

The Quest of Love: A Liturgical Reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress*

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Introduction: “Lay my Book, thy Head and Heart Together”

The Pilgrim's Progress, one of the most widely read and beloved books of all time, was written by John Bunyan, a seventeenth century Congregationalist pastor. His work has been lauded for its theology as well as critiqued for it, and many volumes have been written about how the text expounds upon certain doctrines or how those doctrines shaped the text. However, as C. S. Lewis notes, “Most of [*The Pilgrim's Progress*] has been read and re-read by those who were indifferent or hostile to its theology, and even by children who perhaps were hardly aware of it” (402). Though Bunyan's book is rich with theology that is worth exploring, *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been more widely read and enjoyed as a literary work apart from its theology. As W. R. Owens observes, “Much of its attraction lies in the beauty and simplicity of Bunyan's prose, and in the vividness with which he brings allegorical characters to life” (xxxviii) and Lewis claims that “[t]he greater part of it is enthralling narrative or genuinely dramatic dialogue” (402). Yet as many as have lauded *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a literary achievement are those who have critiqued it for its failings as a work of literature. In reading Bunyan's work, however, it is important to remember that Bunyan was neither a theologian nor a novelist, but a pastor. His profession was not aimed at expounding theological doctrine or crafting stories and characters; rather, his profession as a pastor was aimed at bringing people to a saving faith in Christ and helping them to live in accordance with that faith.

For that reason, it would be helpful to think of *The Pilgrim's Progress* not as a theological work meant to instruct the reader in doctrine but as a pastoral work meant to transform the hearts and lives of its readers. His writings on theological doctrines should perhaps be viewed in a similar manner as intended not primarily to inform the reader of truths so that he or she knows right doctrine but to exhort the reader to a change of heart to love God. Bunyan

writes in *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded*, “O therefore let all this move thee, and be of weight upon thy Soul to close in with Jesus, this tender-hearted Jesus” (309). For Bunyan, the knowledge of right doctrine is important only insofar as it leads to steadfast Christian living. As Faithful explains to Talkative in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, “*Knowledge . . . may be obtained in the mysteries of the Gospel, and yet no work of grace in the Soul. . . . Indeed, to know is a thing that pleaseth Talkers and Boasters; but to do, is that which pleaseth God. Not that the heart can be good without knowledge . . . that is accompanied with the grace of faith and love, which puts a man upon doing even the will of God from the heart*” (80). Because Bunyan viewed right doctrine as valuable for how it could bring people closer to God, Bunyan’s theological treatises should probably be understood in light of this purpose: to draw readers to God. If his writings that seem most explicitly to be theological works should be viewed as having that as their primary purpose, then so should *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Recognizing the pastoral purpose behind *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is helpful in answering the significant question of why Bunyan, a Puritan, would write a fiction at all. As U. Milo Kaufmann observes at the start of his book *The Pilgrim’s Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation*, “Puritans did not ordinarily write imaginative romances” (3). Not only did Puritans not write fiction, they repudiated it for at least two significant reasons. The first is that they viewed fiction as literally not true and not conveying the truth. Bunyan addresses this concern in his “Apology,” writing, “*My dark and cloudy words they do but hold / The Truth, as Cabinets inclose the Gold*” (ll. 127-28). This Puritan accusation of fiction as lacking truth and Bunyan’s rebuttal, which implies a certain poetics and thus intention for writing, have warranted much study from many scholars, but this approach emphasizes the doctrines of the text. If the value of the story were primarily in its doctrines, even for a pastoral rather than theological purpose, then

it seems odd that Bunyan would choose to write a fiction, which was anathema, rather than write a treatise directly on those doctrines. It seems there must be something in the nature of fiction or story that is able to meet Bunyan's pastoral purpose that an expository piece cannot.

The second reason Puritans rejected fiction sheds some light on that something: they were concerned that fiction engaged a person's fancy, or imagination, and thereby misdirected his or her desires. How fiction affects the way a Christian lives was the very thing Bunyan was also concerned about. In his "Apology," Bunyan writes, "*May I not write in such a stile as this? / In such a method too, and yet not miss / Mine end, thy good?*" (ll. 61-63). He claims that his book will positively affect the reader to pursue faithful Christian living:

*This Book will make a Travailer of thee,
If by its Counsel thou wilt ruled be;
It will direct thee to the Holy Land,
If thou wilt its Directions understand:
Yea, it will make the sloathful, active be;
The Blind also, delightful things to see.* (ll. 207-12).

His claim is that his book can shape the reader into the kind of person who pursues God ("*make a Travailer of thee*") and that it gives the reader a sense of how to pursue God ("*It will direct thee to the Holy Land*"). As Alison Searle articulates in "*The Eyes of Your Heart*": *Literary and Theological Trajectories of Imagining Biblically*, "[H]e carefully adapts the embodied hermeneutic of scriptural interpretation developed by Puritan divines, linking the aesthetic features of literature and an engaged imagination to the spiritual and moral transformation of the reader's life" (60). Bunyan wrote a fictional story *because* it can engage the reader's imagination and thereby direct his or her desires to live in a Christian way.

To articulate how the story of *The Pilgrim's Progress* directs the desires of the reader who is imaginatively engaged by the story, I intend to examine *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the lens of James K. A. Smith's liturgical pedagogy. In his books, *Desiring the Kingdom* and *Imagining the Kingdom*, Smith argues for an education that is “a holistic endeavor that involves the whole person, including our bodies, in a process of formation that aims our desires, primes our imagination, and orients us to the world” (*Desiring* 39). In Smith's pedagogy, the purpose of education mirrors the pastoral purpose of Bunyan's writings: as Bunyan's writings were not primarily aimed at explaining theological knowledge but transforming the hearts and lives of readers for Christ, so Smith argues that “education is not primarily a heady project concerned with providing *information*; rather, education is most fundamentally a matter of *formation*, a task of shaping and creating a certain kind of people” (26). For that reason, Smith's liturgical pedagogy will provide a useful framework for understanding and articulating how *The Pilgrim's Progress* affects the reader as a means of holistic education.

To explain the importance of a liturgical pedagogy and how it works, Smith presents an anthropology that supposes humans to be primarily desiring creatures rather than thinking creatures or believing creatures. At the core of Smith's argument is the claim that “[people] are, ultimately, *liturgical animals* because we are fundamentally desiring creatures. We are what we love, and our love is shaped, primed, and aimed by liturgical practices that take hold of our gut and aim our heart to certain ends” (*Desiring* 40). Smith contrasts the idea of people as “desiring creatures” with two alternatives, people as “thinking things” and people as “believing things,” both of which, he claims, “remain narrowly focused on the cognitive aspect of our nature and tend to reduce us to that aspect (whether in terms of thoughts or beliefs)” (Smith *Desiring* 46). Labeling both “thinking” and “believing” as cognitive, Smith identifies two basic philosophical

anthropologies: the cognitive, mind-oriented view and the liturgical, heart-oriented view. Smith's anthropology does not deny the presence or significance of cognitive ideas or beliefs but argues that desiring precedes thinking and believing. In a similar fashion, this analysis is not meant to deny the value of cognitive aspects of *The Pilgrim's Progress* such as its doctrine but to begin exploring how its affective qualities influence the desires of the reader. This analysis supposes that the reader first learns from *The Pilgrim's Progress* in an affective and emotional capacity related to his or her desires before learning from it cognitively.

Smith further argues that a person's desires are shaped by repeated practices that orient the person toward an object of desire, and narrative elements of *The Pilgrim's Progress* closely parallel this model. Smith explains the three components of people as loving creatures:

- 1) Humans are intentional and aim at, or love, something (*Desiring* 48).
- 2) Humans are “*teleological* creatures....whose love is aimed at different ends or goals,” which are expressed as “a specific vision of the good life, an implicit picture of what we think human flourishing looks like” (52).
- 3) The desires or loves of the human heart hinge upon a person's habits (56), which are, in turn, shaped by practices (58).

The imaginative story of *The Pilgrim's Progress* contains each of the three components that constitute people as desiring creatures: 1) a love for the Lord and intention to be in his presence, 2) the goal of attaining the vision of the good life, the Celestial City, and 3) the rigorous journeying. In his “Apology,” Bunyan indicates both the habit—“*how [Christian] runs, and runs*” (l. 201)—and the goal—“*Till he unto the Gate of Glory comes*” (l. 202). That there are parallels between aspects of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Smith's model for people as liturgical animals does not, however, explain how Bunyan's story, which is not a physical habit or

practice, can affect a person's desires and lead to embodied Christian living.

The Pilgrim's Progress is able to affect the reader by shaping his or her pre-cognitive perception of the world and how the reader practically feels his or her way through it. Smith asserts that people engage with the world emotionally and intentionally on a pre-cognitive level so that, before people act or make a decision, they already have an array of unthought assumptions about themselves and the world. As Smith explains, "perception and evaluation are inextricably intertwined: as soon as I take in a scene, before I 'think' about it, I've already evaluated it on the basis of predispositions I bring to the situation" (*Imagining* 34). These pre-cognitive assumptions determine what an individual perceives can or should be done. Smith explains how stories are instrumental in forming these predispositions or assumptions: "Stories are means of 'emotional prefocusing' that shapes our tacit 'take' on the world. And they do so because narrative operates on an affective register—what Merleau-Ponty calls 'antepredicative' know-how, a knowing without thinking that is processed by the body, as it were" (38). Thus, a story engages the heart through an embodied vision of the world; through the imagination, the world is re-perceived. By imbibing stories, people gain a "sense" of how the world is and how they fit into it (Smith 108-10). Just like we get a sense of the way things are in life by experiencing it—"I'm just that kind of unlucky" or "It's one of those days"—stories give us a sense of the world through a vicarious experience of a world. Before a reader thinks about what a story means, it is already acting on the reader's perceptions through the imagination to the emotions so that a story can bring the reader to boredom or laughter or tears before he or she can consider the ideas or beliefs of the text. In this way, by shaping the reader's pre-cognitive sense of the world, *The Pilgrim's Progress* affects the reader's desires and actions.

To examine how Bunyan's story affects the reader in this way involves looking for the

implicit vision of the good life in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Smith argues that a liturgical analysis of culture involves asking, "What vision of human flourishing is implicit in this or that practice? What does the good life look like as embedded in cultural rituals? What sort of person will I become after being immersed in this or that cultural liturgy?" (*Desiring* 89). Of course, *The Pilgrim's Progress* explicitly presents heaven as the good life and claims that the reader should follow Christ to receive that vision of the good life, but these explicit articulations of the book's vision of the world are received cognitively and consciously rather than affectively and preconsciously. Though I will argue that the implicit and explicit visions of the good life in *The Pilgrim's Progress* are congruous, they are not necessary the same. Many advertisements explicitly envision the good life as one of familial connection but implicitly envision it as one of consumerism through the story it tells of how consumerism enables that family connection. Regardless of our cognitive recognition and subsequent affirmation or rejection of that implicit vision of the good life, the story with its implicit vision sticks with us in a way that an explicit articulation of truth or belief does not. While *The Pilgrim's Progress* does make explicit claims about what constitutes the good life and how it is attained, the story carries this vision of the world implicitly so that the reader who is engaged by the story is affected by its implicit vision regardless of his or her conscious, cognitive stance toward the book's explicit message.

The questions that Smith raises for a liturgical analysis are specifically directed at cultural practices and I will be asking them of a very narrow practice: an imaginative, immersive reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* that involves engaging and receiving it for its story. While the text is not always conducive to this practice of reading, and the reading practice expected by the text is considerably more complex than just a naïve, imaginative reading, the story is at the center of the reading experience, so imaginatively receiving that story is part of the practice of

reading *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The practice of reading I am examining is one described and examined by Cassandra Falke in *The Phenomenology of Love and Reading*: “Reading literature, I argue, unfolds with the singularity of an act of love, and like an act of love requires us to yield our intention” (3). She explains this kind of reading further:

Reading creates in us new ways of loving, and thus new ways of being. Or it can. In order for a book to work on us this way, we have to open ourselves up to an intentionality and signifying practice that originates outside of our own “egological sphere” (EP 102).

Because we cannot anticipate the way we will be changed by an event of reading, we commit ourselves first to the act of surrender itself and, through our surrender of our own intentionality, find ourselves remade. (Falke 3)

For a reader's desires and actions to be affected by *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the reader must be immersed in the act of reading, allowing his or her intentionality to be directed by the narrative. Otherwise, the reader of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is able to read its narrative at an experiential distance, such as in a reading that prioritizes identifying theological doctrines, and reading in such ways can diminish and even neutralize the affective power of the literature because a non-immersive reading is a different reading practice that contains its own story and implicit vision of the good life that may conflict with those of the story being read.

Necessarily, *The Pilgrim's Progress* will not be experienced by all readers in the same way, even through an immersive reading; however, this analysis is not concerned with the reader's response to the story but the affective influence the story has on the reader's imaginary. An implicit vision of the good life and the self are embedded in *The Pilgrim's Progress*; it carries with it an imaginary, “a kind of noncognitive *understanding*” (Smith *Desiring* 65), that interacts with the reader's own imaginary. The particular ways in which *The Pilgrim's Progress*

shapes a reader will depend on the existing imaginary of the reader and its similarities and differences to the text's imaginary, but, regardless of the reader's particular imaginary, Bunyan's book has a stable imaginary toward which the narrative draws the reader. This examination seeks to account for the imaginary of *The Pilgrim's Progress* that would be at operation on the reader regardless of the reader's pre-existing imaginary. It should be noted also that part of the premise of this theoretical model is that, even if the reader's perceptual imaginary and the text's were somehow identical, the text would nevertheless be operating on the reader to strengthen and reinforce the existing imaginary. Not every immersive reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* will be experienced in the same way, but it will influence every reader to re-perceive the world and themselves on a pre-cognitive level.

Looking at *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the lens of Smith's liturgical pedagogy reveals that Bunyan's story does, in a sense, make a traveler of the reader by making every experience of life feel like it is part of a spiritual journey so that every action leads toward or away from the most beautiful and desirable destination, heaven. In chapter one, I will argue that the allegorical form can engage the reader's imagination with an embodied experience that leads to the perception of transcendent significance in ordinary experience. Chapter two explores how *The Pilgrim's Progress* shapes the reader's self-identity into that of the lifelong traveler seeking a new residence, or vision of the good life, and how other people influence the journey. Finally, chapter three examines how the locations along Christian's journey familiarize the reader with the spiritual journey and rehearse the practices that shape the reader's desire for heaven.

Chapter 1: “It Chaulketh out before Thine Eyes”: Enchanting Ordinary Experience

As an imaginative experience, *The Pilgrim's Progress* begins in a rather unusual manner:

“As I walk’d through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Denn; And I laid me down that place to sleep: And as I slept I dreamed a Dream” (Bunyan 10). The narrator’s actions—walking, lying down to sleep, and dreaming—could be nonfigurative so that dream is what brings the reader into the allegory. Or is it? The phrase, “the wilderness of this world,” does not suggest a physical location but a metaphor, and Bunyan glosses the “Denn” as “The Gaol.” Already, the story has brought the reader into an allegory, in which the physical places and actions described point to, or mean, something other than what they seem on the surface. What the reader experiences on the surface—the walking through a wilderness, lying down in a den, and dreaming—are seemingly at odds with what is actually meant. This “doubleness” of meaning between the literal meaning of the image and story and the “hidden” allegorical meaning seems to encourage a cognitive reading of the allegory as a puzzle to be solved for hidden truths. While there is merit to that cognitive approach, and Bunyan encourages it through the marginal notes that identify the meanings of certain images and events, the story and images of the allegory affect the reader's imagination before they can be thought about like a riddle because the reader conjures the images to the imagination before reflecting upon them. Rather, the allegory shapes the reader’s affections and precognitive construal of the world by providing to the reader’s imagination a sensory experience of those “hidden” meanings. Thus, *The Pilgrim's Progress* offers an embodied experience through the imagination that leads the reader to re-perceive ordinary experience as charged with transcendent significance.

The Imagined Experience of *The Pilgrim's Progress*

A story like *The Pilgrim's Progress* is able to shape a reader’s desires and actions

because the imagination affects the body's sense of the world, which affects the heart's desires and the actions that proceed from them. Stories can affect the body through the imagination because the imagination is the faculty by which bodily sense perceptions are experienced by a person even when there is no external, physical cause for those sensations. Imagining what a duck looks like brings to the sense faculty of sight the image of a duck so that one "sees" a duck with one's "the mind's eye." Though this imagined sight of the duck is not caused by external sensory input, it is still sensed by the body as if it were perceived in the flesh, which Falke defines as "the sensing body, through which we find the shape of who we are and experience life" (145). The imagination can present to "the sensing body" the sight (or sound or smell, etc.) of a duck even when no duck is physically present to be seen, resulting in a kind of duality of sensory experiences: outwardly sensing one thing and imaginatively sensing another. Thus, when a story employs the reader's imagination, the reader experiences through the body's senses the people, places, and events described.

The imagination is not, however, only used consciously but is constantly construing a person's perception of the world. Smith argues that the imagination should be understood as an "everyday capacity" (*Imagining* 18) operating in the background of daily life, "a quasi-faculty whereby we construe the world on a precognitive level, on a register that is fundamentally *aesthetic* precisely because it is so closely tied to the *body*" (17). The imagination is therefore continuously bringing a set of sense perceptions to be in or alongside current sense perceptions. Smith borrows the term "social imaginary" from Charles Taylor and refers to this continuous set of sense perceptions as the imaginary: "The imaginary is more a kind of noncognitive *understanding* than a cognitive *knowledge* or set of beliefs. . . . This 'understanding' is more on the order of know-how than propositional knowledge, more on the order of the *imagination* than

intellect” (*Desiring* 65-66). The imaginary precedes every cognitive and conscious interaction with the world. Thus, the imagination is constantly at work, even when not consciously engaged.

Literature such as *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is able to engage the imagination through the medium of language because words are directly and necessarily linked with the imagination’s capacity to bring to the senses that which is not sensibly present. Cognitive theories of language that assert a separation between a word and what it signifies underestimate the power and reality of experiential association. Though the word “duck” is not actually or existentially linked to the creature, the word is, for native English speakers, so closely associated with the creature that they are experientially indistinguishable. The word does not merely indicate to a person a definition or set of qualities but prompts sensory interaction with the thing that is not sensibly present by conjuring to his or her imagination an irreducibly complex tapestry of particular experiences comprised of sensations (images, sounds, etc.), impressions, emotions, stories, and so forth; thus, the word “duck” can bring to the present perception those sensory experiences that the person associates with a duck. When a person hears words with which he or she has associated experiences (and he or she receive them as words, not merely sounds), the words necessarily bring to the imagination their referents and the associated experiences. Words cause the sense perceptions to perceive that which is not physically, sensibly present.

Because the imagination is embodied, even abstract words, such as “faith” or “salvation,” are still ultimately connected to embodied experiences, even if that embodied experience is several steps removed. As Smith articulates, “the imagination is a kind of midlevel organizing or synthesizing faculty” (*Imagining* 18). For example, we do not directly perceive the seasons, but we perceive the out workings of the seasons and over time we perceive a pattern that we identify as the seasons. We perceive summer through the gestalt of bodily experiences of summer—the

rising of temperature, the greening of trees, the buzzing of bees in the clover—these images repeated over time through the imagination give rise to our perception of summer as a thing of its own, apart from the experiences that constitute it. Though “summer” is abstract, it is based nonetheless in embodied experiences across time. Thus, when someone attends to even an abstract word like “summer,” the word precognitively turns his or her imagination toward the sense perceptions associated with that word.¹

Because words are experiential, engaging a person’s senses through the imagination, the reading of a story, like *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, is an experience that adds to a person’s total life experiences that shape his or her imaginary. While a single word such as “burden” might evoke a panoply of embodied associations, more words can clarify and focus that image—with increased clarity and focus comes increased experiential intensity of the imagined object. For example, the burden on Christian’s back is a “great burden” that “*lieth hard upon [him]*” (10) so much so that he tells Evangelist, “I fear that this burden that is upon my back, will sink me lower then the Grave” (11). Though the reader of today may not have the same associations with burdens as Bunyan’s contemporary, the reader nonetheless gets the sense that it is immense and heavy. The imagined object can thus be the object of experience as if it were a physical object. Story, then, is when the imagination experiences these objects as if interacting with them and perceiving them

¹ An obvious implication of language in relation to the imagination is that it has a uniquely subjective component—not everyone will come to imagine the same experiences from the same words. Many associations will be personal or cultural in nature rather than universal, so the particular way in which a text shapes the imaginary of a reader or group of readers will vary. The more vivid and precise the language for directing the imagination, the more common the experience can be between readers. The imaginative experience of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is necessarily different for readers today from the experience it gave Bunyan’s contemporaries because certain words and images held experiential associations and thus precognitive meanings that contemporary readers no longer have as part of their imaginaries. This shift presents a difficulty in examining *The Pilgrim’s Progress* since some images probably had an intuitive significance for his readers that we lack. Christian’s burden, for example, might have had an intuitive significance that is beyond us now. Supposing we came to understand, cognitively, an affective association that Bunyan’s contemporaries had with burdens, it will not affect our imaginaries in the same way. Nevertheless, though some words and images in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* may have lost or shifted affective meaning, together they focus readers’ imaginations enough to constitute a shared experience that shapes the imaginary in a similar direction.

change over time so that the objects are perceived as part of an event. As Falke explains, “For phenomenologists, the event of reading takes its place beside other events. Consequently, a phenomenological view of reading allows for the possibility that books can change us by adding to our experience rather than merely representing possible experiences to us” (69). With Christian, the reader experiences “his burden loosed from off his Shoulders, and fell from off his back; and began to tumble; and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulcher, where it fell in, and I saw it no more” (37). The heavy burden, which the reader first perceives as an object, is later experienced in an event that adds to the reader’s experiences. Christian’s journey in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* thereby becomes one of the many experiences that constitute the reader’s imaginary, his or her precognitive orientation toward the world.

By engaging the imagination through its story, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* influences the reader’s precognitive imaginary. The sense perceptions that the story evokes provide the reader with an imagined experience that adds on to and interacts with the reader’s existing experiences, developing his or her imaginary. Because the influence is to the imaginary, which operates on a precognitive level, the reader does not need to consciously think of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in order to have his or her perception of the world partially shaped by it.

By influencing this precognitive sense of the world, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* shapes the reader’s desires and actions by giving him or her a vision of the good life, which Smith defines as “the ideal picture of human flourishing” (*Desiring* 26). Actions arise from the heart’s intention toward an object, from a love for something or someone. The imagination characterizes a person, object, or situation as either desirable or reprehensible to the body: if the imagination depicts one of these as satisfying a need, whether physical or spiritual, or pleasing, then the heart will be inclined to obtain, keep, and enjoy that which is depicted in this way; if the imagination depicts

the person, object, or situation as detracting from a need, painful, or destructive, then the heart will be inclined away from it out of fear or loathing. The things that are imagined as desirable and reprehensible together constitute a vision of the good life, for the vision of the good life encapsulates both what it includes as well as what it excludes. The central conflict in *The Pilgrim's Progress* arises from visions of the good life that compete with the vision of the good life offered in the Celestial City. For example, when Worldly-wiseman confronts Christian, he paints for him a picture of the good life that includes his family, decent neighbors, and an affordable, comfortable lifestyle and that excludes the burden on Christian's back through Legality and the difficulties of the way to the Celestial City. Christian finds this vision of the good life appealing, so he strays from the way to reach Morality; the vision shapes his desires and leads to his action. Christian is only able to continue on the way to the Celestial City, when Evangelist corrects the vision painted by Worldly-wiseman by showing that Legality is not able to remove Christian's burden and that the good life of Morality excludes eternal life, the very thing that Christian set out from Destruction to obtain. By engaging Christian's imagination, and through him the reader, Evangelist construes Morality as a lacking and ultimately undesirable vision of the good life. In this way, *The Pilgrim's Progress* uses the imagination to shape the desires of the heart and the actions that proceed from it by construing the world around it as either constituting or detracting from the good life.

Sensory Perception in Allegory

One challenge to reading *The Pilgrim's Progress* as an imagined experience is that it is an allegory, which, as a form, seems to separate the imagined experience evoked by the words from the meaning of the allegory. The meaning of allegory is often perceived as lying beneath the surface of the images and story so that they are meaningful only insofar as they explain or

illustrate some idea or doctrine. As Bunyan writes in his “Apology” and has been quoted many times in this regard, “*My dark and cloudy words they do but hold / The Truth, as Cabinets inclose the Gold*” (6); he writes as if his story and images *only* served as containers for doctrine, and some people approach *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in this way. Allegory does seem to invite a particularly cognitive approach in which the images are replaced, like in a cryptograph, with that idea to which they point, setting the story elements and what they represent in opposition to each other: the reader either experiences the story or interprets it for its truth. Consider Angus Fletcher’s explanation in *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*: “The whole point of allegory is that it does not *need* to be read exegetically; it often has a literal level that makes good enough sense all by itself. But somehow this literal surface suggests a peculiar doubleness of intention, and while it can, as it were, get along without interpretation, it becomes much richer and more interesting if given interpretation” (7). In Fletcher’s view, though an allegory can be read naively to receive an imagined experience, such a reading fails to gain the full meaning of the text. In short, allegory as a mode is effectively Plato’s cave—the images and events are but shadows in the cave that might prompt the reader to leave the cave. The narrative itself holds no reality except as it points to another. In this view, the images and events of an allegory are merely vehicles to reach the other meaning rather than an expression of that other meaning.

While some allegories may be intended for such a purely cognitive engagement, allegory can be as much of an embodied experience through the imagination as any other form of story, for allegory is the conjuring of physical images and events to parallel or represent something that is not immediately sensibly experiential, such as the spiritual realities and theological doctrines of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. To take again as an example the seasons, which are indirectly experienced through the imagination, the Greek myth of Hades’ abduction of Persephone

allegorically relates the cycle of the seasons through a more tangible narrative of human interaction. As a form, allegory makes experiential and felt what would otherwise be only abstractly expressed—that is, through terms that have only a secondary existence experientially to sensibly immediate images and events. In an allegory, the represented ideas, such as the seasons or the Christian spiritual life, are experientially real because the imagined world is experientially real. Thus, the narrative and images of allegory are not merely pointing the reader away from the story and images to something else but are in themselves meant to be the direct experience of those other abstract realities.

The Pilgrim's Progress blurs the distinction between literal and allegorical to provide an embodied experience of the Christian spiritual life. Christian's entrance through the Wicket-gate, for example, has the literal meaning of a man passing through a gate and the allegorical meaning of an individual converting to the faith. Experientially, these meanings are not separate, for a literal reading of the scene leads to an experience of the allegorical meaning. Through the allegorical scene, the reader can experience a spiritual reality as an imagined event and thereby absorb it into his or her imaginary as if it were a lived experience; the imagined scene is true to the real spiritual experience. As Matthias Bauer writes, "The way and race are not an allegory, they are real. The saints are actually on the move, walking through the wilderness of this world, and this actual journey is simultaneously an antitype of Exodus and a spiritual journey to God" (198). Bauer says that the journey depicted is not an allegory, which I take to be distinguishing Bunyan's imagery and narrative from the notion that they are merely shadows of some other reality or "higher truth." That is, the distinction between the allegorical image, a journey, and the allegorical meaning, the Christian life, is not so clear-cut as a more cognitive approach to allegory would assert.

This blurring between the literal and allegorical is part of what gives *The Pilgrim's Progress* its force as an experience for the imagination. Some scenes are more evidently allegorical in their form and content, such as Christian's fight with Apollyon, while most of the dialogs, such as Faithful's conversation with Talkative, seem to lose their allegorical "doubleness," for they could occur just as easily in the immanent world as in the spiritual world. Kaufmann describes this shift as a "tension . . . in Bunyan's aesthetic" resulting in "diverse modes of narration and exposition" (5), but, as odd as it seems for characters to break into theological discourse, there is no break in the allegory. The realistic dialogues work as a continuous part of the allegory because *all of the allegory is real*. The fights with monsters and giants are spiritually real, so dialogues can be spiritually real as well: for the reader, all aspects of the story provide an embodied experience of spiritual reality.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, voices and the words that they say are as much a part of the imagined allegorical world that provides a direct experience of spiritual reality as the landscape that provides its shape and the creatures that inhabit it. A dialog that could occur in the real world is part of the journey, for the voices of Worldly-wiseman, Evangelist, Talkative, etc. shape Christian's success or failure on the journey to the same degree that more concrete obstacles such as steepness or darkness do. David Diamond in "Sinners and 'Standers By'" suggests a specific way that certain dialogs are part of the spiritual journey, arguing that conversations such as Christian has with Faithful and Faithful with Talkative rehearse the vetting process that members would go through to enter a Congregationalist church (2). Though these dialogs may be understood as rehearsing other practices in addition to what Diamond identifies, they are not merely vehicles for conveying theology to the reader but sources of narrative conflict and danger akin to the more evidently dangerous enemies such as Apollyon and Giant Despair. Of course,

the perceived threat of a Worldly-wiseman or a Talkative is much lower than an Apollyon or a Giant Despair because the former just seem like other people while the latter are brutal monsters, but they share a role in the narrative as threats to Christian's progress to the Celestial City, leading the reader to perceive ordinary people as part of the same spiritual conflict.

Thus, the dialogs are experientially continuous with the more overtly allegorical passages of the story so that the dialogs present a comparable experiential weight. Considered by itself, the conversation with Talkative, for example, reads plainly as a discussion on theological doctrine, but the preceding scenes ease the reader into this new mode of narrative. A few scenes earlier is the more overtly allegorical trek through the Valley of the Shadow, in which voices and the words they say impact Christian's struggle through the darkness. As the dreamer describes, "one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stept up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind" (65). As part of the envisioned experience of the Valley of Shadow, the demonic voice coming from the surrounding darkness presents itself as an allegorical experience of some spiritual reality. The next voice he hears, which becomes part of the embodied experience of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, is that of Faithful reciting Psalm 23.4. Faithful's voice is both of physical reality to Christian—a voice that Christian can hear from a person whom Christian can meet—and of spiritual reality to the reader, for it depicts the spiritual experience of comfort received by the words of Scripture and fellow Christians. In the darkness, these voices are significant not only for the content of their words but for their physical auditory presence to Christian as obstacle and aid respectively. When the reader leaves the Valley of the Shadow of Death with Christian, voices, especially Faithful's, are thereby construed as having a practical impact on the imagined experience of the journey, so, when the characters converse later, the voices that

engage in dialog still present an interaction that can shape the outcome of the journey. Just after leaving the Valley of Shadow, Christian's dialog with Faithful is grounded in events of the allegorical world, namely Faithful's journey, and the reflection on personal narrative serves as the basis for traveling companionship, becoming part of the journey itself through the act of traveling with someone to the Celestial City. Conversely, Christian articulates the very real danger that discussion with Talkative presents besides doctrinal misunderstanding: "I am of opinion, that he has, by his wicked life, caused many to stumble and fall; and will be, if God prevent not, the ruine of many more" (77). In the experience of the story, dialog is never "just talk"² however ordinary it may feel.

Enchanting the Ordinary

Because the conversations are experientially continuous with the rest of the allegory, the reader is not jolted out of the experience when shifting from more fantastic scenes to dialogue and vice versa, so the whole story more easily enters the reader's imaginary as a lived experience. The conversations between characters that feel as if they could occur in real-world experience ground the reader in the events of the story—that is, the imagined experience of a conversation with Talkative could be or perhaps has been already a lived experience for the reader. The story's conversations feel familiar and ordinary even as they feel, within the context of the story, continuous with and as dramatically significant as the more fantastic events, which are unfamiliar to the reader insofar as the reader has never been in an actual, physical sword fight with a demon or been locked in an actual, physical dungeon by a giant. Because of the experiential continuity, the reader is able to more easily identify his or her ordinary experience

² This is not to be confused with the theological point made by Talkative's character that right Christian discipleship is not only defined by confession of faith, "talk," but obedience as well; rather, conversation and "talk" are inextricably linked to embodied living and cannot be considered in isolation as if apart from intention and action. Conversation *does* things and *is* an action though it is not a sufficient action for salvation as Talkative indicates.

with the fantastic events. The reader does not perceive Christian's fight with Apollyon, for example, as the fight of someone else—a hero to be respected and emulated but whose actions might be altogether other; rather, the reader perceives that the fight might someday be or perhaps has been already his or her own fight. The fantastic elements are received into the imaginary not as fantastic or unreal, as belonging to another world, but as part of ordinary experience—aspects of life that would seem mundane are construed as fantastic.

This construal of seemingly mundane aspects as fantastic leads to a partial re-enchantment of the world in the reader's imaginary. To be more precise, *The Pilgrim's Progress* resists aspects of the secularization process that Charles Taylor describes in *A Secular Age*, specifically the growing disenchantment of the world and the perceived divide between the transcendent and the immanent. Bunyan's allegory brings the transcendent into ordinary experience through the genre of knightly romance and re-envisioning knightly romance as an experience of personal, spiritual life. The allegory draws on elements of the genre of knightly romance, such as questing through perilous regions to find a sacred place and fighting monsters, and, by drawing on this more fantastic genre of literature, the story evokes an enchanted imaginary in which the cosmos is inhabited by spiritual forces that affect physical reality. This brings forward the imaginary of the cosmos, rather than "the modern neutral universe" (Taylor 29), in which all aspects of existence are part of something transcendent, a cosmic struggle of right and wrong. In those knightly romances, the world is filled with evil that takes on the form of demons and giants and monsters—there are spiritual forces at work in the world affecting nature itself. *The Pilgrim's Progress* does not address if spirits affect the world physically but envisions them at work in the ordinary human activity, specifically in struggles with sin: doing the right thing on an ordinary basis is where the evil forces of this world are confronted and have

a real presence. Whereas a secular imaginary supposes that a cosmic neutrality can and does exist in certain areas of life, in certain activities, so that the immanent can be experienced without the presence of transcendence or spirituality—as Taylor articulates, in the secular world “a clear line between the physical and the moral” has been drawn (40)—*The Pilgrim’s Progress* rejects this possibility for cosmic neutrality and the division between physical and moral: all people and their actions are characterized as participating in a transcendently charged cosmos, and the elements of knightly romance allow for that cosmos to be felt. The allegory thereby pierces the imaginary divide that has been erected between immanence and transcendence to show that they do influence each other on a level of human existence, even if the inter-influence envisioned by the story is not as all-encompassing as the enchantment of pre-secular society.

The allegory envisions the self as open to a kind of cosmic vulnerability, for there are forces at work in the world to attack Christian’s attainment of eternity. Some of these forces are demonic and assault Christian through his desires. For example, the demon whispering blasphemies in Christian’s ear presents an external force threatening his progress, even though Christian supposes the blasphemies to have an internal source. This particular demonic force also illustrates Taylor’s idea that the distinction between external and internal forces were not easily distinguished in an enchanted imaginary: “the inside is no longer just inside; it is also outside. That is, emotions which are in the very depths of human life exist in a space which takes us beyond ourselves, which is porous to some outside power, a person-like power” (36). In this way, the self that is envisioned by *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is more akin to the vulnerable and porous self of the enchanted pre-secular world than the buffered self of secularity. Taylor explains that the buffered self “is the agent who no longer fears demons, spirits, magic forces. More radically, these no longer impinge; they don’t exist for him; whatever threat or other

meaning they proffer doesn't 'get to' him. Now the disengaged rational agent carries out an analogous operation on desire" (135). *The Pilgrim's Progress* does not present a buffered self in this manner, for these spiritual forces are presented as having a profound impact on the self—in fact, they are depicted as having the most viscerally serious threat to the person as in the fight with Apollyon and the imprisonment by Giant Despair. *The Pilgrim's Progress* still envisions a porous self in so far as it is vulnerable to and affected by spiritual forces at work in the cosmos.

The vulnerability envisioned by *The Pilgrim's Progress* takes a significant turn from the pre-secular world as Taylor describes it, for the self is more individualistic. Unlike the porous self of the pre-secular imaginary partakes of a tangible social order, namely the Church, that stands in opposition to the spiritual forces of evil and running counter to them was dangerous (Taylor 42-43), social orders, in the allegory's imaginary, do not have the same kind of tangible existence. The church is not an entity of its own but an experience, and institutional and societal religion that take form in the allegorical world are enemies. For example, Pope is a wicked giant found in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Worldly-wiseman's vision of civil religion leads Christian astray, and Faithful is executed in Vanity Fair because, as the judge says, "he disputeth against our Religion" (94). The church is not known "bodily" in the same way it was in the presecular imaginary. Cosmic safety is found only in God whose presence can be known through fellowship with genuine pilgrims (members of the true church) as is illustrated in the Valley of the Shadow when Christian hears Faithful's voice: "For that he perceived, God was with them, though in that dark and dismal state" (65). Though God's presence and thus cosmic safety may be felt in the presence of fellow Christians, recognizing them is no easy or intuitive task; as Diamond notes, "the task of assigning would-be pilgrims to prescribed genera [of genuine or nominal Christian] proves surprisingly difficult for Christian, Christiana, and their peers" (2). In

this way, the presence of the transcendent God is set at a remove from embodied experience even as the world becomes an even more cosmically uncertain and dangerous place.

While this extended cosmic uncertainty and vulnerability lays the groundwork for the buffered self of secularity, *The Pilgrim's Progress* does not imagine the self as having the capacity to shape the surrounding moral landscape. Taylor explains that "it took more than disenchantment to produce the buffered self; it was also necessary to have confidence in our own powers of moral ordering" (27). This confidence in humanity's power to enact moral order takes the form of "civility," which James K. A. Smith, summarizing Taylor, describes as "a concern to *manage* our passions and social life. Civility becomes a sort of naturalized, secularized sanctification" (*How (Not) to Be Secular* 43). This kind of self-willed morality is precisely the kind of civil religion to which Bunyan's allegory objects; more importantly, humanity's lack of control over the transcendent moral landscape is essential to the allegory's central image: the road. The road, which is the way to the Celestial City, exists outside of the self and cannot be shaped by human will; rather, it has its own order that it impinges on pilgrims and that shapes them as liturgies do to receive its implicit vision of the good life, the Celestial City. Moreover, deviation from that order cannot lead to the same end: Formalist and Hypocrisie use their own ingenuity first to climb over the wall rather than enter through the gate and then to go around the hill to find the road on the other side but are lost; Ignorance also approaches the road in his own way to his doom. The road has in its nature a way that it must be traveled and places through which it travels that impinge on the self from the outside; put another way, the road has a meaning that exists outside the self, meshing with Taylor's view of meaning in the enchanted world: "in the enchanted world, the meaning exists already outside of us, prior to contact; it can take us over, we can fall into its field of force. It comes on us from the outside" (34). Bunyan's

allegory envisions meaning and transcendent experience as impinging on the self from the outside. The reader absorbs this vision into his or her imaginary by experiencing the road and its transcendent meaning through Christian's journey.

In this imaginary, however, the locus of that meaning and transcendent experience has shifted from residing in physical entities and places (Taylor 11-13) to events and experiences. The shift moves the presence and reality of transcendence from what is surely concrete—people, creatures, objects, places—to what is somewhat abstract—the actions, thoughts, feelings, desires of human beings. The Lord's Supper illustrates this shift in the imaginary: in the Roman Catholic understanding of the Lord's Supper, the physical materials of the bread and the wine are themselves charged with transcendent, spiritual significance; by contrast, in Bunyan's Calvinist imaginary, it is not the bread and the wine that are charged with transcendent, spiritual significance but the act of partaking in the Lord's Supper. That which is spiritual and eternal is not immediately perceivable through the senses in Bunyan's imaginary, for he takes the scripture verse, "the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (*English Standard Version*, 2 Cor. 4.18b) to mean that immanent physical people, creatures, objects, and places are only temporary and without eternal, transcendent meaning. Thus, in this imaginary, only what cannot be seen (i.e. sensibly perceived) has transcendent meaning—only that which the mind perceives and which physically manifests only through action. By giving form to it through the imagination, the allegory shows the reader what is unseen: the eternal, transcendent meaning of activity in the world.

The allegory of *The Pilgrim's Progress* enchants ordinary practices in the Christian life by offering an imagined experience of the Spiritual reality at work; the practice is re-perceived as not something mundane but quite powerful and profound, even magical. For example, in Part II,

the shepherds give Mercy a mirror that represents the Bible. The description of the mirror and its ability echoes the description that might be given to a magical item in a knightly romance:

Now the Glass was one of a thousand. It would present a man, one way, with his own Feature exactly, and turn it but an other way, and it would shew one the very Face and Similitude of the Prince of Pilgrims himself. Yea I have talked with them that can tell, and they have said, that they have seen the very Crown of Thorns upon his Head, by looking in that Glass, they have therein also seen the holes in his Hands, in his Feet, and his Side. (268)

The dreamer not only describes its unusual ability and how it may be used as a magic item but he does so with an air of mystery, using phrases like “one of a thousand,” suggesting its rarity, and “I have talked with them that can tell,” evoking the wonder-sparking uncertainty of hearsay. This mirror re-envisioning the act of reading the Bible as an activity touched by the supernatural in which the reader is able to see across time and space—it is no longer the seemingly mundane act of reading a book but a transcendent experience. In this way, the allegory allows the reader to experience the transcendent, spiritual reality of ordinary experiences.

By showing the transcendent meaning of activity, *The Pilgrim's Progress* gives the reader the sense that no area of life can be separate from the transcendent, counter to the rising secular imaginary that perceives certain activities as separate from and having no part in the transcendent, existing only immanently. Though Vanity Fair is, as Boscaljon describes, “a cultural place whose meaning is to lack a spiritual depth” (676), it is nevertheless transcendent experience. The avoidance of transcendence is not without transcendent meaning. Vanity Fair envisions the spiritual experience of interacting with the deliberately non-spiritual and worldly; it envisions the non-physical and transcendent experience of people and things in the world that

reject, exclude, or commodify the non-physical and transcendent. Vanity Fair as a purely secular and immanent affair was crafted by spiritual entities to ensnare pilgrims on the road to the Celestial City: “Almost five thousand years ago . . . *Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion*, with their Companions, perceiving by the path that the Pilgrims made, that their way to the City lay through *this Town of Vanity*, they contrived here to set up a Fair; a Fair wherein should be sold of *all sorts of Vanity*, and that it should last all the year long” (85-86). The notion that it is immanence without transcendence is an illusion, a meaningless vanity, for the secular world is made an obstacle on the transcendent road to reach the Celestial City.

The Pilgrim's Progress envisions this transcendent, spiritual reality to be ultimately desirable, and the allegory gives the sense that it is real and present in ordinary activity through an imagined experience. However, because in the imaginary of *The Pilgrim's Progress* actions and events are the point of interpenetration between the physical and the spiritual, the imagination is necessarily part of the experience of the transcendent. Thus, words and the imagination are necessary to experience transcendence: physical experience cannot be a transcendent experience without the imagination. In this imaginary, physical experience does not allow for the possibility of directly experiencing the eternal—yet—because the eternal is inaccessible to the senses except through the imagination. For the direct, physical—immanent—experience of the transcendent, a person needs to cross the River of Death and be united with Christ in heaven where the immanent and transcendent become reunited in perfection. That is partly why actions have eternal or transcendent meaning: they influence a person's ability to partake of the interpenetration of transcendence and immanence that comes from being reunited with God in heaven. Moreover, the sense that ordinary activities and experiences such as conversation and reading Scripture are charged with a transcendence that is just out of reach

experientially instills in the immersed reader the desire to know that transcendence fully.

Chapter 2: “This Book will make a Travailer of thee”: Perceiving People as Pilgrims toward
Their Desires

The allegorical form of *The Pilgrim's Progress* influences the reader's imaginary to have the precognitive sense that ordinary experience is charged with transcendent, spiritual reality so that even the most mundane activities and experiences affect the ultimate attainment of the immanent experience of transcendent meaning as envisioned in the Celestial City. The reader experiences the attainment of transcendence through the story of Christian's journey, which influences the reader's actions in the world, for, as Smith argues, a person's actions are shaped by the sense of what kind of story he or she is a part of (*Imagining* 108) and what role or character he or she is playing in that story (127). The character of Christian provides for the reader a sense of self, for with him the story unfolds; through the imagination, Christian's journey becomes the reader's experience. *The Pilgrim's Progress* envisions the self as a lifelong traveler who seeks to obtain residence in a vision of the good life and whose journey is shaped by other people, including those who fulfill certain roles in the cosmic order and those with whom the journey may be taken together.

Envisioning the Self as Traveler

In his “Apology,” Bunyan claims, “*This Book will make a Travailer of thee*” (l. 207), so in the imaginary of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are two contrasting narrative roles, or character types, that serve as visions of the self: resident and traveler. Before Christian embarks on pilgrimage, he is a resident of Destruction along with other characters such as Obstinate, Pliable, and, in Part I, his family. The vision of the resident is of someone at home and content with the way things are: his or her way of life, behavior, experiences, possessions, and so forth. In short, the resident feels as though his or her current life is the good life because his or her purpose for

existing is being fulfilled by that life. Obstinate, for example, seems content to remain in Destruction, which he feels to be the good life, based on his reaction to the idea of leaving: “*What! said Obstinate, and leave our Friends, and our Comforts behind us!*” (13). The habits of the resident are to enjoy the (perceived) good life, and those habits reinforce that sense that the current life is the good life. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the resident is a vision of the ideal and desired self that is only truly realized in the Celestial City.

The other vision of the self in Bunyan’s allegory is the traveler. Unlike the resident, the traveler lacks a residence and feels this lack of the good life; the traveler feels that his or her current life is not a full expression of the good life and that it is to be found elsewhere—that ultimate fulfillment of his or her purpose must still be found. The traveler’s habits are to seek and obtain the good life in order to become a resident; indeed, those habits shape the traveler’s vision of the good life to be obtained as well as shape the traveler into the kind of person who can be a resident in the envisioned good life. To be a traveler means feeling that one does not currently have the good life, but that it is yet to be attained. Thus, in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the self is envisioned as either a resident of a vision of the good life, content with the way life is, or currently a traveler not content with the current state of life, traveling to attain a new residence where the good life may be enjoyed. Of these two visions of the self, resident and traveler, the story envisions the traveler as the truer vision so that the reader is inclined on a precognitive level to view him or herself as a traveler.

Absorbing the traveler’s identity into the imaginary means gaining a clearer feel for the importance of one’s desires, habits, and practices toward attaining one’s vision of the good life, or *telos*, for these aspects of one’s identity are depicted through the pilgrimage on the road. Christian and other pilgrims whom he encounters are envisioned according to their relationship

with the road: why they are traveling and how they conduct their journey. Both of these aspects parallel components of James K. A. Smith's explanation of people as teleological creatures: 1) a character's reason for traveling is the character's *telos*, "a specific vision of the good life . . . of what we think human flourishing looks like" (Smith *Desiring* 52); 2) how a character conducts the journey parallels habits that Smith calls "the fulcrum of desire" that "'turns' our heart, our love, such that it is predisposed to be aimed in certain directions" (56). Together, these aspects—*telos* and habits—constitute a character's teleological orientation and are central to the sense of what it means to play the part of the traveler: to be a traveler is to have a sense of the destination or purpose of the journey and how one is to reach the destination, the practices that will accomplish that goal. To be a traveler is to live according to a teleological orientation.

Gaining this sense of the self as a teleological creature, as a traveler, means gaining a sense of a traveler's role in the journey and acting as a traveler would act, specifically traveling. Traveling takes work—*is* work, really. Bunyan's word for what the reader becomes is "travailer," curiously highlighting the etymological link between "travels" and "travails," or "works." The traveler works to reach his destination, but, considering Bunyan's ardent rejection of works-based righteousness, what are these "works" in which the traveler engages? These are works as liturgies are "works," specifically "'work[s] of the people' (*leitourgos*)" (Smith *Desiring* 134), so they are traveling liturgies. To be a traveler means to follow these traveling liturgies, the practices of the road, which I will examine at length in chapter three, but more broadly means having certain habits. In the vision of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, working as a traveler, especially to the Celestial City, means having three habits: perceiving the path to the good life, receiving the road as it is, and persevering to the end.

Throughout Christian's journey, the act of traveling is never envisioned as an activity that

can be performed absent-mindedly or inattentively; rather, it is one that requires constant consideration and attention. Regularly, the characters need to reorient themselves to be sure that they are traveling in the correct direction in order to reach the right destination. Worldly-wiseman disorients Christian by giving him a new destination that sends him on a different path, and before Christian is able to travel rightly again he needs to bring his attention back to the correct destination, the Wicket-gate. After that, Christian and his companions do not lose sight of their destination, but they do need to pay careful attention in order to rightly perceive the path that leads to the Celestial City. Often, they are confronted with alternate paths or pitfalls that force them to watch and examine the road to discern where it leads: at the foot of Difficulty are routes around the hill that seemingly still lead to the Celestial City; a mire and a pit are on either side of the road through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; By-path Meadow seems parallel to the road but leads to Giant Despair; the road diverges where Flatterer leads them astray. An integral part of traveling in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is perceiving where a given path leads, so that being a traveler means attending to one's *telos* and to the habits and practices that aim the heart toward or away from that end. To be a successful traveler is to question one's desires and actions and to consider where they will ultimately lead.

In conjunction to perceiving where a certain path leads is the habit of receiving the road as it is. As noted in chapter one, the road to the Celestial City exists outside of and apart from the self, so the traveler does not forge a new path to reach a vision of the good life but must navigate the road in a manner suitable for how the road is at a given point. At the Slow of Dispond, for example, the way through the mire is the steppingstones, so the traveler must walk carefully on them to avoid the mud. These proper ways of navigating the road through certain regions are practices that the traveler receives to follow the road. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, this sense that

the practices of a road are received is true not only of the one way to the Celestial City but of all roads to all destinations. The road that runs past Mt. Sinai must be traveled to reach the village of Morality where Legality lives; even though the vision of life depicted by that road and village are of self-righteousness, of a kind of self-made good life, the road is nonetheless already in existence to be followed, the practices to be received from outside the self. Even Formalist and Hypocrisy follow a received practice for entering the road; as they explain, “what they did they had custom for; and could produce, if need were, Testimony that would witness it, for more than a thousand years” (40). Thus, in the vision of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, to be a traveler is to receive a way of traveling from a source external to the self; only, that way of traveling will be received either from the Lord of the Celestial City—as Christian says, “by the Rule of my Master” (40)—or from some other source. As the brief journeys of Formalist and Hypocrisy make clear, these other roads cannot lead to the successful arrival at the desired destination of the Celestial City. The traveler accepts the road with all its difficulties and dangers as it is and does not seek to change it or to find another way.

In addition, the traveler perseveres to the end. In one sense, this perseverance means continuing on the journey despite the dangers that lie ahead and the difficulties of the current segment of road; even places of rest along the journey are envisioned as part of this perseverance, for they refresh and strengthen Christian for the road ahead. Though in a sense, he is not literally moving forward with his journey at these places of rest, he is not there for the place of rest itself, as if it were a residence and he a temporary resident—in fact, this posture of residence to a place of rest is his failing at the arbor partway up Difficulty; rather, rest is envisioned as an integral part of persevering, of continuing forward to danger and through difficulty. But braving danger, pressing through difficulty, and preparing to do so are only part of

persevering in the role of the traveler; perhaps more significantly, it means traveling for the entire extent of life until death is crossed. In the life of the traveler to the Celestial City, there is no time in his or her life when he or she is not progressing forward along the road to the Celestial City. In this sense, persevering means simply continuing in traveling, which includes the perceiving, receiving, and enduring of the road, until the end.

Bunyan's story makes the reader into a traveler, in part, through the imagined experience of Christian becoming a traveler himself. This begins with him losing his sense that he is a resident of Destruction, enjoying the good life with a home and a family. He is described from the first as "cloathed with Raggs...with his face from his own House...and a great burden upon his back" (10). His posture, turned away from his house, suggests that he is not enjoying the good life—he is not sitting inside his house, enjoying the comforts of a good meal or the company of his family. He seems impoverished being dressed in rags and is weighed down with a burden. Not only is his current experience of his residence not one of the good life, but Christian comes to perceive that anything good he has will soon be lost: "I am for certain informed, that this our City will be burned with fire from Heaven, in which fearful overthrow, both my self, with thee, my Wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruine" (10). He becomes restless, "walk[ing] solitarily in the Fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time" (11). Unlike the resident who perceives the current life as the good life and knows what to do to enjoy it, Christian's cry from the beginning is "*what shall I do?*" (10). Thus, the story opens with the reader experiencing with Christian this lost feeling of residence, inclining the reader to feel the same.

Being a traveler requires direction, which Christian lacks: "he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because, as I perceived, he could not tell which way to

go” (11). Evangelist directs him to the Wicket-gate, which Christian can barely see. Though he lacks a clear vision of where he is going and how he is to get there, his goal of reaching the Wicket-gate initiates him in the pilgrimage toward his ultimate goal, the Celestial City; as Smith describes, “So many of the penultimate decisions, actions, and paths we undertake are implicitly and ultimately aimed at trying to live out the visions of the good life that we love and thus want to pursue” (*Desiring* 54). As Christian takes intermediary steps, his vision of his destination, the Celestial City does become clearer. He reads to Pliable: “There is an endless Kingdom to be Inhabited, and everlasting life to be given us; that we may Inhabit that Kingdom for ever” (15). Throughout the story, Christian’s vision of the kingdom, his *telos*, becomes stronger and clearer as his habits shape that vision of the kingdom in him.

In the imaginary of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, being a traveler is a lifelong identity if the transcendence that charges ordinary experience is to be fully attained. The way is, however, fraught with difficulties and opposing agents that would prompt a person to become a resident again in this life. For example, the Slow of Dispond prompts Pliable to give up traveling and return to being a resident of Destruction. Worldly-wiseman appeals to Christian’s desire to avoid further difficulties by presenting a new residence in Morality, which Christian pursues for a time. The vision presented at the foot of Mt. Sinai and in the rebuke of Evangelist is that these alternate visions of the good life are not worthy of pursuit. Because Destruction and Morality are, early in the narrative, envisioned as residences that fail to ultimately satisfy, especially since they may only be experienced temporarily before death, the self as traveler is envisioned as a lifelong identity. Only the Celestial City is envisioned as a residence to be enjoyed by its residents for the eternity that is sensed through the allegorical form. This gives the reader the sense that any residence obtained before death and the residence to be obtained after death are

mutually exclusive; one's residence is either temporal or eternal. Therefore, the reader feels an impetus forward: lasting, transcendent contentment cannot be found in one's current circumstances, so to ultimately enjoy the good life as a resident is to be a lifelong traveler.

This pursuit of the ultimate as a lifelong traveler to the Celestial City involves an embrace of a vulnerability akin to that of the premodern self. In contrast, residents of this-worldly cities in the allegorical world—Destruction, Morality, Vanity Fair—feel safe and comfortable; perhaps it can be unpleasant from time to time, but it is a life owned and controlled by its residents so that misfortunes can be reversed and improvements executed through effort. As a resident of this world, a person can be buffered against outside influences, but being a resident of the next world, the Celestial City, involves a radical vulnerability (and “healability”) before God, and traveling is the process of surrendering control to God. Thus, the traveler to the Celestial City opens his or her self to dangers and difficulties of the road that cannot be controlled, only responded to and navigated, so the traveler must have confidence in God rather than his or her self. The world through which the self as traveler moves is not empty but filled with spiritual forces that impinge upon the traveler, pushing the self toward or away from the Celestial City. Perceiving these forces means recognizing that one's teleological orientation and progress along the road are shaped by external forces and responding to that influence. Being and acting as a traveler means being vulnerable to and a part of a dynamic interplay of agents shaping the individual's being-in-the-world.

One kind of these outside agents includes those which are experienced only immaterially: spirits and ideas. Some entities with whom Christian interacts, such as shining ones who attend to Christian and demons who harass him, represent the unseen spiritual forces that are at work in the world. These spiritual entities are envisioned as real and at work influencing Christian's

journey as part of an existing cosmic order. Similarly, certain abstract ideas, properties, virtues and so forth, such as Good Will, Shame, and Giant Despair, are given a bodily form and influence the progress of pilgrims on the road. Though these ideas might seem existentially contingent upon human imagination, the allegory envisions them as having a reality external to the individual and exerting influence as part of the cosmic order. These immaterial spiritual forces are more closely tied to particular locations along the road and the spiritual experiences they represent, so their influence will be explored more in chapter three.

The other kind of outside agents influencing the traveler is experienced materially: other people. As Peter Crisp observes in “*The Pilgrim’s Progress: Allegory or novel?*”, most characters or entities with whom Christian interacts are not manifestations of pure spirits or personifications of abstract ideas but personifications of certain sets of people (335). In the allegory, people are envisioned and experienced as two different kinds of characters: 1) characters who embody a particular role in the Christian’s life, which I will refer to as “role-characters”; 2) characters who, like Christian, are either residents or travelers and embody a certain teleological orientation, which I will refer to as “*telos*-characters.” In different ways, these two kinds of people-personifying characters shape Christian’s identity and actions as a traveler and thus shape the reader’s perception and treatment of other people in the world.

Expecting Others to Fulfill Roles in the Cosmic Order

Though role-characters personify sets of people, they do not fit either vision of the self as presented by the story, being neither residents nor travelers; rather they are defined by certain patterns of behavior and a single, fixed function, a *telos* of sorts, in relation to the journey of others. If the world of the allegory is like pervasive sacred space in which is practiced a variety of traveling liturgies, the central of which is the way to the Celestial City, then role-characters

are the liturgical leaders, the people guiding practitioners in the use of the space. Unlike a church sanctuary, this space, which pervades all aspects of life, is filled with guides for different and incompatible “liturgies” or ways. Evangelist is the clearest example of this category, for his character is defined primarily in how he helps Christian on his spiritual journey. Other characters that could be considered manifestations of human roles include Help, Worldly-wiseman, Flatterer, and Great-heart. These characters are defined by what they do rather than what they are: their existence is bound up with a function in the unfolding story of an individual.

Because role-characters perform a function in the journey of the reader as a traveler, they are affectively part of the allegorical landscape, the cosmic forces at work in and around the road: they are an outside influence on the traveler’s ultimate attainment of the good life. They feel almost as integral to the journey as the locations through which the road passes even though they are not tied to any one location. Evangelist, for example, does not follow the linear path of the pilgrims but appears when Christian needs guidance without any apparent regard for any distance traveled and disappears just as suddenly when his work is finished. The reader gets the sense that after Evangelist has left, he will seek out other pilgrims to guide as if he were part of the cosmic order spiritual forces at work in assisting pilgrims to the Celestial City. In contrast, Worldly-wiseman manifests the role of one dispensing the wisdom of the world as part of the spiritual forces that oppose the Lord of the Celestial City. Role-characters in the allegory serve as both persons and integral parts of the cosmic order.

The reader gets the sense that people as role-characters are there for the reader as part of the cosmic order of the journey, either assisting him along the road toward the Celestial City or away from it toward an alternate vision of the good life. These characters present themselves to Christian as guides who know the journey and intend to help him to the good life. When

Evangelist meets Christian, he carefully enquires about Christian's anguish and what he seeks with the attitude of one familiar with and empathetic to Christian's predicament; he speaks as one who personally knows the journey. Unfortunately, Worldly-wiseman also displays a knowledge that wins Christian's trust: "thou art like to meet with in the way which thou goest, Wearisomness, Painfulness, Hunger, Perils, Nakedness, Sword, Lions, Dragons, Darkness; and in a word, death, and what not? These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies" (19). He adds, moreover, "I could direct thee to the obtaining of what thou desirest" (19), suggesting that he intends to help Christian attain the good life. Role-characters seem personally invested in the journey of the traveler, making them feel worthy of trust and respect, even as the roles that they embody seem part of a cosmic order that is much larger than the self. Wherever the role-character would lead the traveler, the role-character seems able and eager to help him or her attain the good life; these characters seem to be there for the traveler.

The reader as traveler is particularly vulnerable to the influence of role-characters because of their apparent trustworthiness, so they present the greatest explicit threat to Christian and his companions. The worst outcome for the traveler comes from leaving the path, and each of Christian's departures from the way occurs because of his decision, which arises from a desire. While monsters like Apollyon present considerable and dramatic challenges to Christian almost to the point of death, it is Worldly-wiseman who succeeds in getting Christian to leave the path and nearly abandon the quest altogether, an outcome worse than death in this story. Flatterer, also a role-character, manages to lead Christian and Hopeful down a wrong path away from the Celestial City. Worldly-wiseman appeals to his desire to remove his burden with ease and regain the comforts of home; Flatterer appeals to his and Hopeful's desire to know the right path. Because Worldly-Wiseman and Flatterer present themselves as friends and guides, their

guidance is readily received. While Apollyon also attempts to appeal to Christian's desire by bribing Christian into turning back, he does so as an enemy with something to gain from Christian's return—a personal motivation that Worldly-wiseman seems to lack. Role-characters present the greatest threat to the traveler precisely because they seem less threatening.

Because role-characters present the greatest threat or help to Christian's journey, correctly perceiving them in others becomes part of the role of the traveler, and the narrative trains the reader to make these perceptions. Christian's downfall comes from failing to perceive Worldly-wiseman as a hindrance to his salvation, seeing him instead as an Evangelist; likewise do Christian and Hopeful misperceive the Flatterer as a righteous guide. Scenes like these envision the danger that comes from failing to rightly perceive, instilling a desire to do so. Moreover, each scene in which Christian is deceived is immediately followed by a character who serves the Lord of the Celestial City to reprove him for being deceived, reminding him that he had the means to avoid deception. Before explaining at length the nature and motives of Worldly-wiseman, Evangelist asks, "Did not I direct thee the way to the little Wicket-gate?" and "How is it then that thou art so quickly turned aside for thou art out of the way?" (22). His questions imply that Christian should not have been so influenced by Worldly-wiseman. In a similar manner, the shining one that rescues Christian and Hopeful from the net of Flatterer reminds them that the Shepherds had given them "a note of direction for the way" (128) and warning of Flatterer, meaning they had what was necessary to rightly perceive the path and Flatterer. These scenes give the reader the sense that the roles of others can be perceived through received counsel from the right sources.

The story also rehearses for the reader the practice of rightly perceiving the roles of others. For example, Christian and Hopeful engage in this practice of discernment when they

encounter Atheist. While Atheist is still at a distance, Christian begins observing Atheist's behavior for an understanding of how he fits into the world and comments, "Yonder is a man with his back toward Sion, and he is coming to meet us" (129). That Atheist has his back to the Celestial City could mean that he is a messenger from there, placing him in a trustworthy position as other role-characters have been, and he seems also to be there for them since he is coming to meet them. Hopeful's response reflects the wariness they were meant to learn from their encounter with Flatterer: "I see him, let us take heed to our selves now, lest he should prove a Flatterer also" (129). Because they are aware of the possible danger and seeking to discern if Atheist presents that threat, they are not beguiled³ by the vision Atheist presents to them of the Celestial City being unreal; they recall, too, the guidance they had received from the Shepherds: "What! No Mount Sion? Did we not see from the delectable Mountains the Gate of the City?" (130). The scene rehearses for the reader the practice of rightly perceiving the roles of others to avoid the danger that they present to the traveler.

Because role-characters are part of the felt cosmic order, influencing the traveler's journey, and the story makes a point of observing that influence, role-characters create the expectation in the reader's imaginary that individuals will inevitably fill those roles. Someone who directs people to the Wicket-gate or someone who directs people to Morality will approach the reader because that is simply how the world works in the imaginary of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Anyone could fill these roles at any time because they are defined by what they do for the individual, not for anything particular in themselves. Since the roles are relative to the

³ It may be argued that Christian is deceived, for he asks "*Is it true which this man hath said?*" (130) and doubt is a recurring struggle for Christian. David Seed notes that "when Christian is talking to Atheist, he appears to believe him at first. Then, after Hopeful has warned him off, he claims he only did so to 'prove' (i.e. test) his companion. It is difficult to avoid reading this explanation sceptically since in general Christian treats Hopeful in an overweening, condescending way" (79). Considering Christian's tendency to treat Hopeful in the "self-chosen role as guide and mentor to his companion" (Seed 78), his question might not indicate any doubt, only a desire to play the teacher to Hopeful. Regardless, the dialogue rehearses the practice of examining and discerning the roles that others play.

individual's spiritual journey and *telos*, the reality of the role exists primarily within the individual's experience and perception of the other person's actions—that is not to suggest that the other person does not really play a role in shaping the individual's spiritual journey but that the individual can come to that perception apart from the intentions of the other. For example, the reader might come to perceive a college friend who led him or her into the faith as Evangelist; the college friend might not have deliberately adopted that role as a pastor might, yet the college friend is perceived as an Evangelist nevertheless. *The Pilgrim's Progress* leads the reader to expect people to fulfill the roles of role-characters and rehearses the active discernment of these roles.

This expectation in the imaginary of *The Pilgrim's Progress* that others can be role-characters instills the sense that certain relationships are part of the spiritual journey by aiming the reader-as-traveler to or away from the desired residence of the Celestial City. Re-perceiving another person as a role-character leads to the reader responding in a manner befitting the perceived role. If the perceived role is positive, such as Help, then the reader will likely receive the influence of the other person to the reader's benefit; if the perceived role is negative, then the influence rejected. Because these are other people, the response is not merely internal, and perceiving others as these roles leads to treating them accordingly. For example, perceiving another as an Evangelist or a Help prompts a posture of respect or gratitude. Conversely, perceiving someone as a Worldly-wiseman or a Flatterer prompts wariness or avoidance for the sake of one's own preservation and successful continuation on the spiritual journey. Rightly perceiving the role of another can benefit the individual's spiritual journey. Other people as role-characters embody the transcendent cosmic order that impinges upon the self as it navigates the way to the Celestial City.

Perceiving Others as Fellow Travelers

Most characters, however, are *telos*-characters, which personify sets of people according to their relationship to the Way, characterizing them, like Christian, by their teleological orientation. Other *telos*-characters include his companions, Faithful and Hopeful, and other pilgrims, most notably Talkative, By-ends, and Ignorance. *Telos*-characters envision others as also teleological creatures whose ultimate desires are shaped by their habits and the practices they follow. Unlike role-characters who exist as part of the cosmic order and affect the traveler by doing things to and for him or her, *telos*-characters navigate through the cosmic order and affect the traveler by doing things *with* him or her, meaning that the influence is bi-directional. *Telos*-characters are practitioners of traveling liturgies, so the self-as-traveler is not inherently alone, for there is the possibility of traveling together.

The story paints this possibility as desirable because companions can help each other overcome difficulties but also simply share in the journey. As Janet Bertsch in *Storytelling in the Works of Bunyan, Grimmelshausen, Defoe, and Schnabel* notes, "Characters can assist and encourage each other during the stages of the journey through which each person must pass (for example, the Wicket Gate and the River of Death)" (37). Though companionship is painted as practical in reaching the destination, a fellow pilgrim is not merely a means to an individual's end; rather, in traveling together the destination becomes a shared end and the journey a mutually accomplished action. This mutuality is most vividly felt in *Vanity Fair* when, for the first half of the adventure until Faithful's defense, Christian and Faithful are described inseparably as "these pilgrims" or "the pilgrims." The narrative focuses on how the citizens of the fair treat the pilgrims as a unit and how the pilgrims respond as one, with no distinction made between Christian's actions and Faithful's. Before meeting Faithful, the plight of the traveler seems

utterly lonely, making a long, difficult journey all that more formidable, but Christian meets a fellow traveler, the journey becomes one in which “they went very lovingly on together” (67). So the companionship of fellow travelers is envisioned as desirable.

To travel with another, however, both travelers need to have a shared destination and a shared sense of how to reach it, which is why conversations play such a prominent role in the story. Conversation allows for Christian to discover if the other’s teleological orientation aligns with his own for the purpose of traveling together. Each new encounter between Christian and another pilgrim begins with Christian asking where the other is going, in effect asking about the other’s *telos*. The direct answer to that is nearly always the Celestial City, but further conversation reveals the authenticity of that intention through the examination of the habits that form that desire, an examination which Diamond describes as “a fraught and uncertain process” (2). For example, Talkative seems at first to Faithful “a very excellent Pilgrim” (Bunyan 76) since he eagerly discusses theological matters with some accuracy, but, as Christian explains, “Religion hath no place in his heart, or house, or conversation; all he hath lieth in his tongue, and his Religion is to make a noise therewith” (77). Talkative’s vision of the good life is in receiving the esteem of others for his religiosity through the practice of religious talk, so he is not also traveling on the road with the aim of reaching the Celestial City; his habits do not aim his heart toward the Celestial City. The conversation rehearses the practice of seeking to discern another’s *telos* in order to become traveling companions.

Conversation also reveals the other’s practices, which indicate if both travelers will be traveling the road in the same way. By-ends, for example, adopts practices of religion that allow for an easy and comfortable life, practices which cannot be maintained when receiving the often difficult road as it is; as Christian explains to By-ends, “If you will go with us, you must go

against Wind and Tide . . . You must also own Religion in his Rags, as well as when in his Silver Slippers, and stand by him too, when bound in Irons, as well as when he walketh the Streets with applause" (98). By-ends's practices conflict with his stated goal of reaching the Celestial City, for they shape in him a vision of the good life as one enjoying wealth and comfort, a residence that is reached before death. Bertsch comments on how By-ends and his companions explain their conflicting goals and practices: "They try to justify situations in which religious belief is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end, as though worldly riches might lie beyond the Celestial City" (30). By-Ends wants worldly comfort and success more than heavenly glory so that he likely turns aside at Lucre, on which Hopeful and Christian comment:

Hope. I will warrant you, when By-ends comes up, if he hath the same invitation as we, he will turn in thither to see.

Chr. No doubt thereof, for his principles lead him that way and a hundred to one but he dies there. (104)

Christian and Hopeful could not travel with By-ends, for their practices of traveling the road do not align with his and their paths would have diverged eventually. Without a shared destination and shared practices for following the road, the journey cannot be mutually accomplished, so conversation is crucial for discovering if another traveler would make for a good companion.

However, the story envisions a fellow traveler's teleological orientation as affecting more than the longevity of the companionship; traveling together can shape where and how one travels. In this imaginary, the practices of the individual are not insulated from those of others but have an effect on and are affected by those of others. Like role-characters, *telos*-characters exert an influence on Christian that shapes his teleological orientation, but he is able to exert an influence on them as well; the influence is bi-directional because *telos*-characters are able to

share a *telos* and the associated practices. Moreover, as Smith explains, “practices are communal or social. There are no ‘private’ practices; rather, practices are social products that come to have an institutional base and expression. Practices don’t float in society; rather, they find expression and articulation in concrete sites and institutions—which is also how and why they actually shape embodied persons” (*Desiring* 62). Though a community of three individuals as Christian, Faithful, and Talkative could hardly be called an “institute” such as Smith is discussing, Talkative’s empty religious practices would affect how the group travels over time. Diamond explains that Talkative’s conversation has “the contaminating influence” that “threatens to lead sincere professors like Christian and Faithful out of the Way” (6). Even Talkative’s seemingly harmless practice of empty theological talk could lead Christian and Faithful astray. The reader more vividly experiences the mutual influence of fellow travelers when Christian and Hopeful leave the road at By-path Meadow at Christian’s suggestion. Christian leads Hopeful astray out of a desire for an easier path, but Hopeful admits that he had misgivings and could have persuaded Christian to remain on the road. Thus, the reader experiences how traveling with another means shaping and being shaped by the practices of another.

With this mutual influence as fellow travelers comes a heightened vulnerability to the self as a traveler—a vulnerability that is more ambiguous and more difficult to navigate than the vulnerability with role-characters. Whereas role-characters have clearly defined positions in the cosmic order and thus effects on Christian, leading him to or away from the Celestial City, the impact of a *telos*-character is less easily defined, especially since the influence flows both ways. Because of this ambiguity and the more prolonged nature of the relationship, traveling with another for a stretch of road involves an increased vulnerability (and “healability”) compared to traveling alone: the danger is greater but so also the potential for overcoming difficulty.

Gaining a Sense of Community

Far from envisioning the self as essentially isolated or alone, *The Pilgrim's Progress* gives a sense of self and others that opens the possibility for rich relationships between people through a heightened vulnerability. Seed rightly observes, "Critics have commented frequently on Christian's isolation in Part I, but this has been rather over-stated. Even before he meets Faithful, Christian has had the benefit of the anonymous instructors and of course Evangelist" (75). Certainly, those who assist Christian provide a form of fellowship in the form of instruction, but, when Christian and Faithful become traveling companions, the reader begins to get a sense for the profound depth of community that is possible in life as a spiritual journey. The experiences traveling companions share are not only difficult but profoundly personal. The mockery and abuse that Christian and Faithful endure together in Vanity Fair is prefigured by Faithful's experience in the Valley of Humiliation when Shame mocks and abuses Faithful for pursuing religion; in Vanity Fair, Christian experiences communally with Faithful what had previously been only a private difficulty. More profoundly still is the shared experience depicted by Christian and Hopeful's imprisonment by Giant Despair; in Christian's darkest moment in Doubting Castle, the image of religious despair, Hopeful not only visits or aids Christian, but he is there with him in the dungeon, with him in his despair, even as Hopeful seems less affected than Christian. Finally, and perhaps more profoundly still, Christian and Hopeful cross the River Death together. *The Pilgrim's Progress* envisions a community in which even those experiences that seem the most private, even inaccessible to others, may be shared and endured together.

The story also occasionally blurs the distinctions between characters so that Christian exhibits the same flaws that were admonished in another, and this blurring of difference enables increased empathy, thus encouraging grace and connection. Soon after Christian and Faithful

reprimand By-ends for his practice of worldly comfort and observe the dangers of taking the easy road, they give in to the temptation to leave the path for the sake of comfort at By-path Meadow. The reader can perceive the fluidity of what otherwise appear to be categorical differences. While By-ends personifies a set of people who desire worldly comforts, Christian and Hopeful in personifying believers are not immune to the same desires but can be just as deceived. This blurring of the distinction between Christian and By-ends is significant because it helps the reader recognize the error of too sharply distinguishing him or herself from the other and saying, "So-and-so has that problem, but I am not like that." The difference between a Christian and a By-ends lies in the desire-shaping habits that can fade and fall away if not carefully maintained. The highlighting of these shared flaws and struggles is significant in helping a person extend grace, mercy, and forgiveness to another rather than censure.

Whereas Part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is more focused on the individual so that society is depicted as the individual self engaging with another, Part II depicts the Christian as but one among the community. Part II not only shows a much wider variety of Christians with more distinct sets of motivations and temptations, envisioning more fully the diversity of the Christian experience, but it also envisions the church community as one that extends across time. Whereas Christian fights Apollyon alone and only flees from Giant Despair with Hopeful, Christiana and her companions encounter quite a few enemies. In several of those combats, Great-heart fights with the help of other pilgrims or faithful members of the community and, more significantly, they seek out several of these fights: while staying with Gaius, they hear about Slay-good and then hunt him; they put together a posse to assault the monster of Vanity Fair; and they pursue the Giant Despair after deliberating as a group. That the pilgrims confront the forces of evil together matches the greater emphasis on the Christian community of Part II,

emphasizing that the heroism of faithfulness need be done in solitude but as a community. In addition, the monsters are not merely obstacles that keep the pilgrims from the road, but obstacles and threats to future pilgrims and they take time to address the threats of the future. The community is not only together in the present but together across time.

This sense that there is a community of believers across time is especially felt in the repeated references to Christian throughout the second part. These references have a two-fold impact on the reader. The first is that ordinary, weak believers such as Christian can have a profound impact on those who follow. Bertsch comments, “When the characters in part 2 visit the locations of events in Part I, they find that Christian’s story has changed their journey. His example has helped to convert Vanity Fair and to fence off the bypaths of Hill Difficulty. Plaques and monuments commemorate his experiences and warn travelers along the same route” (39). Furthermore, while the reader experiences in Part I the failures of Christian and his anxiety about reaching the end, what the pilgrims who follow him know are his triumphs and the ways in which God delivered him from harm; he is a testament to the goodness of God and provides hope for the future. The reader, who is not necessarily some great Christian, can nonetheless, like Christian, have a substantial impact on those pilgrims who follow. Moreover, the reader senses a heightened connection with the believers who come before by making relatable those who might otherwise seem unobtainable in their grandeur.

Finally, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* envisions the community of pilgrims to continue forever in the Celestial City where any sense of isolation vanishes and tension between companions dissolves. As Christian describes to his wayward companion Pliable, “There also you shall meet with thousands, and ten thousands that have gone before us to that place; none of them are hurtful, but loving, and holy; every one walking in the sight of God; and standing in his presence

with acceptance for ever” (15). The reader gets a glimpse of this eternal fellowship in Bunyan’s description of Christian and Hopeful ascending the stairs to the gates of the Celestial City; Christian does not ascend alone and isolated but with his fellow traveler. Their companionship is not only for the present difficulties but lasts into eternity, giving the reader a sense of the transcendent significance that the community of pilgrims to the Celestial City has.

Chapter 3: “Till he unto the Gate of Glory comes”: Locations to Orient the Reader’s Desires

In the imaginary of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the self is envisioned as a lifelong traveler who has left his or her residence behind to attain a new home in the Celestial City where the good life may be enjoyed forever in the company of fellow pilgrims. To attain this end, the traveler must persevere in following the way, which involves the habits of perceiving where the path leads and receiving the road as it is, when it leads through places of difficulty as well as through places of rest. These locations through which the road passes act as landmarks to familiarize the reader with the envisioned spiritual journey that is life and to rehearse the practices that shape the reader’s desire for heaven.

Knowing the Spiritual Road Bodily

Bunyan’s allegory envisions places whereby a person may enter sacred space through the imagination by re-envisioning all spaces as connecting with the transcendent through the imagination. With the Reformation and the rise of secularity came a loss of sacred space. Church buildings were no longer perceived as architectural incarnations of the transcendent glory of God but merely buildings in which Christians gathered to glorify God through worship and the hearing of the Word; this meant all places were of equal transcendent value, for the acts of glorifying, worshiping, praying, etc. that touched the transcendent could occur anywhere at any time. However, man as an embodied creature still needs a sense of space, and Bunyan’s allegory presents to the imagination places of transcendent spiritual experience that can be physically experienced anywhere. In Bunyan’s imaginary, a physical location, though sacred by design, does not necessarily bring an individual into contact with the transcendent—individual intention and attention to spiritual experience in the moment does. For example, the church sanctuary is not necessarily a place where a person will experience Christian community; however, when

Christian is welcomed into the Palace Beautiful, the reader experiences being welcomed into the fellowship of believers: the palace is a space that *is* the spiritual experience of Christian community. Bunyan's depiction of the Palace Beautiful presents the reader with an imagined experience of the transcendent, spiritual reality; each location in the allegorical space embodies a transcendent reality. In this imaginary, entrance into the church sanctuary experientially could be entrance into a time of difficulty such as spiritual lethargy in the Incharned Ground, shame in the Valley of Humiliation, or, as it was for Bunyan for a time, fear of the law at the foot of Mt. Sinai. This vision of space recognizes the dissonance that can be felt between the purposed experience of a place and personal experience of it. More significantly, Bunyan's allegorical world envisions the transcendent as a road to be known bodily through the imagination.

Because the places along the road embody spiritual experiences that can occur anywhere at any time, the events of life are re-perceived as occurring in the transcendent, spiritual space of the road and the places along it. These locations along the road shape the reader's imagined geography of experience, priming his or her expectations of life on a pre-cognitive level. The spiritual experiences of the Way enter the reader's imaginary as expected aspects of life's experience. As these experiences become expected, they give the reader a sense of familiarity with the journey that contributes to a precognitive sense of direction, just as familiar landmarks on a routinely traveled road tell a traveler when and how to turn without the traveler consciously thinking about them. Like these landmarks, most locations along the journey are not events that are experienced once; rather, they are experiences that a person may go through multiple times in his or her life. Experientially, a person can find him or herself slogging through the Slow of Dispond multiple times. Furthermore, the locations are not necessarily experienced in the same order that they are in the narrative. Though the narrative places the Slow of Dispond before

Christian passes through the Wicket Gate, the reader experiences the Slow of Despond as despond itself, which, as an experience, does not necessarily or exclusively precede the spiritually transformative event of the Wicket Gate. For these reasons, these locations are more like landmarks than milestones to be reached and left behind: the reader comes to recognize them as part of the spiritual journey, giving him or her a sense of direction along the way, for each location familiarizes the reader with the actions needed to traverse the depicted spiritual experience. For Christian to navigate the spiritual journey, he must practice the disciplines necessary as a traveler and citizen of the Celestial City.

Life as Difficulty and Rest

The Pilgrim's Progress envisions the Christian life as a journey through a series of trials and difficulties, punctuated by periods of God-given rest and ease. These difficulties cannot be avoided for an easier path to the Celestial City but must be traversed to reach that desired haven; rather, regions of difficulty are comprised of practices that shape the traveler's desires for the Celestial City so that he or she is suited to be a resident there. Similarly, the regions of rest, though they give the traveler ease on the journey, are not received as places of residence but involve practices that aim the traveler forward to the Celestial City. The way leads through both difficulty and rest, and the traveler must accept both, following the formational practices inherent to each region, to reach the good life beyond the River of Death. As practices, they carry an implicit vision of the good life, residency in the Celestial City; as the traveler passes through the locations of difficulty and rest, following the road's practices, he or she is instilled with a precognitive desire for the Celestial City. Working through the difficulties of the road requires the traveler to rehearse practices that foreshadow the good life of a resident of the Celestial City.

The story initiates the reader into the practices of the road, these rhythms of difficulty and

rest, through two locations, which are experienced as formational events: the Wicket-gate and the place of Deliverance. While other locations present themselves as landmarks that may be experienced more than once, the Wicket-gate and the place of Deliverance present themselves as one-time events and, together, as a turning point for Christian and his interaction with the way. Christian must pass through the Wicket-gate and stand before the cross before he is fully on his way to the Celestial City. Before he comes to the Wicket-gate, the story is primarily moving toward the Wicket-gate because Evangelist repeatedly directs Christian to the Wicket-gate as a step on his journey to the Celestial City. Only after he has been brought through the gate and has seen the cross does the way feel aimed at reaching the Celestial City.

The road before the Wicket-gate and after the cross feel different in part because the events, particularly the cross, transform Christian. Seeing the cross changes those defining features of Christian by which the reader imagines him: from the start, he is burdened and, at the cross, he is unburdened; from the start, he is in rags and, at the cross, he is clothed in new garments. The reader sees Christian as a traveler in a new way so that he is not the traveler he was before. The burden on his back affected his ability to travel: in the *Slow of Dispond*, “*Christian*, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the Mire” (16); by Mt. Sinai, “his burden, *now*, seemed heavier to him, than while he was in his way” (20); he runs up to the place of Deliverance, “not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back” (37). With his burden removed, it no longer affects how Christian interacts with the road. Before he sees the cross, the burden also propels him forward as a motivation for his journey, even serving as a source of temptation toward Morality, but upon its removal he receives a new sense of purpose—not a negative sense as fleeing Destruction or removing his burden, but a positive one—in the form of a new object, the “Roll with a Seal upon it” (37), which is directly tied to

entering the Celestial City: by this roll, he is able to enter the gates of heaven. With this roll on his person, the road after the cross more fully feels as if it is taking him to the Celestial City because Christian has been transformed into the kind of traveler who can enter the Celestial City. The events of the Wicket-gate and the place of Deliverance are a turning point in the story for Christian such that the reader senses that all the road afterward proceeds from that point.

His actions in the events that transform him into the right kind of traveler initiate him in some of the essential practices for traveling the road that will continue to change him and shape his desires for the Celestial City. In the manner that he begins his journey through the Wicket-gate and at the cross, so will he continue in the rhythms of difficulty and rest. To enter at the Wicket-gate he must acknowledge his need and the desperation of his situation, for he tells Good Will, “Here is a poor burdened sinner, I come from the City of *Destruction*, but am going to Mount *Zion*, that I may be delivered from the wrath to come” (25). After he is admitted, Good Will questions him and Christian confesses his inadequacies along the journey to that point. Furthermore, to meet his needs, Christian must receive help from another; he cannot remedy his desperation on his own, but another must act on him. At the Wicket-gate, Good Will is the one who opens the door and even pulls Christian through; not of his own actions does Christian enter the Wicket-gate but of Good Will’s. At the place of Deliverance also, his burden spontaneously looses from his shoulders at the sight of the cross—the cross takes his burden. Many places of difficulty will take him through the same rhythm of acknowledging his desperation and of accepting help from another.

The cross also introduces the rhythms of rest of being unburdened, of preparing for the road ahead, and of receiving a foretaste of heaven. When his burden rolls away, “Then was *Christian* glad and lightsom, and said with a merry heart, *He hath given me rest, by his sorrow;*

and life, by his death" (37). The shining ones prepare him for his journey ahead by clothing him anew and giving him the roll, both of which help him persevere during his journey. Finally, he receives a foretaste of heaven at the cross of which the reader learns only in retrospect: in the Palace Beautiful, Prudence asks Christian, "*And what is it that makes you so desirous to go to Mount Zion?*" To which Christian answers, "Why, there I hope to see him *alive*, that did hang *dead* on the Cross For to tell you truth, I love him, because I was by him eased of my burden" (50-51). At the cross, Christian receives a brief sight of the person who awaits him in the Celestial City and who draws him onward. Each of these aspects of the turning point of the Wicket-gate and the place of Deliverance is repeated in the practices that Christian must follow to pursue the road to the Celestial City. The turning point enters the reader's imaginary as the formational event by which Christian becomes not just any traveler but a traveler able to enter the Celestial City and his travels become the practicing of that transformation.

Rhythms of Difficulty

To reach the Celestial City, Christian must pass through difficulty and what he must do to traverse those regions are the practices that shape his desires, transforming him into a resident of the Celestial City. Overcoming these difficulties are not opportunities for Christian to appear heroic, resilient, or strong-willed—his accomplishments along the journey are no source of pride. Even his most substantial triumph over Apollyon is scarcely Christian's triumph: he does not prevail against Apollyon and seem a grand, noble, or valiant hero afterwards. He takes a stand and just barely survives, not through any great prowess or raw determination but "as God would have it" (59). Though the scene does envision victory for the self over evil, it does not attribute the victory to something special in Christian but ascribes the victory to God. Rather than inflating the ego, the practices required to pass through difficulties on the road require Christian

to humble himself to Lord of the Celestial City.

These practices involve a kind of de-buffering of the self, an embrace of vulnerability as both generally true of human existence and specifically desirable in a relationship with the Lord. Each region through which Christian passes with the reader demands that he set aside his pride, his self-confidence and self-reliance, to be dependent on God for his existence and happiness. The practices of the journey shape the traveler away from the buffered self of the secular man who makes his own path and who is a self-made man toward a vulnerable self that is open to and seeks the making power of God; the implicit vision of the good life carried by these practices is one of intimate connection with the Creator God, in which the creature enjoys his creaturely nature that is contingent upon the Creator. The self-made man, by contrast, lacks the capacity to enjoy being contingent upon the existence and will of another. For this reason, the practices inherent to the difficulties involve the de-buffering of the self and the embracing of the creaturely nature: the accepting of lowliness, accepting help, seeking the promises, and submitting to the King.

The Practice of Accepting Lowliness

First, some difficulties of the road rehearse for the reader the practice of acknowledging and accepting his or her low condition, inadequacy, desperation, even inability. In short, the traveler must accept the contingent nature of being the creature rather than the creator. The secular man who forges his own path through the moral landscape is not inadequate or unable to attain the good life through strength of will, moral fortitude, intelligence, and so forth, but the traveler who would be a resident of the Celestial City must acknowledge inadequacies and relinquish self-confidence in order to successfully pass through the difficulties that line the way.

The Valley of Humiliation most vividly presents an experience of this practice. As a

space, the valley embodies humiliation, the process of being brought low, not only by being a region that is lower but also by following a region of notable height. Before Christian enters the valley, he experiences a sequence of events that could be a source of pride—a difficult ascent at the top of which is a triumphant moment of sorts in the Palace Beautiful—so the descent into the valley is a descent into a confrontation with his literal lowness of place. For Christian, who throughout his journey wrestles with self-sufficiency and self-worth, leading him toward legalism, doubt, and despair, the Valley of Humiliation is a place where he is confronted with his failures along the journey; he is confronted with an accuser who would bring Mt. Sinai down upon his head and lord it over him. To crush Christian's hopes of being received by the Prince of the Celestial City, Apollyon reminds Christian of his failures, concluding with the observation that "*when thou talkest of thy Journey, and of what thou hast heard, and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest*" (58). The accusation highlights Christian's inadequacy, which Christian must acknowledge to proceed in the conversation and through the Valley: "All this is true and much more, which thou has left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honour, is merciful and ready to forgive" (58-59). Moreover, he is unable to defeat Apollyon in combat until he is brought to his most desperate state when Apollyon "had almost prest him to death; so that *Christian* began to despair of life" (59). The Valley of Humiliation confronts Christian's pride, forcing him to acknowledge the lowness of his condition, that his life is dependent on another: he is able to fend off Apollyon "as God would have it" (59). Faithful also must acknowledge and accept his humble condition when passing through the Valley of Humiliation, for Discontent calls Faithful a fool for pursuing the way and tempts him with worldly glory while Shame attempts to make Faithful ashamed of the indignity that attends religion. Through the difficulty of the Valley of Humiliation the reader experiences the practice

of acknowledging and accepting one's humble condition.

Part II envisions this practice as not only necessary to pass through the Valley of Humiliation but as desirable and even pleasant. The women and children in Part II do not struggle with pride in the same way as Christian or Faithful. Rather, in part because of their status in society, they already perceive and accept their lowliness so that they are not afflicted by being brought low. Their experience of the valley is not only free of conflict but pleasant and restful, for they perceive "how green this Valley is, also how beautiful *with Lilies*" (223). Mercie says of her experience in the valley, "I think I am as well in this Valley, as I have been any where else in all our Journey: The place methinks suits with my Spirit" (224-25). The experience of the Valley of Humiliation presented in Part II envisions humiliation or lowliness as a spiritual experience that can be a source of delight and rest for the Christian, not merely difficulty. Because they have accepted their lowliness upon entering the Valley, they do not expect that they need to provide for themselves in order to live; self-reliance is not part of their precognitive framework for engaging the world, so the valley is fruitful and providing for their needs and comforts. This alternate depiction of the valley envisions humiliation as desirable and worthy of pursuit through the rhythms of humility that would make it pleasant; with the expurgation of self-reliance and acceptance of inadequacy and inability comes the experience of humiliation as a spiritual place of abundance, prefiguring the abundance to be enjoyed in the Celestial City.

The Practice of Accepting Help

Because traveling the road means accepting one's inadequacy and need, the road repeatedly requires Christian to practice accepting help from others, for he is often unable to follow the prescribed way through his own strength and willpower. The practice of receiving help is a natural extension of accepting lowliness; having rejected self-confidence, an assurance

in his being, he must also reject self-reliance, an assurance in his own ability, by relying on the abilities and provision of another, namely God. The practice of accepting help recurs throughout the journey. One notable location that demands this practice of Christian is the Slow of Dispond. Like the Valley of Humiliation, the Slow vividly embodies the spiritual experience of despond by also being a spatially lower region into which he falls and where is covered in the filth of the region, visualizing his lowliness and desperation. Christian struggles to get through the mire and finds that he “could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back” (16). He must rely on Help who lifts him from the mire. This acceptance requires trust on Christian’s part—it might even be called faith because Christian “gave [Help] his hand” (16) and, as Kaufmann notes, “a cliché of seventeenth-century Puritanism was the identification of hand with faith” (62). Giving Help his hand is an act of faith without which Christian would not have been able to progress on his journey. To overcome the difficulty of despond, Christian must practice accepting help from another, not relying on his own abilities. Through the imagined experience of slogging through the Slow of Dispond and being lifted from it, the reader rehearses navigating through the spiritual state of despond, gaining a precognitive sense for how self-effort is insufficient to overcome the issue; progress requires a vulnerability and dependence.

Christian’s fight with Apollyon also rehearses for the reader the practice of receiving help. The fight takes a turn for the better because of a kind of divine intervention: “But as God would have it . . . *Christian* nimbly reached out his hand for his Sword, and caught it” (59). Though the help God provides in the fight is more of a providential nature than miraculous since Christian is the one who takes the sword and stabs Apollyon, Christian nonetheless claims he received help from God in overcoming this difficulty: “I will here give thanks to him that hath delivered me out of the mouth of the Lion; to him that did help me against *Apollyon*” (61).

Christian has the sense that he has received help, regardless of how it appears, and, after Apollyon's defeat, Christian does receive direct help from what seems to be God himself: "Then there came to him an hand with some of the leaves of the Tree of Life, the which *Christian* took, and applied to the wounds that he had received in the Battel, and was healed immediately" (61). Having been injured, Christian does not heal through "natural" physiological processes or simply press on through the strength of his will—injury from Humiliation does not call for the civility of secularity, which "involves a struggle to reshape ourselves" (Taylor 101). Rather, the practice required by humiliation involves being vulnerable to the power of God and being "healable," which Taylor suggests as an antonym for "vulnerable" (36). Throughout Christian's journey, the practiced response to spiritual difficulties, such as despond or humiliation, is to receive the aid and provision offered, to be helped and healed, and implicit to this practice is a vision of help and healing available and freely given—a vision of a good life received not wrought.

The Practice of Seeking the Promises

In addition to acknowledging need and accepting aid, which both relate to Christian's current condition, the road rehearses the practice of seeking the promises, which turns his attention to the future. The Slow of Dispond again vividly envisions this practice. Bunyan glosses the steps that can help a traveler traverse the slough as "*The Promises of forgiveness and acceptance to life by Faith in Christ*" (17). The promises are assured visions of the good life, of the aid Christian will receive in forgiveness, and of his reception into the Celestial City; the promises give the reader as traveler a sense of the journey's purpose and hope for its fulfillment. Just before Christian falls into the Slow of Dispond, he is reading of the glories of the Celestial City and the promise from its lord that "[i]f we be truly willing to have it, he will bestow it upon us freely" (15). The dreamer notes that "just as they had ended this talk, they drew near to a very

Miry Slow that was in the midst of the Plain, and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bogg” (16). The turning of their attention from the promises coincides with falling into the muck that obscures the steps of the promises, their sense of direction and purpose. Upon losing his sense of direction, purpose, and hope, Pliable turns back because he lacks a vision of the destruction awaiting his home and a burden on his back; Christian continues through, however, because he perceives that he has nothing to return to. Though he retains some sense of purpose, he is bogged down by, as Help describes the muck, “many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions” (17), which must be countered by a source of hope, the promises; to traverse the Slow of Despond without being spattered with mud requires seeking the promises. The road has been all but lost except for the steps—despond is the loss of the road, for the promises *are* the road. The traveler needs to seek the promises to regain the sense of the road’s presence, the sense that there is a road that leads somewhere and the hope that somewhere may be reached.

Whereas accepting help is somewhat passive in nature, seeking the promises is more proactive, for the traveler is pursuing God’s help, looking for ways to rely on Him. In this practice, the reliance on God rather than self is not merely a remedy to a current predicament but preventative. Christian practices seeking the promises while traveling up Hill Difficulty and through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, for through these regions he finds he must travel carefully. When ascending the hill, “he fell from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and his knees, because of the steepness of the place” (42). He is no longer walking but climbing: he must pay such close attention to the road that he has to touch it with his hands. Because, as Kaufmann argues, “it is impossible to disengage Word from Way” (114), for Christian to ascend Difficulty means he must be close to Scripture and the promises therein. The Valley of Shadow rehearses this practice again as Christian must proceed carefully to stay on the

path: “The path-way was here also exceeding narrow, and therefore good *Christian* was the more put to it; for when he sought in the dark to shun the ditch on the one hand, he was ready to tip over into the mire on the other; also when he sought to escape the mire, without great carefulness he would be ready to fall into the ditch” (63). The image of a mire returns, so the danger of the Slow seems here as well; here also, the way is obscured though by darkness rather than mud. To remain in the way, Christian must practice carefully seeking the way even just one step at a time.

This practice envisions the good life as a gift to be sought and received from someone whose offer of the gift may be trusted. The good life is not an uncertain future, for the promises that lead to that future are the firm ground in the midst of a bog or a deep darkness and the solid hand- and foot-holds up a steep slope—the promises are as trustworthy as the ground itself. The good life envisioned by seeking the promises is one of a close and trusting relationship with the giver of that life, for his words are reliable and good, worth seeking out and even hanging onto.

The Practice of Submitting to the King

Finally, the difficulties through which Christian must pass require him to practice submitting to the Lord of the Celestial City. Christian regularly must claim to be a citizen of the Celestial City and acknowledge himself to be a subject of its Lord. In doing so, he accepts a vulnerability before the world by putting his confidence and trust not in himself but in the Lord of the Celestial City. In the Valley of Humiliation, for example, when Apollyon mocks him for his former citizenship in the City of Destruction, Christian claims: “But I have let my self to another, even to the King of Princes, and how can I with fairness go back with thee? . . . I have given him my faith, and sworn my Allegiance to him” (57). In submitting to his prince, Christian must also trust in his prince’s grace and protection: “I count that the Prince under whose Banner now I stand, is able to absolve me; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with

thee” (58). Moreover, his boldness in fighting Apollyon comes from putting his confidence in his lord, rather than his own ability as has been noted, so he does not buffer himself from the cosmic forces that seek to impinge upon him but allies himself with God, accepting his power and influence to work in him. Faithful also, when passing through the Valley of Humiliation, is confronted with and tempted to be ashamed of his citizenship in the Celestial City. In order to escape that shame, he submits himself to his new Lord, saying, “*Shame* depart, thou art an enemy to my Salvation: shall I entertain thee against my Sovereign Lord? How then shall I look him in the face at his coming?” (73). He not only must reject being ashamed of his new Lord but must gather his new glory from his identify as a future resident of the Lord’s domain.

Vanity Fair also rehearses the practice of laying claim to Christ as King, for, as the pilgrims are passing through the fair, they must continually reject the riches offered them by the fair. To pass through the fair, they must reject the visions of the good life that are offered them, saying that they buy the truth and that their traffic is in heaven. More especially, their passage through Vanity Fair brings them into conflict with the spiritual forces that stand opposed to the Celestial city. As the dreamer notes, Vanity Fair is a location of temptation established by Beelzebub, Apollyon and Legion (85-86). Thus, when Faithful is brought before the judge, part of his defense requires him to reject the lords of the city as those who are opposed to his own king: “And as to the King you talk of; since he is *Beelzebub*, the enemy of our Lord, I defie him and all his Angels” (90-91). Moreover, he notes that the ways of the fair are in direct opposition to the ways of his Lord, for “he had only set himself against that which had set it self against him that is higher than the highest” (90). The practice rehearsed by their traversing of Vanity Fair is that of submitting to the king; otherwise, they would reside there and not continue on the road. Thus, various difficulties on the spiritual journey pressure the traveler to relinquish the hope of

citizenship in the Celestial City by denying its King, so Christian's journeying through them rehearses for the reader the practice of submitting to the Lord of the desired haven. A crucial part of life's spiritual journey is laying claim to citizenship in heaven as a subject of the lord.

The Practice of Dying: The River of Death

As the final difficulty of this life through which the reader as a traveler must pass with Christian, the River of Death rehearses the practice of dying, which involves the application of every practice mentioned. When Christian begins sinking in the river, he cries out to Hopeful and admits his desperate state: "I sink deep Waters, the Billows go over my head, all his Waves go over me, *Selah*" (148). The River of Death also provides a most vivid experience of receiving help from another as Christian struggles and nearly drowns except for the persistent encouragement of Hopeful at his side: "*Hopeful* therefore here had much adoe to keep his Brothers head above water, yea sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then ere a while he would rise up again half dead" (148). As in the Slow of Dispond, Christian is overwhelmed by guilt for his sins and fear that he will not be accepted: "all the words that he spake, still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and hearty fears that he should die in that River, and never obtain entrance in at the Gate" (148). Only when he rediscovers the promises is he able to pass through the River of Death; when he hears Hopeful remind him, "*Jesus Christ maketh thee whole*" and hears the Lord tell him, "*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee*" (149), promises that God will heal and deliver him, Christian is able to take courage. The practice of submitting to the King is alluded to in the warning they receive before entering the river: "*You shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place*" (148). Thus, the River of Death requires the practices rehearsed through all the preceding difficulties and gives the reader an imagined experience of

dying, of what might be expected.

The River of Death is not only a final difficulty requiring the other practices but also a final practice of its own in preparation of the traveler for heaven—a practice that only the reader as traveler can undertake repeatedly through the imagined experience provided by the text. By crossing the River, Christian takes the final steps in his transformation into a resident of the Celestial City, for he leaves his “*Mortal* Garments behind [him] in the River” (149) so that he can be garbed in the “white Robes” (149) of heaven. In doing so, he leaves behind all material, personal goods—anything that he may have laid claim to as the fruit of his efforts: crossing the River of Death requires the traveler to leave behind all that is known and become vulnerable to the unknown, relying completely on the promises of God for what lies beyond. In Part II, that dying is a liturgical practice with an implicit vision of the good life becomes especially evident because each character crosses the River of Death in a distinctly liturgical, ritualistic fashion. Each character receives a summons from the Lord with a token of proof, the character says farewell to fellow travelers, determines what should be done with their spiritual possessions, assays the river, and says some final words. The passing on of items and of the final words while crossing the river envision the community to be enjoyed in the Celestial City, for this aspect of the ritual envisions a Christian's death as a time of giving to the church for its encouragement. Each death also highlights the summons of God and the answering of the summons, envisioning death as a relational process with God. Death is not accidental, but an intentional call from God to be in communion with Him. Furthermore, God does not simply take the Christian over the River of Death but invites him or her over as merely the final obstacle on an ongoing journey to an everlasting communion with Him, and the Christian moves through the final difficulty with intentionality and purpose, with the goal of being with Christ—not that death is sought out, but it

is crossed when the road, God's way, comes to it. Dying becomes another act of faithfulness, the final act of this life, in the spiritual journey that the reader experiences through the imagination.

Rhythms of Rest

Though life envisioned by *The Pilgrim's Progress* is not glamorous or pleasant but filled with difficulties, the spiritual journey depicted involves rhythms of rest as well as difficulty. The practice of rest does not, however, involve avoiding difficulties, for pursuing easier paths leads travelers to worse difficulty than the road requires. Frequently, the pilgrims eschew paths that would make their journey easier and, when they do make choices out of a desire for ease, they go astray almost to their doom. For example, Christian and Hopeful attempt to traverse By-Path-Meadow as a means of circumnavigating a part of the road that is "rough" to the point that "their feet [are] tender by reason of their travels" (108). Though they find the meadow, "very easie for their feet" (108), events quickly take a turn for the worse, and they are soon captured by Giant Despair. The story envisions pursuing the life of ease as far from the good life.

Rather, any ease or comfort that the pilgrims experience along their journey comes as part of the prescribed course to the Celestial City and not by choice. The Palace Beautiful, where Christian enjoys fellowship and rest, lies at the top of Hill Difficulty; the road passes through the Pleasant Meadow by the River of God just before becoming the rough part by the stile; the road passes through the land of Beulah just before the River of Death. All these locations offer the pilgrims rest and comfort, but they are experiences of ease that they cannot but choose for following the course of the road—ease and comfort are envisioned as occasional gifts from God as part of following Him and do not come from seeking them out. Even these regions of rest, however, are initially envisioned with caution against complacency, for, when Christian rests in the arbor on Hill Difficulty, he loses his roll that would admit him into the Celestial City. Even

God-given rest is not necessarily easy but demands vigilance. Like the difficulties through which the road passes, areas of rest are part of the way and thereby lead forward to the Celestial City.

Just as the difficulties of the road require practices that humble and transform the traveler into a resident of the Celestial City, so too do the rhythms of rest soften the individual into the more vulnerable self that is capable of enjoying communion with God. Whereas the self-made man of secularity would take a time of rest and even ease as a kind of reward for his efforts, the traveler to the Celestial City must receive them as a gift when God wills. Moreover, the practice of rest requires a vulnerability, an acknowledgement of weakness and of the need for rest to continue the journey; Christian does not rest merely because he wants to but because he needs to travel well and reach his destination.

The Practice of Unburdening

First, the places of rest where Christian pauses rehearse the practice of unburdening. On the one hand, unburdening simply means setting aside his difficulties for a time: he is not laboring forward. One of the first locations that clearly envisions this is the arbor that he discovers up Hill Difficulty, for there he is able to take a time to rest his feet. When he and Hopeful pass by the River of God is yet another place where they can unburden, for the travels there are easier than the preceding road. These places present to Christian an absence of the difficulty he has experienced on the road, and in that way, he experiences a kind of unburdening. In the Palace Beautiful, Christian rests in safety without fear of backsliding or losing his way, for the burdens of difficulty have been laid on another. Moreover, Christian is able to reflect with the keepers of those locations on his journey, unburdening emotionally, and he receives wisdom and grace in his time of need. The Palace Beautiful vividly rehearses this practice of reflection as unburdening in the conversation Christian has with the virgins of the house. These periods of rest

are not a lack of progress in the way, but meditative practices in how the Gospel continues to redeem and restore Christian by allowing him to put off him the difficulties he has already experienced so as to be able to take on the difficulties ahead. By experiencing rest through these places as times of unburdening for the road ahead, the reader rehearses rest as a practice that implicitly envisions the good life as the place where all burdens are set aside forever.

The Practice of Preparing

The keepers of these locations give Christian what he needs to confront the difficulties ahead, rehearsing the practice of rest as preparation for the road ahead. This practice of rest closely parallels the practice of receiving help in the midst of difficulty—indeed, there is little to differentiate them except the occasion in which the traveler receives help, for both involve the traveler relying on another’s ability and providence. The first clear example of this practice comes in the Palace Beautiful where the women equip him with the “Furniture, which their Lord had provided for Pilgrims as Sword, Shield, Helmet, Brest-plate, *All-Prayer*, and Shooes” (54), all of which Christian needs soon after in his fight with Apollyon. They also give him rations, “a loaf of Bread, a bottle of Wine, and a cluster of Raisins” (55), that he eats after his battle and that refresh him for the journey ahead. In the Delectable Mountains, the shepherds warn Christian and Hopeful of the Flatterer and give them “*a note of the way*” for the road ahead. The preparation at these places of rest gives the reader the sense that rest does not simply empty him or her of weariness but provides what is needed for the suffering ahead.

The Practice of Foretasting

The locations of rest envision rest as providing a foretaste of the Celestial City; they rehearse the practice of heavenly meditation, which draws the traveler forward on his or her journey. Kaufmann explains that “in heavenly meditation the memory functioned as a reservoir

of imagery that preserved experience in order to make possible the edifying reenactment basic to the appreciation of experience as foretaste” (153). As locations of reprieve from difficulty, they parallel the final reprieve in the Celestial City. As times of joy, they give the traveler a vision of the joys that will be experienced in heaven. The Country of Beulah most vividly envisions this rest; as Kaufmann observes, “Beulah constitutes a glimpse of heaven. The episode set there is in substance heavenly meditation” (162). In Beulah, “whose air was very sweet and pleasant” (Bunyan 145), Christian and Hopeful enjoy good food and hear “continually the singing of Birds, and [see] every day the flowers appear in the earth” (146). So these places of rest give a foretaste of what will be enjoyed in the Celestial City and rehearse the practice of receiving rest as a vision of the destination to draw the reader as a traveler forward to the Celestial City. While this practice does somewhat parallel the practice in difficulty of seeking the promises, it is unique in how it turns the traveler’s attention not only to what lies ahead but to present circumstances as well; life before Celestial City is not completely without merit or good, but it can and should be enjoyed as practice of the enjoyment of the greater goods to be enjoyed in heaven.

The Practice Looking Forward

Finally, the locations of rest give the traveler a vision of what lies on the road ahead. At the Palace Beautiful, the virgins show Christian the Delectable Mountains, informing him of the next place to seek, for it will be closer to the Celestial City and able to give him a sight of his desired city. When Christian arrives at the Delectable Mountains, the shepherds take him to the Hill called Clear, and use a “Perspective Glass” to see the Celestial City. Though their vision is obscured by the fear put into them by the sight of Hell, “yet they thought they saw something like the Gate, and also some of the Glory of the place. Then they went away and sang” (119).

Kaufmann observes that Christian “is taken to the summit of the Hill Clear for a glimpse of the

distant Celestial City We can be sure that had his vision of the end ever dimmed, not even the powerful energies of his revulsion from the City of Destruction would have been enough to prod him safely through his many hazards” (133-34). This envisions rest as a time to look forward and renew the hope of the destination, a sense of the purpose for the road.

The Interpreter’s House, also a place of rest, rehearses the practice of viewing the road ahead as accomplished through the reading of God’s Word. The Interpreter’s House envisions reading the Bible as an immersive experience that instills fear of certain paths and hope for the desired destination. The Interpreter’s House is an experience that engages the whole body as Christian and the reader move from room to room—Christian sees, he hears, he chokes on dust. As Luxon notes, “Each successive Significant Room represents a progression from mere ‘notional’ understanding to ‘experimental’ understanding As he moves from looking and interpreting to participating in and experiencing his lessons, they gradually come to life. Emblems grow into characters and Christian is invited to discover himself in those characters” (452). The various rooms present him with an increasingly embodied sense of how his journey will unfold. From the drama of Passion and Patience, Christian receives the practice of patience, of waiting, as Interpreter says, “until the *next* World, for [his] Portion of good” (31), which gives Christian a vision of the journey ahead insofar as it instills the sense that the good life cannot be attained in this life. A more immersive vision of this hope is presented in the knight charging the palace to seek entry. Christian immediately senses what it means, for the knight and his rush forward to enter the palace mirror Christian and his pilgrimage to enter the Celestial City: seeing this vision of entry into a desired destination fills Christian with a hope that prompts him to continue immediately on his journey. But the Interpreter insists on showing Christian another vision of the road that fills him with fear. In the next significant room, the caged man is not only

like a pilgrim but *was* a pilgrim as Christian is: as the caged man is so Christian also could be—the cage might well be Christian’s cage someday, so his questions about how the caged man might escape are urgent and earnest, loaded with the fear of one day being in the same circumstance. Upon hearing there is no escape, he urgently wants to know how he might avoid it altogether. As he becomes fully immersed in the interpretive experience, Christian perceives the immediate and urgent relevance to himself, so his takeaways are not cognitive but affective: “they put me in *hope* and *fear*” (36): fear that would turn him away from wrong turns and hope that will propel him forward along the correct path. Thus, the Interpreter’s House envisions Scripture reading as an immersive experience that practices envisioning the road ahead, instilling fear of wrong turns and hope for arrival at the Celestial City.

Filling the Reader with Fear and Hope

Some locations in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* affect the reader in a manner similar to the visions in the Interpreter’s House, filling the reader with fear and hope. Rather than presenting rhythms of the spiritual journey that rehearse certain practices, these locations, through which the traveler does not necessarily pass, envision certain experiences which the reader desires either to avoid or attain. The most notable locations are Mount Sinai and Doubting Castle, which instill fear in the reader, and the Celestial City, which fills the reader with desire and hope.

Mt. Sinai

The first of these locations which Christian encounters, Mt. Sinai, instills in the reader a fear of self-confidence in works-based righteousness. With Christian, the reader travels off the prescribed path to the Celestial City in pursuit of Morality as an alternate residence where one must live with self-confidence in one’s own righteousness. Mt. Sinai is not the destination but a landmark, a place of difficulty, by which he must pass to reach the village of Morality on the

other side; the traveler does not need to climb Mt. Sinai, only go around, “but behold, when he was got now hard by the *Hill*, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was next the way side, did hang so much over, that Christian was afraid to venture further, lest the *Hill* should fall on his head” (20). The hill terrifies Christian, for “flashes of fire [come] out of the Hill” (20) and his fear makes him stop: the vision Bunyan paints of Mt. Sinai brings into sharp focus the terrifying nature of the Law and its demands, so the reader feels the terror of the law. Although the town of Morality supposedly offers comfort and ease living a good life under the law, the source of the law, Mt. Sinai, has the devastating power to crush and burn all who would reach their destination. To reach Morality requires ignoring the terrifying nature of the hill and asserting one’s ability to meet the law’s demands, but the reader experiences that fearful reality with Christian so that ignoring it is more difficult. Christian’s experience at the foot of Mt. Sinai places into the reader’s imaginary a fear of pursuing Morality as a vision of the good life.

Doubting Castle

Whereas Mt. Sinai instills a fear of self-confidence before the law, Doubting Castle, which embodies the experience of religious despair, instills a fear of self-reliance on the spiritual journey of life, for the pilgrims reach it when they depart from the Way laid out by God for an easier way of their own choosing with the vain hope of later making their own way back to the road. In doing so, they follow in the footsteps of a pilgrim named Vain-confidence. Christian cannot maintain his self-confidence for long, however, when the seemingly easier way of By-Path-Meadow quickly becomes worse than the rough road they left as the meadow grows dark with night, their guide falls in a pit, and the weather turns dangerous: “it began to rain, thunder, and lighten in a very dreadful manner, and the water rose amain” (108). At this point, Christian relinquishes his self-confidence that brought them out of the Way, recognizing the foolishness of

trying to make his own way, but he still holds tightly to his self-reliance, insisting that he can and should lead them back to the Way because he led them into it. Having become lost, they are captured by Giant Despair who locks the travelers in a dungeon of doubting, which is described as “a very dark Dungeon, nasty and stinking to the spirit” (110). The reader experiences with Christian the horror of religious despair: being starved, brutally beaten, and counseled to commit suicide until, “what for want of Bread and Water, and by reason of the Wounds they received when he beat them, they could do little but breath” (113). In their misery, the pilgrims struggle to perceive an escape from the dungeon⁴ to the point where Christian is ready to take his own life. Christian is trapped in doubting, in the belief that his departure from the path means he will not be accepted in the Celestial City. He forgets that his acceptance is not based on his abilities but the grace of the Lord of the Celestial City. This grace is the Promise, the key that he remembers and that allows them to escape. Christian’s imprisonment in Doubting Castle instills in the reader a fear of the religious despair that comes from relying on one’s self rather than the Way and promises of God.

The Celestial City

Finally, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* envisions the Celestial City, the desired destination toward which all the rhythms of difficulty and rest have been aiming the traveler, and the vision of the Celestial City is beautiful, inspiring hope and desire in the reader. The ascent begins this beautiful vision by presenting a reversal of their former difficulties and describing what is still to come in the Celestial City. After crossing the River of Death, Christian and Hopeful must ascend

⁴ While Hopeful does counter Christian’s inclination toward suicide with optimistic thoughts of escape, the grounding for those hopes is shaky at best or else fuels the self-reliance behind Christian’s despair. Hopeful suggests that God might provide an event such as Despair dying or forgetting to lock the door, but this idea is speculative rather than based in God’s promises. Hopeful also reminds him that suicide is sin leading to Hell, which, regardless of the reminder’s veracity, points Christian toward the Law, the breaking and emphasis of which have filled him with despair. Finally, Hopeful encourages Christian simply to spring into action if the opportunity arises and reminds him of his accomplishments in the past, making the solution somewhat of a reliance on his own abilities.

“a mighty hill, but the Pilgrims went up that hill *with ease* . . . with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the Clouds” (149); though this ascent is the second of “two difficulties more to meet with” (147) of which the pilgrims were earlier informed, the first being death, the ascent is hardly like any difficulty that came before, being easy, pleasant, and comforting. As they ascend, the shining ones tell them about the Celestial City saying, “the beauty, and glory of it was inexpressible” (149); despite being inexpressible, the shining ones describe much of that beauty and glory to Christian and Hopeful, so the vision of the good life in the Celestial City becomes more and more vivid to the reader: what they shall eat, what they shall wear, what they shall do in the company of the King. They describe the Celestial City as the apotheosis of their travels through difficulty: “There also you shall serve him continually with praise, with shouting and thanksgiving, whom you desired to serve in the World, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh” (151). As they approach the Gate, before they have even entered, Christian and Hopeful are saluted with trumpets and surrounded with music, and they are filled with “the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there, with such company, and that for ever and ever. Oh! by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed” (152). So even the ascent and approach of the Celestial City paint an alluring vision of the desired haven toward which the entire journey aims the reader.

Then, the Gate is opened and the dreamer sees the Celestial City itself, giving the reader a taste of the desirable kingdom, not through the description of other characters or the joys leading up to it but through the narration itself. Here, at the Gate’s opening, the reader experiences with Christian a consummation of the journey. At this point, as Nellist observes, the allegory has dissolved (135) so that the reader’s attraction and desire for the Celestial City is aimed not an

allegorical depiction of something else but an imaginative rendering of actual heaven. The mixture of ecstatic triumph and relief that the characters feel while entering the city excites in the reader a desire for that moment for themselves as they imagine the kingdom: “behold, the City shone like the Sun, the Streets also were paved with Gold, and in them walked many men, with Crowns on their heads, Palms in their hands, and golden Harps to sing praises withal” (Bunyan 153). The exquisite depiction of the Celestial City enters the reader’s imaginary, aiming his or her desire toward this vision of the good life in heaven.

The Conclusion: "I have told my Dream to thee"

As a pastor, Bunyan told us his dream of a transcendent and fantastic world at work in the immanent and mundane activity of ordinary people, who are lifelong travelers to a glorious city and knights questing for their one true love through the trials that prove them and mold them as residents of heaven. Like a dream, there is much to be gained from Bunyan's story that cannot be articulated as ideas, whether theological doctrines or political stances, but comes to the reader through the imagined experience of its world, characters, and story. The potency of a dream comes from the desire, fear, or hope that it instills in the dreamer, especially since that influence can follow a person into their waking day without that person even realizing it. Reading can be a kind of dreaming while awake; as Bunyan writes in his "Apology" of his book, "*Would'st thou be in a Dream, and yet not sleep?*" (l. 228). To receive Bunyan's allegory as a dream and dream it after Bunyan is to see life in the world, in part, through this dream as a road that leads to another world to come.

I have tried to re-tell the dream of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to get a sense of how it affects a reader's desires and subsequent actions in the world, but the story surely adds more to the reader's imaginary than I have said here. I have explored how the allegorical form allows the reader to experience intangible, spiritual realities through the imagination, charging ordinary experience with transcendent meaning. I have looked at how the characters influence the reader's self-perception and perception of others, placing people within the cosmic order of life as a spiritual journey, and how the world of the allegory affects the reader, specifically how the locations along the road rehearse the practices that shape who the reader is as a traveler. Regarding these elements of the story, more could be said in how they influence and add to the reader's imaginary, and I have not touched upon many other story elements as well as narrative

elements that contribute to the reading experience and thereby add to the reader's imaginary. However, I believe that I have touched upon the most essential aspects of the story to paint the big picture view of the imaginary presented by the dream-like experience of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and how it influences its readers.

Regardless, to understand the impact of Bunyan's dream, it is important that we understand Bunyan's dream *as* a kind of dream and that many people have and still do dream it after him. Because of the breadth of its influence on the imaginations of readers, it would be worthwhile to examine how the imaginary of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as a prominent Protestant literary text, has influenced (and continues to influence) Protestant social imaginaries. More broadly, it could be considered further how *The Pilgrim's Progress* influenced and was influenced by the shift from a premodern imaginary to secularity. More still could be said on how it interacts with modern social imaginaries. Whatever its role in history may have been, whether contributing to or resisting trends that led us here, it continues to exert an influence on its readers and shape communities. *The Pilgrim's Progress* has shaped the world in many ways and has done so by capturing the imaginations of its many readers and shaping their perceptions of the world, their desires, and their actions.

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