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John Bunyan and Socinianism

by NICHOLAS SEAGER
Keele University
E-mail: n.p.seager@keele.ac.uk

This article recovers John Bunyan's engagement with Socinianism in his doctrinal and imaginative writings. After surveying the rise of Socinianism in seventeenth-century England, the article augments the known theological contexts of Bunyan's disputes with the Quakers and the Latitudinarians by showing that he charges these groups with slighting the Son and so associates them with anti-Trinitarian heresy. Bunyan's recourse when affirming the Trinity is to biblical typology, a hermeneutical method and manner of structuring narratives which Bunyan uses to uphold the embattled orthodox views of Christ's divinity, the propitiatory atonement and justification by faith.

In the preface to John Bunyan's first publication, *Some gospel-truths opened* (1656), the author's friend and pastor, John Burton, wrote that 'this [work] discovers the damnable errors of those commonly called *Socinians*'.[1] Given that Bunyan's primary focus in this book is the errors of the Quakers, with Familists and Ranters as secondary targets, and that he does not mention Socinianism at all in the main text, Burton's assertion requires some explanation. In a similar manner, when he clashed with the Latitudinarian Edward Fowler in the 1670s, Bunyan labelled his opponent's beliefs 'the Religion of the *Socinians, Quakers, &c.* and not the Religion of Jesus Christ'.[2] This article brings together Bunyan's quarrel with the Quakers and his dispute with Fowler in a hitherto unremarked context: that of the seventeenth century's engagement with and controversies over Socinianism. This is perhaps a startling idea since Bunyan's learning, though rather more than he allowed, was nevertheless slight, and

I would like to thank Ann Hughes, Roger Pooley and the anonymous readers for this JOURNAL for their helpful comments and suggestions.

[1] John Bunyan, *Some gospel-truths opened according to the Scriptures*, ed. T. L. Underwood, in *The miscellaneous works of John Bunyan*, ed. Roger Sharrock and others, Oxford 1976–94, i. 7.

[2] Idem, *A defence of the doctrine of justification, by faith in Jesus Christ*, ed. T. L. Underwood, ibid. iv. 36.

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there is no obvious evidence that he read the Socinian works that existed in English. Moreover, we could be forgiven for thinking that Bunyan's writing career slots squarely between two pressure-points of Trinitarian controversy in England – the first following the First Civil War in the late 1640s and early 1650s, the second coming immediately after Bunyan's death in 1688. The justification for the association lies in the fact that Bunyan used the term 'Socinian' more emotively than descriptively, less to denote a developed theological position and more to stigmatise anti-Trinitarian tendencies, in particular a slighting (as he saw it) of the significance of the Son. This same tendency he detected in the Quakers and the Latitudinarians: hence, for Bunyan, the three were but interchangeable heresies.

Bunyan's awareness of the anti-Trinitarian challenge, which in this period was virtually synonymous with Socinianism, strengthened his strongly Christocentric theology, which partly essays to compensate for denials of the Son's divinity. Bunyan believed that justification came through faith in Jesus, not works or worship, conduct or conscience; he believed that original sin necessitated Christ's expiatory sacrifice and propitiatory atonement; he believed that Christ was a co-equal and consubstantial part of a triune godhead; and he believed that free grace and imputed righteousness were offered to an elect number of believers. Socinianism, in the Calvinist understanding at least, rejected all these doctrines. Therefore, as much as the Anglican mainstream that persecuted him after 1660, we need to view heterodox challenges to reformed orthodoxy such as Socinianism as helping to shape Bunyan's faith and writings – both his doctrinal and imaginative works. This essay argues that Bunyan's response and insights are less intellectual than imaginative, as he honed the habitual typological exegesis of his Nonconformist background to oppose anti-Trinitarianism. Bunyan brings to his controversial and expository divinity not scholarship but the resources of a great literary writer, in particular the perception of recurrent images and patterns in biblical narratives that he uses to valorise Christ.

An introduction to the growing Socinian threat will help to contextualise Bunyan's response. Anti-Trinitarianism migrated to England in earnest during a period of unprecedented religious experimentation in the 1630s and 1640s. Its modern roots lay in the humanistic biblical philology of the Renaissance, notably the challenge to the Trinity's scriptural authority implied by Erasmus' 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament, which omitted the contentious Johannine comma, a medieval insertion at 1 John v. 7–8 that lends weight to the consubstantiality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[3] The Spanish reformer Michael Servetus was burned by the

[3] Stephen D. Snobelen, '"To us there is but one God, the Father": antitrinitarian textual criticism in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England', in Ariel

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Genevan Council in 1553 for doggedly professing the anti-Trinitarian implications that Erasmus had prudently disavowed. Following Servetus, the most significant post-Reformation anti-Trinitarians were the Socinians, named for the Italian Fausto Sozzini, who in 1579 joined the Polish Minor Church or Polish Brethren, a Reformed Protestant group based at Raców, which believed that the Trinity had no biblical basis. After Sozzini's death in 1604, the Polish Brethren codified their beliefs, which entailed a rejection of the propitiatory atonement and a denial of original sin, in the Racovian Catechism (1605), and they continued throughout the seventeenth century to promote a rational, anti-metaphysical approach to faith that rejected 'mysterious' doctrines, particularly the Trinity.[4] When expelled from Poland in 1658, the Socinians found refuge in the Netherlands, though important figures in the history of English anti-Trinitarianism had already begun to disseminate their ideas at home.[5]

One set of thinkers which has been deemed important for the growth of Socinianism in England is the Great Tew Circle, a group which met at the Oxfordshire home of Lucius Cary, 2nd Viscount Falkland, in the 1630s and which is often considered a haven from Laudian uniformity. The Great Tew Circle promoted a rational approach to doctrine and scepticism of religious authority, which elicited accusations of Socinianism, though probably more in the sense of rationalism than doctrinal deviancy. At any rate, two of Great Tew's theological heavyweights, William Chillingworth and John Hales, explicitly eschewed the Socinian denial of the Trinity.[6] As Hugh Trevor-Roper observes, individuals in this period accused of Socinianism in the 'wider sense' of rationalism generally chose to deny it in the 'narrow sense' of anti-Trinitarianism.[7] Those at Great Tew made use of

Hessayon and Nicholas Keene (eds), *Scripture and scholarship in early modern England*, Aldershot 2006, 116–36.

[4] For original Socinian texts see George Huntston Williams (ed.), *The Polish Brethren: documentation of the history and thought of Unitarianism in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and in the diaspora, 1601–1685*, Missoula 1980. Socinianism was by no means the doctrinal monolith that some of its opponents in seventeenth-century England made it through essentialist, sensationalised or inaccurate characterisations: there was variation in belief as well as change over time.

[5] See H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in seventeenth-century England*, Oxford 1951; Earl Morse Wilbur, *A history of Unitarianism*, Boston 1945–52, ii. 166–235; and Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and religion in the English revolution: the challenge of Socinianism*, Cambridge 2010. Paul C. H. Lim's *Mystery unveiled: the crisis of the Trinity in early modern England*, Oxford 2012, examines seventeenth-century Trinitarian controversy.

[6] *The works of the ever memorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton*, Glasgow 1765, i. 76–7; ii. 14. William Chillingworth rebuts the charge of anti-Trinitarianism levelled against him by the Jesuit, Edward Knott: *The religion of Protestants a safe way to salvation*, London 1638 (*RSTC* 5138), sig. §§2v. Francis Cheynell expresses his scepticism of Chillingworth's denial in *Chillingworthi novissima*, London 1644 (Wing C3810), sig. C4r–v.

[7] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: seventeenth-century essays*, Chicago 1988, 188.

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Socinian insights and methods without necessarily renouncing central doctrines. Nevertheless, the heresy-hunting Presbyterian, Francis Cheynell, in *The rise, growth, and danger of Socinianisme* (1643), was particularly severe on Chillingworth, and his pursuit did not end even with Chillingworth's death.[8] Though an alarmist, Cheynell was seeking a middle course between Laud's reverence for the Church Fathers and the Socinians' exaltation of private judgement, as well as opposing the Independent policy of widening toleration. Cheynell gives a representative outline of what Puritans feared:

> The *Socinian* Errour is *Fundamentall*[:] they deny Christs satisfaction, and so overthrow the foundation of our faith, the foundation of our Justification; they deny the Holy Trinity, and so take away the very Object of our Faith; they deny the Resurrection of these Bodies, and so take away the foundation of our hope; they deny originall sinne, and so take away the ground of our Humiliation, and indeed the necessity of regeneration; they advance the power of Nature, and destroy the efficacy of Grace. It is an *Antichristian* errour, because it takes away the very Essence and Person of *Jesus Christ*, for they deny him to be God, and so take away his Essence.[9]

The Trinity was inextricable from other necessary doctrines, a fact which also informs Bunyan's engagement with Socinianism. For Cheynell, Scripture is the sole reliable measure of truth, not received authority from without (Laud) or the natural faculty of reason from within (Socinianism). However, Protestant biblicism was exactly what threatened to overthrow the Trinity, as several controversialists in the 1640s and 1650s claimed that they were stripping Christianity down to the original scriptural message, rejecting the post-apostolic accretions of the fourth-century Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

Those in England accused of rejecting the Trinity up to the mid-1640s – Hales, Chillingworth, Anthony Wotton – by and large denied doing so.[10] Not so Paul Best, a very different figure, socially, intellectually and religiously, from those at Great Tew. Best came into contact with Socinianism while fighting in Eastern Europe in the Thirty Years' War; his subsequent preaching in Yorkshire attracted the attention of the authorities and he was imprisoned in 1645. Thomas Edwards, in *Gangraena* (1646), declared with dismay that 'we have those who overthrow the Doctrine of the Trinity [and] oppose the Divinity of Christ'.[11]

[8] See John Aubrey, *Brief lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick, London 1972, 223.

[9] Francis Cheynell, *The rise, growth, and danger of Socinianisme*, London 1643 (Wing C3815), 24.

[10] On Wotton see Peter Lake and David Como, '"Orthodoxy" and its discontents: settlement and the production of "consensus" in the London (Puritan) underground', *Journal of British Studies* xxxix (2000), 34–70 at pp. 38–48.

[11] Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena*, London 1646 (Wing E228), sig. A4r.

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As Ann Hughes indicates, Best's error is so far beyond the pale as to receive relatively brief mention in Edwards's heresiography. Instead, Best becomes a comparatively stable gauge, a 'litmus test', against which to measure other heresies: sects could be judged based on how vehemently they opposed Best.[12] The subject became harder to essentialise and sideline in this way when Best, tired of imprisonment without trial and at a time when his examinations had tailed off and his petitions were ignored, chose to force the issue by publishing *Mysteries discovered* (1647), the first avowedly Socinian work written by an Englishman in England. He argues that the Trinity is non-scriptural, the three persons of the godhead being consistently distinguished in the Bible, and that it is a popish imposition based on pagan polytheism, contrived to keep the populace in slavish awe.[13] Thanks to the support of opponents of religious persecution and uncertainty about how to prosecute blasphemy after the dismantling of Laudian episcopacy,[14] Best was released from prison in 1647 and withdrew to Yorkshire.

A man whom Best may have introduced to Socinianism, John Biddle, was altogether less retiring.[15] Biddle's unorthodox view of the Holy Ghost as the chief ministering spirit but distinct from God had attracted attention in late 1645. In *Gangraena* in 1646, Edwards complained that Biddle remained unquestioned, though he was committed to prison that summer.[16] Sharing Best's impatience with the legal system's sluggishness, Biddle published his *Twelve arguments* (1647) and *A confession of faith* (1648). The latter sets out six proto-Unitarian principles, as Biddle argues for 'the different nature, order and dignity of the three persons' of the Godhead, and establishes a hierarchy wherein the Father is 'the first person of the HOLY TRINITY'. Biddle denies Christ's pre-existence (prior, that is, to the Creation) and his consubstantiality and equality with his father and creator. He differentiates the divinity of Christ's *office* from his putative deity, saying that 'Christ in his humane Nature is a Person, and consequently... he cannot be a Person in the Divine Nature'.[17] No heretics had been executed in England since the anti-Trinitarians

[12] Ann Hughes, '*Gangraena' and the struggle for the English revolution*, Oxford 2004, 164. [13] Paul Best, *Mysteries discovered*, London 1647 (Wing B2053), 11–12.

[14] John Coffey, *Persecution and toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689*, Harlow 2000, 146.

[15] See Nigel Smith, '"And if God was one of us": Paul Best, John Biddle, and anti-Trinitarian heresy in seventeenth-century England', in David Loewenstein and John Marshall (eds), *Heresy, literature, and politics in early modern England*, Cambridge 2006, 160–84.

[16] Thomas Edwards, *The third part of Gangraena*, London 1646 (Wing E237), 87–8; Hughes, *'Gangraena' and the struggle*, 191–2.

[17] John Biddle, *A confession of faith touching the Holy Trinity, according to the Scriptures*, London 1648 (Wing B2873), 4, 3, 9–10.

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Edward Wightman and Bartholomew Legate in 1612.[18] James I and Archbishop Abbot in 1615 had explicitly defined heresy as the denial that Christ is one's saviour, and now, under the Long Parliament, the so-called Draconian Ordinance (May 1648) made denial of the Trinity a capital offence.[19] Uncertainty about the limits of toleration ensured that Biddle was not executed. By this time, heterodoxy was cropping up in all manner of places, including parliament, witnessed by the expulsion of John Fry after he poured scorn on the orthodox Trinitarian position, drawing the fire of amongst others the inexhaustible Cheynell, who was commissioned by parliament in 1650 to discredit Socinian Christology.[20]

Despite being in and out of prison, Biddle remained irrepressible in the early 1650s, translating into English several Socinian works, probably including the English Racovian Catechism that appeared in the summer of 1652 (it incorporated Biddle's idiosyncratic view of the Holy Spirit).[21] Though released from prison after the Act of Pardon and Oblivion of February 1652, Biddle's efforts to organise a congregation (over a century before the first official Unitarian church) were frustrated by his re-imprisonment in 1654 and 1655, his exile to the Scilly Isles in 1655, and ultimately his death in prison in 1662. In the 1650s the Cromwellian minister and later associate of Bunyan, John Owen, took over Cheynell's role as the foremost Socinian opponent, in which he continued beyond the re-establishment of Anglicanism and into the 1670s. In February 1652 Owen led a group of ministers who successfully petitioned parliament to have the Latin Racovian Catechism burned, just as its unwilling dedicatee, James I, had ordered it burned in 1614. Article XXXVII in the Instrument of Government of 1653 provided religious liberty only for 'such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ'.[22] Prompted to engage directly with the continental tradition after Biddle had translated Socinian works into English, Owen countered the Socinians' rejection of propitiatory

[18] Ian Atherton and David Como, 'The burning of Edward Wightman: Puritanism, prelacy and the politics of heresy in early modern England', *EHR* cxx (2005), 1215–50.

[19] 'An ordinance for the punishing of blasphemies and heresies,with the several penalties therein expressed', in *Acts and ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660*, ed. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, London 1911, 1133–6.

[20] John Fry, *The accuser sham'd*, London 1648 (Wing F2254), 21–3; Francis Cheynell, *The divine triunity of the father, son, and holy spirit*, London 1650 (Wing C3811), 426–30.

[21] On the Arian John Milton's role in licensing the English Racovian Catechism see Stephen B. Dobranski, 'Licensing Milton's heresy', in Stephen B. Dobranski and John P. Rumrich (eds), *Milton and heresy*, Cambridge 1998, 139–58.

[22] Sarah Mortimer discusses the Trinitarian settlement under Cromwell in *Reason and religion*, 205–32. Blair Worden looks at how anti-Trinitarianism stretched the limits of toleration in these years in 'Toleration and the Cromwellian protectorate', in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and toleration* (Studies in Church History xxi, 1984), 199–233.

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atonement and of justification by faith in *Diatriba de divina justitia* (1653) and *Vindiciae evangelicae or The mystery of the gospel vindicated and Socinianisme examined* (1655).[23] In 1656 Nicholas Estwick wrote a lengthy refutation of Biddle, wherein he asserted that God is 'but one in essence, most singularly one, and three glorious Persons', and blamed the rise of the heresy on the Civil War: 'There was not, I believe, till these daies of trouble, the least number of professed *Socinians* in all the Land.'[24] As Sarah Mortimer says, anxiety about Socinianism in England peaked in the mid-1650s.[25]

The Socinian challenge is thus part of the immediate background against which Bunyan first ventured into print. Burton's invocation of the Socinians in the preface to Bunyan's attack on the Quakers is explicable in this context by the fact that Bunyan tends to conflate the two groups. This was not unusual in the 1650s. For Bunyan in *Some gospel-truths opened* the Holy Trinity is at stake, because he felt that the Quaker emphasis on the spiritual Christ as an inner light within each believer undermined the significance of the historical Jesus who died on the cross to make atonement for man. The Quaker position had much in common with the Socinian heresy, because from Burton and Bunyan's perspective each misunderstood original sin, justification by faith, propitiatory atonement and the hypostatic union of the divine and human in Christ. Its connection with Socinianism may not be obvious now, but the Quaker movement was born and grew amidst Trinitarian controversy. The critical consensus, in lieu of any explicit publication of their beliefs, is that early Friends were biblical non-Trinitarians.[26] The treatment of James Nayler, who was deemed in 1656 to have blasphemously imitated the Messiah, was a hard-line reaction to the Quaker view of Christ, which Nathaniel Bacon said 'destroys the second person of the Trinity', and which Owen deemed their fundamental error.[27] The Quakers also embraced the controversial Christology of William Dell, whose emphasis on the inner spiritual existence of the believer seemed to leave little room for the

[23] See Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: reformed Catholic, Renaissance man*, Aldershot 2007, 35–66, and Tim Cooper, *John Owen, Richard Baxter and the formation of Nonconformity*, Aldershot 2011, 59–74.

[24] Nicholas Estwick, *Mr. Bidle's confession of faith, touching the Holy Trinity . . . examined and confuted*, London 1656 (Wing E3360), sigs A1r, A4r.

[25] Mortimer, *Reason and religion*, 220.

[26] Hugh Barbour, *Quakers in Puritan England*, New Haven 1964, 145; Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English revolution*, London 1985, 34–5; Patrick Nugent, 'Unitarian belief among early Quakers', *Journal from the Radical Reformation* ii (1993), 8–21. George Fox's rejection of the Trinity is representative: *The great mistery of the great whore unfolded*, London 1659 (Wing F1832), 99–100.

[27] Leopold Damrosch, Jr, *The sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan crackdown on the free spirit*, Cambridge, MA 1996, 92. Bacon and Owen are cited in Worden, 'Toleration', 220.

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historical Jesus or the Trinity.[28] William Penn spent time in the Tower of London for his view of the Trinity, which entailed a rejection of the doctrine of satisfaction, in *The sandy foundation shaken* (1668), a work which Bunyan had read and found objectionable.[29] The first known use of the word 'Unitarian' in print, not at present recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, was an attack on George Fox in 1673 by Henry Hedworth, himself a Unitarian.[30] So, although the conflation of Quakerism and Socinianism is not intuitive from a historical perspective where we know how each movement developed, Bunyan would have agreed with Ralph Farmer's contemporary assessment that 'one egge is not more like another, than the doctrines of the *Quakers* and *Socinians*'.[31]

Bunyan's sense of the Quakers' errors concerning Christ was both formative and enduring. *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners* (1666) is Bunyan's intensively introspective spiritual autobiography and not a history of the development of his ideas such as, for example, Richard Baxter provided in the 'self review' in his *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, or which Milton left in *De doctrina Christiana*. It is nevertheless possible to trace in it Bunyan's engagement with varieties of heterodox opinion. Bunyan recalls his youthful doubts over the divinity of Christ: 'Once I was much troubled to know whether the Lord Jesus was both man as well as God, and God as well as man.' His resolution of this conflict came in part from reading his Bible, but also from his awareness of 'the errors of the Quakers'; he explains that 'for as the Quakers did oppose his Truth, so God did the more confirm me in it, by leading me into the Scriptures that did wonderfully maintain it'.[32] In the expanded third edition (1672?), Bunyan laid eight Christological errors at the Quakers' door, and these reveal the correspondences that he saw between them and the Socinians. Most apparently, for Bunyan, the Quaker position was tantamount to rejecting justification by faith, and their extreme spiritualisation of Christ implied a rejection of the propitiatory atonement and of the coeval divinity and humanity of Jesus. In *Some gospel-truths opened*, with anti-Trinitarianism in mind, Bunyan maintains that the Son existed before the Creation along with the Father, and restates the orthodoxy that he is 'Co-eternal and also Co-equal with his Father'.

[28] On Dell and Quakers see Roger Pooley, 'Dell, William (*d.* 1669)', *ODNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7461, accessed 1 July 2011]. On Dell's Christology and Socinianism see Mortimer, *Reason and religion*, 171.

[29] See Richard L. Greaves, 'Introduction', to Bunyan, *Miscellaneous works*, viii, p. xliii.

[30] Henry Hedworth, *Controversie ended*, London 1673 (Wing H1351), 53–4. Hedworth was trying to show that Socinians accorded more prestige to the Son than did the Quakers.

[31] Ralph Farmer, *Sathan inthron'd in his chair of pestilence*, London [1656] (Wing F444), 28.

[32] John Bunyan, *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners*, ed. W. R. Owens, London 1987, 33.

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The notion of Christ as an inner light for all believers offered universal salvation, whereas the Calvinist Bunyan believed in a limited atonement and saw the inner light as equivalent to the conscience, by itself insufficient for redemption. Christ's life was a historical reality, Bunyan maintains, not merely a metaphor or a figure for a future event, as the Quakers implied; the second coming will also be an actual event and, in saying otherwise, the Quakers are not reading Scripture correctly – a charge to which I will return.[33]

If the Quakers in the 1650s are, for Bunyan, guilty of something like Docetism, reading Christ's life metaphorically and overly spiritualising the Son, then the error that he saw committed in the 1670s, by the future bishop of Gloucester, Edward Fowler, went too far the other way, approaching Pelagianism, and narrowly focusing on Christ's historical existence as an exemplar and teacher. Fowler's *The design of Christianity* (1671) prompted Bunyan to respond from prison with *A defence of the doctrine of justification, by faith in Jesus Christ* (1672). Fowler was a Latitudinarian, a term of abuse in this period for conformist Anglicans who seemed to attach little importance to dogma or liturgical practice.[34] To Bunyan, thinking back to the uniformity imposed in 1662, Fowler was a timeserving conformist, a representative of those who had imprisoned Bunyan, and a promoter of civil obedience – anathema to someone who had been incarcerated for preaching his creed in defiance of the law. Accordingly, Bunyan characterised Fowler as 'a glorious Latitudinarian, that can, as to Religion, turn and twist like an Eel on the Angle; or rather like the Weather-Cock that stands on the Steeple'.[35] Fowler contended that God cared more about the ethical state of believers than doctrinal purity and that '*the Promoting of* Holiness *was the Design of* our Saviour's whole Life and Conversation among Men'.[36] Christ was first and foremost a teacher and the aim of Christianity was to restore man to his original, prelapsarian state: 'The grand designe of the Gospel is to make men good: not to intoxicate their brains with notions, or furnish their heads with a systeme of opinions; but to reform mens lives, and purifie their natures.'[37] Bunyan

[33] Idem, *Miscellaneous works*, i. 47, 56–7, 44. Edward Burrough denies Bunyan's claims about Quaker Christology in *The true faith of the gospel of peace contended for, in the spirit of meekness*, London 1656 (Wing B6046), but see also his *The memorable works of a son of thunder*, London 1672 (Wing B5980), 484.

[34] John Spurr, '"Latitudinarianism" and the Restoration Church', *HJ* xxxi (1988), 61–82. Latitudinarians are often identified as the intellectual heirs to Great Tew rationalists like Chillingworth, as in M. I. J. Griffin, *Latitudinarianism in the seventeenth-century Church of England*, Leiden 1992, 89–91.

[35] Bunyan, *Miscellaneous works*, iv. 102.

[36] Edward Fowler, *The design of Christianity*, London 1671 (Wing F1698), 36.

[37] Idem, *The principles and practices, of certain moderate divines of the Church of England*, London 1670 (Wing F1711), 18.

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surmised that Fowler denied justification by faith, imputed righteousness and absolute predestination. Bunyan, of course, viewed Christ's role as much more than that of merely an exemplary man and labels Fowler's *Design* 'the abuse of Christ, of Scripture, and Reason; it is but a wresting and corrupting of the Word of God, both to your own destruction, and them that believe you'.[38] But Bunyan also repeatedly levels the charge of Socinianism against Fowler, grouping his opponent with 'the rest of the *Socinians*, and *Quakers*'.[39] Fowler was no Socinian in the strict sense, despite his links to Thomas Firmin's circle: he even attempted an affirmation of the Trinity against the Socinians in *Twenty-eight propositions* (1693) during the Trinitarian controversy of the 1690s, a time when Latitudinarians became more explicitly opposed to freethinking. Given the prevalence by the 1670s of this particular line of stigmatising an opponent, which caused Andrew Marvell to wearily declare that 'no man can tell you the truth but he must presently be a Socinian', it is easy to conclude that this is just one amongst many insults that Bunyan indiscriminately heaped on Fowler.[40]

However, if Socinianism is understood as a broader mode of rational enquiry, the logical *terminus* of which was a 'wrong' conception of Christ, and hence of eschatology, Bunyan was not just slinging mud. On a scale from Bunyan's solifidianism (relying on faith alone for salvation) to Biddle's Socinianism (emphasising reason and autonomous morality), Latitudinarianism sought a middle way that made practical divinity more important than systematic theology.[41] For Fowler and the Latitudinarians, natural religion provided a rational basis that is adequate for revelation and, hence, salvation – and this is available to all. Likewise, as Mortimer notes, Fausto Sozzini's most alarming claim as far as the orthodox were concerned 'was that Christ saved men through his teaching and example, not by atoning for their sins on the cross'.[42] From Bunyan's categorical and dogmatic perspective, Fowler, the denier of the work of grace, no less than the spiritualist Quakers, was an anti-Trinitarian. By Fowler's logic, a man may be wholly ignorant of Christ and yet be saved. And Fowler's view of human perfectibility put man on an equal footing with the incarnated Son of God. Whereas the Quakers mistakenly view Christ as a type, an anticipation of some further revelation, Fowler and his ilk erroneously stand by Adam (the type) rather than Christ (the antitype). In Bunyan's view Fowler diminished the role of Christ to that of a mere man who taught

[38] Bunyan, *Miscellaneous works,* iv. 35. [39] Ibid. iv. 106.

[40] Andrew Marvell, *The rehearsal transpros'd: the second part* (1672–3), ed. Martin Dzelzainis and Annabel Patterson, in *Prose works*, ed. Annabel Patterson and others, New Haven 2003, i. 396.

[41] See Isabel Rivers, *Reason, grace, and sentiment,* I: *Whichcote to Wesley: a study of the language of religion and ethics in England, 1660–1780*, Cambridge 1991, 25–163.

[42] Mortimer, *Reason and religion*, 15.

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obedience and charity. Resetting typology to the orthodox position, seeing Christ as a singular, complete and historical fulfilment of Old Testament shadows, was a major part of Bunyan's response to these anti-Trinitarian tendencies.

Bunyan discerns heterodoxy in Fowler's Christology, because it implies that Christ was not always to die for man, making his sacrifice an exigency, and God contingent. After quoting Fowler to this effect, Bunyan states: 'The Sum of your Doctrine therefore is, That Christ by his Death onely holds the Point of the Sword of Justice, *Not that he Received it into his own Soul.* That he Suspends the Curse from us; *Not that himself was made a Curse for us*; that the Guilt might be Remitted by our Vertues: *Not that he was made to be our Sin, our Curse, and Death*'.[43] Significantly, Bunyan goes on from the atonement to rebuke Fowler's neglect of writing about Christ as God:

> Your Discourse therefore of the Life and Conversation of the Lord Jesus, is none other than Heathenish: For you neither Treat of the Principle (his Godhead) by which he did his Works; neither do you in the least, in one Sillable, Aver the First, the main and Prime Reason of this his Conversation; only you Treat of it so far, as a mean Man might have considered it. And indeed it stood not with your Design to Treat aright with these things: For had you Mentioned the First, though but once, your Babel had tumbled about your Ears: For if in the Holy Jesus *did dwell the Word, One* of the *Three* in Heaven; or if the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was Truly, Essentially, and Naturally God; then must the *Principle* from whence his *Works* did *Proceed*, be *better* than the Principle from whence Proceeded the Goodness in *Adam*; otherwise *Adam* must be God and Man.[44]

Bunyan is concerned here to affirm the divinity of Christ, his place in the triune Godhead, and the ridiculousness of believing that the righteousness of Christ is equivalent only to that of a creature, the prelapsarian Adam. Fowler's views, Bunyan says, are incompatible with any sense that Christ is God: this is why he calls Fowler a Socinian.

As well as pursuing the full implications of Fowler's principles, Bunyan sends a message to anti-Trinitarians more generally: 'Faith in Jesus is as absolutely necessary as to believe immediately in the Divine being: Yea, without Faith in Jesus, whosoever believeth in God is sure to perish, and burn in Hell' (he invokes John viii. 24). Bunyan here explicitly endorses Article xxxvii of the 1653 Instrument of Government. Socinians would not on the whole deny that faith in Christ is necessary for salvation: Bunyan means that the right *kind* of faith is necessary, which is that specified in the Westminster Confession. Against Fowler's 'Socinian Complyances', Bunyan asserts the Trinity and the inadequacy of reason for salvation, averring that 'the design of Christianity as prescribed by you, is none other than the Errors of your own brain, the way of Death, the Sum and Heart of Papistical

[43] Bunyan, *Miscellaneous works,* iv. 44.

[44] Ibid. iv. 53.

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Quakerism, and is quite denyed by the Lord Jesus, and by his blessed Testament'.[45] Socinianism is certainly a useful brush with which to tar Fowler, but Bunyan saw that his opponent genuinely shared much with the anti-Trinitarians, which included Quakers, and it was this that impelled him to write back.

The close identification of Latitudinarianism, Quakerism and Socinianism in Bunyan's theology may provide a solution to the old problem of the significance of Ignorance in the allegory of *The pilgrim's progress* (1678–84). Ignorance has variously been identified as an adherent to natural religion (deism), a Latitudinarian and a Quaker in mutually exclusive readings.[46] The brisk young man from the Country of Conceit who believes that he will be saved because his good heart tells him that he is following God's commandments, who scorns revelation as a whimsy, and who thinks justification by faith alone will lead to moral anarchy proceeds with 'a false Faith', Christian informs him, 'because it taketh Justification from the personal Righteousness of Christ, and applies it to thy own', and it 'maketh not Christ a Justifier of thy person, but of thy actions'. When Ignorance nevertheless proclaims, as any Socinian might, that he thinks that he must believe in Christ for salvation, Christian responds:

> How! Think thou must believe in Christ, when thou seest not thy need of him! Thou neither seest thy original nor actual Infirmities, but hast such an Opinion of thyself, and of what thou doest, as plainly renders thee to be one that did never see the necessity of Christ's personal Righteousness to justify thee before God. How, then, dost thou say, I believe in Christ?

A wrong conception of Christ, based on a misguided conviction of man's salvific self-sufficiency, slighting the atonement and ignoring His 'Beings and Attributes as the Word hath taught', is tantamount to unbelief for Bunyan.[47] Bunyan's allegory is general as well as particular, and the attack is against the abstract quality of theological ignorance in all of the places where the author discerned it. The traits of Quakers, Latitudinarians and Socinians are hard to separate in Bunyan's divinity or in Ignorance's personality, but the same fundamental error characterised all three sects.

Bunyan's engagement with the Socinians elsewhere in his oeuvre is quite sparing, but none the less significant. For example, *The strait gate* (1676) closes with an inventory of 'Professors' who will be denied admittance at

[45] Ibid. iv. 118, 120, 120–1.

[46] John W. Draper identifies Ignorance as a deistic disciple of natural religion in 'Bunyan's Mr. Ignorance', *Modern Language Review* xxii (1927), 15–21. William York Tindall, amongst others, associates Ignorance with Fowler and the Latitudinarians in *John Bunyan: mechanick preacher*, New York 1934, 62–3. But Richard F. Hardin sees Ignorance as a Quaker in 'Bunyan, Mr. Ignorance, and the Quakers', *Studies in Philology* lxix (1972), 496–508.

[47] John Bunyan, *The pilgrim's progress*, ed. Roger Pooley, London 2008, 147–50.

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the entrance to heaven. This is a sliding scale of a dozen errors, ranging from those who only talk a good religion through those who abuse their position to formalists, legalists and libertines, the '*temporizing Latitudinarian*' like Fowler, and on to the wilfully ignorant and timeservers. This roll-call of the reprobate culminates with

> that *free-willer*, who denies to the holy Ghost the sole work in conversion; and that *Socinian*, who denieth to Christ that he hath made to God satisfaction for sin: and that *Quaker* who takes from Christ the two natures in his person, & I might add as many more: touching whose damnation (they dying as they are) the Scripture is plain: *these will seek to enter in, & shall not be able.*[48]

Bunyan conceives of heretical viewpoints on a vertical register of high to low that tends towards a rejection of the Holy Trinity. In *The strait gate*, he looks down the line from the Calvinist end, focusing on issues that affect the Trinity, seeing Quakers alongside Socinians in the far distance and Fowler and the Latitudinarians just a few spaces off. Like Ignorance, these will all discover that 'there was a way to hell, even from the Gates of Heaven'.[49]

Bunyan's expository writings on the Holy Trinity, then, cannot be read otherwise than as directly, not just incidentally, engaged with those who deny this doctrine or garble it in ways that he sees fit to correct. It is impossible to overstate the importance of the Trinity to Bunyan's outlook. As Richard Greaves states, 'For Bunyan the one fundamental belief that cannot be sacrificed is the doctrine of the Trinity.'[50] Bunyan's emphasis on the Trinity grew only stronger; his works of the late 1680s, including those left in manuscript and published posthumously in 1692, contain Bunyan's longest Trinitarian statements, which is hardly surprising in the wake of the publication of Stephen Nye's *History of the Unitarians, also called Socinians* (1687), the first of the 'Unitarian tracts', which ushered in the debates of the 1690s. Bunyan always defends and explains the Trinity with reference to the Bible; like his friend Owen he believed that the doctrine was authorised by Scripture. We might find this strategy surprising, because, as Mortimer notes, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the orthodox to defend the Trinity through Scripture alone, meaning that many were forced to affirm it through patristic authority or as an inexplicable mystery.[51] Beyond dogmatic conviction that the doctrine was scriptural, which Bunyan certainly held, the remainder of this essay will argue that Bunyan's recourse was not just to the Bible, but specifically to reading it through typology, a scripturally sanctioned mode of exegesis which supported (amongst other things) orthodox Trinitarianism. Typology, as

[48] Idem, *The strait gate*, ed. Graham Midgely, *Miscellaneous works*, v. 125, 126–7.
[49] Idem, *The pilgrim's progress*, 164.
[50] Greaves, *Glimpses of glory*, 562.
[51] Mortimer, *Reason and religion*, 40, 60, 78, 152, 167, 188, 225.

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W. R. Owens points out, was Bunyan's preferred hermeneutical method, the habitual and customary kind of biblical interpretation and application of Bunyan's radical Puritan tradition.[52] It particularly appealed to Bunyan because he believed that it upholds the soteriological necessity of Christ's sacrifice, his existence before the Incarnation, and the orthodox view that a Messiah was predicted and promised in Old Testament types which are fulfilled in New Testament antitypes. As Bunyan put it: 'In the *Old* Testament thou hast the promise, and in the *New*, the fulfilling of it.'[53] In Puritan pastoral theology, and the literary tradition that was its product, typology increasingly meant looking for signs of fulfilment and realisation in the personal experience of believers. This is what informs the allegory of *The pilgrim's progress*: Old Testament figures have to be read in their 'gospel sense' as prefigurations, and Christian experience is recurrent, following biblical patterns.[54] As well as using typology in this personal manner, Bunyan employs figural exegesis to support the orthodox view of Christ.

Bunyan's invocations of typology to counter denigrations of the Son are reflexive and strategic. Typology uses the Bible to understand the gradual revelation of God, which is consummated in Christ and his Church. It is an interpretive method established by the Church Fathers to provide continuity with the Hebraic tradition, and there is considerable authority for it in the New Testament. Typology survived the Reformation emphasis on the singular and literal sense of Scripture not just because it was sanctioned in the Gospels, but also because it was held to be not a distinct, metaphorical sense of the Word, but rather a part of the literal sense. As William Perkins put it, the literal and the figurative 'are not two senses, but two parts of one full & intire sense'.[55] Throughout the seventeenth century, typological exegesis was buttressed by a number of manuals that showed readers how to interpret the Old Testament as prefiguring or shadowing forth the New, from William Guild's *Moses unveiled* (1620) to Samuel Mather's *The figures or types of the Old Testament* (1683). After Bunyan's death the question of the validity of figural reading became an increasingly important sideline in the conflict between orthodox and heterodox hermeneutics: from the 1690s onwards, typological interpretation, which had until then attracted broad consent, came under attack from heterodox opponents of Christianity, particularly deists, who took their cue from earlier anti-Trinitarians in order to challenge the continuity

[52] W. R. Owens, 'John Bunyan and the Bible', in Anne Dunan-Page (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Bunyan*, Cambridge 2010, 39–50.

[53] John Bunyan, *Come and welcome to Jesus Christ*, ed. Richard L. Greaves, *Miscellaneous works*, viii. 307.

[54] On literary uses of typology in this period see Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant poetics and the seventeenth-century religious lyric*, Princeton 1979, 111–44.

[55] William Perkins, *A commentarie or exposition upon the first five chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians*, Cambridge 1604 (*RSTC* 19680), 346.

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of Christianity with the Hebrew Old Testament.[56] John Toland, for instance, attacked 'mysterious' Christianity, including the Trinity, and labelled typology 'a ridiculous imitation of the Jews', wrestling plain words into allegorical shapes.[57] This is a later stage in heterodoxy than concerns Bunyan, and it is important to retain the historical particularity of pre-1690s anti-Trinitarianism rather than reading it teleologically as anticipating the freethinking attacks on Christianity that came later. For example, Bunyan's opponents were still adherents to the Bible as the word of God. By contrast, writers of the next generation like Toland, Anthony Collins and Matthew Tindal did not just challenge certain doctrines based on their reading of Scripture; they opposed the adequacy of the Bible as a source for doctrine. The following discussion will show that Bunyan's recourse to typology accords a place of prominence to Christ's propitiation and that this should be placed against the background of the Socinian challenge.

Some examples from Bunyan's exegetical publications will show the connection between his employment of typology and the affirmation of the Trinity – and will demonstrate that Bunyan recognised the connection. The Christocentrism of typology is evident in *Solomon's temple spiritualized* (1688), which is effectively a handbook on the method:

> *Aaron* was a type of *Christ*; his *Offering*, a type of Christ's Offering his *Body*; the *Blood* of the Sacrifice, a type of the *Blood* of Christ; his *Garments*, a type of Christ's *Righteousness*; the *Mercy-seat*, a type of the *Throne* of *Grace*; the Incense, a type of Christ's *Praise*; and the *sprinkling* of the Blood upon the *Mercy-seat*, a type of Christ's *pleading* the vertue of his Sufferings for us in the presence of God in Heaven.[58]

This insistent passage is of a piece with Bunyan's unrelenting application of the Gospels to the Old Testament. *The house of the forest of Lebanon* (published in 1692), an exposition of 1 Kings vii, extends the typological methods of *Solomon's temple spiritualized*. Bunyan endeavours to show that Solomon's house is a type of the New Testament Church under persecution, bulwarked by the Trinity:

> This House had plenty of Windows, *three rows* of Windows on both sides the House.
>
> *In three rows.* By these Windows *in three rows*, perhaps was prefigured how into the Church in the Wilderness was to shine the *Doctrine of the Trinity*: yea, to signifie that she was to be possessed with that in her most low state, and when under her greatest Clouds. The Doctrine of the Trinity! that's the substance, that's the

[56] H. W. Frei, *The eclipse of biblical narrative: a study in eighteenth and nineteenth century hermeneutics*, New Haven 1974.

[57] John Toland, cited in Paul Korshin, 'The development of abstracted typology in England, 1650–1820', in Earl Miner (ed.), *Literary uses of typology: from the late Middle Ages to the present*, Princeton 1977, 147–203 at p. 163.

[58] John Bunyan, *Solomon's temple spiritualized*, ed. Graham Midgley, *Miscellaneous works*, vii. 106.

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ground and fundamental of all: For by this Doctrine, and by this *only*, the man is made a Christian; and he that has not this Doctrine, his Profession's not worth a button. 1 *John* 2·22, 23. Chap. 4·2, 3, 4. 2 *John* 9. 10.

You must know that sometimes the Church in the Wilderness has but little Light, but the diminution of her Light is not then so much in, or as to substantials, as it is to circumstantial things; she has then the substantials with her, in her darkest day, even *Windows in three rows*.[59]

Bunyan's presentation of the Trinity, a doctrine nestling in the Old Testament symbol, shows not only its centrality to his theology, but also his belief that the challenges to this doctrine are a manifestation of the 'Wilderness' (symbolised by the forest) through which Christianity is presently travelling. Bunyan goes on to give an exposition of the Trinity, which I will resist quoting at length, because it is consonant with what we have already seen and how he expounds the doctrine elsewhere. The larger point here is that typology, for Bunyan, provides a biblical authority for the Trinity: 'no House, that we read of in the Bible, was *thus* adorned with Light, or had Windows in *three rows*, but this; and answerable hereunto, no Congregation or Church, but the true Church of God, has the true anti-type thereof'.[60] At a time when people were denying the Trinity's biblical basis, typology became an important strategy for maintaining orthodoxy.

Next, there is the typological interpretation proffered in *An exposition on the first ten books of Genesis* (published in 1692). This work traces the figural anticipations of Christ's life in Genesis i–x, from the Creation and Fall to the Flood and subsequent generation of mankind. It starts, however, with an affirmation of the Trinity, which reads as an inventoried rejection of the Socinians' heterodox Christology: Bunyan asserts the distinctness and unity of the three-person Godhead, affirms the pre-existence of God the Son and denies hierarchy within the Trinity (subordinationism). Interestingly, Bunyan alights on biblical passages that had come under the scrutiny of anti-Trinitarians, but without any ostensible indication that he knew the usage to which these parts had been put, particularly 1 Cor. viii. 6 ('for us there is but one God, the Father') and the disputed verse at 1 John v. 7–8 ('the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one').[61] Gordon Campbell surmises that Bunyan knew of the alleged spuriousness of the latter, the Johannine comma, but ignored it because his English Bible, whichever it was, contained the verse, and he believed this was a true copy of God's word.[62] Campbell is mostly right: Bunyan's Trinitarianism

[59] Idem, *The house of the forest of Lebanon*, ed. Graham Midgley, *Miscellaneous works*, vii. 137.

[60] Ibid. vii. 137–8.

[61] Idem, *An exposition of the first ten books of Genesis*, ed. W. R. Owens, *Miscellaneous works*, xii.

[62] Gordon Campbell, '"Fishing in other men's waters": Bunyan and the theologians', in N. H. Keeble (ed.), *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus*, Oxford 1988, 137–51 at p. 145.

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is fideistic, untroubled by rather than unaware of problems of the historical transmission of doctrine. However, Bunyan was not prone to ignore problems; in other works he shows an awareness of passages that had been interpreted in anti-Trinitarian ways. If we were tentatively to adopt Frei's terms, Bunyan's theology falls inside the 'precritical' phase of biblical hermeneutics, preceding the sterner tests to scriptural authority that came in the 1690s and continued into the eighteenth century; however, Bunyan is responsive to the challenges rather than ignorant of them.

There is in Bunyan's writings the tacit knowledge that typology bolsters the Trinity. Typology was particularly serviceable against Socinianism and those other heterodox positions that Bunyan deemed tantamount to the same thing. This usage is intensified in the late works, but is present in his earliest books. In *Some gospel-truths opened* Bunyan aims to confute the Quakers' exclusively spiritual Christ by asserting scriptural prophecy and typology. Bunyan states that Christ 'was first promised to the Fathers', and he insists on 'Gods fore-ordaining and purposing, that a Christ the saviour should be'. Here he maintains that Old Testament events are 'types and shadowes' of New Testament ones.[63] Typology was crucial to defending the orthodox view of Christ because, as Erich Auerbach has shown, it maintained that both Old Testament type and New Testament antitype were historical events.[64] If the Quakers wanted to downplay Christ's historical role, they had to explain away two levels of historicity in Scripture. The type Bunyan explicates most fully in *Some gospel-truths opened* is that of Jonah, whose three days in the belly of the whale as a figure for Christ's three days in the tomb before the resurrection is sanctioned in the Gospels (Luke xi. 29–32; Matt. xii. 39–42).[65] Likewise, Bunyan twice uses typology in his attack on Fowler to insist on the divinity of Christ, the righteousness that is imputed to the elect, and the necessity of reading the Old Testament in its 'gospel' sense.[66] *Light for them that sit in darkness* (1675) is a significant publication, because Bunyan here warns his readers of the Christological errors of Quakers and Latitudinarians simultaneously, and he does so by explaining at length the persons, animals and objects in the Old Testament that shadow forth Christ in the New. 'The Scriptures of the Old Testament', he states, 'are filled with Promises of the Messias to come, Propheticall Promises, Typical Promises: For all the Types and shadows of the Saviour, are virtually so many Promises.'[67]

[63] Bunyan, *Miscellaneous works,* i. 30, 34–5.

[64] Erich Auerbach, 'Figura' (1944), trans. Ralph Manheim, in *Scenes from the drama of European literature* (1959), repr. Manchester 1984, 11–71 at p. 53.

[65] Bunyan, *Miscellaneous works,* i. 38.

[66] Ibid. iv. 88, 119.

[67] Idem, *Light for them that sit in darkness*, ed. Richard L. Greaves, *Miscellaneous works,* viii. 60.

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In his doctrinal works, written for different occasions and at different stages of his life, Bunyan's biblical expositions against those who relegate the significance of the Son make extensive use of typology. In addition, as has been previously recognised, typology provides Bunyan's most famous literary allegory, *The pilgrim's progress*, with structural integrity whilst also enforcing theological positions.[68] Bunyan justifies his use of fiction in the prefatory 'Apology' by asking: '*Were not God's Laws| His Gospel-Laws, in olden times held forth| By Types, Shadows and Metaphors?*'[69] Typology is, after all, an exercise in fictional patterning, a way of completing narratives. Michael Austin goes as far as to say that the two parts of *The pilgrim's progress* are typologically connected.[70] Typology in *The pilgrim's progress* supposes intertestamental unity, emphasising Christ as the more complete fulfilment of Old Testament figures that are incomplete because they are bound by Mosaic Law, and consequently supporting the doctrine of satisfaction, which Bunyan felt Quakers, Latitudinarians and Socinians were undermining. For instance, Faithful reflects on Talkative:

> This brings me to mind that of *Moses*, by which he describeth the Beast that is unclean. He is such an one that parteth the hoof, but cheweth the Cud; not that parteth the Hoof only, or that cheweth the Cud only. The Hare cheweth the Cud, but yet is unclean because he parteth not the hoof. And this truly resembleth Talkative: he cheweth the Cud, he seeketh knowledge, he cheweth upon the Word; but he divideth not the Hoof, he parteth not with the way of sinners; but as the Hare, he retaineth the foot of a dog or bear, and therefore is unclean.

Christian replies: 'You have spoke, for ought I know, the true Gospel sense of those Texts': the Old Testament rule anticipates the division of elect and reprobate under Christ's dispensation.[71] In describing Mr Legality as 'the son of the Bond-woman', Bunyan points to the new covenant and Christ's satisfaction of the Law, enforcing a typological interpretation by directing the reader via the margins to Galatians iv. 21–7, a foundational piece of typological interpretation, by which Paul says that Abraham's two children by his two wives – Ishmael by the bondwoman, Hagar, and Isaac by the freewoman, Sarah – represent the two covenants, the Mosaic and the Christian.[72] In *Of the law and a Christian* (published in 1692), Bunyan draws on this authoritative typology to demonstrate the doctrine of

[68] U. Milo Kauffmann, '*The pilgrim's progress' and traditions in Puritan meditation*, New Haven 1966, 25–60; E. Beatrice Batson, *John Bunyan: allegory and imagination*, London 1984, 125–33; Michael Davies, *Graceful reading: theology and narrative in the works of John Bunyan*, Oxford 2002, 71–3, 199–200.

[69] Bunyan, *The pilgrim's progress*, 6.

[70] Michael Austin, 'The figural logic of the sequel and the unity of *The pilgrim's progress*', *Studies in Philology* cii (2005), 484–509.

[71] Bunyan, *The pilgrim's progress*, 83–4.

[72] Ibid. 26.

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justification by faith, imputed righteousness and free grace, against the dictates of legalism:

> WHEREFORE when ever thou who believest in Jesus, doest hear the Law in its Thundering and Lightning fits, as if it would burn up Heaven and Earth; then say thou, I am freed from this Law, these Thunderings have nothing to do with my Soul; nay even this Law, while it thus Thunders and roareth, it doth both allow and approve of my righteousness. I know that *Hagar* would sometimes be domineering and high, even in *Sarahs* House and against her; but this she is not to be suffered to do, nay though *Sarah* herself be barren; wherefore serve it also as *Sarah* served her, and expel her out from thy house.[73]

At a time when key doctrines were being challenged by ardent biblicists, typology supplied Bunyan with a means of reading these doctrines back into the Bible. This is an aspect of early modern hermeneutics that has not been sufficiently recognised by studies that see typology in abeyance from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards.[74]

Quakerism threatened Bunyan's theology by denying the Trinity; Latitudinarians failed to see that they too were eroding this doctrine by shifting towards a theology of reasonable ethics and away from one of grace. Behind both new movements, then, Bunyan discerned the Socinian heresy. As well as being adamant about the doctrine when disputing with theologians, Bunyan the pastor felt compassion for doubt, perhaps recollecting his own qualms about Christ, recounted in *Grace abounding*. In fact, Bunyan's most detailed affirmation of the Trinity, coming in *Of the Trinity and a Christian* (published 1692), was inspired not by any opponent but by his desire to explain '*How a young, or shaken Christian should demean himself under the weighty thoughts of the Doctrin of the Trinity, or Plurality of Persons in the Eternal Godhead*', a partially autobiographical statement for Bunyan perhaps.[75] His first instruction is for the doubter to accept that Scripture is the word of God: Bunyan sees attacks on the Trinity as attacks on the status of Scripture, whereas the anti-Trinitarians (who promoted doctrinal primitivism and anti-credalism) believed that the orthodox position countermanded Scripture. The difference comes in the extent to which each believed Scripture was capable of being understood by the individual. Bunyan clearly shows that he knows the anti-Trinitarian usage to which a verse such as Deuteronomy vi. 4 ('*The* LORD *our God is one* LORD; or The LORD is our God, the LORD is

[73] Idem, *Of the law and a Christian*, ed. W. R. Owens, *Miscellaneous works*, xii. 412.

[74] Most significantly Paul J. Korshin, *Typologies in England, 1650–1820*, Princeton 1980.

[75] John Bunyan, *Of the Trinity and a Christian*, ed. W. R. Owens, *Miscellaneous works*, xii. 403.

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one; or The LORD is our God, the LORD alone') had been put, but counters that 'carnal or natural reason' should not lead the believer to quibble or to attempt to elevate his understanding above that of God. Bunyan is certainly in dialogue with anti-Trinitarians in this passage:

> It must be then that they exalt themselves against that God as thus and thus revealed in the Word, to wit against the knowledg of one God consisting of three Persons, Father Son and Spirit; for this is the Doctrin of the Scriptures of truth; and therefore it is observable these thoughts must be brought captive, and be made subject in particular to the Lord Jesus Christ as to the second Person in the Godhead; for the Father is ever acknowledged by all that profess the least of Religion; but the Son is that stumbling-stone, and rock of offence against which thousands dash themselves in pieces; though in him are hid all the Treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.[76]

Personal experience during his conversion, and decades of religious controversy thereafter, convinced Bunyan that Christ's divinity was a 'stumbling-stone', and he tried to help the misguided by encouraging them to read the Bible typologically.

Bunyan's Trinitarianism was fostered amidst the Christocentric radicalism that he experienced in the New Model Army; it was strengthened by the centrality that the Trinity was given in the Cromwellian settlement in 1653, which was itself constructed in competition with anti-Trinitarian ideas. Thereafter, when he started writing, Bunyan took up the fight against anti-Trinitarianism wherever he found it – and he searched hard. He developed a number of polemical strategies, most importantly, I have argued, typological exegesis. As a final caution, however, we must be wary of considering Bunyan as simply 'orthodox'. He is not so precisely because of the centrality of the Son to his theology – a centrality that I have suggested was in large measure reflexive and compensatory, worked out in a feedback relationship with anti-Trinitarian ideas. In the triangular diagram of the Trinity that tops his *Map shewing the order and causes of salvation and damnation* (1664), as Gordon Campbell has noted, Bunyan differs from his likely sources in a revealing manner.[77] Theodore Beza and William Perkins in similar diagrams placed 'Father', 'Son' and 'Spirit' at the points of the equilateral triangle, and 'God' in the centre. However, on Bunyan's diagram, 'God', 'Father' and 'Spirit' occupy the three points, with 'Son' taking the central position, along with a verse from Acts x. 36, proclaiming 'He is Lord of All', and a stem which confirms (*contra* Socinianism) that Christ was present in the Beginning. Bunyan's

[76] Ibid. xii. 405.

[77] Gordon Campbell, 'The source of Bunyan's *Mapp of salvation*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* xxxxiv (1981), 240–1.

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opposition to anti-Trinitarianism must not be seen simply as a precursor to the reaction to the deist offensive of the early eighteenth century because it is tinged by its own historical particularity. Specifically, Bunyan's Calvinism leads him to an inadvertently heterodox Christocentrism. Nevertheless, as this article has shown, Socinianism is an overlooked context for the development of Bunyan's theology and the development of his literary allegory, steeped as these are in a biblical typology that gave God the Son the pride of place.

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