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# Knowing the Holy: Sanctification and Identity in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Literature

A Dissertation Presented for
the Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Elizabeth Anne Acker
May 2012

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# Abstract

Literary critics have long recognized the importance of religious dogmas to the formation and awareness of personal identity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Stanley Fish's seminal work, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, argues that the goal of seventeenth-century writers, influenced by the theology of Augustine, was not so much a construction of the self, but a deconstruction of the self as a sacred act. Borrowing from more recent work by Brian Cummings and Gary Kuchar, this dissertation explores the Protestant conception of holiness, or good works, within a salvation paradigm that centered on faith rather than works. In Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, John Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, and John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* and *Pilgrim's Progress*, sanctification is brought about through a right knowledge of both God and self through the agency of Scripture. In this way, sanctification was effected by the work of God, and the good works of the Christian could be attributed to divine rather than human agency. In *The Faerie Queene*, Redcrosse's journey is marked by error and mistaken identities, until he learns from Fidessa and Contemplation how to correctly interpret Scripture and himself. In the *Holy Sonnets*, Donne articulates the process of re-identification required by the Calvinist model of salvation, both resisting and affirming the self-abnegation that identification with Christ requires. In *Grace Abounding* and *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan frames Christian identity through a definition of the fear of God, which obliges the Christian to identify with Christ at the expense of ties to family and community. This study concludes with a reflection on how the sanctification by identification with Christ was expressed outwardly through the Protestant concept of vocation.

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# Introduction

## Sanctification and Re-identification in the English Reformation

For those who experienced the social upheavals caused by the Protestant Reformation, self-doubt was the inevitable consequence of religious controversy. The Reformation challenged authorities and institutions which had long guided the Christian understanding of selfhood, often turning obscure theological questions into pressing personal dilemmas for those who had to choose loyalties or navigate the social issues caused by government-enforced religious practices. At the heart of these questions was the problem of a personal salvation with all its implications. The Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin, the belief that human nature was hopelessly corrupted by the first sin of Adam and morally incapable of saving itself, shaped not only the doctrine of justification by faith, but Protestant teaching on sanctification as well. While not every Protestant shared a strict Augustinian perspective, the doctrine of moral helplessness was central to Reformation debates and proved to be a defining issue, particularly in England where Calvinism was ascendant under Elizabeth and James. Thus, each English Protestant was compelled to confront a theology that designated him or her a failed self, incapable of realizing the identity that God had constructed within human nature as the image of God.

This study is concerned with how three English writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries addressed the issue of identity and sanctification, and how a Protestant model of sanctification - one based on the doctrines of *sola fide* and *sola gratia* - offered new scope in creating imaginative characters and in expressing private struggles. Edmund Spenser, John Donne, and John Bunyan are enticing characters for a study of the creation of religious identity in the English Reformation because all three were very much a product of England's religious

milieu. Spenser belonged to an Elizabethan Church that was Calvinist in doctrine, but which still retained many of the external trappings of Catholic worship. Donne was born into a recusant family, but then left his Catholic heritage to accept ordination into the Church of England when Calvinism was still ascendant in the reign of James I. Bunyan seems to have been born into a family with no particular religious fervor, and his first attempts at religion apparently centered on the parish church. It is only well into adulthood that Bunyan has what he afterwards considers a legitimate conversion experience and joins the Baptist congregation at Bedford. The rest of his life was marked by almost constant conflict with the laws governing the established church.

Reformation teaching on sanctification, like the doctrine of justification by faith, has roots in St. Augustine and St. Paul. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Bullinger were indebted to Augustine's equation of Original Sin with moral helplessness. "What good work can a lost man perform?" asked Augustine ("Enchiridion" 256). To be spiritually lost is to be morally dead and incapable of acting on one's own behalf. It was justification that raised the dead and made it possible for the individual to become an active moral agent once again. In the process, that aspect of humanity that was defaced by Original Sin, the image of God, could be restored through sanctification. It is Paul who describes Christ as "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15, ESV), and who admonishes Christians to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). As the incarnate God, Christ restores the image of God within human nature becoming, as Paul calls him, the "last Adam" (I Cor. 15:45). Delivered from the death of Original Sin, the Christian may be restored to the *imago dei* by becoming like Christ. In both Romans and Galatians, epistles beloved of the Reformation, Paul enjoins the Christian to "put on Christ" (Rom. 13:14, Gal. 3:27).

The expression "put on Christ" suggests that sanctification is less about performance than it is about an identification. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin argues that the Scriptural promises of rewards for good works do not mean that Christians may take credit for those works. He states, "But though it is by mercy alone that God admits his people to life, yet as he leads them into possession of it by the course of good works, that he may complete his work in them in the order which he has destined, it is not strange that they are said to be crowned according to their works, since by these doubtless they are prepared for receiving the crown of immortality. No, for this reason they are aptly said to work out their own salvation . . . The moment they are admitted to fellowship with Christ, by the knowledge of the Gospel, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, their eternal life has begun" (540). Sanctification, like justification, is by the election and grace of God. It is the process of taking possession of and living in the new and eternal life created by the saving mercy of God, and it is brought about through the revelatory knowledge that the Spirit gives of the Word of God.

This raises the question of whether or not knowledge itself was understood to be a good work, since the Christian must presumably study Scripture in order to arrive at knowlege. Stanley Fish argues in *Self-Consuming Artifacts* that writers in the Augustinian tradition use language to strip away the trappings of selfhood so that only Christ remains before the gaze of the reader. Fish begins by distinguishing between rhetoric, which delights the hearer by validating prior assumptions, and dialectic, which seeks to shift the hearer to an altogether different way of seeing himself. Dialectic is the art of shifting paradigms and consequently, it is the art of conversion. In his discussion of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, Fish argues that Augustine's dialectic consists of dismantling rhetoric so that the reader understands the futility of human speech and reason (41-42).

Embedded in Augustine's treatise is a theology of knowledge that is based on direct revelation, a knowledge that is received rather than earned. Wisdom, Augustine argues, is found in Scripture rightly understood, but one may read the Scriptures without seeing into them properly (“On Christian Doctrine” 456-57). A right understanding comes from the same source as the Scriptures themselves. The preacher should "lift up his thirsting soul to God, in order to give forth what he will drink in, and to pour out what he will be filled with" (468). This does not exclude effort or artifice in speaking or learning, but rather makes both dependent on the intervention of God who wills their efficacy (469). For Fish, this erasure of the preacher (or writer), who loses the authority of authorship in order to become a transparent channel of revelation, amounts to rhetorical self-nullification, the self-consuming artifact. I would argue that the reader may go one step further and say that by leaving Christ in the eye of the reader, the author is not merely rejecting an identity, but also assuming a new one, one that reflects the divine man -- that the author is, to quote Calvin, coming "into possession of it [that identity] by the course of good works." In this case, it is the work of writing. The poem or allegory thus becomes one way in which the author can put on Christ. It is my contention that Protestant piety placed sanctification at this recurring moment of transformation, one brought about by receiving and expressing a new understanding of God and self. Christ has been inserted into the text in place of the self, but in a way that permits the writer to identify with Christ and so fulfill his purpose to bear the image of God, since Christ is God made man. The self is not consumed, but transformed by this re-identification. It is sanctification by grace because sanctification produces good works, but is not produced by them, and because the process results from receiving a revelatory understanding of the self.

This does not resolve the question of how much human agency is involved in the process of sanctification. More than one critic has noted that Reformation writing often seems conflicted on this point. In *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser*, Darryl J. Gless notes that the Thirty-Nine Articles, which governed the English church under Elizabeth, listed the stages of Calvinist soteriology such as justification and sanctification, without expounding on their relationship. He states, "The language presents these events as a sheer list without explicitly commenting on their interrelations or the energies that achieve them" (28). One cannot read Reformation theology without an awareness of how insistent most of its proponents were in proclaiming that a doctrine of grace should not be used to excuse evil. Instead, the Christian was enjoined to act upon the grace that was given by God, while being mindful that good works came from the gift of justification and were not a means of earning salvation (Gless 31). It might be argued that the emphasis upon knowledge offered some alleviation to the tension between grace and works. The emphasis on the knowledge of God and self in Protestant writing about holiness allows the author to locate the agency with God and in the operation of Scripture in a way similar to that described by Augustine.

Thus far, I have used the terms Augustinian and Calvinist to indicate certain doctrinal threads, but anyone who studies the English Reformation must be prepared for endless ambiguities. Like the Protestants of early modern England who struggled with seemingly endless doctrinal controversies, the scholars who study them do not have the luxury of a consensus. An excellent overview of various trends in framing the English Reformation has been provided by Peter Marshall in his article, "(Re)defining the Reformation." Marshall begins by noting the point at which the traditional narrative of the Reformation – that England's progression from a Catholic to a Protestant country was a gradual but steady process involving discontent with the

Catholic Church at all levels of society – began to be challenged by the revisionism of scholars like Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy (565). In his seminal study, *The Stripping of the Altars*, Duffy argues that Catholicism continued to be a vibrant and popular movement among the common people, while the Reformation was largely imposed on them by political and religious authorities. That the Revisionist view failed to gain a consensus is apparent in the emergence of "Postrevisionism," a term which Marshall calls "elusive and catch-all" (565). Postrevisionism does not deny continuing Catholic influence in England after the reign of Henry VIII, but rather emphasizes the complexity of the Reformation as a series of narratives and a collection of competing identities rather than a collective movement toward a Protestant uniformity. Richard Mallette concurs: "Profiting from prolific research over the past three decades by political historians and historians of religion, literary studies have recently begun to regard the English Reformation of the sixteenth century as a collection of discourses, an array of voices and currents of thought" (7). One attempt to bring order to the resulting milieu of religious identities is the idea of "confessionalization." In *Literature and Politics in the English Reformation*, Tom Betteridge describes confessionalization as, "The creation of true false religious identities, and the process of examination and inquisition that this entailed," a process which "clearly had the potential to massively increase the power of early modern governments and ruling elites" (2). Betteridge argues that these identities were created (mainly by those in power) in response to the uncontrolled dissemination of knowledge made possible by the printing press.

Marshall concludes his survey of recent criticism by suggesting some lines of inquiry that future criticism might pursue. He suggests that the most fruitful way of approaching

religious identities in the Reformation might focus less on collective identities and more on individuals. He states,

> It is often suggested that the frequent shifts and turns of government religious policy in the sixteenth century must have confused and disoriented people . . . Yet I think the possibility that it had precisely the opposite result needs to be investigated seriously – that the orders to remove or restore altars, images, and books had a profoundly catechizing effect, encouraging people to think about their meanings more intensely than they had done before. (585)

In this way, controversy became a tool for religious education and indoctrination, and the lack of unity itself encouraged greater individualism and greater self-reflection among those who had to choose between submission and defiance, conformity and contrast.

The result is that the variety of religious experiences in England often resulted in complexity of experience for individuals. Isaac Stephens argues, "We must remember that although communal religious life that revolved around the parish church was significant to the spiritual life of an individual, it was not necessarily always the driving force that defined a layperson's personal piety and devotional practice" (28). He notes that spiritual practices of Englishmen in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were shaped not only by the Calvinist theology of the Church of England, but also by "a form of Calvinist pietism [that] sank deep roots among the laity" (28). In other words, even when personal religious practice conformed to official doctrine, it was likely to take on an individualized character in everyday practice. Stephens example of this is Elizabeth Isham whose lengthy spiritual autobiography

(1639) reflects both devotion to the Book of Common Prayer and to the ideology of the Puritans who ostensibly rejected the Prayer Book (29).

The spiritual practices of Isham and others illustrate the difficulty of dividing English Protestants into categories. While a number of critics have noted the dominance of Calvinism in England during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, Calvinism itself does not offer a tidy category. For example, to the extent that John Donne embraced a predestinarian theology, it was a moderate Calvinism, marked by more ambiguity than one would find in the writings of Luther or Calvin, both of whom influenced Donne's sermons (Lewalksi 20). For example, in one sermon, Donne argues that no one who receives a royal pardon needs to ask why it was given: "I enquire not what God did in his bed-chamber, in his cabinet counsel, in his eternall decree" (323). The Christian, in other words, does not need to understand election to have assurance of salvation. John Bunyan is the most distinctly Calvinist of the three authors discussed in the following chapters, but his theology was moderated by certain elements he obtained from reading Luther whose writings were more sympathetic to the doubts and uncertainties of a troubled Christian. Further, the difficulty of distinguishing between the influence of Luther, Calvin and others has been noted by Dewey D. Wallace, who has noted that it is often not possibly to label something as distinctly Calvinist. He observes, " . . . Not only does Calvin follow the general pattern of earlier Reformed theology, but also does Reformed theology in the later part of the sixteenth century tend toward a more rigid and scholastic version of the doctrine [predestination] quite apart from Calvin," and he cites Luther's *Bondage of the Will* as an example of this (202). Wallace also notes, "It was characteristic of the Rhineland Reformers and especially Bucer to discuss redemption in terms of a whole 'order of salvation' in which sanctification was a crucial part and in which it was closely related to predestination as 'election to holiness'" (203). The

wide but not universal acceptance of a soteriology based on predestination results in a blurring of categories, since English reformers read and were influenced by all the above authors and more besides. I have chosen to refer to Calvinism throughout, since it was Calvin's formulation that was most influential in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, not merely in its emphasis on predestination, but also in its "'word-centered' style of piety" (Doerksen and Hodgkins 13). Throughout this study, I also acknowledge the influence of others, such as Luther, on specific writers. In doing so, I trust that this project will illustrate Marshall's point that Protestantism is best discussed as an individual experience rather than defined nationally or confessionally.

I have discussed Peter Marshall at length because this study begins at the place where he ends. Marshall indicates that a better theoretical understanding of the Reformation may require focusing on individuals rather than confessions or establishments: "Any convincing attempt to redefine the English Reformation, in other words, needs to start and end with the story of how English Christians managed to redefine themselves" (586). Identity is usually formed by relationships within families and communities, but the Reformation offered the possibility of re-identification by reframing the all-important relationship between the individual and God. Because God supersedes all other authorities, one may transform all other relationships by redefining how one relates to God, and thus assert an identity that is radically different than one assigned by family or class. Defined this way, sanctification means that Donne need not remain a recusant, and Bunyan need not remain a tinker.

Beyond this, however, there is the more foundational sense of identity that is challenged and changed by a Protestant paradigm of salvation (to borrow Lewalksi's term) in which God justifies, sanctifies, and ultimately glorifies the redeemed. It is my contention that Protestant

writers used poetry and fiction to argue for a transformative knowledge of the divine as a remedy for Original Sin. They do not only portray sanctification as an affective process located in the heart, but also as a substantive process that renews the mind by changing how one thinks about God and self. As will be seen in Chapter Three, Bunyan's Christian attempts to convert Mr. Ignorance by challenging, not just his opinion of himself, but the way in which he arrives at that opinion. The restoration of an individual to divine image-bearing begins with a truthful acknowledgement of the degree to which that likeness has been destroyed and a fresh vision of how it might be restored. Consequently, we see Edmund Spenser attempting to redefine chivalry and Englishness in the light of the Reformation's revised understanding of self. How does one define Christian nobility, the reader is compelled to ask, if it is no longer defined by an institutional church that gains money and power by commanding the devotion of those with money and power? For Donne, how does one find the parameters of self while embracing a theology that is utterly self-effacing?

By making sanctification a process of knowing differently, Protestant writers distinguish it from the works-based theology of late medieval Catholicism. That sanctification will involve a change of behavior is inevitable, but Augustinian theology (as transmitted by Calvin and Luther) always places the emphasis on God's agency. It demands that righteousness or holiness always be seen as God's work rather than human endeavor. Because of this, the centrality of Christ extends beyond his role as exemplar for the *imago dei*. Neither the church establishment nor good works can mediate between humanity and God. Only Christ mediates, not only as an advocate, but as one who supplies the righteousness that the individual Christian lacks. Only Christ possesses that sufficiency. In his *Lectures on Galatians*, Luther contrasts the security of salvation by works with the security of salvation by grace by pronouncing,

> We must by all means believe for a certainty that we are in a state of grace, that we are pleasing to God for the sake of Christ . . . To the extent that Christ is pleasing to God and that we cling to Him, to that extent we, too, are pleasing to God and holy. And although sin still clings to our flesh and we still fall every day, still grace is more abundant and more powerful than sin. (377-78)

Salvation, according to Luther, is not based on the individual's action, but in the identification of the Christian with Christ and his worthiness. The Christian who is confident of that identity need not doubt his or her acceptance by God, since Christ is always accepted; nor need he doubt the goodness of God who gives salvation freely, as Luther had before his conversion. Luther's explanation of justification (righteousness through the merit of Christ) indicates how a theology of sanctification by knowing might be possible. Holiness is not something that the Christian earns or obtains progressively; rather, it is something that characterizes the Christian from the moment of justification. From the moment that the merits of Christ are applied to his account, the Christian stands possessed of righteousness, of a holy identity that belongs to him *gratis*. Sanctification occurs when he recognizes that identity, which is really a re-identification with Christ, and begins to act upon it. Since this is not a righteousness that originates with the Christian, but rather acts upon him to change his character, it cannot be attributed to human endeavors. In this way, the Protestant subscribes to a salvation with works, but not a salvation by works. In his discussion of Luther's definition of *iustitia*, or righteousness, Brian Cummings observes, "By a delicate use of relative pronouns, Luther crosses the gulf between *iustitia* and man; God's righteousness is that by which the righteous man lives . . .Instead of *iustitia* belonging to God, it is something he imparts to others; exclusive possession is rewritten as

inclusive gift" (65). By making righteousness a gift that is bestowed rather than an honor that is earned, Luther's theology presents identity as a something determined by divine pronouncement rather than personal choices: "The just man, then, is not the man who has learnt to do just actions, but one to whom God has decided not to attribute sin, and thus to call 'just'" (97). Thus, throughout most of his adventure, Redcrosse fails to act in a manner that might be described as holy, and yet he does not cease to be Redcrosse; nor is he ever otherwise than St. George, though he is nearly at the end of his quest before he discovers that this is his identity. Rather, the discovery of that identity, along with the story of his changeling past, empowers him to fulfill that quest and to act out the role that has been given him.

Narratives that follow a Protestant theology of sanctification begin with themes of loss and estrangement. The rustic swain in the Prologue of *The Faerie Queene* who is really a prince though he does not know it, the nameless and burdened man in rags who weeps outside the city at the beginning of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and to some extent the lost narrator of Donne's "Good Friday, 1613," who is compelled to travel in a direction opposite his own desires are all pictures of the failed self, simultaneously alienated from God and a right understanding of themselves. The drama of these narratives arises from the conflicts that emerge as a re-identification with Christ begins to transform the individual in opposition to old, unconverted states of mind (such as pride and ignorance) or extrinsic, social pressures (such as alternative forms of Christianity). Notably, Barbara Lewalski, in her description of the Protestant salvation paradigm, observes that this paradigm does not follow discrete stages, but rather describes different aspects of one continuous process that culminates with glorification, which is the perfection of the believer in heaven, the ultimate reclamation of the *imago dei* (16). Calvin himself explains the link between glorification and justification in the *Institutes*: ". . . Holiness of life, real holiness, as it is called,

is inseparable from the free imputation of righteousness" (386). That is to say, that sanctification cannot be detached from justification because holiness of life cannot exist apart from the imputed righteousness that justification provides. In the same way, the absence of holiness would indicate that justification had never occurred, since the righteousness of Christ once infused, will always demonstrate itself through outward actions. Calvin argues that imputed righteousness is a future-oriented decree. He states, ". . . God the Father, who, as he hath reconciled us to himself in his Anointed [Christ], has impressed his image upon us, to which he would have us to be conformed" (446). Imputed righteousness, given in the act of justification, does not merely pardon, but it begins the process of reconstructing the character of the person who has been justified by imprinting the image of Christ upon the individual Christian. Since Christ is God, sanctification imprints, and thus restores, the image of God

For Luther, this was a far more effective means of bringing about holiness than mere rule-keeping, the paradigm he saw in late medieval Catholicism. He explains this in his interpretation of Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (ESV). He argues that human nature wears the likeness of Adam (Original Sin), but that salvation offers transformation:

> But to put on Christ according to the Gospel is a matter, not of imitation but of a new birth and a new creation, namely, that I put on Christ Himself, that is, His innocence, wisdom, power, salvation, life, and spirit . . . This does not happen by a change of clothing or by any law or works; it happens by the rebirth and renewal that takes place in Baptism . . . To put on Christ according to the Gospel, therefore, is to put on, not the Law or works, but an

> inestimable gift, namely, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, peace, comfort, joy in the Holy Spirit, salvation, life and Christ Himself. (352-53)

Sanctification is the process of taking up a new persona, of acting out a re-identification. That Redcrosse's three-day battle with the dragon may be associated with Christ's passion indicates that there is more than salvation at stake. In that the tree and the springing well save him from destruction by the dragon, we may read justification; in that they empower him to destroy the dragon and restore Eden, we may read sanctification, which restores that which was lost to Original Sin. The Protestant paradigm allows both to be enacted concurrently. Likewise, that justification should be enacted at the end of the narrative need not contradict the idea that Redcrosse is acting out an identity that he has always possessed, since the doctrine of predestination asserts that this identity has always been his through the sovereign and prevenient grace of God.

The Protestant emphasis on the role of knowledge in sanctification not only accommodated the doctrines of *sola fide* and *sola gratia*, but affirmed the supremacy of Scripture. Protestants located the process of sanctification within the mind and within the context of Scripture-reading. Thomas A. Dughi argues, "From Luther through Bunyan (and beyond), nothing is more fundamental to Protestantism than the belief that the Word of God has the power to lay hold of and transform the deepest structures of the psyche" (23). Knowledge of Scripture could not be separated from knowledge of God and self because Scripture forced the individual to see self from a new perspective. John Frith, a colleague of William Tyndale and a martyr in the reign of Henry VIII, explains this in his treatise, *A Mirrour to Know Thyself*. He

begins his treatise by noting that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and that the fear of the Lord begins with knowledge of self. He states,

> Now who can fear the Lord, but only he that knoweth himself, as the Scripture teacheth him? For if I perceive not the imperfection of my nature, which is subject unto corruption, and void of all stableness; if I perceive not the unstableness of my flesh, being prone to all sin, and rebellious to righteousness, and there dwelleth no goodness in me; if I perceive not the poison of the old serpent, and hell, and sin which lieth hid within me, unto which are prepared pains intolerable, I shall have no occasion to fear God, but rather to advance myself equal with God, as Lucifer, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, and such other have done, which after were sore chastened for their folly. (265-266)

This passage sounds, of course, very like something John Calvin could have written. In fact, it predates Calvin's *Institutes* by several years. There is the common Protestant emphasis on total depravity ("there dwelleth no goodness in me"), and Scripture is held up as the absolute standard by which the self is measured, as opposed to the unstable perceptions of pride. Throughout the treatise, Frith chides his opponent, Sir Thomas More, for embracing a doctrinal position that accommodates itself to human reason. For Frith, human self-awareness needs the special revelation that Scripture provides in order to be truthful.

One example of this perceived connection between revelation and self-awareness is the Protestant discourse on conscience. Jonathan Wright explains that medieval scholasticism understood the conscience to be exempt from the corruption of Original Sin. Borrowing the idea

of *synderesis* (the knowledge of moral law) from St. Jerome, Scholastics argued that the conscience was still a reliable arbiter of human behavior with the capacity to apply moral standards to everyday situations. Protestants, on the other hand, "found it hard to accept the concept of a *synderesis* inherently inclined towards good and a *conscientia* still able to flawlessly apply its precepts – both mysteriously unaffected by the Fall" (119). An example of the Protestant distrust of conscience may be found in Bunyan's *The Holy War*, in which Mr. Conscience is imprisoned by Diabolus (Satan) after Mansoul's fall. When Mansoul is recaptured by the Prince (Christ), Mr. Conscience is released, but retired from office. Blinded by having lived so many years in a cell deprived of light, Mr. Conscience is no longer fit to provide the city with moral guidance and must be replaced by the King's Secretary who represents the Holy Spirit.

Aside from failing to provide reliable moral guidance, the fallen conscience exacerbates the problem of a failed self. Heinrich Bullinger defines the role of conscience in this way:

> And the conscience, verily, is the knowledge, judgment, and reason of a man, whereby every man in himself, and in his own mind, being made privy to every thing that he either hath committed or not committed, doth either condemn or else acquit himself.

Self-assessment, to know oneself, is the function of conscience. Its purpose is to allow an individual to reflect upon and pass judgment on his or her own conduct and spiritual condition. A failed conscience, therefore, makes proper identification impossible because it distorts self-awareness.

While Bullinger emphasizes human depravity, he is not as quick as Bunyan to disqualify conscience as a moral arbiter. For Bullinger, the conscience remains intact, in spite of human sinfulness, through the supernatural agency of God:

> And this reason proceedeth from God, who both prompteth and writeth his judgments in the hearts and minds of men. . . . But the disposition of mankind being flatly corrupted by sin, as it is blind, so also is it in all points evil and naughty. It knoweth not God, it worshippeth not God, neither doth it love the neighbor; but rather is affected with self-love toward itself, and seeketh still for its own advantage. . . . Wherefore the law of nature [Natural Law] is not called the law of nature, because in the nature and disposition of man there is of or by itself that reason of light exhorting to the best things, and that holy working; but for because God hath imprinted or engraven in our minds some knowledge . . .

Bullinger's characterization of conscience includes several features worth noting. The first is the link between conscience and knowledge. Natural Law, according to Bullinger, is a fixed knowledge that God has imprinted on the human consciousness. The difference between this and the Scholastic idea of *synderesis* appears to exist in the application. Whereas Scholastics affirmed the ability of humans to keep God's law, Bullinger argues that humanity has an accurate knowledge of what is good, but no desire to do it. The inclination of human nature is "in all points evil." Instead, moral knowledge exists so that every person may be answerable for his or her actions. Calvin states that God has endowed people with some core knowledge of himself so that they "may be condemned by their own consciences" when they fail to honor and obey him;

the sinner is not indicted by God, but by his own awareness that what he has done is wrong. So, if Original Sin denies human nature a free moral agency in that it is inflexibly bent on evil, people are still not without responsibility because they recognize the evil of their sins even as they enjoy committing them. This is because human nature "knoweth not God." Bullinger here distinguishes between knowledge of God's law and knowledge of his person and character; apparently a fallen conscience can supply one, but not the other. The implication is that a right knowledge of God would be a transforming knowledge, and that human behavior might change in the light of that revelation.

While Protestants distrusted conscience, they placed great value on the function of memory. In his article, "Spenser and Interpellative Memory," Christopher Ivic explains that memory (personal and national) plays an important role both in *The Faerie Queene* and *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. He describes the early modern understanding of the role of memory in self-definition:

> According to the Oxford English dictionary, 'to forget oneself' involves losing 'remembrance of one's station, position, or character; to lose sight of the requirements of dignity, propriety, or decorum; to behave unbecomingly.' Far from a mere lapse of memory, forgetting oneself entails a transformation (usually, though not always, imagined as erosive) of the self, a slide from one social, cultural, gender, and/or racial category to another: from a state of civility to incivility, to borrow an example from Spenser's *View*. In the early modern period, forgetting, as opposed

> to remembering, is tantamount to moral or ethical failure, and it leads to the loss of one's identity. (292)

For early modern Protestants, Original Sin must have seemed very like this kind of forgetting. Both Spenser and Bunyan portray their protagonists at the beginning of their journeys as impoverished and alienated. Georgos has forgotten himself in that his abduction in infancy constitutes a break in his personal history; there is a gap in what he knows about his own story. He is a peasant because he does not know that he is a prince; he cannot claim an inheritance that he does not know he possesses.

Whereas, forgetting oneself was synonymous with a loss of identity, memory might serve to facilitate a restoration. Achsah Guibbory, discussing John Donne's understanding of memory, notes that there was a tradition extending back to Augustine who considered memory, along with intelligence and will, to be part of the trinity of the human soul. That is, memory is part of how humanity is created in the divine image. Donne considered memory the most reliable faculty and least affected by the Fall (261). Guibbory argues that this reflects Augustine's idea that memory is the faculty that leads us to God: "Since all that man learns is stored in the memory, God too must dwell there. . . . Because God, once learned, is in our memory, the way to find God is through memory" (263). Similarly, Donne suggests that memory may provide the "stability, security" necessary to apprehend divine truth (262), precisely what Frith insists that prideful self-knowledge is lacking. One might conclude, therefore, that where memory is lacking, pride erects itself in the void. In "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward," it is memory that provides the narrator with the transformative vision of Christ crucified, which enables the narrator to relocate himself in the cosmos and assign purpose to the direction in which he is traveling.

Memory is valuable because it provides a stable means of knowing both God and self. It is this kind of knowledge that John Calvin describes in the *Institutes*. Having described "solid wisdom" as "the knowledge of God and of ourselves," he argues "that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he [has] previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself" (4-5). This is because human nature is always pleased with itself until it encounters by revelation the perfection and purity of the divine nature (5). Once the individual has that encounter, perspective is abruptly altered. According to Bullinger, Natural Law provides recognition of what is good, but human nature is not compelled to do it. Knowledge of God, as Calvin describes it, brings about a different result. He explains,

> For this sense of the divine perfections is the proper master to teach us piety, out of which religion springs. By piety I mean that union of reverence and love to God which the knowledge of his benefits inspires. For, until men feel that they owe everything to God, that they are cherished by his paternal care, and that he is the author of all their blessings, so that naught is to be looked for away from him, they will never submit to him in voluntary obedience; no, unless they place their entire happiness in him, they will never yield up their whole selves to him in truth and sincerity. (7-8)

Calvin states later in the passage that it is love for God which motivates true obedience and not the fear of punishment (8). It will be seen in chapter three that John Bunyan argues the same thing in *Treatise of the Fear of God*, insisting that the goodness of God, as much as his judgment, inspires fear and reverence in the person who has once glimpsed the purity of the divine nature.

For this reason, holiness (the product of this transformation) is frequently defined in opposition to pride and error. Pride is a false perception of the self, the sort of misperception that can result from a corrupted conscience, which is no longer honest in its recognition of moral failure. Calvin states, "So long as we do not look beyond the earth, we are quite pleased with our own righteousness, wisdom, and virtue; we address ourselves in the most flattering terms, and seem only less than demigods" (5). Such pride is also the product of mistaken ideas about God. Martin Luther accused his opponents of failing to understand the unattainability of God's holiness when they taught that human efforts could satisfy God's desire for righteousness. More than that, he argued that the attempt to appease God through works was rooted in a misrepresentation of God's character:

> They fast; they pray; they lay crosses on themselves. They suppose that in this way they are placating the wrath of God and meriting grace. But they do not give glory to God; that is, they do not regard Him as merciful, truthful, and faithful to His promises. No, they consider Him an angry judge, who must be placated by their works. In this way they despise God, accuse Him of lying in all His promises and deny Christ and all His blessings. In short, they depose God from His throne and set themselves up in His place. (229)

There is nothing glorious about God if he is a petty tyrant; there is no reason to honor him if his morality is so like that of humanity that he can be impressed by human endeavors. Instead, God is glorified by the recognition that his holiness is transcendent and can only be satisfied by a righteousness that he supplies, and by a trust which believes that he is gracious enough to supply

it. Holiness, according to Luther, comes by faith in who Christ is and what he provides: "Do you see now how faith justifies without works? Sin lingers in us, and God hates sin. A transfusion of righteousness therefore becomes vitally necessary. This transfusion of righteousness we obtain from Christ because we believe in Him." It is helpful again to remember that for Protestants there is no neat line separating the act of justification from the act of sanctification. When the Christian receives a "transfusion of righteousness" it immediately begins to operate within the Christian to transform him or her into the likeness of Christ whose righteousness has been received. What is required of the Christian to make this possible is to know the character of God and the work of Christ and to respond in faith to the promise of salvation.

Is it possible then to see common features in Protestant literary depictions of holiness, bound as they are to notions of individual selfhood and conviction? Literary artists, like theologians, could never separate the grace which justifies from the grace which sanctifies, though there was a clearly defined distinction between the two. If it is God who does the work of saving, then it is God who does the work of sanctifying. The subject of the story/poem is the object of divine grace as it operates to transform the individual into the image of the divine as it was purposed by God in the beginning. There is always an emphasis on God's agency/ sovereignty rather than the agency of the character undergoing transformation. This grants a biblical revelation of self, and through that knowledge, the subject is able to overcome sin. This always involves identification with Christ, both as Savior and model of the *imago dei*.

Chapter One discusses Spenser's allegory of holiness in Book 1 of *The Faerie Queene*. Redcrosse's journey is characterized by constantly shifting identities, both his own and that of the characters around him. The successful completion of Redcrosse's quest is made possible by

the revelation of his true name by Contemplation and the identification he makes with the Passion of Christ in the final battle with the Dragon. Throughout Book 1, Spenser repeatedly draws his picture of holiness in contrast to representations of pride and error. In the end, the transformation of Redcrosse requires a transformation of his story as well, as the reader is invited to accept a rewriting of the narrative that exonerates, or justifies, the guilty knight, leaving intact his heroic persona as St. George of England.

Chapter Two explores John Donne's conflicted response to Calvinism in his religious poetry. Throughout the "Holy Sonnets" and in "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward," Donne struggles with the implications of a theology in which acceptance by God is entirely dependent on grace. His poetry is a response to the conflict between this theology and his self-awareness. After exploring several figures for self-negation in the "Holy Sonnets," Donne attempts a kind of poetic crucifixion in "Good Friday," untangling the implications of the Cross for his own failed selfhood. To the extent that Donne finds a resolution to his spiritual dilemma, it rests in his interpretation of how the Passion redefines suffering for the individual Christian. Having found deadness within himself already, Donne seems to argue that it is the restorative power of Christ's intentional sacrifice that can assign meaning and purpose to the afflictions the poet endures through the sanctification it offers.

The last chapter is a discussion of the role of self-knowledge in the writings of John Bunyan. For Bunyan, self-knowledge came through a right knowledge of God, which he designates the "fear of God." In his *Treatise on the Fear of God*, Bunyan meticulously describes the characteristics of such a reverence and the sanctifying effects of its work in the soul. It will be seen that much of what is argued in the treatise can be tied to Bunyan's own spiritual experience in *Grace Abounding*. Bunyan's own practice of reverence may help to explain his

decision to accept prison rather than conformity, and *Pilgrim's Progress, Part I* is Bunyan's analysis of how godly fear can transform every allegiance and relationship, forcing the individual to base his or her identity solely on a central, defining relationship with God. In the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, the sinner is alienated from God, but the sanctified saint is alienated from the world with the hope of gaining eternal life.

While these authors do not represent the full scope of Protestant experience in England, they do reflect new ways of understanding selfhood within the controversies raised by the Reformation. It is true that not every Englishman could identify with the Augustinian theology of Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, and others, but every Englishman could identify with the doubts and controversies that the Reformation created. Above all, the works discussed here reflect the complexities created by the shift from the communal sensibilities of late medieval Christianity to a profoundly personal Christianity, one that had the power to redefine allegiances and alter the relationships at the core of one's identity.

# Chapter One

## The Restoration of Eden: Identity and Holiness in *The Faerie Queene*

When Edmund Spenser sends his Redcrosse knight to liberate Una's kingdom, an allegory for the restoration of Eden, he is necessarily writing about the effects of Original Sin, the destruction of the *imago dei* within the human soul. Redcrosse represents holiness, the state of being set apart to God. The conflict of the narrative thus arises from Redcrosse's repeated failure to recognize certain truths about himself and those around him. The role of pride as a constant antagonist indicates that the real conflict for Redcrosse lies in competing identities, through repeated motifs of bondage, liberty and self-loss found throughout the first book of *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser's own theology has been a contentious issue for his critics. Anthea Hume summarizes Spenser's doctrinal position as "a fervent Protestantism which requires the label 'Puritan' during a specific period" (9). She places the Puritan period of Spenser's writings in the late 1570s (4), but states that she can offer no evidence for extending it to the 1590s when The *Faerie Queene* was published (9). Darryl J. Gless argues that controversy about Spenser's theology stems partly from each reader's inclination to read his or her own perspective into the narrative and partly from a critical tendency to "infer" entire theologies from isolated passages in Spenser's works (4,2). Gless does not dismiss the possibility of gaining insight from using theological sources, but rather cautions against reading any one doctrinal system as authoritative in a period known for variety of religious expression (13). Carol V. Kaske agrees that Spenser's "doctrinal allegiance" may vary based on the passage being referenced (5), and notes that while Calvinism was predominant in England during Spenser's lifetime, Spenser shows the influence of other theologians such as Melancthon (7) and a debt to Catholic style and form in some

writings (9). John N. King identifies Spenser with "the Progressive Protestant movement to continue the process of church reform," but argues that attempting to distinguish between Puritans and Anglicans in the late sixteenth century is "inappropriate" and "anachronistic" (9). Richard Mallette argues that Spenser attempts "the reconciliation of religious and literary texts" (1), but finds that effort to be tense and conflicted. He states,

> As it moves from book to book, and prison to prison, the poem seems to migrate ever more distantly from its Reformation grounding in disputes about the will. But that discourse has been sedimented in the text from the outset. . . . *The Faerie Queene* engages the resources of the Reformation, interrogates those resources, transmutes them, resists them, and remains in thrall to them. (4)

According to Mallette, the reader should, consequently, expect to find contradictions in Spenser's representations of human will and agency as Spenser struggles to internalize Reformation teaching on human agency.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the influence of the Protestant tradition on Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, particularly in its emphasis on holiness produced by grace and in the central role of Scripture as the agent of that grace. Because authorities do not read Spenser's theology as the same in all his writings, I have here assumed only that Spenser is a member of the Church of England at a time when its doctrines were informed by Calvinism, which seems to be the minimum agreed upon by critics generally, if not unanimously. Book I is, as Hume notes, ". . . a Protestant recreation – effected by Spenser himself – of the St. George legend" (72). It is a Protestant delineation of holiness centered on grace and Scripture and offered in contrast to a

Catholic model of piety. As such, the Legend of Holiness seems to be in the same spirit as Spenser's earlier political support of "militant Protestant policies" on the part of the English government (King 11).

The journey of Holiness in the first book of *The Faerie Queene* is one of self-loss. Spenser presents his readers with two versions of this loss, one which represents failure and the other fulfillment. Self-loss is a repeated theme in the New Testament. Christ says, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26, KJV). Elsewhere, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). The paradox thus presented to the reader is one of conflicting versions of the self – one which must be lost and another which must be found. This is a theme common in Pauline epistles where these two selves are referred to as the "old man" and the "new man," the former referring to unregenerate human nature and the latter to the sanctified self created at the moment of conversion. For example, Colossians 3:9-10 states, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (KJV). Two things are noteworthy: first, the new man is a renewal of the original man who was made in the divine image and, second, that this renewal is a process that occurs in the mind and which is brought about through knowledge. Spenser's belief in knowledge as the agent of sanctification can be seen in Redcrosse's repeated conflict with errors of various kinds and in the instruction the knight receives in the House of Holiness. Likewise, the renewal of the primordial perfection of humanity is seen in the object of the knight's journey. Redcrosse is questing for Eden, for a perfection that was lost to Original Sin.

In order to achieve his quest, everything that Redcrosse knows about himself will change. While Spenser never uses New Testament terminology, the old man/new man dichotomy is

present in the narrative nonetheless. The old man is proud, self-sufficient and self-promoting. He is dishonest with himself, as well as others. The new man is Christ-like, both sacrificing and heroic in his sacrifice. What enables Redcrosse to make the transition from one to the other is a process of self-discovery, one that involves the destruction of the old man through repeated failure, but which offers him restoration through divine grace. I call this a "re-identification" because Spenser dramatizes this transformation in part by renaming his protagonist, by presenting him with one identity at the beginning of the narrative and then changing it dramatically near the end. Redcrosse's eventual success is a fulfillment, not simply of his obligation to Una, but also of his identity as St. George, patron saint of England and embodiment of English national identity. Because pride and error are the antagonists who oppose this fulfillment, the progress of the knight may be seen in his battles, both successful and unsuccessful, against these enemies.

While holiness is an inward and individual journey, it must be noted in the beginning that Spenser's allegory also reflects a crisis of national identity. Critics have thus offered different suggestions for how the reader should approach the historical allusions in *The Faerie Queene*. Andrew Escobedo places Spenser in a group of authors that he perceives as trying to bridge the gap between Protestant Tudor England and its medieval Catholic past. Spenser's narrative, which connects the court of Gloriana/ Elizabeth to Arthurian Briton and the Saxon St. George, offers such a bridge. David Miller has also noted the significance of historical transition to a reading of *The Faerie Queene*, centered as it is on the person of Gloriana:

> *The Faerie Queene* reflects a poetics of incorporation that could have been formulated only *after* the Reformation in England had hastened the long-term process through which the national state

> assumed the role of preeminent corporate entity in political life, and *before* the idea of the state had detached itself from the person of the monarch. (17)

Spenser is thus redefining chivalry at a moment when Christian identity and English identity are uniquely conflated. Michael O'Connell argues that political considerations are at the forefront of the allegory, at least in the beginning, because Spenser wishes to speak to power: "As a poet of moral vision, he recognized the importance of touching the mind of the ruler, for the ruler not only establishes national policy but also serves in some sense as the moral leader of a people" (3). However, O'Connell disagrees with earlier critics who tried to tie the plot of the narratives too closely to a historical chronology (11). O'Connell sees the art of allegory as liberating Spenser from too close an association with "actual events", as he attempts to discuss "considerations of history within the framework of moral concern" (5). He argues that Spenser is interested in "the moral potential of political power," but that he becomes increasingly disillusioned with politics, and that the latter part of the epic is increasingly focused on personal experience rather than historical possibilities (14). From these arguments, the reader may conclude that historical themes provide important context for the narrative, but that there must also be a willingness to let each moment of a character's journey stand quasi-independently as tropes and symbols shift on the landscape of fairyland.

This is similar to the approach taken by Paul Alpers who insists that critics are mistaken in searching for an overarching narrative structure in *The Faerie Queene*. Instead, he suggests that Spenser gives priority to the lessons and themes of individual cantos (108). According to Alpers, the reader need not retain much detail from canto to canto, much less from book to book (124-125) . For this reason, he prefers to speak of the allegory's organization rather than its

structure (107). Woodcock observes that Spenser does not seem interested in constructing a coherent or consistent fantasy world, and he dismisses the attempts of critics to "find some kind of unity in *The Faerie Queene*, to contain its potential endlessness and assert a framework of unity through the provision of an external structure" (78). Evelyn B. Tribble cites Alpers to argue that teachers should follow his suggestion of focusing on individual scenes as disparate reading experiences instead of perceiving the allegory in its entirety as a puzzle to solve (59). Tribble ties this approach to a Protestant understanding of allegory and the act of reading. For the early Reformer William Tyndale, for instance, a right exegesis relies on "contextualization," on the realization that certain symbols in Scripture have different meanings which cannot be determined by an outside authority, but rather by analyzing the text itself, "comparing one part with another and carefully considering context to determine local meaning" (60). Tyndale notes that symbols such as the lion and the serpent can have opposite meanings in different places in Scripture (61). Similarly, symbols in Spenser's allegory may not have consistent meanings from one canto to the next. In this sense, the action of each individual scene is at least partially self-contained, since the signifiers of the allegory are not always static. Burton J. Weber offers an example of this by noting that the "slouthfull Asse" that Idleness rides in the House of Pride is not meant to be confused with the "lowly Asse more white than snow," which Una rides as a symbol of her humility (176). On the other hand, it does not necessarily follow that the reader must see the narrative strictly as a collection of episodes; the journey of Holiness would seem to require some continuity in the thematic development of the narrative, as well as some consistency in what Redcrosse himself represents. Rather, contextualization requires some elasticity on the part of the reader who shares Redcrosse's occasional dismay at the failure of characters or objects to be what they seem.

Redcrosse himself is something of an enigma as he first appears in the narrative, for the man is hidden behind the symbolic armor that he wears. He first appears in the Prologue as a nameless youth, and gains his title from the red cross that is blazoned on the shield that Una gives him. As one who has "taken up the cross," he is representative of one who follows Christ and imitates his sacrifice. The New Testament command to take up the cross in self-denial is immediately followed by Christ's statement, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:24-25, ESV). To bear the cross is to identify with Christ, whose identity as Savior lay in sacrificing himself. In the same way, Redcrosse's quest is one that will require a kind of death and resurrection – the end of his own agency and strength and the enervating power of something beyond himself. Redcrosse's heady overconfidence at the beginning of the narrative is an indication that he does not yet know this, that he cherishes illusions of chivalric grandeur and glory. He repeatedly overestimates his own strength and judgment, and in this way proves that he knows no more about himself than does the reader.

Redcrosse's lack of self-knowledge is directly tied to his repeated failures. James Nohrnberg draws the connection between pride and a skewed perception of self. In discussing how the Knight of Holiness can escape one form of pride only to be captured by another, Nohrnberg states,

> The suggestion is that pride is always looking for an occasion; after the Fall, it is something of an independent reflex. The disarmed Redcrosse has been relying mainly on himself . . . and in the context of holiness self-reliance is really a choice of the wrong trustee. It is also a failure of self-knowledge; the ideal of holiness

> is based on an impossible model, and pride is partly the unwillingness of self to make the damning comparison. (263)

Pride may be considered an inevitable consequence of Original Sin, and one that never truly goes away because the fallen self is continuously confronted by unflattering comparisons, not just to the divine character, but to the perfection that was the image of God in humanity, the "impossible model." Self-reliance occurs when the individual forgets the contrast between the lost perfection of human nature and its present reality resulting in misplaced confidence in personal judgment or strength. This misplaced confidence may be seen almost immediately in Redcrosse's journey when he encounters Errour, an episode in which his impulsive rush to battle nearly results in defeat.

The battle with Errour in Wandering Woods sets up much of the conflict of Book I. Norhnberg states, "The 'adventure of Spenser's opening episode traces the path of his legend as a whole, which ends with the unveiling of truth" (151). Errour is the first of a series of deceptions Redcrosse will encounter, and in many ways the easiest since he has no trouble identifying her as a foe. Burton J. Weber suggests that Errour represents "the doubt of God" (178), but there is evidence in the text, both in Errour's geographical location and in her description, that Errour represents instead a false conception of God embodied in false religious practices. The labyrinthine wood in which Una and Redcrosse quickly become lost foreshadows the forest in which Archimago has his den, and its name (wandering) invokes one meaning of error, which is a "devious or winding course" (OED). Matthew Fike has argued that the labyrinthine wood suggests freedom of the will, since it is easier to exit the wood than to find Errour in it. He states, "Redcrosse experiences the wood as multicursal on the way in and unicursal on the way out, as if error resists discovery and must be pursued actively. . . .The

possibility of choice in a multicursal life affirms a Christian rather than a classical view: free will to choose the one right path versus a fixed fate" (234). This reading is problematic, however, given the manner of the character's arrival at Errour's den:

> When weening to returne, whence they did stray,
> They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
> But wander too and fro in ways unknown,
> Furthest from end then, when they nearest weene,
> That makes them doubt, their wits be not their owne:
> So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
> That which of them to take, in diuerse doubt they been. (1.1.10)

It is hard to see how the journey to Errour's Den can be a matter of free will when the characters do not intend to arrive there. Rather, there is a certain inevitability to their eventual encounter with the monster. Certainly, they are choosing the paths they are walking, but their choices do not take them where they wish to go, which is out of the Wood altogether. It is not until they arrive at Errour's Den and Una recognizes their danger that Redcrosse decides to take on the monster in spite of warnings from Una and the dwarf. I would suggest that, for Spenser and his early readers, the abundance of polemical writings during the English Reformation meant that an encounter with error in some form was inevitable.

The monster itself reflects the heterodoxy of religious debate in the sixteenth century. Weber notes the similarity of the monster to artistic representations of the serpent of Eden, but with the significant adjustment of making the monster hideous rather than beautiful, and he argues that this indicates a reference to new errors rather than to the original error of Original Sin. According to Weber, "The reference to Elizabethan pamphleteering is continued in the

account of Errour's offspring. That these creep into their mother's mouth to avoid the 'uncouth light' from Redcrosse's shield (1.15) refers to the anonymity of dissenting controversialists" (181). Waters, responding to an earlier reading by John M. Steadman that places Errour in the realm of worldly reason (that is, philosophy as false knowledge), notes that Errour may also be taken to represent the intrusion of rationalism into matters of religion. He states,

> Spenser's monster Errour can refer, in addititon to the secular erudition emphasized by Steadman, to the false rationalism of the Church of Rome -- so mistrusted by Hooker and Parker and so hated by Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Bullinger, Cranmer and Jewel, and many others. (284)

When Catholic theologians, in response to theology of Luther, attempted to explain grace as God's response to the efforts by which humanity seeks to gain His approval and predestination as His foreknowledge of the Christian's good works, Calvin and Luther answered by arguing that this was an attempt to bind the judgments of God to only those causes that are accessible to human reason. God, the reformers argued, may predestine someone to eternal hell for reasons known only to Himself; at no point in time is He obligated to bend His eternal wisdom to the scope of human understanding. It is this position which the early Reformer John Frith defends when he quotes Augustine in his treatise, *A Mirrour To Know Thyself*, ABut why [God] cho[o]seth the one & repelleth the other, enquyre not (sayth S. Austyne) yf thou wilt not erre" (268). Insisting upon rational explanations of the divine must lead to error in the end because such reasoning is based on the false assumption that some aspects of the divine can and ought to be reduced to fit inside the human mind. It is a kind of intellectual arrogance that refuses to allow any revelation that is not immediately accessible to human understanding.

In this first battle of holiness, Spenser ties error to pride, since pride insists that the divine will accommodate human reason. For George F. Butler, the decision to enter the Wood at all is an indication of Redcrosse's susceptibility to pride: "Because he is inexperienced and ignorant of the ways of the world, he is seduced by the deceptive beauty of the wood and is 'with pleasure forward led'" (118). When the sinister reality of the Wood becomes apparent and Error appears, the overconfident Redcrosse insists upon entering a cave to destroy the monster. Instead, he is paralyzed and nearly overcome by the strength of his adversary. He might have heeded Una's warning:

> Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
> Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
> The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
> Breedes dreadfull doubts . . . (1.1.12)

Spenser is probably punning on Adoubt@ which in old usage could be synonymous with AfearA, but which might also suggest uncertainty. When reason probes not merely the unknown but the unknowable, it produces the kinds of spiritual misgivings which paralyze an individual as effectively as the coils of a serpent. Doubt destroys faith, and with it confidence, leaving the knight in the grip of self-defeating fear. In his haste to battle ("The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide" -119), Redcrosse proves his weakness where he means to prove his strength. It is necessary that Una come to his aid. And how does she counsel him? She calls to him to remember his faith: ANow now Sir knight, shew what ye bee,/ Add faith unto your force, and be not faint@ (164-65). Katherine Walls has suggested that, at this point, Una may be as misled as Redcrosse, since she seems to assign faith an auxiliary role to human efforts. Walls suggests that, given the context, Una may even be encouraging him to regain his confidence in himself

(531-532). Yet, this would seem to be foolhardy, since it was Redcrosse's misplaced confidence in himself that got him into such a potentially disastrous battle in the first place. Whatever incongruities the reformers saw between faith and human reason, Spenser seems to have pinpointed the fundamental incongruity between faith and pride. Pride promotes self-reliance; devout faith involves putting one's confidence somewhere other than in oneself.

While Redcrosse succeeds in overcoming Errour, even in victory Redcrosse is not free from pride's influence. Fike notes,

> He may begin to make progress against error not because he adds faith to his force but because of the 'high disdaine' he feels is for his martial incompetence or his carnal self rather than the monster. . . Although his "more then manly force" supports the idea that faith has made the power of grace active in the battle, the knight's newfound strength may stem instead from the fear of shame or from fury – anger at his foe or, worse yet, at himself for revealing his incompetence in arms to a woman (or, allegorically, his inexperience in faith to the True Church). (237)

Pride lies in the expectation that the "more than manly force" required to defeat his enemy must come from within himself. This tendency to rely on his own judgment and his own strength is the hubristic flaw that repeatedly sabotages the knight's quest, and it raises the question of whether it is possible to separate pride from the new Christian heroism that Spenser seeks to promote. The Protestant definition of sanctification, as the process of holiness, is linked to selflessness and a recognition of man's incapacity. If Protestant England was to have a Christian chivalry, it could not be one of self-glorification or of self-justification through good works.

Alpers sees Spenser's ambivalence toward human endeavors in the complexity of Redcrosse's motives:

> In his final battle with the dragon, the Red Cross Knight is impelled by the same motives – wrath, shame, and the like – as in the battle with Error. The interest and complexity of Spenser's treatment of heroism lie not in the way it is represented in itself, but in Spenser's willingness to examine it from every perspective – to ask as fully as possible what it tells us about human nature. In almost every canto of Book I, there is a criticism of human strength as it is expressed by heroism; yet in each of these cantos, the claims and values of heroism are in some way re-established. The value of Spenser's moral intelligence lies in the breadth and variety with which these movements of attitude are registered in canto of the book. (339).

It might be suggested that Spenser affirms the value of the heroic deed without necessarily affirming the motive. If holiness is the imitation of the divine, then Errour (which is a distorted knowledge of the divine) must be overcome, but if pride provides the impetus, then the hero has won a pyrrhic victory, since pride relies on a distorted understanding of self.

The battle with Errour initiates the reader to the central conflict of Book I. Each of Spenser's knights prevails by overcoming his or her antithesis. Holiness, however, is not an active virtue so much as a spiritual state. The OED defines it as the state of being set apart or separate, consecrated to sacred use. The person who is holy is set apart from worldly things, but there is a difference between being pronounced holy and actually living in a manner separate. It

is possible for Redcrosse to be the knight of holiness by title and yet desecrate himself by service to that which is profane, as he does in his encounters with Duessa and Lucifera. Spenser places various manifestations of pride in opposition to holiness because pride is a false knowledge of self. If we may borrow Christopher Ivic's explanation of the concept of "forgetting oneself" in Spenser's writings as a moral decline resulting from the failure to remember one's rank or estate, then the opposite of holiness would be the sin that results from forgetting one's separateness from the world. This act of forgetting may be called "pride", which subverts holiness with an inaccurate perception of self. The person guilty of pride has fundamentally mistaken his or her own character. For this reason, Redcrosse's encounters with pride always involve some form of error. In Reformation literature, mistaken notions of self are always rooted in false ideas about the character of God. By misapprehending God, the individual misapprehends self, and the failure of the image of God within the individual owes something to this error. By the end of the narrative, there will be a re-identification with Christ through the three-day battle with the dragon, but Redcrosse must learn to recognize the failures of the fallen self before he can exchange that identity for a better one. In the interim, he is prone to deception and self-deception, and his reliance upon his own judgment is his primary handicap.

The success of Archimago's deception also demonstrates the connection Spenser saw between false knowledge of God and false knowledge of self. Redcrosse and Una are led into Archimago's hermitage because they apparently cannot distinguish between seeming and being:

> There was an holy Chappell edifyde,
> Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
> His holy things each morne and eventyde:
> Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,

Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway. (1.1.34)

Archimago represents a Catholic model of piety with his external rites and apparent good works. His deeds and words do not, however, add up to genuine sanctity, but rather to an inversion of holiness. The real power of Archimago is occultist rather than divine, in both senses of the word Aoccult@. His power is both demonic and deceptive, twisting and distorting reality to make Una seem the opposite of what she actually is and separating Redcrosse from the quest which identifies him. D. Douglas Waters points out that witchcraft was, for the Reformers, analogous to the seductive nature of false doctrine (281), but he does not elaborate on how that doctrine might entice the individual from truth. Archimago's sorcery suggests that false doctrine, like the occult, appeals to the human desire for power. The alleged conspiracies of the Catholic Church for political power were certainly a favorite theme of Reformation polemics, but Archimago suggests something even beyond this. Like Faustus, he aspires to supernatural power, to a dominion over demonic forces, and as with Faustus, such ambition is indicative of Luciferian pride. It is the arrogance of one who aspires to the authority of God whom the angels serve.

Archimago's pious appearance is an integral part, rather than a contradiction, of his occult ambitions. It is the bait that draws Redcrosse and Una into his trap, but even his apparent religion is a manifestation of the same spiritual pride that emboldens him to summon demons as his servants, and which also manifests itself in his attempts to please God with good works. Archimago speaks the rhetoric of human worthiness: "He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore/ He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before" (1.1 35). In the theology of Luther and Calvin, it is not possible for one tainted by original sin to please God through any merit of his or her own, but that is precisely the idea behind a Catholic saint. A saint, in medieval Catholic theology, is one who has not only earned his or her own place in heaven, but who has acquired

extra merit which can be shared with those less worthy. The Catholic Church's claim to grant release from penance by indulgences was based on the idea that it was within the pope's power to parcel out this excess merit. To Luther and Calvin, this was appalling arrogance, not merely to claim that one had the power to make oneself worthy, but also to claim the right of bestowing grace to make others worthy. This was to profess an authority over the spiritual realm equal only to those who sought occult power. To set off the darkness of Archimago's deception, Spenser provides in his description of Archimago's hermitage a crystal stream that flows continually from a sacred fountain and passes by the hermit's hut. This stream is a foreshadowing of the springing well which will empower Redcrosse in his final fight with the dragon at the end of Book I, but here Spenser uses it to provide a subtle contrast. The clear and unsullied water, a foreshadowing of the spring that will revive Redcrosse in the penultimate canto, reminds the reader that the pure grace bestowed by God is always at hand, and that reliance on one's own power or supposed worth is a continuous rejection of that grace.

The vision crafted by Archimago exploits the limitations of human perception. Redcrosse is assaulted at the gates of his senses. He touches an imposter wearing the form of Una. He hears what sounds like Una's voice soliciting him to sin. He sees what must be Una in Alewd embraces@ with a squire. It seems impossible that Redcrosse should not act on the evidence of his own eyes, and yet his decision is wrong. He behaves in Archimago's hut with the same impetuous self-confidence he showed in Errour's Den. The weakness of reason is thus revealed, for reason may be subverted by both emotion and faulty perception: "Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,/ The eye of reason was with rage yblent" (1.2.5). Human reason is unreliable, first because it is dependent on the senses which may be suborned by false evidence, and also because it may be overshadowed by passion. If Redcrosse were to wait and

confront Una in the light of day, error and falsehood might be exposed. Instead, he places too much confidence in his own judgment and abandons her without any explanation at all.

Redcrosse's apparent helplessness against supernatural deception reveals a fundamental tension in Reformation theology, as well as his inadequate knowledge of self. While critics generally point to the arrogance of the knight in his rush to judgment, the fact remains that his response, however impetuous, is not unnatural. In her article, "Redcrosse and the Descent into Hell," Judith H. Anderson notes that the events in Archimago's hut are increasingly blurry as the narrative proceeds until even the reader cannot be certain at all times whether Redcrosse is awake or asleep. Redcrosse himself is completely befuddled; Anderson states, "The Knight wakes to more and more fully illusory experiences; he wakes to find falsehood more and more true" (475). In an article on Protestant demonology, Nathan Johnstone argues that, while Protestant's argued for the complete sovereignty of God, they were "too driven by a profound sense of human sin" to overlook the agency of the Devil in temptation and deception (174). Instead, a keen sense of human moral helplessness made the Devil that much more fearful. Johnstone maintains that this was partly a result of Protestant conviction that the Catholic Church offered a false religion:

> As the reformers came to terms with a realization that the religion they had once embraced was thoroughly corrupted by Satan, they concluded that his most dangerous agency lay hidden in the commonplace – the apparently harmless and even superficially pious. This combined with their sense of personal struggle with the diabolic to make the Devil's power to enter directly into the consciousness the archetype of his agency. He could introduce

> sinful thoughts into the mind, or take hold on man's corrupted will and turn him to sin. (177-78)

Luther himself expounded on this theme in his Commentary on Galatians, and his comparison of false doctrine to witchcraft is taken directly from the epistle: "Oh foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not believe the truth?" Luther states,

> For just as it is impossible for a man to set himself free from the bewitchment of his senses . . . so it is impossible for those who have been bewitched in spirit to set themselves free by their own powers, unless they are set free by those whose minds have not been taken captive by this bewitchment. So great is the efficacy of this satanic illusion in those who have been deluded this way that they would boast and swear that they have the most certain truth. (195)

Though Redcrosse is certainly high-handed in the way he breaks faith with Una – and hypocritical in that he eventually falls into the same sin that he rejects in her – there is no question that he has been utterly taken in by what appears to be a "most certain truth." Archimago, with his hermitage and beads and prayers, represents the deception in the "superficially pious", and he offers Redcrosse the evidence of his own senses.

This does not entirely excuse Redcrosse, for in the end, his hasty judgment is another example of his self-sufficiency. Johnstone cites Luttmer in noting that Protestants believed the Devil operated differently on the "regenerate and the unregenerate," and that this was central to the Protestant construction of identity (177); that is, that part of their identity rested in the nature of their conflict with the devil. Whereas the devil may tempt anyone to sin, he endeavors to

deceive Christians with a vision of themselves that is not true. It is Redcrosse's failure to recognize the opposition between himself, the Knight of Holiness, and Archimago with his "commonplace" piety that makes him vulnerable to deception. Had Redcrosse properly understood what he himself represented, he would not have mistaken Archimago's semblances for genuine sanctity. To be more specific, Redcrosse's role as the Knight of Holiness is to demonstrate the new nature, yet everything about his encounters with Errour and Archimago demonstrate the false confidence and self-trust of the "old man". Once asleep, Redcrosse has no hope of withstanding Archimago's deceptive visions, but he ought not to have been in Archimago's hut in the first place.

The result of Archimago's ploy is that Redcrosse becomes the prey of error once again, this time in the form of Duessa. Though her true form is similar to the monster of Wandering Woods, she is able to disguise this with a false beauty. Her claims to her own identity are suspiciously similar to Una's with a few telling details,

> He [Duessa's father] in the first flowre of my freshest age,
> Betrothed me unto the onely haire
> Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage;
> Was never Prince so faithfull and so faire,
> Was never Prince so meeke and debonaire;
> But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,
> My dearest Lord fell from high honours staire
> Into the hands of his accursed fone,
> And cruelly was slaine, that shall I ever mone.
> His blessed body spoild of lively breath,

Was afterward, I know not how, convaid

And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death

When tidings came to me, unhappy maid,

O how great sorrow my sad soule assaid.

Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,

And many yeares throughout the world I straid. (1.2.23-24)

I have quoted the passage at length because I think there is an allusion here that has been generally overlooked. Duessa's fiction concerning her past sounds suspiciously like the scene in the gospel of John in which Mary Magdalene encounters and fails to recognize the risen Christ. Mary says to the angels, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him" (John 20:13, ESV). Nohrnberg has argued that the abandoned Una is Mary Magdalene searching for her lost lord, and that Duessa is a parody of Una (173). He does not, however, draw the connection between Duessa and Mary Magdalene that seems apparent in this passage. Clearly, Duessa is meant to be a parody of Mary, but in what way?

The Geneva Bible suggests one interpretation. There is only one marginal gloss on this story, and it comes a few verses later when Christ says, "Touche me not." The translators note, "Because she was too muche addicted to the corporal presence, Christ teacheth her to lift up her minde by faith into heauen where onely after his ascension he remaineth, & where we sit with him at the right hand of the Father." Though the Catholic Church is not directly referenced, Spenser's contemporaries would have recognized an allusion to the Catholic Mass and the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. It was a commonplace among Protestants to argue that Christ's body could not be in multiple places at the same time (Gordon 133). Christ's body could not literally be in the Eucharist

because the New Testament teaches that Christ is seated at the right of hand of God the Father. The Geneva gloss emphasizes why this is so central to Protestant theology. If, as Luther contended in his Commentary on Galatians, God justifies Christians by clothing them with the righteousness of Christ, then the Christian's salvation rests in identification with Christ. This identification is not with a dead sacrifice offered repeatedly on church altars, but with a glorified Christ who occupies the position of ultimate approval – the seat at the right hand of God. It seems a bit much to ask that Redcrosse recognize the doctrinal error in Duessa's speech, though Norhnberg considers it significant that Duessa's theology lacks a resurrection, but missing that error costs the knight dearly because there is no sanctification without resurrection. The laying down of the "old man" has meaning only in the restoration of self in the "new man", and that restoration is only possible by identification with a risen Christ. In that sense, when Redcrosse follows Duessa, it is not merely a denial of Christ's resurrection, but of his own also. It is an abandonment of holiness because death alone does not sanctify. There must a reconstitution of the self, one that enables the taking up of a new identity, and it is this which Duessa fails to offer.

Redcrosse's susceptibility to error causes him to become a victim of pride, the mistaken perception of self. He follows Duessa who leads him to the house of Pride. This palace, like so much else in Redcrosse's journey, has an appearance of splendor that does not match reality. It is made of bricks, cunningly laid but not mortared. It rests on a sandy hill, alluding to the parable of the foolish man who built his house on the sand only to have it collapse in a storm. It is large and gilded, but it is unstable. The house of Pride, therefore, is a picture of misplaced confidence in self. The golden exterior masks the fragility of the structure, and the foundation is brittle and unsteady.

The mistress of the house likewise pretends to a false identity. Lucifera professes to be the daughter of Jove, though she is actually the daughter of Pluto and Proserpine, the rulers of the Underworld. Like Duessa, her false identity justifies a claim to dominance. It is not enough for her to be born of gods; she must be the daughter of the king of the gods:

> And thundring Jove, that high in heaven doth dwell,
> And wield the world, she claymed for her syre,
> Or if that any else did Jove excell:
> For to the highest she did still aspyre,
> Or if ought higher were then that, did it desyre. (1.4.11)

Because pride is always preoccupied with the preeminence of self, it is continually subject to self-revision. Its perceptions and presentation must be always changing to maintain the prestige that pride craves. The bricks cannot be cemented together, nor can the foundation be firm; the charade must be in constant flux in order to maintain the superiority pride craves. Lucifera must not only build her house on a sandy foundation, but she must live in it as well, even if she perishes with it when it topples. She is guilty of conscious self-deception, continually looking in her mirror to assure herself that the façade of glory she has created is still in place. Likewise, the members of her court preen and maneuver themselves into positions of prominence before her guests. They recognize Duessa as one of their own, and it is to Lucifera that Duessa makes obeisance even as she presents herself in a guise that is not her own: "And false Duessa seeming Lady faire" (1.4.13). It is fitting that false doctrine should pay homage to the false daughter of a false god, that pretense should acknowledge pretense. Lisa Dickson notes that Redcrosse and Duessa are described as "amazed" by the spectacle of Lucifera's court, indicating that Redcrosse's perceptions are skewed from the time he enter's Pride's house. She adds, "In just a

few verses, the wayward and morally confused Redcrosse will be reduced to fighting a son of Aveugle for the "honour" of being the Queen of Pride's thrall, and, blinded by his own pride, will be unable to see the irony in his situation." Whereas sanctification requires a laying down of self in order to take up a new identity, pride clings to self-interest and so creates a false identity. Pride has no stable referent; the thrall of pride is continuously subject to superficial self-revision in order to maintain superiority and has no power of self-reflection other than to verify that appearances are being maintained. In seeking to promote self, pride becomes selfish and is incapable of exchanging a pretense for a genuine transformation of self. Pride is thus the subversion of holiness by creating a façade of goodness where no real goodness may be found.

That Lucifera's court is preoccupied with self-promotion suggests that Redcrosse is guilty of the same pride in his battle with Sansjoy that was nearly his undoing in the battle with Errour. In his discussion of heroism in *The Faerie Queene*, Alpers notes this connection. He attributes the false homage to Lucifera as the knight being caught up in the moment rather than to a deliberate idolatry, but there is something logical about it as well. Alpers explains, "Our moral strength at this point lies in recognizing that human heroism inherently serves Lucifera – that the House of Pride is its natural home" (343). In this sense, Spenser seems to play with a contradiction. The pursuit of personal glory was always one element of chivalry, as well as the desire to dominate, both characteristics of pride. The glory that Redcrosse wins in Pride's House raises the same dilemma as his victory over Errour? How can Redcrosse pursue chivalry without pursuing the accolades and motives that go with it or becoming distracted by them? How can there be a Knight of Holiness when holiness seems to contradict the characteristics for which chivalry was admired? Later in the narrative, humility will come through the humiliation of

defeat; in Canto V, rather than furthering the objectives of his quest, Redcrosse's successes have instead moved him farther away from Eden and genuine holiness.

The dwarf's role in Redcrosse's escape raises questions about his function in the allegory. Robert L. Reid interprets the dwarf according to his first appearance as part of a group of three that also includes Redcrosse and Una. Reid argues that this models the Augustinian idea of the tripart soul with man as intellect, woman as emotion (or heart) and dwarf as the lower appetites (220). According to Richard C. Frushnell and Bernard J. Vondersmith, the dwarf is commonly read as "prudence" or "reason" (52), but they question that interpretation: "If the dwarf is reason or prudence, he is so only tenuously . . . The Dwarf is more properly viewed as the imperative for correct activeness in the moral allegory . . . he is the prod to act rightly or the prod not to act wrongly" (52-53). The dwarf thus maintains the continuity of a narrative that is disjointed by Redcrosse's abandonment of Una (57). It might be argued that the dwarf here serves the function that someone in the Augustinian tradition might have attributed to memory. Christopher Ivic has noted that, in Renaissance parlance, one who has behaved improperly may be said to have "forgotten himself" (292-93). By joining and remaining in the court of Pride where he is so clearly in inappropriate company, and where he feels the strangeness of his alien surroundings, Redcrosse demonstrates that he has forgotten himself. It is the function of memory to recognize the wrongness or incongruity of the circumstance and raise the alarm accordingly. Likewise, when Redcrosse is imprisoned in Orgoglio's dungeon, it is the dwarf who seeks help and finds Una. The dwarf does not seek her out specifically, but he finds her nonetheless, and it is this return to Una (a remembering) that brings about Redcrosse's release. It is worth stating that the Dwarf functions according to the Reformation idea of conscience. In the absence of revealed truth (Una), only conscience, informed by Natural Law, has the capacity to

recognize the moral incongruities that lurk behind an otherwise successful deception. Though Protestants believed the conscience was corrupted by Original Sin, they were far more likely to trust it than reason, since conscience must remember those parts of the divine law that are indelibly printed upon it, while reason is hopelessly bent toward self-justification.[1]

There is deep irony in the fact that forgetting oneself should also mean captivity to self in *The Faerie Queene*, or rather, that grasping a false and flattering version of the self should result in enslavement to the self. The progress of Redcrosse's quest is a series of narratives of deliverance. Gray has noted in "Bondage and Deliverance in *The Faerie Queene*" that Spenser's heroes repeatedly uphold virtue by releasing captives (1). He states that this theme recurs throughout Book I and echoes the Christian narrative of redemption, but Gray neglects to inquire as to precisely what kind of prison holds the captives other than that this captivity results from a "movement away from love and virtue" (3). The narrative of Redcrosse suggests that the self may be the most formidable of prisons because self-reliance traps him in an endless cycle of defeat. The story is an allegory, and in that sense every event in the story may be internalized, but Spenser takes some pains to make Redcrosse more clearly a victim of his own determinedly assertive self than of any villain in the narrative. When the knight is pinned within the coils of Errour, it is because of his own foolish overconfidence - his misplaced faith in himself. In Archimago's hut, he relies on the evidence of his own senses and abandons Una, only to be ensnared by the deceptions of Duessa. Likewise, his eventual capture by Orgoglio occurs, not because Duessa has disarmed him, but because he has disarmed himself. Elizabeth J. Bellamy's

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[1] I am thinking here of Bullinger's exposition on conscience and natural law in *The Second Decade*, which was quoted in the Introduction. On the subject of reason, Calvin discourses at length on the corruption of human reason in the First Book of *The Institutes*, and Luther states succinctly in his Commentary on Galatians, "Reason and the flesh simply want to work together" (215).

argument that donning armor represents the assumption of wholeness (94) is true for Redcrosse. By removing his armor, he has cast off the last link with Una and with his own destiny as the champion of Eden.

The resulting imprisonment by Orgoglio is foreshadowed by the knight's encounter with Fradubio. Early in the knight's journey with Duessa, he plucks a branch from a tree only to hear the voice of Fradubio who is trapped, not *in* the tree, but *as* the tree. Like Redcrosse, Fradubio has a tale of doubt and misperception. Having chosen the duplicitous Duessa over the lady to whom he had already pledged his service, he then discovers that Duessa is a witch. Her deceit uncovered, she transforms him and his first love, Fraelissa, into trees. Fradubio describes the choice that confronted him in these terms:

> So doubly lov'd of Ladies unlike faire,
> Th' one seeming such, the other such indeede,
> One day in doubt I cast for to compare,
> Whether in beauties glorie did exceede; . . .
> The wicked witch now seeing all this while
> The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway,
> What not by right, she cast to win by guile,
> And by her hellish science raisd streightway
> A foggy mist, that overcast the day,
> And a dull blast, that breathing on her face,
> Dimmed her [Fraelissa's] former beauties shining ray. (1.2.37-38)

Fradubio's dilemma bears several striking resemblances to Redcrosse's earlier experiences. First, the circumstance is the result of his own arrogance. Like Redcrosse plunging into the cave to do battle with foes unknown, Fradubio arrogantly assumes the privilege of choosing between two loves when he has already pledged himself to the first. Redcrosse errs through overconfidence and Fradubio through vanity, but both are manifestations of pride. Fradubio's self-imposed choice leads him into the same doubtful hesitation that seizes Redcrosse when he is caught in the coils of Errour. Both knights also err by relying on the evidence of their own eyes, thus choosing the false light of human reason over faithfulness to revealed truth, if the reader may assume that Fraelissa mirrors Una as Fradubio mirrors Redcrosse. This self-reliance makes both knights vulnerable; Duessa deceives Fradubio by casting a mist which distorts the appearance of Fraelissa just as Archimago creates a dream-vision to slander Una. Fradubio's eventual punishment is his transformation. His choice of error over truth results in the loss of identity, even humanity: ". . . But once a man Fradubio" (1.2.38).

When Duessa at last springs her trap for Redcrosse, it is a short transition from one form of pride to another. His downfall begins when he sets aside the last of his ties with Una by removing the identifying armor she gave him in order to consummate his illicit relationship with Duessa. The symbolism is doubly evocative. At the court of the Faerie Queene, Redcrosse is a nonentity, a rustic with no place or station. His role is provided for him through Una and the coat of arms she gives him. The removal of that armor, like his act of infidelity with Duessa, marks a casting away of that identity. It is this loss which makes him unable to withstand the onslaught of Orgoglio, or Carnal Pride, not merely because Una's quest gave him a role and purpose, but also because the identity she provided through the red cross armor, has its roots in reality. The rustic who sits on the floor of the Faerie Queen's hall is a fitting parallel for the

kingdom of Eden that is captive to the dragon because he (the rustic) is humanity in reduced circumstances seeking to win back that lost estate. The dilemma is real and the armor is real; it is Duessa and her cohorts who forever seem to be what they are not. By binding himself to Duessa, Redcrosse has accepted that seeming at face value; he has bought into error, and it enslaves him to himself.

The great paradox of Book I of *The Faerie Queene* is that enslavement to self inevitably results in a loss of self. Fradubio, in a moment of blinded vanity, asserts willfulness over faithfulness and loses his natural form. Redcrosse, in a moment of lust, yields to self-gratification and finds himself at the bottom of a pit in Orgoglio's castle. Though not transfigured like Fradubio, Redcrosse has been disfigured and his strength wasted. The figure that appears before Arthur is described thus:

> His sad dull eyes deepe sunck in hollow pits,
>
> Could not endure th' unwonted sunne to view; . . .
>
> His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned bowrs
>
> Were wont to rive steele plates, and helmets hew,
>
> Were cleane consum'd, and all his vitall powres
>
> Decayd, and all his flesh shronk up like withered flowres. (1.8.41)

When Una sees him, she asks what bad fortune could have reduced him to such a state, "That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre" (1.8.42). Pride's dungeon is the beginning of the end of self-reliance for Redcrosse, who has been stripped of strength and prowess. His weak eyes that can no longer bear sunlight are an indication that reason, such as it was, has been dimmed. The demise of his pious façade is represented in the shrunken flesh. Like Lucifera's house, Redcrosse's understanding of himself was based on illusion and a shifting foundation. He has

worn his armor of holiness as a façade that masked the ambition, lust and hasty judgment that guided his actions.

Though it is completed in Orgoglio's dungeon, this loss is a gradual process that has been working in the knight since he left Una in Archimago's hut. Throughout their journeys, Redcrosse and Una have been accosted by the Saracens, Sansfoy, Sansjoy and Sansloy. Like Duessa to Una, they serve as foils for Redcrosse, permitting the reader to define holiness by what it is not. Redcrosse's weakness is that he can defeat each of these negative states of the spirit in an external foe, but he cannot defeat them within himself, and therefore the self is compromised. When he abandons Una and his pledge to her, he is without faith. When he finds himself a misfit in the house of Lucifera with her train of deadly sins, he is without joy. When he yields to lust and the blandishments of Duessa, he is without law and finally lays aside the outward pretense of righteousness that he has been carrying in the form of Una>s armor. The fact that he can face all these vices in the Saracens without ever recognizing them in himself is evidence that he lacks self-knowledge, his reflexive dislike of Lucifera's house notwithstanding. In that regard, he becomes the unwitting imitator of the hypocrite, Archimago, by carrying the trappings of piety without authenticity. From the moment he leaves Una, he slowly inches toward the condition that will at last be manifest in Orgoglio's prison. His identity was derived from his role as the representative of holiness, as the standard-bearer of the "new man"; having fallen away from holiness and yielded to the "old man", he is estranged from himself.

In Spenser's allegory, pride is overcome by grace and truth. Waters states, "Thus it seems clear that 'heauenly grace' and truth bring Prince Arthur to Red Crosse's rescue and the 'braue knight' is thus a minister of grace. It is quite probable that he is in the sense of

magnanimity or greatness of soul" (58). Waters argues that this contrasts with Redcrosse's sin of pride, which is the opposite of a gracious or magnanimous spirit:

> Red Cross, the Christian man, has diminished his magnanimity through actual sin to the point that he has enslaved himself to his own pride (Orgoglio), as the commonplace view of the Orgoglio episode explains it, that nothing but God's grace can save him. Grace infuses magnanimity, symbolized by Prince Arthur, and the Knight of Holiness repents. (60)

Accordingly, Waters reads Arthur's Squire as the "ministry of the Word of God," his magic horn as "the message of salvation" (60), and his diamond shield as a symbol of repentance (61). In his discussion of Arthur's shield, D. C. Allen offers an explanation of the symbolic virtue of diamond that would tie it closely to Waters definition of magnanimity:

> A man of Spenser's age would treasure the diamond because it resisted poison, subdued quarrels, gave one power over one's enemies, aided lunatics and the possessed, subdued furious beasts, and gave one strength and power in action. (238)

In other words, the diamond has value because it not only confers strength, but also because provides help to the helpless. Richard J. DuRocher argues that Arthur represents magnificence which, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, always aspires to do great things for God. Magnificence differs from prideful ambition in that its great work usually involves sacrifice for the glory of God. DuRocher notes that defining magnificence in this way closely ties it to holiness (188). Magnificence restores holiness because it corrects the error upon which pride is founded, the desire for personal honor rather than the honor of God. Magnificence is outward

rather than inward looking in its aspirations, and in that sense, its ambitions are as pure as the diamond shield that Arthur carries.

Arthur's shield exercises enormous power over those who gaze into it. Lisa Dickson notes that it "partakes of the sovereign power to refashion through blinding effulgence." Citing the shield's power to turn those who gaze on it into stone, and then to pulverize the stone into dust and nothing, Dickson concludes, "Arthur's shield remakes those who are penetrated by its glory" (481). It is not apparent to me that disintegration necessarily equals a "remaking," but it is a necessary first step. Repentance involves an acknowledgement of unpleasant truths about oneself, the admission of the "old man's" essential wrongness, and this begins the process of remaking that will be carried on in the House of Holiness. Allen notes that Christians of the sixteenth century also associated the diamond with repentance. He quotes from the *Summa de Exemplis* to describe the diamond as:

> Usually small in size and this smallness is emblematic of humility so essential to repentance, for unless we become as little children we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The diamond though clear as crystal may have a dusky hue; so the repentant man may have a dark exterior, but he is cleanly within because he is filled with the light of grace. . . . Finally, the diamond has the power to drive out poisons, to expel fear, to resist magic arts, and to join things that have been separated, for instance, an estranged man and wife. So repentance casts forth the poison of sin, expels the fears of the violence of sin, resists the magic arts of the Devil, and leads back the wandering soul to Christ, her spouse. (qtd. in 240-41)

While it is difficult to see how the shield alone could encompass the repentance that makes the knight's transformation possible, a process that will be largely effected in the House of Holiness, Allen's list of the gem's powers suggests the beginning of repentance. Like the diamond, repentance has the power of enlightening the deceived and reconciling the alienated. In the same way, Prince Arthur's rescue of Redcrosse not only strips away the delusions that have led him astray, but unmasks Duessa as well (exposing the "magic arts of the Devil"), and reunites Redcrosse with the forsaken Una. The diamond represents the clarity of vision that makes true introspection possible and prepares the way for the actual work of inner transformation. It begins the cure of pride, which will finally be accomplished in the House of Holiness.

That the unmasking of evil is not enough to fully bring about repentance is clear when Redcrosse, almost immediately after parting with Arthur, comes upon Depair's cave in Canto IX. In his temptation of Redcrosse, Despair states,

> Why then doest thou, O man of sin, desire
> To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
> Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire
> High heaped up with huge iniquitie,
> Against the day of wrath, to burden thee? (1.9.46)

Redcrosse is easy prey for Despair because he has lost the good appearance he has erstwhile maintained. With his frailty and sinfulness firmly in focus, Despair's rhetoric seems logical and compelling. As Archimago appeared the saintly hermit, so Despair has the appearance of the sincere penitent or ascetic with his uncut hair, his body emaciated from fasting, and his clothing pinned together by thorns (1.9.43-44). Similarly, the assumptions underlying Despair's rhetoric are not so different from what Redcrosse has escaped in the deceptions of Archimago, Duessa

and Lucifera; Despair offers a spiritual vision that is essentially self-centered. Ernest Sirluck has noted that Despair's rhetoric operates by suppressing the role of God's mercy in salvation (8). Despair speaks as though Redcrosse were the author of his own narrative, rather than the object of either providence or satanic manipulation. By focusing on the condemnation of sin to the exclusion of grace, Despair indirectly attributes to Redcrosse the necessary moral agency for salvation, thus committing the same doctrinal error as Archimago with his saints and popes. Redcrosse, in Protestant soteriology, cannot be sufficiently good in himself to merit acceptance by God, and any attempt to do so is bound to result in hopelessness. The temptation of Despair, therefore, is to fixate on the fallen self, rather than looking beyond it to the sovereignty of divine grace. Fike notes that the same labyrinthine imagery that surrounds Errour's Den also appears at Despair's cave; this suggests that Redcrosse has once again become entangled with false notions of human agency.

The narrow escape from Despair's cave, brought about by Una's timely intervention, is a final statement by Spenser on the futility of human agency in salvation. Una rebukes Redcrosse by saying, "Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?" (1.9.53). Clearly, rejection of self (suicide) is not the loss of self that the New Testament prescribes, nor is self-loathing the same as humility. Rather, security lies in ascribing all agency to the divine. Having confronted his own weakness in Orgoglio's prison and the unmasking of Duessa, Redcrosse desperately needs something that will put the revelation of his own nature in a proper perspective. Una's solution is to take him to a house, "Renownd throughout the world for sacred lore" (1.10.3).

The instruction of Redcrosse in the House of Holiness marks the transition from "old man" self-reliance to the "new man's" life by faith. It does so by imparting a true knowledge and right understanding of both God and self. Richard Mallette notes in *Spenser and the*

*Discourses of Reformation England* that Redcrosse's near defeat by Despair indicates how drastic a transformation is required, "Redcrosse's enfeeblement is so self-originating and thorough that he seems unable, without something akin to new life, to execute his own recovery" (3). Alpers suggests that the House of Holiness episode demonstrates a breach between Redcrosse's quest and his spiritual development, since the virtues that are promoted there are acts of mercy rather than violence. Nonetheless, Alpers adds, "The House of Holiness is preparation for slaying the dragon, because it show us that man's strength depends precisely on rejecting the idea that he has strengths of his own and on recognizing his frailty and dependence on God" (118). That holiness will come through self-knowledge is immediately apparent when Redcrosse and Una arrive at Dame Coelia's house and are greeted by a porter named Humility. The porter's venerable aspect, "an aged syre, all hory gray," suggests that his modesty has been hard-won by experience, as indeed will be true of Redcrosse by the time he leaves this place. The entrance itself is no easy accomplishment for it requires that self be diminished: "They passe in stouping low;/ For streight and narrow was the way which he did show" (1.10.5). The straight and narrow way, according to Christ, is that "which leadeth unto life" (Mt. 7:14 ). Spenser elaborates on this by adding, "Each goodly thing is hardest to begin" (1.10.6). In fact, the reader would be hard put to understand how the mere act of stooping as one walks could possibly be such a demanding feat if it were not for the ubiquitous power of pride in the first nine cantos. Pride is everywhere from Archimago's hermitage to Lucifera's palace to Despair's den, and the passageway which excludes such a versatile and mighty foe must be very narrow and difficult indeed. Moreover, the door to Coelia's house is always locked ("for feare of many foes") making the house of holiness a guarded keep in which entrance is gained by weakness rather than strength. Humility, who guards the door, requires a prop, a staff, to support his

"feeble steps" (1.10.5). His frailty parallels the weakness that must be manifest in Redcrosse before his restoration can be effected.

Dame Coelia's hospitality represents the auspices of grace in the transformation of the knight. As the parent of faith, hope and charity, grace enables perfection. Lest the reader should overlook the role of grace in this canto, Spenser explains it in advance:

> What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might
> And vaine assurance of mortality,
> Which all so soone as it doth come to fight
> Against spirituall foes, yeelds by and by,
> Or from the field most cowardly doth fly?
> Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
> That thorough grace hath gained victory.
> If any strength we have, it is to ill,
> But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will. (1.10.1)

This is as clear a statement as any in protestant literature to uphold the Augustinian view of human nature. In the last two lines of the stanza, Spenser sums up an argument he has spent the first nine cantos laying out. Any assertion of Redcrosse's independent will is so much blowing in the wind, for the will is infected and always inclines to evil just as Redcrosse, when confronted with a choice, invariably yields to the worst. Self-reliance, therefore, inevitably results in the opposite of holiness. In the House of Holiness, this condition is treated in Redcrosse when the knight is placed in the hands of a physician who works *upon* him to purge his infected soul.

The process of holiness reshapes the individual in part by conferring a new and alien perspective. Judith Anderson points out that Redcrosse and Una seem to take on secondary roles in the action of Canto X, a section of the narrative which she characterizes as rather flat and abstract. She states, "In coming to the House of Holiness, . . . we are likely to find the dominance of abstraction oppressive and the very lack of perspectives remarkable. Instead of arranging and reconciling opposite points of view, Canto X first narrows them all to a single dimension" ("Perspective in Spenser" 22). Anderson does not discuss which points of view ought to be addressed and reconciled, but this is a question which ought to be raised. If the canto seems one-dimensional and abstract, rather like a stained-glass window, it is a significant deviation from the drama of the rest of the narrative. The reader should consider that the limited perspective and action are integral to the statement that Spenser is making about grace and holiness. Holiness does not have multiple points of view; it is the imitation of the divine and, therefore, adopts the divine perspective. The process of becoming holy, therefore, requires that spiritual sight be refocused. All self-reliance, even confidence in one's own perceptions, must be cast off.

This divine point of view is accessible only through revelation which is in itself a manifestation of grace, and this is seen in the tutelage of Fidelia who opens to Redcrosse the contents of the sacred book she carries. Even this act of learning is passed over briefly, and Redcrosse appears as a passive recipient of faith's knowledge, a counterpoint to the earlier battle with Errour in which the intrusion of human reason into matters of faith is nearly his undoing. In the House of Holiness, the role of faith is to enlighten the mind, making it possible for Redcrosse to comprehend truth that is not accessible to unaided reason. Moreover, the truth that is revealed to him results in an overwhelming sense of helplessness:

Greevd with remembrance of his wicked wayes,

And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore,

That he desirde to end his wretched dayes:

So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soule dismayes. (1.10.21)

As in his encounter with Despaire, Redcrosse is overwhelmed by the refocused sight of himself. Dughi notes that Despair's rhetoric, while erroneous, serves to prepare Redcrosse "for receiving the word of grace" (27). The difference in Fidelia's tutelage is that faith is outward looking; it relies on the character of God rather than on the accomplishments of self, and therefore provides hope. When Speranza teaches Redcrosse how to take hold of her silver anchor, she counters the doctrine of Despair that the human condition is hopeless as well as helpless. It is true that Redcrosse has failed, and that his independent endeavors must always meet with failure in the future, but God does not require him to succeed independently. There is something that will hold him up in his quest and which will provide him with the stability of purpose he has always lacked. And where does Speranza direct him for this comfort? Spenser continues, "Else had his sinnes so great and manifold/ Made him forget all that Fidelia told" (1.10.22). Hope allows him to claim the assurance that Scripture offers. To believe the revelation of Scripture is to accept the condemnation of God for the behavior of the self-centered old man, but it is also to accept the promises of God for the new man who walks by faith, and among those promises is mercy for repentance and grace for transformation. Redcrosse must come to trust the inward mirror which Scripture provides because the truth it presents promises something more solid than his own efforts, and that is the unfailing work of grace. Scripture is thus presented as the instrument of grace in transforming the nature of a Christian because it reveals a right knowledge of God and

the self, and also because it extends to the believer the promise that this transformation will be fulfilled.

The role of Patience in the restoration of Redcrosse is likewise derived from the promises of Scripture. The presence of this character as physician of the soul is probably an allusion to James 1:4: ABut let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing.@ This is echoed by Hebrews 10:36, which states, "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Calvin discusses patience as one aspect of self-denial in the *Institutes*:

> God having promised that he will be with believers in tribulation, they feel the truth of the promise; while supported by his hand, they endure patiently. This they could never do by their own strength. Patience, therefore, gives the saints an experimental proof that God in reality furnishes the aid which he has promised whenever there is need. Hence also their faith is confirmed, for it were very ungrateful not to expect that in future the truth of God will be, as they have already found it, firm and constant. (459)

Because patience waits for the promise of God in a given circumstance, it is the remedy for the impetuousness of Redcrosse who is continually rushing into situation that are too much for him. Patience is the willingness to renounce human action in order to wait upon divine intervention. In this way, the torturous treatment that is inflicted on the knight serves both to eliminate his self-reliance and to discipline him to endurance. It promotes singleness of purpose (the exclusion of all perspectives but the divine) and strengthens him to fulfill that purpose, and this

is necessary because his travels with Duessa have clearly shown that he has hitherto lacked both the devotion and the fortitude to follow through on his mission.

Redcrosse's cure by Patience prepares him to receive at last a complete knowledge of his own identity. Redcrosse's story begins, not in the first canto of Book I, but in the Prologue written in Spenser letter to Sir Walter Raleigh. In it, Redcrosse first appears, not as a knight, but as a "tall clownishe younge man" seeking adventures, who is relegated to sitting on the floor because he is "unfitte through his rusticity for a better place" (17). Nohrnberg notes of the "clownishe younge man" that "his naiveté, his susceptibility to deception, his stumbling and humiliation, all suggest his type" (261). The extent of his nobodiness is indicated by the fact that he does not even have a name in this part of the narrative. Miller notes that a name is a "sign of personhood, implicitly attributing to us as social and psychological creatures the unity and continuity of a physical body" (5). For this reason, the armor which identifies the knight at the beginning of Book I also serves to hide him from the reader. Bellamy notes,

> The knight's donning of armor is in more ways than one the assumption of chivalric identity . . . Lacan's metaphor positions armor as both protection against bodily fragmentation and also a proleptic symbol of wholeness – in the final analysis, scarcely more than 'the armor of an alienating identity.' (94)

Given the armor of God by Una when he is assigned to champion her cause, he assumes the title of Redcrosse knight, but this does not tell the reader *who* he is, only *what* he represents. The revelation that he is a prince, lost in infancy, indicates that Redcrosse, who is nobody at the beginning of the epic, is in fact everybody – the Christian everyman (261). He is mankind in reduced circumstances, for Eden has been lost and those who might have inherited it live in

spiritual poverty, unaware of their own legacy. When the young man dons the cross-emblazoned armor, he takes upon himself an identity and quest, but he is incapable of fulfilling either until Contemplation brings him into a full knowledge of himself. There is nothing magical about the moment when Contemplation calls the knight by the name Georgos, and yet it is the climax of the knight's stay in the House of Holiness, and it is the last revelation before he finally departs for Eden.

The tale of the Saxon prince kidnapped to be raised in poverty in the fairy realm is conventional enough for courtly romance, but it is a convention adaptable to the purpose of the narrative. Until this point in the story, Redcrosse has been dressed in borrowed nobility, his title derived from the standard of Una's champion. Una provides him with a claim to Eden, but now his own royal birth makes him eligible to claim Una. Spenser appears to suggest that conviction of sin is only the beginning of self-knowledge, that when one has at last been stripped of arrogance and false confidence (and his armor serves to create that so long as his armor is the only holy thing about him), there is room to discover another identity, which is of greater worth. Woodcock explains the significance of this revelation within the context of his own exploration of Spenser's fairies, calling this a deconstruction of the knight's identity as the reader has understood it up to this point; Georgos is a human, not an elf, and a prince rather than a plowman (84). Woodcock argues that, because Redcrosse turns out to be someone (even something) other than what the reader has believed for ten cantos, it indicates that the reader cannot trust the identity of any character in the narrative, and he notes that Artegall's origins are equally mysterious (85-86). Because of the re-identification, Redcrosse's meaning as a sign within the narrative changes (86), and it changes for the character himself as well as for the reader. Though the casting off of old misconceptions of the self (so much vanity and chasing after the wind) is

painful, it is also liberty, for the false version of self is as shifting as Lucifera's house and is continually subject to the manipulation of deceivers like Archimago. For Redcrosse, to know himself is to be free from the power of false representations.

Redcrosse's moment of illumination comes as Contemplation is substituted for corrupt reason. Anderson argues that Contemplation's spiritual insight comes at the expense of his humanity:

> The comparison of Contemplation to a half-dead oak first indicates clearly that there is something unhealthy about the old man; then his attitude toward Redcrosse is presented in such a way that it seems unkind and unchristian. . . . . Contemplation's behavior may make for good doctrine, but it strikes a reader as being too single-minded. (26-27)

It is a tribute to the quality of Spenser's epic that one of his scenes inspires such criticism, for allegory, as a genre, is peculiar in its reliance on flat characters which represent a single state of mind. That a critic would expect anything different at this point in the narrative is an acknowledgement of the extraordinary complexity of the earlier cantos. As for Contemplation's single-mindedness, it is of a piece with the restricted perspective of the rest of the canto. Contemplation's unique ability to see heaven clearly and earth dimly is descriptive of this exclusive point of view, for Contemplation has but feeble use for reason that is shaped by the perceptions of the senses. The implication is that, as with Redcrosse after he has looked upon heavenly glory, Contemplation's eyes have trouble adjusting to the darker material world after being focused for so long on the dazzling light of the New Jerusalem. Perhaps, like Plato's inhabitants of the cave, a journey to the bright light of forms is sufficient to reduce the physical

world to a puppet show of shadows. Contemplation lays out before Redcrosse, both his past and his future, first a quest and then a pilgrimage. Most importantly, he enables the knight to place things in their proper sphere of importance:

> O let me not (quoth he) then turne againe
> Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse are;
> But let me here for aye in peace remaine,
> Or streight way on that last long voyage fare,
> That nothing may my present hope empare.
> That may not be, (said he) ne maist thou yit
> Forgo that royall maides bequeathed care,
> Who did her cause into thy hand commit,
> Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quit. (1.10.63)

Anderson argues that Contemplation becomes "more human" as the conversation progresses, and that he is at last the one who leads Redcrosse back to his earthly duties (28). This is surely a strange order of things, to make heaven the beginning rather than the end of one's meditations, but holiness is being disciplined in its priorities, and the expectation of heaven confirms rather than diminishes the obligations of earth.

The relationship between the realization of the new man and the obligations of earth is apparent when Redcrosse at last confronts the enemy he set out to conquer in the beginning, and the reader finds it to be yet another manifestation of pride and error. The dragon as a metaphor for Satan is one of Spenser's borrowings from Revelation where he is described as "the dragon, that old serpent, the devil" (Rev. 20: 2). As the serpent, he is the deceiver of the human race, and the lie with which he ensnared Adam and Eve in Eden is the same as the error which has

continually beset Redcrosse throughout his journey, the false confidence he can be capable of distinguishing good from evil through his own wisdom. As the image of God was dethroned in Adam, his ascension became a fall and his seduction a captivity. Spenser parallels this transformation in *The Faerie Queene* as he moves from the serpent of Wandering Woods to the dragon of Eden. The conflict with the dragon in canto xi presents pride, not merely as a private vice, but as the enslavement of earthly policy and the continued corruption of all human affairs. It is not only the image of the divine that is overthrown by original sin, but the right dominion of mankind. Humanity cannot rightly rule the earth so long as it is imprisoned by self-deception.

The dragon represents the failure of human dominion and the consequences of that failure. In Belinda Humfrey's article on the dragon in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, she notes that Redcrosse's defeat of the dragon is often read as a metaphor for the harrowing of hell. The fire from the dragon, then, is the fire of judgment on human sin. John W. Crawford notes that, in the Bible, fire may represent both judgment and purification, and Crawford argues that the engulfing of Redcrosse in the dragon's fire provides a purification from sin (178). It might be possible to include all these readings and say that the dragon represents the curse that came into the world because of sin, and that curse includes death, hell and corruption. It is not just a punishment for sin in the next world, but a spoiling of things in this world. It is probably impossible at this point to separate the spiritual and political layers of Spenser's allegory. Throughout Book I, symbolic representations of Catholicism have borne the imprint of Luciferian pride. Like Redcrosse, Spenser appears to have been moved by Contemplation from mystical heights to the world of public affairs in which false religion, accompanied by the false version of self it promotes, threatens to hinder the restoration of humanity to its right place in creation. The battle for holiness having been won in Redcrosse's own character, he is called to champion righteousness

in public affairs. And because the dragon represents one more manifestation of error and pride, it is absolutely necessary that Redcrosse be incapable of defeating it unaided. Grace is, yet again, the agent of God's work in spite of human weakness.

Redcrosse is restored by a springing well and by the tree of life, both symbolic reminders that the ultimate victory of the Christian lies in resurrection, in the restoration of the new man to eternal life. Thomas A. Dughi notes that well of life and the tree of life have traditionally been read as symbols of the sacraments, baptism and communion. Dughi takes exception to this because, he argues, it involves "an assertion about the source of Redcrosse's spiritual strength that would have been deeply disturbing to a committed sixteenth-century Protestant . . . [that is] the agency of the sacramental life of the church" (22). Dughi argues that the letter to Raleigh indicates that Spenser is engaged in a Protestant reformation of the individual through literature. He states, "Book 1 as a whole is inspired by the great dream of the Reformation: that the words of a book possess the power thoroughly to transform the soul's deepest structures . . . nothing is more fundamental to Protestantism than the belief that the Word of God has the power to lay hold of and transform the deepest structures of the psyche" (22-23). Dughi thus presents Redcrosse's victory over the dragon, through the assistance of the tree and the well, as the application of what he learned in Fidelia's schoolroom, and he cites Douglas Waters to support reading the well as representative of the perpetual cleansing of the Word (29). This reading also makes sense, I think, of the well's location in the narrative. Baptism is a rite of initiation into the Church. It belongs properly at the beginning of a journey of holiness, not at the end. The act of "rightly dividing" the Word, of using it appropriately and effectively, is a mark of spiritual maturity and may be placed at the end of the narrative.

The Tree of Life may also be tied to the restorative power of Scripture in that the Tree of Life represents the redemptive arc of the Christian Bible. In Genesis 2, God places both the tree of life and the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" in the center of the Garden of Eden, thus giving Adam and Eve a choice between life and death. Death was chosen, and an angel was sent to guard access to the tree of life, since God had no wish to couple sinfulness with immortality. The tree of life reappears in Revelation as a promise to the faithful: "To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7, ESV). In Revelation 22, the tree of life appears in the New Jerusalem as follows: " . . . Also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed" (v.22-23). Whereas in Genesis, humanity was separated from the tree of life by the curse, here the tree is offered as the remedy for the curse. It is here that we need what Tribble calls the "contextualization" of Tyndale's Protestant typology. Throughout the narrative, trees have represented the curse brought about by sin – the labyrinth of trees in Errour's wood, the tree that encases the cursed Fradubio, even the tree imagery in the description of Orgoglio whose mace is a "snaggy Oke" torn from the bowels of the earth (1.7.10). In Canto XI, however, the meaning of the tree as a sign in the narrative changes within the context of Redcrosse's battle with the dragon. Through his three day battle, Redcrosse identifies with the passion of Christ whose death reverses the consequences of the Fall, and the tree of life is restored to its original healing purpose. Given the clear allusion to Revelation 22:23 in the trees healing properties, it is unlikely that Spenser overlooked the political implications of the verse. The leaves are not for the healing of individuals, but for the healing of nations. The tree's presence in the New

Jerusalem, which Redcrosse glimpses from Contemplation's mountain, promises a cure for those perennial conflicts that rupture human society from both within and without.

At the end of Book I, the reader is given Redcrosse's own account of his experiences. Having slain the dragon, he enters Eden where he is welcomed and his claim to Una received. He tells his story to Una's father, but it soon becomes clear that he has told it with some significant omissions, for explanations are required when Archimago appears and presses Duessa's claim to Redcrosse: "Therefore since mine he is, or free or bond,/ Or false or trew, or living or else dead" (1.12.28). Duessa's betrothal claim is frightening in its totality, in large part because it reaches beyond death, thus exceeding the legal boundaries of marriage. By demanding him "living or else dead," Duessa extends her claim to the soul, as well as the body. Thus accused, Redcrosse is forced to supply some of the information he left out of the first version of the story, but even his second account is rather sanitized; much is made of Duessa's deceit and little of Redcrosse's own poor decisions. The most surprising part of this exchange is that Una confirms and supports Redcrosse's revised narrative. He asserts his innocence, and truth vindicates him.

The thematic development of Redcrosse's story makes it a suitable narrative for revision, for only revision can adequately address the nature of the change that has taken place within his character. By accepting the revision, the reader accepts the transformation of the justified knight whose guilt has not been laid to his charge and whose sanctification has reclaimed Eden from the dragon. Perhaps, it is here that the reader may benefit from Alpers' admonition that a precise memory for detail is not necessary from one canto to the next. Instead, the reader is invited to share the deliberate forgetfulness of God who "remembers our sins no more." The knight's sanctification does not make the history of his sins any less true, but it does render it irrelevant.

When Archimago seeks to prevent the betrothal of Una and Redcrosse by making a claim for Duessa, it matters only that Duessa's claim is invalid, both because of Una's prior claim and because of Duessa's own fraud. His failures do not justify her tyranny. It should be observed, also, that the terms of Redcrosse's vindication are hardly flattering:

> Who by her wicked arts, and wylie skill,
> Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
> Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
> And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared ill. (1.12.38)

If we are to follow Maurice Hunt's contention that "labor in *The Faerie Queene* becomes shameful work . . . when it is done under a woman's command or influence" (94), how much more disgraceful is this admission by Redcrosse of ravishment at the hands of Duessa? The hedging phrase, "Too false and strong for earthly skill or might," is all that preserves his precarious manhood - this and the grace of Una who quickly deflects attention from Redcrosse's seduction to the subornation of Archimago. Una's own omissions are a reminder that, after all, divine forgiveness lies in deliberate forgetfulness. God does not remember forgiven wrongs, and neither, apparently, does Una.

This last scene of Book I raises the question of whether or not the remembrance of past sins should be part of self-knowledge. In Coelia's house, humility had the form of age and experience, and certainly experience has no wisdom without memory. The right knowledge of self would seem, therefore, to be at least partly dependent on the continuing awareness of what one used to be, as well as the knowledge of what one has become. Having been exonerated by Una, however, Redcrosse seems free to leave his past to the divine amnesia. Perhaps, the last confrontation with Archimago is meant to limit the legacy of personal history, to provide a

boundary to the claims that the past may make upon the sanctified. The story as Redcrosse and Una retell it includes the necessary reminder of the knight's vulnerability. Having been repeatedly overcome by deceptions too strong for human resistance, he would do well to remember that he is always dependent on grace even if the guilt for specific iniquities has no place, since otherwise, the new man would be perpetually limited by the legacy of the old, and his sins would continue to define him as who he was before he repented and was transformed in the House of Holiness.

The journey of Redcrosse reveals the importance of salvation as a process in early Reformation writing. It is not enough that Redcrosse be accepted into divine favor (justification), but he must become worthy of that favor. That it is impossible for him to do this by means of his own accomplishments is apparent in his repeated failures. Because of the limitations of his own perception and reason, he is subject to repeated misunderstanding and misdeeds. Only the intervention of divine grace suffices to transform him into a character worthy of his calling. Consistent with a Calvinist understanding of the restoration of the divine image through sanctification, this process involves the restoration of an identity that may have belonged to him from the beginning, but which can only be realized when the corruption of Original Sin has been removed through the auspices of divine grace. Redcrosse experiences repeated failure until he understands that losing himself is what he must do to find himself. As will be see in the next chapter, the question of how this is to be done is the theme of much of John Donne's religious poetry.

# Chapter Two

## "Renovations are Always Acceptable to God": Donne's Poetry of Regeneration

It may be said of John Donne that no one else better illustrates the difficulty of articulating identity within the Protestant paradigm, a difficulty that arises because the very act of expressing a self is too close to the kind of self-reformation that Protestantism rejected. Had he not been raised a Catholic, Donne might still have struggled with doctrines that left so little to the agency of the individual. Donne's love poetry indicates that he had some regard for his own talents as a seducer; nothing could have been more contrary to this than Calvinism with its teaching of unmerited grace and the inscrutable election of God. In fact, Donne's religious writings reveal a conflicted acceptance of the Calvinist doctrine of moral helplessness in that there is a continuous tension between his own conscious courting of favor and the intellectual assent he gave to a Protestant doctrine of sovereign grace.

This tension is the transitional point between the fallen and sanctified self in Donne's writings. Gary Kuchar has noted that Donne saw the act of preaching as an intimate act in that the preacher identifies with and gives voice to the conscience of the individual congregant ("Ecstatic Donne" 631). Kuchar describes this as an "ecstatic experience" in that something external (the preacher) is made to feel as though it is somehow internal (the conscience or conviction of sin). This translation from external to internal facilitates an awareness of the divided self because it is the "experience of hearing one's own conscience against one's own intention" (632). It is my contention that, not merely one preacher, but a Protestant doctrine of *sola gratia*, functioned as the external conscience or convicting voice for Donne, compelling him to work out his conversion as a renovation of the mind – a conflict between intellectual faculties and the emotional responses of fear, anxiety and guilt.

Transformation is an important theme in Donne's writings. Paul Harland notes that change and growth are frequent subjects in Donne's sermons and reflect the moderate Calvinism for which Donne is well known. According to Harland, Donne the preacher describes sanctification as a process in which the individual has an active role:

> For Donne, the grandeur of the human condition could be found in the fact that, by accepting or denying God's grace, individuals might elect to change their natures . . . The essence of human happiness, established in God's creation, resides in one's ability to grow, to transform oneself from a particular condition into a better one. (3)

However, Donne's perspective of human agency in his poems is always more complex and conflicted than Harland portrays it. There is always a desire to be able to *do* something independently and always a return to the doctrine that he cannot do anything without help. This reluctant insistence on the necessity of prevenient grace does not mean that there is not a corresponding emphasis on good works since, as Harland notes, the transformation of the individual is the purpose of the grace. In a Candlemas Day (1622) sermon, Donne states, ". . . There is no faith, which the Angels in heaven, or the Church upon earth, or our own consciences can take knowledge of, without good works" (377). Calvinism certainly did not accept the validity of faith without good works; it simply placed human effort in a different role than what was given it by Catholicism; election to a new nature came from God and expressed itself through good works.

Donne expounds a Calvinist version of sanctification and vocation in a sermon preached at the Hague in 1619 and revised and expanded as two sermons after his illness in 1630. There is

no way to know how much material was original in 1630 and how much was retained from 1619, but the sermons retain the conflicted Calvinism of the "Holy Sonnets" and "Good Friday." Donne analyzes Matthew 4:18-20, the passage in which Christ calls fishermen to be his disciples. In the second sermon, Donne describes the relationship between sanctification and vocation by discussing how the occupation of the disciples (fishermen) became their divine calling (fishers of men):

> It is a Renovation, though not an Innovation, and Renovations are always acceptable to God; that is the renewing of a mans selfe, in a consideration of his first estate, what he was made for, and wherein he might be most serviceable to God. (305)

Donne's emphasizes renovation (rather than innovation) here because he is referring to the importance of tradition in doctrine and liturgy, but he also refers to the "first estate" of humanity – the unblemished image of God that was lost to Original Sin. God is interested in restoring the individual to that lost image, but he also includes whatever the person has been in the meantime. God does not throw away Peter and Andrew's experience as fishermen, but rather claims and sanctifies it for the purpose of the church. I believe that Donne thought his own vocation of poetry was redeemed through his religious verses; whereas he had formerly written licentious verses, his talents were exercised to express the spiritual "courtship" between God and the individual heart. This renovation is on display in the sonnet, "What if this present were the world's last night?," in which Donne attempts to put the language of seduction to spiritual use.

This type of artifice suggests that Donne is trying to assert some agency in the process of sanctification even as he steadfastly maintains a doctrinal position to the contrary. In one of the Hague sermons, he says the following of sanctification:

> Such a renewing it is, as could not be done without God; no man can renew himself, regenerate himself; no man can prepare that worke, no man can proceed in it of himself. The desire and the actuall beginning is from the preventing [prevenient] grace of God, and the constant proceeding is from the concomitant, and subsequent, and continuall succeeding grace of God. . . . (305)

By explaining that sanctification is both initiated and carried out by grace, Donne denies any possibility of self-fashioning in the work of regeneration. Moreover, Donne argues that grace not only regenerates, but also equips the Christian to fulfill his calling. In the first Hague sermon, Donne states, "Christ needed not mans sufficiency, he took insufficient men; Christ excuses no mans insufficiency, he made them sufficient. His purpose then was, that the worke should be ascribed to the Workman, not to the Instrument." Christ is sufficient, but man is not, so Christ makes men sufficient in order to make them useful. Christ, according to Donne, is neither repulsed by inadequacy nor thwarted by it; rather, he supplies what is lacking for both sanctification and vocation, so that God is glorified in a work that no one else could accomplish. This statement provides a Calvinist frame to Donne's insistence on good works. Because Christ makes sufficient those whom he calls, there can be no excuse and no exception in the matter of sanctification. As Donne later states, "If the Lords arme bee not shortned, let no man impute weaknesse to his instrument, as that their strength shall not be thought to be their owne" (275).

The original sermon on Matthew 4 was preached to an audience of fellow ministers, and therefore it is possible that it had no purpose other than to demonstrate Donne's orthodoxy to his Protestant colleagues. That Donne should have revised and expanded the original in 1630 after his illness suggests that he was still mulling the implications of a grace-based understanding of

vocation, and with it, the sanctification that makes vocation possible. This suggests that Donne continued to emphasize prevenient grace as the agent of sanctification, even though he ceased to write the kind of emotionally painful lines that characterize the "Holy Sonnets."

The spiritual anguish present in both the "Holy Sonnets" and "Good Friday" is proof that to agree with a doctrine and to put it into practice are two different things, and Donne seems to have found the implications of prevenient grace particularly bitter. In his second sermon at the Hague, Donne illustrates the difficulty of self-abnegation by describing the various orders of friars who compete with each other to humble themselves with deprivations, but who then quarrel over positions of honor in processions. Donne thus argues that self-denial can be an act of pride: "There may be a pride in Humility, and an over-weaning of ourselves." Donne finds the corrective for this false humility in the admonition of Christ, "Follow me." To follow is to yield precedence, to allow someone the first place and to walk in imitation; the follower becomes the shadow of the leader. This is very close to Stanley Fish's idea that the writer, as self-consuming artifact, writes himself off the page, leaving only Christ to the reader's gaze. The problem is that Donne's ego does not yield quietly to being a passive presence in his own drama. His theology states that sufficiency is found only in Christ, but the conflicts of his religious poetry indicate that self is not content to be the shadow only. Donne's desires are hardly rebellious in that he seems to desire to be godly; rather, his poems express frustration with the inefficacy of self to play a role in salvation or sanctification.

The "Holy Sonnets" and "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward" date to the period between his conversion to Protestantism and his ordination, and the majority of scholars have read the themes of his poetry as related to the moderate Calvinism of the church into which he was ordained. Notable exceptions to the critical consensus would be Louis Martz and Helen

Gardner who place the "Holy Sonnets" in the tradition of Ignatian meditation. Martz notes that criticism of Donne prior to the 1960s placed him at the head of a school of seventeenth-century religious poets, whereas he contends that Donne was part of a broader and older tradition of meditative practices, particularly those of St. Ignatius of Loyola, that he would have brought to Protestantism from his own recusant past: "It may be easier for us to see Donne's originality, not as a meteoric burst, but as part of a normal, central tendency of religious life in his time" (2). Helen Gardner argues that Donne's religious poems demonstrate "continuity" in his spiritual development: "The habits of devotion they [the poems] reflect are those he must have been taught as a child, which he took up again – he may never have abandoned them – with adult seriousness and adult intensity" (xxi). Other critics have suggested intellectual debts to St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard of Clairvaux , and St. Thomas Aquinas. [2]

In response, a number of critics have placed Donne's religious poetry within the Protestant tradition. John Stachniewski counters that the Ignatian reading is flawed because there is no certainty as to the original order of the sonnets, nor any evidence that Donne considered the order important (677-78). Barbara Lewalski relates Donne's religious poetry to the Calvinist salvation paradigm and reads the "Holy Sonnets" as reflecting a Pauline conversion narrative. Lewalksi uses the 1635 order of the sonnets, as does Martz and Gardner, though she concedes there can be no certainty that this is the order in which Donne wrote or would have arranged them, and she sees a completely different pattern in the sequence. Where Martz and Gardner argue for the Catholic meditative tradition, Lewalski argues that the sonnets fit neatly into the seven stages of salvation recognized by Protestants, and that this is suitable to the

[2] Achsah Guibbory argues for Donne's indebtedness to the writings of St. Bonaventure and St. Bernard in "John Donne and Memory as 'The Art of Salvation.'" In "John Donne and the Augustinian Paradox of Sin," Gillian R. Evans notes Donne's use of a paradox found in St. Bernard's writings (3).

uncertain sequencing because, in Protestantism, "the various states [stages] are not so much sequential as concomitant" (265).

Finally, some critics have refused to see Donne as fitting neatly into either Protestant or Catholic categories. Strier argues that ambiguities in the sonnets prove that both sides are partly correct: "Donne was no more consistently Calvinist than he was consistently Arminian in the 'Holy Sonnets'" (366). Within the last decade, critics have challenged the idea that the meditations of the "Holy Sonnets" conform to any consistent devotional framework. Brian Cummings maintains that both those who place Donne in the Catholic tradition and those who place him in the Protestant tradition share the "assumption of the legibility of emotion. Yet the difference in the conclusions itself belies such legibility" (369). Moreover, both Catholic and Protestant interpretations are dependent on the dating of Donne's poems. Paul Dean sums up the problem thus, "Few of Donne's poems can be dated with confidence, and attempts to infer a life story from them, as from Shakespeare's sonnets, are at best conjectural" (69). Gardner's dating of the "Holy Sonnets" to around 1609 (*The Divine Poems* xlix) is generally accepted, but a lack of certainty as to the original sequence makes it unwise to try and construct a linear narrative from the sonnets themselves. In any case, spiritual development is seldom linear and consistent, and the reader should expect contradiction and ambiguity in poems that are so intensively, even aggressively, personal.

Thematically, the "Holy Sonnets" explore different aspects of the failed and fallen self and the process of conversion. A number of critics have noted the presence of the divided self in the sonnets. Lewalski argues that the thematic source of these poems may be found in Paul's epistles and she argues that they owe more to Protestant theology in

> . . . Their anguished Pauline speaker, their presentation of states of soul attendant upon the Protestant drama of regeneration, than they do to any other meditative scheme. They are permeated with biblical metaphor, psalm allusions, and Pauline echoes . . . And the precise theological terms which also resound through these sonnets – "Impute me righteous," "make me new," "adoption" – afford clear evidence of their primary concern with the Protestant paradigm of salvation. (265)

This would make the primary drama of the sonnets the struggle between old nature and new. More recently, Gary Ettari argues that the overarching theme of the Holy Sonnets is "rebirth and renewal." The manner in which Donne portrays this makes it clear that this process will require an overthrow of the old self in a most dramatic manner. In the sonnets, self must be drowned, burnt, battered, ravished and crucified, leaving the reader to wonder how many modes of destruction will suffice to rid Donne of the "old man" and the sinfulness inherent to that nature. If the renewal of sanctification is a resurrection, then the anguish of the sonnets rests in the underlying fear that no death will suffice to earn the resurrection he desires. Martz states that the "Holy Sonnets" represent an underlying need for spiritual satisfaction: "It is the poem of the mind, seeking to find what will suffice. It destroys the old romantic tenements, and in their place constructs a stage on which an insatiable actor presents to the mind the action of an inward search" ("Meditative Voice" 327). Tina Skouen has placed the sonnets within the literary tradition of psychomachia, or internal conflict. She cites R.B. Rollins to support this assertion: "From such a perspective, the sonnet 'Batter my heart' and even the whole group of Holy Sonnets appear to represent not only 'the individual's struggle to establish some kind of

efficacious relationship with God' but also an equally 'archetypal' struggle to bridle the rebellious passions" (168). This reflects the Protestant teaching that the mind is the *locus* of sanctification. Reason (informed by a right knowledge of God) produces holiness when it dominates the passions. While I have borrowed Lewalski's ordering of the sonnets, I do not argue that this is the original ordering, since it would be impossible to corroborate such an argument, nor do I wish to demonstrate a Calvinist progress of the soul. I believe that the "Holy Sonnets" represent a transition in which Donne struggles to understand his own agency in salvation in an English Protestant paradigm that is dominated by Calvinism. The ever-present difficulty of the sonnets is how to understand and discipline the passions that accompany his spiritual flux. "To whom then will you liken God," demands the prophet (Is. 40:18, ESV), but for Donne the question is to what can he liken himself, and how he can bend those metaphors to represent not merely what he is, but what is possible for his transformation.

In the process of describing his own dilemma, Donne frequently addresses God in ways that are startling to the reader, as in the sonnet which begins, "Thou hast made me, and shall thy worke decay?" This sonnet presents sin and judgment as problems for God as well as for the poet, since God stands to lose his prize creation. This is not impertinence, but rather a shrewd rhetorical maneuver. Like Abraham's pleading on behalf of Sodom, it offers God an alternative to destructive judgment – a reason to choose mercy. However, unlike Abraham, Donne does not invite God to look for even a token or appearance of righteousness. Rather, the absence of any claim to even a minimal goodness prepares the reader for the Calvinist dilemma that will run through the sonnets. The poet is beset by temptation and his own frailty:

> Despaire behind, and death before doth cast
> Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste

By sinne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh

. . . Our old subtle foe so tempteth me,

That not one houre my selfe I can sustaine; (6-8, 11-12)

The poet's statement that he cannot "sustain" himself indicates the totality of his helplessness. Death is before him, and his sinful flesh continuously fails him. The corruption is within him, and he scarcely needs to wait for his dissolution. In the final couplet, it is grace that he looks to for intervention, describing it as a magnet that might draw the poet's "iron heart." It is in these last lines that the poet succeeds in grasping the contradictions inherent to re-identification. He wants the intervention of grace, or he would not ask for it; he does not want it, or else he would not have left it up to grace to draw him rather than simply throwing himself upon it. This odd combination of desire and ambiguity prepares the reader to recognize the fallen version of self as both villain and victim, both despised and pitied, throughout the "Holy Sonnets," a paradox that will become especially important in "Batter My Heart, Three-Person'd God."

The metaphor of the magnet used in the last line indicates more than helplessness, however. Angus Fletcher describes Donne's debt to William Gilbert's *De Magnete*, which Donne alludes to in *Essays on Divinity*, and to which he is indebted in "To Mr. Tilman After He Had Taken Orders" (8-9). Gilbert argues for a kind of sentience in inanimate things and describes magnetism as an awareness that is stimulated in objects by the force which attracts them. In this theory, the magnetic attraction is a conscious reaction (an awakening) to the attractive force of the loadstone (8). Fletcher argues that Donne, in his poem to Tilman, describes grace as such an awakening, providing an inward re-orientation though the man remains outwardly the same (9). In the same way, Donne's use of magnetism in Sonnet I involves more than the inertia of a motionless heart being drawn inexorably to something.

Rather, the poet is suggesting that something can be changed within the heart, a redirection of its inclinations brought about through the agency of grace. In line 3 of the sonnet, Donne describes himself as being drawn toward death, "I runne to death, and death meets me as fast." In line 8, the heaviness of his sins "t'wards hell doth weigh." In lines 11 and 12, he describes the way in which the will has been compromised, "But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,/ That not one houre my selfe I can sustain." As in "Good Friday," the soul is subject to foreign motions and unable to pursue the correct course of devotion. Now, however, Donne suggests that grace can counteract the influence of sin and death. As adamant awakens in iron an attraction and impulse not previously felt, so grace can become the loadstone to reanimate within the iron heart an attraction – toward what? Away from sin and death certainly, but Donne does not here articulate a longing toward the divine. This longing is absent for the time being, and the agency of grace is needed to restore it.

The reader might well ask whether the rhetorical pleading of the sonnets does not undermine the portrayal of self as helpless against the flesh and the devil. In the sonnet, "As due by many titles I resigne," the poet again invites God to see himself as the injured party in Donne's possible damnation. The poet is God's creation, a purchase, a son, a servant, a sheep, and an image of the divine. In other words, he is a desirable possession to reclaim. Clearly, Satan agrees; he is "loth to lose" his grasp on the soul. It is this subversive approach to unmerited favor that Strier sees as a struggle to internalize the implications of Calvinist doctrine. Donne has assented to the doctrine in theory, but he stumbles on the application because of the difficulty in re-evaluating himself so dramatically. Strier cites Luther to argue that Protestants in general saw the value of the self as something that comes extrinsically through the love of God and the sacrifice of Christ; that is, God assigns to the individual a value which he or she does not

already have and which cannot be achieved. In contrast to this, Donne seems to be insisting upon an intrinsic value that he thinks God should acknowledge (369).

It might be argued, though, that what appears to be an assertion of independent worth instead becomes a declaration of the poet's reliance on God for a valid identity. All of the metaphors of the poem describe the poet's worth in relational terms – *God's* creation, *God's* possession, *God's* child, *God's* servant, *God's* sheep, and *God's* image. The speaker's value is derived from the precise relationship he has with God, and that is why there is such desperation in the last four lines of the sonnet:

> Except thou rise and for thine owne worke fight,
>
> Oh, I shall soone despaire, when I doe see
>
> That thou lov'st mankind well, yet wilt not chuse me,
>
> And Satan hates mee, yet is loth to lose mee.

Lewalski notes that this is a poem about election, but the poet also speaks beyond that to the desire that God's love, bestowed upon humanity in general, should be also directed toward him personally. It is not just deliverance from judgment that matters here, but the need to be valued by God. The speaker describes himself as "blood bought," but Calvinism defines the atonement as applicable only to the elect. Therefore, unless he has assurance that God has chosen him, Donne cannot with certainty call himself "sonne" or "sheepe." More recently, Kuchar describes the central dilemma of the "Holy Sonnets" as "the speaker's terrifying recognition that repentance requires him to experience his lack of autonomy – to undergo a psychically violent process in which he comes to realize, existentially as well as cognitively, that in himself he is nothing" ("Petrarchism" 537). All the careful arguments he has made for his own value at the beginning of the sonnet necessarily crumble unless God rises up on his behalf.

In “I am a little world made cunningly,” Donne begins with the image of man as a microcosm in order to meditate on the Fall of Creation, which brings judgment not only on the earth, but also on Donne’s own “little world” of himself, which is doomed to die twice over, both physically and spiritually. Donne’s opening description of the cleverly fashioned microcosm, an intricate joining of body and spirit, emphasizes the original nobility and dignity of humanity whose Fall is not tragic unless it is a fall from a high place. Lewalski reads this poem as penitential, and certainly repentance and judgment are prominent themes, but it is also a poem about regeneration. It is not just about how the microcosm may be destroyed, but how it may be restored. Perhaps, it can be washed instead of drowned (7-9). If it must be burned, perhaps it can be done with the fire of zeal rather than the fire of judgment (10-13). Interestingly, the poet interjects a third kind of fire near the end of the sonnet: “Alas the fire/ Of lust and envie have burnt it heretofore,/ And made it fouler” (10-12). There is certainly repentance here for the specific sins of lust and envy, but there is also the argument that the poet’s passions might be co-opted for a better purpose, or that healing might bring about better desires. Donne seems to argue that the redemption of his microcosm rests on the conversion of his longings, which may be redirected from unholy to holy desires. This seems to echo the first sonnet in which he invites grace to become the magnet for his iron heart. If one may borrow from the Hague sermons here, it is a kind of renovation of the passions that Donne appears to suggest as a way of renovating the whole self. Moreover, in the fifth sonnet, it is not any one attribute of God that he wishes to draw near to, but to God himself. The reference to God’s “house” is most likely a reference to the church, given that this is the subject of “Show me, deare Christ, thy spouse,” but it is worth considering that it may also refer simply to the place where the presence of God dwells or to the place where the poet can worship him. His salvation must not be only about what he is escaping,

but also what he is fleeing toward, and what must change in him as a result, and this recognition may indicate a kind of spiritual progress.

The themes of identity and substitutionary atonement are perhaps best seen in Sonnet VII (1633 manuscript), "Spit in my face you Jewes." Martz notes that this seems to conform to an exercise in Ignatian meditation in which the contemplative imagines himself present at the suffering of Christ and among those who abuse him. In this way, Christians may mourn for their own sins as they consider the suffering that those sins caused. In Sonnet VII, however, Donne begins by expressing a longing that he might bear the contempt and torment for his own sins rather than watch Christ suffer for them. Recognizing that this would be to no purpose, he describes himself as guiltier than those who were directly responsible for the crucifixion: "They kill'd once an inglorious man, but I/ Crucifie him daily, being now glorified" (7-8). The last part of the sonnet compares Christ to Jacob who disguised himself as his twin brother, Esau, in order to deceive his father and receive the blessing that was intended for his brother. Instead, God disguises himself as man in order to suffer for humanity.

Donne here presents the sacrificial death of Christ as a kind of impersonation. Having desired to substitute for Christ during the act of atonement, the poet instead turns to consider the implications of God disguised in human form. He describes this as "strange love" (9) and a cosmic irony: "God cloth'd himself in vile mans flesh, that so/ Hee might be weake enough to suffer woe" (13-14). Whereas Jacob disguises himself with the intent of gaining some advantage (11-12), God deliberately places himself at a disadvantage by taking on a form that can suffer pain and death. The conclusion of the meditation, then, is not that the poet should better identify himself with Christ, but rather it is a recognition that Christ has already identified with him, a theme that is echoed in "Wilt thou love God as he thee," which concludes, "'Twas much, that

man was made like God before,/ But, that God should be made like man, much more" (13-14). Because man fails to keep the likeness of God, God takes on the likeness of man, and so the divine image is renewed in the person of Christ who is the incarnation of God. Sonnet VII takes on a different tone from "Good Friday," partly because, at the end of the sonnet, Donne succeeds in doing what he cannot at the end of the longer poem, which is to focus his attention on the love of Christ rather than on his own inadequacy.

This ultimate dependence on God's agency is also present in "Batter my Heart, three-person'd God." While the sonnet shocks the reader with its request for violation and with the intensity of that request (Cummings calls this "masochistic bravado" [397]), the insistence on the powerlessness of the soul and the need for God's dominion over it is in line with a Calvinist understanding of the self. William R. Mueller has shown that this sonnet is deeply rooted in Biblical imagery. He cites Isaiah 1:21, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." Mueller further explains,

> The speaker, in spite of his professed love for God, has plighted his troth to the Adversary; he is like Israel which, as the Old Testament frequently says, went a whoring after false gods. The equation of idolatry, of unfaithfulness to God, with either fornication or adultery is one of the more repeated images of the prophetic writers. (313)

In "Batter My Heart," God cannot recapture the soul without violating its selfhood because it is the very autonomy of the soul that has been its undoing: "Yet dearely I love, and would be loved faine,/ But am betroth'd unto your enemie" (9-10). The heart is captive to its own prior bad choices and can only be delivered by being overruled. To this end, the poet suggests that God's

erstwhile method of dealing with him has not been forceful enough: "You/ As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend" (1-2). The problem is that mending will not suffice; reason no longer governs, and the poet cannot seek what is his own best interest. The reader will remember the passage from Calvin's *Institutes*, ". . . Since reason, by which man discerns between good and evil, and by which he understands and judges, is a natural gift, it could not be entirely destroyed; but being partly weakened and partly corrupted, a shapeless ruin is all that remains" (165). If reason is unable to govern, then there is nothing but captivity for the soul, and the poet invites God to be the captor, "Take mee to you, imprison mee" (12).

Although the idea of ravishment in this context is initially shocking, it allows the poet to explore the paradox of being delivered through captivity and being liberated by being overpowered. It is interesting that Donne should frame holiness as chastity. Chastity is moral constancy or spiritual fidelity. The metaphorical use of ravishment suggests a pun on the word "enthrall", which can mean either to enslave or to beguile. Critics seem most intrigued by Donne's willingness to place himself in a feminine role in this sonnet. John E. Parish notes, "Readers . . . who find it 'a strain to imagine the poet in the role of a woman,' should remember that with Donne (as with Shakespeare, Spenser and others) the soul is always feminine" (301). Parish constructs an entire narrative in which the central character of the sonnet is (feminine) Reason who has betrothed herself to the enemy and who, therefore, must be forcibly reclaimed. In a sense, this allows the reader to distance the poet from the violation he requests in final line. I think it would be a mistake to do this. In Parish's narrative, Reason, the princess, is the culprit, and it is Reason alone that is in need of conquest. The sonnet makes clear, however, that the entire town is captive, not just its traitorous or incompetent viceroy; reason is not the only part of the self that is corrupted by sin. It is the entire town that must fall if God consents to "break,

blow and burn," and it is the entire town that will be raped (a term which has different implications when applied to a town than when applied to an individual). Further, it might be argued that this poem has everything to do with Donne's sexuality, rather than just a divine conquest of his reason. In "What if this present were the world's last night", Donne tries to pursue Christ with the same flattery he used to court his mistresses: "To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assigned,/ This beauteous form assures a piteous mind" (13-14). While there is no certainty as to the order in which Donne wrote his sonnets, it is clear that in one sonnet he is the pursuer and, in the other, he is the pursued. It is worth suggesting that Donne tries and fails to be the suitor, or (in other words) the agent of his conversion. He finds himself unequal to the task of pursuing Christ (reason is unreliable, the will is weak), and he falls back on the hope that God may pursue him. Even so, he is often unwilling to be overtaken and made holy, and so he falls back upon the metaphor of ravishment, an act that by definition deprives the victim of the right of refusal.

Donne's use of sexual imagery and the language of seduction in order to engage the divine is problematic for some critics, but it is necessary for Donne. The distinction between Jack the Rake and Dr. Donne the preacher is artificial and unhelpful, though Thomas O. Sloane notes that it is a division Donne himself promoted after his ordination to separate himself from his licentious past (188-189). But the man who wrote "To His Mistress Going to Bed" is the same man who wrote the "Holy Sonnets," and he brings his past sins and conflicts with him. The process of sanctification requires it of him because memory is a function of the mind, and sanctification is the renewing of the mind. Achsah Guibbory notes that Donne placed great value on the role of memory in salvation because he saw memory as the most stable of human

faculties, the intellect and will having been compromised by the Fall (262). Kuchar describes Donne's view of homiletics in this way:

> . . . The preacher should speak in a voice that is intimate enough with me to know my most disavowed secrets, but other enough from me to shock me by revealing them . . . For Donne, the power of fascination a preacher possesses is directly proportional to his ability to get auditors to feel as well as to understand the shock of surprise attendant upon an encounter with one's conscience as God's witness within the soul ("Ecstatic Donne" 631)

Kuchar argues that Donne wanted the voice of the preacher to transcend time by revealing the sin of the past, startling the hearer in the present, and speaking forward in time to the Last Judgment (632). What was memory to Donne the preacher, therefore, must be startling and immediate to Donne the poet. But what if the preacher is preaching to himself? He can be the voice of his own conscience, but how does he surprise with that encounter? Kuchar compares the experience of being seized by one's own conscience to David Krell's definition of *uncanny*: ". . . It generates a newfound sense that the relation between what is me and what is not-me is neither simple nor under my control" (636). As the echo of God within the soul, this conscience is the voice of the "new man," the regenerated self that is being remade in the likeness of God (643), and which therefore condemns the sinfulness of the "old" nature. Stachniewski notes that rape was a "widely used" metaphor to characterize a Calvinist conversion. He states, "Calvinist conversion involved God's simultaneous and irresistible seizure of all faculties, and it this that Donne invites" (689). This requires a contravention of the self, a dissolution of autonomy because the self no longer recognizes its own moral authority, and this is what Donne is using rape to

describe. The use of sexual imagery in the "Holy Sonnets" allows Donne to bring together his past and present in order to arrive at a redemptive future. Because licentiousness characterized him before his conversion, that imagery is brought forward to suggest how God might reclaim him for sacred use. This is the renovation of Donne the poet.

In spite of its apparent violence, there is also a tenderness expressed in line 9, "Yet dearely I love you, and would be loved faine." This turn toward relationship in his penitence may explain the Trinitarian emphasis of "Batter my heart, three person'd God." It is worth asking why the action of the poem should require a three-personed God. The doctrine of the Trinity has always been central to the Christian understanding of a relational deity – a God who is self-sufficient, but continuously pursuing relationships with his creation. Further, the doctrine of the Trinity makes possible the doctrine of the Incarnation with its sacrificial significance. Three persons are necessary to enact the drama of the atonement – the Father to judge sin, Christ to bear sin, and the Holy Spirit to resurrect Christ, thus ensuring life to those who follow him. If the poet is to be finally delivered, not just from judgment, but from slavery to sin, this drama must be acted out in him. Some critical discussion of how this operates in the poem has focused on the contrast between God's current method of wooing the soul ("knocke, breathe, shine" [2]) versus the alternative suggested by the speaker ("breake, blowe, burn" [4]). Some critics have read the three actions as corresponding to three persons of the Trinity in their respective roles. Arthur L. Clements summarizes this reading as "the Father as Power, the Son as Light, and the Holy Ghost as Breath." He argues that this reading is too simplistic. For one thing, Donne would have to depart from the traditional order of Father, Son and Spirit: "knocke, breathe, shine" instead of knock, shine, breathe (484). For another, it is not the Father who knocks, but the Son, according to Revelation 3 (485). One counterargument has been offered by Lucio P. Ruotolo,

who argues for the influence of Aquinas: "The order then that we find in Donne's poem reflects the essentially Thomistic paradigm of 1) God the Father as begetter and generator . . . 2) God the Son or begotten whose life breathes forth love; and 3) God the Holy Ghost whose love illuminates historical man through the affections and the will" (445-446).

Trinitarian theology again appears in "Father, part of his double interest." At the beginning of the poem, Donne is probably referencing Romans 8:16-17, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (ESV). This poem is more comfortable with Calvinist concepts than previous sonnets, both in its identification with Christ and in the meaning it provides for suffering. Here suffering has nothing to do with paying for sin, but rather with emulating Christ in order to be rewarded. His reference to the Trinity again emphasizes the relational nature of God. The symbolism of the rest of the poem is indebted to I Corinthians 3, which compares the Old Covenant (the Law of Moses) with the New Covenant (the Gospel); the passage is also a defense of St. Paul's ministry. Donne is probably reading verses 4 through 6:

> Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.
> Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming
> from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us
> competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but
> of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (ESV)

The word "sufficient" appears nowhere in this sonnet, but the sufficiency of Christ is apparent throughout. The Son keeps his place in the Trinity, but imparts to the poet "his deaths conquest" (3). Moreover, he has made two wills (7), which are the two covenants. The Old Covenant,

according to Donne, involves controversy and impossible demands: "Yet such are thy laws, that men argue yet/ Whether a man those statutes can fulfill;/ None doth" (9-11). In contrast to this, ". . . Grace and spirit/ Revive againe what law and letter kill" (11-12). In the end, Donne does not reject divine law, but rather argues that the Old and New Covenants ultimately agree in one regard: "Thy lawes abridgement, and that last command/ Is all but love" (13-14). Though he concludes with acclaim for the Gospel ("Oh let this last Will stand"), the poet can end with a satisfactory resolution of both the demands of the law and the supremacy of grace. Both are satisfied by love.

While the sonnets are clearly informed by what Lewalski calls the "Protestant paradigm" (16), they ultimately escape the efforts of critics to fit them neatly into a clear devotional formula. That may be deliberate on the part of Donne, who notoriously eschewed theological controversy. No doubt he had had enough of that when he made his transition from Catholicism to Protestantism and, while he was quick to attack Catholic traditions in his sermons, he was also quick to smooth over dissent among Protestant authorities on knotty doctrinal issues. Evans suggests that this is why paradox is so crucial to Donne's writings, since paradox can offer a shortcut out of controversy: "Nothing contains and compresses speculation more effectively than a paradox, used as Donne uses it, as a means of tucking in the ends of a concept, and focusing attention upon the place where oppositions meet" (6). Paradoxes are also eminently suited to poetry as a medium for expressing truth in that they are a way of bending language to accommodate concepts that are transcendent, and which cannot therefore be clearly articulated in the ordinary use of language. In that sense, Donne needs paradox as more than just an escape hatch from endless controversies. Christianity cannot be stripped of paradox without being oversimplified, and possibly it is this aspect of religion that is most appealing to Donne.

Concerning the sonnets, Stachniewski explains, "The paradoxical expressions reflect a genuinely paradoxical attitude toward God" (690). Paradoxes thus encapsulate the conflicted attitude that Donne felt toward a God that He perceived as simultaneously judging and exonerating him.

The centrality of that conflict to Donne's Christianity may be seen in "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward," a poem which dates to the transitional period just before Donne's ordination into the Church of England, but which was written several years after the "Holy Sonnets." Because of the date, Joe Glaser argues for a biographical reading of this poem:

> It not only provides the clearest evidence we have as to Donne's attitudes as he moved toward ordination in the Anglican Church, but also confirms what we know from others sources about the oddly elliptical way in which his mind resolved problems and the gallery of recurrent images and concerns that haunted his imaginative life. (169)

"Good Friday" reveals that Donne is still troubled by issues addressed but not resolved in the "Holy Sonnets." In this poem, Donne explores the tentative nature of a fallen self that is dependent on a holy and paradoxical God. It must be asked whether "Good Friday" is a poem about justification or sanctification. Most critics after Helen Gardner accept her dating of the "Holy Sonnets" to around 1610, by which point Donne has already left the Catholicism of his youth. The fact that "Good Friday" is actually dated to 1613 makes it difficult *not* to consider how it fits into the period of Donne's life. Presumably, having now identified himself as a Protestant, Donne has accepted the paradigm of justification by faith, though "Good Friday" could easily be about justification or sanctification. It is helpful here to remember Lewalski's discussion of the states of Protestant salvation as "concomitant," and Terry G. Sherwood's

reading of "Good Friday" (discussed in greater detail below) certainly makes the case that Donne's poem is about the lifelong "conversion" that takes place in sanctification, that is the re-identification from the old man to the new. Above all, Calvinism was concerned with the conversion of the whole person. God does not merely pronounce the Christian righteous, He then sets about to make the Christian righteous in fact as well as in title. Conversion encompasses this entire process, and it is not outside Calvinist orthodoxy for Donne to present conversion as a continuous journey.

Donne begins here, as he does in other religious poems, by presenting the soul as a microcosm: "Let mans Soule be a Spheare" (1). Verena O. Lobsien has noted that the circle was a common Renaissance trope:

> Renaissance poets used circularity as a medium for thinking through certain problems in connection with the life of the soul. . . . It provides a means of analyzing, understanding, and asserting what later came to be called subjectivity. Indeed, circularity became a favorite mode of imagining the mind in possession of itself. (13-14)

Lobsien does not cite "Good Friday" as an example of circularity in Donne's poetry, but circularity is the dominant trope, and it would be appropriate to characterize this poem as the contemplations of a mind seeking possession of itself. Martz interprets the poem as presenting the three ways in which (according to Augustine) the individual is made in the image of God, which are understanding, will and memory (*Poetry of Meditation* 56). These are the elements of the mind which must be renewed.

In "Good Friday," points of the compass provide a metaphor for human will and self-direction. Every sphere, or celestial body, has a motion; for the soul, Donne distinguishes

between what ought to be, and what is, the force that compels it. He states, "The intelligence that moves, devotion is" (2). The course laid out for the soul by devotion is not unimpeded; as occurs with other bodies, another force alters the course of its orbit and the sphere loses its original place, "subject to forraigne motions" (4).

The reluctant journey away from the poet's desired destination has inspired a number of critical interpretations. Joe Glaser takes the westward journey as a representation of Donne's journey toward Protestantism (and ordination) and away from the Catholicism of his youth (172). According to A. B. Chambers, Donne is borrowing from a long tradition that envisioned the entire cosmos as engaged in westward motion (31). Chambers argues that the conflict in the poem is between passion (earthly desires) and reason, which he associates with devotion to Christ (42). I would argue that this is a poem about the conflicted character of self-interest. Nature, both within and without the poet, pulls him in one direction, while his own mind (central to the process of renewal) longs to move another way. The idea of all creation being compelled to journey west is compatible with William H. Halewood's reading of "Good Friday" as a poem about sin as the Reformation defined it, which is "the general corruption that all branches of the Reformation insisted was inseparable from human nature. It is the general errancy or wholesale evil that Luther found impossible to particularize in confession or adjust to any system of penance" (218). The reluctant journey would therefore symbolize the unbreakable grip of sin which continually draws the poet in spite of his best efforts otherwise. "Pleasure and business," rather than religious devotion, become prime movers of the soul which "admits" the intrusion. While "pleasure and business" would seem to imply self-determination, the self engaged in gratification and advancement, Donne immediately characterizes it as a loss of self-determination by comparing it to his own journey west when he would rather travel east (9-10).

If pleasure and business may be considered foreign motions, then the pursuit of self ironically pulls the individual even further from self-fulfillment. That is, the pursuit of self-gratification runs contrary to self-interest. Halewood adds, "On the simple question of choice versus compulsion, it seems to me that the simple answer is that the rider is self-compelled – not a troublesome paradox for the primitive Protestant, who fully provided for it in a self-condemning theology" (219).

Halewood's characterization of Protestant theology is bleak because he focuses on condemnation, but I would suggest that Donne saw in it a way to articulate the frustrations he already felt within himself. Stachniewski would seem to agree with this reading of Donne's relationship to Calvinism. He states,

> In view of Donne's Catholic upbringing, his later political alignment with the Laudian party, and some evidence of muted dissent among Anglican right-wingers, his responsiveness to Calvinist theology is more than likely also to represent an ideological extrapolation of his own from the needs and tensions of his personality and the particular circumstances of this period of his life. (697)

In other words, his internalization of Calvinism may the product rather than the cause of his personal crisis, and that personal crisis may explain why he was attracted to Calvinism in spite of his Catholic upbringing and later Laudian affiliation. Like Luther before him and Bunyan after, Donne's self-condemnation and acute awareness of his sins impelled him to a conversion experience. Gillian R. Evans notes, "Throughout the sermons and in many of the divine poems, Donne's sense of sin runs as a connecting thread, unifying his theological reflections, and giving

a deeply felt immediacy to his use of a number of conventional paradoxes" (3). The dogma of Protestantism gave Donne a language in which to express the condemnation he already felt and a re-formulation of grace to take as a remedy for the ever-cycling guilt. The question is whether "Good Friday" describes a journey out of the spiritual difficulties that had plagued the poet throughout the "Holy Sonnets," or if he is once again circling the issue looking for a place to alight and rest.

The poet's reluctant journey is to the west, which he invites the reader to take as a metaphor for death. To emphasize the involuntary nature of the journey, he adds, ". . . When my Soules forme bends toward the East" (259). The use of the phrase, "Soules forme" indicates that the westward journey is a violation of the nature of the soul. Donne seems to suggest that there is something forced and unnatural about death. It is not the normal course or orbit for the soul, but rather something to which it is constrained by sin (14). The east is the direction of the rising sun, but Donne alludes to it more specifically as the geographic location of Christ's passion: "There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,/ And by that setting endless day beget" (11-12). The east, direction of the rising sun and daybreak, is the appropriate place for the death of Christ because that death brings about eternal life. If the west represents death, then the east is resurrection or renewed life. Donne immediately confuses this, however, by comparing the rising and setting of the sun, to Christ being lifted up on the cross to die. The distinction between east and west, marked by no polar boundaries, is thus blurred and their functions conflated just as the death of Christ is both death and new life in one moment. In Donne's ironic version of the Passion, it is not the rising of the "Sunne" which ends the night, but its setting (12).

This paradox leads Donne to contradict his earlier complaints and conclude that perhaps it is appropriate that his back is to the east. The sight of the crucified Christ, he argues, is too

elevated for mortal eyes. He states, "Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must die;/ What a death were it then to see God dye?" (17-18). He alludes to Exodus 33:20, the verse in which God tells Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." Donne's poem creates a conundrum out of this verse. First, it is unclear what Donne's appositive is modifying. Is it the vision of God's face or the face itself that gives life? Moreover, whose "self" is this? Donne seems to argue that the existence of a self – "self life" – is dependent on seeing the countenance of God, and that knowing the divine is essential to realizing the self. That God's countenance is inaccessible creates the conundrum. It is death to the self to see God's face; it is death to the self not to see God's face. And, so, the author finds himself "going west," however he turns to look at the matter.

The imaginary vision of the crucified Christ allows Donne a way around the impossibility of seeing God. Sibyl Lutz Severance notes that seeing the divine is an important theme in both this poem and Donne's sermons, in which he talks of seeing God in the macrocosm of Nature (28). In "Good Friday," seeing Christ means that Donne has knowledge of him gained by a personal encounter, not just information gleaned from some other source. Because the knowledge is personal, it is potentially transformative. Severance refers to one of Donne's Easter Sermons in which he discusses I Corinthians 13:12: "For now we see through a glass darkly: but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am also known." Donne acknowledges that humanity's capacity to know the divine has been "fragmented," yet Christians must see God nonetheless (28).

This seeing is made possible by memory, which retains the knowledge of God, though the experience of his presence was lost in Eden. Donne states, "Though these things as I ride, be from mine eye,/ They are present yet unto my memory,/ For that looks toward them" (33-35).

Guibbory, in describing Donne's debt to an Augustinian understanding of memory, states, "If man looks toward the image of God in his memory, God Himself will illumine the rest of his rational soul. There is almost a sense that the process of illumination is inevitable, once man rightly uses his memory" (270). Memory thus becomes the part of the mind that supplies the fragmented vision necessary for conversion. Does the crisis of the poem lie in the fact that Donne can visualize, but cannot literally see God, and therefore his transformation remains incomplete, as his knowledge is incomplete? Only death brings about perfection or glorification, so he continues his westward journey knowing that, on a round globe, a westward journey pursued far enough will bring him to the east in the end.

As if this were not perplexed enough, Donne argues for yet one more way in which the soul can lose itself. If it is death to see the living God, is it not death to see the dying God? Drawing upon the gospels' account of Christ's crucifixion, Donne cites the ways in which nature itself shrank from the spectacle through earthquake and eclipse: "It made his footstool crack, and the Sunne wink" (20). What bothers Donne about "viewing" the crucifixion is that it seems to invert the proper order of things. He states,

> Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,
>
> And turn all spheares at once, peirc'd with those holes? (21-22)

There has been some controversy among critics over whether the word "turn" in line 22 should not be read as "tune." Chambers opts for "tune" and argues that Donne is using the imagery of strings and music to describe Christ's role in remedying the damage caused by the Fall of Adam. The pierced hands of Christ "tune the spheres, because Christ is the new string required, as Donne says elsewhere, to remedy Adam's dissonance in the world harmony" (49). I am not sure that line 22 is a line about Christ as Savior, so much as it is a line about Christ as God.

Certainly, the poet is meditating on the Passion, but it is the divinity of Christ that is central at this moment in the poem. Turning the spheres is therefore more suitable to the context than tuning the spheres in that it shows the glory and power which Christ has set aside in order to suffer, a theme which continues in the next lines:

> Could I behold that endless height which is
>
> Zenith to us, and our Antipodes,
>
> Humbled below us? . . . (23-25)

What Donne means by "humbled below us" is uncertain, but perhaps what disturbs him is to see the divine made subject to the judgment of man. God put to death by the creation he gave life to is an exact inversion of the order of the universe. Hence, the "zenith", or pinnacle, of living beings becomes less than his creation in that he ceases to live. Moreover, Donne's description of God as both zenith and antipodes implies a base position for humanity, which being exactly opposite the "endless height" that is God, must occupy a very low station indeed. Donne appears to suggest that, if God is the zenith of creation, then man is its nadir. This is hardly a biblical notion, but Donne seems disturbed by the way in which the universe has been rearranged, however temporarily, in the appearance of a mortal God. Donne's initial image of a microcosm has turned into a macrocosmic dilemma, for that is the scale on which Donne is drawing out his idea of human identity. The human self only exists in relation to the divine self, and the divine death must therefore change man's self-awareness:

> . . . Or that blood which is
>
> The seat of all our Soules, if not of his,
>
> Made durt of dust, or that flesh which was worne
>
> By God, for his apparell, rag'd, and torne? (25-28)

God does not need the body that Christ occupied in order to exist, but humanity needs it; it is "the seat of all our Soules." Mankind is bound to Christ because Christ was God made man, and so it was a man's flesh that was "rag'd and torne." The brief mention of Mary at this point in the poem, appearing as a kind of accessory to redemption, may or may not be a holdover of Donne's Catholicism, but it serves to emphasize the link between the human and the divine in the sacrificed God-man. Like Mary, the poet finds that it is not possible for him to be merely a spectator; he is forced to be a participant, for his own humanity is represented by the dead man on the cross. Thus, it is indeed his own death that he encounters when he sees God die.

If this is so, it does not seem to provide Donne with closure. He insists upon "seeing", if only metaphorically. Though he cannot see "these things" with his eyes, they are only visible in his memory (33-35). What is more important, however, is that God is also looking at him. Christ on the cross "sees" Donne (35-36). It is the crucified God-man who beholds the poet, and Donne's final appeal is to this incarnation: "O thinke mee worth thine anger, punish mee,/ Burne off my rusts, and my deformity" (39-40). If this poem is meant to be a new understanding of the self in the context of Christ's redemptive act, Donne seems to be struggling with the central point of Protestant theology. For Protestants, the identification of the individual Christian with Christ's sacrifice meant that works and penance were not needed for salvation, since Christ took the full punishment upon Himself. For Donne to seek punishment from the crucified Jesus in the very act of salvation indicates an unwillingness to see self nullified or made irrelevant in the redemptive process. Halewood suggests that what Donne desires here is the chastening of Hebrews 12 that will prove him a true child of God, and he argues that the poem has closure because Christ's presence is felt by the poet: "The implications for closure seem sufficiently clear; surely, closure is as complete as the nature of poems will allow when Christ presents

himself to be spoken to" (221). Terry G. Sherwood also notes "Donne's need for corrective affliction" (101), which presumably is satisfied by his presentation of himself for punishment at the end of the poem. Chambers argues that, by continuing westward, Donne presents his back to the divine scourge because he knows that the journey west will eventually lead him around the globe and to the east (51-52). He continues, "The corruptible must be refined by fire that it may put on incorruption. The journey westward to death is both right and inevitable" (52). I do not see, however, how it is closure to address Christ, when the thing he is asking for (a presentable self) is not granted him. The phrase "worth thine anger" suggests the root of Donne's dilemma. What Donne longs for is an identity worthy of divine recognition. Can he have this if he has no agency in his own salvation? Perhaps, Donne simply does not want to come to God as he is, but prefers to be restored to the divine image before God recognizes him: "Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,/ That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face" (41-42). Perhaps, instead of having self die as he looks upon the face of God, Donne wishes rather to have the self restored and affirmed before he is required to look.

For Donne, conversion is a process rather than a one-time encounter with God. Sherwood offers a reading that would reconcile grace with the desire for affliction:

> With sin resisting a strenuous desire for purity, Donne necessarily requests the violence of corrective affliction so that he can 'turne' to God. Then, Donne can dare to face the crucified God, hence reach[ing] the spiritual goal awaiting after his death. Turning is a life's work. No less convicted of personal sin than in the earlier Holy Sonnets, Donne here reveals a conception of spiritual

> progress as perpetual conversion dependent on affliction. (101-102)

Sherwood argues that this is Donne avoiding Calvinist extremes. He describes Donne's view of spiritual progress as "free human movement towards the boundaries of man's limits, then a clear recognition of those boundaries, then a willing request for God's aid" (111). This is not quite the same as Strier's argument that Donne's Calvinism is always conflicted, but there is conflict here nonetheless because Sherwood's interpretation suggest Arminianism with its emphasis on free will and human effort.

Calvinism seems to confront Donne with a level of self-abasement that no act of personal penance (no self-denial of monastic proportions) could have afforded; the self is not being demeaned, but rather it is being set aside altogether. Jan Franz Van Dijkuizen states, "Rather than merely despising the flesh, the pain-seeking mystic actually employs his or her own body as a spiritual instrument and operates in the assumption that the body is a legitimate, even crucial, site of religious experience" (64-65). The flagellant may punish self, but self has the satisfaction of receiving the punishment and earning merit by it. In the Calvinist paradigm, Christ alone receives punishment, and Christ alone achieves merit. Therefore, in the doctrine of *sola gratia*, the only body with redemptive significance is the body of Christ. Donne himself upholds this teaching in the first Hague sermon where he refutes the Catholic doctrine of the supererogation (superfluous merit) of the saints:

> That is poore treasure which they boast of in the Romane Church, that they have in their Exchequer, all the works of supererogation, of the Martyrs in the Primitive Church, that suffered so much more then was necessary for their own salvation, and those

> superabundant crosses and merits they can apply to me. If the treasure of the blood of Christ Jesus be not sufficient, Lord what addition can I find, to match them, to piece them out! And if it be sufficient of it selfe, what addition need I seek?

What "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward" reveals is what is at stake in Donne's struggle with Calvinism. He considers the crucified Christ and realizes that the only human part of the Savior is the part that is suffering and dying. Borrowing Stanley Fish's language, the crucifixion represents a "consuming" of the self far more complete and dramatic than anything accomplished through mere self-denial. What, then, does it mean for Donne to identify with the man on the cross?

In his biographical reading of the poem, Glaser suggests that the ambiguities of the poem may reflect Donne's frame of mind after the hardships of the preceding years and with the uncertainties of the vocation to which circumstances compelled him: "Good Friday, 1613, fell on April 2, just after All Fools Day, which Englishmen traditionally celebrated by sending their friends on meaningless errands" (171). Donne's conversion to a Calvinist faith may have been reinforced by the sense of inevitability that finds its way into the poem. Glaser states,

> Pulled in directions opposite to where he thought he wanted to go, corrected at every turn (above all, softened by suffering), Donne finally began to understand who had been in charge of his life all along . . . His break with Rome must have been part of a larger pattern that he could not see at the time and must still take to a large degree on faith . . . But that lack of control was itself a hopeful sign. By continuing westward, accepting the new religious

> identity life has thrust upon him, the speaker of the poem may yet be reshaped – he hopes – in a way that God will find useful and worthy of recognition. (174)

If Donne means to convey the frustrations of his financial hardships and the end of his professional ambitions, that would explain a presentation of his life journey as a fool's errand. Affliction does not have to improve the soul. In his second Hague sermon, Donne argues that suffering may have the opposite effect: "The afflictions of the wicked exasperate them, enrage them, stone and pave them, obdurate and petrifie them, but they doe not crucifie them" (300). That is, the afflictions of the wicked never become their crosses; they never become the means by which the individual can lay down one version of the self and take up another. Such sufferings (those without transformations) are meaningless because the individual gains nothing from them. In the same sermon, Donne suggests how he gains by bringing his own tribulations to a crucified Christ.

This explanation comes in a discussion of how the Christian must follow Christ. The end of Christ, according to Donne, is the cross, and therefore the Christian is commanded to take upon his own cross as he follows. This means the Christian must be willing to undergo affliction, not once, but many times: "One affliction makes not a path; iterated, continued calamities doe" (299). It is the "constancy" of the Christian in the face of repeated trials that produces sanctification. The Christian who would follow Christ must carry his cross to Christ, and there identify himself with the sacrifice Christ made. In an extraordinary exegesis, Donne refers to the story in 2 Kings 4 in which the prophet Elisha raises a boy from the dead by stretching out his own body on the corpse of the child. Donne explains,

> . . . As Elisha in raysing the Shunamits dead child, put his mouth upon the childs mouth, his eyes, and his hands, upon the hands, and eyes of the child; so when my crosses have carried mee up to my Saviors Crosse, I put my hands into his hands, and hang upon his nailes, I put mine eyes upon his, and wash off all my former unchast looks, and receive a soveraigne tincture, and a lively verdure, and a new life into my dead teares, from his teares. I put my mouth upon his mouth . . . Thus my afflictions are truly a crosse, when those afflictions doe truely crucifie me, and souple me, and mellow me, and knead me, and roll me out, to a conformity with Christ. (300)

As with the reference to Jacob in Sonnet XI, Donne has inverted a biblical type. Whereas Elisha placed his own body on the boy's in order to give life, Donne superimposes himself on the suffering Christ so that he may receive death. The purpose here is not to seek affliction, which Donne tells us is unnecessary (301), but rather to consecrate affliction to the purpose of sanctification. That this may not place too much importance upon his own suffering, Donne adds, "I must bring my crosse to his; lay downe my crosse at the foote of his; Confesse that there is no dignity, no merit in mine, but as it receives an impression, a sanctification from his. For, if I could dye a thousand times for Christ, this were nothing, if Christ had not dyed for me before" (302). This is worth considering because a number of critics have suggested that Donne is seeking the purification of affliction, but if Glaser's reading is correct, Donne's prayer at the end of "Good Friday" ("O thinke mee worth thine anger, punish mee") is not an invitation but a resignation. He already has afflictions; what he needs is for those afflictions to have some

purpose. If God will take ownership of them, if God will identify himself as the author and manipulate them, there is hope that they will work out for the poet's benefit and for the redemption of the failed self.

It may be also that Donne's pursuit of affliction has less to do with *desire* than *need*. In his article, "Martyrdom in Donne's Prose," Neal E. Migan applies Stanislov Grof's idea of "ego death" to Donne's writings:

> The literature of self-sacrifice was Donne's ticket to freedom, and he knew that ego death and moral masochism would not only dispel his guilt, anxiety, and depression, but lead him profitably toward the martyrdom which his conscience required. His lifelong movement toward martyrdom entailed nothing less, and required nothing less, than the death of significant portions of his ego. (12)

It would be hard to argue against the idea that Donne is seeking "the death of significant portions of his ego." As Stanley Fish notes, that is good doctrine in the Augustinian tradition. Glaser's biographical reading suggests that Donne's submission to chastening may be a resignation to the inevitable, or what he perceives as inevitable, rather than an active pursuit of affliction. He already has the affliction; what he needs is to make sense of it. Moreover, he still feels his sins hanging on him as "rust" and "deformity." Therefore, he does not ask for punishment before he will consent to turn; he asks for punishment so that he may be made able to turn.

In the end, the ambiguities of Donne's theology, both at the time of his conversion as well as later in his ministry, may have had as much to do with the complexities of his character as with a reluctance to engage in controversy. His willingness to be charitable on obscure points of theology may have been a tacit acknowledgement that they were obscure to him also, and all

the more abstruse in the difficulty he found in reading them upon his own heart. Though he dismisses Donne's religious poetry as inferior to his secular poetry, Robert Graves offers an explanation of the distinction between the poetic and the spiritual: "Indian mystics hold that to think with perfect clarity in a religious sense one must first eliminate all physical desire, even the desire to continue living; but this is not at all the case with poetic thinking, since poetry is rooted in love, and love in desire, and desire in hope of continued existence" (409). Yet, Donne does not try to relinquish his desires – certainly not his desire for continued existence. Preoccupied as he was with death and the corruption of the flesh, Donne came to realize that physical passion has a short shelf life. Rather, Donne seeks to redefine and re-identify those desires and to find, not a wasting fire, but a passion that can recreate even as it consumes.

# Chapter Three

## Bunyan and the Fear of God

In many ways, no one better reflects the doctrinal amalgam that resulted from the English Reformation than John Bunyan. Concerning his various doctrinal positions, Richard Greaves states,

> No theological label without careful qualification will fit Bunyan. . . . His foundation principles were basically Lutheran, much of his theology was in full accord with the orthodox Calvinism of his period. His doctrine of the church and the sacraments was neither Calvinist nor Lutheran but a heritage from the Independent-Baptist tradition, particularly the segment of that tradition of which he was a part. (159)

William York Tindall notes that Bunyan was a Particular Open-Communion Baptist:

> As a Particular Open-Communion Baptist, Bunyan believed in Calvin, in the observance of Sunday, in the congregational discipline, and in dipping the adult; but he generously condoned the weakness of Independents for infant sprinkling and invited them to partake of his symbolical supper. (3-4)

One might imagine that Bunyan would object to the characterization of Communion as "his symbolical supper. It is certain from Bunyan's writings that the tenets of Calvinism in their purest form were to him a harsh taskmaster. Though he embraced Calvinist teaching about election and reprobation, it is clear from his writings that the doctrine of predestination provided a theater for Bunyan's inmost terrors.

Much of Bunyan criticism has emphasized the ways in which the tumultuous historical circumstances of his life (1628-1688) influenced his writings. Among the essential works are William York Tindall's *John Bunyan, Mechanick Preacher* and Christopher Hill's *A Tinker and a Poor Man*. Tindall emphasizes the political implications of Bunyan's conversion from laborer (mechanic) to spiritual leader, arguing that Bunyan is intentionally subversive in a system that oppressed those at the bottom of society, noting that the Baptists were among the sects that attracted those "whose troubles were social and economic as well as religious" (4). The majority of critics, however, have adopted Hill's position that the political implications of Bunyan's preaching ministry were incidental rather than central to his theology. Hill states, "For him the first priority was to be able to worship and preach according to what he believed to be God's will. But many in authority in his society, especially among the gentry, thought religious dissent was in itself seditious" (15). Further, Richard Greaves has sought to place Bunyan within the dissenting communities of England in the later seventeenth century in *John Bunyan and English Non-conformity*, noting that there was "considerable fluidity"(4) in the interactions of dissenting sects even as they were marginalized and persecuted by the rest of society (1). The conflict between the internal constraints of conviction and the external constraints of class and authority creates within Bunyan's writings a sense of the world as a hostile and alien place. This feeling of alienation is, in part, what I wish to address in this study.

Adopting Hill's emphasis on the centrality of dogma in Bunyan's experience, more recent critics have focused on a variety of ways in which his doctrinal views shaped his writing. Thomas Luxon's seminal study *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in Representation* borrows and critiques Stanley Fish's deconstructionist reading of *Pilgrim's Progress*, arguing first that Bunyan belongs to a Puritan tradition that is ambivalent in regards to

the roles of allegory and experience in the Christian life (2). Genuine pilgrims (the "blest") are those who can rightly distinguish between the literal and the figurative on the journey to heaven (159). Michael Davies' *Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan* has also proven influential in the last decade. Davies seeks to redirect readings of Bunyan's theology from a focus on wrath and judgment to a focus on the centrality of grace and the assurance it offers. I am aware that by centering my own reading on the Bunyan's theology of the fear of God, I appear to be moving in a direction opposite to Davies, but I trust that the subsequent pages will prove otherwise. It is precisely because of the pervasive presence of fear in Bunyan's writings that grace is so essential to Bunyan's theology. It is fear that defines his understanding of the distinction between divine and human character and that the necessity of a re-identification with Christ in order to bridge that gap. Redcrosse's encounter with Despair and Donne's glimpses of terror in the "Holy Sonnets" are momentary experiences of what was a continual torment for Bunyan during different periods of his early life. Much of his writing involves discussions of those fears in various formats as he endeavors to resolve them with faith in a gracious God.

Few writers have managed to convey the awe of God and the terror of hell that are apparent in the writings of Bunyan. Indeed, any critic who undertakes to interpret Bunyan's work must inevitably address the issue of Bunyan's apparent horror of divine judgment. His autobiography, *Grace Abounding*, his "Treatise of the Fear of God," and his most famous work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, reveal that even a transforming view of grace did not alter Bunyan's emphasis on fearing God. Rather, Bunyan's fear changes over time and shapes his understanding of how the individual Christian must act toward God and others. That recognition has the power to transform the person who receives such a revelation of the character of God. So

dramatic will that transformation be that it has the power to dissolve ties of family and community that would otherwise define the self. The fear of God thus marks the individual Christian in such a way that the Christian becomes holy, or set apart from the rest of the world, just as God is holy.

The presence in the Bunyan corpus of a lengthy treatise on the subject of fearing God is a testimony to the great importance he ascribed to the subject. The idea of "fearing" God is one which requires a certain amount of qualification from the outset, and Bunyan devotes significant space to developing the reader's understanding of what true godly fear looks like. Like Donne, Bunyan regarded the Calvinist doctrines of total depravity and predestination with trepidation. He was acutely aware from personal experience that, far from being a pat theological term, the phrase *fear of God* could describe a spectrum of emotions, ranging from sober reverence to stark terror. It is this range of feeling that is perhaps partly responsible for making *Grace Abounding* seem so strange, even neurotic, to modern readers. In Christian theology, God's judgment is always balanced by his love of mercy, but it is left to the sinner to understand and personalize a balance between the two, to "work out . . . salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12, ESV). How is one to show the proper awe for God's justice, while at the same time resting contentedly in the assurance of grace as faith demands? Or, rather, how is one to be confident in the grace of God without being complacent in religion? Bunyan undertakes to find this balance in his treatise and, by doing so, to provide the reader with a tool for self-understanding. The central theme of Bunyan's treatise is that fear is not automatically godly simply because it is directed toward God. Instead, Bunyan describes both a "godly" and an "ungodly" fear of God in order to demonstrate that fear can be based on either revelation or false perceptions; the individual Christian must

learn to distinguish between the two. The result is Bunyan's own understanding that sanctification occurs as the knowledge of God creates the fear of God.

Bunyan begins by describing fear as the most natural response of the fallen self to any revelation of God's person. Bunyan, perhaps speaking from bitter personal experience, explains that fear is, first of all, always a reaction to majesty and power:

> The presence of a King is dreadful to the Subject, yea though he carries it never so condescendingly; if then their [sic] be so much glory and dread in the presence of the King, what fear and dread must there be, think you, in the presence of the Eternal God? (404)

The subject fears the king because he knows that it is within the hands of the king to deal out judgment at his pleasure. God judges both temporally and eternally, and is, therefore, much more to be feared. Moreover, God's revelation of Himself is frightening because it illuminates human depravity at the same time that it demonstrates divine purity. Bunyan states:

> By the presence of God, when we have it indeed, even our best things, our comeliness, our sanctity and righteousness, all do immediately turn to corruption, and polluted rags. The brightness of the glory of the ire or candle, and covers them with the shadow of death. (404)

The presence of God here is fearful because it alters self-perception; the person to whom God is revealed must forever lose all illusions of goodness or the worthiness of self because all human merit is dimmed to darkness in the shadow of God's light. Therefore, even the goodness of God increases, rather than releases, fear. Bunyan here seems to make his case from experience:

> And what mean the trembling, the tears, those breakings and shakings of heart that attend the people of God, when in an eminent manner they receive the pronunciation of the forgiveness of sins at his mouth, but that the dread of the Majesty of God is in their sight mixed therewith. (405)

Bunyan does not here make a clear distinction between holiness and goodness beyond listing them as separate causes for fearing God. The implication is that God's mercy is as fearful as his judgment when both stand in contrast to the frailty and failure of humanity; that both qualities of the divine character create the same awe in the one who encounters them. In either case, the revelation of the divine character also turns the sinner's gaze inward to lament the inadequacy of self. Like John Frith, Bunyan argues for a revelation of the fallen self that is tied to a revelation of the character of God. Concerning this aspect of Bunyan's theology, Richard Greaves explains,

> For Bunyan the divine nature was holiness, and that holiness was believed to pervade all the attributes of God. Such holiness, being absolute purity, was in large measure responsible for generating in man a fear of God. . . . Never was any man more gripped by this fear than when he became aware of his own evil and impure nature. (30)

Self-knowledge is, therefore, necessarily the recognition of a failed self because it comes from an awareness of the contrast between the self and divine perfection.

Bunyan's treatise is most remarkable in his assertion that the fear of God does not always bring about true recognition of either God or self, and therefore does not always bring about

salvation. Bunyan's ungodly fear is characterized, like the rhetoric of Despair in *The Faerie Queene*, by a misapprehension of the divine character that considers only justice to the exclusion of God's mercy. The first type of unrighteous terror perceives only divine condemnation and responds with resentment and revulsion. This, in Bunyan's characteristically vivid analogy, drives the sinner from God in the same way a hornet's sting drives intruders from the nest. The very thought of God becomes intolerably painful (410). The second kind of ungodly fear is like it in that it produces a morbid dread of condemnation that causes the individual to flee, if not religion altogether, certainly anything that might convict of sin or remind of judgment. It is to this fear that Bunyan attributes some of the hostility directed by his contemporaries towards preachers like himself. He states,

> Many also at this day are possessed with this ungodly fear: And you may know them by this. They cannot abide conviction for sin, and if at any time the word of the law, by the preaching of the word comes near them they will not abide that preacher, nor such kind of sermons any more. They are, as they deem, best at ease, when furthest off of God, and of the power of his word. The word preached brings God nearer to them than they desire he should come, because whenever God comes near, their sins, by him, are manifest, and so is the judgment too that to them is due. Now these not having faith in the mercy of God through Christ, nor that grace that tendeth to bring them to him, they cannot but think of God amiss, and their so thinking of him makes them say unto him, "Depart from us . . ." (411).

Bunyan, like Spenser, identifies error (in this case, misunderstanding the role of grace in the salvation process) as the enemy of holiness, and faithlessness as the source of the error. An incomplete or false knowledge of God pushes the sinner away from salvation rather than towards it, and thus effects more unrighteousness because God's presence, absent the mitigating role of grace, becomes too terrible to be endured. Likewise, Scripture cannot be endured by someone taken with this error because Scripture "brings God nearer to them." Besides making the proximity of God dreadful to the sinner, ungodly fear may also produce the assumption that God cannot be pleased with any service; therefore, the individual does not offer any. Like the slothful servant of Jesus' parable who hides rather than uses the talent entrusted to him, the sinner avoids the practice of true religion for fear that all effort at exercising faith will not be enough to gain divine approval (411). Such fear is inevitably unholy because it leads to a hatred of God and any service toward him.

According to Bunyan, an ungodly fear of God may likewise push the individual to the opposite extreme of relying on self-righteousness. The fourth and fifth examples of wrong fearing involve the inability to trust exclusively in the merits of Christ for salvation. This fear cannot be content to rest in grace bestowed through Christ's atonement, but must continually add good works to make the self more acceptable to God. Uncertain devotees may even accept additions and amendments to the divine law in order to impress God with the stringency of their duty. Bunyan sees this as a hopeless endeavor because there is no way to ascertain when, if ever, God is actually satisfied: ". . . Where this ungodly fear reigneth, there is no end of law and duty." He accuses Catholics of practicing such a religion:

> How is it wrakt and tortured the Papists for hundreds of years together, for what else is the cause but this ungodly fear, at least in

> the most simple and harmless of them, of their penances, as creeping to the Cross, going barefoot on pilgrimage, whip[p]ing themselves, wearing of sackcloth, saying so many paternosters, so many avemaries, making so many confessions to the Priest, giving so much money for pardons, and abundance of other the like, but this ungodly fear of God? (412)

There is an irony in Bunyan's description of Catholic piety; his reference to methods of torture such as the rack would certainly have reminded his Protestant readers of the Inquisition, but here they become metaphors for the spiritual tortures that Bunyan perceives Catholic as inflicting on themselves out of spiritual desperation. Adherence to the law produces self-torment because it afflicts the individual with the conviction that whatever has been done in the past is not good enough. This erring fear of God leaves no opportunity to ever make peace with the self because there will always be one more rule or one more duty in order to become acceptable. Bunyan concludes that such a slavish pursuit of works is the result of unbelief, of insufficient confidence both in divine grace and in the merits of Christ who fulfilled the law for righteousness.

Even after he concludes his discussion of ungodly fear, Bunyan has yet more to warn of, for he describes how a godly fear of God may also become a stumbling block. This manifests itself as doubt of one's salvation despite prior assurance. Bunyan explains this through a reading of Romans 8:15, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (KJV). Bunyan's use of this passage in this context may show the influence of earlier Protestant sources. Bunyan may be indebted to the marginal note on this verse in the Geneva Bible, which interprets this characterization of the Holy Spirit based on the effects of his work in the heart: "He [the Holy

Spirit] proposeth us saluacion by ye the Law with an impossible co[n]dition, who also doeth seale our saluation in our hearts by Christs fre[e] adopcion, that we co[n]sider not God now as a rigorous Lord, but as a moste merciful Father." In other words, the Holy Spirit preaches both the law and grace; he proposes salvation through the law, but he seals it through the free pardon of Christ. Greaves notes that Bunyan's emphasis on the "wrath-grace dichotomy" demonstrates the influence of Luther (155), and this interpretation of Romans 8 echoes the ideas of Martin Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*. Luther argues that the right preaching of the law is for the sole intention of bringing about an awareness of guilt and the despair of ever attaining righteousness through human goodness. Salvation is thus "proposed" by the law because it is the law that condemns human endeavors. At the point of moral despair, the preaching of grace must then offer the sinner the certainty of salvation in Christ. Bunyan, familiar with both the Geneva Bible and Luther's reading of Galatians, applies an identical reading of Romans to the problem of righteous fear. Bunyan interprets the spirit of bondage to mean conviction of sin and awareness of the impending judgment of God. It is the spirit of bondage because it reveals the sinner to be captive to sin and bound over to the inevitable justice of God. The fear it produces is godly fear because the sinner is brought to repentance, but not to despair. God then grants the penitent the spirit of adoption which, according to Bunyan, is the peace of acceptance through God's election and Christ's merit. It is the promise of forgiveness of sins, and it empowers the soul to claim God as Father. Bunyan explains that both are the work of the Holy Spirit, and they must always come in the order laid out in Scripture. The person who has received the pardoning assurance of the spirit of adoption, and then afterwards fears judgment, does not fear correctly. Such a fear was beneficial before conversion, but it is detrimental to faith afterwards. Most

important is Bunyan's insistence that the measure of whether or not fear is godly is the effect of that fear; godly fear inclines the heart toward God, and ungodly fear drives it away.

Bunyan argues that the Christian may experience fears of damnation after receiving the spirit of adoption, but they will not be godly fears because God does not send them, and they do not produce godly results. Once the Holy Spirit has given the spirit of adoption, Bunyan maintains, He cannot again become the spirit of bondage without contradicting himself:

> He cannot, after he hath come to the soul as a spirit of adoption, come again as a spirit of bondage to put the soul into his first fear . . . As a spirit of adoption he told me my sins were forgiven me, that I was included in the covenant of grace, that God was my Father through Christ, that I was under the promise of salvation, and this calling and gift of God to me is permanent, and without repentance. And do you think, that after he hath told me this, and sealed up the truth of it to my precious soul, that he will come to me, and tell me that I am yet under my sins, under the curse of the law and the eternal wrath of God? (412)

Bunyan does not include the reference here, but there is an allusion to Romans 11:29, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." What Bunyan has produced in his reading of these passages from Paul's text is an argument for the irrevocability of salvation. He does so with an emphasis on human helplessness. The Spirit of God not only tells the sinner of forgiveness, but also empowers the sinner to receive it; it is the Spirit who enables the sinner to call God Father and provides the assurance of grace. Having released the sinner from judgment, God can no longer pronounce judgment without rescinding His pardon and breaking His word, a

thing that is impossible. The Christian then may have a secure identity by recognizing that his salvation is dependent on the character of God and not on the character of self. This is a stability that pride, the false elevation of self cannot offer, but which can be found in the unchanging nature of the divine. Bunyan thus concludes with Paul that the Christian does not "receive the spirit of bondage again to fear" because such fear would be an ungodly denial of the trustworthiness of God and a refusal to claim his promise as good.

Besides allowing Bunyan to place his explanation of the fear of God inside a predestinarian understanding of grace, this argument provides both Bunyan and the reader with an escape from what seem to be endless opportunities for dread. He poses questions to an imaginary interlocutor about the nature of those fears that a Christian may experience after the confirmation of salvation. The answers offered reveal that this fear prevents prayer and the enjoyment of Scripture, denies the comfort of salvation and confuses the Christian as to what is the work of God, and what is satanic deception. Bunyan's conclusion is that such bad effects reveal that post-salvation fears are none of God's work. He states, "These are not his doings; dost thou not see the very paw of the Devil in them, yea in every one of thy ten confessions; is there not palpably high wickedness in every one of the effects of this fear?" (417). The question that confronts the reader here concerns the identity of Bunyan's interlocutor. To whom is he posing these questions? Certainly, this exchange may be understood as a rhetorical technique, anticipating and answering the reader's objections and concerns. And yet the questions and responses so precisely match Bunyan's own experiences in multiple passages of *Grace Abounding* that he seems to be rethinking out his private terrors and uncertainties in this doctrinal treatise.

There can be no doubt that the tone of "Treatise of the Fear of God" is remarkably different from the dramatic and intimate style of other Bunyan works. Apart from the brief rhetorical dialogue, "Fear of God" is almost devoid of the companionable personality that emerges in *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding*. Bunyan's unusually dispassionate and detached tone here may be one more indication of the danger he saw for himself in this topic. Whatever parallels exist between the theology of the treatise and the experiences in the autobiography, Bunyan seems determined not to draw them out himself; he refuses to illustrate this particular sermon with his own life story. Indeed, he cautions the reader as to the danger of reading one's own experience incorrectly. When in the midst of his discourse on the spirit of adoption, the objection is raised, "But this is contrary to my experience," Bunyan replies, "Let the Word be true, whatever thy experience is. Dost thou not understand me?" (415). For the reader who is accustomed to the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, it is possible to glance over the significance of the first part of the statement until pulled up again by the second. According to Peter Goldman, in the Puritan theology of Bunyan, the sacramental work of Scripture is not just in the letter on the page, but in the grace it works in and through the life of the Christian. He states,

> Puritans insisted that a "historical knowledge" of the Gospel was totally inadequate for salvation. The logic of iconoclasm implied that the bare or literal word was simply another empty formalism, Bunyan's experience of the word is essentially sacramental . . . (462)

In this model, grace works through the connection between Scripture and experience that is so abundantly in evidence in all Bunyan's other writings. Yet in this treatise, Bunyan sees Scripture

and experience as possible antagonists, or as potentially competing ways of understanding reality, and so he challenges the reader with the question, "Dost thou not understand me?" It is as though he suspects the reader may not pay close enough attention to the implications of his statement. In "Fear of God," experience, shaped as it is by the limited perceptions of humanity, is inherently subjective. On the other hand, Bunyan believes that God's revelation of himself in Scripture is objective and absolute. In its revelation of both God's justice and mercy, as well as in its witness against the corruption of human nature, it is reliable, whether human perceptions agree with it or not. For Bunyan, the right fear of God, and thus a right knowledge of the self, must be taken out of the context of experience which is bound to shifting emotion and placed in the context of the unchanging Word of God.

Throughout his treatise, Bunyan repeatedly measures the validity of fear by the results it produces, and the definition of right fearing that emerges is that a godly fear is inherently reconstructive. The fear of God disabuses the self of any notions of its own goodness, replacing self-satisfaction with a keen awareness of corruption and unworthiness, but this self-knowledge is not good enough. It is not enough because it shows the self what it is, but does not reveal what it should become or how it might arrive there. Therefore, true godly fear will not only provide identification of the self as sinful, but also make possible the re-identification of the self as called and chosen. Bunyan devotes the latter part of his treatise to the link between godly fear and the sanctified life, arguing that right fearing is, foremost, a token of election. Its very presence designates the one who possesses it as a child of God. It is evidence of a character that is in the process of being changed. In his description of the sources of godly fear, Bunyan makes the following assertion in support of the claim that godly fear is a token of election:

> This fear of God must not be, cannot be found in old hearts, old hearts are not bottles out of which this fear of God proceeds, but 'tis from an honest and good heart, from a new one, from such an one that is also an effect of the everlasting covenant, and love of God to men. (423)

Such a heart will fear rightly because it contemplates not only the omniscience of God and his righteous judgments, but also the kindness and faithfulness of God when he reveals himself through biblical covenants. For a Calvinist, the covenants are declarations of God's unfailing promises to the chosen. A heart that is affected by the divine covenants has been changed by the goodness of God as it has been manifest through love and favor. Such a heart fears because it realizes sin and repents, but also because it believes divine promises and has received answers to prayer. It is a "new heart" because it has been made so by regeneration. It is therefore free to think of itself and God in new ways.

Bunyan's list of attributes that are produced by godly fear is lengthy and addresses both motives and actions. It describes a transformation of the self that is as deep as the desires and affections of the individual. He begins with the reflection that God's majesty will always inspire awe and reverence. This reverence causes the elect to keep him constantly in mind: " . . . It is his Person and Majesty that his fear always causeth the soul to be upon" (425). Awe of God's person extends to a reverence for Scripture and a "tenderness of God's glory" (426). The latter trait causes a Christian to be distressed and provoked if anyone else dishonors God by work or action. An end to conflicting motives is also a trademark of godly fear, according to Bunyan, who characterizes the elect by "singleness of heart." Bunyan defines this as "when a man doth a thing simply for the sake of goodness and the God who commands it. Moreover, the fear of God

will cause one to obey the Law of God, not only willingly, but also with pleasure; the individual is no longer torn between what he must do and what he wants to do. The one who fears God will delight in his regulations since the converted heart has been estranged from sin (430). As it turns from sin, the heart will likewise be enlarged to love others and to feel compassion toward those in distress (428). It is blessed in humility (knowing that any goodness is a gift of God) and hope which finds security in the divine promises. Finally, the heart taken with godly fear will be motivated by a willingness to give God what it holds most precious. Bunyan here cites Abraham as an example of such devout reverence in that he was willing to offer up his son at God's command (429). The sanctified heart, therefore, is one that reverence inclines toward God so that the Christian will do whatever God requires, not only faithfully, but willingly and with pleasure.

Presenting godly fear as the effect of election, Bunyan argues that it is the cause of good works which are the outward expression of a reverent heart. The one guided by godly fear will be careful to guard both words and actions so as not to fall to sudden temptation and not to give offense to others. Not only will the tongue be kept from offensive words, but the desire of the heart toward God will move the elect to godly conversation. Bunyan asserts, "It is the natural effect of this ungodly fear, to exercise the Church in the contemplation of God, together and apart. All fear, good and bad, hath a natural propenseness to incline the heart to contemplate upon the object of fear" (426). Fear causes the mind to be preoccupied with the object of that fear. This seems negative, almost obsessive, in *Grace Abounding* when Bunyan describes his prolonged terror at the possibility of having committed the unpardonable sin by denying Christ, but he suggests in the treatise that a right fear of God could produce a beneficial preoccupation – one that turns into persistent meditation on the character of God. The mind is overtaken with

thoughts of God and a desire to speak of holy things. The soul is "sanctified and seasoned" with reflections on the divine nature. Such "holy thoughts," Bunyan argues, "prepare the heart to and for God" (426-27). That is, the heart is made fit for the presence and use of God.

Godly fear will be matched by self-denial (427), compassion and prayer (428). Bunyan cites the biblical stories of Nehemiah and Paul as examples of the godly abstaining from what they might have lawfully done in order to avoid giving offense to those around them. Bunyan describes the self-denial that results from godly reverence as the "grace of fear" because it makes the elect generous toward others, not through the giving of wealth, but through the relinquishing of certain liberties or privileges in order not to prevent someone else's spiritual progress. Likewise, compassion toward the saints will compel the one who fears God to aid those who are persecuted, even at the risk of human displeasure (427). The one who fears God will also be given to constant prayer. Bunyan argues that prayer is only effective insofar as it is inseparable from fear. He support this assertion with the passage in Hebrews that states of Christ, "He was heard in that He feared." Fervent prayer is the result of reverence, and reverence is the license to pray (428). Finally, Bunyan describes godly fear as producing holiness, a category which certainly seems redundant after the list that precedes it. He possibly means to include a general category for any act of virtue or piety he has not already listed. He describes a holy life as follows: "An honest or conscientious use of all those means which God hath ordained that we should be conversant in for our attaining salvation" (430). The phrase "all those means" is so vague as to scarcely constitute a category unless it is meant as a catch-all. It is a problematic paragraph in any case, for it speaks of "attaining salvation" after Bunyan himself has gone to such lengths to defend the exclusive role of grace. Bunyan is careful to clarify what he perceives to be the role of holiness:

> Not that work is meritorious, or such that can purchase eternal life, for eternal life is obtained by hope in Gods mercy, but this hope if it be right, is attended with this godly fear, which fear putteth the soul upon a diligent use of all those means that may tend to the strengthening of hope, and so the making of us holy in all manner of conversation, that we may be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. For hope purifieth the heart, if fear of God shall be its companion . . . (430)

Whereas ungodly fear may produce despair, causing the individual to sin more deeply since nothing but sin and damnation is possible, godly fear accepts mercy and so has grounds to hope. Such hope makes holiness possible, for grace provides the expectation that God can and will be pleased, both with the imputed righteousness of Christ and with the transformation that is taking place in the nature of the converted self. Holiness in turn reinforces hope since an inclination toward godliness is evidence of the proper fear of God and the fear of God is a token of election.

Bunyan's exposition of godly fear in "Fear of God" provides a lens through which the reader may better understand the experiences Bunyan describes in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Critical attention to Bunyan's understanding of selfhood has centered on his spiritual autobiography. Yet, as an autobiography, it scarcely rises to the demands of modern criticism for historical accuracy. Christopher Hill sums up the difficulties it poses as a chronicle:

> *Grace Abounding* is an unsatisfactory document for the biographer. It is a spiritual autobiography, describing the events which led up to Bunyan's conversion. The chronology is at best imprecise, at worst chaotic. Any references to external events in

> Bunyan's life during this period are quite accidental. . . . It is almost impossible to establish the sequence of events. (63-64)

Christopher Hill openly distrusts the accuracy of the narrative because of its adherence to the standard tropes of conversion narratives, stating "We are not therefore necessarily bound to accept everything in *Grace Abounding* as autobiographical truth. The object of the work is to convey a message" (65). There is no direct evidence of any historical discrepancies in *Grace Abounding*, but critics in general can at least agree with Hill's other criticism: "The chronology is at best imprecise, at most chaotic" (64). Hill argues that Bunyan's intentions are pastoral (66), and a number of other critics have pointed out that the work serves as persuasive writing aimed at bringing the reader to the salvation that Bunyan himself receives in the course of the events narrated. Richard Greaves maintains that *Grace Abounding* served to establish Bunyan's preaching credentials in the absence of the usual education (Non-conformity 38). Robert Bell places Bunyan in the Augustinian tradition of using spiritual confession as a means to inspire others to the same kind of conversion the author has experienced (109). Lynn Veach Sadler places Bunyan in the tradition of Augustine's *Confessions* and adds, "*Grace Abounding* is remarkable for its lack of physical detail and therefore disappoints or at least surprises the seeker after facts" (35).

However, not every critic has seen Bunyan as an enthusiastic participant in the conventions of conversion narratives. In her discussion of Bunyan's debt to Luther, Vera Camden argues that Bunyan recognized and distrusted the sameness in the "testimonies" of his contemporaries, questioning whether the parroting of religious motions indicated a genuine personal encounter with God. According to Camden, Bunyan was attracted to Luther because he saw Luther's experiences, and his retelling of them, as more original and therefore more genuine:

"It is feeling, or authentic inward experience, that Bunyan can recognize in Luther, but not his contemporaries" ("Most Fit for a Wounded Conscience" 822). Rebecca S. Beal has also questioned whether it is helpful to place Bunyan in the tradition of the *Confessions*. She maintains that *Grace Abounding* may be more productively compared to a Pauline epistle in the connections it makes between doctrines and life experience (152). She states,

> In its allusions to Paul's letter to Timothy, Bunyan's title indicates the major themes at work in *Grace Abounding*; like Paul, Bunyan will defend his pastoral vocation from prison; like Paul, Bunyan emphasizes the working of grace in his own life in order to teach and console a congregation from which prison has separated him. (149)

According to Beal, biography provides the reader with an incentive and model for practical use of the doctrines taught (152). Robert Bell makes a case for *Grace Abounding* as a transitional narrative retaining characteristics of Augustinian spiritual confession while at the same time looking forward to the more concrete autobiographies of the eighteenth century (109).

Regardless of *Grace Abounding's* place among seventeenth century conversion narratives, the overwhelming consensus among critics is that the book is a pastoral work intended to bring about a transformation in the life of the reader. This does not mean that every aspect of its theology can be taken at face value. To say that *Grace Abounding* is a sermon is not at all the same as saying that it is a work of theology. A sermon seeks to convince and move the hearer, whereas a theological tract arranges and explains doctrinal teaching. Bunyan certainly seeks to compel the reader through the narrative of his own conversion, but he never pauses to add doctrinal commentary at any critical point in the story. This allows the reader to experience

discoveries with the younger Bunyan and to arrive with him at moments of discovery. But it would be a mistake to assume that every thought the younger Bunyan has about God is automatically receiving the older Bunyan's approval. Hill notes, "Bunyan, unlike Luther, thought of salvation as much in terms of a process as an achieved fact and present possession of the believer" because it involved both justification and preservation, sanctification being part of the latter (49). Because salvation was a process, knowledge comes in stages, a kind of progressive revelation of the soul. "Fear of God," on the other hand, appears to offer a doctrinal corrective to some of the perceptions of Bunyan's youth. Bunyan declines to use these experiences to illustrate his "Treatise of the Fear of God" (written thirteen years after *Grace Abounding*), but he clearly explores in the treatise the meaning of experiences that he describes in the autobiography when he discusses godly and ungodly fear. "Fear of God" provides insight into what the older Bunyan understood to be the relationship between God and the self, and *Grace Abounding* illustrates how that relationship drove Bunyan to non-conformity.

Bunyan's earliest memories of religious awakening involve terrifying nightmares experienced in childhood. He states,

> . . . The which [his youthful sins], as I have also with soberness did consider since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and affrighten me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with fearful visions. For often, after I have spent this or the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, labored to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid. (4-5)

Bunyan's assurance that God was using nightmares to awaken him to a sense of his own sinfulness seems to be in keeping with the tradition of Augustinian confession in which every event that contributes to a conviction of sin is a tool in the hands of God. What is remarkable in Bunyan's account is the immediate association of divine agency with human fear that he draws from this childhood experience in later life. Nor is his fear confined to the conviction of sin, but returns as he seeks in anguish the confirmation of his own election and returns again when he fears that he has committed the unpardonable sin and seeks forgiveness. Andrew Cambers notes that spiritual autobiography provided Calvinists with a tool for self-examination. He explains, "Spiritual diaries are examples of the search for marks of election that was at the heart of this strand of Calvinism – they appear to show individuals testing their spiritual condition and attempting to discern marks of election in the routine of daily life" (798). While other traditions emphasized self-examination, it was especially import to Calvinists because of the necessity of being sure of one's election, and Cambers observes there is a significant volume of such works to attest to the significance of this discipline to Calvinists (798). This suggests that the reader should not take for granted that Bunyan began his narrative with assurance of his salvation, but rather that gaining assurance may have been the point of writing the book. Indeed, it is apparent at the end of the narrative that Bunyan's doubts and fears continued well into his preaching ministry. Grace has the title role in *Grace Abounding*, but fear is its ever-present antagonist.

To read *Grace Abounding* in the context of "Treatise of the Fear of God" is to question the extent to which Bunyan's experience is compatible with his doctrinal point of view. Felicity A. Nussbaum suggests that the pastoral role Bunyan exercises in *Grace Abounding* turns his life into a text that he expounds for the reader. She states,

> . . . While Bunyan uses the words of Scripture as a corollary text to *Grace Abounding*, it is finally the private individual account of conversion with the Bible as a substitute text. There is nothing in Bunyan's account which resembles the Scriptural exegesis concluding Augustine's confessions. Instead, Bunyan presents his individual experience, his own conversion, as possessing the possibility of equal authority. One might even say that while Bunyan seems to proclaim the authority of God's word, the force of the autobiographical text suggests that Bunyan is creating a substitute personal text to replace the Scripture as a devotional guide. (22)

While Nussbaum's reading is problematic, I include it because it raises questions about the relationship between the Word and experience in a Bible-centered model of piety. Like "Fear of God," *Grace Abounding* reveals Bunyan's awareness of potential contradictions in the application of Scripture. "Fear of God" explicates and *Grace Abounding* illustrates what Bunyan perceives to be the limitations of human perception. Bunyan states toward the end of the book that his own responses to and applications of Scripture varied daily:

> Thus, by the strange and unusual assaults of the tempter, my soul was like a broken vessel, driven with the winds, and tossed sometimes headlong into despair; . . . But in all these, I was as those that jostle against the rocks; more broken, scattered and rent. Oh! The un-thought-of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors, that

> are affected by a thorough application of guilt yielding to desperation! (106-107)

What haunts Bunyan at this stage and prolongs the agony of his crisis is the awareness that interpretation can be dangerously subjective. By depicting himself as a vessel tossed about by gales of temptation, Bunyan presents the self as something unstable and continuously at the mercy of outside forces. "Fear of God" offers Scripture as a fixed truth by which the self can be assessed, but not if Scripture is going to be read through the lens of fluctuating experience: "Let the Word be true whatever thy experience" – not true in experience, but true whether experience confirms it or not. I do not believe *Grace Abounding* is meant to reconcile Scripture and experience so much as it is meant to diminish the potency of experience in what Bunyan believed to be the stronger force of the Word of God. The emotional tone of the autobiography suggests that Bunyan is still troubled by the specter of these anxieties, and the process of recounting them is a kind of purgative meant to cleanse him, not of the fears and doubts themselves, but of the echoes that remain in his own consciousness. This is in stark contrast to the dry and colorless tone of much of "Fear of God," a work that analyzes and dissects the topic of fear almost to the point of numbness.

The reader must then question how much of Bunyan's fear is derived from any theology or passage of Scripture, and how much from some other source. Bunyan never directly addresses this question in *Grace Abounding*, but "Fear of God" suggests that the more mature Bunyan would not have accepted the legitimacy of every one of his former terrors. In his treatise, Bunyan characterizes fear as godly or ungodly based on the actions that result from that fear. Any fear that drives the individual away from God and into further sin must be ungodly. This provides an interesting way of looking at the often-discussed passage in *Grace Abounding*

in which Bunyan is seized with a horror of divine judgment in the middle of a game of cat, or tip-cat. While playing cat on a Sunday, he experiences a moment of conviction, a sense that God is angry with him for violating the Sabbath. Reading this incident in the light of Bunyan's treatise, the reader may see how Bunyan's guilt translates into despair of God's favor:

> That I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven; for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions. Then I fell to musing on this also; and while I was thinking of it, and fearing lest it should be so; I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind I would go on in sin; for, thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them; I can but be damned, and if I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins, as be damned for few. (13-14)

Bunyan's conclusion is comical, but it is also reasonable based on his perceptions of God at that moment. At that instant, he perceives an implacable God, one who cannot be mollified once outraged. Having thus forgotten God's grace in his perception of divine anger, Bunyan concludes that he has no hope of salvation and, therefore, sin is the only pleasure left to him. If salvation is unavailable to him, he has no incentive to reform, and his fear becomes a reflexive motion pushing him further into the fallen version of self.

In his treatise, Bunyan describes ungodly fear as pushing the individual to one of two errors – either resignation to the implacable judgment of God or reliance on personal goodness to appease God. In *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan appears to swing from one extreme to the other.

When his obsessive fear finally drives him to practice religion, he occupies himself with achieving piety through religious conversation and duties. The curious passage about bell-ringing is an example of Bunyan's reflections on the futility of good works. As part of his reformed life, Bunyan leaves the practice of bell-ringing. He does not state when he took up this service for the church; presumably, it was initially part of his new-found religiosity. He abandons it because he questions his own motives. He states,

> For, though I was as yet a nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet, I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and indeed, I did all that I did, either to be seen of or to be well spoken of by men . . . (18)

Bunyan here shows the influence of Luther, who cautions in his *Lectures on Galatians* that good works are not valid before God unless they are accompanied by good motives; thus the sinner may keep the letter of the law only to find that the spirit of the law condemns him. Thus, in "Fear of God," Bunyan writes of what he calls singleness of heart. One must not only do the right thing; one must do it for the right reason as well, or it is not a righteous act. Like Spenser's Redcrosse, Bunyan discovers that the effort to make oneself acceptable is conducive to pride. He forsakes one set of sins (dancing and gaming) only to fall into another (hypocrisy and vanity). Because he seeks human rather than divine approval, his motives are corrupt. Purity of heart seems utterly unattainable, and the self is too deeply flawed for God to be satisfied with mere outward conformity. Moreover, those good works subject him to the same fear of judgment that he experienced during his game of Cat. He fears that God may strike him dead for his hypocrisy, so he not only forbears ringing the bells, but dares to go watch only so long as he may stand directly in the shelter of the doorway just in case the judgment of God should take the form of a

falling bell, and finally, he avoids going at all for fear that the entire steeple will collapse on top of him (19-20).

The fears that Bunyan explains in this passage also seem to fall short of the godly fear that his treatise describes. His abandonment of bell-ringing illustrates the frustration of one who is attempting to please God through moral self-sufficiency and service to the church, but who finds at every turn that self is not up to the task. Even after he receives some assurance of his election and his acceptance by God, he lapses into fear once again. Of all the incidents in *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan's account of his temptation to "sell Christ" seems to have drawn the most critical attention. Bunyan's anxieties perplex the reader. What does he mean by *sell Christ*? How does one sell him and for what gain? Nussbaum notes that Bunyan appears to regard "the spirit of Christ as property," and argues that the tempter must be a *doppelganger*, "an alternative self external to him" (24). Christopher Hill cites Jack Lindsay's suggestion that Bunyan is obsessed with the notion of selling Christ because his own family lost status when their land was sold two generations before (69). Hill points out that the theme of the spiritual "inheritance" runs throughout *Pilgrim's Progress* and that both the autobiography and the allegory refer repeatedly to the passage in Hebrews that discusses Esau's sin in selling his birthright. Therefore, Hill concludes, one should consider the idea of selling Christ to be a metaphor for damnation. Certainly, Bunyan is convinced that selling Christ will result in damnation, but what is not clear is exactly what he thinks he might get in the exchange. Interestingly, Hill equates "selling" with "selling out," that Bunyan is facing a choice between pursuing Christ or settling for social norms: "But the idea of selling out, of betraying one's own convictions, of getting by at a low, but accepted level of achievement, of self-love rather than self-denial, remains to haunt Bunyan throughout his life" (70). Perhaps, it is simply that Bunyan is fixated on the thing he

dreads most. He states in "Fear of God" that fear always involves a preoccupation with the thing feared. Bunyan has all along been tormented by the prospect of damnation, and there is no surer path to damnation than apostasy. Because that is the thing he fears most, it is the thing that he thinks of most.

It is interesting that Bunyan eventually tries to escape this dilemma by avoiding agency: "Let him go if he will" (79). In "Blasphemy and the Problem of the Self in Grace Abounding," Vera Camden observes that cursing and blasphemy are recurring temptations for Bunyan and ties Bunyan's perception of the enormity of the sin to the Puritan emphasis on the Word (8). Camden argues that Bunyan sees not just failure in this sin, but a failure of the self in his powerlessness to resist it. She states,

> In *Grace Abounding* Bunyan's sense of impotence extends to every aspect of his self-portrayal. He is first enslaved to his sins, guilt and despair, and then later in the autobiography, trapped by the assaults of the scripture through the voices of divine and demonic forces. Bunyan deliberately characterizes his compulsion to blaspheme as a commandment from within; he is caught in the grip of something larger than his own will. (10)

It may be concluded, then, that the danger of this temptation lies not only in the nature of the sin itself, but possibly also in the limitations of self that it reveals. According to Camden, blasphemy offered Bunyan the illusion of power by the way in which it challenges and subverts spiritual truth (6-7). She concludes, ". . . Bunyan sought, though language, a meaningful, powerful and expressive action. He sought authority: a self" (7).

Perhaps, it is possible to read this final temptation as the last gasp of Bunyan's moral self-sufficiency. Lori Branch suggests that Bunyan's obsession with "selling" Christ comes from the use of legal and economic metaphors for salvation in the Puritan tradition. She explains that while these metaphors originate in Scripture and were frequently used in the Middle Ages, their use reached a kind of apogee under the Puritans who were preaching to a society preoccupied with mercantile concerns (272). Branch argues that Bunyan's crisis is brought about the stress of a religious system that reduces faith to knowing and which grounds that knowing in the evidence of a godly life (277). If this is so, then the Calvinism of Bunyan and his contemporaries has become little different than the works-based righteousness that the Reformation originally denied. Even if God is seen as the enabler of good works, one's acceptance by God is still marked by outward piety, and how can anyone know if he or she has done enough to be confident of acceptance? The temptation to sell Christ and Bunyan's effort to throw the question back onto the actions of Christ come about because Calvinism, as Bunyan has hitherto applied it, creates a conflicting view of human agency:

> Instead of a comforting equality of partners in a contract, in *Grace Abounding* Bunyan faces the looming inequalities of the soul figured as a commodity before God . . . Bunyan experiences himself less as a party to a contract and more a thing before an economic agent who may take no liking to him. Powerless to affect his own value, Bunyan can only examine his own experience for signs that Christ's righteousness has indeed been credited to him. (Branch 275)

Bunyan's understanding of Calvinism has ironically denied him agency in his own salvation while simultaneously bidding him read his salvation through his own actions and thoughts.

It would seem logical, then, that Bunyan must resolve this apparent contradiction by choosing one side or the other; either he has agency, or he does not. Bunyan resolves the issue by rejecting not only his own agency, but any possibility of an independent selfhood: "I thought I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand. There was my righteousness" (133). "Righteous" is a way of defining character; it refers to the moral condition of the self. Bunyan is asserting that the substance of that righteous character for the Christian is something extrinsic; it rests in Christ and not in Bunyan. It involves a re-identification that allows him to relinquish the burden of a failed self and claim the sufficiency of the divine man. Bunyan can free himself of the futile quest to determine his own value, since his salvation rests on the merit of Christ's works rather than on the quality of his own. Camden explains how Luther, rather than Calvin, shapes Bunyan's perspective:

> Luther provides a metaphor whereby the believer's conscience and Christ may become united. The conscience - or in Bunyan's terms, the "head and life" of the believer - is the bridal chamber of Christ. . . . The *Anfechtung* which is our earthly condition while imprisoned in the flesh is, paradoxically, only overcome by the mystery of spiritual union with Christ which the saints have traditionally figured through the carnal union of man and *wife*: "*sponsus et spousa fiunt una caro*." This union requires, according to Luther's commentary a "*commercium admirabile*," a mar-

> velous exchange of identity which permits the saint to claim Christ as the beloved . . . (844)

The re-identification described here is not the annihilation of self, but a reconfiguration of identity according to one all-pervading relationship in the same way that a traditional bride finds herself with a new name, a new family identity and a shift in every other relationship as the marital partnership assumes the central and dominant place. The identity of the bridegroom undergoes a corresponding transformation as he becomes one flesh with the bride, figured in Christian theology by the incarnation of Christ as the divine man who bears and takes away the sins of the world. This "exchange of identity," by which Christ assumes and atones for the sinner's culpability, enables the elect to claim the righteousness of Christ as a shared marital asset. Camden concludes, "This doctrine is so powerful and indeed so transforming in the believer's psychic life because it frees the sinner from the self and weds the saint to Christ" (845-46). Bunyan echoes this language when he states, "Further, the Lord did also lead me into the mystery of the union with the soul of God – that I was joined to Him, that I was flesh of His flesh and bone of his bone." Espoused to Christ, he is entitled to share in all that belongs to Christ, including sanctification (135).

This allows Bunyan finally to rest in the fidelity of Christ as the guarantee of his security. His fear that he has left Christ is answered by Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (GA 125). Here again, all agency is ascribed to Christ, and therefore it is perceived to be a faithful agency. But how does this transform the individual Christian? In *Pilgrim's Progress,* the individual who seeks salvation, must leave all the world to find it.

"Treatise of the Fear of God" shows how Bunyan saw godly reverence as the hinge connecting justification (its cause) with sanctification (its effect). In *Grace Abounding,* Bunyan

gives testimony to the continual presence of fear in his own spiritual journey. In *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan synthesizes the two approaches by simultaneously expounding and illustrating the role of fear in the transformation of the elect. Throughout *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan illustrates the Calvinist model of conversion by defining his pilgrims through the contrast between the converted individual and the unconverted world. The pilgrims of Part One find themselves journeying through an alien and often terrifying landscape in which nothing is to be feared so much as conformity to the values and priorities of those around them. It is not that their salvation is dependent upon that contrast (they occasionally commit the same errors as the false pilgrims around them), but that this contrast when it occurs is the unmistakable evidence of their salvation. As in "Fear of God," Bunyan ties this transformation to the presence of godly fear which the pilgrims choose over fear of the community's disapproval or rejection.

The use of pilgrimage as a metaphor for the Christian life gives topography a defining role in the narrative. In *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, Fish argues that the road is deceptively tangible to would-be pilgrims who think that they are going to heaven simply because they are on the King's highway. He states, ". . . Because it spatializes and trivializes the way, [the road] is as a great a danger as any the pilgrims meet within its confines" (229). This is because the act of walking on the King's highway has the appearance of a journey to heaven, and false pilgrims mistake the appearance of salvation for the reality. Thomas Luxon echoes this by arguing that error in *Pilgrim's Progress* takes the form of characters mistaking the allegorical as literal (160). More recently, Adam Sills has tied the concept of topography in *Pilgrim's Progress* to early modern attempts to map out (and thus impose structure upon) dissenting communities. Sills argues that the geography of *Pilgrim's Progress* is resistant to the idea that Christian community can be defined spatially (70-71), even though Bunyan recognized that some organization was

necessary in carrying out a pastoral ministry (72). Instead, one's neighbors, in Bunyan's portrayal, are largely a negative influence, in that they attempt to impose upon the individual a set of values and norms that are contrary to true Christianity (75-76). While I agree with Fish and Sills that there are characters in *Pilgrim's Progress* who err in identifying with a geographical community rather than an allegorical community (the invisible church), I would argue that one cannot overlook the significance of the external landmarks that validate the journey for true pilgrims. It is true that there are false pilgrims on the road, but they are false pilgrims because they missed the important landmarks – the narrow gate and the cross – and they missed them because they trusted a traditional view of religion (one derived from their own community) rather than a biblical Christianity that would have clearly pointed out these necessary stages. The road is indeed symbolic, but it is symbolic of a very literal separation that is occurring between the pilgrim and his former community, and the locations on the road serve as markers to indicate the progress of his transformation.

This begins in the first lines of the narrative, which describe a scene of complete alienation. The protagonist is a man, bowed under the burden of self-knowledge, who has found cause to fear, but no place of safety from the thing he dreads. Like Spenser's rustic swain in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, the burdened and ragged sinner at the beginning of *Pilgrim's Progress* represents humanity in reduced circumstances. He is isolated, estranged from his family and impoverished. His estrangement is also internal. He cries out for salvation and for a means to be rid of the burden of guilt that he cannot cast off himself. He is even nameless until he declares the purpose of his journey to Obstinate, and then the author designates him Christian, "for that was his name" (14). In every sense, the pilgrim begins his journey as a failed self, and his awareness brings with it the fear of condemnation: ". . . I fear that this burden that is upon

my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet. And, sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit (I am sure) to go to judgment and from thence to execution . . . ." (12-13). What does one make of a character who feels that he is not adequate even to face condemnation? Michael Davies observes, "The nameless man, crying out in a damnable desperation, crushed doubly between the burden at his back and the book in his hand, is caught in an acute drama of paralysis, at once intimate and cosmic, a crisis of stasis as arresting for the reader of the text as it is for the reader within it" (1). It may be added that this paralysis is not only a crisis of stasis, but also of identity because it deprives the self of its familiar and comfortable contexts (family and community). In place of these, the pilgrim/reader confronts a new self-awareness that does not immediately offer any hope of life. Paralysis exists because his current state is intolerable, but he does not know how to exchange it for another.

The ragged man is troubled not only by his guilt, but by his inability to account for himself to God, and this motivates his journey at the beginning. Presumably, he could go home and be welcomed by family and neighbors, but he is constrained by the failure of this all-important relationship to the divine. Like his name, his anticipation of joy in the Celestial City does not come until after he starts his pilgrimage; the beginning of the journey is an escape from "the wrath to come" (13). This fear of wrath is such an effective impetus that the pilgrim stumbles unwittingly into the Slough of Despond, so eager is he to escape the damnation that he believes is looming over his native place. Christian later tells Help that he fell into the Slough because "fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way and fell in" (17). Christian's fall in this pit may be taken as a representation of the spiritual bondage described in "Fear of God" in which the sinner is so consumed with the conviction of sin that he or she cannot understand the

role of divine grace. Fear, therefore, alienated Christian from his home and compels him to his pilgrimage; real evidence of mercy does not appear until after he is let in at the Wicket Gate.

Interestingly, Bunyan uses the Slough and the subsequent encounter with Worldly Wiseman to show in *Pilgrim's Progress* that fear does not always produce godly results. Help wants to know why Christian did not pay attention to the steps set out over the Slough (20). Worldly Wiseman is able to tempt Christian from the right road with the promise of an easier amelioration of the guilt and fear that are driving him. The potency of Worldly Wiseman's temptation is in the possibility he holds out that Christian may attain salvation without truly leaving anything behind. If Mr. Legality can rescue Christian by removing his burden, then he is free to return to his family and resume his occupation. He need not even leave the City of Destruction, though Worldly Wiseman advises him to relocate to the village of Morality as a more suitable place for his family: ". . . Thou mayest send for thy wife and children to thee to this village . . . there thou shalt live by honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion" (25). There may be a note of irony in the way Worldly Wiseman equates honesty with fashion. In any case, Morality offers a kind of spiritual compromise. It is a place where one may satisfy religious qualms by adopting a new lifestyle that is perpetually suspended between the City of Destruction (a kind of moral abandonment) and the all-or-nothing philosophy of the King's highway.

The problem with this solution is that Wordly Wiseman presumes to offer salvation without re-identification. Christian left his home because of the overwhelming burden of his failed self, but Morality offers the hope that self may not have to be remade, after all, but merely reformed. Christian need not leave anything behind in order to make himself acceptable to God; rather, he can be acceptable to God and to his neighbors at the same time. Legality, according to

Worldly Wiseman's claim, has the power to make the pilgrim satisfactory without ever making him different; he may live as he did before only, perhaps, in more respectable company. But Bunyan's allegory goes on to echo the objections raised to this theology in "Fear of God." Salvation by the law, as the treatise makes clear, is an impossibility because human nature can only sin, and the law can only condemn this sin. The problem is not where Christian lives, but rather who he is – a fallen man with sinful inclinations. When Evangelist arrives to reprove Christian, Mt. Sinai itself confirms his theology: "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (30). Implicit in the verse is the assumption that no one can achieve perfect conformity to the law, and so the law condemns everyone who trusts in it for salvation. Consequently, salvation without fundamentally changing the nature of the person is no salvation at all. Evangelist tells Christian: "The King of Glory hath told thee, That he that will save his life shall lose it. And, he that comes after him, and hates not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea and his own Life also, he cannot be my disciple" (29). It may be suggested that the relationships catalogued here are those most important to a personal sense of identity, but even identity itself is to be sacrificed in the pursuit of discipleship. By suggesting that Christian can have his old life and salvation with it, Worldly Wiseman has denied the very nature of salvation which requires a transformation of self.

Bunyan is here drawing an emphatic parallel between conventional wisdom and a salvation that is based on works. Sills observes,

> As an outgrowth of the humanistic strain within Calvinism, good neighborhood falls, for Bunyan, essentially under the category of

> works, defined as that which is a manifestation of grace but not a means to achieving grace. (73)

Community could result from a work of grace acting simultaneously within a group of Christians, but it could not transmit grace, nor could someone become a Christian simply by membership in such a community. The reason for this appears in Bunyan's satirical names for Mr. Legality and his son, Civility. When community attempts to impose moral norms, it may begin with an enthusiasm for divine law (legality), but it will eventually decline into an emphasis on only those virtues that make living together possible (civility). Thus, one mistakes polite behavior for Christian behavior, though all the while lacking a true work of God (grace) in the heart. Sills concludes that, in Bunyan's theology, "to speak or act in a Christian manner without having the Word of God impressed on one's heart is to deceive another wantonly and to misrepresent the Word itself" (73). In this sense, the town of Morality may be as much a satire on the notion of Christian community in seventeenth-century England as the town of Vanity Fair is a parody of popular antagonism to the overtly spiritual in the wake of the Puritan Commonwealth.

The encounter with Worldly Wiseman provides the reader with a warning about heeding conventional wisdom in matters of religion. Worldly Wiseman is the second antagonist Christian meets (counting Obstinate at the very beginning), and he appears in the narrative before Christian can even be said to have entered the Way. This suggests that the very act of entering the King's highway (i.e. the Christian life) is a re-orientation of the self. Whereas the sinner who lives in the City of Destruction or its more respectable counterpart, Morality, is far removed from the holiness or otherness of God, the pilgrim seeks to estrange himself from the place of his nativity so that he may identify himself with Christ, "despised and rejected of men."

The pilgrim removes himself from the world around him so that he may become more fit for the world that is to come. Monica Furlong notes that all of the "bad characters" in Pilgrim's Progress may be placed in one of seven categories, the largest of which is worldliness (107).

The encounter with Worldly Wiseman is reflected in the later encounters with By-Ends and Ignorance, and his responses to the later antagonists allow the reader to trace some development in Christian as a character. Whereas Christian is overawed by Wordly Wiseman at the beginning of the narrative, he (Christian) speaks with authority in later episodes, admonishing others to a right journey. The shift in Christian's role from his early naiveté to eventual spiritual maturity is a gradual change, but Vanity Fair appears to be a catalyst in that transformation. It is unfair to say that Vanity Fair is only a satire on seventeenth-century English society, for the simple reason that Bunyan indicates that its sins are universal. Like the City of Destruction and Morality, Vanity Fair personifies the values and beliefs of the World, and by that Bunyan would have meant all that is invented by humans to find purpose and satisfaction apart from God. Morality is the place where the human conscience seeks appeasement in law and duty, but Vanity Fair is the place where the human spirit seeks satisfaction in the acquisition of wealth, power and pleasure. Bunyan describes the merchandise of the Fair as follows:

> . . . At this Fair, are all such merchandizes sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures; and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not? (102)

Interestingly, not all the wares on sale in Vanity Fair are inherently *bad* things. There is nothing inherently sinful in government or in marriage. The merchandise at Vanity Fair is deadly

because it is distracting, and because the grouping of all these "wares" together suggests that they all serve in this context as means to power and pleasure. The Fair is a lure to keep pilgrims from finishing the journey and attaining heaven by offering them a different set of priorities. It is a second chance for pilgrims to reattach themselves to the earthly things which they should have put behind them and to find an identity for themselves in worldly titles or professions.

The interaction between Christian and Faithful and the townspeople who persecute them centers on the pilgrimage as the rejection of worldly values. When the merchants call out to passersby, tempting them to buy into the pleasures of the Fair, Christian and Faithful respond by putting their fingers in their ears. In response to the question, "What will you buy?," they answer, "We buy the truth" (105). Truth, apparently, is the only commodity that is not for sale in Vanity Fair, and the outrage of the spurned merchants incites the riot that culminates in the pilgrims' imprisonment.

The persecution of Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair, like Bunyan's own imprisonment, is an exercise in re-identification. It represents the mutual rejection of society by the individual who defies its norms, and of the individual by the community which punishes that defiance. Numerous critics, including Tindall, have pointed out that Bunyan's resistance to royal authority in matters of religion was a political act. Bunyan would have considered it a spiritual act whatever the political implications. Davies goes so far as to say, "Bunyan is always keen to point any metaphor or analogy towards the spiritual and away from the political when discussing salvation" (56). Bunyan surely knew that he invited contempt by breaking the law and being jailed for it, and also by stubbornly staying in jail in spite of the hardship this created for his family. One example of the difficulties posed to the reader by the pilgrim's abandonment of his children is found in Hill's discussion of the false sequels to *Pilgrim's Progress* that were

published in Bunyan's own lifetime: "Part II appeared in 1684, provoked to some extent by Bunyan's indignation at a number of spurious sequels which were circulating; partly, we may suppose, in order to be able to express second thoughts – e.g. on Christian's desertion of his family" (199). Kathleen M. Swain notes that a number of critics have shared Huckleberry Finn's bafflement at how Christian abandons his family, and "it didn't say why." To this Swaim answers, ". . . Bunyan does present very clearly, and more than once, his hero's reasons for such actions, but the reasons given are problematic to any but the most austere Christian believer" (2). The reason, plainly enough, is that he has gone where his family was not willing to follow, even though he asked them to come. So, he left them, indicating as dramatically as possible that no earthly tie should be allowed to supersede the pursuit of salvation. Communal disapproval of this is implied by Worldly Wiseman's inquiries about Christian's family and by his suggestion that Morality is a place where Christian can live with and support his wife and children. It does not seem possible that Bunyan should place those words in Worldly Wiseman's mouth and not think of his own family. There can be no denying that Bunyan in later life achieved a place and prestige through his preaching ministry that would not otherwise have been available to a mere Elstow tinker, but not before he had lost the stability and certainty of the place he had once occupied, and not before he had risked the welfare of his family by his imprisonment.

The Christianity of *Pilgrim's Progress* operates as a contrasting society. The pilgrims are a peculiar people whose authenticity is marked by their distinction from the world around them. Unlike the Puritans of a previous generation, Bunyan appears to have concluded that the greater society and its religious practices cannot be purified, and that the world is a hostile place which cannot be reconciled to the way of the cross, though the world seems to do a better job of tolerating the true believer in the second part of the allegory. Furlong states, "Images of

inclusion and exclusion are among the most dominant Bunyan reveals in his writing" (113). Bunyan's reading of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* in which the history of the true church is also the history of the persecuted church probably strengthened his conviction that suffering proves authenticity. The suffering of Christian and Faithful is a logical consequence of re-identification; the pilgrims must always be alien to the wider culture, their values different and their characters incompatible. Even in Part Two, Christiana lives safely in Vanity Fair for a short time, but she is still part of a distinct sub-culture. According to Margaret Soenser Breen, "Christiana and her companions thus constitute a community that counterpoints the earthly societies against which Christian defines his faith" (444). Even when pilgrims can live safely in Vanity Fair, they are required to maintain a distinct identity that is "in the world" without being "of the world," and which continually woos tolerance by persevering in charitable works.

This is the sermon that Christian attempts to preach to By-Ends and Ignorance with no success. By-ends is Bunyan's satire on those who profess religion insofar as it provides opportunity or acceptance. This character defines his own spiritual priorities as follows: "First, we never strive against Wind and Tide. Secondly, We are always most zealous when Religion goes in his Silver Slippers; we love much to walk with him in the street, if the Sun shines and the People applaud him" (116). Appearing, as it were, immediately after the pilgrims' persecution and Faithful's martyrdom in Vanity Fair, By-ends provides a kind of comic relief. After the gruesome torture and death meted out to Faithful, there is something absurd, even anticlimactic, about By-ends, who talks about wearing religion as silver slippers and being applauded by his neighbors in the sunshine. Moreover, he has a set of cronies named Hold-the-World, Money-love, and Save-all, just in case the reader has mistaken his principles. Further, they are all quick to condemn Christian and Hopeful for not having sufficient regard for the opinions of others:

> . . . The men before us are so rigid, and love so much their own notions, and do also so lightly esteem the opinions of others, that let a man be never so godly, yet if he jumps not with them in all things, they thrust him quite out of their company . . . They are for hazarding all for God at a clap, and I am for taking all advantages to secure my Life and Estate. They are for holding their notions, though all other men be against them; but I am for Religion, in what, and so far as the Times and my safety will bear it. (118)

By-ends quickly identifies himself with his prestigious and well-connected relatives and hesitates to use his real name which he recognizes as less than complimentary. This embarrassment with his name suggests that By-ends knows his principles to be less than honorable. If he does not acknowledge that his motives are base, he must at least be aware that there is something shifty about a nature that pursues personal advancement by any means available and which counts religion as one more means to self-aggrandizement. Whereas true pilgrims are compelled by fear of God and his judgments, By-ends regards the opinions of his neighbors as most important in matters of religion. His conversation with his friends about the wisdom of putting safety first takes on the tone of those who protest too much. The irony of By-ends is that his pursuit of wealth is not as prudent as his pursuit of religion. He succumbs to the temptation of Demas who lures him into a silver mine, and he is never seen again (124). In his conversations, By-ends appears to equate wealth with public approval, and he craves both. The result is self-destruction; in attempting to gain the world, he loses his own soul.

While By-ends' motives are mercenary, Ignorance is apparently sincere in his journey toward the Celestial City. His place in the allegory is unique. Unlike other false pilgrims,

Christian speaks with him on two different occasions, making an extra effort to convince him that his pilgrimage will fail unless he begins it again in the right place. Bunyan uses Ignorance to illustrate what he considers to be the pitfalls of human reasoning. Richard F. Hardin has suggested that Ignorance is a satire on the Quakers who emphasized "spontaneity and intuitive response above study" (496), though he notes that Ignorance's belief in transferred merit (Christ's merit makes the Christian's good works sufficient for salvation) was a belief shared by Catholics (499). James F. Forrest notes that other critics have suggested that Ignorance may be a Deist or a Latitudinarian (12). Forrest objects to such explanations of Ignorance by attaching him to a particular sect only succeeds in diminishing the artistry of Bunyan's character (12-13). I would argue that the fact that Ignorance can so easily be identified with different theologies suggests that Bunyan is more interested in attacking what he considered a common error than in parodying any one group, and the error here is a spirituality that is based in confidence in the self and in self-perception. Forrest describes it as "hypocrisy, a belief in one's own righteousness leading to a rejection of the means of grace offered in Christ" (18). Placed in the narrative near the pilgrims' encounter with the Flatterer, the story of Ignorance is part of an exposition on the dangers of pride (Forrest 17-18).

The reader is introduced to Ignorance as a native of the town of Conceit. In this context, *conceit* likely refers to a fanciful notion, or an idea that does not correspond to reality. According to the OED, the meaning of the word was already beginning to shift in the seventeenth century to its contemporary usage – that is, an exaggerated idea of one's own personal merit. However, Bunyan most likely means the word in the older and broader sense, since Ignorance appears to have "fanciful notions" about a number of different things. Christian pronounces him "wise in his own conceit" (142). In other words, Ignorance is wise according to

his own notions of wisdom, a statement which might be considered true of ignorance everywhere. David Hawkes, in his explanatory footnote, reads this another way -- that Ignorance is considered a wise man in his own hometown – "wise in his own Conceit" (142). The phrase is also a biblical allusion; the marginal note in *Pilgrim's Progress* cites Proverbs 26:12, but the same expression is used in Romans 12:16, ". . . Be not wise in your own conceits" (KJV). The statement in Romans 12 is part of a discussion of how Christian standards and ideals ought to be different from the self-centered values of the world: "And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." (Rom. 12:2). In the second dialogue between Christian and Ignorance, it is apparent that the latter thinks in conformity to the rest of his community (Conceit) and has no misgivings about this, even when Christian attempts to convince him that God's judgments are altogether different. The statement that he is wise in his own conceit prepares the reader for the underlying relativism of Ignorance's religion. He is wise because his own notions tell him so; he is good because his own heart tells him so. That it might be risky to accept this biased judgment never once occurs to him.

Christian attempts to persuade Ignorance of the futility of clinging to his own standards of goodness by insisting on the role of Scripture as the outside arbiter of inward virtue. When pressed by Christian, Ignorance can only state that he is convinced of his acceptance in heaven because his heart tells him that he is acceptable. When asked how he knows that his heart is reliable, he answers that it must be because it is good, and he knows that his heart is good because his life is good. How does he know that his life is good? Because his heart tells him so (163). Ignorance's morality is essentially relativistic because it is based on individual perceptions and on the values of his own community, but this reduces him to a kind of circular reasoning. He must continually return to the testimony of his own heart because he refuses to

acknowledge the authority of any outside source that disagrees with it. When he asks Christian what he should consider right thoughts concerning the self, Christian answers, "Such as agree with the Word of God" (163). As in Spenser's allegory of Redcrosse, holiness is produced by a right knowledge of God and self, as in "Fear of God," that right knowledge is found in Scripture. Christian states that good thoughts are "when our thoughts of God do agree with what the Word saith of him: and that is, when we think of his Being and Attributes as the Word hath taught . . . when we think that he knows us better than we know ourselves, and can see Sin in us, when and where we can see none in ourselves" (164). A right fear of God convinces the individual that the judgments of God concerning the heart are true and causes the individual to yield to them in spite of personal inclination. Christian refers to this as "heart-humiliation" (164), suggesting that the root of the Ignorance's problem is pride, and thus his ignorance lies in misunderstanding himself. Bunyan suggests that what Ignorance most needs is to borrow a perspective outside himself so that he can see himself more clearly.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, there can be no right understanding of self without first abandoning human reason as the means of knowing. A. Richard Dutton comments on the absence of any substantial debate in *Pilgrim's Progress*: "The book as a whole is the product of a mind given to self-justification rather than constructive dialogue with other points of view" (443). I would argue that the absence of any real engagement with alternative points of view is precisely the crux of the matter; "point of view" is what is at stake in the narrative. Christian is not merely trying to present Ignorance with a different theology, but rather to initiate him into a different way of approaching theology, one that is centered on Scripture. Davies states, "Bunyan's narratives press the reader to read the self and the Word 'gracefully', first by refusing to read themselves according to any this-worldly precedent of narrative logic, causality, and

sequentiality, nor any earthly notions of knowledge and reason" (7). In Stanley Fish's seminal reading, reason (or logic) is subverted by the possibility of a character like Ignorance finding the right road and yet not attaining salvation on it; Ignorance even arrives at the gates of the Celestial City, and yet he is not welcome to enter. Fish contends that Bunyan, having chosen the journey as a metaphor for salvation, then undermines the metaphor by making it possible for a character to have the journey without having salvation. Fish uses the episode with Formalist and Hypocrisy as an example. These would-be pilgrims argue that they are in precisely the same place as Christian and, therefore, it should not matter how they arrived there. Fish argues that this is a reasonable conclusion "based on the physical and available evidence . . . which defines the boundaries of their belief" (228). Yet, these two characters have not made the whole journey because they did not come by the cross, and they are quick to leave the highway as soon as a road that seems better presents itself; their error is not in placing too much importance on the road, but in placing too little. The same may be said of Mr. Atheist who does not believe in the existence of the Celestial City because he has never found such a place himself; ironically, he is facing away from the Celestial City as he says this. Mr. Atheist thus confines all the possibilities of the universe to the limited boundaries of his own experience, a limitation that is emphasized by his inability to see one way while he is walking another. This is the error that Ignorance makes when he rejects the judgments of Scripture, which Christian quotes as revealed truth, in order to base his conclusions about himself and God on the evidence of his own heart.

Christian argues that Ignorance's false conceptions of self cannot be remedied until he adopts a new way of knowing, a new epistemology of self-understanding that will correct the errors brought about by moral complacency. Hopeful observes that "fear tends much to men's good, and to make them right at their beginning to go on Pilgrimage" (168). Christian agrees,

but amends this by saying that it must be right fear and then proceeds to define right fear in three points that echo *Treatise of the Fear of God*; right fear comes from conviction, compels the soul to seek Christ, and preserves and maintains a sanctifying reverence for the things of God (168). Why is it that some initially fear God's judgment, yet are not saved in the end? According to Christian, "They have slavish fears that do over-master them; I speak now of the fears they have of men" (170). Like Wordly Wiseman and By-ends, Ignorance's attitude toward religion is contaminated by an undue regard for what is conventional or socially acceptable rather than an awe of the exclusive goodness of God. He defends the authenticity of his pilgrimage by telling Christian and Hopeful that he has left everything to pursue heaven (141). This is not precisely true. In the first conversation Ignorance has with the pilgrims, he brushes them off by saying, "Be content to follow the Religion of your country, and I will follow the Religion of mine" (142). By conforming religion to custom, Ignorance proves that he has not left all behind. He has not even left his country behind, for he is carrying its values and notions with him. Nor has he entered the Way at the Wicket Gate or passed the Cross, but rather has followed the shortcut marked out for him by his neighbors. His feet are propelling him on the King's highway, but his heart has never left the town of Conceit.

By-ends and Ignorance both fail to grasp the necessity of re-identification, even though their own names betray their errors. The fact that By-ends can be embarrassed by his identity, and yet see no reason to change it indicates that he is self-deceived. This stubborn tendency in human nature to think well of itself despite all evidence to the contrary appears in the narrative as proof that godly fear and accompanying conviction are only possible through the intervention of divine grace. This grace overwhelms the true pilgrim with a sense of the hollowness and futility – the nothingness – of the ragged identity he has maintained. It drives him to the Cross to

re-identify, as Bunyan re-identifies in *Grace Abounding*, with the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ. Only by identifying with Christ can the pilgrim be relieved of the burden of his own failed selfhood and take on a new role represented by the gifts the angels give him at the cross, a moment which Roger Sharrock calls "the theological hinge upon which the whole allegory turns" (80). It is in this regard that Fish's reading perhaps does not go far enough. He describes the pilgrimage as an "inner commitment" and states,

> . . . The 'way' refers to an inner commitment of the spirit (a road, as Augustine says, not from place to place, but of the affections), a commitment to the rule of his master, and as long as he walks by that, any road he literally walks is the way. (228)

It may be argued that the narrative does not allow for such a clear differentiation between the rule and the road. The pilgrims may indeed encounter different obstacles, but always there is the same Wicket Gate and the same Cross because it is at the Wicket Gate that the pilgrim re-identifies himself by rejecting the world and embracing the way of Christ, and it is at the Cross where the exchange of identities takes place. Luxon also finds Fish's reading problematic. He states,

> Bunyan does not allow, as Fish pretends to, that there is 'an infinity' of ways. Bunyan is certainly not a pluralist. There is for Bunyan only one way. If that way looks or sounds different in different pilgrims' perceptions or discursive accounts of it, this is an unfortunate affect of the pilgrims' stubborn attachment to the things of this world. (171)

There is certainly an inner commitment, but there is always an outside referent, spiritual signposts that validate the journey that is being made, and that are recognized as valid because they are indicated by Scripture. Hill states, "Christian is revealed as one of the predestined elect the moment he enters the wicket-gate: those who enter by other, surreptitious, routes do not survive to the end of the journey (209). As Christian tells Formalist and Hypocrisy, whoever does not come in at the door is "a thief and a robber" (47).

This does not mean that the pilgrim achieves his own salvation. Fish notes that Christian never misses "a new opportunity to fall into an old error" (232). Apollyon taunts Christian with his failures and hypocrisy, and Christian is forced to concede the truth of his accusations. Even after enduring Vanity Fair and rejecting Demas' sales pitch, Christian leads Hopeful onto By-path Meadow and into the clutches of Giant Despair. Why is he then not allowed to damn himself as Formalist, Hypocrisy and By-ends do when they leave the road? The answer lies in "Fear of God" when Bunyan describes the privileges of those who possess a truly godly fear. Among the twelve privileges he enumerates are security and the promise of continual pardon. He cites Ps. 25:12, "What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." Bunyan expounds it this way,

> O thou that fearest the Lord; whoever wanders, turns aside, and swerveth from the way of salvation, whoever is benighted, and lost in the midst of darkness, thou shalt find the way to the heaven and the glory that thou hast chosen. (431)

Christian's godly fear is a token of his election and guarantees that he cannot alienate himself from the Way, however often he wanders. When he and Hopeful leave the Way to follow the Flatterer, an angel appears to free them, punish them and lead them back to the right road (153-

52). To desire heaven is also evidence of grace working a godly fear, and Bunyan cites Ps. 145:19 to show that God "will fulfill the desire of them that fear him." Those that truly desire heaven, according to Bunyan, find it.

Finally, there is the promise of limitless mercy for the one who reveres God. Bunyan quotes Ps. 103:17, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him." He cross-references this to Ps. 90:3, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Bunyan interprets these two verses together to mean that the mercy of God is an essential part of the being of God. God's mercy endures as long as God himself endures, which is to say forever. This means that God's mercy is inexhaustible as God's being is eternal. Bunyan states,

> Child of God, thou that fearest God, here is mercy nigh thee, mercy enough, everlasting mercy upon thee. This is long-lived mercy. It will live longer than thy sin, it will live longer than temptation, it will live longer than thy sorrows, it will live longer than thy persecutors. It is mercy from everlasting to contrive thy salvation, and mercy to everlasting to weather it out with thy adversaries. Now what can hell and death do to him that hath this mercy of God upon him? And this hath the man that feareth the Lord. (433)

This, then, is why Christian cannot be lost no matter how many times he misses the Way. Having re-identified himself with Christ, he is secure in the divine person whose very being is bound up with unlimited mercy. Christian, in himself, is finite. His journey begins at a fixed point and moves inexorably to a fixed end, but God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. Christian's salvation is assured because there is an end to his life before there is an end to what

Bunyan calls “pardoning preserving mercy” (433). The secret of his salvation is that he dies before he can exhaust the inexhaustible.

The reader is left to consider Bunyan’s arguments regarding the limits of self-knowledge. Fish notes, “The claims of ‘Eternal Life’ are made at the expense of this life – its pleasures, its values, its loyalties, and, above all, its point of view.” Surely there can be nothing more integral to identity than perspective. Yet Bunyan argues that salvation only comes from a new identity that is put on by borrowing a new perspective, one that has its origin in inspired fear. Camden states, “The unconverted self, for Bunyan, is a liminal self. The only past worth recording is the past seen from the retrospect of Providence” (“Blasphemy” 15). The individual learns to reverence God at the expense of self, and in that loss of self, paradoxically, is the gaining of immortality.

# Conclusion

## Sanctification and Vocation

The paradox that characterizes sanctification as the process of losing oneself in order to restore the self is not unique to the Reformation, but Protestantism was unique in locating the agency of this process outside the individual. The restoration of the self, a re-identification with Christ, could not be achieved by personal effort, but the individual could participate in that re-identification by adopting a new way of knowing. By accepting a biblical perspective of God and self, the Christian could experience a transformation that began in the mind and reshaped the whole person. The Protestant was therefore challenged to produce the good works that were a necessary proof of salvation, but also to recognize that those works were not initiated within oneself, but through the work of God in restoring the soul.

While sanctification was an inward process, it was meant to have communal as well as personal significance through the Protestant concept of vocation. As with justification and sanctification, sanctification and vocation are intertwined in practice. The Christian as imitator of Christ was also part of a priesthood of believers and responsible to others for providing mutual aid and comfort. Whereas sanctification was the unveiling of an identity conferred through justification, vocation was the outward expression of that identity within the Christian community. Hans J. Hillerbrand has described the Lutheran concept of vocation as the belief that "all professions and endeavors were spiritually blessed . . . It made all work, no matter how lowly and mundane, if performed in the proper spirit, pleasing to God . . ." (427). Hillerbrand notes that this doctrine gave dignity to those who had no chance of upward mobility (435). It also upheld the value of the individual within the community. Whereas justification and sanctification were gained through identification with Christ, vocation was found in identification with the visible body of Christ, the church.

Sanctification and vocation are discussed by John Frith in his 1532 treatise, "A Mirrour to Know Thyself." Few literary scholars have given much attention to the writings of Frith, who was overshadowed by the accomplishments of his colleague, Tyndale. Frith enjoyed the early patronage of Cardinal Wolsey who secured him the position of junior canon at Cardinal College at an unusually early age. When his Protestant views were discovered, Frith abandoned England for continental exile with Tyndale (Pineas 173). During this time, he authored a number of pamphlets debating Simon Fisher, Thomas More and John Rastell on the doctrines of purgatory and transubstantiation. Richard Rex notes that in his broadside against the doctrine of purgatory, Frith "achieved the rare success of converting one of [his] targets: John Rastell, a brother-in-law of More's, was won over by it to the opposite cause" (114). Arrested upon his return to England, Frith was sent to the Tower of London where he continued to write; "Mirrour" was composed the year before he was burned at the stake. In addition to his argument against the doctrine of Purgatory and the conversion of Rastell, Rex notes that Frith also changed the debate in England over transubstantiation by introducing "Swiss arguments against the real presence" (123). According to Walter M. Gordon, Frith provided "the tinder for the English Eucharistic controversy of the sixteenth century" (132). His writings are, therefore, central to the nascent Reformation in England.

In "Mirrour", Frith begins by laying out an Augustinian theology of human depravity and God's sovereignty in matters of salvation, concluding "that all goodness cometh of God, and all sin or mischief of our poisoned nature" (268). This reminder of human dependence on divine grace is a prelude to his discussion of the individual Christian as part of the Christian community. Justification is referenced only in passing with sanctification and vocation as gifts of God rather than proofs of human merit (266). Most of the treatise is dedicated to a discussion

of vocation, which consists of the "gifts" God has given to each Christian and the obligation to use those gifts for the benefit of the whole church. Frith does not address specific occupations, but rather discusses the obligations that those in certain stations of life have toward others. While salvation is a personal matter, Frith's teaching on the mutual obligations of Christians to nurture each other at time seems to blur the boundaries of the self as identification with Christ becomes identification with the body of Christ.

Frith admonishes the reader to understand gifts as obligations rather than favors. Concerning one gift, he states,

> If God have opened the eyes of thy mind, and have given thee spiritual wisdom through the knowledge of his word, boast not thyself of it, but rather fear and tremble; for a chargeable office is committed unto thee, which (if thou fulfil it) is like to cost thee thy life at one time or other, with much trouble or persecution. But if thou fulfil it not, then shall that office be thy damnation. (269)

This sounds very much like Bunyan who for fear of God chose to stay in prison rather than renounce his unlawful preaching, but Frith argues that the Christian must act out of compassion as well as fear. Every person with knowledge of Scripture "hath cure of his neighbor's soul." As an analogy, he argues that if he saw a blind man about to stumble into a pit, he would be obligated by divine law to save his neighbor or else stand guilty of his blood. Frith does not confine this ministry of "knowledge" to those in professional ministry, even Protestant ministry. He states that he is obligated for "the knowledge that God hath given me" (269). This implies that every Christian possesses some obligation toward the souls of others, since ideally every Christian would have some knowledge of Scripture.

Frith does not limit the idea of gifts to spiritual benefits. He spends much of the last half of the treatise discussing the obligation of Christians to meet the material needs of others. He states, " . . . The most honest member must serve the vilest at his necessity . . . Even so hath God appointed his gifts, and distributed them in this world unto us (which should be as one body,) that every nation hath need of another, every occupation need of another, and every man need of his neighbor" (269). Hillerbrand explains that Protestants saw all labor as valuable if it was done to honor God, but Frith presents an argument beyond this to the mutual needs of the Christian community. In this model, no one's value can be less than another's because each needs the other to supply what is lacking for the common good. Frith specifically appeals to those who have wealth and those who possess physical strength, thus encompassing Christians of high and low estate.

Whereas the individual is alone before God in regards to salvation, the Christian's vocation is so interwoven with the community that he cannot hope to detach himself from that identification without risking his salvation. Frith states, "If God hath given thee riches, thou mayest not think that he hath committed them unto thee for thine own use only, but that he hath made thee a steward over them to distribute them to the profit of the community; for indeed thou art not the owner of them, but God is the owner" (271). Whatever belongs to God belongs to the community, and to withhold what is needed from a fellow Christian is an act of theft. Frith quotes St. Gregory concerning Dives: "He was not damned because he despoiled any other man's, but because he did not distribute his own" (271). This gives Frith an opportunity to denounce the excess wealth of the Catholic Church, a favorite theme of Reformers. Pineas has noted Frith's frequent use of sarcasm and irony, and Frith employs them in his discussion of the church's use of money for churches rather than charity:

> They defraud the poor of their bread, and so are they thieves . . . as an old doctor saith, they are in that point worse than the devil, for the devil would have had that Christ should have turned stones into bread (which might have succoured the poor,) and these builders turn the bread into stones. For they bestow the good which should be given to the poor for their sustenance, upon an heap of stones. (273-74)

Frith follows this with an argument that owes much to the Protestant idea of the invisible church. The clerics, he argues, consider charity a waste of money because it leaves no lasting monuments, and no one knows what becomes of the money after it is distributed. He answers this by suggesting that the community itself would be improved by wise beneficence. A bishop willing to give away half his extravagant income, "giving unto one man forty shillings, and lending unto another twenty nobles to set up his occupation withal, and so give and lend as he seeth need, he should within five or six years more make a flourishing diocese" (274). This he argues, would be a more acceptable building project than constructing religious houses. In this he echoes Luther who, according to Madeleine Gray, advised the city of Leisnig to confiscate the property of monasteries in their town and redistribute the wealth in charity and business loans (121).

While Frith's admonition to the wealthy is primarily directed to the Catholic Church, his argument for the universal ownership of God seems to redefines private property as a public trust. In the same way, physical strength is also obligated to the common good. Frith states, "If God have given thee thy perfect limbs and members, then get thee to some occupation, and work with thine own hands, that thy members which are whole and perfect may minister to their

necessity that lack their members" (272). Frith's use of the word members here evokes the concept of individual Christians as members of the body of Christ. Because the Christian has identified with Christ, his members become members of the body and exist to serve the body. Frith again targets the church establishment, particularly the idle monks and mendicants who live off the labor of others. By this point in the treatise, his argument has become invective rather than instruction.

Frith's version of vocation is radical in its implications. While the Reformation centered on salvation as a personal rather than corporate experience, Spenser, Donne and Bunyan were cognizant that a personal identification with Christ could not be separated from identification within a Christian community where vocation could be exercised. Andrew Escobedo notes that Spenser wished to provide England with a national epic (71) reflecting Spenser's own Renaissance conception of the poet as an instructor of virtue (69). If Redcrosse were only on a journey of holiness, his nationality would be irrelevant. Rather, it is Spenser's reconstruction of chivalry that requires a reconstruction of English identity. In order to make space for a Protestant knight, Spenser must also tell the story of the Protestant England to which he belongs. Donne's conversion from Catholic to Anglican, torturous in any case, came with the added dilemma of whether or not to accept ordination. Robert S. Jackson has noted that, although Donne's choice of the ministry was influenced by King James, this does not mean that there was not an inward calling, but rather that the king provided external confirmation of that calling. Jackson asserts that Donne was uncomfortable with the subjectivity of a personal call to ministry; the king's authority over the community of faith offered reassurance and validated Donne's vocation (141). Even Bunyan whose call to ministry put him in opposition to the

established church received legitimacy through his own Baptist congregation. It was a personal vocation, but it was also a corporate calling.

The discussion of vocation could not escape two anxieties particular to the Reformation: the desire to maintain social order and the need to affirm a godly life against those who would interpret grace as license to sin. Hillerbrand notes of Luther, "At issue was his concern for a structured society, in which everyone had an assigned place (435). Because the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers permitted every believer, including women and common laborers, unmediated access to God, Reformers were anxious to uphold the social status quo, as Tyndale does when he teaches the submission of wives to husbands and the submission of servants to masters. In the discourse on civil government which concludes the *Institutes*, Calvin attempts to chart a middle course between the precedence of God's laws and the necessary rule of kings and magistrates. He states, "On the one hand, frantic and barbarous men are furiously endeavoring to overturn the order established by God, and, on the other, the flatterers of princes, extolling their power without measure, hesitate not to oppose it to the government of God." Freedom of conscience must not be confused with lawlessness (970). In "Mirrour", Frith states,

> Truth it is, that where faith is present, no sin can be imputed, but this faith is not in thy power, for it is the gift of God. And therefore, if thou be unkind, and endeavor not thyself to walk innocently, and to bring forth fruits of faith, it is to be feared that for thine unkindness God will take it from thee, and hire out his vineyard to another, which shall restore the fruit in due season, and then shall thine end be worse than thy beginning. (271)

At this point, there is a tenuous line separating Frith from the works-based theology of his Catholic opponents, and yet Reformers were aware of the moral risk of teaching salvation without works. Obligation to others within the Christian community, rather than obedience clerical law, was made the constraint to moral autonomy. Vocation thus became the safeguard of sanctification.

This dissertation began with Peter Marshall's discussion of narratives of the Reformation as a movement within English society. In discussing sanctification, I have followed Marshall's contention that the Reformation can be better understood through a study of individuals rather than confessions or national churches. Justification by faith taught that the Christian was identified with the righteousness of Christ; sanctification by faith was the discovery and living out of that righteousness through a right knowledge of God and self learned from Scripture. These are inward transformations. It is in the Protestant idea of vocation that the individual translates that encounter with the divine into a practical calling within the Christian community, the invisible church of those who have collectively identified as Christ's body.

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# Vita

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