

# ***Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners***

## **John Bunyan**



While *Pilgrim's Progress* is Bunyan's best known work, he wrote many others. Probably the most interesting of these is **Grace Abounding**, or to give it its full title, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, or The Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to his Poor Servant John Bunyan*, which tells the story of how he came to faith. First published in 1666, it is a cautionary tale about misreading the Bible. After reading in Hebrews 10:28 that *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin* Bunyan became convinced that he was past redemption. In fact his sins might not seem so very bad to us, ranging from things we would not regard as sins at all, such as playing ball games on a Sunday, to things we think positively praiseworthy, such as bell ringing, which was his favourite pastime. The verse, though was taken by Bunyan as meaning that there was nothing he could do to make up for these sins, and so he would be damned for all eternity, and he was haunted and tormented by these words and this prospect.

Fortunately, he eventually came to understand the true meaning of the verse: that we are **already** saved, if only we take hold of our salvation. Now that Christ has died for us, there is no *need* for any *more* sacrifices from us: his was the perfect sacrifice, **once** and **for all**. Christ has saved us, and all we need do is repent of our sins and accept his forgiveness. Such is the abounding grace of God, that **forgiveness** is **freely** available to all believers. Freed from his mistaken sense of guilt and filled with joy and the passion to spread the good news, Bunyan became a preacher, the leader of a congregation in Bedford, and an important figure in our Christian literature and history.