A Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People

John Bunyan and his Church

1628–1688

CHRISTOPHER HILL

"The Pilgrim's Progress"

pp. 196–230

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The years between 1678 and 1686 saw intense political crisis. The campaign to exclude the Catholic Duke of York from the succession produced majorities in the House of Commons in all three Parliaments between 1679 and 1681, and powerful support in London and the country generally. Its defeat led to a severe Tory reaction, and renewed persecution of dissenters. These years were among the most productive of Bunyan's life: apart from *Grace Abounding*, all his greatest imaginative works were published then. In part this can be explained by relaxation of the censorship during the period of the Popish Plot, and by the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1679. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, written some time before it was printed in 1678, was followed by *Mr. Badman* in 1680, intended as a sequel; *The Holy War* in 1682, Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1684. Part I was much revised and expanded for later editions published during these years. *A Book for Boys and Girls* appeared in 1686. In addition Bunyan continued to publish doctrinal works, and many treatises were left in manuscript when he died. In the midst of a busy life as preacher and pastor it is an astonishing achievement.

18. *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Take a carnal man, when he grows up in this world from a child, he is as a drop in that sea, he minglith in that sea; and which way the sea goes, he goes with it; he finds them suitable to his principles, and the world finding him suitable to them hugs him, embraces him: and thus it comes to that mighty power and prevalence, especially Satan working together with it. And men are apt to please others, to live to the lusts of men, I Pet. IV. 2; to receive honour one from another, John V. 44, and the examples of the most: for what the most do, all will do. . . . It is a hard matter, therefore, my brethren, to be converted and turned to God; it is hard for a man to come out of this world, to swim against this stream. . . . Therefore, my brethren, take it for a certain sign of an unregenerate estate, to be carried thus along with the stream, and to be moulded to the same principles the generality of the most of men are; and the generality of the most of men are civil men. It is a sign, I say, of death. THOMAS GOODWIN

O what mists, what mountains, what clouds, what darkness! . . . But faith . . . taketh stomach and courage, fighteth, and crieth, and by crying and fighting, by help from heaven, its way is made through all the oppositions that appear so mighty . . . [until] it sweetly resteth after its marvellous tossings to and fro. BUNYAN

1. *The Allegory and its Antecedents*

PART I of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was written in jail, at almost exactly the same time as Milton, imprisoned by blindness, was writing *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*. Bunyan served two prison sentences—one from 1660 to 1672, with occasional remissions, the other in 1676–7. There has been disagreement about which of these two periods saw the actual writing of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It doesn't matter much, but for what it is worth my preference would be for the earlier period. Although Bunyan claimed that the writing came to him easily and spontaneously, six months would have been a very short time in which to compose *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The allegory relates very closely to *Grace Abounding*, published in 1666. 'One Temporary in your

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1 *An Exposition of the Second Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians in Works* (Edinburgh, 1861–3), ii. 29.
2 *The Pharisee and the Publican* (1685), MW x. 183–4.
parts', who deserted the cause 'about ten years ago' is clearly a reference to the restoration, suggesting that this passage was written not later than 1672. Similarly, the description of Giant Pope as 'grown crazy and stiff in his joints' seems more applicable to the 1660s than to the late 1670s. The danger appeared on the increase to Bunyan when he published Part II in 1684 (65, JXxiii).

To account for the delay in publication there are several considerations. First, Bunyan's introductory verses show he was genuinely worried about the propriety of writing fiction on so serious a subject. Or rather, he was worried about the reactions of the godly to its publication. He must have taken many opinions before deciding to publish, and not all his co-religionists approved. Some of the many spurious continuations of The Pilgrim's Progress claimed to be rectifying its theological impropriety and lack of seriousness; though one may suspect that this was not the only reason for trying to cash in on Bunyan's fame. Secondly, Bunyan's jail sentence of 1676-7 would have made immediate publication difficult then. The brief liberty after Charles II's Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 soon ended, and a period of renewed persecution followed. Most of Bunyan's books hitherto had been printed without licence, and there were things in The Pilgrim's Progress which might displease a captious censor. But by 1678 the government was being pushed on to the defensive by Whig Exclusionists, and publication was becoming easier. Bunyan was by now in touch with leading London Independents, and—probably on the advice of John Owen—switched to Owen's publisher, Nathaniel Ponder. Ponder no doubt hoped for and expected a wide circulation for The Pilgrim's Progress, and therefore wanted it to appear respectfully licensed.

The opening of The Pilgrim's Progress is perhaps the most memorable scene in the book. The pilgrim, the man in rags with a burden on his back, runs away from the City of Destruction with his fingers in his ears, to prevent him hearing the cries of his deserted wife and children. He is started on the true path by Evangelist, the preacher, who reappears from time to time to advise and admonish. After surviving the Slough of Despond, the pilgrim is admitted to the way by the wicket-gate. He visits the House of the Interpreter, who shows him a series of moral emblems. His burden falls off at the cross, he is stripped of his rags, clothed in fresh garments, and given a roll as a sort of identity card.

Christian passes through the Valleys of Humiliation and of the Shadow of Death. Faithful joins him, and they are arrested in Vanity Fair, where Faithful is tried and executed. Hopeful, inspired by Faithful's martyrdom, joins Christian. But Christian, over-confident, leads them out of the way, and they are captured and imprisoned by Giant Despair. Escaping, they proceed to the Delectable Mountains from which shepherds show them the Celestial City. Finally they reach the River of Death, and cross it to enter the City.

In The Pilgrim's Progress, as in the contemporary Hudibras and the earlier Don Quixote, exciting action is tempered by conversation. Christian has long and improving discussions with fellow-pilgrims, with false pilgrims, and with those like Mr. Worldly Wiseman who try to persuade him to give up. Part I ends with Ignorance, who has pestered them en route, knocking confidently at the gate of the Celestial City and being led off to hell.

Part II appeared in 1684, provoked to some extent by Bunyan's indignation at a number of spurious sequels which were circulating; partly, we may suppose, in order to be able to express second thoughts—e.g. on Christian's desertion of his family. Part II
Bunyan’s Major Creative Period: 1678–1686

describes the journey of Christian’s wife, Christiana, their four sons, and a young girl, Mercy, following the same route. Their neighbours try to dissuade them, as Christian’s had done, but they persist, inspired by his memory. They are given Mr. Great-heart as guide and to do the fighting for them.

Their journey is more leisurely than Christian’s had been. They stay for a month at the Palace Beautiful, more than a month at Gaius’s inn, ‘a great while’ at Vanity Fair, now far less dangerous for pilgrims. Marriages take place, children are born. They are joined by several fellow-pilgrims—Mr. Honest, Mr. Fearing, Mr. Feeble-mind (‘true of heart though weak in graces’ (172)), Mr. Ready-to-halt, Mr. Valiant-for-the-truth, and Mr. Stand-fast. When they come to the River of Death, Christiana soon crossed, and most of the others follow. But Christiana’s boys, with their wives and children, are still on the bank when the story ends.

Part II is in some respects a more ecumenical, more tolerant book than Part I. It was, however, tolerant only of godly protestants. Bunyan’s hostility towards catholics and persecution had if anything hardened since Part I. But Part II does reflect his liberal attitude towards controversies over baptism and intercommunion. Part I deals with an individual fighting alone to save his soul, which is his and only his. Part II deals with a family, a community, on the way to the heavenly city. They are second-generation professors, who have benefited from the experience and example of the lone pioneer Christian. In 1672 Bunyan had become pastor to the Bedford congregation. Part II handles problems and solutions which he had encountered in that role. In particular it deals with the defects, the hypocrisies, of godly members of a gathered church.3

I had originally intended to treat Part II of The Pilgrim’s Progress as a separate work. It was probably written fifteen or so years after Part I. Chronologically it belongs much more with Mr. Badman and The Holy War. But the two parts are closely interlocked. Part I as we know it today has been extensively revised and added to: many of the revisions and additions relate to Part II and can hardly be discussed separately. So I have treated the two parts together, but I have tried to make it clear when I am quoting from Part II, or from an addition to Part I, and I hope the reader will keep the chronological distinction in mind. (In the Oxford University Press edition, Part II begins at p. 165.)

Allegory was traditionally a way of circumventing the censor, of speaking to an audience fit though few. Sidney had both preached and practised this, and Spenser practised it. Fulke Greville underlined its usefulness, and the Spenserian poets—Daniel, Drayton, Browne, Sylvester, Withers, Milton—continued to make use of it. Bunyan was well aware of the advantages of allegory for this purpose. The giants personify persecution, the House Beautiful the illegal separatist congregation.

Much printer’s ink has been spilt in the search for antecedents for The Pilgrim’s Progress. I refer the interested reader to John Brown, J. B. Wharey, and Harold Golder.4 I shall merely try to summarize what I take to be present opinion. The concept of life as a pilgrimage goes back far into the Middle Ages, if not further. All attempts to tie Bunyan down to a single model have failed. The idea was common property in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, as Wharey rightly emphasizes. The dream framework, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, giants who challenge wayfarers to duels: all these are traditional.5 Pilgrimage of course was rather popish, but the theme had been passed on by the radicals of Edward VI’s reign, and received a new lease of life from popular Puritan preachers in the early seventeenth century. Later it seemed particularly appropriate to the post-revolutionary sense that the utopian millenarianism of the radicals had failed. Now that the big bang had not materialized, gradualism came into fashion, wayfaring rather than warfaring.

The idea of abandoning all for Christ, including one’s own family, had especial relevance to the mobile world of vagrant soldiers and ex-soldiers of the 1640s and 1650s. Consider the following:

I was at the plough, meditating on the things of God, . . . and suddenly I heard a voice saying unto me, Get thee out from thy kindred and from thy father’s house; and I had a promise given with it. . . . Having neither taken

3 Cf. Sharrock, 74, 92, and chap. 24 below.


leaves of wife or children, nor thinking then of any journey, I was commanded to go into the West.

The promise was 'that God would be with me'. That was the beginning of the itinerant ministrations of the Quaker James Nayler. The Quaker Richard Hubberthorne also claimed to have been called from the plough, like Elisha, by the Word of the Lord. George Fox's *journal* records a solitary pilgrimage away from this world.

Thanks to Golder and Margaret Spufford, we now know something of the significance for Bunyan of chap-book romances. Like Perkins before him, Bunyan refers disparagingly to those who preferred 'a ballad, a newesbook, *George on horseback* or *Bevis of Southampton* ' to the Bible; but he seems to include some of the godly among chap-book readers. His own early readings left its mark on him. Golder suggests that he first came to the Bible after demobilization, and that he then read it through the spectacles of the romances. Like Baxter, he was initially attracted by the historical books of the Bible. Bunyan's *Exposition on Genesis*, giants, battles, and all, fits in with this interest. So does the history of Old Testament massacres shown to Christian in the Interpreter's house (54). Christiana is told that 'the name of her husband... his travels and wars... rings all over these parts of the world'. He was the model Christian-chivalric hero (248).

L. B. Wright suggested that what Spenser accomplished in the romance tradition for the courtly reader, the prose romances which Richard Johnson published in the early seventeenth century did for the plain citizen. Following up this perception, Nick Davies has pointed to analogies between Johnson's stories and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Johnson, like Bunyan, intersperses his prose with occasional verses. His heroes, like Bunyan's, are saints as well as knights. Among the conventional features of romance that Bunyan echoed are the unheeded warning; the resisted temptation to return; the useless sword; dark and dangerous valleys; the distant glimpse of a far-off city or country; the arming of the hero; his imprisonment; the castle on a height defended by lions, against whom innocence is a protection; the unwitting failure of loyalty; the magical healing of the wounded hero with leaves from a tree; the prevalence of riddles; the overriding power of destiny.

In Bunyan's poem before Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress* he tells Christiana how to respond to those who:

> love not the method of your first,
> Romance they count it, throw't away as dust.

He does not take the accusation too solemnly, but replies:

> Some love no cheese, some love no fish, and some
> Love not their friends, nor their own house and home.

Let them take it or leave it in effect Bunyan's confident retort (171-2).

In *The Pilgrim's Progress* Pope, Persecution, Despair are all giants. Apollyon, the power of sin, is a dragon: lions represent persecutors. Christ 'had been a great warrior'; men were harnessed out 'for the service of their Lord' (50, 54). There are many duels, and some unexpected chivalry, as when Mr. Great-heart allows Giant Maul to recover after felling him to the ground (245). There is not much military display and celebration. The most remarkable example of influence of the romances comes in 'Of the Spouse of Christ', in *A Book for Boys and Girls*. The church is represented as a beggar maid, cast out of doors, naked,
the day that she was born'. But a great King becomes enamoured of her:

His cheeks like flowers are, his mouth's most sweet.
As for his wealth, he is made heir of all,
and this lady becomes joint-heir with him.

Thou, of an outcast, now art made a queen...
Barefoot, but now as princes' daughters shod.13

Another source has often been seen lurking in the background, though specific links are difficult to establish—Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman*. Coulton thought that 'very probably Bunyan had read him' or at least heard tales from him, and that 'here we have the origin of Giant Despair and Doubting Castle'. Coulton quotes Langland:

'By Christ', quoth Conscience then, 'I will become a pilgrim,
And walk on, as wide as the world lasteth,
To seek Piers the Plowman, that Pride may be destroyed,...'
And then he groaned after Grace, till I 'gan awake.14

I think it very improbable that Bunyan had read Langland. But from Edward VI's reign onwards Langland—like Chaucer—had been misinterpreted as a Wycliffeite, and had been co-opted into the heretic tradition. Not only his works but others relating to Piers Plowman had been widely disseminated. One feature of the Piers Plowman inheritance was its strong bias in favour of the poor, who were far more likely to be saved than the rich—a point *Piers Plowman* had been widely disseminated. One feature of the heretic tradition. Not only his works but others relating to Piers Plowman had been widely disseminated. One feature of the Piers Plowman inheritance was its strong bias in favour of the poor, who were far more likely to be saved than the rich—a point which Latimer echoed and Foxe seemed to express, and which is central to Bunyan's thinking.15

The theme of pilgrimage became commonplace—in the Homily Against the Fear of Death, in Stephen Batman, *The Travayled Pilgrimage* (1569), G.B.'s *The Shipps of Safe-guard* (1569), Geoffrey Whitney, *Emblemes* (Leyden, 1596), William Broxup, *St. Peters Path to the Joyes of Heaven* (1598); so did the dangerous journey occurring in a dream (Humphrey Gifford, *A Posie of Gilloflowers*, 1580; Francis Thyny, *The Debate between Pride and Lowliness*).16 Hendrik Niclaes's *Terra Pacis* (Eng. trans., 1575, repr. 1649) has been seen as a source for The Pilgrim's Progress. It depicts a perilous spiritual pilgrimage from 'the wildernessed lands' to Paradise on earth. ('Fly now!' H.N. exhorts his readers.) Property was common in the Land of Peace.17

Nearer home, we find the pilgrimage theme in the greatest English Puritan, William Perkins. There is a strait and narrow gate, leading to two cities. Bunyan appears to imitate many of Perkins's tricks of style: 'Is Christ...? Then...', and of content: 'What professors shall be saved?' John Preston thought a Christian's life was 'like a walk... from place to place', from sin to salvation—or to hell. This life is the ground, Christ the way: his is the shortest and plainest, but we must expect to meet obstacles en route. John Downame compared the Christian to a pilgrim or traveller, whose life is a 'tedious and painful pilgrimage', on which 'he meeteth with few friends and many dangers'.18

William Browne in *Britannia's Pastoral*, like Perkins, shows two paths of life stretching before the sinner, and calls on the Muses to be profitable to him in his pilgrimage. Thomas Taylor in *The Pilgrims Profession* compared the life of the saint to a traveller returning home through a strange country. 'Christ himself lived in the flesh as a pilgrim', observed Fynes Morison: all our life is a pilgrimage. *Purchas bis Pilgrimes* also insisted on life as a pilgrimage: the Apostles were pilgrims.19

Later prototypes of *The Pilgrim's Progress* show that the theme was popular. Thus Sir William Denny's *The Pilgrimes Passe to the Land of the Living* (1653) declared that life 'is a long journey on

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16 *Sermons or Homilies* (1802), 78-9; *Select Poetry... of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. E. Farr, Parker Soc. (Cambridge UP, 1843), i. 205, 209-10, 218-21; ii. 398-59; Thynn, 7-10, 65-6. Thynn defended the profitability of his apparently frivolous subject-matter, rather as Bunyan did in his Prologue to *PP*.


foot. 'Though the way be rugged it is direct.' Presumption may as dangerously overthrow thee as desperation was like to undo thee. 'Wade through the slough! This thawed clay! That mires, this tires!' Samuel Pordage's Mundorum Explicatio (1661) manages to anticipate (in content though not in skill) both Milton and Bunyan, the Fall and the theme of pilgrimage.

Others come so late that they need only be mentioned. Ynavasor Powell's A Christian Pilgrimage was published in The Bird in the Cage, Chirping, when he was in prison in 1661. Powell was like Bunyan in his religious and political outlook. So was Benjamin Keach, whose Warr with the Devil (1676) was a very popular allegory. Simon Patrick is sometimes misleadingly mentioned in this context, but he had nothing in common with Bunyan. He was a Latitudinarian, and his The Parable of the Pilgrim (1664) contains little allegory and much didacticism, designed to show the superiority of the established church.

If it is difficult to pinpoint specific sources for The Pilgrim's Progress, it is easy to demonstrate that the idea of conversion as a journey was familiar in the seventeenth century. More important than any influence is the milieu in which seventeenth-century Puritans lived, the problems and tensions which they had to face in their lives. Arnold Kettle observed that 'a persecuted minority is likely to express and maintain its faith in allegorical rather than realistic terms, partly for tactical reasons, but also because its thinking will be in those terms.' And he movingly described Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation as 'a spiritual pilgrimage, conceived essentially in terms of allegory.' The pilgrims', Bradford's or Bunyan's, 'need to see themselves in terms of allegory in order to survive.'

As Sharrock emphasized, perhaps the most significant prototype of The Pilgrim's Progress is Grace Abounding. The state of desperation in which the Pilgrim finds himself at the beginning of the story (9) mirrors that of Bunyan throughout Grace Abounding. The wicket-gate had been anticipated in Bunyan's dream of his exclusion from the company of the godly in Bedford (GA, 20-1). The Slough of Despond recalls Bunyan finding himself 'as on a miry bog that shook if I did but stir' (GA, 28). Christian's fear that Mount Sinai would fall on his head recalls Bunyan's fear that the church bells or steeple might fall on him whilst watching bell-ringing (GA, 15). The blasphemies whispered to Christian by a devil in the Valley of the Shadow of Death echo those which Bunyan himself had been tempted to utter. Hopeful is as influenced as Bunyan had been by the text 'My grace is sufficient for thee' (63-4; GA, 32, 79, 65).

The 'very brisk lad' called Ignorance, and Mr Brisk in Part II (123, 226-8), remind us that Bunyan himself had been a brisk talker in matters of religion (GA, 11-14, 19, 27). Hopeful seems to have had Ranters tendencies, as at one time Bunyan did. Hopeful 'delighted much in rioting, revelling, drinking, swearing, lying, uncleanness, Sabbath-breaking and what not.' Like Bunyan, he 'could not tell how to part with mine old companions, their presence and actions were so desirable unto me.' Mr. Self-will in Part II sounds Rantersh, and perhaps Vain-confidence in Part I (137-8, 255-7, 348-9; 112, 330). Faithful suspected that Talkative had nothing else but 'notions', a usual phrase for Ranters ideas. Atheist had 'been seeking this city this twenty years', which would take him back to the Ranters epoch (84, 135, 326).

Or indeed, as Olivier Lutaud suggested, we might find the main source for The Pilgrim's Progress in the Bible—a Bible read through romantic spectacles, Exodus and the return from Babylonian Exile, pilgrimage to the Promised Land or to Zion—'the way for the wayfaring men'. 'All saints shall walk... even in one street, in one way and in one light. It is Antichrist that hath brought in all those crossings, bye-lanes and odd nooks that to this day many an honest heart doth greatly lose himself in.'

One other antecedent should be mentioned—popular dialogue and trial scenes. These were developed from Dent and Bernard by Levellers and other radical pamphleteers during the Revolution. I take one example—not as a source for The Pilgrim's Progress, but to illustrate the loosening up of prose and of ideas which had
occurred in Bunyan's youth. Richard Overton's *The Araignement of Mr. Persecution* came out in April 1645, whilst Bunyan was at Newport Pagnell. It must have been widely read and appreciated by those in the Army who were enjoying the religious liberty which Overton defended in this tract.

Bunyan had his own experience of trials, so he had nothing to learn from Overton in that respect. After 1660 the saints themselves were in the dock, whereas in the 1640s they could hope to put their enemies on trial. Overton, like Bunyan, draws on an old tradition in his use of descriptive names—Sir Symon Synod and Sir John Presbyter, who are prosecuted by Mr. Gods-vengeance of the town of Impartiality in the county of Just-judgment. Gods-vengeance has forborne for some time, persuaded by 'his kinsman Mr. Long-sufferance (an honest peaceable gentleman, unwilling his enemy should perish'), but finally he obtains a warrant from Lord Chief Justice Peace-with-all-men for the Constable, Mr. Reward-of-tyranny, to attach Persecution. The latter is then tried by the judge Lord Parliament, together with Reason, Humanity, and Conformity, Justices of the Peace, and before twenty-five jurors with appropriate names like 'Gospel', 'National-loyalty', 'Liberty-of-the-subject', and 'Innocent-blood'. We may compare 'our well-beloved uncles, Cardinals False-heart, Would-have-wit, ... and Dr. Corrupt-doctrine' in Overton's *The Last Will and Testament of Superstition* (1642).

Overton's tract recalls Dent's and Bernard's use of name-changing. Mr. Persecution had gone under the names of Spanish Inquisition, High Commission, Classical Presbytery, and now claimed to be called Present-Reformation. Overton's delightful irony frequently anticipates Bunyan. Mr. Persecution had been 'of all the universities of Christendom'. He asked for a new jury because 'my breeding, nature and course of life is not so well known unto [the jury selected] as unto divers other gentlemen.' Sir Symon on Mr. Persecution's behalf proposed a new jury, including

25 I owe this point to Bob Owens.
26 'Sir John' was the familiar contemptuous nickname for an inadequate priest of the episcopal Church of England, and so particularly offensive here, suggesting that new Presbyter was but old priest writ large. Cf. p. 131 above.

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Overton's tract drew on covenant theology, and advocates toleration for Roman Catholics and Jews as well as for Anabaptists, Independents, and antinomians. Samson, he pointed out, lived peaceably among the Philistines. The rebellion in Ireland, Overton declared flatly, was caused by intolerance, which is a mark of Antichrist. Bunyan would not have gone as far as that, and he would certainly have rejected Overton's defence of mortalism and commendation of his own treatise, Mans Mortalitie (1644).

**ii. Sweating Work**

Christian is revealed as one of the predestined elect the moment he enters the wicket-gate: those who enter by other, surreptitious, routes do not survive till the end of the journey. One of the significant paradoxes of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is that nevertheless one feels that the Pilgrim is making free choices all the time, deciding for himself. The journey itself is a matter of choice. Christian has to do a great deal of knocking at both the wicket gate and the Interpreter's House before either is opened (25, 28; cf. 188). Mr. Badman and the citizens of Mansoul appear also to be free agents. It is the paradox of all predestinarian protestantism, and no doubt of Islam and Marxism as well. If 'we may truly willing to have it [salvation]', Christian tells Pliable, 'he will bestow it upon us freely.' 'Believing and coming was all one', Christian assures Hopeful. 'They that must be saved' are 'those that accept of his salvation', Joseph informs Prudence, to her satisfaction (141, 143, 225). Repentance is always possible for the saints, and will never be rejected (118, 232). The fact that Christian is predestined to salvation, whether he knows it or not, gives him the courage to go on believing and so to face the horrors of life's pilgrimage. This point is made in Mr. Valiant-for-the-truth's song:

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit (295)

Election sets Christian apart, with his band of comrades, and enables him to distinguish between true and false pilgrims. Yet all through The Pilgrim’s Progress, throughout Bunyan’s writings, there is an emphasis on activity, *willed* activity, on the struggle to achieve sanctification. “The soul of religion is the practic part,” says Christian. “At the day of doom men shall be judged according to their fruits. It will not be said then Did you believe? but, Were you doers, or talkers only?” (79–80; cf. 82). Christian’s escape from the Slough of Despond, and his victory over Apollyon (“as God would have it”) (59) seem no less acts of his own will and courage than did Abdiel’s stand against Satan and his legions in Paradise Lost. “Often at the resting-places’, observed Mr. Great-heart, ‘some pilgrims in some things come off losers’, and Christian lost his roll, the token of his salvation (217). Bunyan hoped that this allegory ‘will make the slothful active be’ (6–7).

There is no miraculous divine intervention for the pilgrims. Evangelist advises and warns, as do the Interpreter and the ladies at his house. In Doubting Castle it is Christian himself who ultimately remembers that he has had the key of escape all the time. The burden falls off at the cross, very early in the journey. Christ is the way, the road, and is spoken of as a great warrior who defeated God’s enemies. But he himself is relatively absent from the allegory. There is little about his redemptive suffering—by contrast with Profitable Meditations of 1661, in which we are repeatedly urged to look ‘upon his side, his hands, his feet’. In this The Pilgrim’s Progress recalls Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes rather than Grace Abounding. The subject of Bunyan’s allegory is Christian, his experience, his struggles, temptations and decisions, defeats and victories: not the vicarious sacrifice on the cross which Bunyan had insisted on in A Vindication and Law and Grace, and was to stress again later. The Pilgrim’s Progress is all thoroughly this-worldly. Bunyan ‘never imagined heaven or hell without reference to the earth.’

‘Be careful then in little things’, wrote Bunyan in his posthumous Exposition on . . . Genesis. The words recall Adam’s summary of Michael’s teaching at the end of Paradise Lost:

> There was no reason why Adam should wish to subvert ‘worldly strong’, though many why Milton should. Bunyan, like Milton, was ‘deemed weak’ in restoration England.

> With Milton the word ‘stand’ is crucial. ‘Sufficient to have stood though free to fall’ applies to the rebel angels as well as to Adam and Eve. Stand fast: to stand or fall Free in thine own arbitrament it lies.

> They also serve who only stand and wait.’ I sing . . . unchanged.’

The climax of Paradise Regained comes when Satan places the Son of God on the pinnacle of the temple, and challenges him to stand there. “‘Tempt not the Lord thy God’, he said, and stood.” So too for Bunyan. In Grace Abounding he had written ‘O how happy now was every creature over I was! For they stood fast and kept their state, but I was gone and lost.’ William Sedgwick had described the New Model Army as ‘Valiant for truth’. In Part II of The Pilgrim’s Progress Mr. Stand-fast and Mr. Valiant-for-the-truth are key figures. ‘No man could ever make him face about’, Bunyan said of Valiant-for-the-truth in his prefatory verses (173). ‘He would not go back’, says Great-heart repeatedly about Mr. Fearing (249–51). Gifford’s last letter to his church concludes, ‘Stand fast: the Lord is at hand.’ Christian decides not to flee before Apollyon because his armour offered protection only against frontal attack. ‘In the description of the Christian armour’, Bunyan repeated in The House of the Forest of Lebanon (posthumous), ‘we have no provision for the back. So our men in the church in the wilderness are supposed to be more stout.’ Emanuel’s last words in The Holy War echo those of Gifford: ‘Hold fast till I come.’

> When Faithful is done to death in Vanity Fair, Hopeful takes his
place by Christian's side. In the ebullient 1640s faith in the coming millennium had fortified the morale of Parliamentary troops: a less-assured hope for the ultimate coming of the Lord strengthened the godly remnant's dogged resistance in the darker place by Christian's side.

None can make him to forsake what he has received of God', Bunyan reminded 'sufferers' in 1684: 'a commandment to hold fast'. 'Who knows', Hopeful tells Christian, 'but that God that made the world may cause that Giant Despair may die?' (115); the words were written by Bunyan after many years of incarceration in Bedford jail. Despair does not die (in Part I); but the pilgrims escape from his clutches.

iii. From this World to That Which is to Come

Running through *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a strong sense of the superiority of the poor to the rich. The traditional pilgrimage-romances which Bunyan inherited were about Everyman: *The Pilgrim's Progress* is about one of the elect. But the Pilgrim, like the whole book, is firmly set in a lower-class ambiance. The Dreamer who tells the tale is an itinerant - a tinker, perhaps - who is sleeping rough on his travels, as Quaker missionaries did. He kips down for the night in a 'den', which is normally identified with Bedford jail, but might be any cave or hovel. Part II starts with the author 'on his wonted travels', sleeping for the night in a wood and dreaming again. The judge in Vanity Fair denounces the pilgrim Faithful as a 'runagate', a vagabond, just as in *A Few Sights from Hell Dives* had described Lazarus as 'a scabbed creep-hedge'. The pilgrim is related not only to Lazarus but also to the publican in *The Pharisee and the Publican*. Christian and all his fellow-travellers are 'foot-men'. The hero of the ballad, *A Jovial Tinker* (1616):

walked about the country
With pike-staff and with budget.

The ordinariness of the participants in the dialogue of *Mr. Badman* is established by the fact that they meet out walking in the early morning. Behind *The Pilgrim's Progress* are the literal wanderings of itinerant craftsmen or beggars, as well as the spiritual pilgrimage of seekers passing through all sects.

The word 'pilgrim' is regularly used in contemporary ballads to describe roving vagabonds. The protagonist of *The Distressed Pilgrim*, dated c.1676 or earlier, wanders 'from place to place, from town to town'. 'I once had land', he tells us, but now 'I'm grown exceeding poor... Let patience work for me.' *The Contented Pilgrim*, possibly a few years earlier, declares that 'There's nothing here but care and strife with the poorer sort we see... To save our souls, let's strive for that.' Middlesex JPs in 1684 ordered all unlicensed itinerant peddlars to be taken up as vagrants. It is perhaps one-sided to speak of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as 'the epic of the itinerant'. But it originates in a society in which there had been a clamp-down on the lower-class mobility which had characterized the revolutionary decades. In Elizabeth's reign itinerant catholic priests had been denounced as runagates, vagabonds. The Settlement Act of 1662 was directed against both vagabonds and itinerant preachers.

When we first see him the Pilgrim is in rags - allegorical rags, to be sure, but they also represent his real poverty. ('You must also own religion in his rags', Christian later tells Mr. By-ends (100).) The Pilgrim is a 'labouring man', of 'base and low estate and condition'. (In 1661 Bunyan had been indicted as a labourer.) The Pilgrim had been 'driven out of his native country'; the pilgrims are 'strangers in the world' (90). Like any seventeenth-century vagabond, the Pilgrim has no property ties: he is free to leave home, his wife, and children; they are free ultimately to follow him.

'The man in rags', as G. M. Trevelyan observed, had been a familiar symbol since Wyclif. The 'great burden upon his back' was Bunyan's addition, recalling Humphrey Gifford's unemployed 'country clown', who:

went up and down
With fardell on his back.

The Pilgrim had acquired his burden by reading the Bible (17–18). In *Grace Abounding* Bunyan had 'a great burden upon my spirit', 'I

33 Tibbutt, *Minutes*, 21; Offor, iii. 526; *Advice to Sufferers*, MW x. 77–8.
34 MW i. 304.
35 *The Pepys Ballads*, ed. H. E. Rollins, i. (Harvard UP, 1929), 102–8; *Mr. B.*, Offor, iii. 595.
was a burden to myself.' Thomas Taylor had spoken of sin as a burden like an actual load on a man's back. The burden on the back was the symbol of the lowest grade of itinerant, just as the sword was the outward sign of social superiority.

The social lowliness of the Pilgrim is shown by the way he is addressed, and addresses others. Mr. Wiseman, who 'looked like a gentleman', calls him 'good fellow', and 'thous' him throughout; Christian replies with the deferential 'you' and 'Sir' (17, 21, 24). Paul Cobb had with equal condescension called Bunyan 'good-man', 'neighbour', when trying to persuade him to promise to give up preaching; Bunyan 'sirred' him while refusing. The Latitudinarian divine Edward Fowler 'thee's and 'thous' Bunyan from time to time. In *The Holy City* (1665) Bunyan addresses the 'learned reader' as 'Sir'; 'the godly reader', and even 'the captious reader', presumably from Bunyan's own class, are 'friends'. Initially Evangelist 'thous' the pilgrim, and he replies with 'you' and 'Sir'; but when Evangelist comes to warn Christian and Faithful about Vanity Fair they 'thou' each other (9–10, 86). Apollon and Giant Maul 'thou' the pilgrims (56–7, 244). Although Demas at the Hill Lucre is 'gentleman-like', Christian 'thous' him as a sign of contempt, as Great-heart was to 'thou' Giant Despair (106–7, 282), as indeed Sir Edward Coke had said to Ralegh at his trial 'Lo! I thou thee, thou traitor!'

The character Shame protests that 'but few of the mighty, rich or wise' are ever of *The Pilgrim's Progress* reader's opinion. He 'objected the base and low estate and condition of those that were chiefly the pilgrims'. Religion 'made a man grow strange to the great, . . . and made him own and respect the base'—another snide comment on the restoration. Many pilgrims were 'beggars born, and their original had been the dunghill' (72–3, 52–3; cf. 153–4). This recalls what Bunyan had written in *A Few Sights from Hell* and was to write in *The Heavenly Foot-man*. 'Give me not riches' had been the Interpreter's prayer (200). 'The ungodly who prosper in the world', said Mr. Wiseman in *Mr. Badman*, 'they increase in riches'.

Undesirable characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as later in *The Holy War*, are almost obsessively labelled as lords and ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen. In addition to Wordly Wiseman, Formalist and Hypocrisy are gentlemen; so is Giant Pope. Evangelist is one of the very few good characters described as a gentleman (a tribute to the ministry?); Mr. Sagacity, whose narrative starts off Part II, was 'an aged gentleman' (174–5). Madam Bubble, 'the Mistress of the world', is a gentlewoman (300–3), Madam Wanton 'an admirably well-bred gentlewoman' (185). In *The Holy City* (1665) the Whore of Babylon is 'this gentlewoman'; in the posthumous *Of Antichrist and his Ruin* Bunyan described Antichrist as a gentleman. Mr. By-ends had become 'a gentleman of good quality', related to Lord Turnabout, Lord Timeserver, and 'the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues', as well as married to Lady Faining's daughter. His friends Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all are all gentlemen (90–103). When Faithful is brought up for trial in Vanity Fair it is for slandering several of the nobility and 'most of the gentry of our town'. ('Sins are all lords and great ones' adds the marginal note, in case we should miss the point.) The judge is Lord Hate-good. The 'gentlemen of the jury' think Faithful a 'rogue', a 'sorry scrub'. All the witnesses against him are lords or gentlemen, and he was punished according to 'their law' (94–7). (We recall the gentry who had to be introduced into the government of Bedford after 1660, and who played a significant part in Bunyan's trial and imprisonment.)

Bunyan did not let alone for long those former Puritans and Parliamentarians who had compromised or even profited by a change of allegiance at the restoration. Pliable, 'a turn-coat', is 'not true to his profession', and is despised even by God's enemies (68). 'One Temporary', whom Faithful had known 'about ten years ago', was 'a forward man in religion then' (my italics). He dwelt 'about two miles off of Honesty, . . . next door to one Turnback.' 'He was resolved to go on pilgrimage, . . . but all of a sudden he grew acquainted with one Save-self, and then he became a stranger...

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41 *GA*, 119–14. On the other hand, when Bunyan visited 'an honest woman' at her house, and she called him 'Goodman Bunyan', this was equal talking to equal (*The Acceptable Sacrifice*, Offor, i. 701).
42 *MW* iii. 66–72.
43 'None but mean persons' were Puritans, Mary Springett testified from her own experience (M. Webb, *Penns and Penningtons of the Seventeenth Century* (1867) 13, 18).
44 Offor, iii. 664. He was quoting Ps. 73.
45 *MW* iii. 169; Offor, ii. 54. See pp. 127 above and 332 below.
Mr. By-ends, some more explicitly political passages, including an inserted in the second edition (99). By-ends and his three friends in 1660. ('The parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues' had been inhabitants of Vanity are divided about the pilgrims, as men had naught, and such by which a man could by no means please God', show that this was not too far-fetched a caricature.

The steps, Bunyan's marginal note tells us, are 'the promises of forgiveness and acceptance to life by faith in Christ' (J.6).

There is indeed much to be read between the lines of The Pilgrim's Progress about the religious politics of the age. The inhabitants of Vanity are divided about the pilgrims, as men had been about Puritans in England before the civil war. In consequence, 'they fell to some blows, among themselves, and did harm one to another'. Christian and Hopeful are 'charged as being guilty of the late hubbub that had been in the Fair' (91). Their 'disloyal notions' were very like those with which Bunyan was charged in 1660-1 (93; cf. GA, 105-31). Hopeful also alludes to the restoration when he tells Christian 'that there were many more of the men in the fair that would take their time and follow after' Faithful (98).

Faithful was alleged to have said that Vanity's 'religion was naught, and such by which a man could by no means please God', as Bunyan was charged with thinking Anglicanism 'naught' (94-6; cf. GA, 113-19). In the third edition Bunyan added, apropos of Mr. By-ends, some more explicitly political passages, including a riotous caricature of fair-weather Puritans who turned their coats in 1660. ('The parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues' had been inserted in the second edition (99)). By-ends and his three friends produce good Latitudinarian divinity to justify becoming religious in order to get 'a good wife and good customers and a good gain', making 'religion a stalking horse to get and enjoy the world' (101-4). Sharrock compared both Mr. Worldly Wiseman and Ignorance (who ended up in hell) to the Latitudinarian and future bishop Edward Fowler. Sermons recorded by Pepys and Evelyn show that this was not too far-fetched a caricature. "If you will go with us", Christian told By-ends, "you must go against wind and tide. . . . You must also own religion in his rags, as well as when in his silver slippers, and stand by him too, when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause" (100; cf. 102). That made perfectly serious demands, relevant to everyday life in restoration England: we can all think of modern analogies.

The two lions outside the Palace Beautiful, which terrify Timorous and Mistrust, are said to represent civil and religious persecution, whose object is to prevent believers associating with the true church. When Christian approaches them he finds they are chained, which Sharrock thinks refers to the period of liberty under the Commonwealth. The lions were asleep when Faithful passed (43-5, 321, 71). In Part II the way past the lions 'had of late lain much unoccupied, and was almost all grown over with grass', because the lions are now backed by Giant Grim or Bloody-man. Grim still represents, Sharrock thinks, 'the civil power which puts into effect the penal laws against nonconformists' in 'the renewed outbreak of persecution' of 1681-4. But Grim had enclosed 'the King's highway' as 'mine own ground'. He must represent the power of landed JPs (218-19, 344).

In Part I, Giant Pope was 'grown so crazy and stiff in his joints' that Christian passes him 'without much danger' (65, 334). In Part II Giant Maul is less specifically the papacy than Giant Pope: he seems to represent persecution in general. He counters the charge—often laid against the Jesuits—that he 'did use to spoil young pilgrims with sophistry' by accusing Great-heart of gathering up women and children and carrying them 'into a strange country, to the weakening of my master's kingdom' (264, 347-8). England is dividing into two nations. We recall that the Latitudinarian Mr. Worldly Wiseman had been described in Part I as an alien (23; cf. 53; Christ 'turned to flight the armies of the aliens').

In Part I the Enchanted Ground 'represented a period of peace and toleration for the faithful.' Sharrock suggested that this referred to the years when the Declaration of Indulgence of 1672 briefly allowed dissenters to meet in public (136, 336). In Part II the Slough of Despond is 'rather worse than formerly'; for 'many that pretend to be the King's labourers and say they are for mending the King's highway . . . mar instead of mending' (187). Sharrock thinks this is directed against Baptists who disagreed with Bunyan on church membership. But the labourers have been at work 'for above this sixteen hundred years'; it seems more likely that it refers to clergy of the established church who offer 'their own carnal conclusions instead of the word of life' (15-16, 341).

The spring at the foot of the Hill Difficulty of which Christian
drank was now 'dirty with the feet of some that are not desirous that pilgrims here should quench their thirst.' When Great-heart explains this, Mercy reasonably asks, 'And why so envious tro?' Great-heart prudently does not answer, leaving it to Bunyan's marginal note to explain, 'Tis difficult getting of good doctrine in erroneous times' (214-15). Offor noted a parallel passage in The Holy City (1665) which attributed the muddying of the water to 'the Romish beasts.' 46 We may suspect that Great-heart saw 'Romish beasts' in the Church of England as well as further afield.

In general there is much more alarm in Part II about papery and the dangers of persecution, in consequence of the Catholic leanings of Charles II and his brother and the menacing gestures of French foreign policy. This fear is reflected in the town of Vanity, where opinion is much more moderate than when Faithful was burnt there. 'Then the name of a professor was odious; now . . . religion is counted honourable.' 'It was not now as in former times.' But 'a monster out of the woods . . . slew many of the people of the town. It would also carry away their children, and teach them to suck its whelps.' The monster described is the Beast of Revelation, Antichrist. This may refer to persecution in general rather than exclusively to the papacy. The idea of an international crusade against the papal Antichrist, popular in the 1650s, no longer seemed relevant. In the 1680s the threat of persecution came from the Bedfordshire gentry and the Church of England.

But now protestantism is going over to the offensive. Great-heart and other 'valiant worthies' among the pilgrims wounded the monster and drove him off. He 'has not made that havoc of the people's children as formerly he hath done', and 'it is verily believed by some that this Beast will die of his wounds.' In consequence the pilgrims are held in great esteem by all but some of 'the baser sort', so blind that they do not respect those who stand up against the monster. (The reference here, Sharrock suggests, is to the preachers of the 'Morning Exercises against Popery' in 1674 and later (277-8, 350). But it may be to protestant solidarity reaffirmed during the Popish Plot. On certain issues the two nations could reunite.)

Part II, whilst welcoming unity among protestants, urged strongly the virtues of watchfulness and steadfastness. 'He that lives in such a place as [Vanity] is, that has to do with such as we have, has need of an item to caution him to take heed, every moment of the day' (275, 277). It was said of Mr. Valiant-for-the-truth that 'no man could ever make him face about'; and of Mr. Fearing, 'a man that had the root of the matter in him' (173, 249-50)—a phrase Oliver Cromwell had used—'he would not go back again, neither'. Vigilance is still necessary for pilgrims. 'They that get slips' going down the hill from the Palace Beautiful 'must look for combats' in the Valley of Humiliation' (236-7; cf. 217: dangers of resting places).

In the most helpful analysis of The Pilgrim's Progress I have read for a long time, James Turner describes Bunyan as 'a despised itinerant manual worker, excluded from landownership, exposed to the rigours of the open road as he travelled and the violence of property-owners if he deviated; yet he was a householder and artisan, descended from yeomen and small traders. . . . He dissociated himself indignantly from the homeless poor. . . . He saw place as property', something from which the landless were excluded. Giants who challenged trespassers on their property are common in Germanic folklore, Golder told us long ago. 47 But the issue had acquired a new sharpness in post-restoration England.

The giants in The Pilgrim's Progress ask, 'Why are you here on my ground?' (267). Christian, Turner continues, 'shoulders it with [his] adversary, saying "Give place to me, that I may dwell"—a text heavy with radical political implications.' 48 Apollyon 'tries to insist that Christian, having been born in his "dominions", must work for his wages.' "Your service was hard", Christian replies, "and your wages such that a man could not live on."' Apollyon counters: 'There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects by letting them emigrate to mend themselves when they were unable to live on their wages (57).

Wages were fixed by JPs, drawn from the gentry. The landlord's...
Bunyan's Major Creative Period: 1678–1686

'servants and labourers', declared a pamphlet of 1660, 'are in the nature of his vassals; his tenants indeed are free, but in the nature of subjects.' JPs had a power of summary arrest. Mr. Great-heart asserts a right of way against Giant Grim, who has blocked up the King's highway by enclosure. This confrontation 'echoes the struggles against private enclosures which raged throughout England in the sixteen-fifties.' Giant Despair's complaint, 'You have this night trespassed on me by trampling and lying on my grounds', like vagabonds, leads on to 'and therefore you must go along with me' to his dungeon. After their escape the pilgrims did not feel safe until they were off Despair's property and out of his jurisdiction on the King's highway again (218–19, 113, 118; cf. 59). The whole Giant Despair episode, Turner suggests, 'is a vivid reconstruction of a country estate as it is experienced by those excluded from it... Despair is less an abstract or existential inner state than the emotional response of the poor Christian to repression and social contempt.'

By contrast, the Pilgrim seeks 'an inheritance', hopes to 'inhabit' a 'kingdom of great plenty', where he will be provided for by the 'owner of the place', 'the Lord, the Governor of the country'. Great-heart knows 'many labouring men that have got good estates' in the Valley of Humiliation (237–8). In Emanuel's Land, on the Delectable Mountains and in Beulah, lands and their produce are 'rent-free', 'common... for all the pilgrims' (55, 119, 155, 303). In the Celestial City, it is said, pilgrims have houses of their own. Access to the orchards and vineyards of the King is free. All material needs are met, and they are in continual and easy contact with the King (176, 187). In Part II Christiana and Mercy 'have all things in common', even though Mercy is a hired servant (185). So in Bunyan's The Holy City (1665) 'plums and figs and grapes... will be open to every passenger, in common and free for all.' It is all very reminiscent of the medieval peasant's Land of Cokayne, or of Fifth-Monarchist visions of a material heaven on earth. Like the latter, it implies a sharp critical comment on contemporary landlord attacks on traditional customary rights.

49 [Anon.], The Gentry rule the nation.
50 Turner, in Newey, 99–100.
51 MW iii. 185–6; cf. A Discourse of the Building of the House of God (1688), 'rent-free'.

The Pilgrim's Progress

Turner makes a valuable further point about Bunyan's symbolism, to which I return in chapter 26. Hills, heights, represent lordship, the great and powerful, the gigantic walls built 'of purpose to keep Israel out of his possession'. 'There were giants on the earth in those days' (Genesis, 6:4) refers 'to the very dads and fathers of all that monstrous brood' of persecutors. 'By these giants and these high walls, God's children to this day are sorely distressed.' It was then a reasonable question to ask, 'Whose Delectable Mountains are these?' They could be expected to belong to an enemy. It is interesting evidence of what may be a softening in Bunyan's social attitudes that in Part II he contemplated the possibility that the spirit of grace shall spring up in some that are great and mighty, as well as in many that are poor and low (231).

The social emphases of The Pilgrim's Progress have long been recognized; but perhaps they have been insufficiently stressed in accounting for the book's popularity. Its relative neglect by the polite literary world during the century and a half after Bunyan's death is explained in part by its 'low' style, but also by its contempt for the aristocracy and gentry, expressed with remorseless regularity and lethal accuracy in all his writings, especially in The Pilgrim's Progress. Hence its popularity during the same period with the middle and lower classes, and in America; hence its influence on the early working-class movement—so long as the aristocracy and gentry seemed the main enemy. Hence perhaps something of its international appeal. 'The symbolic landscape of the landless', Turner concludes, 'remained for two centuries one of the principal possessions of the dispossessed.'

iv. Progress, Circular, Linear, and Psychological

Royalty used to go on progress round the kingdom: James I spent a night at Luton in Bedfordshire in 1605 on one of his progresses. But as government became more centralized, as revenues came in instead of having to be collected, so royal progresses became rarer. This coincided with a time when the lowest class of the population appears to have been most mobile. Was Bunyan's title, whose apt alliteration we take so entirely for granted, intended to suggest that...
his pilgrim was a king. 'Common beggars have their progresses as well as kings,' George Wither had written in his very popular *Brittanns Remembrancer* of 1628. We recall the Ranter Abiezer Coppe’s remark to the beggar whom he befriended: 'because I am a king I have done this.' More prosaically, heads of Oxbridge colleges still went on progress round their manors in Bunyan’s time, collecting rents.55

Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was ‘from this world fo that which is to come’, just as Jesus Christ walked ‘through this world, from the cradle to his cross’ on ‘his progress’.56 This use of the word in a linear sense, a journey from A to B, is rather unusual in the seventeenth century. James I and Warden Woodward went on circuit, returning to their starting-point. Spatially they made no progress at all. *OED* cites Bunyan’s title under the rubric ‘onward march, journeying, travelling, marching forwards or onwards’. The examples which it gives of ‘progress’ in this modern sense come mostly from a later period. Understanding of contemporary usage may help to explain what Stanley Fish saw as mystifying come mostly from a later period. Understanding of contemporary usage may help to explain what Stanley Fish saw as mystifying features of Bunyan’s book. The events in it are not necessarily sequential, nor is there a steady advance across country. Drawing a map of the pilgrims’ route, as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century illustrators tried to do, is as difficult and elusive as producing a time-chart for *Grace Abounding*. The pilgrims travel a long way before reaching Vanity Fair, though it turns out to be identical with the City of Destruction from which they had started; but now it is utterly alien to them. The ‘progress’ is psychological, not geographical; the landscape reflects the inner state of the pilgrims, who, though ‘strangers in the world’, ‘were going to their own country’ (90).57 Envy and Pickthanh knew Faithful, and the latter in Vanity, whilst Faithful was a stranger, speaking a different

56 GA, 37–8.

v. Satire and Vanity Fair

Literary critics these days have discovered Bunyan the satirist.58 He lived in an age of brilliant satirists — Butler, Marvell, Rochester, Dryden, following on from Overton and Walwyn and others whose pens had been liberated by the Revolution. But Bunyan’s satire is of a particular kind. It is directed almost exclusively either against the aristocracy, the gentry and the rich generally, or against hypocritical turncoats and the self-satisfied godly.

Bunyan’s success as a satirist comes from his realism. Unlike Dryden he does not pillory individuals, nor is he as savage as Butler or Rochester, or as he could be himself in theological polemic. Mr Worldly Wiseman has been compared to Edward Fowler, but I think he is rather a type composed from the characteristics of many real people whom Bunyan had encountered, so that he is recognizably individual, the personification of the social attitudes of Puritans who conformed at the restoration. Similarly Bunyan’s aristocrats, so carefully and brilliantly named, are types but also have individual characters. Many such had been introduced into the freedom of Bedford corporation after 1660.

It is the wit of the satire that most strikes the reader — Captain Pope’s scutcheon in *The Holy War* was ‘the stake, the flame and the good man in it’ (*HW*, 229), which deals simultaneous blows at popery, at all persecution, and at the aristocracy’s herculean folly. Mr By-ends, whose great-grandfather, a waterman, got his money by ‘looking one way, and rowing another’, is the perfect emblem of those former Parliamentarians and Puritans who accepted the restoration (99). Bunyan’s earlier remark that God’s own, unlike unlearned preachers.59

59 *A Few Sighs from Hell*, MW. 304.
The satire is most obvious in Vanity Fair, where all is for sale, 'as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls and precious stones and what not' (88). Part of the effect comes from the incongruous lumping together of so many incompatible things — kingdoms and lusts, whores and wives, servants and lives, souls and silver. But some of the items are worth dwelling on for a moment. They come out so fast that their individual significance is easily missed. Over all is the money power, reducing all aspects of life to the same level: the human and the political as well as the economic.

'Places', 'honours', and 'titles' are aimed at the court and its permeation by money: 'preferments' is a blow at the restored Anglican clergy, for many of whom — Fowler, for instance — conformity had brought the possibility of high and lucrative office in the church. In The Greatness of the Soul, published between Parts I and II of The Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan lists, among 'things far lower, more base, but much more easy to obtain', kingdoms, dukedoms, gold, and silver. This makes it the more likely that in 'countries' and 'kingdoms' there is an echo of the preacher who is said to have proclaimed before the face of General George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, 'some men will betray three kingdoms for filthy lucre's sake'. But Bunyan would agree with the contemptuous sentiment and would admire the courage of the preacher who dropped his handkerchief at the Duke's feet as he said it — if indeed he did say it. 'Lusts, pleasures and delights of all sorts' must also refer to the court: 'wives', 'husbands', to the economic transactions which were upper-class marriages and which perhaps were spreading down into those of good bourgeois nonconformists. The list makes points which if spelt out at greater length would have been seditious; if the censor had read more carefully he might reasonably have taken umbrage. The speed of the calculated jumble enables Bunyan to get away with it, as well as adding to the black comedy.

In the trial of Faithful in Vanity Fair the three informers, Envy, Superstition, and Pickthall, reinforce the point about the truth being on sale; and Envy is ironically made to denounce Faithful who 'doth all that he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in the general calls principles of faith and holiness.' He dared to affirm 'that Christianity and the custom of our town of Vanity were diametrically opposed and could not be reconciled.' That came near the knuckle again: Bunyan thought that Fowler preferred the wisdom of this world to Christianity. Pickthall returns to the charge of seditious: 'he hath railed on our noble Prince Beelzebub, and hath spoken contemptuously of his honourable friends', and the rest of the nobility. 'If all men were of his mind, if possible, there is not one of these noblemen should have any longer a being in this town' (93–5). Here the allegorical meaning seems to blend with a directly political sense. Faithful was punished 'according to their law' (97). This law and its courts, as Mrs Bunyan knew, would not give the pilgrims justice.

There has been some dispute as to whether Vanity Fair represents the Church of Rome or the money power. I do not see why we have to choose: Bunyan could perfectly well have intended both. ('The ware of Rome and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this fair: only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat. ... This Fair... is an ancient thing, of long standing.') From Luther onwards part of the protestant case against Rome had been its profitable trade in indulgences for sin. But 'he that will go to the [Celestial] City, and yet not go through this town, must needs go out of this world' (89). The fact that 'all order was confounded' in the Fair (as in the Valley of the Shadow of Death) would fit Bunyan's view of either Rome or the unacceptable face of capitalism (62–4, 90, 299–300). Milton in Book I of Paradise Lost has a similar linkage of popery and the money power. The fallen angels mined gold in hell, and built Pandemonium, possibly on the model of St Peter's in Rome. The simple emblem of the man with the muckrake, 'that could look no way but downwards', recalls the downwards look of Milton's Mammon.

A comparable satire on the all-pervasive corrupting influence of

60 MW ix, 236; cf. Of Antichrist and his Ruin, Offor, ii, 78: kingdoms, crowns, places, preferments, offices, put up to sale thanks to Antichristian covetousness. In Bernard's The Life of Man the character Covetousness 'propoundeth offices to sale, and so maketh the buyers to sell their duties for profit to make their monies' (160).
the money power is *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift was an early admirer of Bunyan. It is perhaps significant that *Gulliver's Travels*, like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, became a children's book. Their attacks on the money power simmering over court and country were too pointed to be taken seriously. As adults came to terms with the market economy, they let their children enjoy *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels* as fairy stories. It is perhaps significant that *Gulliver's Travels*, like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, became a children's book. Their attacks on the money power simmering over court and country were too pointed to be taken seriously. As adults came to terms with the market economy, they let their children enjoy *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels* as fairy stories. A third work from this half-century which also became a children's book was *Robinson Crusoe*—about a man walking alone, like Christian, far from the trammels of commercial society, but equipped with up-to-date tools and all the bourgeois virtues.

Already Bunyan is gunning for hypocrisy, a main target of his writings of the 1680s. Plyable, Faithful tells Christian, was 'a turncoat, he was not true to his profession'. He was despised by those he turned from and by those he turned to (68). Formalist and Hypocrisy do not enter at the wicket-gate but climb over the wall into the way (39). Men like Talkative, 'whose religion is only in word', make 'religion so stink in the nostrils of many as it doth' (85). The casuistical conversation of Mr. By-ends and his three cronies, showing that gain is godliness, first appears in the third edition (1679), the portrait of the Latitudinarian Mr. Worldly Wiseman in the second edition (1678). Sharrock conjectured that success may have given Bunyan courage to print them (p. xxxv). Or perhaps the censorship was lighter after 1678. 'O Man of God! Art thou offended?' Bunyan had asked in 'The Author's Apology for his Book'. He had reason.

If we ask what is the common factor shared by the victims of Bunyan's satire—the rich and well-born, the time-servers and the hypocritical godly—it is manifestly their lack of any sense of sin: the deficiency which had linked Ranters, Quakers, and Latitudinarians in his earlier criticisms.

**vi. Christian's Wife and Children**

Bunyan's Pilgrim is walking in the fields, thinking of the imminent destruction of his city, when he cries out, 'What shall I do?' 'What shall I do to be saved?' He does not run because he did not know which way to go, until Evangelist shows him. Then Christian began to run, putting his fingers in his ears so as not to hear the cries of his wife and children (8–9).

It is a dramatic opening. Allegorically it is very telling, based on the Biblical adjuration to leave one's family for Christ's sake. But taken literally it is horrifying. Abandoning his family to the mercies of the parish authorities was just about the most brutal act a man could commit. When Bunyan himself was imprisoned 'the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was like to meet with .. would break my heart to pieces.' The story of a predestined saint starts off with a terrible jolt. It is unpleasantly true to the life of the poor in the seventeenth century. Many men fled from a poverty in which wife and children had become burdens. When God commanded, he had to be obeyed: but the consequences for dependants remained. 'Yet, thought I, I must do it, I must do it.' The Quakers James Nayler and Richard Hubberthorne deserted their families for the Lord in precisely similar circumstances. 'Escape for thy life', the millenarian John Mason warned his disciples around 1668.

Bunyan's friends—perhaps especially his women friends—may have pointed out to him the unacceptability of this opening. He began to tinker with it from the second edition. The Pilgrim no longer simply walks out on his family. Bunyan added a passage making Christian return home and expostulate, vainly, with his wife and children; and he also introduced a long conversation between Christian and a character who speaks only in the second edition. Her name, appropriately, is Charity.

In the first edition the pilgrim was cross-examined at the Palace Beautiful only by Prudence and Piety. In the second edition Charity asks about his wife and children: 'Why did you not bring them along with you?' Christian weeps, and justifies himself at great length (8–9, 47, 50–2; cf. Brown, 249–51). Also in the second edition Evangelist reminds Christian that he that 'hates not his father and mother and wife and children, .. he cannot be my disciple' (23). When Mercy in Part II leaves her parents to go on pilgrimage, her act of Biblically authorized disobedience has none of the economic consequences that the defection of the head of a household would have. Even so, she does it with 'a very heavy heart' (206).

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64 GA, 97–9; Lindsay, *Bunyan*, 192–3; Thomas Ward and Valentine Evans, *Two Witnesses to the Midnight Cry* (1691), 10.
In the posthumously published *The Heavenly Foot-man*, often thought to have been written about the same time as *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the subject seems to have been on Bunyan's mind. When he described how 'some run from father, mother, friends and companions ... because they would not lose their souls', he omits wives. When Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, 'let what would become of her, Lot would not so much as look behind him to see her'. His heart was indeed upon his journey, and well it might. His life lay at stake, and he had lost it if he had but looked behind him. 'Thy soul is thy own soul, that is either to be saved or lost; thou shalt not lose my soul by thy laziness.' Bunyan inserted a long passage about Lot's wife in the second edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He was clearly on the defensive against readers' criticisms (108-10).

Bunyan was still nagging away at the same point in Part II. Christian 'was forced to go on his progress without them [his wife and children]' (174—my italics). Mr. Sagacity, introducing Part II, says that Christiana and her sons 'all played the fool at first, and children' (174). Mr. Sagacity, introducing Part II, says that Christiana and her sons 'all played the fool at first, and would by no means be persuaded by either the tears or entreaties of Christian' (176—7). Christiana, he adds, wondered 'whether her unbecoming behaviour towards her husband was not one cause that she saw him no more.' She recalled 'all her unkind, unnatural and ungodly carriages to her dear friend, which also clogged her conscience and did load her with guilt', remembering how she had hardened her heart against all [her husband's] entreaties and loving persuasions. '... to go with him.' At one time recalling 'how like a churl I had carried it to him' she contemplated suicide (177). Her interpretation of her guilt (vile wretch that I was) was accepted by her children and confirmed not only by Mr. Sagacity but also by a heavenly visitant who tells her that God is ready to forgive her for 'the evil thou hast formerly done to thy husband in hardening thy heart against his way'; and he invites her to go on pilgrimage (177—82, 205, 212; cf. 194).

Throughout Part II Christiana and her band are continually being reminded that Christian has preceded them on their journey. Memorial stones recall his struggles and triumphs. There have been changes in the route. The byways where Formality and Hypocrisy got lost have been blocked by posts, chains, and a ditch—though determined stragglers could still circumvent them (215). This has curious consequences for the allegory. Bunyan had told Fowler that it was not good enough to follow Christ as an example: only faith in his redeeming blood saves. Christian's example seems more acceptable: some of his victories seem to have been effective once for all. Great-heart and his shooting parties just finish off work which Christian had so well begun.

Bunyan is trying to justify himself in making Christiana grovel before the memory of her husband in the additions to Part I and in Part II. These revisions, made long after he had first told the story, suggest that he had originally failed to take account of the pilgrim as a human being. This in turn suggests a certain moral insensitivity. The opening is explicable in terms of the allegory and of the Biblical injunction to forsake father, mother, wife, and children for Christ's sake. But the realism of the story—not least of this scene—makes it difficult for us to forget Mrs. Graceless and her children as living persons. I cannot accept the view that 'only by reading the opening of Part II can we appreciate what happened at the opening of Part I.' That is to connive at Bunyan's rewriting of Part I. The revisions, and Part II, were written at least in part in order to give the husband the last word in this proxy matrimonial brawl. Part II is a modification of as well as a sequel to the original Part I.

When he published *The Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan had been married to Elizabeth for nearly twenty years. For much of this period he had been separated from her, in prison, in hiding, and in pursuit of his two vocations, as tinker and as pastor. He must have known what hardships she suffered over these years. One wonders what she thought of the opening of Part I. We know very little about her. The one scene in Bunyan's life in which she figures prominently is when she is pleading to the judges for her husband's release. Forgetting womanly modesty, she beards them in public, contradicts them several times ('it is false'), makes the most of her recent miscarriage, and finally accuses the judges of social discrimination: 'Because he is a tinker, and a poor man, therefore he is despised, and cannot have justice.' On the little evidence we
Bunyan never really recanted his view that my soul is mine and thine thine. He explained, expostulated, defended, rewrote; but his position remained hard. We may perhaps contrast him with Milton. Theologically Milton disapproved of Adam's human weakness when he—unlike Lot—decided to die with Eve rather than live without her 'in these wild woods forlorn'—the earthly Paradise without Eve. But the poetry in which Adam tells her of his decision shows that a large part of Milton's heart thought Adam was right, and not—as the narrator smugly comments—'fondly overcome with female charm'. Bunyan reveals no such agreeable weakness. Absolute devotion to any human being was, for him, sinful servitude.70