

A John Bunyan Signature

A HITHERTO unnoticed John Bunyan signature has been found by Dr. T. L. Underwood on page 58 of the copy of Thomas Grantham's *St. Paul's Catechism* (London, 1687) in the British Museum (3506.a.23). The inscription reads "John Bunyan his Book i say the same 1699." It is found at the close of the section of the catechism dealing with the Lord's Supper, which sets forth a doctrine and practice akin to that of the famous Bedford tinker. Grantham (1634-1692) was a General Baptist minister who worked with churches in Lincolnshire and Norfolk, and is probably best known for his work, *Christianismus Primitivus* (London, 1678). He differed sharply from Bunyan on such questions as predestination, free will, and the extent of the atonement, but not on the Lord's Supper.

If the date is accurate, the signature is obviously not that of the Bedford preacher. If, however, 1699 was mistakenly written instead of 1688, the possibility of another Bunyan signature is raised. The inscription would then mean that this copy of Grantham's work was Bunyan's possession, and that after reading the section on the Lord's Supper he expressed his agreement.

Miss Joyce Godber examined seven Bunyan signatures (*Bedfordshire Magazine*, VI 1957, 47-49) and concluded that two were genuine. An additional two Bunyan signatures exist in the United States in copies of the 1637 Cambridge edition of *The Whole Book of Psalmes* and *The New Testament*. (See W. E. A. Axon, *Notes and Queries*, Fifth Series, XI 1878, 106; Paul Kaufman, *Book Collector*, VIII 1959, 427-28.) A comparison of the signature in the Grantham work with these signatures indicates that it definitely is not that of Bunyan's son, though the 1699 date would favour such a possibility. The signature in the Grantham tract has certain similarities with the four known signatures of the Bedford preacher, but differs sharply in its capitals J. and B.

If the signature is not that of the Bedford preacher or his own son, two possibilities remain: (1) There was another John Bunyan in the late seventeenth century who read and took a marked interest in Baptist theology. (2) The reader of Grantham's *Catechism* was noting that Bunyan's book (presumably his *A Confession of My Faith*) agreed with Grantham, as he did with both authors. Yet this practice is very rare, making such a possibility quite unlikely. There is consequently a distinct possibility that this copy of Grantham's work was originally in Bunyan's possession, and that either he or the person who inherited it recorded the inscription. If so, one more book can be added to the meagre list of works Bunyan is known to have read.

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