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THE RECORDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL JOHN BUNYAN SOCIETY



ILLUSTRATION BY
DANIEL GIESBRECHT

THEN ANSWERED THEM THE RECORDER AND MY LORD MAYOR, 'OH! TIDINGS! GLAD TIDINGS! GOOD TIDINGS OF GOOD, AND OF GREAT JOY TO POOR MANSOUL!'

EDITED BY RICHARD ANGELO BERGEN

Corpus Christi College



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President's Address: Nathalie Collé, Université de Lorraine



Dear IJBS Members,

It is with great pleasure and emotion that I am writing to you today as new President of our society. I will have the honour and privilege to serve you in that function over the coming three years (2025-2028), and I am very grateful to you all for your trust. I am also very grateful to the 2022-2025 Executive Committee for entrusting me with the vice-presidency of the society. As I am well aware and as we all know, our society is much more than a group of scholars, teachers, students, librarians and other professionals; it is also a community of people with link-minded interests and values, and I feel very privileged to be part of it.

This past year was marked by the 11th triennial conference of the IJBS, which took place on 18-20 June 2025 at the University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, PEI, Canada. This yet other wonderful triennial was organised and hosted by Shannon Murray, with colleague and husband Gerald Waldio, also a Professor at UPEI. The theme of the conference was "*Nonconformist Teaching and Teaching the Nonconformists, 1500-1800*". The opening plenary and reception on the evening of Wednesday 18th June was held at the Performing Arts Centre. The conference sessions on Thursday 19th June and Friday 20th June were held on the Holland College campus, in the Centre for Applied Science and Technology. The Banquet, on Thursday evening, was held at Lobster on the Wharf, 2 Prince Street. It was preceded by a walking tour of Charlottetown guided and with both enlightening and humorous commentaries by Edward MacDonald. On Friday afternoon, an optional outing took the participants to the PEI National Park North Shore to Dalvay-by-the-Sea for a nice and sunny walk on the beach, followed by a very enjoyable stroll in the beautiful gardens of and lovely dinner at The Dunes Gallery and Café.

On the academic side, the opening plenary was delivered by Dr. Edward MacDonald, Professor Emeritus at the University of Prince Edward Island, who presented on "Paradise Lost? The Quaker Settlement of New London on 18th-Century Prince Edward Island". The closing plenary was given by Dr. Angelica Duran, Professor of English, Comparative Literature and Religious Studies at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, who addressed questions relating to "Teaching Individually and Globally in and with Bunyan". The plenary panel that followed was devoted to the (then forthcoming) volume *Global Bunyan and Visual Art* co-edited by Angelica Duran and Katie Calloway (Baylor University, Waco, Texas) and published with Bloomsbury in November 2025. The panel was chaired by Angelica and welcomed papers by Andy Draycott, Katie Calloway, Vera J. Camden, and myself. On 19th and 20th June, eight sessions of two to three papers gathered speakers and attendees around a variety of subjects and figures: "Reading Bunyan", "Exegesis, Realism, and Rhetoric", "Richard Baxter", "Meditations on Death and Gaol", "Phillips, Burton, and Trosse", "L. M. Montgomery and the Nonconformists", "Milton", and "Holy Conference and Dissenting Academies". They all made for very interesting presentations and thought-provoking discussions, in the typically kind-hearted and generous spirit of the IJBS.

I would like to renew here my sincere and heartfelt thanks, as we did collectively during the Business Meeting on 20th June, to retiring members for their service: Shannon Murray, of course, and in the first place, who served the IJBS for the past three years (2023-2025) as President, and the previous three years (2019-2022) as Vice-President, Sophie Aldred (University of Oxford) for her service as Event Officer, Michael Arbino (Kent State University) as General Secretary, and Margaret Breen (University of Connecticut) as North American Treasurer. We are all very grateful for their work and dedication.

President's Address: Nathalie Collé, Université de Lorraine

The Business Meeting elected new officers for 2025-2028: Jameela Lares (University of Southern Mississippi) as Vice President, Daniel Johnson (London School of Theology) as General Secretary, Andy Draycott (Biola University) as North American Treasurer, and Shannon Murray (University of Prince Edward Island) as Webmistress. Our continuing committee members are Rachel Adcock (Keele University) as European Treasurer, Richard Bergen (University of British Columbia) as Editor of *The Recorder*, and Rachel Adcock (Keele University) & David Gay (University of Alberta) as Co-Editors of *Bunyan Studies*. I want to thank them as well for their continued dedication to our society. The Social Media Officer and Event Officer positions are still vacant to this date, and spontaneous applications are welcome.

One of the subjects of discussion during the Business Meeting was a possible switch from hard copies to PDF or open-access copies of *Bunyan Studies*. This discussion culminated in a motion, which passed unanimously: "The John Bunyan Society will offer to subscribers the opt-in option of receiving *Bunyan Studies* in hard copy, as a PDF, or both". I would like to express here my and our collective sincere thanks to Rachel Adcock and David Gay for their wonderful work as co-editors of *Bunyan Studies*, as well as David Walker for his invaluable past service to the journal of our society. 2026 will see the publication of number 30, a special issue reflecting key themes of the 2025 conference; number 31 will follow in 2027, completing the scope of the reflection.

A great many thanks again, on behalf of us all, to Shannon Murray for organising a very memorable and successful conference at UPEI and for making us discover Charlottetown and PEI's North Shore – a real treat! As David Gay wrote to the speakers and delegates after the event, "the spirit of the IJBS community was very high in Charlottetown, culminating in Angelica Duran's important and motivating closing keynote address. Angelica offered valuable encouragement on Bunyan in the curriculum and pedagogy, Bunyan in new meeting / conference venues, and Bunyan's approaching anniversary year in 2028".

The next conference of the IJBS will be held at the Université de Lorraine in Nancy, France, on 5-7 July 2028. As you all know, this will be an anniversary year – a double anniversary year, in fact, as we will be celebrating both Bunyan's 400th birth date and the 350th publication anniversary of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part 1. As announced during the Business Meeting at UPEI on 20th June, and then again at the opening of the banquet at Lobster on the Wharf in Charlottetown that evening, I proposed the theme "Bunyan's textual, visual and material afterlives – a legacy in multiple forms". I sincerely hope you will travel to France in three years' time, and that I will have the pleasure to welcome you all to Nancy for the event.

2025 has been marked by the awarding of two important prizes for our society. The 2025 Roger F. Pooley Early Career Essay Prize was awarded to Matthew Leech-Gerrard for his essay "'The Spirit of the Martyrs Revived': Early Quaker Uses of History". The selection committee was chaired by Bob Owens, and its members were David Parry and Daniel Runyon. Congratulations to Matthew for this achievement.

The 2025 Richard L. Greaves Prize was awarded to John Morrill and the editorial team for their *The Letters, Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 3 vols (Oxford UP, 2022). On the shortlist of the Greaves Prize Committee (composed of Vera Camden, David Gay and Neil Keeble) were also eds. Crawford Gribben and John Tweeddale's *The T and T Clark Handbook of John Owen* (Bloomsbury, 2022) and Katie Calloway's *Literature and Natural Theology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge UP, 2024). The winner was announced at the banquet of the 2025 conference in PEI. Congratulations to John for winning the prize, and to the authors and editors of the other volumes for their extraordinary work in history, literature, thought, practices and legacy of Anglophone Protestantism to 1700.

The much-awaited *Global Bunyan and Visual Art* came out on 13th November 2025. Bloomsbury presents the book as "advanc[ing] the conversation about the presence, aesthetic appropriation, and re-interpretation of the foundational English author John Bunyan (1628-1688), whose works and legend have had a vibrant afterlife in visual art. Focusing on the global reach of Bunyan's works and legend through multiple media and cultural adaptations provides a unique opportunity to discover the varied and generative influence of Bunyan on cultures past and present, promoting a more diverse appreciation of Bunyan's unparalleled reach. The contributors also foster opportunities to discuss the role of intermediality in contemporary re-appropriations of early modern literature in the context of globalization, as well as a critical exploration of Bunyanic presence in global contemporary art via intertextual and intermedial relations". *Global Bunyan and Visual Art* unquestionably provides a new landmark in Bunyan scholarship. It is also a welcome follow-up to *Global Milton and Visual Art*, published in 2021.

Finally, the Bunyan Meeting church, museum and community gallery in Bedford, England, has launched its website page dedicated to "Bunyan 400: A Significant Anniversary for Bedford and Beyond". Their hope is that this will be "a major event in the life of Bunyan's hometown of Bedford, and around the world", including, in Bedford, theatre and musical performances, a book festival, an international conference, exploration of Bunyan's Christian faith, reading and hearing in diverse communities and languages, as well as publications. "Why does something that happened 400 years ago matter to us today?", they ask. "Because many of the themes of John Bunyan's life are just as relevant today. We are still concemed about freedom of speech, political imprisonment, the place of faith in life, and the power of education and literacy in a world where it is often denied through censorship or persecution". "The anniversary may be four years away", they write, but they have already been approached by local, national and intemational communities and have had "an amazingly enthusiastic response", including by the IJBS. Janet Wootton (retired Congregational Minister and former Director of Studies for the Congregational Federation, currently Co-chair of Intemational Congregational Fellowship Theological Commission) contacted the members of the IJBS Executive Committee a few months ago to envisage partnerships with us. We will keep you informed of these future events.

In the meantime, I wish you all the very best for the coming months.

Nathalie Collé

‘Nonconformist Teaching and Teaching the Nonconformists, 1500-1800’ – The Eleventh Triennial Conference of the International John Bunyan Society, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 18-20 June 2025

Donovan E. Tann

University of Dubuque

Twenty-five delegates from six different countries, including Denmark, New Zealand, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, gathered in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island for an invigorating and engaging three-day conference. Organized by Shannon Murray (University of Prince Edward Island), president of the International John Bunyan Society for the past three years, this meeting exemplified the society’s collegial environment and a growing sense of momentum for the future of Bunyan studies. The conference’s theme, “Nonconformist Teaching and Teaching the Nonconformists, 1500-1800,” inspired fruitful connections between scholarship on nonconformist reading, interpretation, and instruction and on the generation of readers and teachers that have followed. The windswept beauty of Prince Edward Island and the historic city of Charlottetown provided the perfect backdrop for scholars to reflect upon Bunyan’s readers, both past and present.

With an opening reception and plenary at the University of Prince Edward Island and the remaining sessions at Holland College, new and returning delegates had opportunity to learn about island history and its connections to early modern religious cultures. Historian Edward MacDonald (University of Prince Edward Island) delivered a fascinating opening plenary on the larger context of European settlement in Prince Edward Island with a particular focus on the Quaker Robert Clark’s eighteenth-century project. MacDonald’s familiarity with island history and experience as a public historian shone through in his ability to tell the story of the extraordinary difficulties colonists experienced at New London, from shipwreck and starvation to the colony’s economic failure after the American Revolution meant the loss of their closest trading partner. Through stories, letters, and other documents, MacDonald’s lecture traced how the legacy of this concerted effort, bankrolled by Quaker merchants in England, became obscured as the critical mass necessary to establish their religious practice and identity evaporated soon after arriving on what was then called the Island of St. John. This engaging lecture connected delegates to a sense of place and context, particularly for those of us who were visiting the island for the first time.





‘Nonconformist Teaching and Teaching the Nonconformists, 1500-1800’ – The Eleventh Triennial Conference of the International John Bunyan Society, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 18-20 June 2025



Thursday’s plenary panel session gave conference delegates an exciting preview of upcoming publication of *Global Bunyan and Visual Art*, edited by Angelica Duran (Purdue University) and Katherine Calloway (Baylor University), with four of the book’s contributors. Nathalie Collé (Université de Lorraine) opened the session with an examination of Bunyan’s visual afterlives that traced the ways in which later illustrators encode, interpret, and transform Bunyan’s work into new media and contexts. In his examination of cover art, Andy Draycott (Biola University) traced the social and cultural pressures that shaped Bunyan’s reception, which situated nationalist approaches to illustrating Korean Protestant editions and efforts by Brazilian Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal readers to establish a sense of inherited historical tradition. Katherine Calloway’s presentation explored how Bunyan’s cultural texts were embedded in the Baptist cultural tradition and racism’s legacy in American culture, from the slaveholding Rev. William Carey Crane on one end to references to Bunyan’s allegory in calls for integration among the Baptist World Alliance on the other. Vera Camden (Kent State University) discussed the English watercolorist Thomas Hennell (1903-1945) and presented a persuasive case for the artist’s use of Bunyan as a psychological model for his own mental health struggles in using self-portraiture to represent Bunyan’s imprisonment. These vivid examples of Bunyan’s enduring impact on visual arts and visual cultures were a tantalizing glimpse of the upcoming volume, which should appear later this year.

Photographs by Katie Calloway and David Gay

Although I could not attend every session, I was impressed with the overall quality and rigor of the conference scholarship. In addition to the exemplary plenary session on Bunyan’s global visual cultures, the theme of reading and instruction continued throughout the concurrent sessions. Margaret Sönser Breen (University of Connecticut) and Andy Draycott focused on *Pilgrim’s Progress*’s continuing readership, in their discussion of the work’s social and literary legacies and Draycott’s analysis of marginalia, drawings, and readers’ marks that indicate readers’ complex engagement with the work. Shannon Murray’s talk, “Selling Bunyan in Montgomery’s *The Tangled Web,*” by contrast considered Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* as an object or talisman in L.M. Montgomery’s novel, in which a tattered first edition of Bunyan’s text ultimately goes unread after being sold to allow the main character to forge her own path beyond the institution of marriage. David Gay (University of Alberta) and Jeremy Larson (Regent University) similarly explored urban cityscapes as landscape and gendered scenes of instruction in Milton’s work.



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Other sessions took up the thread of connections between past and present that Ed MacDonald introduced in the opening plenary. Jean Mitchell (University of Prince Edward Island) identified far-reaching connections that linked the Cavendish of L.M. Montgomery’s imagination with evangelical missionary expeditions, and Susanne Gregerson explored how the past moral example of dying children became a staple of instructional literature for children in the early modern period. Arlette Zinck (Regent College) continued the theme of nontraditional learning sites in considering how Bunyan’s experience in prison produced hope and transformation as a source of what William Lynch describes as imagination, wishing, and community.

Friday afternoon’s closing plenary provided a fitting closing to the conference that synthesized the emerging themes of Bunyan’s readership, the need for renewed and focused attention, and continued connections between past and present. Angelica Duran’s energizing and timely talk about the challenges that face twenty-first century readers of Bunyan explored the divide between Bunyan’s increasingly low adoption in universities and a more general readership. Duran introduced practical strategies for teaching Bunyan in the classroom and showed how memory could be a model for sustained engagement across lines of religious and secular distance. Given the conference’s focus on education and nonconformity, I felt that Duran’s talk was a fitting conclusion to the conference sessions. Directing our attention to 2028 as both the 400th anniversary of Bunyan’s birth and 350th anniversary of *Pilgrim’s Progress*’s first publication, Duran called upon delegates to assign Bunyan’s works in educational settings, to organize panels at major conferences, and to take advantage of the upcoming anniversaries to raise the profile of the organization in the future.



‘Nonconformist Teaching and Teaching the Nonconformists, 1500-1800’ – The Eleventh Triennial Conference of the International John Bunyan Society, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 18-20 June 2025

On the final day, delegates gathered at Charlottetown’s Lobster-on-the-Wharf restaurant to celebrate another successful triennial conference. In addition to the excellent meal, banquet attendees were introduced to the society’s incoming president, Nathalie Collé, who announced the twelfth triennial conference will be held at the University of Lorraine (Université de Lorraine) in Nancy, France. Collé expressed her appreciation for entrusting her with the society’s leadership for the next three years and for all of Shannon Murray’s work over the past three years. At the banquet, Vera Camden announced the 2025 Richard L. Greaves Prize as the chair of the prize committee. This year’s well-deserved winner went to John Morrill and the editorial team for *The Letters, Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (3 vols, Oxford University Press, 2022) for the “magisterial” and accessible edition that highlights Cromwell’s influence as a religious figure in addition to his well-known political role, and the committee commended how the edition captures Cromwell’s immediacy in(?) a first-rate and accessible edition. Camden also recognized Katherine Calloway’s *Literature and Natural Theology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2023) for the award’s Honorable Mention.



In addition to the excellent slate of panels and plenary sessions, the conference provided ample opportunity to learn more about the island and to continue informal discussion. On Thursday afternoon, most of the delegates joined Edward MacDonald, our first plenary speaker, for a short Charlottetown walking tour that revealed his talent as a tour guide and led us through architectural, political, and social highlights as we continued to enjoy the temperate weather on the island. On Friday afternoon, many delegates also joined us on a short bus tour to the island’s North Shore, where we explored Brackley Beach and the surrounding dunes, toured through the gardens at the Dunes Gallery and Café, and finally enjoyed dinner with a fantastic view of the gardens at the close of the conference events.

Altogether, delegates enjoyed the unique blend of scholarly rigor and generosity that I have observed at every triennial conference of the International John Bunyan Society I have attended over the past twelve years. Shannon Murray, her colleagues, and her volunteers continued this tradition with a well-organized and engaging slate of speakers, panels, and events. Since presenting for the society for the first time as a graduate student, I have appreciated the society’s support for graduate students and early career researchers. I hope that many more will be able to join us at the upcoming 2028 conference in Nancy, France.

Bunyan 400



Janet Woootton, Chair of the Bunyan 400 Steering Committee

A year ago, *The Recorder* was kind enough to publish an article on the 400th anniversary of John Bunyan's birth, and 350th anniversary of the publication of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 2028. That month, October 2024, we held a launch event at Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, UK, the home of the Church that still meets and worships on the site of the orchard and apple barn purchased by Bunyan and other non-conformists in 1672, and the John Bunyan Museum & Library.

The launch event was a huge success, with representatives from Bedford Town and Borough, and a whole host of community organisations. Many are now listed as supporters of the Project on our new website, Bunyan 400 - Inform Inspire Engage, among whom, we are delighted include the International John Bunyan Society!

There, you can also find the beginnings of a small number of projects and ideas, which are already taking off, even this far ahead of the anniversary year. Of course there are many, many more in the pipe line. The last year has passed in a whirlwind of activity, setting up systems and structures of course, but also building up a whole network of people who are enthusiastic about celebrating this double anniversary.

John Bunyan is an immensely significant figure in global terms, as well as central to the heritage of Bedford and its environs. We are working with a number of international organisations, and many of our projects have global reach. On the website, you can listen to the first paragraph of The Pilgrim's Progress read in Burmese and Mara (the official language of Myanmar, and one of the many indigenous languages), and also in Czech, Greek, Flemish and Welsh. That leaves a further 290+ languages which we know have translations of Bunyan's major work! This will be an ongoing project, which we hope will undergird further research into language and translation.

It has been wonderful to talk to the President of the IJBS, Professor Nathalie Collé, and others, about potential collaborations in the next few years. Of course, we are very much looking forward to the 2028 Conference. We were excited to see the coverage of the book, Global Bunyan and Visual Art, in the 2025 Conference, as a number of people have been sending us photographs of stained glass windows in local churches. We hope this will form the basis of another project, in connection with which we are now in touch with Jasmine Allen, the Curator of the Ely Stained Glass Museum, very close to Bedford.

Celebrating John Bunyan's 400th Anniversary

The breaking news here in Bedfordshire is the discovery, after many years of searching, of some living descendants of John Bunyan. Clive Arnold, Curator of Elstow Moot Hall, has been engaged in 30 years of research into Bunyan's family, until now without success. Recently, however, new information led to contact with a family named 'Brown' going back to John's daughter, Sarah, who married William Brown. Clive writes:

Imagine our surprise and delight when we discovered that every level of this Brown family's tree was correct. That their ancestor Henry and the Henry Brown on our tree were one and the same person! Imagine my delight as I realised that I had discovered not just one living descendant of John Bunyan, but a whole family of 13.

More information will be available on the Moot Hall website: Home, and also eventually on the Bunyan 400 site. And there will be a lot more to report on Bunyan 400 as plans progress through the next months and years. Locally, we are working with churches and faith communities, heritage organisations, schools, theatres and music societies. We are hoping to produce a number of heritage trails, a documentary, and more. And we are in the very early stages of planning large scale community events, which may well have global as well as local reach.

So lots is happening. Please visit the Bunyan400 website, and sign up to receive all our news and updates, on Support - Bunyan 400!





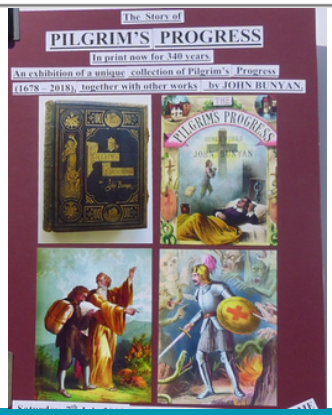
A John Bunyan Exhibition

Laurence Croft

I have been an avid collector of the works of John Bunyan for more than fifty years and now have a large and interesting collection consisting of some 500 volumes. Several years ago, as we were moving from Lancashire to live in Hampshire, I began to sort out my collection. It was then suggested to me to have an exhibition of some of my books in the local parish church of St Leonard's in Walton-le-Dale.

The exhibition, which took place on Saturday 7th July 2018, was arranged in five parts. The first part consisted of several displays covering the life and times of John Bunyan and the history and influence of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This section included an account of how Terry Waite, Archbishop Robert Runcie's special envoy was given hope by thoughts of John Bunyan, when he was a hostage in Beirut (1987- 1991).
The second part of the exhibition was devoted to *Pilgrim's Progress*. This included:
(1) A fine collection of highly decorated Victorian editions with exceptional chromolithographic illustrations. This included the Newcastle edition of 1874 in full leather binding, highly decorated in gilt with brass edges and clasps. Also, a similar Welsh edition, (published in Edinburgh in 1876) with gilt leather and brass edges; and again with clasps.
(2) The collected works of John Bunyan, including the 3-volume set by George Offor of 1858, several of them having large pull-out maps of the pilgrim's journey.
(3) A collection of special editions of *Pilgrim's Progress* including the first facsimile of the 1678 edition published by Elliot Stock. The Bedford edition of 1838, and the Elstow edition (1881), with covers made from wood obtained from the Elstow parish church.
(4) A large collection of highly decorated copies of *Pilgrim's Progress* largely from the Victorian period, which gave a demonstration of how book illustration has changed over the last 340 years. This included crude woodcuts from a very early edition.
(5) A collection of children's editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*.
(6) A display of copies of the Third Part of *Pilgrim's Progress* from 1814, 1815 and the Burslem edition of 1820, together with other spurious works such as *The Visions of John Bunyan* published in 1805 in Liverpool.
(7) A collection of pocket and miniature editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*.
The third part of the exhibition was a display of other works by Bunyan including *The Holy War, Grace Abounding*, and *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, a folio edition of 1900 illustrated by the Rehead brothers. Also, a facsimile edition of *A Book for Boys and Girls* published by Elliot Stock in 1899, and a copy of *Divine Emblems* of 1820.
The fourth part of the exhibition was a display of Bunyan biographies including that of John Brown (1887), Edmund Venables (1888), J.A Froude (1880), Lord Macauley (1914) as well as more recent biographies by Christopher Hill and Monica Furlong.
The final part of the exhibition was a display of associated works such as the facsimile of the *Bunyan Church Meeting Book*, and others such as Mary *Bunyan* by S.R. Ford in several different editions. Then a collection of curious editions such as *Pilgrim's Progress in Shorthand* by Isaac Pitman, and *Pilgrim's Progress* set to music. Also, the *Catalogue of the Bunyan exhibition* held at the New York Public Library in 1929.
The overall conclusion was that the exhibition was a great success, despite the fact that the weather was very hot and that there was the major distraction of the World Cup on that day. However, most of the visitors expressed an appreciation of the efforts we had taken to put on an interesting exhibition. As we had advertised the exhibition locally, we had some visitors who had not been in the church before, but what was somewhat surprising was to discover how widespread was ignorance of John Bunyan and *Pilgrim's Progress*. Although it was a lot of work doing the research and producing labels for all the exhibits it all seemed worthwhile, and I hope to repeat it again in the near future.

-The image to the left is the poster advertising the event, and the one to the right is a crude woodcut from an early





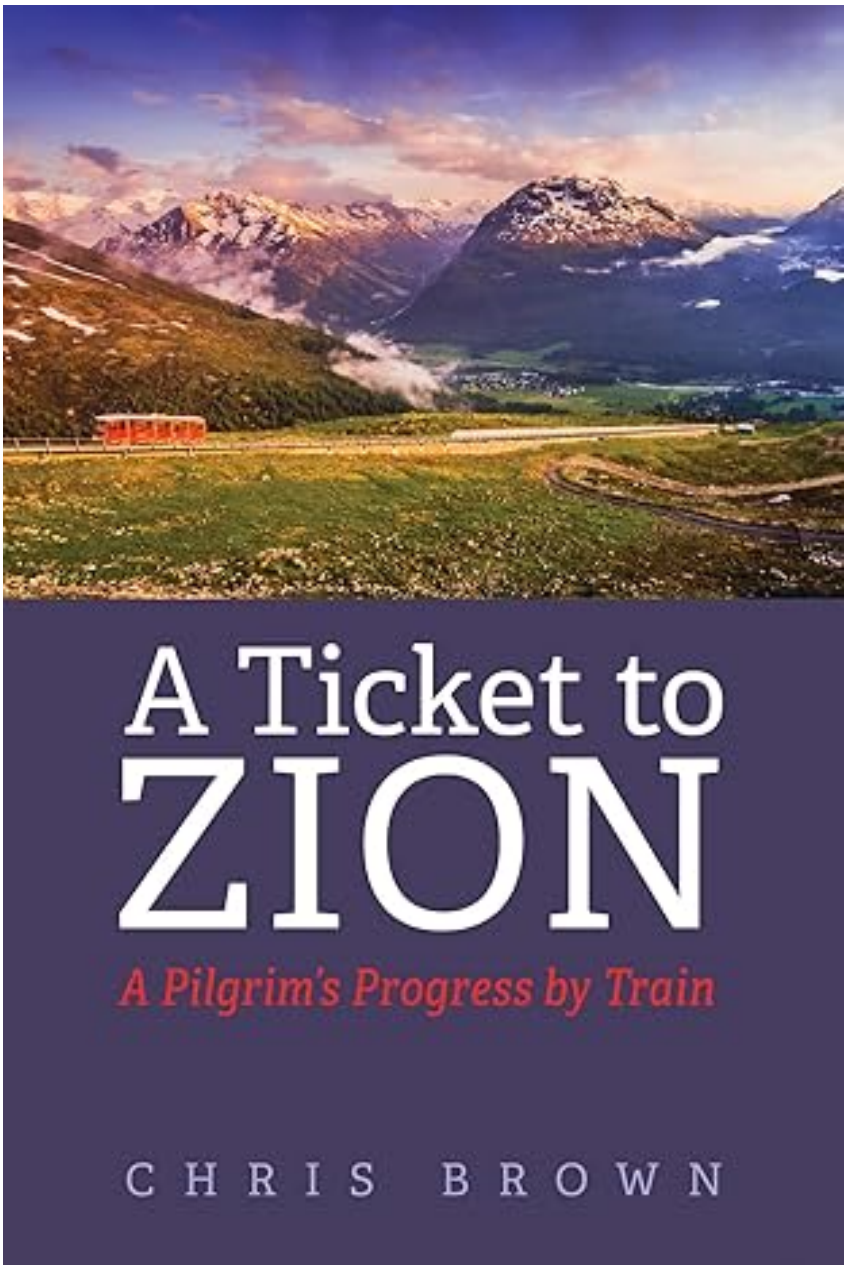
Review of *A Ticket to Zion*

Margaret Thickstun, Hamilton College

A Ticket to Zion: A Pilgrim's Progress by Train. Chris Brown. Resource Publications, Eugene, Oregon. 2021. 192 pages. Available in hardcover, paperback, or as e-book.

I approached this book with certain expectations: that the story would update *The Pilgrim's Progress* by shifting from walking to train travel, something like a straight version of Hawthorne's "The Celestial Railroad," and that it might focus on the value of community, as in Edward Taylor's poem "The Joys of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended," where the church is figured as a coach in which the faithful "sweetly sing / As they to glory ride therein." And I expected that the story would follow the conversion map laid out in Bunyan's text. When I teach *Pilgrim's Progress* to undergraduates, I ask them to work as well with a modern adaptation. Comparing individual scenes in the allegory requires students to tease out the significance of what the adapter has kept, omitted, or altered. *Ticket to Zion* is not a text that could be used in this fashion.

Although the book contains echoes of Bunyan's text, it is a wholly new imagining of the process of getting to Heaven, written for a contemporary audience familiar with train travel, nostalgic for steam engines, but capable of following analogies to the workings of DNA and understanding the conversation of mechanical and electrical engineers. At one point Heisenberg gives a mini-lecture on the uncertainty principle. What is he doing on the train? Does he get to Heaven, too? We will never know.



Review of *A Ticket to Zion*

When *Pilgrim's Progress* surfaces, it does so to suit Brown's purposes: the train does go through a place called Slough, but that happens near the end of the journey; there is a narrow gate, but it is not at the beginning; although the train does stop in London, it is not Vanity Fair. In this allegory "the Controller" runs the trains; the Controller's son bought all the tickets with his blood; the employees of the railroad are "announcers" (prophets) and "cleaners" (clergy).

I do wish the story were more explicit about the relationship between salvation and train travel at the beginning. The main character, a Welshman named Ian, receives a visit from his cousin Dafydd, who recounts his conversion at a local revival. But the initiating action for Ian is seeing an actual steam engine and then dreaming about riding a train. He is very excited when he receives an offer for a free ticket to Zion, but he does not carry a burden, have a crisis of faith, or feel anxious to escape his home town, although he is a bit depressed in the opening chapter (he has multiple sclerosis; the loss of jobs at the mill means his little village is run-down). The postman who delivers the leaflet offering the free journey does it because "he believed that this journey would be a wonderful experience for any of the Talybont residents, most of who had not had a holiday in years" (13). Ian packs for a long weekend, and worries about whether and how he might pay for the return ticket. The free ticket he receives certainly seems unusual—"hand-written in blood red ink," requiring him to sign a form asking him "if he was sorry all the wrongs he had ever done" (14)—but the text does not dwell on conviction of sin.

Unlike Bunyan in *the Pilgrim's Progress* Part 1, this text presents an open call: there is a ticket for every person in the world, although most neglect to use theirs—and these appear to be offered trans-historically, as Moses and his entourage have a special car on the train. Near the end, after the train goes through the Channel Tunnel, it travels for 500 years around Europe, picking up travelers, including, if I am not mistaken, many Jews who died in the Holocaust. A car at the front of the train has been reserved for them. Buses arrive at train stations from Asian countries. Heaven is multicultural, although none of the named passengers are women, and most of the men are Welsh.

The challenge for Ian, and for readers, is figuring out which announcers to believe and which train to board. At the beginning, he receives many offers to go to Zion using forms of transportation that are not trains; he frequently gets off at a station to buy coffee or a paper and then has trouble reuniting with the right train—the PA system is garbled, and some of the announcers wholly unreliable. Even after crossing through the Channel Tunnel, the train stops at stations where competing trains lure some of the passengers away from the one Ian rides in. There were times when I was having a hard time figuring out who was doing what to whom—or how I was supposed to make right choices modeled on Ian's actions. It would have been helpful if more of the guidance had been offered in the form of allegory and Ian's choices, rather than as interpolated lecture.



Gamifying and gaming *Pilgrim's Progress* games

Andy Draycott, Biola University

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Gamification has been a buzzword for securing student engagement, particularly in the learning management systems (LMS) world of online instruction. Incorporating visuals, level-achievement badges, and bonus points incentives brings familiar elements from online or computer gaming into the not always quite so fun world of higher education. Sometimes these moves will be welcome even if largely decorative, a cheering up of the online course site; otherwise, the logic of the class learning might be more deeply enmeshed. I confess that my online *Pilgrim's Progress* class is not very visually gamified, but it does encourage a "choose-your-own-adventure" approach to course assignments with multiple alternatives for students who are processing their learning visually or verbally, with creative writing or research skills. It is in my in-person version of the class that games kick in at a different level. I've written some about various versions in my *Into the Pilgrimverse* chapter on the "Family" but here I want to observe some features of certain games that point both to gamifying and gaming as explained below. This piece follows up from our Triennial Conference in Prince Edward Island and particularly Donovan Tann's paper, "Bunyan's 'Raspberry Cordial': The Game of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1994), L. M. Montgomery, and Dissenting Pedagogy." He had brought much of the board game set up with him to offer the tangible material and visual artifact in support of the talk and for listener's visual and tactile engagement.

Board games certainly have the potential to take players on a Bunyanesque journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Before I mention a few of these, let us consider the way in which the book's narrative arc has been deployed to decorate otherwise ordinary games. This is the case for the Pilgrim's Progress card games.

The Castell Bros Pepys Series card deck (1938) come with a small resumé booklet of the story (Fig 1), and each playing card is illustrated with an artistic rendition of a scene from Part I on the front, and the back has a visual of the whole journey mapped from bottom to top of the card (Fig 2). The deck also comes with a "Progress Rules" booklet which gives rules for "Progress," "Progress Rummy," and "Progress Drives." The latter envisages a mixed sex idealized family game setting with indications of how a "gentleman" and a "lady" should move around the table between rounds of play. The "Rules" concede that "Any standard game of Patience can be played with the Progress Cards." But given that the deck has four suits not related to Pilgrim's Progress at all (Crown, Sun, Moon, and Star) each with the standard 13 cards, it would seem any card game could be played with the deck. And the games depend nothing on any logic from the decorative affordances of Bunyan's classic.

Likewise, Brazilian marketers of the originally Chinese graphic novel by Johnny Tong and Wong produced a memory game (*Jogo da* Memória) with cards in pairs featuring characters from the visual story of the comic. Winning the game by finally locating either the pair of "Beelzebu" (Beelzebub) or "Esperança" (Hope[full]) is indifferent for the games' outcome (Fig 3).

Peter Voth's intricately designed deck of *Pilgrim's Progress Playing Cards* (2022) is not merely high quality but is embossed in gold relief as of "celestial quality."[1] The aces of each traditional suit feature a rendition of a key narrative location, the numeric cards carry the suit design and the face cards of King, Queen, and Jack carry each two images of favored men and women from the narrative, with the Jack featuring the villains and monsters (Fig 4). Amid all this beauty in design, the game itself is still any game that a deck of cards will serve with Pilgrim's Progress themed decoration. Cards will function for winning hand irrespective of the moral character of, say, Evangelist or Apollyon displayed on the face.







Cards by Peter Voth



Fig. 2



Fig. 1



Fig. 3

Gamifying and gaming *Pilgrim's Progress* games

Last of those I've come across in this card category, the Pilgrim's Progress CGI movie (2019) producers marketed a "Trivia Deck" of cards (Fig 4). Each card displays a still image from the production connected in some way to the questions on the other side. These are about the movie in assorted categories, to be selected by the rolling of a die. Here we do find some tie-in to the content of Bunyan's text as mediated by the adaptation.

All these games can be inspected in the classroom to examine the visual adaptation rendered in the products, but it is in the board games that *The Pilgrim's Progress* experience comes alive. I have had the class divide into teams and then we spend 10 minutes each at one board game and then each group moves around the class to take up position on the board left by the previous group. In this way we all navigate from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Students can judge the ways in which game producers try to incorporate some of the theological and biblical emphases into a format that is shaped by the secular good of winning and beating other players! These games fascinate because they expose Bunyan's own gamification of his book. By this I mean that once Bunyan's marginal references are recognized as extra-textual pointers to the interpretative key of Scripture, not only does the reader get invited to jump to the Bible explicitly by the marginal note, but furthermore, they are challenged to spot even those biblical quotations and references that Bunyan might have supplied in the margins but didn't. (At least, this is the invitation editors, including myself, have taken up in annotating the text.) I want to point to three games that gamify *The Pilgrim's Progress* almost to a vanishing point in service of that extra-textual pointing to Scripture, gaming the game of Pilgrim's Progress for extra-textual Pilgrim's Progress purposes.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

The most intense, Role Player Game (RPG) Pilgrim's Progress game, difficult to find so of likely very small market circulation, is Shepherd Solid Ground Games' *Race of Faith in the Similitude of a Dream*, out of Ottawa, Canada (Fig 5). The board, with 200 spaces, is accompanied by the 200+ page "play-action book" (Fig 6). Every throw of the dice, used "to determine providential results" at any given board space, corresponds to either "Fruit of the Spirit" or" Works of the Flesh" that prosper or hinder pilgrimage. Every potential roll has a Bible verse ascribed to it and instructions for player moves. Added to this, every play-action book page begins with the text of *The Pilgrim's Progress* the bottom of the game book page with a concluding key Bible verse. To get a sense of the Scriptural saturation, in Bunyan's text the episode of the cross receives 3 Bible references. The incident is covered over 4 spaces on the board, and the play-action book's pages gives 55 different verses! Ephesians 1:13 and Zechariah 3:4, but not Mark 2:5, of Bunyan's references, are included among the 55. This game pushes the player into Scripture way above and beyond the originating text, while maintaining textual connection with Bunyan's classic through the play-action book quotations and board navigation.



Fig. 6

Gamifying and gaming *Pilgrim's Progress* games

Dialing down the textual intensity, we next consider the *Christian's Journey. A Pilgrim's Journey to the Celestial City* (Hightower Enterprises, 1984). Here the board visually maps the narrative progress of Bunyan's narrative in Part I (Fig 7), but progress isn't made via place counting with dice but rather by completing each numbered place of challenge until reaching the Celestial City. Elements of Bunyan are preserved in player counters transitioning from burdened pilgrim to scroll bearing, to weaponized, and then to crowned upon successfully reaching the top of the board (Fig 8). At board locations cards are read that give elements of the plot, but players advance by answering Bible quiz questions from pre-agreed categories: Rare and Interesting Facts, Life of Christ, Famous Bible Quotes, and Know Your Bible (Fig 9).

More loosely tied to Bunyan's text is the 1979 *Pilgrim's Progress Bible Quiz Game* by Doug Huffman. The board visually incorporates the Slough of Despond and Doubting Castle and Giant Despair, but instead of the journey starting at the City of Destruction we are taken back to Paradise with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden at bottom left (Fig 10). On the way to reach a golden, walled city, also called Paradise (lost and regained?), the first body of water is not the aforementioned Slough but is instead the Red Sea. Board spaces are named after sequentially listed books of the Bible as play progresses through a biblical chronology from Old Testament to New. Progress from one space to another is achieved in answering quiz questions based on the Bible book on which one's play counter has landed (Fig 11).



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



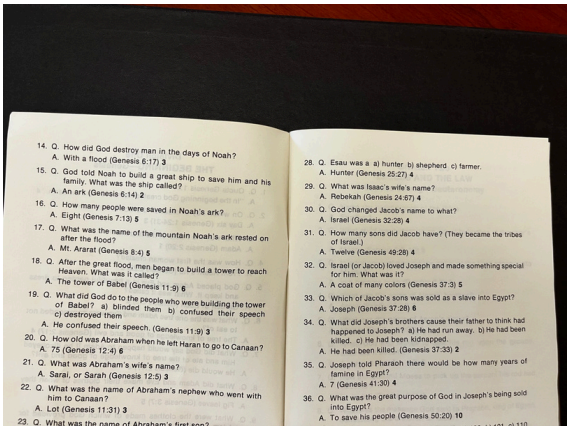
Fig. 10

Gamifying and gaming *Pilgrim's Progress* games

What to make of these games? The card games rely on a cultural memory of *The Pilgrim's Progress* but do not pretend to contribute to Christian discipleship in their game structure, beyond an incidentally cheerful validation of the good of rest and play. The boardgames propose more programmatic edification for their players, beyond the simple playing and winning. They vary in the fittingness of their game visuals and player progress to Bunyan's book from which they all draw their inspiration or titles. The character of Bunyan's marginal annotations which point readers to Scripture are brought from the margins to center stage in the particular games surveyed here. It is worth asking whether Scripture as marginal reference is the same as Scripture as adduced from a quiz question. The first intends to throw a reader into dependence on the Word, the second throws a player onto the resources of their own mastery of that Word and prowess of recall. The transformation of the Bible from living authority into a depository of salutary facts could be taken to change the posture of the player in relation to the Word. It now becomes a tool for play success with closed factual answers rather than an open invitation to not just check Bunyan's references but discern the logic of the biblical text pointed to. Another way of thinking about this is to note that, to the extent that Bunyan's marginal references are thought to police interpretation of his text, these games happily distribute verses as rewards or trivia tests. Critical assessment sees them framing the Bible as a storehouse of knowledge rather than a living word of conviction and encouragement. A call for reiteration is not the same as an invitation to mature discernment.

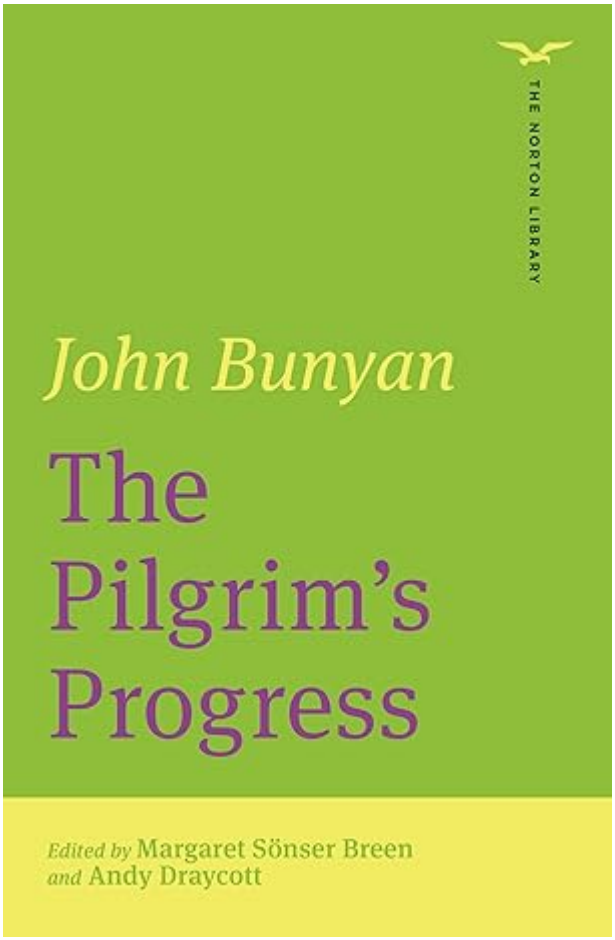
But there is a way these games can be looked at as keys to unlock a different reading of Bunyan's marginal references. Taking them as playful badges for readers to "collect" as they read through, marginal references become gaming tokens rather than authoritarian constraints of readers. On this ludic interpretation, Bunyan's marginal references have a more playful and less determinative role. Perhaps these don't actually function to draw readers into discontinuous reading so that they put their Bunyan down to pick up their Bible. Rather, maybe they play a decorative role that reassures the cheerful religious reader that the Bible is in play even when they are simply enjoying the narrative. A proof text proves the religious flavor of the reading without needing to be turned to. This may also help to explain those erroneous references that endure through editions precisely because receivers of the work are not anxious about the proofs. Rather, they are already-assured of the texts provenness by the presence of the marginal Scriptures. Pilgrim's Progress Games, whether the work's narrative is deployed purely decoratively or minutely parsed at the most intensely and excessively biblical, need not be seen through a lens of distressed critique, but as evidence of the good of play always caught up in but not necessarily condemned by the undoubted trials of commercialism and consumerism.

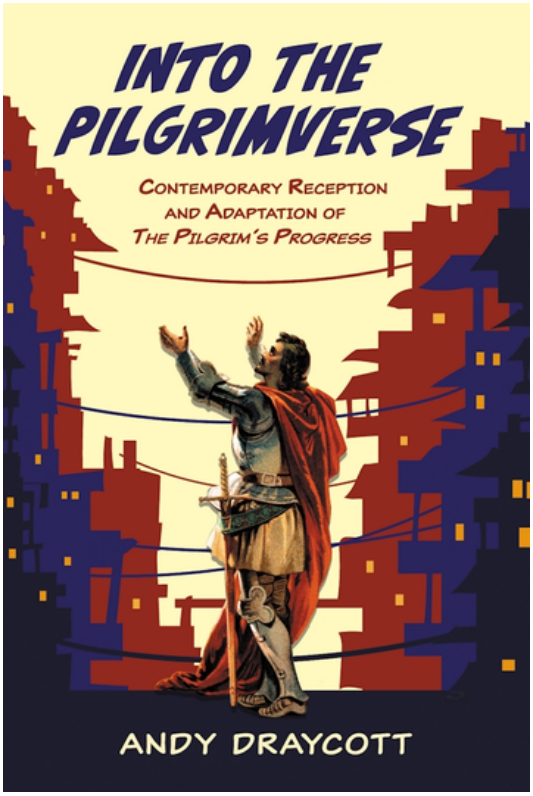
Fig. 11



Announcement: The Norton Library Edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Into The Pilgrimverse*

The Norton Library edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* features John Bunyan's iconic original text. Margaret Sönser Breen and Andy Draycott provide an analytical introduction and insightful notes that support readers' engagement with the biblical intertextuality of the work and its global relevance over the course of more than three centuries.





Join the Narrator and Mr. Researcher as they recruit characters from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress to* explore the book's extensive afterlives: into the Pilgrimverse. Readers will hear expedition reports mapping the range of historic and contemporary reception of this spiritual classic. Be ready to explore the varied formats of books and adaptations, graphic novels, illustrations, board games, music albums, movies, and more. The journey will touch on issues of biblical fidelity, missions, gender, race, and sexuality, and will cross over from elite art to popular culture. This book is for long-time lovers of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and new or simply curious readers. Go ahead and jump in. But watch out for giants!

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Yours sincerely,
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