



# Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan

*Michael Davies*

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## **Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan** Michael Davies

Graceful Reading offers a new way of understanding Bunyan's theology and his narrative art, examining and reassessing the complex and interdependent relationship between them. Michael Davies begins by proposing that Bunyan's theology is far from obsessed with the forbidding Calvinist doctrine of predestination and its corollary tendency towards painful introspection. Bunyan's is, rather, a comfortable doctrine, in which the believer is encouraged to accept salvation through the far more assuring terms of Bunyan's covenant theology - those of faith and grace. The book then reassesses how Bunyan's narrative style is informed by this theology. Works such as *Grace Abounding* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* reveal a profound sensitivity to narrative forms and reading practices, as they aim to inculcate in their readers a self-consciousness about reading itself which is instrumental in the very process of spiritual instruction, in seeing 'things unseen'. This is a study, therefore, which asserts a radically different way of reading of Bunyan's writings, both through the terms of seventeenth-century covenant theology, and through some distinctly 'postmodernist' ideas about narrative practice.

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