sir, said I, if I may do good to one by my discourse, why may I not do good to two? and if to two, why not to four, and so to eight? &c.

**Cobb.** Ay, saith he, and to a hundred, I warrant you.

**Bun.** Yes, Sir, said I, I think I should not be forbid to do as much good as I can.

**Cobb.** But, saith he, you may but pretend to do good, and indeed, notwithstanding, do harm, by seducing the people; you are, therefore, denied your meeting so many together, lest you should do harm.

**Bun.** And yet, said I, you say the law tolerates me to discourse with my neighbour; surely there is no law tolerates me to seduce any one; therefore, if I may, by the law, discourse with one, surely it is to do him good; and if I, by discoursing, may do good to one, surely, by the same law, I may do good to many.

**Cobb.** The law, saith he, doth expressly forbid your private meetings; therefore they are not to be tolerated.

**Bun.** I told him that I would not entertain so much uncharitableness of that Parliament in the 35th of Elizabeth, or of the Queen herself, as to think they did, by that law, intend the oppressing of any of God's ordinances, or the

interrupting any in the way of God; but men may, in the wresting of it, turn it against the way of God; but take the law in itself, and it only fighteth against those that drive at mischief in their hearts and meetings, making religion only their cloak, colour, or pretence; for so are the words of the statute: 'If any meetings, under colour or pretence of religion,' &c.[\[10\]](#)

**Cobb.** Very good; therefore the king, seeing that pretences are usually in and among people, as to make religion their pretence only, therefore he, and the law before him, doth forbid such private meetings, and tolerates only public; you may meet in public.

**Bun.** Sir, said I, let me answer you in a similitude: Set the case that, at such a wood corner, there did usually come forth thieves, to do mischief; must there therefore a law be made that every one that cometh out there shall be killed? May there not come out true men as well as thieves out from thence? Just thus it is in this case; I do think there may be many that may design the destruction of the commonwealth; but it does not follow therefore that all private meetings are unlawful; those that transgress, let them be punished. And if at any time I myself should do any act in my conversation as doth not become a man and Christian, let me bear the punishment. And as for your saying I may meet in public, if I may be suffered, I would gladly do it. Let me have but meeting enough in public, and I shall care the less to have them in private. I do not meet in private because I am afraid to have meetings in public. I bless the Lord that my heart is at that point, that if any man can lay anything to my charge, either in doctrine or practice, in this particular, that can be proved error or heresy, I am willing to disown it, even in the very market place; but if it be truth, then to stand to it to the last drop of my blood. And, Sir, said I, you ought to commend me for so doing. To err and to be a heretic are two things; I am no heretic, because I will not stand refractorily to defend any one thing that is contrary to the Word. Prove anything which I hold to be an error, and I will recant it.

**Cobb.** But, Goodman Bunyan, said he, methinks you need not stand so strictly upon this one thing, as to have meetings of such public assemblies. Cannot you submit, and, notwithstanding, do as much good as you can, in a neighbourly way, without having such meetings?

**Bun.** Truly, Sir, said I, I do not desire to commend myself, but to think meanly of myself; yet when I do most despise myself, taking notice of that

small measure of light which God hath given me, also that the people of the Lord, by their own saying, are edified thereby. Besides, when I see that the Lord, through grace, hath in some measure blessed my labour, I dare not but exercise that gift which God hath given me for the good of the people. And I said further, that I would willingly speak in public, if I might.

**Cobb.** He said, that I might come to the public assemblies and hear. What though you do not preach? you may hear. Do not think yourself so well enlightened, and that you have received a gift so far above others, but that you may hear other men preach. Or to that purpose.

**Bun.** I told him, I was as willing to be taught as to give instruction, and looked upon it as my duty to do both; for, saith I, a man that is a teacher, he himself may learn also from another that teacheth, as the apostle saith: “Ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn” (1 Cor 14:31). That is, every man that hath received a gift from God, he may dispense it, that others may be comforted; and when he hath done, he may hear and learn, and be comforted himself of others.

**Cobb.** But, said he, what if you should forbear awhile, and sit still, till you see further how things will go?

**Bun.** Sir, said I, Wicliffe saith, that he which leaveth off preaching and hearing of the Word of God for fear of excommunication of men, he is already excommunicated of God, and shall in the day of judgment be counted a traitor to Christ.[\[11\]](#)

**Cobb.** Ay, saith he, they that do not hear shall be so counted indeed; do you, therefore, hear.

**Bun.** But, Sir, said I, he saith, he that shall leave off either preaching or hearing, &c. That is, if he hath received a gift for edification, it is his sin, if he doth not lay it out in a way of exhortation and counsel, according to the proportion of his gift; as well as to spend his time altogether in hearing others preach.

**Cobb.** But, said he, how shall we know that you have received a gift?

**Bun.** Said I, Let any man hear and search, and prove the doctrine by the Bible.

**Cobb.** But will you be willing, said he, that two indifferent persons shall determine the case, and will you stand by their judgment?

**Bun.** I said, Are they infallible?

**Cobb.** He said, No.

**Bun.** Then, said I, it is possible my judgment may be as good as theirs. But yet I will pass by either, and in this matter be judged by the Scriptures; I am sure that is infallible, and cannot err.

**Cobb.** But, said he, who shall be judge between you, for you take the Scriptures one way, and they another?

**Bun.** I said, The Scripture should, and that by comparing one scripture with another; for that will open itself, if it be rightly compared. As, for instance, if under the different apprehensions of the word Mediator, you would know the truth of it, the Scriptures open it, and tell us that he that is a mediator must take up the business between two, and “a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one,” and “*there is* one mediator between God and men, [even] the man Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:20; 1 Tim 2:5). So likewise the Scripture calleth Christ a complete, or perfect, or able high priest. That is opened in that he is called man, and also God. His blood also is discovered to be effectually efficacious by the same things. So the Scripture, as touching the matter of meeting together, &c., doth likewise sufficiently open itself and discover its meaning.

**Cobb.** But are you willing, said he, to stand to the judgment of the church?

**Bun.** Yes, Sir, said I, to the approbation of the church of God; the church’s judgment is best expressed in Scripture. We had much other discourse which I cannot well remember, about the laws of the nation, and submission to government; to which I did tell him, that I did look upon myself as bound in conscience to walk according to all righteous laws, and that whether there was a king or no; and if I did anything that was contrary, I did hold it my duty to bear patiently the penalty of the law, that was provided against such offenders; with many more words to the like effect. And said, moreover, that to cut off all occasions of suspicion from any, as touching the harmlessness of my doctrine in private, I would willingly take the pains to give any one the notes of all my sermons; for I do sincerely desire to live quietly in my

country, and to submit to the present authority.

**Cobb.** Well, neighbour Bunyan, said he, but indeed I would wish you seriously to consider of these things, between this and the quarter-sessions, and to submit yourself. You may do much good if you continue still in the land; but alas, what benefit will it be to your friends, or what good can you do to them, if you should be sent away beyond the seas into Spain, or Constantinople, or some other remote part of the world? Pray be ruled.

**Jailer.** Indeed, Sir, I hope he will be ruled.

**Bun.** I shall desire, said I, in all godliness and honesty to behave myself in the nation, whilst I am in it. And if I must be so dealt withal, as you say, I hope God will help me to bear what they shall lay upon me. I know no evil that I have done in this matter, to be so used. I speak as in the presence of God.

**Cobb.** You know, saith he, that the Scripture saith, “the powers that be are ordained of God.”

**Bun.** I said, yes, and that I was to submit to the king as supreme, also to the governors, as to them that are sent by him.

**Cobb.** Well then, said he, the King then commands you, that you should not have any private meetings; because it is against his law, and he is ordained of God, therefore you should not have any.

**Bun.** I told him that Paul did own the powers that were in his day, as to be of God; and yet he was often in prison under them for all that. And also, though Jesus Christ told Pilate, that he had no power against him, but of God, yet he died under the same Pilate; and yet, said I, I hope you will not say that either Paul, or Christ, were such as did deny magistracy, and so sinned against God in slighting the ordinance. Sir, said I, the law hath provided two ways of obeying: The one to do that which I, in my conscience, do believe that I am bound to do, actively; and where I cannot obey actively, there I am willing to lie down, and to suffer what they shall do unto me. At this he sat still, and said no more; which, when he had done, I did thank him for his civil and meek discoursing with me; and so we parted.

O that we might meet in heaven!

Farewell. **J. B.**

**Here followeth a discourse between my Wife and the Judges,  
with others, touching my Deliverance at the Assizes  
following; the which I took from her own Mouth.**

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After that I had received this sentence of banishing, or hanging, from them, and after the former admonition, touching the determination of the justices, if I did not recant; just when the time drew nigh, in which I should have abjured, or have done worse, as Mr. Cobb told me, came the time in which the King was to be crowned.<sup>[12]</sup> Now, at the coronation of kings, there is usually a releasement of divers prisoners, by virtue of his coronation; in which privilege also I should have had my share; but that they took me for a convicted person, and therefore, unless I sued out a pardon, as they called it, I could have no benefit thereby; notwithstanding, yet, forasmuch as the coronation proclamation did give liberty, from the day the king was crowned to that day twelvemonth, to sue them out; therefore, though they would not let me out of prison, as they let out thousands, yet they could not meddle with me, as touching the execution of their sentence; because of the liberty offered for the suing out of pardons. Whereupon I continued in prison till the next assizes, which are called Midsummer assizes, being then kept in August 1661.

Now, at that assizes, because I would not leave any possible means unattempted that might be lawful, I did, by my wife, present a petition to the judges three times, that I might be heard, and that they would impartially take my case into consideration.

The first time my wife went, she presented it to Judge Hale, who very mildly received it at her hand, telling her that he would do her and me the best good he could; but he feared, he said, he could do none. The next day, again, lest they should, through the multitude of business, forget me, we did throw another petition into the coach to Judge Twisdon; who, when he had seen it, snapt her up, and angrily told her that I was a convicted person, and could not be released, unless I would promise to preach no more, &c.

Well, after this, she yet again presented another to Judge Hale, as he sat on the bench, who, as it seemed, was willing to give her audience. Only Justice Chester being present, stept up and said, that I was convicted in the court and

that I was a hot-spirited fellow, or words to that purpose, whereat he waived it, and did not meddle therewith. But yet, my wife being encouraged by the high sheriff, did venture once more into their presence, as the poor widow did to the unjust judge, to try what she could do with them for my liberty, before they went forth of the town. The place where she went to them was to the Swan Chamber, where the two judges, and many justices and gentry of the country, were in company together. She then, coming into the chamber with abashed face, and a trembling heart, began her errand to them in this manner:

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**Woman.** My Lord (directing herself to Judge Hale), I make bold to come once again to your Lordship, to know what may be done with my husband.

**Judge Hale.** To whom he said, Woman, I told thee before, I could do thee no good; because they have taken that for a conviction which thy husband spoke at the sessions; and unless there be something done to undo that, I can do thee no good.

**Wom.** My Lord, said she, he is kept unlawfully in prison; they clapped him up before there was any proclamation against the meetings; the indictment also is false. Besides, they never asked him whether he was guilty or no; neither did he confess the indictment.

**One of the Justices.** Then one of the justices that stood by, whom she knew not, said, My Lord, he was lawfully convicted.

**Wom.** It is false, said she; for when they said to him, Do you confess the indictment? he said only this, that he had been at several meetings, both where there was preaching the Word, and prayer, and that they had God's presence among them.

**Judge Twisdon.** Whereat Judge Twisdon answered very angrily, saying, 'What! you think we can do what we list; your husband is a breaker of the peace, and is convicted by the law,' &c. Whereupon Judge Hale called for the Statute Book.

**Wom.** But, said she, my Lord, he was not lawfully convicted.

**Chester.** Then Justice Chester said, 'My Lord, he was lawfully convicted.'

**Wom.** It is false, said she; it was but a word of discourse that they took for a

conviction, as you heard before.

**Chest.** ‘But it is recorded, woman, it is recorded,’ said Justice Chester; as if it must be of necessity true, because it was recorded. With which words he often endeavoured to stop her mouth, having no other argument to convince her, but ‘it is recorded, it is recorded.’<sup>[13]</sup>

**Wom.** My Lord, said she, I was a while since at London, to see if I could get my husband’s liberty; and there I spoke with my Lord Barkwood, one of the House of Lords, to whom I delivered a petition, who took it of me and presented it to some of the rest of the House of Lords, for my husband’s releasement: who, when they had seen it, they said that they could not release him, but had committed his releasement to the judges, at the next assizes. This he told me; and now I come to you to see if anything may be done in this business, and you give neither releasement nor relief. To which they gave her no answer, but made as if they heard her not.<sup>[14]</sup>

**Chest.** Only Justice Chester was often up with this, ‘He is convicted,’ and ‘It is recorded.’

**Wom.** If it be, it is false, said she.

**Chest.** My Lord, said Justice Chester, he is a pestilent fellow, there is not such a fellow in the country again.

**Twis.** What, will your husband leave preaching? If he will do so, then send for him.

**Wom.** My Lord, said she, he dares not leave preaching, as long as he can speak.

**Twis.** See here, what should we talk any more about such a fellow? Must he do what he lists? He is a breaker of the peace.

**Wom.** She told him again, that he desired to live peaceably, and to follow his calling, that his family might be maintained; and, moreover, said, My Lord, I have four small children that cannot help themselves, of which one is blind, and have nothing to live upon, but the charity of good people.

**Hale.** Hast thou four children? said Judge Hale; thou art but a young woman to have four children.

**Wom.** My Lord, said she, I am but mother-in-law to them, having not been married to him yet full two years. Indeed, I was with child when my husband was first apprehended; but being young, and unaccustomed to such things, said she, I being smayed<sup>[15]</sup> at the news, fell into labour, and so continued for eight days, and then was delivered, but my child died.<sup>[16]</sup>

**Hale.** Whereat, he looking very soberly on the matter, said, 'Alas, poor woman!'

**Twis.** But Judge Twisdon told her, that she made poverty her cloak; and said, moreover, that he understood I was maintained better by running up and down a preaching, than by following my calling.

**Hale.** What is his calling? said Judge Hale.

**Answer.** Then some of the company that stood by said, 'A tinker, my Lord.'

**Wom.** Yes, said she, and because he is a tinker, and a poor man, therefore he is despised, and cannot have justice.

**Hale.** Then Judge Hale answered, very mildly, saying, 'I tell thee, woman, seeing it is so, that they have taken what thy husband spake for a conviction; thou must either apply thyself to the King, or sue out his pardon, or get a writ of error.'

**Chest.** But when Justice Chester heard him give her this counsel; and especially, as she supposed, because he spoke of a writ of error, he chafed,<sup>[17]</sup> and seemed to be very much offended; saying, 'My Lord, he will preach and do what he lists.'

**Wom.** He preacheth nothing but the Word of God, said she.

**Twis.** He preach the Word of God! said Twisdon; and withal she thought he would have struck her; he runneth up and down, and doth harm.

**Wom.** No, my Lord, said she, it is not so; God hath owned him, and done much good by him.

**Twis.** God! said he; his doctrine is the doctrine of the devil.

**Wom.** My Lord, said she, when the righteous Judge shall appear, it will be known that his doctrine is not the doctrine of the devil.

**Twis.** My Lord, said he, to Judge Hale, do not mind her, but send her away.

**Hale.** Then said Judge Hale, 'I am sorry, woman, that I can do thee no good; thou must do one of those three things aforesaid; namely, either to apply thyself to the King, or sue out his pardon, or get a writ of error; but a writ of error will be cheapest.'

**Wom.** At which Chester again seemed to be in a chafe, and put off his hat, and as she thought, scratched his head for anger: but when I saw, said she, that there was no prevailing to have my husband sent for, though I often desired them that they would send for him, that he might speak for himself, telling them, that he could give them better satisfaction than I could in what they demanded of him, with several other things, which now I forget; only this I remember, that though I was somewhat timorous at my first entrance into the chamber, yet before I went out, I could not but break forth into tears, not so much because they were so hard-hearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures will have to give at the coming of the Lord, when they shall there answer for al things whatsoever they have done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be bad.[\[18\]](#)

So, when I departed from them, the Book of Statute was brought, but what they said of it I know nothing at all, neither did I hear any more from them.

## Some Carriages of the Adversaries of God's Truth with me at the next Assizes, which was on the 19th of the First Month, 1662.

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I shall pass by what befell between these two assizes, how I had, by my jailer, some liberty granted me, more than at the first, and how I followed my wonted course of preaching, taking all occasions that were put into my hand to visit the people of God; exhorting them to be steadfast in the faith of Jesus Christ, and to take heed that they touched not the *Common Prayer, &c.*, but to mind the Word of God, which giveth direction to Christians in every point, being able to make the man of God perfect in all things through faith in Jesus Christ, and thoroughly to furnish him unto all good works (2 Tim 3:17).<sup>[19]</sup> Also, how I, having, I say, somewhat more liberty, did go to see Christians at London; which my enemies hearing of, were so angry, that they had almost cast my jailer out of his place, threatening to indict him, and to do what they could against him. They charged me also, that I went thither to plot and raise division, and make insurrection, which, God knows, was a slander; whereupon my liberty was more straitened than it was before: so that I must not look out of the door. Well, when the next sessions came, which was about the 10th of the eleventh month, I did expect to have been very roundly dealt withal; but they passed me by, and would not call me, so that I rested till the assizes, which was the 19th of the first month following; and when they came, because I had a desire to come before the judge, I desired my jailer to put my name into the calendar among the felons, and made friends of the judge and high sheriff, who promised that I should be called; so that I thought what I had done might have been effectual for the obtaining of my desire; but all was in vain: for when the assizes came, though my name was in the calendar, and also though both the judge and sheriff had promised that I should appear before them, yet the justices and the clerk of the peace did so work it about, that I, notwithstanding, was deferred, and might not appear; and although, I say, I do not know of all their carriages towards me, yet this I know, that the clerk of the peace did discover himself to be one of my greatest opposers: for, first, he came to my jailer, and told him that I must not go down before the judge, and therefore must not be put into the calendar; to whom my jailer said, that my name was in already. He bid him put me out again; my jailer told him that he could not, for he had given the judge a

calendar with my name in it, and also the sheriff another. At which he was very much displeased, and desired to see that calendar that was yet in my jailer's hand; who, when he had given it him, he looked on it, and said it was a false calendar; he also took the calendar and blotted out my accusation, as my jailer had writ it. Which accusation I cannot tell what it was, because it was so blotted out; and he himself put in words to this purpose: 'That John Bunyan was committed to prison, being lawfully convicted for upholding of unlawful meetings and conventicles,' &c. But yet, for all this, fearing that what he had done, unless he added thereto, it would not do; he first run to the clerk of the assizes, then to the justices, and afterwards, because he would not leave any means unattempted to hinder me, he comes again to my jailer, and tells him, that if I did go down before the judge, and was released, he would make him pay my fees, which, he said, was due to him; and further told him, that he would complain of him at the next quarter sessions for making of false calendars; though my jailer himself, as I afterwards learned, had put in my accusation worse than in itself it was by far. And thus was I hindered and prevented, at that time also, from appearing before the judge, and left in prison. Farewell.

## John Bunyan

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] The text from which he intended to preach was ‘Dost thou believe on the Son of God?’ (John 9:35). From this he intended to show the absolute need of faith in Jesus Christ; and that it was also a thing of the highest concern for men to inquire into, and to ask their own hearts, whether they had it or no. See Preface to his *Confession of Faith*. — Ed.

[2] Justice Wingate.

[3] ‘Chafe.’ See 2 Sam 17:8. — Ed.

[4] A right Judas. — Ed.

[5] ‘How little could Bunyan dream, that from the narrow cell in which he was incarcerated, and cut off apparently from all usefulness, a glory would shine out, illustrating the government and grace of God, and doing more good to man, than all the prelates of the kingdom put together had accomplished.’ — *Dr. Cheever*.

[6] It is easy to say a prayer, but difficult truly to pray. It is not length, not eloquence, that makes prayer. Though there be no more than ‘My Father!’ if the heart rise with it, that is prayer. ‘Prayer is an offering up of our DESIRES unto God.’ — Ed.

[7] It is not the spirit of a Christian to persecute any for their religion, but to pity them; and if they will turn, to instruct them. — Ed.

[8] The statute under which Bunyan suffered is the 35th Eliz., cap. 1, re-enacted with all its rigour in the 16th Charles II, cap. 4, 1662; ‘That if any person, above sixteen years of age, shall forbear coming to church for one month, or persuade any other person to abstain from hearing Divine service, or receiving the communion according to law, or come to any unlawful assembly, conventicle, or meetin — every such person shall be imprisoned, without bail, until he conform, and do in some church make this open submission following: — I do humbly confess and acknowledge that I have grievously offended God in contemning his Majesty’s godly and lawful government and authority, by absenting myself from church, and from hearing Divine service, contrary to the godly laws and statutes of this realm. And in using and frequenting disordered and unlawful conventicles and assemblies, under pretence and colour of exercise of religion; and I am

heartily sorry for the same. And I do promise and protest, that from henceforth I will, from time to time, obey and perform his Majesty's laws and statutes, in repairing to the church and Divine services, and do my uttermost endeavour to maintain and defend the same. And for the third offence he shall be sent to the jail or house of correction, there to remain until the next sessions or assizes, and then to be indicted; and being thereupon found guilty, the court shall enter judgment of transportation against such offenders, to some of the foreign plantations (Virginia and New England only excepted), there to remain seven years; and warrants shall issue to sequester the profits of their lands, and to distrain and sell their goods to defray the charges of their transportation; and for want of such charges being paid, the sheriff may contract with any master of a ship, or merchant, to transport them; and then such prisoner shall be a servant to the transporter or his assigns; that is, whoever he will sell him or her to, for five years. And if any under such judgment of transportation shall escape, or being transported, return into any part of England, shall SUFFER DEATH as felons, without benefit of clergy.' Notwithstanding this edict, mark well his words on the next leaf, 'Exhorting the people of God to take heed, and touch not the Common Prayer.' Englishmen, blush! This is now the law of the land we live in. Roman Catholics alone are legally exempted from its cruel operations, by an Act passed in 1844. The overruling hand of God alone saved the pious and holy Bunyan from having been legally murdered. — Ed.

[9] The contemptible and mad insurrection to which Mr. Cobb refers, was the pretext for fearful sufferings to the Dissenters throughout the kingdom. It is thus narrated by Bishop Burnet, 1660: — 'The king had not been many days at Whitehall, when one Venner, a violent fifth-monarchy man, who thought it was not enough to believe that Christ was to reign on earth, and to put the saints in possession of the kingdom, but added to this that the saints were to take the kingdom themselves. He gathered some of the most furious of the party to a meeting in Coleman Street. There they concerted the day and the manner of their rising, to set Christ on his throne, as they called it. But withal they meant to manage the government in his name, and were so formal that they had prepared standards and colours, with their devices on them, and furnished themselves with very good arms. But when the day came, there was but a small appearance, not exceeding twenty. However, they resolved to venture out into the streets, and cry out, No king but Christ. Some of them

seemed persuaded that Christ would come down and head them. They scoured the streets before them, and made a great progress. Some were afraid, and all were amazed at this piece of extravagance. They killed a great many, but were at last mastered by numbers; and were all either killed or taken and executed. — (Burnet's *Own Times*, 1660, vol. i. p. 160). — Ed.

[10] The third section of 16th Charles II, cap. 4, also enacts, 'That any person above sixteen years old, present at any meeting under pretence of exercise of religion, in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the Church of England, where there shall be present five persons or more above those of the household, upon proof thereof made, either by confession of the party, or oath of witness, or notorious evidence of the fact; the offence shall be recorded under the hands of two justices, or the chief magistrate of the place, which shall be a perfect conviction.' — Ed.

[11] As Wicliffe wrote in Latin, and his words were of great rarity, it may excite inquiry how poor Bunyan was conversant with is opinions. This is easily solved. Foxe gives a translation of Wicliffe's doctrines in his *Martyrology*, the favourite book of Bunyan. — Ed.

[12] April 23, 1661.

[13] See page 56, and note there.

[14] It is very probable that his persecutors knew the heroic spirit of this young woman, and were afraid to proceed to extremities, lest their blood-guiltiness should be known throughout the kingdom, and public execration be excited against them. Such a martyr's blood would indelibly and most foully have stained both them and their families to the latest generation. — Ed.

[15] 'Smayed,' an obsolete contraction of 'dismayed.' — Ed.

[16] Bunyan is silent upon the death of his first wife and marriage to the second; in fact he forgets his own domestic affairs in his desire to record the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul. It is not his autobiography, but his religious feelings and experience, that he records. — Ed.

[17] 'Chafed,' excited, inflamed, angry. — Ed.

[18] This is a beautiful specimen of real Christian feeling; nothing vindictive, although such cruel wrongs had been perpetrated against her beloved

husband. — Ed.

[19] Nothing daunted by the cruel Statute which was then in force, Bunyan acted exactly as Peter and John did under similar circumstances, “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). If I suffer death for it, I am bound to speak the warning words of truth, “Touch not the unclean thing.” — Ed.