

The Parable of Dives and Lazarus and Bunyan —The Richness of the Beggar in *A Few Sighs from Hell*—*

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A Few Sighs from Hell (1658), John Bunyan's third publication following the two controversial tracts against Quakers, underlines its own formal quality of preaching by beginning with a full quotation of the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16. 19-31) from the Authorized Version (*MW* 1: 249-50).¹ The Scripture is, however, followed by such a lengthy commentary (*MW* 1: 250-362), in which the author thrashes it out verse by verse, that the reader can hardly recognize the traditional tripartite division of seventeenth-century Puritan sermons that should distinguish the three parts — explication, confirmation, and application—from each other (Mitchell 109). The collapse of the traditional boundaries in the sermon treatise represents the revolutionary milieu in the very last phase of the Protectorate when the Good Old Cause was crumbling away.

A Few Sighs from Hell is to be placed within the historical context of radical Puritanism before the Restoration. The sermon treatise was advertized in the 432nd issue of *Mercurius Politicus* (2-9 Sept. 1658) that announced the death of Oliver Cromwell, “the great Protector and Patron of the Evangelical Profession,” who went through “so many strange Revolutions of Providence” (Raymond 423; cf. *MW* 1: xxxv); the poor tinker's theological booklet could not have attracted public attention through a government newspaper except in the 1650s. *A Few Sighs from Hell* was Bunyan's exercise

of “the Evangelical Profession,” textualizing “so many strange Revolutions of Providence” under the Protectorate.

A Few Sighs from Hell had yet to undergo more “strange Revolutions of Providence” even after the Restoration. Bunyan’s sermon treatise was ushered into the reading public by the preface of John Gibbs (“I. G.”), the Baptist vicar of Newport Pagnell, who was to be ejected from the post in 1660,² when the author was imprisoned for unlicensed preaching. Francis Smith, the printer of the book in the subsequent Restoration editions, shared the humiliating experience of imprisonment with Bunyan in the reign of Charles II (Cragg 99). The author, the preface contributor, and the printer of the sermon treatise were all expelled from public life after the Restoration.

The book, however, died hard. In spite of the persecution of dissenters under the Clarendon Code, it went into the seventh edition in the Restoration period; the eighteenth century saw a flood of countless reprints not only in England but in Scotland, Ireland, and colonial America as well (MW I: 227). *A Few Sighs from Hell*, in short, was to become a popular book in Nonconformist and Evangelical circles after the Glorious Revolution.³ The wide dissemination of the sermon treatise by the Bedford tinker is remarkable, especially considering the fact that his first two published works—*Some Gospel-Truths Opened* (1656) and *A Vindication of Some Gospel-Truths Opened* (1657)—survive only in single editions. *A Few Sighs from Hell* was the first popular success of Bunyan the writer; its popularity — at least at the early stage of Bunyan’s reception — was comparable to that of his major works, such as *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

The popularity of *A Few Sighs from Hell* in the eighteenth century shows itself, for example, in one of Laurence Sterne’s sermons. Expounding the

parable of Dives and Lazarus, the author of *Tristram Shandy* summarizes Lazarus' condition as follows: "Overcharged with . . . a thousand unpitied wants *in a pilgrimage* through an inhospitable world, the poor man sinks silently under his *burden*" (Sterne 2: 20; italics mine). "[T]he poor man" evidently refers to "a certain beggar, named Lazarus" in Luke 16. 20. The beggar in the Bible, however, is "laid at his [i.e. the rich man's] gate full of sores"; neither does he move about "in a pilgrimage" nor carry a "burden." Sterne sees in the parable the image of "pilgrimage" and the presence of a "burden" about which the Scripture is completely silent. The textual noises in his rewriting of the Biblical text testify to such a popularity of *A Few Sighs from Hell* in eighteenth-century England that his exegesis of the parable cannot get around the intertextual echo of his seventeenth-century predecessor's most famous work: *The Pilgrim's Progress* that begins with the impressive representation of a poor "Man" with "a great burden upon his Back" (8). The beggar who moves around with "his burden" in Sterne's sermon is not, in fact, so much Biblical as Bunyanesque.

Sterne's exegesis, however, makes a sharp contrast with Bunyan's in the treatment of the ideological implication of the parable. Since Sterne's is a charity sermon that is delivered to "bespeak" his laymen's "alms-giving in behalf of those, who know not how to ask for it themselves" (2: 26), his implied audience are inevitably supposed to be so well-off that the preacher has to avoid mentioning the condemnation the "rich man" (Luke 16. 19) suffers in the Scripture; although "our SAVIOUR might further intend to discover to us by it, the dangers to which great riches naturally expose mankind," Sterne affirms that "it is not riches which are the cause of luxury, —but the corrupt calculation of the world" (2: 23-4). With a middle-class audience in his mind, he transfers the moral "lesson in the parable" from

“the dangers” of “riches” to “the true use and application of riches” (2: 24) that reminds us of Alexander Pope’s argument “Of the use of Riches” in his *Epistle to Burlington* and *Epistle to Bathurst*. Sterne’s sermon on the parable of Dives and Lazarus shares the eighteenth-century attempt to depoliticize the issue of unequal property in the emerging modern consumption society.

The seventeenth-century Bedford tinker, on the contrary, underlines the class difference in the parable, as the second subtitle to the sermon treatise announces clearly, between “the Rich Man and the Beggar.” While Sterne plays the role of a social intercessor between the “two of the most opposite conditions” (2: 19), Bunyan takes a firm stand for “the Beggar” because the author is declared on the title page of the first edition to be a “Poor and Contemptible Servant of / Jesus Christ” whereas Gibbs’s preface introduces him as follows: “his outward condition, and former employment was mean, and his humane learning small” (*MW* 1: 243).⁴ The readers are encouraged through the description of the “outward condition” in the sermon treatise to identify Bunyan with the beggar because the author’s social lowliness is so deliberately foregrounded while the proper name of Dives is never mentioned so that the rich man may be pushed into the background.⁵

Bunyan describes the “outward appearance” (*MW* 1: 251) of the rich man in detail at the beginning of the sermon treatise, only to subvert it immediately in order to glorify in turn his own poor class, making use of the revolutionary topos of what Hill calls “the world turned upside down.” The Bedford tinker starts his preaching by drawing from the parable the two general lessons: (1) “[t]hat those who judge according to outward appearances, do for the most part judge amiss” and (2) “[t]hat they who look upon their outward enjoyments to be tokens of Gods special grace unto them, are also deceived . . . for a man of wealth, and a childe of the devil may make but one person”

(*MW* 1: 252). He insists that “that condition that is the saddest condition, according to outward appearance, is oft times the most excellent” (*MW* 1: 251). His sympathy turns out to be with the poor most unmistakably when he gives to the beggar’s conceivable envy of the rich man the following voice in represented speech: “Oh, that I were in that mans condition! . . . then I should live pleasantly, and might say to my soul, Soul, be of good cheer, eat, drink and be merry . . .” (*MW* 1: 251). His proleptic statement, in which the authorial voice is submerged in the beggar’s, is concerned exclusively with a possible objection from the poor, rather than from the rich whose response Sterne is to care about in the following century. With the badly-off audience alone in his mind, Bunyan looks into his own “soul” to turn the accepted hierarchy of the “outward” world upside down.

A Few Sighs from Hell addresses the poor audience, whose fundamental human rights are constantly threatened in their daily life, because his description of the difference between the rich man and the beggar in “outward appearance,” which intends to help the poor audience realize their own social status, concentrates on such basic matters as food and clothing in the parable. Bunyan characterizes the rich man, for example, by pointing to his “sorts of new suits, and dainty dishes every day” (*MW* 1: 251). The preacher’s repeated references to food and clothing draw on the text of the Bible in that the parable describes the rich man as “cloathed in purple, and fine linnen” (16. 19), and mentions “the rich mans table” (16. 21). To impress his audience with the socio-political problem of unequal property, Bunyan has recourse to a literal quotation from the former part of Verse 21: “And he [i.e. the beggar] desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich mans table” (*MW* 1: 251). Even if he goes so far as to suggest the ideological issue, the Bedford tinker keeps his exegesis strictly literal.

Bunyan defamiliarizes the social condition of the poor around him through his literal exegesis of the parable so that they may better understand why they remain destitute. Expounding again on Verse 21 the latter part of which reads “the dogs came also, and licked his sores,” the Bedford tinker draws a subversive conclusion “that the ungodly world do love their dogs better then the children of God” (*MW* 1: 256-7); the class difference between the rich man and the beggar is transformed into the spiritual opposition between “the ungodly” and “the children of God” while the audience are encouraged to recognize well-off people’s perversity which might otherwise be passed unnoticed in their daily life. Bunyan’s subsequent description develops the defamiliarizing effect of the remarkable parable:

You will say that’s strange. It is so indeed, yet is true, as will be clearly manifested, as for instance, how many pounds do some men spend in a year on their dogs, when in the mean while the poor Saints of God may starve for hunger. They will build houses for their dogs, when the Saints must be glad to wander, and lodge in dens and caves of the earth, *Heb.* 11. 38 and if they be in any of their houses for the hire thereof, they will warn them out, or eject them, or pull down the house over their heads, rather then not rid themselves of such Tenants. (*MW* 1: 257)

The strangeness of the world is highlighted with special references to a basic need besides food and clothing: shelter.

Bunyan’s defamiliarizing discourse on the problem of shelter for the poor, however, marks a point of his departure from the Biblical text of Luke 16. 19-31; Bunyan’s beggar begins, like Sterne’s, to move around whereas the Bible tells us, as we have seen, that the beggar is “laid at his [i.e. the rich

man's] gate full of sores." His deviation from the text of Luke 16. 19-31 is acknowledged by his own reference to another Biblical passage (Heb. 11. 38) when, generalizing Lazarus in the parable, he conjures up the image of "the poor Saints of God" who "must be glad to wander, and lodge in dens and caves of the earth." In the "strange" world of Bunyan, the "Saints of God" have to be "poor" people who constantly move around for wages, only to be ejected harshly out of rich people's "houses," where even dogs are fed well. The Bedford tinker's representation of poor people's daily humiliation under the oppression by the landed class derives its authority not so much from the Bible as from his own experience in the itinerant trade.⁶

The alienation of the wandering "Saints of God" from the "houses" with pet dogs inside shows its variation in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the episode of the Wicket-Gate which has no special reference to Luke 16. 19-31. Christiana, her children, and Mercy are horrified by a barking "Dog" at the Gate; "Knock they durst not, for fear of the Dog" (*PP* 188).⁷ While "the Dogs" in the parable are interpreted as "more favourable to the Saints, then the sinful world" in *A Few Sighs from Hell* (*MW* 1: 258), "the Dog" at the Wicket-Gate is defined in the marginal note in the text as the most "sinful" of the "world": "Devil, an enemy to Prayer" (*PP* 188). With all the differences, however, the episode in *The Pilgrim's Progress* ends with the abrupt identification of the pilgrims with "[t]he Beggars" whose image vaguely alludes to Bunyan's exposition of Verse 21 of the parable of Dives and Lazarus: "[t]he Beggars that go from Door to Door, will, rather then they lose a supposed Alms, run the hazzard of the bauling, barking, and biting too of a Dog" (*PP* 193). The annoyance of the wandering "Saints of God" at the gate of the "houses" with dogs inside, represented both in *A Few Sighs from Hell* and in *The Pilgrim's Progress* with so poignant details, suggests that

behind it is as much the personal memory of the “Poor and Contemptible” tinker as the authoritative presence of the text of the Bible.

The sense of being constantly ejected from “houses,” as a matter of fact, drives the preacher of *A Few Sighs from Hell* further away from the text of the Bible, intensifying the personal tone of the discourse. The Bedford tinker tells his audience that “the ungodly” avoid “the children of God”; “. . . if at any time a child of God should come into an house . . . , they do commonly wish either themselves, or the Saint out of doors . . . though if there come in at the same time a dog, or a drunken swearing wretch . . . they make him welcome . . .” (*MW* 1: 257) The scene has tacitly changed because “the ungodly” as well as “a child of God” may go “out of doors” while the “dog” is described as interchangeable with “a drunken swearing wretch”; the image of the private house of the rich man in the Bible is transformed into a public accommodation into which both the godly and the ungodly, sober or drunk, can be admitted with dogs. What the preacher has in mind is “the Tavern or Ale-house” (*MW* 1: 257) which has no relevance to the parable of Dives and Lazarus.

With the unexpected emergence of “the Tavern or Ale-house,” the discourse of the sermon treatise localizes itself, dividing the image of “houses” into two: the right house and the wrong one. In opposition to the “Ale-house” where “the children of God” are ill entertained, the preacher introduces another kind of house where they feel more at home, that is to say, a meeting house: “. . . if the Saints of God meet-together, pray together, and labour to edifie one another, you will stay till doomes-day (as they call it) before you will look into the house where they are.” (*MW* 1: 257-8) The localization of the discourse is seen most clearly in the abrupt change of pronouns from “they” to “you”; the preacher begins to address a specific local audience around

him. The Bedford tinker represents the local opposition between the culture of the “Ale-house” and that of the meeting house.

The local opposition, however, is so complicated that it cannot be explained away as an economic conflict between the oppressing Dives and the oppressed Lazarus. The complication of the situation is expressed in the fact that Bunyan puts himself on the side of the culture of the “Ale-house,” addressing the people in it in the second-person pronoun (“you”), rather than on the side of that of the meeting house, referring to “the Saints of God” in the third-person pronoun (“they”); Bunyan, in fact, calls the drinking people “friends” (*MW* 1: 258). With all his intimacy with the people in the “Ale-house,” he accuses them of being willing to go there “if it be two or three times in a week” (*MW* 1: 257). He critically points out, in other words, that even once a week are they reluctant to go to church: the meeting house where “the Saints of God” should assemble. There is an embarrassing situation in which Bunyan, who has compared himself to Lazarus, has to move into the world of the “Ale-house,” where his fellow people, like Dives, “eat, drink and be merry,” in order to liberate them from the ungodly place; the opposition between Dives and Lazarus is deconstructed by the discourse of the preaching beggar who moves around in his local community.

The first specific target of the Bedford tinker, who has to recover the sense of his own identity in the framework of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, is the “several filthy blind Priests” who, when the Bedford people “would have gone out to hear the word abroad,” used to “reprove” them (*MW* 1: 314-5). *A Few Sighs from Hell* becomes highly aggressive with the attack on the “priests,” who are specified again in the marginal note as the foremost adversaries —“O ye Priests / this word is / for you”—with one of the two explicit references to modern figures in the sermon treatise: Edmund Bonner,

the Marian Bishop of London (*MW*: 1: 314).⁸ The “Priests” the Bedford tinker accuses of keeping their laymen within their “parish” (*MW*: 1: 314) are reactionary rectors before the Revolution because he makes another reference to Bonner as “that blood-red Persecutor” (*MW*: 2: 253) in his objection to the revival of the Book of Common Prayer after the Restoration in *I Will Pray with the Spirit*, which ends with pointing to the spiritual corruption in “the Alehouse” (*MW* 2: 284). The association of Dives with anti-Puritan “Priests” is, as is seen in Milton’s *Animadversions* (1: 702-3), common in revolutionary Puritanism. Bunyan sticks to the Good Old Cause even in the very last phase of the Protectorate when he condemns the established “Priests” who forbade the Bedford people to move around for better preachers; the Bedford tinker accuses the professional clergy of having kept the laymen within the “ignorance” (*MW* 1: 314) of their “parish” the cultural center of which was not so much the meeting house as the “Alehouse.”

With the “filthy blind Priests” banished from the “parish” by the establishment of the Bedford Free Church in 1650 (Brown 77), the local people have still been kept, according to Bunyan, within the ignorant culture of the “Alehouse” by the “rich ungodly Landlords” (*MW* 1: 315). Imposing the image of Dives successively on the “landlords,” the Bedford tinker gives his revolutionary principle a peculiar application with local details, which urban intellectual Puritans like Milton could not have afforded. The “rich ungodly Landlords,” as the “filthy blind Priests” did, discourage popular mobility because they “so keep under their poor Tenants, that they dare not go out to hear the word, for fear their Rent should be raised, or they turned out of their houses” (*MW* 1: 315); the “rich ungodly Landlords,” exercising their worldly power in order to defend it, obstruct Bunyan’s missions at the meeting house where the spiritual power of the word of God is preached.

They represent the culture of the “Alehouse” because Bunyan also calls them “*drunken proud, rich, and scornful Landlords*” (*MW* 1: 316; italics mine). There is a sharp contest over the “Poor Tenants” between the two houses: the meeting house, the cultural symbol of spiritual power, and the “Alehouse,” that of worldly power.

Unlike Dives who keeps the poor away from his house, the “Landlords” in Bedford are willing not only to keep their “poor Tenants” within “their houses” but also to invite the poor into the “Alehouse” in order to keep them away from the meeting house. The “landlords” have had a considerable success in gaining popularity among the poor; the Bedford tinker bitterly notices the situation because his indignant address to the “drunken proud, rich, and scornful Landlords” is immediately extended to the “mad-brain’d blasphemous Husbands, that are against the godly and chaste conversation of” their “wives” as well as to the masters who “hold” their “Servants so hard to it, that” they “will not spare them time to hear the word” (*MW* 1: 316). The epithet of the “Husbands” — “mad-brain’d blasphemous” — suggests that they join the company of the “drunken proud, rich, and scornful Landlords” in the “Alehouse,” leaving their “wives” at home, to make fun of the godly in the meeting house; traditionally, the landed class in the country “with strong ale and beef, the country rules,” as John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, bears witness to in “A Letter from Artemisa in the Town to Chloe in the Country” (213). The “Alehouse” is, the Bedford tinker is afraid, more attractive in general to poor people than the meeting house.

Still, there are “poor souls” (*MW* 1: 336) that prefer the word of God to “ale and beef,” like the “wives” who hold “the godly and chaste conversation,” although they are mute and helpless under the social pressure of their traditional ties. *A Few Sighs from Hell* becomes most impressive when the

Bedford tinker gives sympathetic voices to the three mute people who, imprisoned in wrong houses, wish that they could go to the meeting house (*MW* 1: 336). The first figure is oppressed by the traditional system of local employment as well as of kinship: “Oh! I dare not for my Master, my Brother, my Landlord, I shall lose his favour, his house of work, and so decay my calling.” The intimidation of the loss of the “house of work” renders a more domestic development to the case of the second figure who is a young son always threatened by his tyrant father: “. . . I would willingly go in this way, but for my Father, he chides and tells me, he will not stand my friend when I come to wants; I shall never enjoy a pennyworth of his goods, he will disinherit me.” The patriarchal oppression in the worldly household develops from the threat of disinheritance to that of domestic violence of which the last figure complains as follows: “And I dare not, . . . for my Husband, for he will be a railing, and tells me, he will turn me out of doors, he will beat me, and cut off my legs.” The fear of being cast “out of doors,” which oppresses all the nameless poor figures (including the Bedford tinker), recapitulates all the poignant comments in *A Few Sighs from Hell* on the meaning of homelessness in the parable of Dives and Lazarus while the issue of patriarchy, which appears in the latter two cases, suggests that all the social problems derive from the power relationship in the domestic sphere.

The issue of patriarchy in *A Few Sighs from Hell* lends its more developed versions to Bunyan’s later major works, such as *Grace Abounding*, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The parable of Dives and Lazarus is conjured up as well in his spiritual autobiography as follows:

Again, as I was at another time very ill and weak . . . methought, I said, there was no way but to Hell I must; but behold, just as I was in the

midst of those fears, these words of the Angels carrying *Lazarus* into *Abrahams* bosom darted in upon me, as who should say, *So it shall be with thee when thou dost leave this World.* This did sweetly revive my Spirit . . . (*Grace Abounding* 81)

The figure of “the Angels carrying *Lazarus* into *Abrahams* bosom,” which refers to Luke 16. 22, is invoked by the occasion of grave sickness that connects the “ill and weak” autobiographer with the beggar “full of sores” in the parable.⁹ The “words” of “the Angels carrying *Lazarus* into *Abrahams* bosom,” however, point not to the Biblical text, in which they never speak, but to Bunyan’s personal concern: what will happen to him when he leaves “*this World.*” Identifying himself again with Lazarus, he concentrates on his own destination after his death with no reference to his family.

The issue of patriarchy, though absent from the text of *Grace Abounding*, takes shape in the same sickbed situation of *Badman*, the book called by the author himself “the Life and Death of the Ungodly, and . . . their travel from this world to Hell” (1), to make a sharp contrast with Bunyan’s spiritual autobiography. The sickbed episode in *Grace Abounding* shows us its interesting variation in *Badman* that describes the villain in “a very dangerous fit of sickness” (135) as follows:

[*Wise.*] His mind also seemed to be turned to his wife and child; but alas! ‘twas rather from conviction that God had given him concerning their happy estate over his, than for that he had any true love to the work of God that was in them. True, some shews of kindness he seemed to have for them, and so had rich *Dives*, when in Hell, to his five brethren that were yet in the world; yea he had such love, as to wish them in

Heaven, that they might not come thither to be tormented.

Atten. *Sick-bed Repentance is seldom good for any thing.* (*Badman*, 139).

Describing the same situation of “Sick-bed Repentance,” Bunyan identifies himself with Lazarus in his spiritual autobiography whereas comparing Badman to Dives; Bunyan insists also in *Saved by Grace*, referring again to the figure of “Lazarus the Beggar,” that “sick-bed Troubles” make a crucial difference between the godly and the ungodly (*MW* 8: 178). What specifically distinguishes Badman from Bunyan in “*Sick-bed Repentance*” is the issue of patriarchy; while the autobiographer does not mention any member of his family, the villain turns his “mind” to “his wife and child.”

The distinction between Badman and Bunyan is, however, puzzling to us because we are likely to think that the father who takes patriarchal care of his family even on his sickbed is more laudable than the one who dismisses all concern about his household. The patriarchal authority Badman exercises, however, is based on the wrong “conviction” that the propertied should have a divine power over the “happy estate,” just as “rich *Dives*” believes, even “when in Hell,” that he could govern the conduct of his “five brethren” in his “fathers house” (Luke 16. 27-8). Expounding the rich man’s “endless misery” in Hell in *A Few Sighs from Hell*, with a sarcastic warning against a “drunkard . . . singing on the Ale-bench” (we should remember here that Badman is “a Frequenter of Taverns and Tippling-houses” [45]), Bunyan blames those who despise the “little ones” like Lazarus “because they are not Gentlemen, because they cannot with *Pontius Pilate* speak Hebrew, Greek, and Latine”; on the Biblical grounds that “the least of the Lazarus’s of our Lord Jesus Christ” in this world is closer to the “house” of God the “Father,” the Bedford

tinker criticizes the “pride” and “covetousness” of “ungodly fathers” who presume that they could guide their dependents (*MW* 1: 303-5). Out from the puzzling distinction between the patriarchal Badman like Dives and the nonpatriarchal Bunyan like Lazarus comes the most profound representation of Bunyan’s resistance to any form of worldly government—his revolutionary spirit that has outlived his humiliating experience of defeat since the breakdown of the Protectorate.

The puzzling distinction between Dives and Lazarus develops its interrogative quality most fully in the allegory of Passion and Patience in the House of the Interpreter in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* whose subtitle, *From This World to That Which Is to Come*, evidently points to its close relationship with *Badman* as “the Life and Death of the Ungodly, and . . . their travel from this world to Hell.” Passion, who showed off his “Bag of Treasure” to Patience, soon “lavished all away, and had nothing left him but Raggs” (31). Passion and Patience are compared to Dives and Lazarus respectively in the Interpreter’s conclusion about this allegory: “Therefore it is said of *Dives*, *In thy life thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*” (32). The image of “Raggs,” in which Dives-like Passion is “tormented,” is underlined constantly when the Interpreter expounds on the allegory as follows: Patience “lavished all away, and had presently left him, nothing but Raggs; So will it be with all such Men at the end of this world” (31). The image of “Raggs” of Dives-like Passion is repeated once again when Christian tells the Interpreter that he understands that Patience “*will have the Glory of His, when the other hath nothing but Raggs*” (31). The “outward appearance” of “Raggs” is a distinctive feature that tells Dives from Lazarus, with whom Christian is encouraged to identify, “at the end of this world.”

The “outward appearance” of “Raggs” of Dives, however, subverts Christian’s identity as Lazarus in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* because the pilgrim is represented as “a Man cloathed with Raggs” at the beginning of the narrative (8); “outward appearance” is, as *A Few Sighs from Hell* insists again and again, always deceptive. The figure of “a Man cloathed with Raggs” suggests that Christian is originally a Dives rather than a Lazarus. The first thing the main character does when he sees the coming of “the end of this world” is, as a matter of fact, to break “his mind to his Wife and Children,” like Badman on his sickbed, in order to make them follow him (*PP* 8). It is not until he leaves behind “his Wife and Children,” running away “from his own door,” that he acquires the name of Christian (*PP* 10-11); in other words, he has to cast himself away from “his own door,” confessing the invalidity of patriarchy in order to transform himself from a Dives to a Lazarus. *Badman* is, in this respect, not a sequence but a prelude to *The Pilgrim’s Progress*; the latter begins where the former ends. Christian’s desertion of “his Wife and Children” is a radical way of paying his respect to their individuality and ultimately to God’s providence because they are able to start for the Celestial City by themselves, as is shown in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, without any help from their domestic leader; *Grace Abounding* repeatedly pays homage to the spiritual independence of the feminine in the lower class, such as his first wife (8) and the “three or four poor women sitting at a door” (14-5) in Bedford. The Bedford tinker pushes the most fundamental Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all the believers beyond patriarchy.¹⁰ The implication of the beggar in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus is a rich resource in the development of the revolutionary spirit of Bunyan throughout “so many strange Revolutions of Providence” in later seventeenth-century England.

Notes

- * This essay draws on the paper read at the 14th Meeting of the Bunyan Society, Tokyo, May 11, 1996.
- 1 All the quotations in this paper from Bunyan's works, unless otherwise mentioned, are from *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, which is abbreviated as *MW* in parentheses in the text, while all the references to the English Bible in this paper are to the Authorized Version on which Bunyan draws in the sermon treatise.
 - 2 The authorship of the preface by "I. G." is now ascribed to John Gibbs rather than John Gifford, the founder of the Bedford Church, who had died three years before the publication of the sermon treatise (*MW* 1: 398). See Greaves 83-5 for Gibbs's career as well as connections between Bedford and Newport Pagnell in the Nonconformist organized activity before and after the Restoration.
 - 3 See Watts 394-490 for the historical development from seventeenth-century Nonconformism to the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival; see also Davie's provocative general comments (12-4) on the changing significance of Bunyan in eighteenth-century dissenters.
 - 4 The social implication of Bunyan's self-fashioning as a poor and uneducated man is discussed in a wider contemporary context in Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity* 156-7 while the historical background against it is generously described in Hill, *A Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People* 16-27.
 - 5 Luke 16. 19-31 is the only parable of Jesus in which a character is given a proper name—Lazarus; since the other is nameless in the Scripture, the exegetical tradition has also given him the proper name of Dives, which derives from the Latin word for *rich* in the Vulgate that reads in 16. 19: "Homo quidam erat *dives* . . ." (italics mine). In *A Few Sighs from Hell*, Bunyan rigorously follows the Biblical text, which gives no name to the rich man, although he evidently knows the name of Dives, as we will see below.
 - 6 Although it is hardly possible to reconstruct the life of poor itinerants in seventeenth-century local communities because there are few reliable records about it, Furlong's brief but imaginative biographical comments on Bunyan's early life (47-8, 52-3) as well as Hill's substantial description of the historical background against it (125-43) are helpful to understand the significance of the author's personal experiences as a tinker that we glimpse here and there in his works; the authoritative description of the social tension between the landed class and itinerants or vagrants in seventeenth-

century England is found in Sharpe 206-24.

7 *The Pilgrim's Progress* is abbreviated as *PP* in parentheses in the text.

8 The other reference to a modern figure in the sermon treatise is made to John Foxe (*MW* 1: 358), the author of *Acts and Monuments* (1563), in which Bonner's persecution of Protestants in the reign of Queen Mary is repeatedly condemned. See Greaves 52-3 for the historical context in which Bunyan's reference to Bonner appears.

9 The sickness of Lazarus in Luke 16. 20 is intensified by the echo of another Lazarus raised from the dead by Jesus in John 11. 1-46 especially in this episode of Bunyan's spiritual autobiography because its concluding statement about the revival of his spirit corresponds with the image of the man who "rose from the dead" in the last phrase of the parable (Luke 16. 31) as well as with the following Johannine definition of the Redeemer: "I am the resurrection" (11. 25). The connection between the Lucan Lazarus and the Johannine Lazarus is noted in Matthew Henry's magnificent exegesis (first published in 1708-10) that recapitulates the seventeenth-century nonconformist commentaries on the Bible (5: 1043).

10 See Keeble's substantial argument about the significance of the feminine in Bunyan's thought in "Here is her Glory, even to be under Him," although he draws a diametrically opposite conclusion that "[h]is imaginative sympathy for women is never so intense as to jeopardise patriarchy" (147). The present paper is an attempt to offer a revisionist point of view to the leading Bunyan scholar's authoritative statement on the issue.

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