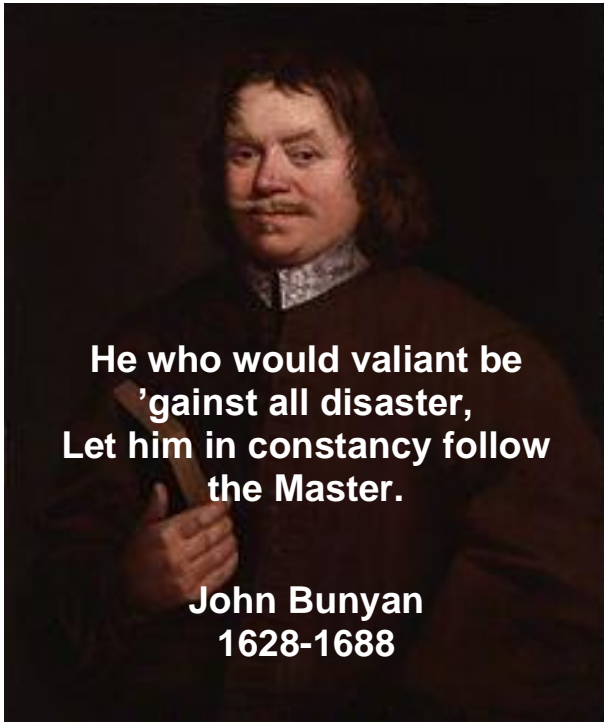


John's Hymn – “Who Would True Valour See”¹

“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” Ephesians 6:17



“At your peril be it if you meddle!” – Mr Valiant-for-Truth²

Introduction – *The Pilgrim's Progress*

This writer met John's Hymn 40 years ago and it's been special ever since. Although it's not men-only, the hymn is a call to men. **“If any man serve me, let him follow me”** the Lord says in John 12:26. John Bunyan wrote the hymn based on Jeremiah 9:2-3, where God, sadly, is compelled to rebuke **“treacherous men...they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth...saith the LORD.”** **“The truth,”** as shown, is **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”**

John Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* and John's Hymn appears in Part 2. Part 1 is about Christian who journeys from **“the city of destruction”** Isaiah 19:18 to the Celestial City of Heaven. In Part 2, Christian's widow, Christiana, her four sons and a lass named Mercy journey to the Celestial City led by Mr Great-Heart. Part 2 describes how they meet Mr Valiant-for-Truth.

Mr Valiant-for Truth

Then they went on; and just at the place where Little-Faith formerly was robbed, there stood a man with his sword drawn, and his face all over with blood. Then said Mr. Great-Heart, “Who art thou?” The man made answer, saying, “I am one whose name is Valiant-for-truth. I am a pilgrim, and am going to the Celestial City”...they took him and washed his wounds, and gave him of what they had, to refresh him: and so they went together. Mr Valiant explains what befell him. “...as I was in my way, there were three men that did beset me, and propounded unto me these three things: 1. Whether I would become one of them. 2. Or go back from whence I came. 3. Or die upon the place. To the first I answered, I had been a true man for a long season, and therefore it could not be expected that I should now cast in my lot with thieves...to the second...I told them that the place from whence I came, had I not found incommmodity there, I had not forsaken it at all...to the third...I told them my life cost far more dear than that I should lightly give it away...wherefore at your peril be it if you meddle. So we fell to it...for the space of above three hours...They are but just now gone...[they heard] your horse dash, [i. e. approach] and so they betook themselves to flight...They have left upon me, as you see, some of the marks of their valor, and have also carried

away with them some of mine.” Mr Valiant later sings John’s Hymn in its first version. So how are you **“valiant for the truth”**? You **“stand against the wiles of the Devil”** Ephesians 6:11 e.g.

“Valiant for the truth” – Against Family Unbelief

Years ago, this writer met up with an international Rugby League player, who played for Kingston Rovers. He came to know **“the gospel of Christ”** Romans 1:16 but didn’t get saved. However, his wife did, so she was **“valiant for the truth”** because she had to stand against family unbelief.

“Valiant for the truth” – Against Popular Opinion

In 1970, Pope Paul VI visited Sydney to lead a city-wide ecumenical service. The then Anglican Archbishop of Sydney was a godly man named Marcus Loane³. Marcus Loane caused a stir because he refused to attend the service. Loane was interviewed on the radio about his refusal. He answered every question the same way; *“What does the New Testament teach?”* He then no doubt used scriptures like Ephesians 5:11 **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”** Marcus Loane was therefore **“valiant for the truth”** in standing against popular opinion. Today, many folk say it’s fine for Islam to be in Britain. It isn’t and the book *Slavery, Terrorism & Islam* by long-term missionary to the Sudan, Peter Hammond, explains why. So, one way to be **“valiant for the truth”** today is that you don’t just “expose” Islam. You **“reprove”** it as **“the unfruitful works of darkness,”** even against popular opinion.

“Valiant for the truth” – Against Ungodly Authorities

John Bunyan⁴ was **“valiant for the truth”** in standing against ungodly authorities. He was gaoled for 12 years between 1660 and 1672 because he faithfully preached the scriptures. Of course, ungodly authorities pose a threat to the Gospel to this day. La Toya Harding is [was] a young lady studying at Aston University. As part of her witness, she asked the university authorities if she could use the university’s email system to send a broadcast Gospel message to all students. They said no, so she sent out personal emails, 200 a day. She reached 9,500 students with the Gospel before the university authorities forced her to stop. Nevertheless, La Toya’s efforts are an up-to-date example of being **“valiant for the truth”** by standing against ungodly authorities.

“Valiant for the truth” – Against “highminded” Education 2 Timothy 3:4

John Bunyan was **“valiant for the truth”** in standing against **“highminded”** education. This is from *John Bunyan, The Immortal Dreamer*, by W. Burgess McCreary⁵: *A university man met Bunyan on the road near Cambridge. Said he to Bunyan, “How dare you preach, not having the original Scriptures?” “Do you have them - the copies written by the apostles and prophets?” asked Bunyan. “No,” replied the scholar. “But I have what I believe to be a true copy of the original.” “And I,” said Bunyan, “believe the English Bible to be a true copy too.”* That takes some resolve!

“Valiant for the truth” – Against “perils by the heathen” 2 Corinthians 11:26

John Bunyan stood against **“perils by the heathen,”** who gaoled him. However, others **“valiant for the truth”** would do so on the mission field in the New World. There, 300 years after Bunyan, another hymn special to this writer would arise from events in Ecuador but that’s for another time.

References

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⁴ www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-bunyan.html *John Bunyan*

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