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The Form of Prayer and the Spirit of Prayer: George Herbert and John Bunyan in Conversation

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On 30 August 2018, the Church of England calendar commemorated the life of John Bunyan, the Nonconformist tinker-preacher best known as the author of the allegorical journey narrative *The Pilgrim's Progress.* The collect or prayer for the day in *Common Worship* skilfully weaves together phrases and ideas from Bunyan's writing:

> God of peace,
> who called your servant John Bunyan
> to be valiant for truth:
> grant that as strangers and pilgrims
> we may at the last rejoice with all Christian people
> in your heavenly city;
> through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
> who is alive and reigns with you,
> in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
> one God, now and for ever.[1]

When posted to the Facebook group of the International John Bunyan Society a few years ago, one group member replied, 'How ironical!' This liturgical commemoration of Bunyan could be seen as ironic since it was for preaching without authorisation from the established Church of England to a separatist Dissenting congregation that Bunyan was imprisoned.[2]

But there is a more specific irony in the commemoration of Bunyan through a liturgical prayer. This is that Bunyan's imprisonment was in least in part a product of his opposition to the Book of Common Prayer, and more broadly to fixed written liturgical prayers of any kind.[3] At his first court appearance at the Bedford quarter sessions, Bunyan engaged in the following exchange with the presiding judge Sir John Kelynge:

> *KEELIN*. But saith Justice *Keelin* (who was the judge in that court), Do you come to church (you know what I mean) to the parish church, to hear divine service?
> *BUN*. I answered, no, I did not.
> *KEEL*. He asked me, why?
> *BUN*. I said, because I did not find it commanded in the word of God.

[1] *Common Worship: Festivals,* Church House Publishing, 2008, p. 175. Also available online at *https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-in-daily-prayer/night-prayer-contemporary-thursday-30-august-2018* (accessed 31 December 2018).

[2] The modern Church of England has a habit of celebrating those who were its historic opponents – the Anglican calendar of commemorations similarly includes those such as Thomas More and John Fisher who died for their defence of the Pope's authority over against Henry VIII's claim to royal supremacy over the church. Rowan Williams in various places has called this a 'martyrial ecumenism', in which the Church of England seeks to recognise the face of Christ in those whose understanding of their obedience to Christ placed them in opposition to the established Church of the day. See, for instance, Rowan Williams, 'On Witness and Holiness', in Tamara Grdzelidze and Guido Dotti, eds., *A Cloud of Witnesses: Opportunities for Ecumenical Commemoration*, World Council of Churches, 2010, pp. 22–25.

[3] For the context of Bunyan's imprisonment, see, for instance, Richard L. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent*, Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 127–45.

> *KEEL*. He said, we were commanded to pray.
> *BUN*. I said, but not by the Common Prayer-book.
> *KEEL*. He said, how then?
> *BUN*. I said with the spirit. As the Apostle saith, *I will pray with the spirit and with understanding*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15.
> *KEEL*. He said, we might pray with the spirit, and with understanding, and with the Common Prayer-book also.
> *BUN*. I said that those prayers in the Common Prayerbook, was such as was made by other men, and not by the motions of the Holy Ghost, within our Hearts; and as I said the Apostle saith, he will pray with the spirit and with understanding; not with the spirit and the Common Prayerbook.[4]

We have this transcript courtesy of a series of letters Bunyan wrote to his supporters that were published in the eighteenth century as *A Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan*, so it may not be an entirely impartial memory. Shortly after this, Kelynge is made to look ridiculous with the words 'No, no, never fear him, we are better established than so; he can do no harm, we know the Common Prayer-book hath been ever since the Apostles time, and is lawful to be used in the church.'[5]

Bunyan's arguments while on trial are developed at greater length in a work Bunyan wrote from prison, entitled *I Will Pray with the Spirit* (1662).[6] In the early stages of his imprisonment, Bunyan was allowed out from time to time, and Richard Greaves suggests that *I Will Pray with the Spirit* expands on his anti-Prayer Book preaching 'during his period of freedom in the late summer and early autumn of 1661'.[7] Although rightly labelled an anti-Prayer Book tract, a relatively small portion of the work as a whole directly attacks the Prayer Book and its adherents, though the passages that do are pretty cutting. Much of the work outlines Bunyan's theology of prayer, with a particular emphasis on his conviction that true prayer must come from the heart and be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Bunyan gives the following definition of prayer, which he then breaks down into seven points which he expounds one at a time:

> Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the holy Spirit, for such things as God hath promised, or, according to the Word, for the good of the Church, with submission, in Faith, to the Will of God.[8]

Expounding his Pauline text, Bunyan explores what it means to pray with the Spirit and with understanding, which for Bunyan means both in one's own native language and with an experiential understanding of the need to be saved from the wrath of God, and the grace of God making the believer a child of God who can approach him in prayer.

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[4] John Bunyan, *A Relation of My Imprisonment,* in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. Roger Sharrock, Oxford, Clarendon, 1963, p. 114.

[5] Bunyan, *A Relation of My Imprisonment*, pp. 116–17.

[6] On *I Will Pray with the Spirit,* see Brian G. Najapfour, *The Very Heart of Prayer: Reclaiming the Spirituality of John Bunyan*, Memphis, TN, Borderstone, 2012; Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, pp. 151–59; Lori Branch, *Rituals of Spontaneity: Sentiment and Secularism from Free Prayer to Wordsworth,* Waco, TX, Baylor University Press, 2006, esp. pp. 43–45, 63–66, 76–77; and Michael A. G. Haykin, 'John Bunyan on Praying with the Holy Spirit', in Joel R. Beeke and Brian G. Najapfour (eds.), *Taking Hold of God: Reformed and Puritan Perspectives on Prayer*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Reformation Heritage Books, 2011, pp. 109–119.

[7] Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, pp. 151–52.

[8] John Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit,* ed. Richard L. Greaves, in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, vol. II, Oxford, Clarendon, 1975, p. 7.

It is true that Bunyan sees this as precluding the use of written prayers, a position not adhered to by moderate Puritans such as Richard Baxter, who were in favour of reforming the liturgy of the established Church but not opposed to written liturgy in principle,[9] but I would argue that it is concern about the work of the Spirit in the regenerate heart that forms the heart of Bunyan's theology of prayer, and not simply the rejection of a fixed liturgy.

Bunyan sees the conformist persecutors of godly Dissenters as elevating the form of prayer above the spirit of prayer:

> And if I should say, That men that do these things afore-said, do advance a Form of Prayer of other mens making, above the Spirit of Prayer, it would not take long time to prove it. […] look into the Goals in *England*, and into the Alehouses of the same: and I believe, you will find those that plead for the Spirit of Prayer in the Goal, and them that look after the Form of mens Inventions only, in the Alehouse.[10]

However, I would like to place Bunyan's account of prayer in dialogue with that of a conformist seventeenth century religious writer, the poet George Herbert.[11] Best known for his posthumously published verse collection *The Temple* (1633), Herbert's poems, like Bunyan's allegories, appeal devotionally to Christian readers across denominations, as well as having a literary beauty and often apparent simplicity that appeals to scholars and to general readers without Christian faith. My wife and I have been reading slowly through *The Temple* since the early days of our courtship – though we haven't finished yet, we find both literary enjoyment and devotional nourishment in its pages.

After a privileged upbringing and a Cambridge education that led to his appointment as University Orator, Herbert felt compelled by a divine call to ordination, and then to serve as rector to the village community of Bemerton in Wiltshire. It is for his three years there before his untimely death at the age of thirty-nine that Herbert is most celebrated. Herbert is sometimes called 'quintessentially Anglican',[12] and his book *The Country Parson* contributes to his image as a saintly icon of the gentle rural parish priest. Objectively speaking, Herbert is at odds with Bunyan in his adherence to the established episcopal Church, his embrace of the church calendar, and his use of the Church of England's written liturgy. However, I would contend that Herbert and Bunyan are not far apart when it comes to what constitutes the inner heart of true prayer in the life of the Christian believer.

A 2001 article in *Renaissance Quarterly* by Robert Whalen is entitled 'George Herbert's Sacramental Puritanism', and I am in agreement with Whalen that Herbert navigates between the polarities in the Church of his day by combining the Puritan focus on inward holiness with a more high church Laudian sensibility that values the outward beauty of church buildings, the liturgy and the rhythm of the church year as an aid to such devotion.[13] Whalen argues that, 'Unmistakably inward in focus,

[9] See Brian G. Najapfour, '"After this manner therefore pray ye": Puritan Perspectives on the Lord's Prayer', *Puritan Reformed Journal*, 4.2, July 2012, 158–169.

[10] Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit,* in MW, II:284.

[11] For Herbert's biography, see John Drury, *Music at Midnight: The Life and Poetry of George Herbert,* University of Chicago Press, 2014, and Helen Wilcox's entry on Herbert in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.*

[12] For instance, John H. Darch and Stuart K. Burns, *Saints on Earth: A Biographical Companion to the Common Calendar*, Church House Publishing, rev. ed. 2017, p. 34.

[13] Herbert's mediating position may at least partially account for the breadth of his posthumous appeal to both high churchmen such as Izaak Walton and Dissenters such as Richard Baxter. See,

Herbert's devotional enthusiasm is cultivated nonetheless through a fully sacramental apparatus'.[14]

Herbert emphasises the importance of attending the liturgical public worship of the parish church in his poem *The Church Porch*, the long instructional poem that introduces *The Temple*. Herbert appears to elevate the public prayers of the whole parish above both private individual prayer and the prayers of small gatherings of family or friends, perhaps alluding to the conventicles of the self-consciously godly Puritans:[15]

> Though private prayer be a brave designe,
> Yet publick hath more promises, more love:
> And love's a weight to hearts, to eies a signe.
> We are but cold suitours; let us move
> Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seaven;
> Pray with the most: for where most pray, is heaven.[16]

Herbert seems to elevate public liturgical prayer over preaching, in a reversal of the typical priorities for public worship in the Puritan mind:

> Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
> Praying's the end [= goal] of preaching. [17]

Herbert's adherence to the church calendar is apparent in the titles of some of his poems: 'Good Friday', 'Easter', 'Easter Wings', 'Whitsunday', and 'Trinitie Sunday'. Bunyan, on the other hand, is manifestly not a fan of the church calendar. He comments sarcastically in *I Will Pray with the Spirit:*

> But here now, the wise men of our dayes are so well skill'd, as that they have both the *Manner* and *Matter* of their Prayers at their finger ends; setting such a Prayer for such a day, and that twenty years before it comes. One for *Christmass*, another for *Easter*, and six dayes after that. They have also bounded how many syllables must be said in every one of them at their publick Exercises. For each Saints day also, they have them ready for the generations yet unborn to say.[18]

Echoes of the Church of England's liturgy and even the pre-Reformation Catholic liturgy surface in Herbert's poems. For instance, Herbert's poem 'The Sacrifice' features Christ speaking from the cross with the repeated refrain 'Was ever grief like mine?' taken from the medieval Catholic Good Friday liturgical sequence known as

for instance, Sharon Achinstein, 'Reading George Herbert in the Restoration', *English Literary Renaissance,* 36.3, Autumn 2006, 430-465, and Jenna Townend, '"[S]weet singer of our Israel": Psalms, Hymns, and Dissenting Appropriations of George Herbert's Poetry', *Bunyan Studies*, 22, 2018, pp. 39–62.

[14] Robert Whalen, 'George Herbert's Sacramental Puritanism', *Renaissance Quarterly,* 54:4.1, 2001, p. 1274. For more on Herbert's Puritan affinities, see Jeanne Clayton Hunter, 'George Herbert and Puritan Piety', *Journal of Religion*, 68.2, April 1988, pp. 226–41, and Daniel W. Doerksen, 'Show and Tell: George Herbert, Richard Sibbes, and Communings with God', *Christianity and Literature,* 51.2, Winter 2002, pp. 175–90.

[15] Cf. the early manuscript commentary on Herbert's *Temple* by George Ryley, *Mr. Herbert's Temple and Church Militant Explained and Improved*, ed. Maureen Boyd and Cedric C. Brown, New York, Garland, 1987, pp. 16–17: 'be not satisfied with private or family, to the neglect of the public, worship'.

[16] George Herbert, 'The Church-porch', lines 397-402, in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 61.

[17] Herbert, 'The Church-porch', lines 409-410, in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 61.

[18] Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit*, in MW, II:247.

the Reproaches.

However, despite his defence of the conformist liturgical prayer that Bunyan rejects, Herbert, like Bunyan, believes that true prayer must come from within, from the heart. Critics have noted that, although many of the poems in *The Temple* are inspired by the physical features of a parish church, Herbert consistently uses these outward objects as symbolic of the inner landscape of the human heart in which Christ must come to dwell. For instance, 'The Altar', one of several pattern poems shaped like an object, is shaped like a sacrificial altar:[19]

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy servant reares,
Made of a heart and cemented with teares;
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.
A HEART alone
Is such a stone,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame
To praise thy name.
That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
Oh, let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctify this ALTAR to be thine. 20

Yet Herbert's altar is explicitly identified as 'made of a heart', and Herbert elaborates, 'A HEART alone / is such a stone'.

Even in their apparent positions on written prayers, Bunyan and Herbert are not as far apart in their actual practice as they may appear to be in principle. This is especially so in their writing. Both Bunyan and Herbert are Biblically saturated writers, with phrases, images and allusions from Biblical texts pervading their writing. In Herbert's case, the Biblical language is sometimes mediated through its appearance in the church's liturgy. For instance, Herbert's poem 'Mattens' paraphrases and explores the language of Psalm 8 and Psalm 95, which form part of the Prayer Book service of morning prayer, and his 'Even-song' poem likewise paraphrases the scriptural texts in the liturgy of evening prayer.[21] Herbert's more Puritan-like sensibilities are seen in his advocacy of plain style devotion over ornate poetry, with his poem 'Jordan (I)' concluding 'Nor let them punish me with loss of ryme, / Who plainly say, *My God, My King*'.[22]

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[19] Incidentally, one of the Puritan objections to Laudian 'innovations' in the Church of England was the restoration of fixed stone 'altars' to churches rather than moveable wooden 'tables' for the Lord's Supper: see, for instance, Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton: Literature, Religion, and Cultural Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 46–47, 95–100; and Kathleen Lynch, 'George Herbert's Holy "Altar", Name and Thing', *George Herbert Journal*, 17.1, 1998, pp. 41–60.

[20] Herbert, 'The Altar', in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 92.

[21] See Wilcox's notes and Noel Kinnamon, 'Notes on the Psalms in Herbert's *The Temple*', *George Herbert Journal*, 4.2, Spring 1981, pp. 10–29.

[22] Herbert, 'Jordan (I), in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 200. On this poem in relation to discussions of plain style, see, for instance, Cedric C. Brown and Maureen Boyd, 'The Homely

In the middle of a passage excoriating the Prayer Book, Bunyan explains why outward forms of prayer are insufficient:

> For right prayer, must as well in the outward part of it, in the outward expression, as in the inward intention, come from what the soul doth apprehend in the Light of the Spirit; otherwise it is condemned as vain and an abomination (*Mark* 7.); because the heart and tongue do not go along joyntly in the same, *Prov*. 21. 9. *Isa*. 29. 13; neither indeed can they, unless the Spirit help our infirmities. And this *David* knew full well, which did make him cry, *Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise,* Psal. 51. 10, 11.[23]

It is somewhat ironic that the text Bunyan cites here is one that is directly used near the beginning of both morning and evening prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, in which the priest says 'O Lord, open thou our lips', and the response is 'And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise'.[24]

In *I Will Pray with the Spirit*, Bunyan stresses the inadequacy of human words to express true prayer, but also suggests that the presence of the Spirit to enable prayer can have a concrete effect on the kind of words used. In his exposition of the 'affectionate', meaning heartfelt and emotional, nature of prayer, Bunyan observes how this is manifested in certain scriptural texts:

> Mark ye here, *My soul longeth, it longeth, it longeth, &c. Oh what affection is here discovered in Prayer!*
>
> The like you have in *Daniel*, Dan. 9. 19. *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do; defer not for thy Names sake, O my God.* Every syllable carrieth a mighty vehemency in it.[25]

Though the repetition of 'it longeth' is Bunyan's, collating several scriptural texts, the triple repetition of 'O Lord' is in the Daniel text. The presence of the Spirit, by moving the heart, shapes the very syllables of these prayers.

More strikingly, Bunyan puts prayers in the mouths of his characters in his allegorical works. In his battle allegory *The Holy War*, prayer is figured by the citizens of the beleaguered city of Mansoul sending petitions to King Shaddai to request his deliverance. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, while it is sometimes simply recorded that characters prayed, at times the actual words of their prayers are given. For instance, when Christian traverses the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he makes use of the weapon of 'all-prayer' that forms part of the spiritual armour he has been given earlier:

> And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises, […] that he was forced to put up his Sword, and betake himself to another weapon called **All-prayer*: so he cried in my hearing, **O Lord I beseech thee deliver my Soul*.[26]

Christian's prayer is identified by Bunyan's note in the margin as a quotation from Psalm 116:4. On his way through the valley, Christian hears the voice of another man,

Sense of Herbert's "Jordan"', *Studies in Philology*, 79.2, Spring 1982, pp. 147–161.

[23] Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit,* in MW, II:250.

[24] *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 241, 252.

[25] Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit*, in MW, II:239.

[26] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress: From this World to that which is to Come*, ed. James Blanton Wharey, rev. ed. Roger Sharrock, Oxford, Clarendon, 1960, p. 63 (see p. 54 for the bestowal of 'All-Prayer').

later identified as Faithful, who becomes Christian's companion, also praying the psalms, in this case Psalm 23:

> When *Christian* had travelled in this disconsolate condition some considerable time, he thought he heard the voice of a man, as going before him, saying, *Though I walk through the valley of the shaddow of death, I will fear none ill, for thou art with me.*[27]

Here Christian and Faithful are praying the written prayers of the psalmist and appropriating them to their own situation, and Bunyan as author is recording these written prayers as a model for his readers to follow in similar circumstances, and thus arguably acting as a quasi-liturgist.

Among the poems of *The Temple* is Herbert's paraphrase of the twenty-third psalm. The psalms provide a point of continuity between the liturgical conformist worship of the Church of England, which adapts the medieval monastic tradition by assigning set psalms for each day, and ostensibly non-liturgical Dissenting worship, which often featured the singing of metrical psalms such as found in the famous collection by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins.[28] *The Pilgrim's Progress* also contains verse paraphrases of the twenty-third psalm. For instance, in *The Second Part of The Pilgrim's Progress* (1683), originally a separately published sequel, a suppertime singer at the Interpreter's house sings the following:

> *The Lord is only my support,*
> *And he that doth me feed:*
> *How can I then want any thing*
> *Whereof I stand in need?*[29]

This is, one might think, suspiciously similar to the opening of Herbert's paraphrase, which begins:

> The God of love my shepherd is,
> And he that doth me feed:
> While he is mine, and I am his,
> What can I want or need?[30]

However, this is not necessarily evidence that Bunyan read Herbert. Rather, both are lifting the beginning of William Whittingham's metrical version from Sternhold and Hopkins, which is almost identical to Bunyan's version except that Bunyan substitutes 'want' where Whittingham has 'lack':

> *The Lord is onely my support,*
> *and he that doth me feed:*
> *How can I then lacke anything,*
> *whereof I stand in need:*[31]

[27] Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 64.

[28] Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins et al., *The Whole Booke of Psalmes collected into Englysh Metre*, John Day, 1562. On early modern psalm culture, see, for instance, Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2004; Linda Phyllis Austern, Kari Boyd McBride and David L. Orvis (eds.), *Psalms in the Early Modern World*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2011; and Ruth Ahnert (ed.), 'Re-forming the Psalms in Tudor England', special issue of *Renaissance Studies*, 29.4, September 2015, pp. 493–680.

[29] Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 204.

[30] Herbert, 'The 23. Psalm', in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 594. For Dissenting adaptations of Herbert's paraphrase of Psalm 23, see Townend, '"[S]weet singer of our *Israel*"', pp. 42–49.

[31] Cited in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox, p. 592.

One Biblical text that poses difficulties for anti-liturgical Nonconformists such as Bunyan is the Lord's Prayer, an undeniably scriptural form of prayer given by Christ himself. However, Bunyan, along with some Nonconformists (though not all) rejects the idea that Christ intended the Lord's Prayer as a 'stinted form' to be recited word for word, pointing out that the versions in Matthew's gospel and Luke's gospel are not identical.[32] Bunyan particularly objects to teaching children to pray by parroting the Lord's Prayer and other prayers, although Bunyan's book of children's verse *A Book for Boys and Girls* curiously includes a close poetic paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer.[33]

Rather, Bunyan advocates a good dose of hellfire to teach both children and adults to pray authentically:

> Oh how far short are those people of being sensible of this, who count it enough to teach themselves and children, to say the Lords Prayer, the Creed, with other sayings; when as God knows they are senceless of themselves, their misery, or what it is to be brought to God through Christ! Ah poor souls! study your misery, and cry to God to shew you your confused blindness and ignorance, before you be so rife in calling God your Father, or learning your children either so to say.[34]

It is the sense of desperation about sin and its consequences that drives people to true prayer. This is so for Hopeful, Christian's second companion who takes the place of Faithful after Faithful's martyrdom at Vanity Fair. Hopeful later recalls that it was Faithful who encouraged him to come to God for mercy, and to pray what looks remarkably like an early form of what some modern evangelical Christians would call the sinner's prayer:

> I told him that I knew not what to say when I came: *and he bid me say to this effect, *God be merciful to me a sinner, and make me to know and believe in Jesus Christ; for I see that if his righteousness had not been, or I have not faith in that righteousness, I am utterly cast away: Lord, I have heard that thou art a merciful God, and hast ordained that thy Son Jesus Christ should be the Saviour of the world; and moreover, that thou art willing to bestow him upon such a poor sinner as I am, (and I am a sinner indeed) Lord take therefore this opportunity, and magnifie thy grace in the Salvation of my soul, through thy Son Jesus Christ*. Amen.[35]

The beginning of this prayer once again appropriates the words of a scriptural prayer, that of the publican/tax collector in Jesus' parable who went home justified rather than the presumptuous Pharisee. However for Hopeful, praying this prayer does not bring an immediate assurance of salvation, but is rather the beginning of a lengthy wrestling in prayer.[36] When Christian asks '*And did you do as you were bidden?*'

[32] For varied Puritan attitudes to the Lord's Prayer, see Najapfour, '"After this manner therefore pray ye": Puritan Perspectives on the Lord's Prayer'. On Bunyan and the Lord's Prayer, see David Gay, 'The Nameless Instrument: Bunyan's Representation of Prayer in *The Holy War'*, *Bunyan Studies* 12, 2006/2007, 88–104, and David Gay, 'The Name of the Prayer in *The Holy War*', *Bunyan Studies*, 19, 2015, 98–117. I am not yet persuaded that Gay gives sufficient evidence to establish that the Lord's Prayer is the 'nameless instrument' of Bunyan's battle allegory *The Holy War,* but much of his wider discussion of the issue is helpful.

[33] John Bunyan, 'Upon the Lord's Prayer', *A Book for Boys and Girls,* in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan,* vol. VI, ed. Graham Midgeley, Oxford, Clarendon, 1980, p. 204.

[34] Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit,* pp. 252–3.

[35] Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress,* p. 142.

[36] In an influential though contested claim, historian David Bebbington sees differing expectations around assurance of salvation as a key point of contrast between the Puritans and the heirs of

he replies, 'Yes, over, and over, and over', and continues 'So I continued Praying until the Father shewed me his Son.' [37]

The sense of desperation motivating true prayer is evident in *The Second Part of the Pilgrim's Progress* in the touching depiction of Mercie, who, though a travelling companion to Christian's wife Christiana, doubts whether she has a true summons to come to the king. This leads her to knock at the gate with a startling fervency that leads Christiana to conclude that Mercie prays better than she does.[38] This kind of desperation is also modelled in many of Herbert's poems, such as 'Affliction (III)', which begins 'My heart did heave, and there came forth *O God!*'[39]

Bunyan's *I Will Pray with the Spirit* dwells on Paul's words about the Spirit interceding with groans that cannot be uttered, commenting 'The soul, I say, feels, and from feeling, sighs, groans, and breaks at the heart'.[40] Similarly, Herbert's poem 'Prayer (I)', seeks to verbalise that which goes beyond words. As critics have frequently noted, Herbert's poem is a single sentence that lacks a finite verb and so remains grammatically incomplete, but it comes to rest by gesturing to a resolution beyond the power of language to articulate:[41]

> Church-bels beyond the starres heard, the souls bloud,
> The land of spices; something understood.[42]

I would argue that, despite his defence of the forms of prayer rejected by Bunyan, Herbert shares the spirit of prayer that Bunyan commends, and despite his conscious rejection of written liturgy, Bunyan is a liturgist despite himself. Both Bunyan and Herbert have a Biblically informed liturgical imagination, and, although my theological sympathies generally lie with Bunyan against his persecutors, I agree with Judge Kelynge, as Herbert would, that 'we might pray with the spirit, and with under-standing, and with the Common Prayer-book also'.

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the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival: 'Whereas the Puritans had held that assurance is rare, late and the fruit of struggle in the experience of believers, the Evangelicals believed it to be general, normally given at conversion and the result of simple acceptance of the gift of God.' (David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, 1989, rep. Routledge, 2003, pp. 42–43.)

[37] Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 142.

[38] Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress,* pp. 187–90.

[39] Herbert, 'Affliction (III)', in *The English Poems of George Herbert,* p. 265.

[40] Bunyan, *I Will Pray with the Spirit,* in MW, II:237. On the motif of groaning in early modern prayer, see Naya Tsentourou, 'Sighs and Groans: Attending to the Passions in Early Modern Prayer', *Literature Compass*, 12.6, 2015, 262–273 (esp. p. 268 on Bunyan, and pp. 269–70 on Herbert).

[41] See, for instance, E.B. Greenwood, 'George Herbert's Sonnet "Prayer": A Stylistic Study', *Essays in Criticism*, 15.1, January 1965, pp. 27–45, and Mario Di Cesare, 'Image and Allusion in Herbert's "Prayer (I)"', *English Literary Renaissance* 11.3, September 1981, pp. 304–28. The final phrase perplexes critics. Some take it as leaving the poem unresolved (e.g. Greenwood, 'George Herbert's Sonnet', p. 28) , while others see the poem as pointing to a transcendent resolution beyond the ability of human language to articulate (for instance, Di Cesare, 'Image and Allusion', p. 323; R.E. Hughes, 'George Herbert's Rhetorical World', *Criticism*, 3.2, Spring 1961, p. 89).

[42] Herbert, 'Prayer (I)', in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, p. 178.

Notes on Contributors

David Barratt with Roger Pooley and Leland Ryken edited *The Discerning Reader: Christian Perspectives on Literature and Theory*, Apollos/Baker Books, 1995. The second edition of his *C. S. Lewis and his World*, retitled: *Narnia: C. S. Lewis and his World* appeared in 2005**.**

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Dr Roger Kojecký's *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism,* revised (2014) for the Amazon Kindle format, contains first publication of a paper on the role of the clerisy contributed by Eliot to an elite discussion group, The Moot. He is among the contributors to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (IVP). He is Secretary of the Christian Literary Studies Group and has lectured recently at universities in Toronto, Xiamen and Shanghai.

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