Robert J. McKelvey

Histories that Mansoul and Her Wars Anatomize

The Drama of Redemption in John Bunyan's Holy War

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

ISBN Print: 978-3-525-56939-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-647-56939-0

Reformed Historical Theology

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in co-operation with
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Volume 15

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Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.d-nb.de abrufbar.

ISBN 978-3-525-56939-9
ISBN 978-3-647-56939-0 (E-Book)

Druck und Bindung: Hubert & Co, Göttingen

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.

ISBN Print: 978-3-525-56939-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-647-56939-0

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Preface

This work comes as the fruit and revision of my doctoral thesis submitted in 2004. As was the case then, I have many people to thank. First, I am grateful for my dad and stepmother, Bill and Jeanne McKelvey; my stepdad and mom, Bill and the late Marjorie Argyle; and my in-laws, Cynthia and the late Donald Hoffman, who did so much for our entire family during this pursuit.

Second, regarding my thesis work and preparation for publication, I am grateful for the assistance and guidance of many: The libraries at the University of South Africa, Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, Princeton Theological Seminary, University of Pennsylvania, and Westminster Theological Seminary—most notably Miss Emily Clutcher (now Mrs. Philip Sirinides), former circulation librarian at Westminster, for the plethora of resources accessed; Dr. Mark Herzer, my mentor, and his dear wife, Martha, for great prowess as tag-team dissertation editors; Jim Wright, my colleague at John Wycliffe Theological College in cooperation with North-West University in South Africa, for shouldering many responsibilities during my doctoral work; Dr. William Barker, my first advisor, for getting me started; Dr. Jeffrey Jue, my second "first" advisor, for insightful direction in seventeenth-century historiography; The late Dr. Richard Greaves of Florida State University for overseeing a directed study on Bunyan; Dr. Carl Trueman, for his labor as my second thesis reader; Dr. Paul C.H. Lim, for a very perceptive external thesis evaluation; Dr. Mark Jones, my former student and now colleague, for invaluable editorial assistance and encouragement to publish with Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; and Dr. Herman Selderhuis, Christoph Spill and the editorial staff of V&R, for the willingness to publish this work and direct me along the way.

Finally, I am most grateful to my wife and best friend, Sharon, for her ongoing love, encouragement, and prayers. My precious children, Leanne, Laura, Joshua, John, Joseph and Lydia have also amazed me at how understanding they have remained during my time-consuming studies.

I reserve greatest thanks to God my Savior: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for his gracious redemption and covenant mercies. I stand overwhelmed by the deep, matchless, and unfathomable love he has shown to such a feeble scholar and unworthy sinner. "*Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness*." (Psa. 115:1)

Windber, PA—3 May 2011 Robert Joseph McKelvey

ISBN Print: 978-3-525-56939-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-647-56939-0

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Question of Ultimate Meaning

The publishers of *The Holy War* in 1682, Dorman Newman and Benjamin Alsop, could not have understood the significance of advertising the writer as, "John Bunyan, the Author of the Pilgrim's Progress."[1] At least in part, they inserted such an identity with the hopes that the warfaring allegory would enjoy the same success as its wayfaring counterpart. However, Mansoul has always existed in the shadow of the Celestial City. From the time of its publication, almost any author discussing *The Holy War* has felt compelled to explain why the second allegory did not enjoy the same reception as the first. Furthermore, once Thomas Macauley claimed that *The Holy War* was the greatest allegory next to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, most commentators found it necessary to express their opinion on his sentiment.[2] The disparity in esteem between the two works manifests itself in the fact that some Bunyan biographers paid very little if any attention to *The Holy War*. Still, the overshadowed composition has hardly gone without notice. Relatively few writings receive the popularity and consideration garnered by *The Holy War.*

Three hundred years after its original publication, James Forrest and Richard Greaves envisioned that the question of the allegory's "ultimate meaning" would be "the focal point of much scholarly debate in the future."[3] Bunyan scholarship fulfilled that prediction especially since the 1988 tercentenary of his death. Greaves himself contributed significantly to the ongoing deliberation on *The Holy War*, particularly in his recent *Glimpses of Glory*, the most comprehensive Bunyan biography to date.[4] Ironically, while the accuracy of the above forecast is without question, the legitimacy of even stating it has come under scrutiny. Beth Lynch disapproves of the pursuit for "ultimate meaning" mentioned by Forrest and Greaves alleging that it "signifies a certain unease about this enigmatic text; for some readers, it seems, *The Holy War* must be contained at all costs." She later con-

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[1] John Bunyan, *The Holy War, Made by Shaddai upon Diabolus. For the Regaining of the Metropolis of the World. Or, the Losing and taking Again of the Town of Mansoul. By John Bunyan, the Author of the Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Printed for Dorman Newman and Benjamin Alsop, 1682), title page.

[2] Thomas Babington Macauley, *The Miscellaneous Writings of Lord Macaulay* (London: Longman, Green, and Roberts, 1860), 230.

[3] James F. Forrest and Richard L. Greaves, *John Bunyan: A Reference Guide* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982), xvi.

[4] *GG*. See especially, chapter 10, "Holy Warfare," pp.401–38.

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cludes, "*The Holy War*, then, does not demand of its readers that they elicit from, or impose upon it an 'ultimate meaning.'"[5]

This criticism comes in part due to the claim that definitive meaning for *The Holy War* remains inaccessible in our modern context. Grant Osborne observes this dilemma for interpreting the Bible and other texts, which facilitates the conclusion of critics that "objective interpretation is impossible and the author's intended meaning is forever lost to us." Consequently, different "communities" are guiding the reader and producing the meaning, "so in actuality any passage might have multiple meanings, and each is valid for a particular reading perspective or community." While Osborne admits the reality of hindrances to procuring authorial intention, he believes that getting at the original meaning of a composition becomes not "a hopeless goal but a possible and positive and necessary one. A text invites each reader into its narrative world but demands that the person enter it upon its own terms."[6] That we approach *The Holy War* on "its own terms" necessitates respect for the work with the simultaneous effort to avoid imposing meaning upon it. Further, it requires paying serious attention to Bunyan's historical context.

Many commentators, in their zeal to set forth timeless spiritual truths from Bunyan's writings, have failed to treat him as a man of his age. This admission highlights the difficulty of accessing his original meaning, because he cannot come forward either for elucidation or correction of our ignorance or misinterpretation. This challenge becomes even greater in his allegories, because the reality signified often does not make itself readily apparent. Similarly, many who possess a passion to advance Bunyan as a child of his times end up stripping him of his theological identity. Galen Johnson addresses such "theorists of suspicion [...] who often have been guilty of removing the theological marrow of Bunyan's writings *a priori*."[7] Such critics without justification neglect the core for the context to reach tainted conclusions.

These tendencies confirm the need to treat Bunyan as both theologian and seventeenth-century artist simultaneously. Roger Sharrock observed the focus in scholarship concerning this relationship between Bunyan the "con-

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[5] Beth Lynch, "'Rather Dark to Readers in General': Some Critical Casualties of John Bunyan's Holy War (1682)," *Bunyan Studies* No. 9 (1999/2000): 33, 45. We will consider Lynch's essay at length in the next chapter.

[6] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 7, 415.

[7] Galen Johnson, "'Be Not Extream': The Limits of Theory in Reading John Bunyan," *Christianity and Literature* 49, No. 4 (Summer 2000): 448. Johnson's title comes from the conclusion of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part I, when Bunyan warned against misinterpretation and reading something into the allegory that is not present: "Take heed also, that thou be not extream, / In playing with the outside of my Dream;" *PP*, 164.

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venticle" and "Parnassus."[8] These terms originated and became commonplace in Bunyan studies through the claim of Samuel Taylor Coleridge that in spite of Bunyan's use of "strange names" in *The Pilgrim's Progress* "to force the allegoric purpose on the Reader's mind [...] his piety was baffled by his genius, and the Bunyan of Parnassus overcame the Bunyan of the conventicle."[9] In Greek mythology, Parnassus refers to the mountain in Greece sacred to Apollos and Muses and, within the discipline of literature, views the poet as one who majestically ascends Parnassus. When speaking about Bunyan of "Parnassus," one is referring to him as an artist within his particular context. Regarding Coleridge's assertion, Roger Sharrock maintained,

> What one finds are variations of stress between these two elements Parnassus and conventicle or attempts to bridge the divide. But this Romantic and Coleridgean polarity which places the unconscious naïve artist over against the rational Calvinist (the world of understanding) only dates from the cultural moment of its proclamation. An earlier critical staple of discourse in the century after Bunyan's death might be more justly taken to be the belief that his success lay in converting the Calvinistic divinity into a well-formed fiction [...] And it is this identification of the theologian and the artist, diverging from the Romantic and post-Romantic view of the baffled artist which has been revived in the major current of modern re-evaluation.[10]

The assessment of Sharrock that *The Holy War* endeavors to "convert" theology into fiction while maintaining the veracity of the former is crucial to this study. Insistent upon seeing Bunyan in his combined historical *and* religious context, Sharrock treated Parnassus and conventicle together and argued for the existence of a "territory" where permanent meaning in Bunyan may be accessed "if regard to the text and its place in history is steady."[11] While many Bunyan studies claim to provide this type of unified treatment, Johnson points out "the common failure among various critical theories to deal seriously with Bunyan's theological convictions," which prompts "'extream' readings that blemish his texts and devalue what they otherwise can teach us." "[W]ithout the Bunyan of the Conventicle," Johnson affirms, "there would be no Bunyan of Parnassus."[12] This study proceeds with this conviction in conjunction with the attempt to present a

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[8] Roger Sharrock, "Bunyan Studies Today: An Evaluation," in *BEA*, 46.

[9] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Roberta Florence Brinkley (1955; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press 1968), 475. In Greek mythology, Parnassus refers to the mountain in Greece sacred to Apollos and Muses and is related to poetry by viewing the poet as one who ascends Parnassus. When speaking about Bunyan of "Parnassus," one is referring to him as an artist within his particular context.

[10] Sharrock, "Bunyan Studies Today," 47.

[11] Sharrock, "Bunyan Studies Today," 47.

[12] Johnson, "'Be Not Extream,'" 448.

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balanced approach to text and context in the quest for ultimate meaning in the allegory.

1.2 Statement of Thesis

This study demonstrates the thesis that John Bunyan composed *The Holy War* as an allegory of warfare symbolizing the salvation history of Scripture from a Calvinistic-covenantal perspective. In a nutshell, Bunyan wrote *The Holy War* as a cosmic drama of redemption. From Genesis to Revelation, Bunyan presented a salvation history proceeding from the eternal counsel of redemption to the eschatological hope of final consummation. As we will observe, the recognition of such redemptive historical development in no way denies the theme of individual conversion so prominent in *The Holy War* yet simply limits its priority.

It follows, then, that the "Histories *That* Mansoul, *and her Wars* Anatomize" include the individual-soteric-microcosmic level or *ordo salutis* unfolding analogous to the redemptive-historical-macrocosmic level or *historia salutis*. Thus, we may properly say that these "Histories" exist on the two levels of individual conversion and corporate redemption, the former of which remains distinct from yet subservient to the latter. This structure, related to seventeenth-century Puritan typology and philosophy of history, presents itself as vital to the flow of *The Holy War*, whose chronological development culminates with the restored and forward-looking city of Mansoul.

B.B. Warfield once noted that the "schematization of the Federal theology" in the English Reformed as expressed in the Westminster Confession (1646) existed as the "architectonic principle" or governing principle of the Confession.[13] Within this seventeenth-century tradition of covenant theology, the same observation stands for Bunyan's *Holy War*. Federal theology, especially as it concerns the eternal covenant of grace, exists as the architectonic principle for his history of salvation, which progresses from creation to the millennium in anticipation of the Second Coming and consummation. This history unfolds as an uneven yet linear progression that begins as a symbol of creation and the covenant of works, in which Adam as the representative head fails and which necessitates the implementation of the already established covenant of grace. The conditions of this covenant are fulfilled by Jesus Christ, who also satisfies the demands of the covenant of works as the second Adam.

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[13] Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), 60; Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646 (Glasgow, Scotland: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1958, repr. 1995). See especially chapters 7–8.

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The theme of individual conversion so prominent in *The Holy War* finds its significance by the soul's inclusion in the drama of redemption through the covenantal scheme, which identifies that person as either in Adam or Christ. The individual, through union with Christ founded upon God's eternal election, participates in the drama by inclusion within what John Von Rohr calls the "trans-historical covenant" between God the Father and God the Son. Applying Von Rohr's study on the Puritans in general to Bunyan specifically, we attest that the covenant of grace was significant for "interpreting the historical process, for it gave an explicit Christological foundation to the covenant of grace, relating it closely to the central Christian conception of Christ's redemptive role in salvation history."[14]

Consequently, all historical and socio-political allusions embedded in *The Holy War* are absorbed within the overarching redemptive history. This scheme finds its roots in the Puritan philosophy of "universal history," which sees all events serving God's redemptive purposes within the confines of history. In this way, political commentary in the allegory is neither trivialized nor prioritized. Bunyan depicts this universal history as a cosmic war as he sets forth the enmity between the church and Antichrist, which is representative of the greater battle between Christ and Satan through the entirety of Scripture. As a pastoral guide to persecuted saints, Bunyan retrospectively rehearses the history of redemption to grant comfort. In addition, he prospectively reveals the consummation of redemption to encourage perseverance and instill eschatological hope. Accordingly, the thesis is substantiated *contextually* through Bunyan's life and writings, *historiographically* by surveying the history of *Holy War* interpretation from the date of its publication up to and including the twenty-first century, *pretextually* by an examination of the introduction to the allegory, and *textually* by a detailed analysis of the narrative itself.

We present this thesis with the recognition that many writers emphasizing the struggle for the individual soul in *The Holy War* also stress the redemptive-historical aspect of the allegory to some degree. Yet, at least for the majority of earlier studies, such treatment is limited either in scope, by ending the history with the person and work of Christ, or in emphasis, by mentioning the historical aspect almost in passing. Most recent studies extend and intensify the emphasis of the historical perspective. This scholarship has identified in *The Holy War* different historical themes such as the provincial history of Bedford, the political history of the Stuart regime from Charles I to Charles II, the history of the church, and the millennium. Many writers recognizing these themes view them as thematic rather than chronological developments, which is most often the case in those who observe the narrative-embedded politics of Bunyan. Yet, the common ap-

[14] John Von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 43–44.

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proach is to view the different outlooks almost as autonomous levels rather than seeing them as united with salvation history on a grander scale and subservient to it. Such coalescence joins these various aspects within an overarching history of redemption while maintaining their distinctions in a limited manner. For example, in *The Holy War*, Bunyan's political allusions to contemporary Bedford and England find their significance for him in the history of salvation under sovereign control. In this respect, the drama of *The Holy War* coincides with what William Haller observes about John Foxe's philosophy of history:

> All history was one. God revealed himself alike in his works and his word. The Old Testament told of Christ and the church prefigured in the patriarchs, prophets, judges, and kings of the chosen people. The New Testament told of Christ's coming and the institution of his church on earth. Revelation foreshadowed the whole course of the church up to the Reformation and on the end of time. And the record of scripture was confirmed and extended in history as recorded by men, The story of every saint was the story in brief of the church itself, the story always of the age-long war of Christ and Antichrist in which every soul was involved and in which England in particular was called by God to play a very particular part.[15]

Such a philosophy sees the unfolding of salvation history as the controlling element of all history as the building of the church of Jesus Christ takes precedence in the providential workings of God. As we will see, this Christian outlook on history in the Protestant church impacted Bunyan in general and *The Holy War* in particular.

1.3 Methodology

We will seek to validate the claim that Bunyan wrote *The Holy War* as a Scriptural history of redemption in the following manner. Chapter two contextualizes *The Holy War* according to Bunyan's life and writings, which highlight different spiritual, theological, historical, and political emphases in support of this thesis. From *Grace Abounding* we will consider Bunyan's military service, spiritual struggles, and pastoral involvement in preaching and writing as contributory factors or shaping influences for the later writing of *The Holy War.* His experience in the Civil War afforded knowledge about military strategy and weaponry essential to the allegorical imagery utilized. Through his religious exposure during the conflict, he also became familiar with the rhetoric concerning the Antichrist and the en-

[15] William Haller, "John Foxe and the Puritan Revolution," in *The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951; reprint, 1969), 217. Haller's critique on Foxe's Anglo-centrism will be discussed later.

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croaching papacy. Bunyan's own tumultuous conversion experience was translated into the ongoing ferocious battle for Mansoul as a symbol of the salvation of any soul. While a strict one-to-one correspondence does not exist, Bunyan's personal salvific struggles exhibit continuity with the narrative on a microcosmic level. From his early preaching and writing, we see that the awareness of the cosmic encounter with Satan was solidified in Bunyan's thought. He identified the devil as not only a propagator of error but also an oppressor of the truth, which thrust Bunyan into a pastoral role guiding and emboldening souls embroiled in spiritual combat. This function continued in *The Holy War* as he instructed the saints in warfare against the one he defined as the archenemy.

Bunyan's developing theology of warfare naturally led him to polemical writing against the Quakers and to the otherworldly composition of *A Few Sighs from Hell.* The two types of writing are different yet similar in the sense that they manifest key emphases for Bunyan. More than anything else, he sought to convey and defend a theology of grace, which expressed the foundational role of the person and work of Christ based upon the unchanging truth of Scripture. With such a focus, Bunyan began, continued, and ended his ministry. For example, while *A Few Sighs from Hell* reflects a class-conscious Bunyan concerned about social inequity, it also presents him as one convinced that God is no respecter of persons. In the end, he requires all men to seek their good things in the life to come. *The Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded* emerges as the most important work in this early period for the composition of *The Holy War* over twenty years later. The treatise sets forth Bunyan's covenant theology, which provides the connection between the eternal decree and the historical unfolding of it. He attests that the failed covenant of works in Adam made necessary the covenant of grace in Christ. This covenant guaranteed salvation for the elect, from Adam who first received the promise to those converted during the millennial reign of Christ. *The Holy War* manifests this framework from start to finish. Mansoul turns from its initial relationship with Shaddai to serve Diabolus. Yet, Emanuel and Shaddai had already provided for the redemption of Mansoul in an agreement representative of the eternal covenant of redemption to save the elect in Christ individually and corporately. At the appointed time, Emanuel fulfills the conditions for salvation, which leads to the recovery of Mansoul and the bestowal of a new charter. This affirmation is symbolic of the new covenant, which guarantees complete and future victory.

From the Restoration of 1660 and beyond, we will consider first Bunyan's *Relation of My Imprisonment.* This work manifests his developing identification with John Foxe's martyrs and a growing determination to fear God over man at all costs. Bunyan became solidified in his recognition that defenders of the truth suffer at the hands of Satan's servants. *The Holy* City,

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composed during Bunyan's first imprisonment, exists as his clearest teaching on the history of redemption and the millennium. The treatise also provides the best scheme for understanding the chronology of *The Holy War* from the primitive church, to the church under the captivity of Antichrist, to its gradual restoration in the millennial reign of Christ. *Israel's Hope Encouraged*, written just before *The Holy War*, provides somewhat of a prelude to the allegory with a message of hope for suffering saints and an image of history as a military drama unfolding with certain triumph in view. *Of Antichrist, and His Ruine* sets forth the rise and fall of the Antichrist by degrees, which corresponds to the gradual nature of Emanuel's withdrawal and return and Mansoul's regression and restoration. *Of Antichrist* also establishes the role of kings in the conquest of Antichrist, which exhibits Bunyan's claim to fear the Lord and honor the king.

Without evidence to question Bunyan's repudiation of violent resistance, we can safely conclude that *The Holy War* does not present a veiled insurrectionist agenda in spite of its militaristic imagery. Though he writes with spiritual violence in mind, it is also easy to see how *The Holy War* could have raised suspicions about his intent and even encouraged the type of confrontation against which he spoke. *Seasonable Counsel* assists in completing the picture of a Bunyan who did not hesitate to make politically controversial statements but whose opposition never rose above commentary for religious purposes. This conclusion is corroborated by his ethic of suffering, which advocates active, willing, and necessary endurance of affliction on the part of persecuted saints.

Chapter three involves a historiographical analysis of commentary on *The Holy War* from the time of publication to the present. This will function less as a literature review and more as an interpretative aid for a more careful analysis of the allegory. Based on the connections observed in chapter two, the interpretations of writers through the centuries can be examined for clues that either corroborate or detract from the thesis proposed here. From this history, we observe that the majority of commentators up to the twentieth century focused almost solely upon the theme of individual conversion in the allegory. This tendency prompted a general neglect of Bunyan's theological convictions, historical context, and millennial expectations. Yet the prominent emphasis on the individual-soteric level in connection with *Grace Abounding* is entirely appropriate. Around the time of the tercentenary of Bunyan's birth, analytical studies started to emerge. From the tercentenary of his death, such examination mushroomed immensely. The benefit of this work has been the contextualization of Bunyan, which resists the simple categorization so often performed in evangelical circles. The disadvantage has been the frequent imposition of non-theological agendas, which discredit his ideological intentions.

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Chapter four sets forth a pre-textual analysis of *The Holy War* through consideration of Bunyan's introduction, "To the Reader." From these verses we gain significant insight into Bunyan's goals for writing an anatomy of Scriptural history within a warfaring genre. He disdained any historiography that, in his mind, focused solely upon earthly matters and idolized human learning. His censure does not imply a repudiation of all contemporary "historiology," for *The Holy War* manifests continuity with such works as *Paradise Lost* by John Milton and *A Compleat and Compendius Church History* by Christopher Ness. Even if he never read them, they provide conclusions consonant with our suggestions for *The Holy War*. We will also see that John Foxe impacted the historical outlook of Bunyan more than any other author. Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* shaped Bunyan's thinking especially on the perceived conflict between the true and divinely sanctioned Reformation church and the false and Satan-energized Roman church, which thrived on the promotion of heresy and oppression of truth. *Acts and Monuments* also upheld for Bunyan the victorious cause of Christ and his church, which gave hope in suffering, heroes to emulate, and enemies to vilify. *The Holy War* parallels these historical foci in the conflict with Diabolus through the presentation of antagonizing Diabolonians, Doubters, and Bloodmen and the certain yet unfulfilled triumph of Emanuel with his valiant champions defending the cause of Mansoul.

Studying Bunyan's convictions on and interpretation of Scripture, we find *The Holy War* exhibiting both the quest to convey nothing but the truth of Scripture and Bunyan's sometimes-independent hermeneutical approach. Related to the precepts he desired to present, Bunyan used allegory as a Scripturally-authorized vehicle of truth by working backwards from precept to parabolic imagery. In this manner, he endeavored to make the doctrines of the Bible more penetrating to those who would receive them. Consonant with his ministerial burdens from *Grace Abounding*, we observe that Bunyan used marginalia in *The Holy War* to continually authorize the text, guide the reader, and safeguard the interpretation. At the same time, we recognize that the key in the window falls short of opening Bunyan's long and complex "similitude" to the extent that he desired.

Chapter five is textual and continues in a more detailed manner the examination of *The Holy War* already provided in the previous chapters. As we open up the narrative, the presentation of our thesis will be further clarified and validated. The allegory unfolds as an overarching history of redemption in a linear, though often unevenly so, fashion paralleled by a history of the individual soul. The construction and loss of Mansoul represents the creation and fall of the elect in the image of God and in Adam as their representative head. With this event, the history of redemption converges with that of the individual soul then respectively separates to Old Testament times and the bondage of sin under the curse of the law.

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Shaddai's pact with Emanuel symbolizes the eternal counsel of redemption, which provides the basis for both salvation history and individual participation within it.

The coming of Emanuel to redeem Mansoul represents the arrival of the quickening Spirit giving birth to the primitive church and converting the soul. This magnificent beginning fades as the glory departs from Mansoul symbolic of the medieval decline of the church and its counterpart in the backsliding believer. The regression in degrees is followed by a gradual return of glory in the embattled yet revived Mansoul representing the pre-Reformation to Reformation era.

Mansoul is restored though not without the fresh attack of the Doubters and Bloodmen, which denotes the maturing post-Reformation church in Bunyan's time, which was still assaulted by error and persecution. The blossoming victory brings untold peace to Mansoul, and the concluding speech of Emanuel marks the beginning of the millennium following the overthrow of Antichrist. In a corresponding manner, the individual soul returns in grace to a higher state of sanctification and the assurance that accompanies it. The histories of redemption and the soul face certain but not-yet-attained consummation under the exhortation to "hold fast till I come" with a view to the postmillennial Second Coming of Christ.

Chapter six provides a concluding analysis and summary of our findings. We also offer some observations from a historiographical perspective. For example, from the appropriate desire to contextualize Bunyan as a man of his times, scholarship must exercise caution not to offer conclusions that trivialize his stated convictions and thought by a preoccupation with contemporary trends of literary or historical analysis. All too easily Bunyan's thought can be viewed as a mere outgrowth of supposed economic, psychological, political, or social fixations. We also make suggestions for future Bunyan studies and offer insight on *The Holy War* based on the thesis presented.

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2. The Road to Mansoul

2.1 The Importance of Context

In order to grasp the meaning of *The Holy War*, we need to consider the paths leading to Mansoul by examining writings by John Bunyan concerning his spiritual experiences and authorial endeavors that inform our approach to the allegory. This background not only sets the stage for the warfare allegory but also enlightens our understanding of it. Writings that more clearly reveal Bunyan's theology assist in illuminating an allegory in which he expresses himself more cryptically.[1]

While all of Bunyan's writings will be considered in relation to the thesis of this study, the focus in this chapter will be upon those that impact our conclusions most significantly. For example, as an account of Bunyan's life up to 1660, *Grace Abounding* (1666) remains especially important to *The Holy War* not only in what it reveals concerning his military involvement and spiritual struggles, but also his experiences as a pastor, preacher, and writer. From Bunyan's early writings up to his Restoration imprisonment, *The Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded* (1659) provides an essential key to *The Holy War* in its presentation of Bunyan's theology of the covenants.[2] We will look at this and other works up to 1660 finding several themes that helped to lay a foundation of convictions for *The Holy War*. Then, from the turbulent period of 1660–88, we will observe that *The Holy War* emerges within the context of political backlash, ecclesiastical persecution, and eschatological anticipation. The most important compositions of this period are *A Relation of My Imprisonment* (1660–62), *The Holy City* (1665), *Israel's Hope Encouraged* (1681), *Of Antichrist, and His Ruine* (1682–83),

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[1] Such a necessity sheds light on the foundational weakness in Daniel V. Runyon's *John Bunyan's Master Story: The Holy War as Battle Allegory in Religious and Biblical Context* (Lewistown, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), which is the first monograph devoted to *The Holy War* from a historical-theological perspective. Runyon certainly refers to some of Bunyan's other writings, but he fails to glean insight from Bunyan's entire corpus in general and key works particularly in his interpretation of the allegory.

[2] The appeal to Bunyan's covenant theology and to Von Rohr's work in *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought* on the covenants has been made independently of similar observations by Michael Davies in *Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002). This assists in confirming the impact of Bunyan's covenant theology on *The Holy War*. We will discuss the findings of Davies in the next chapter.

ISBN Print: 978-3-525-56939-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-647-56939-0

and *Seasonable Counsel* (1683–84), which afford entry into Bunyan's thinking on history, spiritual warfare, the millennium, and suffering.[3]

2.2 Preparation for War amidst Abounding Grace, 1628–1660

2.2.1 Bunyan's Background

Charles I (r.1625–1649) lacked the more balanced approach of his father, James I, to accommodate religious diversity, which was manifested in the selection of William Laud (1573–1645) as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633 and the subsequent imposition of a liturgy infused with Arminian theology and Romish sacramentalism.[4] The king's religious policies prompted war with the Scots and encouraged the alienation of his own parliament, which culminated in the English Civil War. Historians have rightly questioned the validity of the Whig model reducing the Civil War to a clash between a parliament grasping for constitutional freedoms and a monarchy bent on absolutist government. Thus, most seventeenth-century studies agree that religious issues affected the commencement of war. Anthony Milton recognizes this consensus but notes that scholars remain "divided over the best way to represent and understand pre-1640 religious politics, and particularly over the question of how far these earlier conflicts can explain the tensions of 1640–42, which ended in civil war."[5] However the specifics work out, we can begin by saying with Diana Newton that the first Civil War commencing in 1642 was "a war of religion" but "not *only* a war of religion."[6]

Regarding the religious elements behind the Civil War, some scholars have revised the approach depicting the rebellion of a distinct Puritanism against a monolithic Anglicanism. Instead, many see observe a counter-revolution against the radical Arminianism espoused by Laud and his associates. For example, Nicholas Tyacke argues that the rise of English Arminianism in the 1620s threatened the Calvinistic emphasis upon a cosmic struggle climaxing in the overthrow of Antichrist. Such a theological hazard

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[3] The attached dates concern provisional composition, which are very dependent upon the scheme presented by Richard Greaves in *GG*, 637–641. Unless otherwise noted, this study will follow the composition and publication dates presented by Greaves.

[4] For discussion on Laud's transition from Calvinism to Arminianism and his resultant positions, see Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c.1590–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), xi, 70–71, 266–70.

[5] Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.

[6] Diana Newton, *Papists, Protestants, and Puritans, 1559–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 50.

ISBN Print: 978-3-525-56939-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-647-56939-0

consequently served as a catalyst to war.[7] Tyacke detects a well-established double-predestinarian Calvinism in England by this time, reacting against the religious innovations of Charles and Laud. Peter White rejects Tyacke's polarization of Calvinism and Arminianism and argues for an intermediate theology between Puritanism and Romanism. On this basis, White concludes that the real issue leading to war concerned the imbalanced liturgical imposition of the 1630s.[8]

Sean F. Hughes correctly points out that both Tyacke and White fail to account for the varieties of Calvinism in the Stuart church and have been misled by the incorrect notion of "Calvin against the Calvinists" in post-Reformation England. Further, Hughes calls attention to the associated idea that the predestinarianism of Theodore Beza, a departure from Calvin's Christocentric version, must be equated with English Calvinism. Instead, Hughes proposes that the supralapsarianism of Beza was actually a minority position.[9] While we agree with Hughes concerning not only the variants in English Calvinism but also the recognition that Calvin and the English Calvinists are not polar opposites, we also want to be careful not to dichotomize even Calvin and Beza. For example, the research of Richard A. Muller ably refutes the supposition that Beza departed from Calvin's Christocentrism in favor of a more logically coherent system.[10]

Milton agrees with Tyacke that the Arminian-Calvinist divide was a controversial factor yet questions whether disputation over the doctrines of grace can "bear the weight of historiographical argument that has come to rest upon it." The religious context was too complex to allow such turmoil based on "single-issue doctrinal divisions."[11] Instead, Milton argues that the religious conflicts of the early Stuart era resulted partially due to Laudian back peddling from both antagonism to Rome and identification with continental Protestantism. This trend resisted the tendency to identify the pope as the Antichrist, to censure the church of Rome as false, and to accept doctrinal Calvinism for the sake of wider conformity. In this manner, the Lau-

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[7] Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 247.

[8] For the debate between Tyacke and White, see: Nicholas Tyacke, "Puritanism, Arminianism, and Counter-Revolution," and Peter White, "The Via Media in the Early Stuart Church," in *Reformation to Revolution*, ed. Margo Todd, (London: Routledge, 1995), 53–70; 78–94.

[9] Sean F. Hughes, " 'The Problem of Calvinism': English theologies of predestination c.1580–1630," in *Belief and Practice in Reformation England: A Tribute to Patrick Collinson from his Students*, ed. Susan Wabuda and Caroline Litzenberger (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 230–31, 236–37.

[10] Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (1986; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 85; and "The Problem of Protestant Scholasticism – A Review and Definition," in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, ed. Willem J. van Asselt and Eef Dekker (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 46–47. Muller recognizes in Beza a strong connection between Christ and the decree except in the doctrine of assurance.

[11] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 2–3.

ISBN Print: 978-3-525-56939-9 — ISBN E-Book: 978-3-647-56939-0

dians intentionally alienated nonconformist Puritans in order to marginalize radical opinion and so secure a more dedicated allegiance to the refashioning of the English church. Accordingly, Laudians distanced themselves from the moderate yet anti-Romish Elizabethan-Puritan tradition represented earlier by such men as John Foxe, William Whitaker, and William Perkins. The support of Rome for Laudian maneuvers in England only agitated the anti-popish sentiment previously existent. Yet, the Laudians were not igniting a new problem but exploiting the tensions already present between conforming Calvinists and moderate Puritans. Such differences would not allow unity in the 1640s even after the forcible removal of Laudianism.[12] In summary, we must see that the complex religious divide contributing to war was both theological and liturgical.

In general, the climate at the beginning of the 1640s around the time of civil war was ripe for drastic changes in the nation of England, and as Barry Coward observes,

> [W]ithin less than a decade the power of the monarchy was first drastically reduced, and then extinguished, the king executed and the monarchy abolished, along with the other pillars of traditional society, bishops and the House of Lords. The downfall of the crown and the established Church meant the collapse of effective censorship of the press, and the emergence of radical ideas about religious toleration, political democracy, economic reform, fundamental restructuring of education and the law, and the imposition of new social values.[13]

With the monarchy abolished by the execution of Charles I in 1649, John Morrill observes that regicide, with its attendant new freedom, prompted the multiplication of many sectarian groups such as the Levellers, Diggers, Ranters, Fifth Monarchists, Muggletonians, and Quakers. We must note that many seeking liberty of expression disdained the abuse of it by some of the more radical groups such as the Fifth Monarchists. Still, as Ted L. Underwood points out, groups in the 1640s and 50s with divergent views politically and theologically flourished as many sought "a more satisfactory religious experience" in a context igniting the proliferation of such sects. That Bunyan openly joined a separatist congregation in the 1650s manifested how far toleration had extended under the Cromwellian regime.[14]

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[12] Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 529–46.

[13] Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: A History of England 1603–1714* (New York: Longman, 1980), 160.

[14] John Morrill, introduction to *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s*, ed. John Morrill (London: C&B, 1992), 8–14; T[ed].L. Underwood, introduction to *MW* 1:xvi– xvii.

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2.2.2 Bunyan as a Soldier

Within this context Bunyan's experience as a soldier contributed to the writing of *The Holy War*. While his religious attachments and convictions were substantially unformed when he entered the parliamentary army in 1644, preachers and soldiers certainly communicated the idea that they waged their warfare on behalf of the Lord. Many concluded that they were fighting a conflict beyond the battlefield with allegiance extending beyond king or parliament for stakes reaching beyond life in England. This unseen battle paralleled that for Mansoul in *The Holy War*, which represented a greater conflict on a spiritual level.

Manifesting this mindset regarding the Civil War, Charles Carlton makes it clear that both the royalist and parliamentary armies in general believed that God sided with them and that they promoted his cause. Carlton calls attention to the parliamentarian reliance on God for preservation and victory, meshing of war against the 'papists' with the battle in the Christian life against Satan, utilization of preachers for the encouragement and exhortation of troops before battle, and attribution of credit to God for victory. This does not mean that every soldier had the interests of God in mind as he fought. Discussing the number of soldiers who changed sides in the war with relative ease, Carlton maintains, "ideology counted for far less than it has for historians." In the end, "most soldiers thought of themselves not as saints in arms but laborers, worthy of whoever happened at the time to have hired them."[15] Still, as noted above, we recognize that religion was a major factor for the commencement of war. As John Morrill observes, among the parliamentarian cause there existed a "passionate belief [...] that England was in the process of being subjected to the forces of Antichrist."[16]

In the war, both the royalist and parliamentarian sides made use of prayer manuals, catechisms, and abbreviated pocket Bibles, which were readily available for soldiers. The most popular of the latter category on the parliamentary side was *The Souldier's Pocket Bible* (1643), compiled by Edmund Calamy. The full title claims the inclusion of "*most (if not all)*" Scriptural citations, which manifest for the soldier "*the qualifications of his inner man, that is a fit Souldier to fight the Lords Battels, both before the fight, in the fight, and after the fight*."[17] As the heading indicates, there existed an interweaving of the battle on and off the field and physically and spiritually.

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[15] Charles Carlton, *Going to the Wars: The Experience of the British Civil Wars, 1638–1651* (London: Routledge, 1992; reprint 1995), 62, 80, 86, 87, 127, 255, 315.

[16] John Morrill, "The Religious Context of the Civil War," in *The English Civil War*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Arnold, 1997), 172.

[17] Carlton, *Going to the Wars*, 87. Edmund Calamy, *The Souldier's Pocket Bible* (London, 1643).

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Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Reformed Historical Theology, Vol. 15

Robert J. McKelvey pays closer attention to different areas: The connection of The Holy War to Bunyan's other writings, especially those expressing his millennial convictions that then inform the presence of them in the allegory; The importance of interpretative keys for the allegory such as Bunyan's covenant theology and pneumatology; and finally, the observation that the allegory unfolds on its own apart from a more general scheme observed by others as, for example, in Northrup Frye's Great Code.

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ISBN 978-3-525-56939-9

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