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Piety is the root of charity.

JOHN CALVIN

Their ministers, whom Wesley consulted about their convictions, were trained at Halle, which was the centre of the Lutheran movement that most affected Evangelical origins: Pietism. Philip Spener had written in 1675 the manifesto of the movement, *Pia Desideria*, urging the need for repentance, the new birth, putting faith into practice and close fellowship among true believers. His disciple August Francke created at Halle a range of institutions for embodying and propagating Spener's vision. Chief among them was the orphan house, then the biggest building in Europe, with a medical dispensary attached. It was to inspire both Wesley and Whitefield to erect their own orphan houses and Howel Harris to establish a community as centre of Christian influence at Trevecca.

DAVID W. BEBBINGTON

THE PURITAN USE OF IMAGINATION

Eifion Evans

Wouldest thou see a Truth within a Fable?
Then read my fancies, they will stick like Burs
... come hither,
And lay my Book, thy head, and Heart together.

So wrote John Bunyan in his "Apology" to *The Pilgrim's Progress* at its first appearance in 1678.¹ Time has proven him right. Few books, even of the powerful Puritan era, make as lasting an impression on head and heart as his. God's truth is conveyed effectively by Bunyan's fiction.²

TRUTH ALONGSIDE FICTION

Bunyan was certainly aware of the seeming inconsistency between "truth" and "fable." He had even sought the advice of his contemporaries about such an enterprise: "Some said, *John*, print it; others said, Not so. Some said, It might do good, others said, No."

His "Apology" also tells us what convinced him in favor of publishing: "Solidity, indeed, becomes the pen of him that writeth things Divine to men; But must I needs want solidness, because By metaphors I speak; Was not God's laws, His Gospel-Laws, in older time held forth by types, shadows and metaphors?"

Appeal is made to Old and New Testament precedent to justify his method: "The Prophets used much by Metaphors To set forth Truth; Yea, whoso considers Christ,

his Apostles too, shall plainly see, That Truths to this day in such Mantles be."

So he pitched on the book's title as *The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come delivered under the similitude of a dream*. The Scripture verse which provided him with a buttress for his enterprise was Hosea 12:10, "I have used similitudes."³

Bunyan's characters are skilfully and popularly crafted from biblical blueprints. He requires the reader to identify with them, and after making the connection, expects them to draw the proper conclusion, for edification, reproof, correction, much as Scripture itself does. From a study of non-conformist works in the later Puritan period, Professor Keeble concludes that:

the sources of edification were many, various and delightful. It was not immediately apparent to all nonconformists that imaginative literature was one of them, for the predominant end of Restoration drama, fiction and poetry was certainly not godliness. This understandably bred prejudice against them occupying the time of nonconformist writers or readers. It was, however, a prejudice nonconformist authors themselves sought to counter. Rather than reject any literary genre *per se* they distinguished between the prevailing literary temper of Restoration society and the use which might be made, and had in the Bible itself been made, of metaphor, parable, story and poetry. As Bunyan remarked: "for what are these things Ordained, but that we might by the godly use of them, attain to more of the knowledge of God, and be strengthened by his Grace to serve him better. But there is a vast difference between using of these things, and a using of them for these ends." In their apologetic prefaces and by their practice, non-conformist authors sought to persuade their readers imaginative literature might indeed serve these ends. . . . Biblical precedent not only authorizes fiction but exemplifies its capacity to grasp pointedly and movingly the facts of experi-

ence. . . . Experiential authenticity legitimized imaginative literature.⁴

"This is one of the most charming features of his allegory," says Marcus Loane. "It is all so natural and so true to life."⁵

Furthermore, Bunyan built in to his trail-blazing allegorical masterpiece, a safety device which was designed to prevent abuse and to ensure lawful application of his subject, namely, the marginal biblical references. Allegory in the text must become reality to the reader, edifying and motivating, moving him on into closer conformity with biblical ideals. Hence Bunyan's use of imagination was an effective literary tool to achieve the lawful and desirable goal of personal godliness. It was as if Bunyan could not altogether trust his storytelling: he must supervise and control its proper, unfolding impact on the reader by an ever-present Scripture gloss. Keeble draws attention to this feature in this way:

Although within his allegories Bunyan has (largely) forgone any direct address, they are governed by the same determination to instruct. He cannot be content to rely on implication and indirect narration. He is, like all nonconformist writers (including even Milton in *Paradise Lost*), intrusive, constantly watching and guiding his reader's responses. That is why he is so persistently and conscientiously present in the margins of his texts. The self-reflexive nature of Bunyan's fictions insists that they be read as a means, not an end.

In a similar work by Benjamin Keach, *The Travels of True Godliness*, first published in 1683, the allegory is more transparent because the scriptural content is incorporated into the text.⁶

The Pilgrim's Progress, the allegory of pilgrimage, first

appeared in print in 1678, and was followed in 1682 by an allegory of conflict, *The Holy War*. This later work was more subtle as well as more intricate in its story-line, and Bunyan found it necessary to be more explicit about his methodology:

lend thine ear to what I do relate,
 Touching the town of Mansoul and her state;
 How she was lost . . .
 And how against him set, that should her save; . . .
 For they are true . . .
 I myself was in the town . . .
 Let no man, then count me a fable-maker,
 Nor make my name or credit a partaker
 Of their derision; what is here in view,
 Of mine own knowledge, I dare say is true.
 I saw . . .
 I heard . . .
 I was there . . .
 Nor do thou go to work without my key
 (In mysteries men soon do lose their way):
 And also turn it right, if thou wouldst know
 My riddle, and wouldst with my heifer plough:
 It lies there in the window. . . .⁷

"The key" refers to the marginal texts, and they become "the window" through which his mysteries may be reliably seen, for the reader to profit from in his own daily struggles with sin, the world and the devil.⁸ And if Bunyan can confidently say "I was there," he expects his reader to be there in experience as well.

That safeguards were required, Bunyan readily admitted. He was part of the Reformed, Puritan tradition of eschewing the unfounded and unbridled fantasies of the unregenerate imagination. In another work, *The Greatness of the Soul*, after scanning Scripture teaching on the matter, he says no less

conclusively, "God findeth fault with the imagination as with that which lendeth to sin the first hand, and that giveth to it the first lift towards its being helped forward to act." His analysis of this faculty concludes with a statement of its powerful influence in the personality:

The imagination should and would, had it been on God's side, so have conceived of this *motion* of and to sins, as to have presented it in all its features so ugly, so ill favored and so unreasonable a thing to the Soul, that the Soul should forthwith have let down the sluice, and pulled up the draw-bridge, put a stop with greatest defiance to the *motion* now under consideration: but the *imagination* being defiled, it presently at the very first view or noise of the *motion* of sin, so acted as to forward the bringing the said motion or thought into act. So then, *the thought of sin*, or motion there-to, is first of all entertained by the *imagination* and *fancy* of the Soul, and thence conveyed to the rest of the powers of the Soul to be condemned, if the *imagination* be good; but to be helped forward to the act, if the *imagination* be evil . . . for the *imagination* is such a forceable power, that if it putteth forth itself to dress up and present a thing to the Soul, whether that thing be evil or good, the rest of the faculties cannot withstand it.⁹

It was this very power which Bunyan thought should be turned around to the purposes of edification for believers.¹⁰ The alternative to unsanctified imagination is not to deny its usefulness altogether, but to exploit its power in those whose imagination is given new life and direction by the grace of God.¹¹

IMAGINATION A DREADFUL DUNGEON

Since the imagination possessed such power, Puritan writers were careful to define its place in human experience. Predictably, they followed the Reformers in their expo-

sition. John Calvin, for example, refers to its depraved condition by nature: "The imagination of man is a dreadful dungeon; and when wee be but once plunged into it, there is no way to get out agayne; and yet there is none of us all but hee seeketh to followe the imaginations of his owne hearte."¹² In his commentary on Jeremiah 9:14 he shows how an unsanctified imagination is utterly opposed to God:

There is no less contrariety between the rule of right living and the imaginations of men, than there is between fire and water. Let us therefore know, that our life cannot be rightly formed except we renounce our own imaginations, and simply obey the voice of God: for as soon as we yield to our own imaginations, we necessarily turn aside from the right way, which God has made known to us in his Word. This contrast, then, between the law of God and the imaginations or the obduracy of men ought to be carefully noticed."¹³

One of the earlier Puritans, Richard Sibbes, characteristically develops this view in a chapter titled "Of imagination, sin of it, and remedies for it," in his work, *The Soul's Conflict*.

Amongst all the faculties of the soul, most of the disquiet and unnecessary trouble of our lives arises from the vanity and ill government of that power of the soul which we call *imagination* and *opinion*, bordering between the senses and our understanding; which is nothing else but a shallow apprehension of good or evil taken from the senses. . . . This imagination of ours is become the seat of vanity, and thereupon of vexation to us, because it apprehends a greater happiness in outward good things than there is.¹⁴

He is followed by John Owen in his work *The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded*:

It is the great character and description of the frame of men's minds in an unregenerate condition, or before the renovation of their natures, that "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil continually," Gen. vi.5. They are continually coining figments and imaginations in their hearts, stamping them into thoughts that are vain, foolish, and wicked. It follows, therefore, that "the prevalency of temptations" arise, "(1) From the previous power of *lust in the affections*. This will fill the mind with thoughts. The heart will coin imaginations in compliance therewith. . . . (2) They arise and are occasioned by renewed representations of the object of sin. And this is twofold: [1] That which is *real*, as Achan saw the wedge of gold and coveted it, Josh. vii. 21. . . . [2] *Imaginary*, when the imagination, being tainted or infected by lust, continually represents the pleasure of sin and the actings of it unto the mind; herein do men "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii.14. (3) From the suggestions of Satan, who useth all his wiles and artifices to stir up thoughts about that sin whereunto the temptation leads."

The exercise of faith can be distinguished from the evils of imagination, therefore, in this way: "*Imagination* creates its own object; *faith* finds it prepared beforehand."¹⁵

John Bunyan in his work *The Greatness of the Soul* fully agrees with this Puritan stance, when he expounds James 1:15:

Thus you see how sin is in the *motion* of it handed through the Soul; First, it comes into the Fancy or Imagination, by which it is so presented to the Soul, as to inflame it with desire to bring it into act, so from this desire the Soul proceedeth to a purpose of enjoying, and from a purpose of enjoying to *inventing* how, or by what means it had best to attempt the accomplishing of it. But further, When the Soul has thus far by its wickedness pursued the motion of sin to

bring it into action: then to the last thing, to wit, to *indeavours* to take the opportunity, which by the *invention* is judged most convenient, so to endeavours it goes, till it has finished sin, and finished, in finishing of that, its own fearful damnation.¹⁶

OUT COMES A GOD

The Puritan position had several implications. The unregenerate had no reliable guide in matters spiritual from their intellectual speculation. Listen to Matthew Poole in his commentary on Jeremiah 11:8 and 23:17:

Every one *had walked after the imaginations of his own heart*. A phrase by which sin is often expressed in holy writ, Deut. xxix.19. . . . Hence holiness is set out by the notion of *self-denying*, not pleasing ourselves, mortifying our members, &c. . . . A sinful course is very often expressed in Scripture under this notion of walking after the imaginations of our own heart. . . . None have a worse guide of their own actions in their lapsed state, before regeneration, than their own hearts.¹⁷

According to Stephen Charnock, it is this which leads to idolatry:

We cannot comprehend God; if we could, we should cease to be finite; and because we cannot comprehend him, we erect strange images of him in our fancies and affections. . . . We set that active power of imagination on work, and there comes out a god (a calf), whom we own for a notion of God. . . . There are as many carved images of God as there are minds of men, and as monstrous shapes as those corruptions into which they would transform him. Hence sprang; (1) Idolatry. Vain imaginations first set afloat and kept up this in the world; (2) Hence all superstition received its rise and growth; (3) Hence springs all presumption, the common disease of the world.¹⁸

This matter of idolatry had been a serious issue for both Reformers and Puritans. Calvin's sermon on Deuteronomy 4:15-20 is a scathing indictment of man-made images. The evil, he asserts, stemmed from

their owne imaginations. . . . men went astray or rather vanished away in their owne imaginations, and turned al things upside down, and falsified Gods trueth, whensoever they made any counterfeit of him, whether it were in the lykenesse of man or of beast . . . is it not apparant that men are worse than mad, when they wil needs take upon them to shape out Gods being, seeing that no shape can be made of their owne soules, which are nothing in comparison of him?

He pursues the same theme later, when preaching on Deuteronomy 6:20-25:

Hereby we knowe how wretched the state of the papistes is: for they be stubborn and wilfull in their own imaginations. If a man aske them of whom they hold their superstitions: they alledge their fathers, they alledge long antiquitie, they alledge the common fashion of the whole world: but in the meane while they have no certaintie that their doinges please God, or that he alloweth them, whereas in very deed the thing that God leadeth us unto is that we should be sure that we . . . hold not anything that is brought us at aladventure [random]: but that the doctrine of our faith is the pure truth.¹⁹

This attitude to man-made images became a distinctive of Puritanism, one of the issues in the affairs of the church which made them "precisians," laboring for a more thorough reformation. The visual belonged to the old economy of God's dealings with men; the emphasis of a gospel-day was to be verbal. Margaret Aston, dealing with the century from 1560, summarises their position thus:

God could not be imaged. . . . The image was ousted by the word. Visual depictions were to have no place in worship or belief; they could not teach the faith nor, given the danger of their mere presence in the churches, could they be thought of as ornaments. . . . In May 1644, an ordinance designed "the better to accomplish the blessed Reformation so happily begun," took in hand for the whole country, in addition to the clearance of the churches, the destruction of all images of the persons of the Trinity, of saint or angel, "in any open place within this kingdom." . . . Increasingly it seemed natural to equate iconoclasts with puritans.²⁰

Hence John Owen's strictures to his godly readers:

In your thoughts of Christ, be very careful that they are *conceived and directed according to the rule of the word*, lest you deceive your own souls, and give up the conduct of your affections unto vain imaginations. Spiritual notions befalling carnal minds did once, by the means of superstition, ruin the power of religion . . . men . . . gave up themselves unto many foolish inventions and imaginations, by which they thought to express their love and conformity unto him. They would have images of him . . . crucifixes. . . . They would go in pilgrimage to the place where he died and rose again. . . . They would endeavour . . . to cast their souls into raptures and ecstasies, wherein they fancied themselves in his presence . . . getting impressions of wounds on their sides, hands, and feet.²¹

A NOSE OF WAX

Another area where the imagination could cause havoc, was that of hermeneutics. Fanciful interpretations had been a hallmark of Roman Catholic commentaries. "The Church of Rome," warned William Perkins in his *Art of Prophecy*, the benchmark work on this discipline among the Puritans,

believes that passages of Scripture have four senses: the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, and the analogical. An illustration of this can be found in the way the figure of Melchizedek is understood. He offered bread and wine to Abraham (Genesis 14:18). The *literal* sense is that the king of Salem, with the food that he brought, refreshed the soldiers of Abraham, who were tired after their travel. The *allegorical* sense is that the priest offers up Christ in the mass. The *tropological* sense is that we are to give to the poor. The *anagogical* sense is that Christ who is in heaven shall be the bread of life to the faithful. This pattern of the fourfold meaning of Scripture must be rejected and destroyed. Scripture has only one sense, the literal one.²²

William Tyndale, the English Reformer had referred to this one, literal sense as "the anchor that never faileth."²³

It was true, however, that this "grammatical meaning of Scripture, as it is ever the best and truest, so it is sometimes the hardest to be found. . . ." ²⁴ But the alternative was both foolish and dangerous: "There is onely one sence of one place of Scripture: because otherwise the sence of Scripture should be not onely not cleere and certaine, but none at all: for that which doth not signifie one thing, signifieth certainly nothing."²⁵ It is Samuel Rutherford who exposes most vividly the danger of multiple interpretations:

If the Scriptures be not the judge of controversies, by *setting letter to letter, Scripture to Scripture* (understood according to the naturall, and genuine grammatical sense, which the words yield without constraint) then is the Scripture, as Scripture, and in its native sense, a nose of wax, and hath no native sense, but wee are to expect a higher, spirituall allegorick sense, than the letter can beare, and that from the Spirit. We have by this way then no certain rule of faith; the

unstable then may lawfully wrest the Scripture to their own destruction.²⁶

This was particularly relevant at a time when numerous sects, the Quakers among them, were asserting the superiority of individual, subjective inspiration over God's written Word.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Figures of speech require more specific consideration, as John Ball suggests in dealing with allegory: "Of one place of Scripture, there is but one proper and naturall sense, though sometimes things are so expressed, as that the things themselves do signifie other things, according to the Lords Ordinance, Galatians 4:22, 24, 34."²⁷ Edward Leigh has the same passage in view in his *Systeme or Body of Divinity*:

We hold there are Allegories, Anagogies and Tropologies in the Scriptures, yet these are not many and divers senses of the Scripture; but divers collections from one sense, or divers Applications and accommodations of one sense . . . (Galatians 4). The Apostle saith not that there is a double sense; but that it may be Allegorically applied, which is Historically set down. There is then but one sense of the place; part whereof consisteth in the Story, part in the Allegory: so that the whole sense is contained in them both.²⁸

They are both following Perkins:

An allegory is only a different way of expressing the same meaning. . . . The principal interpreter of Scripture is the Holy Spirit. . . . The supreme and absolute means for the interpretation is the Scripture itself. . . . There are, however, three subordinate means to help us . . . the analogy of faith,

the circumstances of the particular passage, and comparison with other passages. . . . Allegories or passages marked by literary symbolism should be expounded according to the scope or focus of the context.²⁹

Imagination must also be restrained if we are to arrive at a right understanding of parables. Two early Puritans recognize this in their works. Richard Field deals with the issue of ambiguity in the context:

All the allegories . . . parables, and Aenigmaticall speeches, which are used in Scripture, not being verified either in the intention of the speaker, or construction of the hearer, in sort as the words properly import, but as signifying things resembled by the things they properly import, doe literally signifie that, which by comparison of such things, they make us understand.³⁰

And Richard Rogers discusses the need for careful, rather than unbridled, exposition:

In parables, we know there must be no precise agreement with truth looked for in every circumstance, nor sense wrung out of every word, but the scope and substance must be looked to and regarded. By the olive therefore, vine, and fig tree, briefly, hee meaneth such of Gedeons familie, as might have been profitably employed. By the Trees seeking a king, he meaneth the Shechemites. By the bramble, *Abimelech*, good for nothing. And as the bramble, which is one of the worst shrubs in the field, ought not to be taken above any of the best trees, for any principall use, but is most fit to be burned: So neither ought *Abimelech* to have been preferred before *Gedeons* sonnes. . . .³¹

All these things presuppose a humble mindset that was

carefully controlled by the Word of God which it sought to understand.

A parable, "in the gospel sense of the term," says Matthew Poole, "signifieth a similitude, taken from the ordinary actions of men, and made use of to inform us in one or more points of spiritual doctrines." It had, he continued, "a double advantage," as an aid to memory, "we being very apt to remember stories," and also as a stimulus to the mind and the affections.³² William Greenhill, in his commentary on Ezekiel 17:1-6, adds some further uses: "To veil divine things, and keep them secret from the knowledge of profane and wicked spirits . . . To convince, and that strongly . . . 2 Sam. xii. 1-7."³³ It was these twin aims, of impression and motivation, that lay at the root of Bunyan's launching *The Pilgrim's Progress* in print. This gave him creativity as well as urgency. His literary output could not be confined to the usual Puritan mold of verbal communication.

VERBAL AND VISUAL

U. Milo Kaufmann shrewdly recognizes this in his book, *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation*. He highlights Bunyan's point of departure from his Puritan colleagues in this respect:

Why did not the Puritan put the imagination into harness and tame it by using it? The answer is implicit in the Puritan orientation towards *logos*. . . . The Puritan was not likely to meditate upon events in the life of Christ but rather upon doctrines or specific propositions of Scripture. . . . The Puritan's earnest Calvinism obliged him to regard the event as secondary to the voice, or voices, speaking in the event. . . . But a Bunyan wholly committed to *logos* would have produced a drastically truncated *Pilgrim's Progress*, if he had produced one at all.³⁴

Bunyan recognized a lawful function for sanctified imagination, working with the raw materials of Scripture-impregnated memory and an uncompromising fidelity to God's truth. Kaufmann compares his attitude with that of Perkins:

For Bunyan, who suggestively links imagination with memory, truth, stored in memory and pleasing to the imagination, is in one of its species the truth of experience reconstructed in meditation. But for Perkins memory was, properly, an adjunct to the reason, rather than to the imagination. Indeed Bunyan associates memory and imagination in a way that suggests that he often preserved experience as image rather than verbal construct, and this tendency is confirmed by the evidence of his work which, as has often been observed, was created in terms of imagery.³⁵

On this point Bunyan was closer to Augustine than most Puritans, recognizing as did the saint of Hippo, the powerful potential of the memory. Augustine speaks of

the fields and spacious palaces of my memory, where are the treasures of innumerable images, brought into it from things of all sorts perceived by the senses. . . . For those things are not transmitted into the memory, but their images only are with an admirable swiftness caught up, and stored as it were in wondrous cabinets, and thence wonderfully by the act of remembering, brought forth.³⁶

But it was Bunyan's own unswerving allegiance to the authority of Scripture, and his constant demand that his readers also commit themselves to biblical orientation of thought and practice that gave abiding significance and value to his imaginative works.

FANCY WITHIN DUE BOUNDS

At the same time, some of Bunyan's Puritan contemporaries conceded to imagination a positive aspect. Stephen Charnock acknowledges this in his "Discourse of the sinfulness and cure of thoughts," on Genesis 6:5:

It is usually taken by the Jews for that fountain of sin within us . . . But there are two places (if no more), wherein it is taken in a good sense: Isa xxvi.3, "whose mind is stayed"; and 1 Chrn. xxix.18, where David prays, that a disposition to offer willingly to the Lord might be preserved in the "imaginations of the thoughts of the heart of the people." Indeed, for the most part it is taken for the evil imaginations of the heart, as Deut. xxxi.21, Ps. ciii.14, &c.³⁷

Advice, too, was offered for the recovery of the imagination to a proper usefulness. Here is Charnock again:

For raising good thoughts, (1) Get renewed hearts. . . . A sanctified reason would both discover and shame our natural follies . . . Till the understanding be born of the Spirit, John iii.6, it will delight in, and think of, nothing but things suitable to its fleshly original; but when it is spiritual, it received new impressions, new reasonings and motions, suitable to the Holy Ghost, of whom it is born. . . . (2) Study Scripture. . . . (3) Reflect often upon the frame of your mind at your first conversion. . . . (4) Ballast your hearts with a love to God. . . . (5) Exercise faith. . . . (6) Accustom yourself to a serious meditation every morning. . . . (7) Draw spiritual inferences from occasional objects.³⁶

And Richard Sibbes has similar views:

The way to cure this malady in us is, (1) *To labour to bring these risings of our souls into the obedience of God's truth and*

Spirit, 2 Cor. x.5. . . . (2) Likewise, it is good to present real things to the soul. . . . Whatever is in the world are but shadows of things in comparison of those true realities which religion affords. . . . (3) Oppose serious consideration against vain imagination. . . . (4) It is necessary that our nature itself should be changed. . . . When the law of God by the Spirit is so written in our hearts, that the law and our hearts become agreeable one to the other, then the soul is inclined and made pliable to every good thought. . . . (5) Even when we are good, and devise good things, yet there is still some sickness of fancy remaining in the best of us, whereby we work trouble to ourselves; and therefore it is necessary we should labour to restrain and limit our fancy, and stop those waters at the beginning, Prov. vii.14, giving not the least way thereunto. If it begins to grow wanton, tame the wildness of it by fastening it to the cross of Christ. . . . If it break loose, as it will soon run riot, yet give no consent of the will to it. Though it hath defiled the memory, yet let it not defile the will. . . . (6) Especially take heed of those cursed imaginations out of which, as of mother roots, others spring forth. . . . (7) Fancy will the better be kept within its due bounds, if we consider the principal use thereof. . . . (8) It should be our wisdom, likewise, to place ourselves in the best conveniency of all outward helps, which may have a kind working on our fancy; and to take heed to the contrary.³⁹

Within such constraints, then, imagination had its uses. Few preachers could compare with the Puritans for their mastery of *the art of sermon illustration*. They did so from conviction, as Richard Rogers explains in his comment on Samson's riddle in Judges 14:14:

Samson . . . made use of the works of God, which he considered and observed. For to his great benefit he gathereth a riddle, and raised thereby a question out of the worke of God in the Lyon, which was a meane to hold much evill from among them. So it behoveth us to marke things that come to

passee daily, (which all fall out by Gods providence) and his dealing in and by them, that wee may learne wisdom there-by, and take good by them. . . . Preachers gather similies by the things they see, reade, and heare, to illustrate that which they utter in their Sermons to the people. . . ."40

Their analogies and sayings are often striking and memorable. Here is Jeremiah Burroughs:

*Those who are contented are fitted to receive mercy from the Lord. If you want a vessel to take any liquor, you must hold it still. . . . So if we . . . would have the Lord pour his mercy into us, we must have quiet, still hearts. We must not have hearts hurrying up and down in trouble, discontent and vexing, but still and quiet hearts.*⁴¹

And Thomas Manton, in his magisterial exposition of Psalm 119, setting out the child of God as "uniform in one place as well as another": "A hypocrite is best when he is taken in pieces; but a sincere man is best when he is taken all together. A Christian is always like himself."⁴² And now Thomas Brooks, of whom Charles Spurgeon said, "he scatters stars with both hands," speaking of "the properties of faith": "What oil is to the wheels, what weights are to the clock, what wings are to the bird, what sails are to the ship, that faith is to all religious duties and services, except it be winter in the soul."⁴³ Now a longer quotation, from "Silver-tongued" Henry Smith's sermon on Ecclesiastes 11:9, "The trumpet of the soul sounding to judgment":

Imagine you see a sinner going to hell, and his summoner gape at him, his acquaintance look at him, the angels shout at him, and the saints laugh at him, and the devils rail at him, and many look him in the face; and they that said they would live and die with him forsake him and leave him to

pay all the scores. Then Judas would restore his bribes. Esau would cast up his pottage. Achan would cast down his gold, and Gehazi would refuse his gifts. Nebuchadnezzar would be humbler. Balaam would be faithful, and the prodigal son would be tame. . . . The guilty conscience cannot abide this day. . . . I think if there were a general collection made through the whole world that there might be no Judgment Day, then God would be so rich that all the world would go a-begging and be as a waste wilderness.⁴⁴

And, finally, a pithy saying of John Flavel's, "Some providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backwards."⁴⁵

SPIRITUALIZE EARTHLY THINGS

The key words here are significant: "if . . . so," "imagine," and "like." Comparisons are made by drawing on natural occurrences, familiar experiences, biblical incidents, cultural usage, and so on, with a view to making abstract ideas identifiably real. By a natural extension, this practice produced an immense body of Puritan literature which spiritualized objects perceived by the senses for spiritual purposes. One of the most monumental of Puritan devotional works was Richard Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Part IV of which is "A Directory for the getting and keeping of the heart in heaven." Here Baxter has this to say:

You can open your Bibles, and read there of God and of glory; O learn to open the creatures, and to open the several passages of providence, to read of God and glory there. Certainly, by such a skilful, industrious improvement, we might have a fuller taste of Christ and heaven in every bit of bread that we eat, and in every draught of beer we drink, than most men have in the use of the sacrament.⁴⁶

They are sentiments echoed by Stephen Charnock

when dealing with the "cure of thoughts":

Glean matter of instruction to yourselves, and praise to your Maker, from everything you see; it will be a degree of restoration to a state of innocency, since this was Adam's task in paradise. Dwell not upon any created object only as a virtuoso, to gratify your rational curiosity, but as a Christian, call religion to the feast, and make a spiritual improvement. No creature can meet our eyes, but affords us lessons worthy of our thoughts, besides the general notion of the power and wisdom of the Creator. Thus may the sheep read us a lecture of patience, the dove of innocence, the ant and bee raise blushes in us for our sluggishness, and the stupid ox and dull ass correct and shame our ungrateful ignorance, Isa.i.3. And since our Saviour did set forth his own excellency in a sensible dress, the consideration of those metaphors by an acute fancy would garnish out divine truths more deliciously, and conduct us into a more inward knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel. . . . Thus may a tradesman spiritualise the matter he works upon, and make his commodities serve in wholesome meditations to his mind, and at once enrich both his soul and his coffers. . . . Such a view of spiritual truths in sensible pictures, would clear our knowledge, purify our fancies, animate our affections, encourage our graces, disgrace our vices, and both argue and shame us into duty; and thus take away all the causes of our wild wandering thoughts at once. And a frequent exercise of this method would beget and support a habit of thinking well, and weaken, if not expel, a habit of thinking ill.⁴⁷

Others, too, were enthusiastic and forthcoming in their recommendation of this use of imagination. Here is George Swinnock:

If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness in solitude, labour to spiritualise earthly things. . . . This is one of the

most excellent and enriching arts in Christianity. . . . He that hath learned this mystery is the true chemist; he leaves the dregs and lees of things, and extracts the substance and quintessence of them. . . . If thou walkest in thy garden, thou mayest turn it into an Eden by delightful meditations. Dost thou behold the flowers standing in their ranks, what a goodly show they make, thou mayest think what a lovely sight it is to see Christians continuing in those several places and stations which God hath set them. Some flowers open and shut with the sun, so doth the Christian observe the shining and withdrawing of the Sun of righteousness. . . . I may with Samson get honey and sweetness by occasional meditation, out of the carcase of every creature. The whole world is a great vast library, and every creature in it a several book, wherein he that runs may read the power, and goodness, and infinite perfections of its Maker . . . Rom. 1:21.⁴⁸

Matter for this useful exercise is to be found in both Old and New Testaments, witness William Greenhill's comments on passages from Ezekiel:

The Lord deals with his people not only by his word, but also by signs and types. . . . By the rainbow . . . circumcision, the paschal lamb, the high priest's garments, the stones in Aaron's breast, the sprinkling things with blood, did all signify and type out something to the people. . . . And so all the parables in the Old and New Testament, they utter forth the mind of God . . . and the Lord doth it, because types and figures make truth more evident and efficacious. The word affects the ear; types and figures affect the eye, and carry a greater efficacy with them than simple and plain speech. . . . The church of Christ is prefigured in Scripture, and set out, by visible things. Sometimes by the ark of Noah, as 1 Pet. iii.20; sometimes by a mountain, as Isa. ii.2; sometimes by a vineyard, and vine, Isa.v.1; Psal. lxxx.8,9; sometimes by a city, Psal. cxxii.3; Rev. xxi.2; sometimes by a ship, Luke v.3; sometimes by a candlestick, Rev. i.20; sometimes by a dove-

house, Isa. lx.8; sometimes by a garden, and by a spring, Cant. iv. 12; sometimes by a bird, Hos. xi. 11; sometimes by a flock, and a fold. Psal. lxxviii. 52; John x. 16; sometimes by a temple, 2 Cor. vi. 16. All these are visible things, and set out the visibility of the church eminently.⁴⁹

Sibbes does the same with the New Testament:

We should make our fancy serviceable to us in spiritual things. . . . And seeing God hath condescended to represent heavenly things to us under earthly terms, we should follow God's dealings herein. God represents heaven to us under the terms of a banquet, and of a kingdom, &c., Luke x. 32; our union with Christ under the term of a marriage. . . . Here is a large field for our imagination to walk in, not only without hurt, but with a great deal of spiritual gain. . . . A sanctified fancy will make every creature a ladder to heaven. . . . Whilst the soul is joined with the body, it hath not only a necessary but a holy use of imagination, and of sensible things whereupon our imagination worketh. What is the use of the sacraments but to help our souls by our senses, and our faith by imagination? As the soul receives much hurt from imagination, so it may have much good thereby. But yet it ought not to invent or devise what is good and true in religion. Here fancy must yield to faith, and faith to divine revelation. The things we believe . . . are above, not only imagination, but reason itself. . . . But after God hath revealed spiritual truths, and faith hath apprehended them, then imagination hath use while the soul is joined with the body, to color divine truths, and make lightsome what faith believes.⁵⁰

For the Puritans, divine revelation was prior to, regulative of, and productive for, a godly imagination.

Spiritualizing natural things is clearly recognised by Puritan writers as conducive to spiritual progress and

maturity. As Keeble suggests, it was a practice continued by a later generation of Puritan writers:

Nonconformists continued, as Puritans had done, to encourage observation of, and meditation on, the creation as a second revelation, and to read this "book of the creatures" as a series of metaphors, exempla and allegories. . . . "To spiritualize all outward objects and ordinances" was to restore to the natural world its vitality and beauty. It was to perceive it imaginatively.⁵¹

Works of this nature had titles like these: *The Husbandman's Companion, containing an 100 occasional meditations suitable to men of that employment*, 1677, by Edward Bury; *The Weaver's Pocket Book, or Weaving Spiritualised*, 1675, by John Collinges; *The Spiritual Chymist; or Six Decades of Divine Meditations*, 1666, by William Spurstowe; and *Trading Spiritualized*, in four parts 1694-96, by William Bagshaw.

John Flavel wrote two such books, *Husbandry Spiritualized: or, The Heavenly Use of Earthly Things*, London, 1669, and *Navigation Spiritualized: or, A New Compass for Seamen*, London, 1677. "The Epistle Dedicatory" to the first of these sets out his convictions on this kind of writing:

It hath been long since observ'd, that the world below is a Glass to discover the World above. . . . the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational creatures, have a Language; and though not by Articulate speech, yet, in a Metaphorical sense, they preach unto man the wisdom, Power, and goodness of God. . . . God hath endowed the creatures with a spiritual, as well as fleshly usefulness . . . as they bear the figures and similitudes of many sublime and heavenly mysteries. . . . Notions are more easily conveyed to the understanding, by being first cloathed in some apt Similitudes, and so repre-

sented to the sense. And therefore Jesus Christ, the great Prophet, delighted much in teaching by Parables; and the prophets were much in this way also, Hos. 12:10.

A sample from the second work will illustrate the practical nature of its teaching:

*If Sea-men lose a gale, there may they lie;
The Soul, when once becalm'd, in sin may die.*

Observation. Sea-men are very watchful to take their opportunity of Wind and Tide, and it much concerns them so to be: the neglect of a few hours, sometimes loses them their passage, and proves a great detriment to them . . . *Application.* There are also seasons and gales of Grace for our Souls; golden opportunities of Salvation afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loss and ruine of Souls.⁵²

John Downname speaks of "the large Volume of his Creatures, and the Book of holy Scriptures, in both which, there is abundant matter of meditation," and adds this qualification:

Neither must this knowledge be only in speculation and theory, but also a fruitful saving knowledge, which sanctifieth the heart, and worketh it and all other parts to an holy practice, without which, this exercise cannot be done profitably, and as it ought. . . . In this exercise we principally seek after goodness, which is the object of the will, rather than truth, which is the object of the understanding; and to be made more holy, rather than more learned. . . . Therefore . . . let us employ the most part of our time and pains, in working thereby on our wills, hearts, and affections, to more purity and holiness, which is the main end of this exercise. . . . Get these truths from thy head to thy heart.⁵³

FROM HEAD TO HEART BY MEDITATION

Meditation, for the Puritans, was a spiritual discipline second to none in its benefits. Properly ordered, it brought into operation all the faculties of the soul: mind and memory, imagination and conscience, affections and will. It drew on Scripture and experience, involved prayer as well as labor, produced godliness as well as delight. Ezekiel Culverwell extols its advantages thus:

For want of this, God's children go limping in their knowledge, and carry the fire of zeal in a flinty heart, which, unless it be hammered, will not yield a spark to warm and cheer their benumbed and frozen affections towards the worship and service of God, and the hearty embracing of his truth. . . . Meditation applieth, meditation healeth, meditation instructeth. If thou lovest wisdom and blessedness, meditate in the law of the Lord day and night, and so make use of these Meditations to quicken thee up to duty, and to sweeten thy heart in thy way to the heavenly Jerusalem.

One of the best examples of this kind in the Puritan period was written by the Bishop of Norwich, Joseph Hall, with the title *Contemplations*, and it was recommended by Baxter "for peace, and comfort, and increase of the love of God."⁵⁴

While the Puritans were not alone in producing manuals of meditation, they were distinguished by an insistence on the prior initiative of God, both through his objective Word, and in the subjective orientation of the soul.⁵⁵ A typical statement is found in Manton's sermon on Psalm 119:15:

Meditation is not to store the head with notions, but to better the heart. We meditate of God, that we may love him, and fear him; of sin, that we may abhor it; of Hell, that we may

avoid it; of Heaven that we may pursue it. . . . Use I.—To reprove those that are seldom in this work. Worldly cares, and sloth, and ease divert us: if we had a heart, we would have time and leisure. The clean beasts did chew the cud. . . . But, alas!—(1) Either men muse on trifles; all the day their minds are full of chaff and vanity. . . . (2) Or else men muse on that which is evil . . . Uncleaness . . . Revenge . . . Envy . . . Pride . . . Covetousness. . . . Use II—to press us to meditate on God's precepts.⁵⁶

This calls for labor, application and watchfulness:

Now meditation must look through, and come to the heart at the quick, and cause the truth to dive into the deep places of the soul. When the timber is hard, the workman cannot thrust the nail with the weight of the hand: no, he must *hammer* it in. Meditation is the hammering of the heart.⁵⁷

Application implies constancy and persistence, as William Bates insists when he recommends meditation as

very Advantageous: You know a Garden that is watered by sudden Showers, is more uncertain in its Fruit, than when 'tis refreshed by a constant Stream; so when our thoughts are sometimes upon good things, and then run off; when they do but take a Glance (as it were) upon holy Objects, and then run away; there is not such Fruit brought into the Soul as when our Minds by meditation do dwell upon them. The Rayes of the Sun may warm us, but they do not Inflake unless they are contracted in a burning [magnifying] Glass; so some slight thoughts of Heavenly things may warm us a little, but will never inflame the Soul, till they be fixed by close Meditation. Therefore David (who was an excellent man at this Duty) tells us his Heart was fixed, and saith the same concerning the frame of a good man. (Psalm 112:7).⁵⁸

If we are to be truly spiritually minded, Owen urges, first among other things, that a "*continual watch is to be kept in and on the soul* against the *incursions* of vain thoughts and imaginations, especially in such seasons wherein they are apt to obtain advantage."⁵⁹

Believers, then, the Puritans suggested, have a remedy for straying thoughts and evil imaginations. They are to be on guard against them, batter them into submission, and reject them out of hand. Equally, as an antidote to sluggishness in heavenly meditation, the believer is to press on within the veil that separates between acquaintance and intimacy with God. There must be a mind disciplined to dwell on God's Word and promises, affections that are stirred and encouraged to embrace heavenly objects, and a will brought into conformity with God and heaven. Above all else, true meditation is an act of faith, as Owen makes clear:

The end God designs is, to draw our hearts and affections unto himself; and unto this end he gives unto us a glorious internal light, whereby we may be able to discern the true nature of the things that we are to cleave unto with love and delight. Without this we have nothing but false images of spiritual things in our minds; not always as unto the truth or doctrine concerning them, but as unto their reality, power, and efficacy. This is one of the principal effects of faith, as it is the principal part of the renovation of our minds,—namely, to discover (reveal) in the soul and represent unto the affections things spiritual and heavenly, in their nature, beauty, and genuine excellency.⁶⁰

ANOTHER WAY OF SEEING

But what kind of representation is this? What are "things spiritual and heavenly"? Baxter answers by talking of another way of "seeing":

Alas! my Lord, it is not all the learning in the world; no, not of theology, that consisteth in the knowledge of words and methods, which I can take for the satisfactory, heavenly light. To know what thou hast written in the sacred book, is not enough to make me know my glorified Saviour, my Father, and my home. It must be a light from heaven that must show me heaven, and a light accompanied with vital heat that must turn to love and joy within me. O let me not have only dreaming knowledge of words and signs, but quickening light, to show the things which these words do signify, to my mind and heart. Surely, the faith by which we must live, must be a living faith, and must reach further than to words, how true soever. Can faith live in the dark? What is it but an effect of thine illumination? . . . Hearing of thee is not satisfactory to me; it must be the presence and operation of thy light and love, shed abroad by thy Spirit on my heart, that must quiet and content my soul. . . . Is not faith a seeing grace? It can see the invisible God, the unseen world, the new Jerusalem, the innumerable angels, and the spirits of the perfected just, if it be animated by thine influx. . . . It is not heaven on earth that I am begging for, but that I may see it from mount Nebo, and have the bunch of grapes, the pledge and the first-fruits.⁶¹

It was the exercise of this "seeing grace" of faith that Baxter urged in his *Saints Everlasting Rest*. This was the vehicle of transporting the Christian into heavenly realms to view the "rest" which remains for the people of God spoken of in Hebrews 4:9. The imagination, sanctified by grace, guided by Scripture, was transported by faith into the realm of "things above," to elevate the mind, stir the affections and satisfy the soul.

A principal use of meditation, then, was to reflect on those things which are above, the heavenly things of Christ's eternal kingdom, both in experience and in prospect. Although we view them only partially and imperfectly, the

believer's duty and privilege is still to gaze with adoration at these objects, however mysterious. Listen to John Owen as he defines the scope of the believer's meditation:

The principal notion which the Scripture gives us of the state of heavenly blessedness . . . is, that *faith shall be turned into sight, and grace into glory*. . . . What, then, is the principal present object of faith as it is evangelical, into whose room sight must succeed? Is it not *the manifestation of the glory of the infinite wisdom, grace, love, kindness, and power of God in Christ, the revelation of the eternal counsels of his will and the ways of their accomplishment, unto the eternal salvation of the church, in and by him, with the glorious exaltation of Christ himself?* Wherefore, in the full, satisfactory representation of these things unto our souls, received by sight, or a direct, immediate intuition of them, doth the glory of heaven principally consist. We behold them now darkly, as in a glass,—that is the utmost which by faith we can attain unto; in heaven they shall be openly and fully displayed.⁶²

Unquestionably, however, it was Baxter who excelled in reflection on heaven, and pressed the frontiers of imagination to their biblical limits. A quotation from *The Saints Everlasting Rest* will bear this out:

It will be . . . a singular help to the furthering of the work of faith, to call in our sense to its assistance. . . . It is very considerable, how the Holy Ghost . . . sets forth the excellencies of spiritual things in words that are borrowed from the objects of sense. . . . We make use of these phrases of the Spirit to quicken our apprehensions and affections, but not to pervert them; and use these low notions as a glass, in which we must see the things themselves, though the representation be exceeding imperfect, till we come to a perfect sight. . . . Go to then, when thou settest thyself to meditate on the joys above, think on them boldly, as Scripture hath

expressed them; bring down thy conceivings to the reach of sense. . . . I would not have thee, as the papists, draw them in pictures, nor use such ways to represent them. This, as it is a course forbidden by God, so it would but seduce and draw down thine heart; but get the liveliest picture of them in thy mind that possibly thou canst . . . till thou canst say, Methinks I see a glimpse of the glory; methinks I hear the shouts of joy and praise; methinks I stand by Abraham and David, Peter and Paul, and more of these triumphing souls; methinks I even see the Son of God appearing in the clouds. . . . Thus, take thy heart into the land of promise, show it the pleasant hills and fruitful valleys; show it the clusters of grapes which thou hast gathered; and by those convince it that it is a blessed land, flowing with better than milk and honey; enter the gates of the holy city, walk through the streets of the new Jerusalem, walk about Sion. Go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that thou mayest tell it to thy soul, Psal. xlviii. 12, 13.⁶³

Baxter was not alone in encouraging reflection on heaven. Sibbes and Rutherford are nearly his equals:

*We should much and often solace ourselves with the meditation hereof, abstracting our minds from this world; and as Gen. xiii. 17, when the Lord made a promise to Abraham of the land of Canaan, he bid him to arise and walk through the land in the length and breadth thereof, so seeing God hath promised us heaven, though we be not in actual possession, as we shall be, yet we should arise often, and walk through this land . . . that is, meditate and think of the surpassing glory and excellence of the place.*⁶⁴

Rutherford is more urgent and no less compelling: "Love heaven; let your heart be on it. Up, up, and visit the new Land and view the fair City, and the white Throne, and

the Lamb, the bride's Husband in His Bridegroom's clothes, sitting on it."⁶⁵

PUT FIRE TO WATER

If Baxter excelled in his views of heaven, others, too, produced works of creative spiritual imagination which were widely and lastingly useful. Who can compare with Samuel Rutherford for consolation? His was a personal ministry carried on by considered letter-writing, but the correspondence is incandescent with lively, imaginative counsel. Take these instances:

I fear that I adore His comforts more than Himself, and that I love the apples of life better than the tree of life . . . a greater heat to eat out a less fire, is a good remedy for some burning. When Christ draweth blood, He hath skill to cut the right vein. . . . I know that Christ is not obliged to let me see both sides of my cross, and turn it over that I may see all. My faith is richer to live upon credit, and Christ's borrowed money, than to have much on hand. . . . I know that it is our sin that we would have sanctification on the sunny side of the hill, and holiness with nothing but summer, and no crosses at all.⁶⁶

Greenhill's commentary on Ezekiel abounds with direct, homely application, combining fidelity to the text with imaginative illustration:

Some fish swim constantly against the stream. Such are true Christians, they swim against the stream, they are not led by the multitude. There are several streams, one of profaneness, another of flattery, a third of superstition, a fourth of lukewarmness and formality, a fifth of carnal policy, a sixth of self-seeking: against all these, and many others, doth the sincere Christian swim and row daily. . . . *Obs.* 4. The waters of

the sanctuary have curing and quickening virtue in them. Where they came, the waters were healed, and every thing lived. . . . People in Scripture are compared to waters, Rev. xvii.1,15; but they are unsavoury, corrupt waters, like the Dead sea, sending out noisome vapours: but when the doctrine of the gospel comes in power, with the merits of Christ, and graces of the Spirit, it purges the head from infectious errors, the conscience from dead works, the heart from vile lusts, and the life from base practices, and begets life in the dead soul. . . . *Obs.* 6. The preachers of the gospel are fishers . . . Mark 1:17. Men are the fish, and the gospel is the net; the promises are the bait, and preachers are the fishers.⁶⁷

George Swinnock applies the same gifts in his work, *The Christian Man's Calling*:

Preparation is necessary before prayer. . . . Those things which will further the duty are meditation and the stirring up of grace. . . . Meditation fits the soul for supplication; meditation fills the soul with good liquor, and then prayer broaches it, and sets it a-running. . . . Prayer is a building which reacheth up to heaven, meditation layeth in all the costly materials which are requisite. . . . Truly thy duty is to read God in the first book, the book of the creatures; and more especially in the second, in Jesus Christ. . . . When thine heart is like wax hardened, bring it by meditation to the warm beams of this sun, and they will soften it. . . . Consider also the word of God. . . . Meditation to the word is what fire is to water; though water be naturally so cold, yet put fire under it, and it will make it hot and boiling.⁶⁸

Whether for the ministry of comfort, the exposition of Scripture, or for liveliness in prayer, imaginative discourse was immensely effective.

After the Act of Uniformity of 1662, when many of the

Puritans could no longer preach, they devoted their energies to writing. With the same painstaking passion for plainness they transposed their pulpit ministrations to paper emissaries. They were responding in real life to the Prince's charge to the people of Mansoul in the closing scene of Bunyan's imaginary *Holy War*: "Nor must thou think always to live by sense: thou must live upon my Word. Thou must believe . . . when I am from thee, that yet I love thee, and bear thee upon mine heart for ever." This study has sought to show that their preaching and writing not only satisfied the mind, but also laid siege to the heart. What they did, they did with the whole personality, intellect, affection, will, yes, and imagination, too. In that way they drew heaven closer to the souls of men, and the souls of men closer to heaven. It was an objective which they believed in, and lived and died for.

Author

Dr. Eifion Evans is the author of a number of books on the subject of revival, including: *Revival Comes to Wales: The Story of the 1859 Revival in Wales* (1959), *The Welsh Revival of 1904* (1969), *Revivals: Their Rise, Progress and Achievements* (1961), and *Two Welsh Revivalists* (1985). He lives in Llanelli, Wales, and continues to study and write on the subject of revival.

Notes

1. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977) xi, xii. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to two books in particular in the preparation of this article. Neil H. Keeble, *Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth Century England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987), is a mine of information and highlights significant areas of Puritan interest; U. Milo Kaufmann's *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale, 1966) is a stimulating and thought-provoking study having implications beyond the contribution of Bunyan.
2. Michael Mullett, *John Bunyan in Context* (Keele, England: Keele University Press, 1996), 192. "Bunyan, having as part of the price of his second

- birth thrown over the stuff of the romances, made use of their scenic apparatus to adorn, explain and allegorize the Reformed schema of salvation. . . . Bunyan's story is not of the species of parable, that is to say a narrative containing abiding truths presented through the medium of everyday or real life; rather, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory grounded in fantasy."
3. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, vi, vii, ix.
 4. *Literary Culture*, 153-55. The Bunyan quotation is from *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, Edited by Roger Sharrock. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1976), 9:254.
 5. Marcus L. Loane, *Makers of Religious Freedom in the Seventeenth Century* (London: InterVarsity, 1960), 139. Cf. John R. Knott, Jr., "Thou must live upon my Word," in *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus*. Edited by Neil H. Keeble. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988), 161, 164. "Bunyan was particularly attracted to the dramatic potential of biblical stories and showed a striking gift for elaborating these in such a way as to make them homely and immediate. . . . We read Bunyan now not because he could produce ingenious typological readings of Scripture, like many of his contemporaries, but because he had a genius for using biblical metaphor and biblical language to create lasting works of the imagination, most notably *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War*."
 6. *Literary Culture*, 146. Cf. Valentine Cunningham, "Glossing and Glozing: Bunyan and Allegory" in *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus*, 227: "The textual activity going on in Bunyan's margins is offered, in fact, as a set of keys to the mysteries being enunciated by the text, an open window on to the figures and allegories that the text trades in." The title of Keach's work continues: *From the Beginning of the World to this present Day; in an apt and Pleasant Allegory, Showing the Troubles, Oppositions, Reproaches and Persecutions he hath met with in every Age*. Chapter 9 of the work is found in Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987), 172-78. Wallace believes that Keach's allegory "has much in common with those of Bunyan in both form and ideas, but it lacks the literary skill of Bunyan" (172).
 7. "To the Reader" in *The Holy War*.
 8. Roger Sharrock, editor of the Oxford University edition of Bunyan's works, goes as far as to say that on occasion there are "parts of the narrative where Bunyan shows a surprising tendency to throw away his fiction, to turn up his own metaphors, without leaving it to the reader. . . . Sometimes this is to be found in those marginal notes which are not Scripture references. . . . Perhaps the most amusing of these instances of the clash between fable and single-minded theological meaning is when Christian obtains for himself and Hopeful their escape from Doubting Castle. . . . 'I have a Key in my bosom called Promise. . . .'" *Life and Story in The Pilgrim's Progress* (Friends of Dr. Williams's Library, Thirty-second Lecture, 1978), 22. Published by Dr. Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AG.

9. Richard L. Greaves, ed., *John Bunyan, The Greatness of the Soul*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1981), 194-95.
10. Referring as well to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, one writer concludes: "In their attempts to inculcate conflict in their readers and move them toward resolution of these conflicts, Milton and Bunyan harness the usefulness of literary adversities and exploit the didactic opportunities created by fiction in order to teach their readers the art of holy war discussed in the many theological tracts written during this period. In doing so they harness what they perceive to be the true power of their art. . . . in order to create the potential for spiritual growth. In this way these fictions surpass the didactic value of the tracts which seek to teach only through doctrine." Arlette M. Zinck, "Doctrine by Example: Sanctification through Literature in Milton and Bunyan," in *Bunyan Studies*, No.6 (1995/96), 53-54. Indeed, another modern writer, affirms that "the crucial Reformation doctrine of justification by faith. . . . needs an analogical imagination to grasp it." Roger Pooley, "Language and loyalty: plain style at the Restoration" *Literature & History*, 6: 1 (1980), 4, quoted in *The Literary Culture*, 250.
11. Cf. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Heart of *The Pilgrim's Progress*," in *Reformation Principle and Practice*. Edited by Peter Newman Brooks. (London: Scolar Press, 1980), 239. Dr. Nuttall sees the work as "certainly a work of supreme imaginative genius; but its power is as a book of 'the way': the way to Christ, the way of Christ and the way with Christ. This is its theme, the manifold reality of Christian experience, and in this Bunyan continued a long tradition."
12. John Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), sermon on Deut.29:19, 1035.
13. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1: 483.
14. Richard Sibbes, *The Works of Richard Sibbes* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973 reprint of 1862 edition), 1:178ff.
15. John Owen, *The Works of John Owen* (1988), 7: 276, 312-13, 320.
16. Richard L. Greaves, ed., *John Bunyan* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1981), 196.
17. Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), 2:534, 566.
18. Stephen Charnock, *The Works of Stephen Charnock* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864) 1:240-42.
19. *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, 135, 299.
20. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds., "Puritans and Iconoclasm, 1560-c.1660" in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (London: Macmillan, 1996) 96, 117, 121.
21. John Owen, *The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded*, 1681, in *Works*, 7:345.
22. William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth,

- 1996), 26. Originally published in Latin in 1592, and in English in 1606.
23. William Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises . . . of the Holy Scriptures*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1848), 304.
 24. William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture*, (originally published in Latin in 1588 [Cambridge: The University Press, 1849]), 362.
 25. William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (London: H. Overton, 1642), 151.
 26. Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist* (London n. p., 1648), 272.
 27. John Ball, *A Short Treatise* (London: Edward Brewster, 1650) 55.
 28. Edward Leigh, *A Systeme or Body of Divinity* (London: n.p., 1654), 127.
 29. *The Art of Prophesying*, 26, 42. See John E. Marshall, "The Puritan Use of Allegory with particular reference to the works of John Bunyan" in *Light From John Bunyan and Other Puritans*. Papers read at the 1978 Westminster Conference, (Berkhampsted, England, 1979), 67-85.
 30. Richard Field, *Of the Church* (n.p., 1606), 232.
 31. Richard Rogers, *A Commentary Upon the Whole Book of Judges* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983), 457 [on Judges 9:7-20 (Jotham's parable)]; originally published in 1615.
 32. *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 3: on Matt. 13:1-3.
 33. Richard Greenhill, *An Exposition of Ezekiel* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994).
 34. *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions*, 125-27.
 35. *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions*, 154.
 36. St. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (London: J. M. Dent, 1946), 210, 213.
 37. Stephen Charnock, *The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1866), 5: 289.
 38. *Works of Charnock*, 5:304, 305, 307, 309.
 39. *Works of Richard Sibbes* (1973), 1:180, ff.
 40. *A Commentary upon the Whole Book of Judges*, 679.
 41. Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (London: Banner of Truth, 1964), 124.
 42. Thomas Manton, *One Hundred and Ninety Sermons on the Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990), 1:8.
 43. Thomas Brooks, *Heaven on Earth: A Treatise of Christian Assurance* (London: Banner of Truth, 1961), 204.
 44. Smith's sermon was originally printed in *Four Sermons* (London, 1598), and may be found in Everett H. Emerson, *English Puritanism from John Hooper to John Milton* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1968), 130-31.

45. John Flavel is quoted in I. D. E. Thomas, *A Puritan Golden Treasury* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), 230.
46. Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works* (Ligonier, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria, 1990), 3:293.
47. *Works of Stephen Charnock*, 5:304, ff.
48. *The Works of George Swinnock*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth: 1992), 2:414-15, 421, 462.
49. *An Exposition of Ezekiel*, 127 on Ezekiel 4:1-3; and 786 on Ezekiel 42:1.
50. *Works of Richard Sibbes*, 1:185.
51. *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 258-59.
52. *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans*, 121-22, 137.
53. John Downname, *A Guide To Godliness* (London: Felix Kingstone for Philemo Stephen and Christopher Meredith, 1629), 548, 557, 573, 539.
54. *Works of Richard Sibbes*, 6:183-84, *Divine Meditations and Holy Contemplations*, [1658], "To the Christian Reader," for the Ezekiel Culverwell quotation. Joseph Hall was Bishop of Norwich, and the full title of Hall's work was *Contemplations Upon the Principall Passages of the Holy Storie*. It was originally issued in eight volumes between 1612 and 1626. Baxter's recommendation of Hall's works is in his *Christian Directory* (Morgan, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria), 1: 479. This is the first of a four-volume edition of Baxter's works.
55. Apart from those Puritans quoted in the text, works on meditation were written by, among others, the following: Nathaniel Bacon, John Ball, Richard Baxter, Robert Bolton, William Bradshaw, John Bunyan, Edmund Calamy Sr., Thomas Doolittle, John Flavel, Thomas Fuller, Obadiah Green, Joseph Hall, Samuel Lee, John Owen, Nathanael Ranew, Samuel Shaw, Thomas Taylor, James Ussher, Thomas White, and Thomas Wadsworth. I am grateful to Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall for supplying information about works by Bacon, Ball, Baxter, Calamy, Flavel and Shaw.
56. *One Hundred and Ninety Sermons on the Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm*, 2:132-33.
57. William Fenner, *The Use and Benefit of Divine Meditation* (London, n.p., 1657), 16-17; cf. Andrew A. Bonar, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (London: The Religious Tract Society, n.d.), 329: "Experience will tell thee thou wilt have much ado with thy heart in this point, to keep it one hour to the work, without many extravagances, and idle cogitations. The cure here is . . . to use watchfulness and violence with your own imaginations, and as soon as they step out to chide them in. . . . Drive away these birds of prey, then, from thy sacrifice, and strictly keep thy heart to the work thou art upon."
58. William Bates, *A Discourse of Divine Meditation*, from *The Works of William Bates* (London: B Aylmer and J. Robinson, 1700), 101.
59. *The Works of John Owen*, 7:385-86.

60. *The Works of John Owen*, 7:447.
61. Richard Baxter, *Mr. Baxter's Dying Thoughts* (on Phil. 1:23; originally published in 1683), in *The Practical Works*, (Ligonier, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria, 1990), 3:1022. I am indebted to Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall for drawing my attention to this passage. See Dr. Nuttall's *Richard Baxter*, (London: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 125.
62. *The Works of John Owen*, 7:337.
63. Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest* [originally published, 1650, revised 1658], in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (Ligonier, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria, 1990), 3:319-20, 315.
64. Sermon on "The General Resurrection" in *Works of Richard Sibbes*, 1864, 2:329.
65. Andrew A. Bonar, ed. *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1984 reprint of 1891 edition), 310.
66. *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, 303, 338, 422. Edward Dering, whom Patrick Collinson refers to as "the archetypal Puritan divine" and "the Elizabethan Spurgeon," also ministered imaginatively by letters of godly counsel: "Dering's conception of God's transcendence and of the work of Christ . . . were expressed with a rich and even mystical imagination. 'If all the world were a flowing water . . . and every yeare one drop should be diminished, the sea should be all made dry and the botomes of the deepe should appeare before He shall cease to live whom God hath raysed from the dead.'" *A Mirror of Elizabethan Puritanism: The Life and Letters of Godly Master Dering*, (Friends of Dr. Williams's Library Seventeenth Lecture, 1963, London, 1964), 31, 18, 5. The quotation is from the 1597 edition of Dering's *Certaine godly and comfortable letters*.
67. *An Exposition of Ezekiel*, 820-21 (on Ezekiel 47:7-10). I am indebted to the Rev. Meirion Thomas for drawing my attention to this passage.
68. *The Works of George Swinnoock*, 2:111-12. 248-49.