THEN ANSWERED THEM THE RECORDER AND MY LORD MAYOR, ‘OH! TIDINGS! GLAD TIDINGS! GOOD TIDINGS OF GOOD, AND OF GREAT JOY TO POOR MANSOUL!’
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Professor David Walker, Northumbria University

Dear Members

As I write this column an horrendous virus has swept through Europe, the Americas, the Far East, Africa, and Australasia. The pandemic, as we all know, has taken many lives, decimated families, ruined economies, and caused havoc wherever it has flourished. Students and scholars that teach and research the literature and history of the early modern period will remember the plagues of the period we study and wonder when we will be free to resume our professional and personal lives. Once again there is talk of prophecy and biblical precedent.

Regional Conference at Northumbria University April 2020

One of the casualties created by Covid 19 was the regional conference that was to take place at Northumbria University during the Easter Break, 2020. The IJBS Secretary, known to us as Rob Daniel, and the European Treasurer, Rachel Adcock, worked hard on realizing the conference with an excellent line up of delegates and plenary speakers for the conference and came up with a great theme and title: GLORIOUS SOUNDS: EXPLORING THE SOUNDCAPES OF BRITISH NONCONFORMITY: 1550-1800.

I am sure this conference will create new directions for research on Bunyan in particular and nonconformist writing generally. Accordingly we are hoping to re-schedule this conference in semester 2 of the coming academic year.

On a more general, positive, and happier note, readers of The Recorder and all those concerned with IJBS, editors and readers of Bunyan Studies, have witnessed an increase in articles submitted to their journal and the membership has been extended. Thanks to the work of Rob Daniel we have entered the world of social media in Twitter, where we have a respectable numbers of followers. We are financially sound and in line with previous triennial conferences we hope to assist with subsidies awarded to a limited number of graduate students who would like to submit papers and participation with conference expenses.

IJBS Triennial Conference 2022 at Northumbria University at Newcastle.

We hope soon to contact IJBS members with a CfP while we work to organize rooms and create a programme and social events that members and others will enjoy.

PROF RICHARD TERRY

I am very sorry to report that Richard Terry, Professor of Eighteenth-Century Literature at Northumbria University, and a significant supporter of Bunyan Studies throughout his employment at the University, died after a brief illness in early June. Richard led the research agenda for English Literature, Language and Creative Writing that transformed considerably the image, reputation, and quality of English Studies at our University in REF2014. Richard was on the board of our journal. On a personal level he was a close friend of mine for over 30 years and along with my colleagues we miss him sorely.

Please stay safe
Best wishes
In Memoriam: Vincent Newey (1943-2020)

We write to share the sad news that Vincent Newey, one of the great Bunyan scholars of his generation, has passed away.

Vince was born and raised in the West Midlands. His teaching career began at the University of Liverpool in 1967, where he remained for twenty-two years before his appointment as Professor of English at the University of Leicester. He took early retirement in 2006, due to ill health.

An outstanding literary critic, Vince’s specialisms encompassed the poetry of the pre-Romantic and Romantic periods (Cowper, Gray, and Goldsmith, as well as Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Byron) alongside the work of several nineteenth-century novelists (Eliot, Dickens, Hardy, and ‘Mark Rutherford’). He published two monographs – *Cowper’s Poetry: A Critical Study and Reassessment* (1982), and *The Scriptures of Charles Dickens: Novels of Ideology, Novels of the Self* (2004) – and edited numerous collections of essays.


As with every piece Vince published, his writings on Bunyan present a master-class in the art of literary criticism. Each displays the hallmarks of his enviable style: one that combines acute insight and sensitivity to language and form with an ambitious intellectual vision, all shaped by a delicate yet robust prose crafted to convey something profoundly engaging and perceptive. A collection of essays, *Literature and Authenticity, 1780–1900*, published in Vince’s honour in 2011, includes an ‘Afterword’ paying full tribute to his achievements, and to his incomparable strengths as a reader, teacher, critic, colleague, and friend.

Vince died on Saturday 16 May, aged 76. He is survived by his wife Sue and their two sons, Matthew and Nathan. A member of IJBS for many years, he will be missed, and we mourn his passing.
Arlette Zwick, The King’s University, Edmonton, Canada

It had rained all summer long in Alberta, but when the International John Bunyan Society President David Gay welcomed delegates to the University of Alberta on 14 August, the Edmonton skies were clear. Scholars from across the United States and Europe and from as far as New Zealand and Israel had made the journey to western Canada for an invigorating discussion of Networks of Dissent. IJBS 9 was an intimate gathering of some thirty delegates. The programme included five plenary sessions and three concurrent panels spread over two and a half days. An exhibition of Bunyan editions, an evening town and gown event, an afternoon visit to the brand new Royal Alberta Museum, and a banquet rounded out conference events.

Helen Wilcox (Bangor University) Tim Cooper (University of Otago) and Robert Daniel (University of Warwick) set the proceedings off on a strong note in the opening Plenary Panel session. The Plenary Panel was followed by a beautifully curated exhibition of rare Bunyan editions at the University of Alberta’s Bruce Peel Special Collections Library. The collection is reputed to be the third strongest in the world, next to the British Library and the New York Public Library, for both number of editions, and variety and depth of the holdings. James F. Forrest, honorary President of IJBS from 1992 to 1995, a Professor of English at the University of Alberta, and an editor of several Bunyan texts in the Clarendon Press definitive collection, was instrumental in building the Peel Bunyan collection in the 1960s and 70s. Sylvia Brown, IJBS Secretary and co-organizer of the conference, curated the exhibition and introduced it to delegates.
From the exhibition delegates returned to the lecture hall for the first Plenary Address, by Feisal Mohamed (Graduate Centre CUNY) who took us on a dazzling journey through ‘Bunyan and the Amus Mirabilis of English Law’. In a talk that tied the legal to the literary, he explored the moment when broad cracks emerged in the consensus of the Cromwellian era on the eve of the Restoration. Early on Thursday morning the lecture hall was once again full for a second Plenary Address, where Ariel Hessayon (Goldsmiths, University of London) talked about ‘Social Networks and the Publication of Continental European Writings during the English Revolution’. Ariel provided an expert tour of an extensive archive of European texts on alchemy, astrology and natural magic, and the writings of the Lutheran mystic Jacob Boehme, as he mapped the networks of relationship that connected one to the other. In the final Plenary Address of day two, Alison Chapman (University of Alabama) discussed ‘The Tithes of War: the Early Modern Law of Tithing and Milton’s War in Heaven’. Drawing on her expertise in early modern English law, Alison explored the contemporary idea of paying a tithe through an alternative currency, and demonstrated how Milton’s Satan, humiliated by the debt of praise owed to God, turns ecclesiastical ordinances into ordaince, its canons into cannons.

Helen Wilcox announced the winner of the Richard Greaves award. Michael Davies and Bob Owens took top honours in a competitive field for their Oxford Handbook to John Bunyan. Several chapter contributors were in the audience to help celebrate the award as warm congratulations were extended to the two editors who, alas, were not able to be at the conference. In his last official duty as President, David Gay thanked all for making the journey to western Canada, and invited incoming IJS President, David Walker, to say a few words. He urged all present to mark their calendars for three years hence when he will welcome delegates to the tenth triennial gathering in Northumbria University. Rich in scholarly accomplishments and good fellowship, it was, yet again, a wonderful IJS conference.
THE APPEAL OF JOHN BUNYAN

David Gay

On the evening of August 15, 2019, the second night of our ninth triennial conference “Networks of Dissent,” we held a special town and gown evening to connect conference delegates to the Edmonton community. “The Appeal of John Bunyan” was a dramatic presentation designed to encourage thinking on the history of religions toleration, rights, and freedoms from the seventeenth century to the present. We took some inspiration from similar dramatizations held at Canada’s world-renowned Stratford Shakespeare Festival, where Supreme Court Justices have heard dramatized cases such as the Appeal of Shylock (2012) in front of live audiences. Dramatization is an effective way of informing and engaging the public in conversation on issues that continue to shape western societies.

Professor of Drama Kate Weiss undertook to write the script for the appeal and to produce and direct the performance. She based her script primarily on the Papers of Thomas Bredlove, who left transcripts of roughly one thousand court proceedings from 1660 to 1675. Her actors were all majors in the University of Alberta’s Drama program, which has produced some of Canada’s most distinguished actors. The players were:

Braydon Dowler Colman as John Bunyan
Michael Bradley as Judge Wingate
Michael Anderson as Mr. Foster (a lawyer) and the Narrator

The venue was the Anglican Parish of Christ Church, an architectural jewel in Edmonton’s Oliver neighbourhood. Judge Wingate took his seat high in the pulpit while Bunyan pleaded his case from the chancel steps before an audience of roughly one hundred people. The brilliantly crafted dialogue among these fine actors brought history to life.

Following the performance, three members of Edmonton’s legal community took the stage to argue the appeal. They were:

Madam Justice Myra Bielby (Alberta Court of Appeal), the presiding judge.
Madam Justice Darlene Acton (Court of Queen’s Bench), serving here as the prosecutor.
Dr. Patrick Hart (a lawyer and Doctor of Religious Studies), arguing on behalf of Bunyan.

The frame of reference for the appeal was intentionally broad. Our legal experts considered the trial transcript as presented by the actors, and the 1593 “Act to retain the Queen’s Majesty’s subjects in their due obedience” (35 Eliz. Cap 1, also known as an act against puritans), which required attendance at divine service in the state church and served for Bunyan’s arrest and trial in 1660. Historical evidence found in Richard Greaves’s landmark Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent also supported the legal analysis. Presentations for and against Bunyan’s appeal were deeply learned and entertaining. Using early modern English law and Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms, our legal experts encouraged us to connect past and present through legal and literary history. Their arguments illuminated demonstrated sharp legal thinking generously adapted to the past and carefully related to the present. They considered a central question for the evening: Why did Bunyan go to prison back then? What happens when laws are passed to regulate religious conduct right now? Even with our rights and freedoms, our separation of church and state, and our secular notions, we are not immune from conflict and injustice around these issues. Justice Bielby heard the arguments and rigorously clarified key issues from different perspectives across the centuries in a learned, lengthy, and instructive discourse. Rather than offering a final decision, she left the outcome of the appeal open, encouraging us to think further with this closing remark: “you be the judge.”

This was a memorable feature of the conference and an important public event for Edmontonians. Members of the public asked challenging questions and gained new perspectives on Canadian law and legal processes. A reception in the church hall followed. We are grateful to all who participated, and to the Anglican Parish of Christ Church for hosting the event with financial support from the Chester Roming Centre for Religion and Public Life, The King’s University, the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts, and The Kule Institute for Advanced Study. This kind of public contact is always a benefit to the JBS mission.
L. M. Montgomery is to my home province of Prince Edward Island as Shakespeare is to Stratford-upon-Avon: central to its artistic, cultural, and commercial life, as you will see if you come to the IJBS Conference here in a few years. Best known for two delightful child characters — Emily Byrd Starr and Anne of Green Gables — Montgomery wrote 21 novels in all, including two intended for adult audiences. One of those, her darkly comic *A Tangled Web* (1931) tells a story of two rival families, the Penhallows and the Darks, and Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* makes a fascinating appearance.

Aunt Becky, one of Montgomery’s many allusions to Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, decides that she will publish the contents of her will before she dies. Every one of her possessions is promised to one member of the family or another except the one thing everyone desperately wants: a jug that she refuses to give until a year after her death. For the rest of the novel, various members of the clan plotting and bribing and lobbying to get that Penhallow jug.

In this deeply dysfunctional family, Margaret stands out as one of the few good souls, and she gets what appears to be the least valuable bequest:

She got Aunt Becky’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, a very old, battered book. The covers had been sewed, on the leaves were yellow with age. One was afraid to touch it lest it might fall to pieces. It was the most disreputable old volume which Theodore Dark, for some unknown reason, had prized when alive. Since his death, Aunt Becky had kept it in an old box in the garret, where it had got musty and dusty. (52)
L. M. Montgomery’s *Tangled Web* and a Bunyan First Edition Ctd.

Margaret was not disappointed, we’re told, but neither does she value the gift: “As for the old Pilgrim’s Progress, it could lie on in the Pinery attic for all she cared” (73). It does, though, turn out to be the most valuable part of the estate, though for financial rather than spiritual or moral reasons. Margaret has always wanted a place of her own, and once she and her suitor have wisely decided against marriage.

The clan were astounded when they heard Margaret had bought Aunt Louisa’s cottage from Richard Dark, still more astounded when they found she had sold the Pilgrim’s Progress Aunt Becky had given her for a fabulous sum. Actually ten thousand dollars. It was a first edition and would have been worth thirty thousand if it had been in first class condition. (234)

Hers is an unconventional choice for the time and place. The Pilgrim’s Progress first edition allows her to live life the way she wishes, not married to a man she doesn’t love, not living with other female relatives, but adopting an unloved boy, Brian Dark.

Montgomery suggests so much with the family’s various reactions to the book. First, no one valued it because it was old, but in the end we learn that its age gives it its value. Theodore had for some unknown reason prized the volume, and so we have a sense of his strength of judgment, but we never do know whether its spiritual or financial worth interested him. The fragility of the book is an issue here too, as the fragility of the jug will become. (Anyone reading the novel must guess what will happen to the jug in the end – it gets shattered, hurled against a wall by a particularly odd and wise member of the clan. But apologies for the spoiler.)

Margaret is the only one who is not part of the jostling for inheritance.

Montgomery’s novel ends by looking at what has real rather than false value. The jug itself was not only fragile but vessel – it contains nothing – and everyone wanted it, so it might well have found a place among the goods in Vanity Fair. The copy of Pilgrim’s Progress is the only thing of true value, and no one sees it, choosing to judge the book by its lack of attractive covers. Montgomery’s greatest joke on these families is that not one of her characters has a moment of revelation, a moment when they actually read the book: but Montgomery did. She records in her journals that she read both parts as a child and was proud of herself for liking them:

*Pilgrim’s Progress* was read and reread with never failing delight. Many a time did I walk the straight and narrow path with Christian and Christiana—although I never liked Christiana’s adventures half so well as Christian’s. For one thing there was such a crowd with Christiana; she had not half the fascination of that solitary intrepid figure who faced all alone the shadows of the dark valley and the encounter with Apollyon. (394)

These lines, by the way, find their way almost word for word into the opening of *Emily of New Moon*, with Emily standing in for Montgomery.

This novel makes an interesting contrast to Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women, where Pilgrim’s Progress is again a central text, but where the March sisters really do structure a moral and spiritual life for themselves based on Bunyan’s imaginative journey. No one in Montgomery’s satire is much interested in the next life. *Tangled Web* secularizes, even commodifies Pilgrim’s Progress as a route to material, temporal happiness: celestial city dwindles into happy home life. It imagines a heaven on earth, specifically on Prince Edward Island, made possible only after *The Pilgrim’s Progress* has been sold and bought at Vanity Fair.

Works Cited

---. *Emily of New Moon*. Seal, 1981.
Early Nonconformity History Publications

There have been two recent and substantial publications from Oxford University Press that, while not focused on Bunyan himself, present the latest scholarship and the outcome of new research on the political and religious context that shaped his life and work.

Reliquiae Baxterianae
The 2019 issue of The Recorder gave advance notice of a five-volume scholarly edition of Richard Baxter’s Reliquiae Baxterianae, edited by N. H. Keeble, John Coffey, Tim Cooper, and Tom Charlton. This was published by OUP earlier this year. Baxter’s massive, narratively rich, with its numerous and extensive substantiating documents, is almost impossible to characterize: it is in different parts and to various degrees autobiographical, historiographical (though both terms are problematic when used of seventeenth-century texts), apologetic, polemic, didactic, meditative, impartial but partisan, analytic but credulous, single-minded but digressive and disorderly, with something of the copiousness of Robert Burton, the gossipy indecency of John Aubrey, the high purpose of Clarendon, the political topicality of Roger Morrice, the partisan opinionativeness of Lucy Hutchinson, the confessional integrity of George Fox, the moderate Calvinism of John Howe, the rational latitudinarianism of John Tillotson, but drawing all together is its determination to record for posterity (Baxter’s avowed audience) the aspirations, tensions, achievements and failures of Puritanism during the revolutionary and Restoration periods from 1615 to 1685. While he was by no means sympathetic to Bunyan’s religious tradition (although, characteristically, very ready to recognise Bunyan’s Christian commitment), Baxter’s unique record provides a first-hand and solidly evidenced narrative of the world with which Bunyan too contended.

In its extensive general introduction, this edition sets out the history of the work’s composition, explores its major themes, and reviews its reception from its first publication to the present day in the dissenting and national church traditions, and in the scholarly literature. Its textual introduction traces in unprecedented detail the preparation of Baxter’s manuscripts for the press, discusses the Baxter archive, and covers the printing and bibliographical characteristics of the 1696 folio. In addition, the editorial apparatus includes an explanatory commentary and textual notes; supporting documentation, much of it never before published; a detailed chronology; an expository linguistic and historical glossary covering political, religious and contextual; and the fullest available bibliography (based upon examination of extant copies) of Baxter’s 140 or so published titles, whose occasion and publication are a recurrent topic in the text. There are four indexes: of persons, places, topics and Baxter’s books. These make fully accessible the wealth of Baxter’s references to hundreds of persons (many never before identified), historical sources and texts and contemporary events.
The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions is a 5-volume series, designed by its general editors (Timothy Larsen and Mark Noll) to complement The Oxford History of Anglicanism. Volume I on the post-Reformation era, edited by John Coffey, completes the set and will be of greatest interest to Bunyanists, several of whom have contributed distinguished chapters. The book traces the emergence of Anglophone Protestant Dissent from the mid-16th century to the Act of Toleration, showing how Dissenters lost the struggle for England's religious establishment, but succeeded in creating new religious communities and identities. Part I explains how the four major denominational traditions of old Dissent began to coalesce: Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Quakers. Part II explores how dissenting traditions developed beyond England, in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Netherlands, New England, the Middle Colonies and the Caribbean. Parts III and IV take up major themes: the parishes, the state, the Puritan Revolution, print culture, theology and the Bible, worship and sacraments, sermons and preaching, women and gender, and the lay experience (Michael Davies, Anne Dunan-Page and Joel Halcomb distil the findings of the Dissenting Experience Project). The Introduction was first trialled at a Bunyan Society day conference in Keele, and was thoroughly rewritten as a result of astute feedback (from Bob Owens in particular). Bunyan looms large in the index, and the volume helps to locate him within the culture of Dissent. As a reference work, it should sit alongside the recent Oxford Handbook of John Bunyan (edited by Michael Davies and Bob Owens) and the first volume of The Dissenters by Michael Watts, which, despite its age, remains the best single-author survey of seventeenth-century Dissent.

John Coffey
N. H. Keeble
Global Milton and Visual Art (Lexington Books, forthcoming 2021),
edited by Angelica Duran and Mario Murgia

John Milton (1608–74) crafts one of the most sensuous characterisations of the garden of Eden ever provided in Western literature in Book 7 of Paradise Lost. Upon the request from Adam the archangel Raphael provides details of how God created the world and to what purpose. Says the Lord’s angelic messenger: “He brought thee in this delicious grove. / This garden, planted with the trees of God, / delectable both to behold and taste.” Indeed, the intriguing visuality that Milton’s epic often invites has inspired a cohort of scholars and critics from seven countries to write on the diverse manners in which Miltonic influence has made its way into modern and contemporary artistic expressions. The multi-authored volume Global Milton and Visual Art will be launched simultaneously as a material book and digital book with webpage supplement. The volume showcases the aesthetic appropriation and reinterpretation of the works and legend of the early modern English poet and polemicist in diverse eras, regions, and media: book illustrations, cinema, digital reworkings, monuments, music videos, painting, sculpture, shieldry, and stained glass.

Global Milton and Visual Art innovates an inclusive approach to Milton’s literary virtues, especially with regard to his masterpiece Paradise Lost, in global contemporary aesthetics via intertextual and interdisciplinary relations. The fifteen purposefully brief chapters, 103 illustrations, and 64 supplemental web-images reflect the great richness of the topics and the diverse experiences and expertise of the contributors. Part I, “Panoramas,” provides overviews and key contexts; Part II, “Cameos,” offers different perspectives of the varied afterlives of the most widely-circulating illustrations of Paradise Lost, those by Gustave Doré; Part III, “Textual Close-ups,” focuses on a rich variety of book illustrations, from eighteenth-century engravings to a twenty-first century graphic novel; and Part IV, “A Prospect beyond Books,” explores visual media outside of books that manifest powerful connections, direct and indirect, with Milton’s works and legend.

Constant references and associations with other literary figures, whether they be Milton’s contemporaries or not, also point to the wide critical scope and intercommunicative aims of Global Milton and Visual Art. In this regard, and as can be expected, the contextual and thematic connections between Milton and his vastly influential namesake John Bunyan have not passed unnoticed in this volume. For example, the chapter by Taiwan’s Chia-Yin Huang, on the French metal worker Léonard Morel-Ladeuil and his “Milton Shield” (1867) evidences that the two prominent English religious writers sometimes follow parallel trajectories in terms of aesthetic and visual representation: the Paradise Lost window (1930) and Pilgrim’s Progress window (1930) appear as a Web-figure as does Morel-Ladeuil’s extraordinary “Bunyan Shield” (1878), featuring stained-glass representations of Bunyan himself, his work, and his Miltonic connections. No doubt, the innovative and detailed approaches to the reconfigurations of Milton’s oeuvre in the world of modern and contemporary aesthetics will soon plant the seed for a much-needed Global Bunyan and Visual Art. After all, Bunyan’s Christian, probably in the same vein as Milton’s Raphael, betrays his own creator’s regard for the visual appreciation of beauty when, upon seeing Immanuel’s Land, he also considers it “very delectable to behold.”
The Pilgrim’s Progress

John Bunyan
Illustrated by William Blake
Introduced by Nathalie Collé
Limited to 750 hand-numbered copies
Editorial material: Roger Pooley

John Bunyan’s religious masterpiece paired with William Blake’s watercolours in a unique limited edition

PRODUCTION DETAILS

Limited to 750 hand-numbered copies
Quarter-bound in red leather blocked in gold foil
Cloth sides blocked on front in gold foil and printed with black ink
Binding design by Anne Yvonne Gilbert
Leather titling label blocked in gold inset on front
Set in Poliphilus with Blado as display and printed on Arctic Volume Ivory paper
384 pages
28 watercolour illustrations by William Blake
Gilded top edge
Introduction by Nathalie Collé
Editorial material by Roger Pooley
Cloth-covered slipcase inset with an illustration label
12¾” x 9¾”

UNIQUE PAIRING

This is the only currently available edition of The Pilgrim’s Progress to feature all 28 of Blake’s watercolour illustrations. They are displayed alongside the complete and authoritative text established by respected Bunyan scholar Roger Pooley and complemented by his informative notes. Bunyan included marginal notes and biblical references throughout The Pilgrim’s Progress, these too have been faithfully reproduced in this limited edition.

EXPERT INTRODUCTION

This limited edition includes a new introduction by Nathalie Collé, a renowned specialist in both 18th-century English literature and the history of book illustration, and a former editor of the newsletter of the International John Bunyan Society. In her essay, Collé reveals the sophisticated way in which William Blake responded to, and went beyond Bunyan’s tale, to create his own idiosyncratic and but extremely unified series of images.

WHAT MAKES THIS LIMITED EDITION SO SPECIAL

The slipcase, which has curved edges to facilitate easy removal of the book, is covered in beautiful real cloth perfectly complementing the soft red leather of the spine. A panel has been blind-blocked on the front, inset with an illustration label and outlined with gold-blocking.

Gold-blocking also features on the spine and the cloth front of the book, on which it is overprinted with black ink with a design by renowned artist and illustrator Anne Yvonne Gilbert based on Blake’s watercolour ‘Christian Reading in His Book’. A panel has been blind-blocked to hold the leather titling label which, again, is blocked in gold foil.

The Arctic Volume Ivory paper is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council which ensures that it has been sourced from environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically well-managed forests. The matt surface is the ideal medium for both the text – the definitive version established by Roger Pooley – and the illustrations. Blake’s 28 watercolours now form part of the collection of Sir Alan Parker who generously allowed Folio to remove them from their frames and mounts and photograph them at high resolution. The reproductions in the book are, therefore, the most authentic available of these astonishingly modern images. The visionary artist, the ideal interpreter of Bunyan’s allegorical dream, employed ink, graphite and chalk along with watercolour and the images, some unfinished, reveal the working practice of this artistic genius.

Blake’s illustrations for The Pilgrim’s Progress were never united with Bunyan’s text during his lifetime and were still unfinished when he died in 1827. In the 1940s an edition appeared in America, but all 28 illustrations have not been published with the text since, and this is the only current edition to unite words and images. Finished with red head- and tailbands, a red ribbon marker and gilded top page edges, this is a unique publication, an exquisite edition of a timeless classic, limited to just 750 hand-numbered copies and available only from The Folio Society.
Pilgrim’s Progress – Movie and Prequel

COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in the US means organizations like the Christian boys adventuring ‘Trail Life USA’ cannot carry on with normal activities. So instead, on May 16th 2020, they hosted a ‘Backyard Movie & Campout’ in collaboration with Revelation Media for a live stream of the 2019 CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) film, The Pilgrim’s Progress. Hosted enthusiastically, and featuring an introduction from the Executive Producer, Steve Cleary, the prize billing before the movie streamed was a virtual visit to the Nashville, TN home of Northern Irish hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty. As Keith played keyboard, Kristyn sang their signature hymn, ‘In Christ Alone’.

The Getty’s participation is relevant not just as a warm up act, but also for the movie itself, as Kristyn Getty provided a recorded prologue for the cinema release, as well as then voicing the role of the Interpreter. In interesting comparison to Bunyan’s Apology, Getty explains that the viewer needs to engage imagination in a child-like way to joyfully participate in creation on the journey of discipleship. The address is clearly to Christians but not immediately directed at children, for whom an animated movie might otherwise be pitched. While commending Bunyan’s allegorical take on biblical truths, this prologue also invites the Bunyan purist to keep an open mind as they consume a movie which necessarily makes cuts and adaptations along the way. Because Bunyan Studies has a review coming later this year, I will limit my comments to features of production, design, marketing and reception, before pointing out a companion movie that, rather than being ‘based on’, is inspired by The Pilgrim’s Progress. The film had 2019 cinema release for a limited 2 day run at Easter in the US, and in October in the UK. I caught it in a matinee slot at my not quite local cinema in a three-quarter full audience representing a broad age demographic. I really enjoy and recommend the film.
Pilgrim’s Progress – Movie and Prequel Ctd.

Instead of a dream sequence framing of the story, we have a narrated mythology (think narration of the origin of the rings in Peter Jackson’s Lord of the Rings). Instead of the City of Destruction we have an old city originally named ‘Noitcursed’ which a mysterious figure called Lux changes to the more appealing ‘Notcursed’. By the time of the story’s setting even this name is fraudulent as the inhabitants labor under the heavy yoke of Lux’s descendants, the Supervisors (Apollyon’s minions). Another ‘Lord of the Rings’ connection is John Rhys-Davies, who played Gimli in that film trilogy and voices the animated Evangelist.

One of the city dwellers is Christian Pilgrim who ends up following Faithful Pathfinder (a reversal of Bunyan’s order) from the city. Faithful’s disappearance, crazy drawings and discarded booklet precipitate Christian’s burden (narrated as a concern for right things rather than conviction of guilt).

Apollyon’s demons are seen comically bumbling along as humanoid minions in early sequences, but these transform into and are joined by a legion of flying gargoyles of a sufficiently scary character that I did not take my daughters to the cinema in anticipation of their big screen fearsomeness (we did all right with the DVD at home). Imagine the reaction you may have had when small and watched the flying monkeys in ‘The Wizard of Oz’ and you’ll have some idea of the effect. These flying demons also give us the obligatory ninja fight sequence required in any action focused movie. Bunyan’s fiery darts fired by the Devil at the wicket gate are replaced by these creatures, whom a stout Goodwill then fights off with a whirling staff and wonderfully choreographed flying kicks.
Pilgrim’s Progress – Movie and Prequel Ctd.

The Pilgrim’s Progress (2019) had sufficient impact to be nominated for the MovieGuide Family Film of 2019 alongside ‘Apollo 11’, ‘Dumbo’, ‘How to Train Your Dragon’, ‘Toy Story 4’, and ‘The Lion King’. It did not win. It is not in the same league as Disney or Pixar – but it is nevertheless a good visual production. Given the variety in styles of animation product in the entertainment industry, director Robert Fernandez gives viewers a highly watchable product. The effects of the animation and the visual possibilities of animation are on fine display in the Mount Sinai/ Legality Hill scene, depicted as a near vertical ascent littered with grave stones bearing contradictory demands of the law – such as ‘Obey the Rules’, ‘Don’t Take Another Step’, ‘Keep This Way’, ‘Speak Up’, and ‘Quiet’. The peak of the Mountain is a parsonified granite judge/Moses, looming menace and hurling his tombstones on the narrowly escaping Christian and Evangelist. Likewise, after some will-o-the-wisp fire-flies lead Christian at night to the Interpreter’s house in a tree (a cross between Bag End, Rivendell, and Dr Who’s Tardis for its magical vastness) Christian is transported between swirling visionary emblems within. The Man in the Iron Cage (an older Christian) becomes a narrative connection to the despair Christian later feels in Doubting Castle, and the Interpreter’s tender, glowing touch on Christian’s chest in parting becomes the key to escape his captor.

Christian’s burden falls from his back as he ascends a very steep mountainside to an ephemeral cross atop it, using the visual medium of light rather than a physical structure. ‘Be Thou my Vision’ is sung stirring in background, perhaps appropriately a hymn that does not particularly spell out the work of the cross directly, either. Other hymns featured in the movie are ‘This is My Story (Blessed Assurance)’, and ‘It Is Well’.

Humor is key for a family movie. Christian is so terrified of the chained lions he is fleeing that he clean knocks over the Watchful character, who had beenbeckoning him, as he bowls through the doorway of Palace Beautiful. Help brings slap-stick fun with his bucket of water at the Slough of Despond/ Swamp of Despondency. Vanity Fair is a fairground of the theme-park variety, but Faithful really does meet his death (off-screen). Judge Hate-good, a comically small man, looks and sounds to me a lot like Rowan Atkinson. A fainting Giant Despair and his wife are also comic standouts, without minimizing the despair of the captured pilgrims.

Where Bunyan revised his first edition to make sure Christian’s family and his loss of them became more prominent, the ‘family values’ angle to the plot of the movie is ramped up even further. Christian cries his for family in Palace Beautiful, and Apollonius uses sorrow for his absent family (visions of whom are conjured to taunt him) to tempt Christian back to his side. Christian conceives of his journey as a quest to find a way to save his family from impending war, and even refuses to go into the River of Death so he can go back to fetch his family, until Evangelist turns up and persuades him otherwise.

One minor cavil is with the Latin on some of Legality Hill’s stones, and the ominous carving of ‘Desperatio’ and ‘Regnum Tenebris’ over the gate of Doubting Castle - a fantasy medieval adaptation too far from Bunyan for me.

Contemporary movies are judged by their inclusiveness in terms of gender and ethnicity. The feminine Interpreter, the well portrayed sisters of Palace Beautiful, and even the frustrated dynamism of Diffidence go some way to softening a thoroughly masculine cast. Hopeful is a black man, filling at least the well-worn buddy trope. Equally, although presenting more of a metaphysical conundrum, The Shining Ones are visibly women and men, white and of color.

On the diversity front, HeavenQuest (2020) from director Matt Billen, scores highly. Employing acting talent from the US, Mexico, Australia, Denmark, and South Korea, this live action movie tells the prequel story of how the protagonist Vangel becomes the figure of Evangelist. (The film’s title fits Korea’s translation of The Pilgrim’s Progress as ‘Journey to Heaven’.)

As the visuals of the movie poster suggest, this is Bunyan in full fantasy action mode. Pilgrim’s Progress meets Star Wars or Game of Thrones. At times too slow for the action genre and unable to compete on battle scenes with higher budget movies, the story is more ponderous to follow. Sadly, the diverse cast is not best honored in the lingering genre supposition that a female warrior will go into battle with less protective body covering then will men. The film ends as Vangel is preparing, under his new King, to set out to bring others across the border – Pilgrim’s Progress awaits!
Robert Fernandez Interview: Director of Revelation Media's The Pilgrim's Progress (2019)

Richard: Please tell me a little bit about the inception of this project. Whose design was it to piece together an animated film about The Pilgrim’s Progress? Why was John Bunyan’s allegory chosen as opposed to another story?

Robert: A fellow named Steve Cleary and I are both heavily involved in the animation studio that produced this film: Revelation Media. We had a long conversation late into one night, about our interest in The Pilgrim’s Progress as a great subject for a film. Moreover, Steve was interested in a project that could be a legacy for his grandchildren. I once was part of a production on John Bunyan, with the Torchlighter series, which strengthened my interest in Bunyan’s stories. I went to Bedford, and I delved deeply into his work, and I maintained an abiding interest in him ever since.

Richard: I have a few questions about source material: I noticed that the script did stick quite closely to the chronology of the original, but you play a lot with diction, and how incidents play out (e.g., Mt. Sinai becomes the adversarial character/mountain Legality). What was the guiding philosophy about how to approach each new place in relation to the source material?

Robert: The movie is made for people from all over the place, with little knowledge of Bunyan; for people who are not necessarily even religious; I do hope that people will read the original text, but we did our best to provide immediate context and explanations.

A huge proportion of the episodes in the original story are omitted – even though a script was written that includes many more of the episodes of The Pilgrim’s Progress. When you’re writing a script, it’s like having a fight with the devil: sometimes you have to discard an entire day’s work. Of course, so much had to be compressed because there are serious limitations of budget, and time and medium, but the original desire was for a longer journey in an episodic form, which could have followed Bunyan’s original much more closely.

With regards to Legality: Christian takes the easy road that ends up not being the easy road. The fear that Christian has of being crushed under the mountain became the main basis for the decision to make Legality into a character who could provoke that fear and dramatize the moral point of all laws being impossible to follow at once; we also found the episode to be a convenient way to transition to the next section as well. We had to move Christian on quickly, and this necessity motivated some narrative decisions. Interestingly, when the film was screened in Costa Rica, to an audience of people with almost no familiarity Bunyan’s original book, the Legality/Sinai scene was the one that several people pointed to as exceptionally resonant in its message.

One scene that we cut out relates to Formalist and Hypocrisy. The staff agreed that the scene was very funny, and the dialogue was spot on, true to Bunyan’s account but with a few flourishes; Hypocrisy had a feather hat, but he was always showing “two faces.” This was one of the scenes that was saddest to excise in the final product.
Richard: I once read a scholar who argued that *The Pilgrim’s Progress* would be nearly impossible to film because of the way in which the Interpreter’s House mixes up insides and outsides. Was the oddity of Bunyan’s episode what accounts for the decision to portray that portion of the movie in a kind of astral starscape?

Robert: Yes! We thought about the Interpreter’s House a lot. Representing it was a real challenge, and we spent a long time thinking about how to approach the space. We had initially written the Interpreter as a man: a half-Gandalf-Dumbledore, and we had 50-60 designs that we fiddled with before we decided on the motherly, feminine type. We also intended to address all of the emblems, but in the cuts, we ended up only briefly touching three of them. It was one of the sections I would most like to revisit in an episodical.

Richard: Please tell me a little bit about the City of Destruction changes, and the choice of introducing the demon characters, and the antecedent discussion of “the war”?

Robert: I felt that we needed more backstory in our adaptation for people with no context, to explain why, for instance, Christian should leave his family, and why his burden exists and grows.

The intention was, and perhaps still is, to make a film about Christiana’s journey, and then another one about *The Holy War*. To me, the story about the war is connected to *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, and it’s all one world. I have thought about this for a long time, and I seriously wonder if a separate project for a game could also find an expression.

Richard: I sensed that there were some gestures toward making the film more epic, especially with the inclusion of John Rhys Davies, and the ominous introductory art style, among other things. There were other portions that seemed to be aimed more at a younger audience. Please tell me a little bit about your intentions with the function of tone.

Robert: The story is not just for children, and some families told me their children were frightened by some parts. It does have the fairy tale art style, and it is definitely not epic in most of the scenes. The intention was to tell the story, which itself is mixed in tone, as well as we could, and convey the message.

It’s true that John Rhys Davies brought a lot of presence and gravity to the film. I spent a considerable amount of time on communications with John Rhys Davies, and I noticed multiple times that he was able to quote entire sections of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* from memory.

Richard: Which portions of the film are you most proud of, and you feel came closest to your ideal vision?

Robert: The ending of the film, the crossing of the river, was my favourite portion of the book as well as our film. I feel like our film does some justice, even though we did cut out an epic fight sequence where Apollyon would rise from the water. Christian thinks the blood on him in the moment is his own, but he learns that it is the king’s, which of course alludes to the cross.

At the end there are numerous things that are symbolic, and complex, and some viewers won’t notice: there are symbols on the armor of several persons, on the walls, in the city, reprises of characters, and colour tones alluding to earlier elements.

Richard: Thank you for this illuminating discussion, and for sharing your thoughts with the International John Bunyan Society!

Robert: My sincere pleasure!
Bibliography of Recent Publications: David Parry, University of Exeter


Bibliography of Recent Publications Ctd.


Pugh, Jonathan. “Imagining Spiritual Growth for the iPhone Generation: Taking College-Aged Young Adults on a Pilgrim’s Journey in Dallas, NC.” D.Min. diss., Gardner-Webb University, 2018.


**Treasurers' Reports**

**Membership renewal date:**

Memberships run out on 30 September, annually or triennially. At the beginning of each September all annual members will be reminded to renew, together with any triennial members whose renewal falls due in that year. A reminder will be sent in October to anyone who has not renewed, with a final reminder being sent in November to anyone who has still not renewed.

**European Treasurer's Report:**

The UK account for the International John Bunyan Society currently stands at £1,993.97, entirely funded by membership renewals. PayPal is by far the most popular method of renewing subscriptions and for new membership payments. Details can be found on our website: [https://johnbunyansociety.org/membership-services/](https://johnbunyansociety.org/membership-services/). Payments can also be made via a direct transfer of the appropriate amount (in £ sterling) into the following bank account: NatWest Bank, International John Bunyan Society, Sort Code: 54-10-31, Account number: 14718073. If you are a new member, or need to change your forwarding address for receiving *Bunyan Studies*, please fill in a membership form - also available on the above web page - and send it to Rachel Adcock at R.C.Adcock@keele.ac.uk.

In addition to the existing current account, IJBS also has an investment account with Old Mutual Wealth, based in the UK. At the time of writing, this contains about £13,884.46, made up of an anonymous donation of £10,000 made to IJBS, together with the fund donated by the family of Richard L. Greaves which is used to award the triennial book prize established in his memory.

The amount in our NatWest account remains constant, despite funds being utilised for conference attendance at the Loughborough University regional conference (April 2019) and the University of Alberta triennial conference (August 2019), the new Early Career Essay prize, and other small matters. The Executive Committee has agreed to fund travel bursaries for postgraduate and early-career scholars who are presenting papers at the regional IJBS conference at Northumbria University (which has been rescheduled due to Covid-19).

Yours sincerely, Rachel Adcock, Keele University, European Treasurer

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**North American Treasurer's Report**

To date the North American account for the International John Bunyan Society stands at $5,952.85 (USD). Use of electronic payment facilities for subscriptions to the Society is growing through the availability of PayPal and use of credit cards on the Society’s web pages. Renewal subscriptions and new membership payments can also be made via a check or money order made out to IJBS. (Please note that dues are payable in US dollars and not in another currency.)

Because of the pandemic, my access to the university will be limited for the next several months. Normally I would ask you to send your check/money order, along with your membership form, to Margaret Breen, IJBS North American Treasurer, Dept. of English, 215 Glenbrook Rd., U-4025, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269-4025, USA. Given the Covid-19 crisis, however, I would prefer that you send your payment to my home address, so that I could then deposit your payment in a timely fashion. My address is as follows: 83 Lower Blvd., New London, CT 06320. Whether you are making use of PayPal or sending a check or money order, it is important that you send me an email apprising me of your payment; I am at Margaret.Breen@uconn.edu.

Yours sincerely, Margaret Sönser Breen, University of Connecticut, North American Treasurer

July 2, 2020
Membership Form and Payment

MEMBERSHIP FORM

The International John Bunyan Society (IJBS)

All members receive:

- access to The Recorder, the newsletter of IJBS (published electronically)
- Bunyan Studies, the official Journal of IJBS (published annually)
- use of our listserv for discussion
- invitation to our Triennial Conference

For more information about the Society, please visit the website www.johnbunyan society.org, or contact the Secretary: Dr Robert W. Daniel. Email: IJBSSecretary@outlook.com

Membership Rates:

Individual: £22 / US$35 per year, or £60 / US$100 for three years

Student, Retired, Under-employed: £12 / US$20 per year

Couples at the same address may pay a single fee (but will be sent only one copy of Bunyan Studies)

Please send the following information and payment to one of the two IJBS Treasurers: Name:

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Rachel Adcock, European Treasurer,
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The International John Bunyan Society

A society dedicated to the study of the life and times of John Bunyan (1628-1688)

http://johnbunyansociety.org/

The Recorder

The Recorder is the Newsletter of the International John Bunyan Society. It appears once a year and offers members of the Society a forum for notes and queries, conference announcements, calls for papers, news of members, book and conference reviews, short articles, bibliographies – anything of interest to scholars and readers of Bunyan and his times.

Submissions (in electronic form) are gratefully received in the Spring for the annual Spring/Summer issue.

Please direct inquiries and submissions to Richard Angelo Bergen: rbergen@corpuschristi.ca

A HEARTY THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS, AND ESPECIALLY NATHALIE COLLE AND DAVID GAY FOR THEIR EXTENSIVE HELP