

Two

Restoration Nonconformity, the Holy Spirit, and Spiritual Presence

A habit of prudent and sober worship was gradually cultivated among Anglicans after 1660 and the same tendency spurred Restoration nonconformists to develop competing conceptions of godliness. The manner in which prominent nonconformists proceeded was in some respects a reaction to the success of Anglican theologians in framing Restoration debates on religion and politics. The backlash against puritans, the sects, and their associated enthusiasts found its most severe expression in the Clarendon Code. But the distance between the Church of England and its critics was carefully drawn by other means. For Anglicans, scrutinizing the implications of a theology of immediate inspiration was of crucial importance. Built into the 'new prelatial way'¹ of church government was a series of checks against the possibility of zealous spirits disturbing the religious and political order. The Clarendon Code, however, was only the crudest method. As nonconformists themselves realized, the religious settlement was rooted in principles that entailed contention on philosophical grounds – signally, reason and the meaning of rational religion, and the scope and authority of the holy spirit in Christian piety. Some of the contours of the ensuing tensions have been exposed by historians. H. John McLachlan and John Spurr have demonstrated the wide use of reason in the thought of Anglican divines and their critics in the Restoration period.² Some, including Isabel Rivers, Justin Champion, J. G. A. Pocock, and Sharon Achinstein, have argued that the emphasis on reason in religious

¹ John Spurr and Hugh Trevor-Roper have argued that advocates for the Church developed or arrived at new ideas and emphases concerning its ecclesiology to occasion the Restoration. See John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven, 1991), p. 163; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Great Tew Circle', in *Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans: Seventeenth Century Essays* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 219-22. Richard Baxter identified such innovatory ideas as the 'new prelatial way'. See, for example, his 1658 letter to Thomas Pierce outlining the differences between what he called 'Old Episcopal Party' and the 'Late Prelates', in Richard Baxter, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter, Volume 1: 1638-1660*, ed. N. H. Keeble and Geoffrey F. Nuttall (2 vols., Oxford, 1991), p. 304 (hereafter *CCRB I*). Like Spurr and Trevor-Roper, Baxter associated Henry Hammond, in particular, with the new prelatial way. See *CCRB I*, p. 105.

² John Spurr, "'Rational Religion" in Restoration England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49.4 (1988), 563-85; H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1951).

debate during this period can be linked to broader shifts in the history of religion and philosophy.³ According to this historiography, the gradual ascendancy of a sociable Arminianism among elites, the development of Latitudinarianism within the church, the spread of mechanical philosophy in scientific circles, and the critique of 'priestcraft' combined to erode rigid predestinarianism, Aristotelianism, and confessional doctrine.⁴

By designing a rational piety that was exercised within the demonstrable limits of an institutionalized episcopacy, the Restoration Church contributed to these processes. The enthusiasts and sectarian holdovers from the civil war days were shown to have erred in assuming an immediate, revelatory contact with God, were entreated to reflect rationally on their religious feelings, and were reminded that in the latter days God would communicate to his subjects by way of the Church and its ordained authorities. From the point of view of nonconformists, however, there was embedded within this framework a range of only partially developed assumptions about the role of God and the holy spirit. The restored Church abated the intensity and directness of 'conversation' with God within her ranks, but nonconformists could not in good conscience submit to a theology that prescribed for the holy spirit a role limited to acting within such institutionalized structures.

Despite the centrality of the holy spirit and its varied applications within seventeenth-century Christian thought, it has not registered significantly in the period's historiography. Literary historians have identified the transformation of an enthusiasm invested with revolutionary

³ Isabel Rivers, 'Grace, Holiness, and the Pursuit of Happiness: Bunyan and Restoration Latitudinarianism', in N. H. Keeble (ed.), *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus: Tercentenary Essay* (Oxford, 1988), 45-69; Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies* (Cambridge, 1992); J. G. A. Pocock, 'Enthusiasm: The Antiself of Enlightenment', in Lawrence E. Klein and Anthony J. La Volpa (eds.), *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe: 1650-1850* (San Marino, 1998), 7-28; Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 157.

⁴ Some notable works exploring these themes are D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London, 1970); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1973), especially chapter twenty-two; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987); John Spurr, "'Latitudinarianism" and the Restoration Church', *Historical Journal*, 31 (1988), 61-82; Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730* (Cambridge, 1992); Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford, 2001). An overview of some of these changes is detailed in David Wootton, 'New Histories of Atheism', in David Wootton and Michael Hunter (eds.), *Atheism From Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1992), 13-55.

social and political energy into one of 'sublime' artistic impulses.⁵ The holy spirit here meets the inspired Homeric poetic muse and the outcome of the relationship remained confined within a poetic or broadly artistic realm.⁶ A related historiographical strand, defined largely by Christopher Hill, had the Restoration as a defining event in English nonconformity, when a spirit of resistance and social conscience was defeated by the forces of conservative reaction. Although this view has been modified by Richard Greaves, Neil Keeble and others who have perceived the culture of nonconformity as more flexible than Hill allowed, no account has been written of the nature and implications of spirit in this inwardly-oriented piety.⁷

The strictly theological and trinitarian reading of the spirit which defines it as the third person of the trinity and the active agent of God in the created realm can be distinguished from broader philosophical applications. Seventeenth-century natural philosophy inherited from Greek and Renaissance thought elaborate systems for understanding the workings of the universe in which 'spirit', variously understood, was central. The Neoplatonism of Henry More posited an *anima mundi* (world soul or spirit of nature) capable of inhabiting and animating matter which is otherwise spiritually dead or inert. Although this *pneuma* is vital and a vicarious extension of God's power, it is also imperceptible, unintelligent, and lacking self-awareness.⁸ This formulation allowed More and the Cambridge Platonists to establish a permanent spiritual presence in the world without taking the additional step, taken at last by Spinoza, of attributing to matter a

⁵ Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought* (Oxford, 1953), p. 136.

⁶ Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent*, pp. 172-81; Sharon Achinstein, 'Honey From the Lion's Carcass: Bunyan, Allegory, and the Samsonian Moment', in David Gay, James G. Randall and Arlette Zinck (eds.), *Awakening Words: John Bunyan and the Language of Community* (Newark, 2000), 68-80.

⁷ Notable studies in Restoration nonconformity and dissent include N. H. Keeble, *Richard Baxter, Puritan Man of Letters* (Oxford, 1982); Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (London, 1985); N. H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester, 1987); N. H. Keeble (ed.), *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus: Tercentenary Essays* (Oxford, 1998); Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent*; Richard L. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent* (Stanford, 2003). Some examples of literature addressing inward piety are Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 1976); Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, 1979); Anne Ferry, *The 'Inward' Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago, 1983); Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, 1995).

⁸ John Henry, 'A Cambridge Platonist's Materialism: Henry More and the Concept of Soul', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 49 (1986), p. 177.

self-activating principle. It was imperative for More, in John Henry's phrase, to avoid attributing activity to matter and materiality to spirit.⁹

This Platonic (or more accurately Stoic¹⁰) conception of spirit as a subtle or imperceptible substance circulating throughout the universe meets at various points with additional features of Restoration theology and philosophy. In the Renaissance Hermetic tradition, still quite alive during the late-seventeenth century,¹¹ nature is perceived as a network of vital forces whose essential secrets might be unlocked by magic.¹² Related to the spirit of nature were 'animal spirits', a crucial feature of early modern medical theory. According to this theory the animal spirits were the 'instrument of the soul'.¹³ When the body's vital spirits, which are composed of vapours from the heart, arrive at the brain they are combined with air to yield the animal spirits.¹⁴ The anatomist Thomas Willis regularly referred to animal spirits, particularly in his 1664 treatise, *The Anatomy of the Brain*. Willis affirmed that in 'advanced brains', in contrast to those of fowls, for example, the animal spirits are created in the brain and flow throughout the nervous system, affecting emotions and facial muscles, and moving 'according to passions of the soul' and 'necessities of nature'.¹⁵

These two bodies of thought, the magical and the anatomical, came together for occultists such as Thomas Vaughan and John Webster for different ends. Koen Vermeier has described animal spirits as one of the seventeenth century's versatile 'floating concepts', ideas not 'debated for

⁹ Henry, 'Materialism', p. 176.

¹⁰ Amos Funkenstein, 'The Body of God in Seventeenth-Century Theology and Science', in Richard Popkin (ed.), *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought, 1650-1800* (New York, 1988), p. 157.

¹¹ Lynn Thorndike, *The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe* (New York, 1967); Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus (eds.), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* (Washington, 1988); Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago, 1999); György E. Szönyi, *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation Through Powerful Signs* (New York, 2005).

¹² Frederic B. Burnham, 'The More-Vaughan Controversy: The Revolt Against Philosophical Enthusiasm', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35 (1974), pp. 33-34.

¹³ Koen Vermeier, 'The "Physical Prophet" and the Powers of the Imagination, Part I: A Case Study in Prophecy, Vapours, and the Imagination (1685-1710)', *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Science*, 35 (2004), p. 570. The quote is here attributed to Galen.

¹⁴ Vermeier, 'Physical Prophet', p. 570.

¹⁵ Thomas Willis, *The Anatomy of the Brain* (London, 1664; facs., New York, 1971), pp. 37, 44, 72, 83; Rina Koeff has pointed to the importance of the intercostal nerves as fundamental to the understanding of the rational faculty in the work of Willis. See 'The Reins of the Soul: The Centrality of the Intercostal Nerves to the Neurology of Thomas Willis and to Samuel Parker's Theology', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 59 (2004), 413-440.

their own sake' but which helped make 'meaningful discourse on other phenomena possible'.¹⁶ For practitioners of magic, the animal spirits of the human body could interact in subtle ways with the external spirit of nature. Occultists could thereby attempt to connect the mysterious cosmic *pneuma* with the human body.¹⁷ Even Neoplatonists and Aristotelians who dismissed magic as foolish or evil made positive use of animal spirits and the spirit of nature as useful bulwarks against philosophies that understood the universe in purely materialist or mechanical terms.

By functioning as a medium between corporeal bodies and incorporeal or imperceptible substances, animal spirits also helped explain how human beings interact with souls and other spiritual substances. The mind/body problem, as it has subsequently come to be known, was intensely debated in the seventeenth century and was one among the collection of philosophical problems that came with the deepening of the early modern sceptical crisis.¹⁸ By the turn of the eighteenth century, Descartes's response to the problem had largely set the terms of the debate. Seeking a basis for human knowledge in an eternal and infinite God, Descartes extrapolated from the fact of his own mental existence, the *cogito*, both the existence of God as well as a rudimentary understanding of how the mind functions in relation to the body to which it is connected as well as to other bodies and material substances.¹⁹ Descartes observed that acts of will find expression in specific bodily movements and cannot affect other souls or objects but by use of the body as an intermediary. The mechanism that causally linked the mind to the body was entirely speculative,²⁰ but Descartes was convinced that this was the only form of spirit/body interaction that can be rationally discussed. This dualist conception of spiritual substance undermined not only the possibility of spirits as apparitions of the sort described by Richard Baxter and Joseph Glanvill, for such spirits would require bodies to inhabit, but it also strips the natural

¹⁶ Vermeir, 'Physical Prophet', p. 569.

¹⁷ Vermeir, 'Physical Prophet', p. 573

¹⁸ Richard Popkin, *The History of Scepticism From Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley, 1979).

¹⁹ René Descartes, 'Discourse on Method' and 'Meditations on First Philosophy', in Elizabeth Haldane and G. H. T. Ross (eds.), *The Philosophical Works of René Descartes, Volume 1* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1911).

²⁰ Descartes himself believed it resided in the pineal, the 'petite glande dans le cerveau en laquelle l'ame exerce ses fonctions, plus particulièrement que dans les autres'. René Descartes, *Les Passions de L'Âme* (Paris, 1649), p. 45.

world of its 'centres of activity'.²¹ The Neoplatonic or Stoic universe is effectively deanimated.²² The human body itself was likewise perceived by Descartes as a machine carefully rendered by God.²³

Nonconformist observers of these trends in philosophy were not inattentive to their theological implications. Nor did the quarrel over the holy spirit proceed in isolation from any one of these currents of thought. Nevertheless the historiography, extending from literary, philosophical, and historical sources, points to the importance of the spirit for Restoration nonconformists, but has not fully engaged with it. Geoffrey Nuttall's 1947 study, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, is an exception.²⁴ Nuttall surveyed a range of puritan opinion on the subject, but focused particularly on George Fox and Quaker conceptions of the inner light, at one extreme, and the more moderate judgments of Baxter and Owen. Historians of puritanism, however, have rarely made the connection between the individual's personal experience of the holy spirit and its implications for a wider 'world' of spirits, despite the connections contemporaries made between them. As Andrew Fix remarked, the existence of spirits and the reality of their operation on earth could be perceived as foundational to Christian belief: 'If one did not believe in fallen angels he could not believe in other (good) angels or in the immediate working of God through the Holy Spirit.'²⁵

For Thomas Jobe, the debate over spirits that took place during the second half of the seventeenth century can be linked to Restoration politics and the pressures exerted by opposing views of religion and philosophy. The 'illuminationism' espoused by the sects of the 1650s was, according to Jobe, frustrated by Anglican uses of mechanical philosophy. Whereas enthusiasts posited a world of inward and immediate spiritual activity, Anglican thinkers such as More and Glanvill proposed a well-ordered mechanical world inhabited by a hierarchy of spirits behaving in generally predictable ways.²⁶

²¹ Han Van Ruler, 'Mind, Forms, and Spirits: The Nature of Cartesian Disenchantment', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61 (2000), pp. 390-1.

²² Van Ruler, 'Cartesian Disenchantment', p. 388.

²³ Descartes, 'Discourse on Method', p. 116.

²⁴ Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford, 1947).

²⁵ Andrew Fix, 'Angels, Devils, and Evil Spirits in Seventeenth-Century Thought: Balthasar Bekker and the Collegiants', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50 (1989), p. 537.

²⁶ Thomas Harmon Jobe, 'The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill-Webster

Although Jobe's framework takes effective account of a specific episode in the history of philosophy – the centrepiece of his argument is the quarrel between John Webster and Glanvill on the existence of witches and spirits in the 1670s and 1680s – more needs to be said of the connections between spiritual presence, the holy spirit, and broader trends in Restoration nonconformity. What Owen, in 1676, termed the 'whole oeconomy of the Holy Spirit' epitomizes what was for nonconformists an intense ongoing concern. Whilst Anglican theologians bonded the operations of the spirit to episcopacy, the Book of Common Prayer, and the supervised study of scripture, nonconformists endeavoured to pry the spirit and, in Owen's words, all its 'Adjuncts, Operations, and Effects', loose from them.²⁷

A close look at perceptions of the spirit reveals the distance between many nonconformists and the Anglican establishment on central features of Christian worship. Some prominent nonconformists, for example Owen, Baxter, and John Bunyan, believed that the major events in the spiritual lives of Christians took place independent of the episcopal structures of the Church of England. Principally, activities involving the holy spirit provided, for nonconformists, a potent basis for both critiquing the Church and developing a uniquely nonconformist mode of worship. Though each of these individuals was drawn to different aspects of the spirit's role in worship, by way of their respective emphases they all found their way back the same problem: That the holy spirit, its functions and operations, had become moribund within the Church's structures of piety.

From their perspective, there were two related reasons for the marginalization of this most crucial feature of Christian worship. The first was an over-reliance on the idea of the church as apostolic in its origin. For nonconformists, the Church's traditions, forms, and authoritarian structures of authority were inadequate for obtaining salvation. Instead of the difficult and sometimes harrowing spiritual transformations wrought by the holy spirit in one's heart, conformists, it was alleged, preferred to take comfort in set patterns, convincing themselves of their piety and salvation. This critique is especially conspicuous in the work of Bunyan, whose Calvinism influenced him to understand salvation as a series of stages that cannot be

Witchcraft Debate', *Isis*, 72 (1981), 342-56.

²⁷ John Owen, *Pneumatologia, or A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit* (London, 1676), p. 3.

negotiated with 'short cuts' of the kind said to be built into Anglican worship. It is clear that for Bunyan and Baxter a Christian's life ought to be understood as a process variously and at times unpredictably interrupted by the holy spirit and its obligations. The section below will explore these points by drawing mainly on printed treatises by Baxter and Bunyan. There are also significant detours into Bunyan's literary works, above all *Pilgrim's Progress* and its sequel, which have been interpreted in light of these contemporary problems. Baxter's manuscripts, now printed, have been examined in like manner.

What was perceived to be a growing indifference to the work of holy spirit was attributed to an over-reliance on reason and, by extension, 'sober' religious worship. This was in part the nonconformist response to the Anglican backlash against enthusiasm, but scrutiny also reveals tensions within the Anglican fold. Feelings of irritation and even despair over those for whom 'the very name of the Spirit is grown to be a reproach' were common.²⁸ The connection between the diversity of spiritual presence and the holy spirit's activity on earth was also made, with some suspecting that if the former was abandoned for philosophical reasons, the latter would follow. This seemed to nonconformists to be a combination of complacency and wilful malice. Glanvill's and More's firm belief in the reality of a spirit-inhabited world demonstrates that the conviction was not espoused by nonconformists alone, however, and generalizations along confessional lines ought to be carefully rendered. For nonconformists, the loosening of the holy spirit from the structures of the Church both allowed for the possibility of a pious mode of worship and functioned as a sustained critique of Anglican doctrine. In this, More and Glanvill proceeded no further than reproving fellow Anglicans for a seemingly high-minded contempt for the word and the idea of spirit. They, too, sensed a problem, a slide toward irreligion hastened by the privileging of reason and a preference for set forms over the immediacy of the holy spirit. The section examining these points is derived from the printed works of Baxter, Glanvill, More, Owen, William Claget, and John Webster. All of the individuals that appear below have been consulted for the manner in which they speak to the depth, scope, and complexity of the problems facing the nonconformists and Anglicans

²⁸ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 21.

who opted to engage them.

I

For nonconformists, the work of the holy spirit in the heart of the individual, ideally, is undertaken in conjunction with the exercise of reason and the reading of scripture, but cannot function by reason or scripture alone. It must be free to intervene in the lives of Christians unfettered by arbitrary limits. Such interventions take place within the heart of the pious. The language of the 'heart' in nonconformist works, particularly in those of Bunyan, illustrates this dynamic and draws attention to the interpenetration of spirit and flesh in regenerate individuals. The spirit must penetrate the heart, it must be permitted to do so, and enter into dialogue with the believer. God initiates this relationship on his own terms and in ways that cannot always be predicted. Thus the heart was both the inward destination of the holy spirit as well as the seat of its most critical functions. But its engagement with the holy spirit did not operate independently of scripture, its preachers, or additional learning. Bunyan and Baxter, for example, were careful to marginalize the beliefs of Quakers who, on principle, dismissed the relevance of external centres of godliness in favour of the supreme influence of the inner light. The economy of the holy spirit encompassed inward processes, including conscience and reason, as well as the familiar activities and institutions that comprised a pious lifestyle. As Keeble has remarked on multiple occasions, there is for Bunyan and Baxter sensitivity to the interpenetration of visible and invisible, human and divine.²⁹ Consequently, the active involvement of the holy spirit, on which the achievement of true grace depended, was characterized as both a physical and a spiritual experience.

Justification before God entailed spiritual transformation, but Bunyan understood the conversion as having intense bodily dimensions. Quoting Corinthians (2 Cor. 3.6.),³⁰ Bunyan stressed the severe, even violent quality of the individual's initial pangs of conversion: 'I kill saith God; That is, with my law. I pierce, I wound, I pierce men into the very heart by

²⁹ N. H. Keeble, 'Introduction', in John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. N. H. Keeble (Oxford, 1984), p. xxii; Keeble, *Man of Letters*, p. 145.

³⁰ 'Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but if the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'

showing them their sins against law.' To believe the scriptures and to be convinced of one's own sinfulness is to be 'killed, I say killed by the authority of the holy Scriptures; struck stark dead in a spiritual sense by the holy Scripture'.³¹ When the Law was set on one's 'heart with power', it was purged of its sins and 'filled with the knowledge of the mystery of Godliness'.³² Owen's analysis of the heart in scripture indicated how thoroughgoing the process is of having one's 'stony heart' taken away and replaced anew by the holy spirit:

The heart in Scripture is taken for the whole rational soul ... as all the faculties of the Soul are one common principle of all our moral operations. Hence it has such properties assigned unto it as are peculiar to the mind or understanding, as to see, perceive, to be wise, and to understand; and on the contrary, to be blind and foolish; sometimes such as belong properly to the will and affections, as to obey, to love, to fear, to trust in God.³³

In regeneration the stony heart and its '*repugnancy* to the Grace of God' would be transformed to bear the Law allowing the justified individual to walk 'in the ways of the Lord'.³⁴ Although Owen did not reproduce Bunyan's violent imagery, by placing the stony heart in opposition to the fleshly heart he underlined the 'obstinate, stubborn' surface through which the holy spirit had to penetrate as it brought a 'pliability' for the new heart of flesh.³⁵

When Bunyan censured 'notionists', his term for those who sought to avoid the struggles of spiritual transformation, he left little doubt about the target of his criticism. There were those who pretended to have the testimony of the spirit which 'is no better than the spirit of Satan, though it

³¹ John Bunyan, 'A Few Sighs From Hell', in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, Vol. 1, ed. T. L. Underwood and Roger Sharrock (13 vols., Oxford, 1980), p. 353.

³² Bunyan, 'Sighs', p. 353. John Bunyan, 'Some Gospel Truths Opened', in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, Vol. 1, ed. T. L. Underwood and Roger Sharrock (13 vols., Oxford, 1980), p. 16.

³³ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 278.

³⁴ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 277. Owen's use of the term 'walking' reflects the flexible nature of English Calvinism, which in practice had more in common with the theology of Calvin's student, Theodore Beza. Beza admitted that individuals have no absolutely certain means of determining the status of their election; the most we may do is look within ourselves and be mindful that the effects of sanctification will point back to salvation. A complete statement of these distinctions can be found in R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1979). The idea of 'walking in the way of the Lord' as a means of affirming one's election was espoused not only by moderate Calvinists like Richard Baxter but also constitutes the dramatic tension in Bunyan's allegories.

³⁵ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 277.

calls itself by the name of the spirit of Christ'.³⁶ Talkative, in the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, attempted to defend his habit of 'crying out' against sin as evidence of the holy spirit's presence in his heart, but Faithful's retort demonstrated the difference between crying out against sin and truly abhorring it: '[A] man may cry out against sin, of policy; but he cannot abhor it, by virtue of a godly antipathy against it: I have heard many cry out against sin in the Pulpit, who yet can abide it well enough in the heart, and house, and conversation.'³⁷ In the 1670s Bunyan would have perceived this variety of hypocrisy as typical of Anglicans occupying the pulpit but also generally characteristic of those convinced, with 'bare notion', of their own piety and justification. Bunyan's encounter with the Latitudinarian Edward Fowler illustrated the extent to which Christ and the holy spirit were for him active, indeed alive, as mediators and facilitators in the transformation that the elect experience upon justification. Fowler's remarks on the 'purity of the human spirit' offended Bunyan's Calvinist insistence on spiritual transformation. Such beliefs are but 'words spoken to the air', bereft of meaning and consequence without a new heart and new spirit. If Christ was limited to a moral 'example', as he seemed to have been for Fowler, his essential role in that thoroughgoing transformation was denied.³⁸ The spiritually shallow conformist surfaces again for Bunyan in the character of Ignorance, 'always full of good motions', believing he has 'left behind all for Christ'.³⁹ Fowler's faith in reason and human nature might itself be understood as a form of antinomianism, and Bunyan established the point in an exchange between Ignorance and Hopeful. The former, in typical Anglican manner, begins by associating Calvinist justification with enthusiasm: 'This [antinomian] conceit would loosen the reins of our lust, and tolerate us to live as we list: For what matter how we live if we may be Justified by Christs personal righteousness from all, when we believe it?'⁴⁰ Believing he has taken the point, Ignorance pressed harder, ridiculing Hopeful's belief in revelations of Christ from heaven as 'whimzy', boasting, 'What! You are a man for revelations! I believe that what both you, and all

³⁶ Bunyan, 'Sighs', p. 351.

³⁷ John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. N. H. Keeble (Oxford, 1984), p. 67. Bunyan published *Pilgrim's Progress* in 1678 and followed it with *Pilgrim's Progress, The Second Part* in 1684. Hereafter these will be referred to as *PP I* and *PP II*, respectively.

³⁸ Rivers, 'Restoration Latitudinarianism', pp. 60-61.

³⁹ Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 118.

⁴⁰ Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 121.

the rest of you say about the matter, is but the fruit of distracted brains'.⁴¹ Christian reminded Ignorance that 'he that trusts his own heart is a fool' and judges him as deluded with whimsies of his own, 'for a man's heart may minister comfort to him in the hopes of that thing, for which he yet has no grounds to hope'.⁴²

The source of godliness is thus neither the Church and its forms nor is it a faith in a rational and pure human nature. With Luther, Bunyan believed the holy spirit, in conjunction with the Bible, expressed itself in the believer's heart and no external authority should interfere with it.⁴³ The process however is not isolated from external factors. '[T]o bow, and win over the heart to God in Christ' is to know scripture, to preach, or to understand and feel the effects of preaching on the heart. Christian, after all, could not have found his way to the Wicket-gate without the counsel of Evangelist.⁴⁴ But the real work of justification, the spirit's penetrating (or killing, as Bunyan's preferred metaphor would have it) and emptying, inhabiting, and transforming of the fleshly heart, takes place internally, as the tortured psychological trials of *Grace Abounding* (1666) attest. The presence and impact of the holy spirit on the heart of the justified was made real and, in a sense, immediate by this interpenetration of divine and human.

If Bunyan had to contend with Latitudinarians and other proponents of rational religion who believed that the spirit was synonymous with reason or human nature, he was also forced to confront the Quaker view that it was synonymous with the inner light. Bunyan repeatedly stressed that the spirit did not initially or incontrovertibly reside in one's heart. As *Pilgrim's Progress* demonstrates, no amount of 'good motions' shields even the elect from occasional 'retakes' or crises of confidence.⁴⁵ Bunyan's first two published works, *Some Gospel-Truths Opened* of 1656 and its *Vindication* one year later, were expressly anti-Quaker tracts. In both he attacks the central Quaker principle of the inner light as both wrongheaded and

⁴¹ Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 121.

⁴² Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 118.

⁴³ Richard Greaves, 'Conscience, Liberty, and the Spirit: Bunyan and Nonconformity', in N. H. Keeble (ed.), *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus: Tercentenary Essays* (Oxford, 1988), 21-43.

⁴⁴ Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 40.

⁴⁵ The term 'retakes' is that of John Stachniewski and Anita Pacheco, editors of *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies* (Oxford, 1998), p. xix (hereafter *GA*). It is useful here to make the distinction, with Richard Greaves, that whereas the central theme of *Pilgrim's Progress* is sanctification, the thematic crux of *Grace Abounding* is election, calling, and justification. See Greaves, *Glimpses*, p. 230.

insufficient for salvation. Bunyan believed that one must have the spirit and righteousness of Christ within one, but achieving this was conditional upon election which was not, on the contrary, universal among mankind.⁴⁶ The emptied heart, prepared by the holy spirit for godliness, is contrasted with the 'puffed up' heart of the unstable Quaker or Ranter.⁴⁷ Like conformist Anglicans, they have grown complacent and vain in their practices and too assured of their own salvation.⁴⁸ This assurance arises from a misreading of the origin and meaning of the inner light, which for Bunyan was a natural rather than a supernatural organ. There is no denial of the universality of a kind of inner light in man, but the light is the light of conscience, a crucial if spiritually unremarkable device. Going straight to the favourite Quaker verse, John 1:9,⁴⁹ Bunyan stated flatly that the light of conscience is by called by some 'Christ, though falsely'.⁵⁰ This, very simply, is a privileging of the Christ within over the Christ without.⁵¹ The egregiousness of the error is made more evident by Bunyan's characterization of the conscience as 'but a poore dunghill creature in comparison of the Spirit of Christ'.⁵² Christ's gift upon entering the heart was the holy spirit itself, 'given to the Elect' at conversion.⁵³ Like Anglicans and Latitudinarians, Quakers were bare notionists for refusing to become truly engrossed in the essential experiences of Christian faith and consequently did not reap their true rewards.

Bunyan's own rather psychologically harrowing experience of achieving grace raises questions about the standards of suffering he expected of others in their own experiences. Vincent Newey has remarked that in Bunyan there is 'no bolder spectacle of incipient insanity in literature'.⁵⁴ But if the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress* can be read as analogous to the trials that Bunyan, himself a solitary pilgrim like Christian, experienced in justification and sanctification (and Greaves has mounted a

⁴⁶ Bunyan, 'Gospel Truths', p. 10.

⁴⁷ Bunyan, 'Gospel Truths', p. 16.

⁴⁸ Bunyan, 'Gospel Truths', pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹ 'That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'

⁵⁰ Bunyan, 'Gospel Truths', p. 55.

⁵¹ John Bunyan, 'A Vindication of Some Gospel Truths Opened', in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan, Vol. 1*, ed. T. L. Underwood and Roger Sharrock (Oxford, 1980), p. 124.

⁵² Bunyan, 'Vindication', p. 148.

⁵³ Bunyan, 'Vindication', p. 174.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Greaves, *Glimpses*, p. 234.

persuasive argument for such a reading⁵⁵) then the second part, the matter of his sanity notwithstanding, implies a broadening in his outlook on the means of salvation. Mercy's anxiety over whether she will be acknowledged at the Wicket-Gate arose from her awareness of having been stirred to embark on the pilgrimage for reasons differing from those of Christiana: '[M]y want of experience, is that that makes me covet to be in silence, and that also that fills me with fears of coming short at last. I cannot tell of Visions, and Dreams as my friend Christiana; nor can I know what is to mourn for my refusing the Counsel of those that were good relations.'⁵⁶ Mercy's eventual warm reception, despite her fears, is in Keeble's words 'the first of many examples in Part II of Bunyan's recognition that grace works in different ways, and to different degrees, upon different personalities'.⁵⁷ Greaves extended the point noting that Christian's pilgrimage was autobiographical, not universal, and in *Faithful and Hopeful* and generally in Part II, Bunyan offered 'alternate patterns of experience'.⁵⁸

This cannot, however, be taken as evidence of a softening of Bunyan's insistence on trial and transformation. Whereas notionists expected entry into the Celestial City without the testing and transformation of their hearts, the procession of diverse pilgrims in Part II cannot be said to have had spiritually and physically undemanding crossings. In *Formalist and Hypocrisy*, travellers from the Land of Vain-Glory, Bunyan likened the condition of spiritual complacency to that of the Church of England. Addressing Christian's query about how they have arrived without entering 'the Gate which standeth in the way', the narrator elaborates thus:

To go to the Gate for entrance, was by all their Country-men counted too far about; and that therefore their usual way was to make a short-cut of it, and to climb over the Wall as they had done ... what they did they had custom for; and could produce, if need were, Testimony that would witness it, for more than a thousand years.⁵⁹

Ignorance attempted a similar short cut with disastrous consequences:

Now while I was gazing upon all these things, I turned my head to look back, and saw Ignorance come up to the River side: but he soon

⁵⁵ Greaves, *Glimpses*, pp. 229-43.

⁵⁶ Bunyan, *PP II*, p. 170.

⁵⁷ Keeble, *PP II*, p. 279.

⁵⁸ Greaves, *Glimpses*, pp. 233-34.

⁵⁹ Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 33.

got over, and that without half the difficulty which the other two [Christian and Hopeful] met with. For it happened, that there was then in that place one Vain-Hope a Ferry-man, that with his boat helped him over ... [but] neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement ... Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the Hill, and put him there. Then I saw there was a way to Hell, even from the Gates of Heaven.⁶⁰

Bunyan's sympathy for Ready-to-Halt and Feeble-Mind, neither of whom, given their physical and mental disabilities, could have survived the adversity experienced by Christian, is apparent, having written for them at their respective deaths what are perhaps the most poignant scenes in the story.⁶¹ Christiana assured Ready-to-Halt that although 'thy travel has been with Difficulty ... [it] will make thy rest sweeter'.⁶² These are not characters emboldened with vain confidence. Ignorance, like the Latitude-men who were fashioning new emphases on the sufficiency of human reason, or Formalist, who was satisfied with the structures and testimony of his historical church, located the source of his salvation in something other than the purified heart. Such individuals were cut off from their own hearts and subsequently cut off from communication with the holy spirit. Bunyan himself worried that 'God had a bigger mouth to speak with, than I had heart to conceive with'.⁶³ In the *Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan*, written shortly after his sentencing to prison in November of 1660, he explained the inadequacies of Anglican practices for communicating with the holy spirit. Standing his ground against the questioning of the notorious Justice Keelin (or Kelyng⁶⁴), Bunyan insisted that, in matters of prayer, 'the spirit itself' intercedes: 'Mark, said I, it doth not say the Common Prayer-book teacheth us how to pray, but the spirit. And it is the spirit that helpeth our infirmities, saith the Apostle; he doth not say it is the Common Prayer-book.'⁶⁵ In the same exchange with Keelin, Bunyan indicated that it is the spirit, and nothing else, that must be truly heard: 'And although it be said

⁶⁰ Bunyan, *PP II*, pp. 132-33.

⁶¹ Bunyan, *PP II*, pp. 257-58.

⁶² Bunyan, *PP II*, p. 256.

⁶³ Bunyan, *GA*, p. 70.

⁶⁴ Stuart Handley, 'Kelyng, Sir John (bap. 1607-1671)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010).

⁶⁵ John Bunyan, 'A Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan', in *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, ed. John Stachniewski and Anita Pacheco (Oxford, 1998), p. 107.

that faith comes by hearing: Yet it is the spirit that worketh faith in the heart through hearing, or else they are not profited by hearing.⁶⁶ Echoing these sentiments, Owen built on what had become a standard criticism of the Church of England and its forms. '[I]t is every man's duty in all his Circumstances', he wrote, 'to pray *as well as he can*, and to make use in his so doing, of the *Assistance of the Spirit of God*.'⁶⁷ The 'Spirit of Grace and Supplication is promised', he continued, 'to *enable us to pray*, not to enable us to *make or compose prayer for others*'.⁶⁸

The problem that followed the incorrigible Mr Badman, another of Bunyan's nefarious characters, into hell, in the final analysis, was a 'hardened heart to sin'.⁶⁹ His callousness and love of filthy lucre were indicative of a heart into which the spirit could literally not penetrate. His cynical show of religion⁷⁰ did not convince Mr Wiseman of his piety, and even had he taken to the church and its forms he would have amounted to no more than did Mr By-Ends, that is, one who is not for religion 'when in rags and contempt' but only when it walks in 'golden slippers in the Sunshine, and with applause'.⁷¹ Neither the human heart nor the holy spirit were contained within the religious edifice built by the Anglican establishment. The concepts that defined it – reason, custom, discipline – even seemed somewhat beside the point. The spirit itself certainly operated outside of these limits and overwhelmed the sinful hearts of the elect at any time and on its own terms. Bunyan here drew on tendencies already present in the radical wing of civil war sectarianism for an updated critique of the Restoration Church. Lawrence Clarkson, for example, the ostentatious 'captain of the rant', rejected the set forms of Presbyterianism in the 1640s, associated reason with the 'self-approving values of the propertied classes', and believed that 'God was a spirit, and did motion in and out into his Saints'.⁷² Agnes Beaumont, who was closer to Bunyan's time and religious

⁶⁶ Bunyan, 'Relation', p. 108.

⁶⁷ John Owen, *A Discourse of the Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer* (London, 1682), p. 3.

⁶⁸ Owen, *Holy Spirit in Prayer*, p. 79.

⁶⁹ John Bunyan, *The Life and Death of Mr Badman: Presented to the World in the familiar dialogue between Mr Wiseman and Mr Attentive*, eds. James F. Forrest and Roger Sharrock (Oxford, 1988), p. 163.

⁷⁰ Bunyan, *Badman*, pp. 104-5.

⁷¹ Bunyan, *PP I*, p. 83.

⁷² Lawrence Clarkson, 'The Lost Sheep Found', in John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, ed. John Stachniewski and Anita Pacheco (Oxford, 1998), p. 179; Stachniewski and Pacheco, *GA*, p. 173n; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, 1972),

inclinations (indeed, having been involved in a minor scandal with him in 1672⁷³), was entirely indifferent to the standard methods and practices of conformist worship during her dramatic struggle with her father's authority. Locked out of her father's house for three days as punishment for having attended one of Bunyan's sermons, Beaumont spent the first night in the barn contemplating the significance of the scriptural passages that 'darted' uncontrollably into her mind and giving thanks to the Lord, still willing to 'pour out a measure of grace' into her miserable situation.⁷⁴ This existential understanding of the holy spirit was equally a source of profound anxiety if one suspected abandonment by God. As Greaves noted, Christian's misery in the Slough of Despond underlined 'how distant and helpless God seemingly could be'.⁷⁵ The closest and most intimate means, both stressful and rewarding, of experiencing the spirit of God was by the heart, and religion by other means, especially Anglican or Latitudinarian, was something less than that.

A prominent nonconformist contemporary of Bunyan, Richard Baxter, echoed the idea that the holy spirit moved freely outside the perimeters of episcopacy. Historians have extensively chronicled his close involvement with ecclesiastical events at the high political level and the reconciling disposition he brought to them,⁷⁶ but this reputation should not conceal the principles he held firm. 'Addicted to no party',⁷⁷ Baxter declared that one 'could not (except a Catholick Christian) have trulier called me than an Episcopal Presbyterian-Independent'.⁷⁸ In a letter to Matthew Hale, Baxter admitted that enthusiasts have occasionally put him off the idea of a 'quickenning spirit' in the world, but he remained thankful to those, such as Hale, who continued to correct him:

pp. 213-17.

⁷³ Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'Bunyan's Women, Women's Bunyan', in Vera Camden (ed.), *Trauma and Transformation: The Political Progress of John Bunyan* (Stanford, 2008), 63-81. For an overview see W. R. Owen, 'Beaumont, Agnes (1652-1720)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010).

⁷⁴ Agnes Beaumont, 'The Narrative of the Persecution of Agnes Beaumont', in John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, ed. John Stachniewski and Anita Pacheco (Oxford, 1988), pp. 194-95, 202.

⁷⁵ Greaves, *Glimpses*, p. 235.

⁷⁶ See, for example, N. H. Keeble, *The Restoration: England in the 1660s* (Oxford, 2002), chapters one through three; G.R. Abernathy, *The English Presbyterians and the Stuart Restoration, 1648-1663* (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 68-91

⁷⁷ Quoted in Richard Baxter, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter, Volume II: 1660-1696*, N. H. Keeble and Geoffrey F. Nuttall (2 vols., Oxford, 1991), p. 69 (hereafter *CCRB II*).

⁷⁸ Richard Baxter, *A Third Defence of the Cause of Peace* (London, 1681), p. 110.

When I heard ignorant men talk of the witness of the spirit enthusiastically, it kept me from considering of that which I am fully convinced of, that the regenerating, illuminating, quickening spirit, disposing the soul with filial affections to God, is Christ's great agent in the world, and his witness and ours, and the mark and grace of God upon us.⁷⁹

In his *Autobiography* he worried about the tensions involved in 'grounding men in their religion, and especially of the witness of the indwelling spirit'.⁸⁰ Like Bunyan, Baxter appreciated the varied quality of Protestant religious experience. His spiritual autobiography diverged from the 'stagist' development characteristic of orthodox Calvinism and exhibited instead the conviction that God 'breaketh not all men's hearts alike'.⁸¹ His judgments on church government and local religious discipline, which were heavily influenced by his own practical and pastoral experience,⁸² always returned to the necessity of catering to the holy spirit and its effects on the individual. For Baxter, this meant discouraging the factionalism and insularity of the sects as well as the authoritarian practices of the Church of England, adorned as it was with apparently superfluous creeds and ordinances.

More than Bunyan, indeed, more than most seventeenth-century Europeans, whether English nonconformist or not, Baxter embraced the literal world of spirits as a means of God's involvement in the spiritual lives of believers. For Baxter, apparitions were not accidental features of the natural world, for such spiritual substances are in a sense licenced by God to assume particular roles in the breaking of men's hearts. In the same way that the holy spirit made its presence known in the heart, a spirit or apparition endowed with religious import communicates its proximity to the individual and the material world. Both means could overtake the expectations of either the individual or the possibilities assumed by the Church's structures.

When cautioning that God no longer taught 'miraculously, as the apostles were taught', Baxter sought, like the Anglicans, to protect religion against enthusiasts, especially antinomians.⁸³ But for Baxter this idea had

⁷⁹ Baxter, *CCRB II*, p. 186.

⁸⁰ Richard Baxter, *The Autobiography of Mr Richard Baxter; Abridged by J.M. Thomas with an Introduction by N. H. Keeble* (London, 1974), p. 110.

⁸¹ Baxter, *Autobiography*, p. 11.

⁸² Keeble, 'Introduction', in *Autobiography*, p. xvi.

⁸³ Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, ed. William Young (London, 1907), p.

an additional implication that has bearing on his perception of personal piety. Acknowledging that God did occasionally undertake the 'sudden extraordinary casting of comforting thoughts into our hearts', he stressed that more often 'God feedeth not saints as birds do their young, bringing it to them, and putting it into their mouths, while they lie still, and only gape to receive it'.⁸⁴ Spiritual and moral progress and effort is the 'essence of Christianity'.⁸⁵ It is 'a small measure of grace at the first', and the true Christian by 'Practical or working Faith' will desire 'to attain to the highest degree of holiness'.⁸⁶ Antinomianism, the ultimate abuse of God's grace, made spiritual progress irrelevant. One's spiritual life, on the contrary, could not in any sense be complete or perfected on earth and only continued moral progress saw to actual sanctification.⁸⁷ Baxter's disdain for complacent worship extended beyond antinomians and settled on those Bunyan would have called bare notionists:

And here let me warn you of a dangerous snare, an opinion which will rob you of all your comfort; some think if they should thus fetch in their own comfort by believing and hoping, and work it out of Scripture promises, and extract it by their own thinking and studying, that then it would be a comfort only of their own hammering it out, as they say, and not the genuine joy of the Holy Ghost.⁸⁸

Those taking comfort in the success of their own 'hammering out' of religious truths have likely circumvented the means by which the holy spirit forms true impressions on the heart and the soul.⁸⁹ The essential interventions of the holy spirit, however, did not necessarily take place in the schematic manner often assumed by seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers. Baxter admitted that he 'could not distinctly trace the workings of the Spirit upon my heart in that method which Mr. Bolton, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Rogers and other divines describe'.⁹⁰ The inability to precisely locate its operations had troubled him in his youth, but as early as 1655 Baxter was advocating attentiveness to a wider range of the holy spirit's

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⁸⁴ Baxter, *Everlasting Rest*, p. 255.

⁸⁵ Keeble, *Man of Letters*, p. 70.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Keeble, *Man of Letters*, pp. 70-71.

⁸⁷ Keeble, *Man of Letters*, p. 70.

⁸⁸ Baxter, *Everlasting Rest*, p. 254.

⁸⁹ William Orme, *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter* (London, 1830), p. 427.

⁹⁰ Baxter, *Autobiography*, p. 10.

means of affecting saving grace in the spiritually-aware Protestant individual.⁹¹ The variety of the spirit's operations included both internal and external phenomena, and antinomians erred in placing the spirit squarely in the former, 'a certain internal assertion of enthusiastic inspiration'.⁹²

Baxter's examples of the external witness of the spirit included miracles and the inspiration of the apostles.⁹³ As William Orme observed, Baxter also concedes to Satan the power of 'operating on human creatures in a supernatural manner' in the form of ghosts and apparitions.⁹⁴ According to Orme, Baxter introduced these stories not 'to prove that Satan has the power of working miracles; but to show from the opposite nature of Christ's works and his, that they could not proceed from the same quarter'.⁹⁵ This is not entirely accurate. In *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (1691) Baxter pointed out that, in an important sense, they do in fact proceed from the same quarter. God will make use of spirits, including those of evil disposition, even if he is not the cause of them:

We may learn to admire that Divine Frame of Government, that hath creatures so various to rule and order and maketh one beautiful Frame of all. As Toads and Serpents on Earth are not useless, nor devouring Fishes, Birds and Beasts; so neither are Devils nor damned souls, no nor their sins.⁹⁶

Moreover, 'no spirits can do anything, but by God's will or permission ... Good spirits are Servants, and Evil ones slaves to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, and shall not frustrate his Grace and Undertaking'.⁹⁷ Along with the quickening spirit that penetrated the heart, spiritual apparitions, even those of evil disposition, are 'not useless' features of piety, and appreciating the whole 'frame' of creation entails acquaintance with them.

Baxter was aware that this view could be vulnerable to reason-oriented critiques. His treatise on the world of spirits evinced a defensive posture with respect to such views. He offered the books of Cotton and

⁹¹ Richard Baxter, *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity* (London, 1655). This work's subtitle indicates its orientation toward Christians of varied degrees of devotion: 'Written for strengthening of the weak, the establishment of the tempted, the staying of the present Course of Apostasie, and the Recovery of those that have not sinned unto death.'

⁹² Baxter, *Autobiography*, p. 110.

⁹³ Orme, *Practical Works*, p. 425.

⁹⁴ Orme, *Practical Works*, p. 426.

⁹⁵ Orme, *Practical Works*, p. 426.

⁹⁶ Richard Baxter, *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (London, 1691), p. 8.

⁹⁷ Baxter, *Certainty*, p. 4.

Increase Mather on witchcraft in New England as instruments for silencing 'incredulity that pretendeth to be rational'.⁹⁸ By no means did Baxter renounce reason. He wrote, after all, that 'the spirit worketh not on the will but by the reason'.⁹⁹ But like Glanvill and More, he was compelled to defend the existence of the spirit world to counter the atheists, infidels, Sadducees, and others who denied the reality of 'apparitions [and] operations of spirits'.¹⁰⁰

Baxter shared with Thomas Hill strong feelings of contempt for Thomas Hobbes who, in the words of Hill, had made 'the holy spirit's infusion of grace' a 'seditious doctrine'.¹⁰¹ Hobbes's view of the holy spirit, and particularly the trinity, is worth pausing over in light of this discussion. As a one-substance materialist, Hobbes's view of spiritual activity was bound to generate opposition. Rejecting conventional Aristotelian and classical Greek metaphysics, Hobbes posited that there are no substantial forms inhering in matter, whether ideal or spiritual, and there are no essences apart from material bodies.¹⁰² He undertook his own analysis of the uses and meaning of the word 'spirit' in common speech, as 'either a subtle, fluid, and invisible body, or a ghost, or other idol or phantasm of the imagination'.¹⁰³ Rejecting all of these, Hobbes found in scripture and everyday speech metaphorical and figurative significations for the word as well as evidence for taking it 'sometimes for a Wind, or Breath'.¹⁰⁴ Referring to Luke 4:1, 'And Jesus full of the Holy Ghost', Hobbes suggested that Jesus may be understood to be full of 'zeal to do the work for which he was sent by God the Father'. Addressing the interchangeable uses of 'ghost' and 'spirit', Hobbes concluded:

How we came to translate *spirits* by the word *ghost*, which signifieth nothing, neither in heaven nor earth, but the imaginary inhabitants of man's brain, I examine not; but this I say, the word *spirit* in the text signifieth no such thing, but either properly a real substance, or metaphorically some extraordinary ability or affection of the mind of the mind or of the body.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Baxter, *Certainty*, p. 80.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁰ Baxter, *Certainty*, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ Baxter, *CCRB I*, p. 74.

¹⁰² Jurgen Overhoff, 'The Theology of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 51 (2000), p. 533.

¹⁰³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Cambridge, 1994), p. 262.

¹⁰⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 265.

Hobbes did not stop here. His own heretical and probably sarcastic interpretation of the trinity replaces the father, the son, and the holy spirit with Moses, Jesus, and the apostles. The latter three had each in turn 'represented (that is, personated)' the Godhead.¹⁰⁶ The work of the third person of the trinity, the holy spirit, was carried out, and remains so in perpetuity, by the apostles and their successors, 'in the office of teaching and preaching'.¹⁰⁷ In the unfavourable judgment of Henry Hammond, Hobbes had destroyed the trinity.¹⁰⁸ As far as the present discussion is concerned, Hobbes had at the very least damaged the usual theological and philosophical underpinnings for not only 'active' spirit in the Stoic or Neoplatonic sense, but also the meaningfulness of any spirit or apparition, in the heart or elsewhere.

Hobbes occupied an extreme end of this spectrum, but Baxter and Hill recognized in him a certain habit of mind that, in their view, was not uncommon. This was a particular kind of infidelity, 'a high-minded opposition to the word of God', the pride of one's intellect and reason.¹⁰⁹ Too much reason and too little religiosity were failures of the intellect and evidence of abandonment by God. In a passage worth quoting in its entirety, Baxter explained how individuals of this mindset were 'arrogant as well as ignorant':

On this account some question, whether man have an immortal soul, because they cannot reach to know (as they expect) what soul is. And some will not believe that there is such a thing as the Spirit of God dwelling in his people, because they know not what that spirit is: And some think that there is not such a thing as inherent, sanctifying Grace, or the image of God renewed upon the souls of the regenerate; but that all talk of these spiritual supernatural changes, are meer fancies and conceits; and all, because they know not what this sanctity and gracious inclination is. They think that there is no such thing as communion with God because they know not *what it is*; nor any such thing as a Spirit of Prayer, because they know not *what it is*.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 334-35

¹⁰⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 334.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Tuck, 'The "Christian Atheism" of Thomas Hobbes', in David Wootton and Michael Hunter (eds.), *Atheism From Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1992), p. 111.

¹⁰⁹ Orme, *Practical Works*, p. 429.

¹¹⁰ Richard Baxter, *The Arrogancy of Reason Against Divine Revelations* (London, 1655), p. 16.

As in Bunyan's attacks on Fowler and rational Churchman, Baxter intended to protect religion and its supernatural qualities from the impiety of an imperious reason that carried individuals to firmly-held conclusions on spiritual matters without immersion in them. Rather than scrupulously rationalizing their beliefs, some nonconformists, in Achinstein's words, 'sought to articulate with more care the precise nature of the *irrationalism* of religion'.¹¹¹

No prominent nonconformist suggested the holy spirit's functions were entirely unpredictable, nor were claims of encounters with spirits or apparitions to be taken at face value. Baxter granted that cheats were active in the production of fraudulent claims, but such stunts were generally the work of 'Papist priests' who were 'prepared and trained up purposely' to stage exorcisms, along with debauched 'girls and young widows'.¹¹² He was mindful of natural causes, as in the case of hurricanes and whirlwinds, but suspected they too were 'managed by some Spirits'.¹¹³ But like Anglicans who objected to the 'pure rationality' of the Socinians, Baxter believed that much was lost if basic assumptions about the operations and objectives of spiritual substances were discarded in favour of discursive reasoning.¹¹⁴ Bunyan and Baxter – and, it will be shown, Owen, More, and Glanvill – believed the main current of Restoration religion went too far in this direction.

Criticism of certain beliefs as 'superstitious' was intensified among churchmen and conformists in the second half of the seventeenth-century. Thomas Spratt, the historian of the Royal Society, was disturbed by the uncritical providential thinking that greeted major upheavals in the 1660s, particularly the fires of London: 'Whenever therefore a heavy calamity on our nation, a universal repentance is required ... Every man must bewail his own Transgressions ... But he must not be too hasty, in assigning the causes of plagues, or fires, or inundations to the sins of other men.'¹¹⁵ The conformist scholar John Spencer, whose forceful contributions to the period's religious and political controversies have not received much

¹¹¹ Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent*, p. 162.

¹¹² Baxter, *Certainty*, p. 3

¹¹³ Baxter, *Certainty*, p. 166.

¹¹⁴ Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*, p. 171; Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp. 254-57.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Spratt, *The History of the Royal-Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (London, 1667), pp. 363-64.

attention from historians, observed that because '[m]en's minds [are] disturbed with love or hatred (as it falls out in religious difference), each party superstitiously interprets all accidents in favour of itself'.¹¹⁶ In a 1665 sermon Robert South complained of those who interpreted the Bible as though it spoke only of events in England and Scotland, and asked if we are to 'read God's mind in his Mind or in his words?'¹¹⁷ The 1661 arrest of Elizabeth Calvert for printing *Several Prodigies and Apparitions Seen in the Heavens, from August 1 1660, to the Latter End of May 1661*, officially, for 'false prognosticating mischievous events, [and] instilling superstitious beliefs into the hearts of the subjects' indicates that this way of thinking could be policed at the popular level.¹¹⁸ Throughout the 1660s fearful reports continually surfaced of Quakers, Presbyterians and other sectarians who, 'denying any worldly authority', pointed to providence as justification for their plotting.¹¹⁹ The Venetian resident reported that the Northern rebels of 1663 had as their 'watchwords: Religion, Providence, Jehovah, Liberty'.¹²⁰ It would be a mistake to underestimate the extent of popular and elite beliefs in what Spencer dismissively characterized as 'the dunghill of obscene and monstrous births, apparitions of lying spirits, strange voices in the air, mighty winds, [and] alterations in the face of heaven'.¹²¹ But the concern of some nonconformists that reason, or rather too much reason unbalanced by piety, was making undesired incursions into territories occupied by the holy spirit and other spirits was not baseless.

II

Although in this second section the emphasis will shift from the

¹¹⁶ John Spencer, *A Discourse Concerning Vulgar Prophecies* (London, 1665), p. 7.

¹¹⁷ Robert South, *Posthumous Works of the Late Reverend Robert South, DD* (London, 1717), pp. 148, 176.

¹¹⁸ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles II*, vol. 2, 1661-1662, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (27 vols., London, 1860-1938), p. 106. Calvert was reported again in 1663 for continuing to publish 'reasonable books'. See *Calendar vol. 3, 1663-1664*, p. 426.

¹¹⁹ *Calendar vol. 2, 1661-1662*, p. 469; *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, vol. 32, 1659-1661, ed. Allen B. Hinds (38 vols., London, 1932), pp. 152, 244; *Venice Volume 33, 1661-1664*, p. 63.

¹²⁰ *Venice Volume 33, 1661-1664*, p. 269. A species of Anglican providentialism survived the Restoration, but as Spurr argues, it was linked to loyalty to the government. See John Spurr, "'Virtue, Religion, and Government": The Anglican Uses of Providence', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 29-47.

¹²¹ John Spencer, *A Discourse Concerning Prodigies* (Cambridge, 1663), p. 10.

inward to the outward spiritual presence, it will be shown that, for contemporaries, they cannot easily be separated. Joseph Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus* was a major contribution to the debate about the reality of spirits. Glanvill was a respectable conformist of Latitudinarian leanings as well as an avowed enemy of religious enthusiasm. In Glanvill's view, philosophically-minded men who allowed their systems of analysis to compromise the reality of spirit itself were as dangerous as conventional enthusiasts. Glanvill's associate, Henry More, whose letter opens *Saducismus*, spoke of 'course-grained Philosophers as those Hobbians and Spinozans, and the rest of that rabble, who slight religion and the Scriptures, because there is such express mention of Spirits and Angels in them'. More, with Glanvill, presented 'fresh examples of Apparitions' in order to 'rub up and awaken their benumbed and lethargicke Minds into a suspicion at least, if not assurance that there are other intelligent Beings besides those that are clad in heavy Earth or Clay'.¹²² Glanvill echoed Baxter's remarks about the problem of sober individuals turning away from the holy spirit on account of 'the proud phantastic pretences of many'. The reaction is such that 'they conclude the doctrine of Immediate Communion with the Deity in this Life to be but an high-flown notion of warm imagination'. In a key passage, he continued:

I acknowledge I have myself had thoughts of this nature, supposing Communion with God to be nothing else but the exercise of virtue, and that peace, and those comforts which naturally result from it.¹²³

Glanvill here pointed to what was ultimately at stake in the defence of spirits and spiritual presence and what links him to Bunyan and Owen. The sober testimony of spirit designed by Edward Stillingfleet and Henry Hammond, for whom 'divine inspiration' was defined largely as the contemplation and exercise of wisdom, reason, and virtue¹²⁴ seemed, to Glanvill, to buckle at points into something resembling irreligion. William Clagett, for example, an Anglican, positioned himself within this current of

¹²² Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus, or, Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions* (London, 1681), p. 16.

¹²³ Glanvill, *Saducismus*, pp. 48-49.

¹²⁴ Edward Stillingfleet, *A Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion* (London, 1665), p. 130; Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations on All the Books of the New Testament* (London, 1659), pp. 1-2.

thought in his critique of Owen's *Pneumatologia*:

The Holy Spirit of God doth in that manner work his Graces in us, that they are still the genuine effects of the Evidence, and the motives of the Gospel, of the natural use of our Faculties of Understanding and Will; and of our own care and diligence in using the external means of Grace. His operations in us make us capable of recovering ourselves by degrees; and in all the while there is no sensible difference between them and the natural operations of our minds.¹²⁵

This conception of piety was not limited to Clagett or the Latitudinarians. Following the Restoration, mainstream Anglican theology could draw upon a strong current of contemplative worship, the central purpose of which was the attainment of happiness.¹²⁶ The Anglican poet Thomas Traherne expressed the kind of optimism about human nature that would become commonplace in the eighteenth century.¹²⁷ Bunyan assailed Fowler and, one suspects, would have disapproved of Traherne and other like-minded Anglicans, for naturalizing and universalizing the holy spirit and reducing the intensity of its operations in the heart. Glanvill, likewise, expressed his discontent with the same trend.

Clagett's remark that the effects of spirits or the holy spirit are not 'sensibly' different from the natural operations of the mind touches on a central point in John Webster's attack on Glanvill's belief in witchcraft. Webster was a former civil war radical and protégé of William Erbery who became a firmly conforming and loyal member of the restored Church. After the Restoration, Webster 'rebuked those who pretended to be guided by the Spirit' and, in Antonio Clericuzio's judgment, significantly modified his own religious views by abandoning his radicalism.¹²⁸ Drawing on his experience as a physician, Webster pursued naturalist explanations for the phenomena presented by Glanvill and More. He argued that the disproportionate representation of the poor, for example, as appearing to bear 'witchmarks' and other physical manifestations of witchery can be attributed to their diet which rendered them particularly susceptible to health

¹²⁵ William Clagett, *A Discourse Concerning the Operations of the Holy Spirit* (London, 1678), p. 322.

¹²⁶ Richard Douglas Jordan, 'Thomas Traherne and the Art of Meditation', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46 (1985), p. 386.

¹²⁷ Jordan, 'Thomas Traherne', p. 402.

¹²⁸ Antonio Clericuzio, 'Webster, John (1611-1682)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010).

problems.¹²⁹ Webster undertook a thoroughgoing debunking of the haunting of Saul by the supposed Witch of Endor. Saul's experience with the Witch of Endor, described in the First Book of Samuel,¹³⁰ in which the deceased prophet had apparently been summoned in spirit form by the witch at the request of Saul, seemed to affirm the reality of witchery and spirits. Glanvill fully embraced the literal telling of the story, insisting that Saul saw a real apparition, 'not a knave'.¹³¹ Indeed, the frontispiece of *Saducismus Triumphatus* is an artistic representation of part of the fourteenth verse (1 Sam. 28: 14): 'And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and prostrated himself.' Webster excoriated Glanvill on this point and argued against any possibility of supernatural activity in the story. It was not the body of Samuel that was raised, for it 'had lain too long in the grave, for some account it near two years' so that 'none could have endured near it, for the noisome and horrible smell'.¹³² The cunning witch had managed to imitate Samuel's voice via ventriloquism, did 'mutter and murmur, and peep and chirp like a bird coming forth from the shell, or that she spake in some hollow cave or vault, through some pipe, or in a bottle, and so amused and deceived poor timorous and despairing Saul'.¹³³ As for the supposed prophecy brought by the apparition, 'how true so ever Mr. Glanvill may think it, there was but a piece of ambiguous equivocation in it'.¹³⁴ Webster admitted that in denying the witch's power of sorcery and the supernatural legitimacy of the apparition he departed from the interpretation that eminent Calvinist divines have tended to adduce from the story. '[W]e shall crave pardon, if we dissent from them', he avers, 'it being no fundamental of religion, nor any article of the faith'.¹³⁵ Additionally, he wrote, it should be considered that 'the generality of an opinion, or the numerousness of the persons that hold and maintain it, are not a safe and warrantable reason to receive it, or to adhere to it: nor that it is safe or rational to reject an opinion, because they are but few that do hold it'.¹³⁶

Instead, Webster tended to refer to Hammond and Stillingfleet, the

¹²⁹ John Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London, 1677), p. 82.

¹³⁰ Specifically, 1 Sam. 28:3-29.

¹³¹ Glanvill, *Saducismus*, p. 59.

¹³² Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 172.

¹³³ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 166.

¹³⁴ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 167.

¹³⁵ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 175.

¹³⁶ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 13.

pillars of Restoration Anglicanism, as his authorities. Webster indicated that it was neither Samuel's decomposed body that appeared to Saul, nor his disembodied soul. He cited Hammond's paraphrase of Luke 23:43¹³⁷ as evidence of the soul's immediate ascent to heaven: 'Immediately after thy death thou shalt go to a place of bliss, and there abide with me, a member of that my kingdom, which thou asked for.'¹³⁸ Neither do souls of the evil wander and manifest themselves in the form of apparitions, for as the parable of Lazarus and the rich man demonstrates, Dives 'presently after his death was in hell in torments and could not come hither unto Earth again to warn his brethren'.¹³⁹ Subsequently the souls of men, whether good or evil, 'do not wander here, or run upon errands'.¹⁴⁰ He consulted Stillingfleet's 'pious and orthodoxal' judgment that 'the future state of the soul of man [is] not discovered in an uncertain Platonical way, but with the greatest light and evidence from that God who hath the supreme disposal of souls, and therefore best knows and understands them'.¹⁴¹ With Stillingfleet, Webster no doubt preferred the more assured procedures of religious contemplation offered by the Church to any such 'uncertain' speculations.

Despite accusations to the contrary, Webster himself was not a 'sadducee' or denier of spiritual substances. He did, however, desire to limit the operations of evil spirits in the material world and place careful qualifications on the nature of otherwise good spirits. With Baxter, he insisted that Satan was under permanent restraint in chains of darkness and cannot execute evil but by the express will of God.¹⁴² But Webster and Baxter diverged on the question of how such spirits intervene in people's lives. To Webster, who took the example of the Witch of Endor's supposed consultation of evil powers in the conjuring of Samuel, God will send 'evil spirits' for just and righteous ends, but certainly not to 'magnify the skill, or practice of a lewd, wicked, and idolatrous woman'.¹⁴³ He argued that the devil and his evil spirits may only participate in the limited mental converse that 'all wicked persons have with Satan'. Even these instances often have

¹³⁷ 'And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day thou shalt be with me in paradise.'

¹³⁸ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 45. Webster's source is Hammond's *Paraphrase*, p. 263.

¹³⁹ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 46. The parable is related in Luke 16: 19-31.

¹⁴⁰ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 45.

¹⁴¹ Webster, *Witchcraft*, pp. 44-45. Webster's source is Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae* (London, 1662), p. 609.

¹⁴² Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 77.

¹⁴³ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 176.

non-supernatural causes, such as 'an atrabilious temperament, or a melancholic complexion and constitution'.¹⁴⁴ He denied the possibility of 'visible and corporeal converse', and affirmed that 'there is not, nor can be any such, whereby any such strange things (as Witchmongers fondly and falsely believe) can be performed or effected'.¹⁴⁵ Rejecting Glanvill's 'Platonical whimsies', he instead turned to Descartes for a basis for his distinction between corporeal and incorporeal substances: '[A]n immaterial and spiritual substance can no way incur into the senses nor effect them, because it is manifest (as Des Cartes hath sufficiently proved) that all sensation is procured by corporeal contact, and not otherwise'.¹⁴⁶ Webster did not deny that 'there have been, are and may be apparitions, that cannot be rationally supposed to be the ordinary phenomena of corporeal matter, yet affecting the senses, there must be something in them that performeth that effect, that is corporeal, or else the sense could not have been wrought upon'.¹⁴⁷ Taking the standard Anglican view, drawn principally from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that in the 'last days' God will speak by way of his son and scripture,¹⁴⁸ Webster argued that it was no longer likely that God, by way of holy prophets or evil spirits, would make himself or his works manifest by visible or direct appearance.¹⁴⁹

It is significant that in *Saducismus* Glanvill singled out Reginald Scot, a sixteenth-century critic of witchhunting, for abuse. Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft*, which was first published in 1584 and republished in 1651 and 1665,¹⁵⁰ exhibits similar arguments to those employed by Webster. Webster had read Scot, 'a person of competent Learning, pious, and of a good family', and went to great lengths to defend him from Glanvill's attacks. Webster shared with Scot a dualistic metaphysics as well as a mechanical understanding of the nature of bewitching. Webster's embrace of Cartesian dualism is explicit; it is peculiar that Scot should have arrived at the same radical separation of spirit and matter given that the

¹⁴⁴ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁵ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁶ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 198.

¹⁴⁷ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 198.

¹⁴⁸ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 105. The relevant passage is Hebrews 1:1-2: 'God at sundry times, and divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the Prophets: But in these last days he hath spoken by his Son unto us.'

¹⁴⁹ Webster, *Witchcraft*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁰ David Wootton, 'Scot, Reginald (d. 1599)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010).

Discovery was written over ten years before Descartes was born. Nevertheless Scot could justifiably be considered a kind of proto-Cartesian. He denied the possibility of witches transubstantiating themselves into objects and beings, and emphasized what an impiety it was to believe 'that an asses body [could be] the temple of the Holy Ghost'.¹⁵¹ Scot's dualism is based partly on the words of Christ, who 'told [Thomas] plainly, that a spirit was no such creature' as 'flesh and bones'.¹⁵² Like Webster, Scot asserted that Satan's influence is limited to mental converse. Satan may suspect but never know the thoughts of human beings and his assaults could not extend into the temporal world.¹⁵³ Paraphrasing Corinthians,¹⁵⁴ Scot formulated a general rule: 'That which is spiritual only discerneth spiritual things; for no carnal man can discern the things of the spirit.'¹⁵⁵ Consequently spirits were 'no bodies', and it was the nature of the two entities to be antithetical: '[S]o as a body is no spirit, nor a spirit a body.'¹⁵⁶

Like Webster, an alchemist and disciple of Van Helmont, Scot expressed respectful belief in the usefulness of the Hermetic tradition for explaining natural phenomena. Intending to provide a natural explanation for the 'evil eye' of 'old women' capable of bewitching individuals from a distance, Scot turned to 'spirits' of the anatomical sort. Having established that the only spirits are those of the vital, natural, or animal kind,¹⁵⁷ Scot speculated that bewitching is, if it is anything, physical illness or infection brought upon 'by means of grosse vapors proceeding out of their eyes which commeth so to pass, because those vapors or spirits ... are carried in the chariot conveyance of the spirits, from the eyes of one body to another, do pierce the inward parts, and there breed infection'.¹⁵⁸ As Leland Estes observed, Scot seemed to have turned to natural magic as a means of compensating for what he perceived to be the shortcomings of Greek science.¹⁵⁹ Webster similarly believed that 'the force of imagination accompanied with the passions of horror, fear, envy, malice, earnest desire

¹⁵¹ Reginald Scot, *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (London, 1651), pp. 69, 76.

¹⁵² Scot, *Discovery*, p. 100.

¹⁵³ Scot, *Discovery*, pp. 117, 365.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Cor. 2:14: 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolish unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'.

¹⁵⁵ Scot, *Discovery*, p. 365.

¹⁵⁶ Scot, *Discovery*, p. 387.

¹⁵⁷ Scot, *Discovery*, p. 390.

¹⁵⁸ Scot, *Discovery*, p. 350.

¹⁵⁹ Leland L. Estes, 'Reginald Scot and His *Discoverie of Witchcraft*: Religion and Science in Opposition to the European Witch Craze', *Church History*, 52 (1983), p. 454.

of revenge, and the like ... can at distance work upon another body'.¹⁶⁰ Although rooted in magical and Greek thought, Scot and Webster here advance a mechanical explanation for phenomena otherwise attributed to mysterious, supernatural forces. The Renaissance philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi, in particular, who provided naturalist explanations for miracles and had his work on the mortality of the soul publicly burnt in Venice, has been identified as central to this tradition of occult-influenced rationalism.¹⁶¹

Baxter, in contrast, was deeply impressed and interested in a wide array of stories of evil spirits, apparitions, and hauntings. Beginning in 1656, he carried on excited correspondence with one John Lewis who supplied him with, among other things, reports of supernatural activities.¹⁶² 'I am glad', he wrote Lewis, for belief in witches, because belief in 'God & Angels, Devils or some Spirits' will follow.¹⁶³ He is informed of 'subterranean spirits, called Knockers ... corpse candles ... hurlers' and other 'dreadful' apparitions.¹⁶⁴ Most sensational of all was the so-called Drummer of Tedworth, a poltergeist residing in the house of John Mompesson, whose family was terrorized by nocturnal thumpings, strange lights, and levitations in the early 1660s.¹⁶⁵ Glanvill, who had visited Mompesson's house in 1663, wrote to Baxter in January of that year and furnished him with details of the haunting, boasting that 'some Hobbists who have been there, are already convinced, and those that are not so are fain to stick to their own opinions against the evidence of their senses'.¹⁶⁶

Baxter wrote that Mompesson's haunting can be 'credibly supposed to be done by the witchcraft of a drummer' and added that Glanvill 'who himself saw much of it, and publisht it', was far from given to 'fanatick credulity'.¹⁶⁷ It is necessary to point out that Baxter and Glanvill took an emanationist view of spiritual activity on earth.¹⁶⁸ According to this view

¹⁶⁰ Webster, *Discovery*, p. 266.

¹⁶¹ Vermeir, 'Physical Prophet', p. 581; Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, p. 773; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The European Witch-craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (London, 1967), pp. 131-32.

¹⁶² Lewis's first letter to Baxter is dated 25 May 1656, *CCRB I*, p. 213.

¹⁶³ Baxter, *CCRB I*, p. 240.

¹⁶⁴ Baxter, *CCRB I*, pp. 234, 240, 247, 263.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Hunter, 'New Light on the "Drummer of Tedworth": Conflicting Narratives of Witchcraft in Restoration England', *Historical Research*, 78 (2005), 311-353.

¹⁶⁶ Baxter, *CCRB II*, p. 31; Hunter, 'New Light', p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ Baxter, *Certainty*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁶⁸ See Carl R. Trueman, 'A Small Step Toward Rationalism: The Impact of the Metaphysics of Tommaso Campanella on the Theology of Richard Baxter', in Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark (eds.), *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*

'corporeal crassitude' is the characteristic that renders an evil spirit's interactions with human beings possible and 'is an abasement and therefore fittest for the more ignoble sort of spirits'. Bad spirits with a 'baser consistence have also a more base and terrene inclinations' and remain compelled, after death, to carry out hauntings characterized by the covetousness, greed, and revenge that marked their lives.¹⁶⁹ Arguing from the 'analogy of nature', Glanvill asserted that because 'microscopical observations' confirmed that there was 'nothing so contemptible and vile in the world we reside in but hath its living creatures that dwell upon', it was 'weakness to think that all the vast spaces above, and hollows underground, are desert and uninhabited'. Why should one thereby not believe, he asked, 'that the air and all the regions above us may have their invisible intellectual agents?'¹⁷⁰ Glanvill extended this assumption into what he calls an entire 'body politic' or devilry, consisting of 'different orders and degrees of spirits', all consisting of the 'meanest and basest quality in the kingdom of darkness'.¹⁷¹

Consequently Glanvill and Baxter both believed that spirits, good and bad, could communicate with human beings in a sensory manner. Baxter's idea of a spirit's consistency, though rudimentary in comparison to the more philosophically-minded Glanvill or More, met its purpose for facilitating this contact. Baxter resisted technical philosophical discussions, admitting in a letter to Thomas Hill in 1652, for example, his intention to avoid 'theological disputes which are ultimately resolved in philosophical uncertainties',¹⁷² and even stating that we can ultimately know little about the doctrine of the spirit and its workings.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, when pressed he aligned himself with 'the Greek Fathers that called Spirits fire'.¹⁷⁴ *Ignis*, in a sense, was understood to be the active substance (*potentia activa movendi*) in all created spirits or souls and it did not trouble Baxter whether it might be deemed 'material'.¹⁷⁵ To Baxter, nothing much was won or lost in terminological decisions such as these: 'The word *immaterial* signifying

(Eugene, 2007), 147-64.

¹⁶⁹ Baxter, *Certainty*, p. 222.

¹⁷⁰ Glanvill, *Saducismus*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷¹ Glanvill, *Saducismus*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁷² Baxter, *CCRB I*, p. 76.

¹⁷³ Baxter, *Everlasting Rest*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Baxter, *Of the Immortality of Mans Soul* (London, 1682), p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Baxter, *Immortality*, p. 6.

nothing (but a negation) and *materia* being by many Antients used in the same sense as we do *substantia*, I usually lay by the words.' Given the fine gradations in the quality and consistency of spirits emanating from God, there was little purpose in distinguishing them into discrete categories.¹⁷⁶

Baxter indicated in a letter to Hale that such fine distinctions provided 'little satisfactory to acquaint us with the nature of a spirit, not telling us anything what it is, but what it is not'. Ultimately, he asked, who can know the difference 'between the highest material substance, and the lowest substance, called immaterial?'¹⁷⁷

In the foregoing passages, Baxter referred to an encounter with More that had taken place in the 1680s over what the latter perceived to be a reckless turn to materialism in Baxter's thinking. Characteristically More coined a new term for the occasion, 'psychopyrist', being any philosopher, principally Baxter, who 'holds all Created Spirits to be a kind of more pure and subtile fire'.¹⁷⁸ More objected to materialism because he associated it with multiple forms of atheism. As Pocock has shown, materialism was to be resisted for opening the way to two different, though related, varieties of atheism.¹⁷⁹ The materialism of the sort imagined by Hobbes posited an entirely mechanical and, More would add, spiritually dead universe activated and functioning according to principles associated with matter in motion. The second implication of materialism, assumed by Spinoza and known at the time as 'hylozoic atheism', attributed to matter a self-activating principle that More worried philosophized God entirely out of relevance.¹⁸⁰ More attributed to Baxter a failure to consider the implications of his own views, allowing the igneous substance a disturbingly ambiguous material status, even endowing it with active properties and consequently legitimizing both the atomistic and the pantheistic modes of atheism.¹⁸¹

All of this exasperated Baxter who preferred to emphasize the larger issues that were in agreement between the two of them. True to his lifelong

¹⁷⁶ David Lindberg supplies a wide-ranging context for the uses and modifications of Aristotle's light metaphysics during this period. See 'The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Light: Light Metaphysics of Plotinus to Kepler', *Osiris*, 2 (1986), 4-42.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Henry, 'Materialism', p. 184.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in *CCRB II*, p. 239.

¹⁷⁹ J. G. A. Pocock, 'Thomas Hobbes: Atheist or Enthusiast? His Place in a Restoration Debate', *History of Political Thought*, 11 (1990), p. 742.

¹⁸⁰ Pocock, 'Hobbes', pp. 743-45.

¹⁸¹ Henry, 'Materialism', p. 185. Some additional implications of pantheism are described in Justin Champion, 'John Toland: The Politics of Pantheism', in *Revue de Synthèse*, 116 (1995), 259-80.

reconciling inclination, Baxter steered a middle way in philosophy, as in ecclesiology and Protestant doctrine. Desiring him to resist indulging in exotic terminology, particularly 'the title of Psychopyrist', Baxter reminded More that they are 'agreed in the formal notice of a spirit in general' but admitted he remained 'at a loss' about the 'true difference between Substantia and Materia'.¹⁸² Baxter's uncertainty about whether the substance of spirit ought to be deemed material was, as far as he was concerned, of no great consequence in his own emanationist conception of the spirit world. It also spoke to what was for him the generally unedifying nature of technical philosophical discussion:

I have long taken it for a matter of very great use to distinguish unknown things from known ... [but in] many of your books I take this to be an excess; And I have oft wondered at your Friend and (sometime...) mine, Mr. [Joseph] Glanvill, that ... he could talk and write of doubtful things with that strange degree of confidence, and censuring of Dissenters as he did.¹⁸³

Though More, with the intention of suggesting the material status of *ignis*, 'said *Fire is nothing but motion of sulphureous particles*, and only in Candles, Fire-sticks or Hot Irons', Baxter insisted that this is incorrect. It was the vehicle of angels and other spirits, and was consequently of a 'more noble character'.¹⁸⁴ *Ignis* must be understood analogically rather than symbolically or literally. 'When I tell you', he continued, 'that it is only analogically that Souls may be called Fire, did you fairly pretend to the contrary?'¹⁸⁵ Baxter's analogical view was again grounded in his emanationism: 'I have often said, that I think Substances differ so gradually, that the lower hath still some Analogy to the higher.'¹⁸⁶

Although there does not appear to be direct evidence that Baxter read Owen's pneumatology on the holy spirit, he would have found in it a sympathetic reading of the igneous qualities of spiritual substances. Elaborating on the testimony of Matthew, Luke, and John as having witnessed the holy spirit descend to earth in the form of a dove,¹⁸⁷ Owen,

¹⁸² Baxter, *CCRB II*, pp. 245, 239.

¹⁸³ Baxter, *CCRB II*, pp. 245-46.

¹⁸⁴ Baxter, *Immortality*, p. 72.

¹⁸⁵ Baxter, *Immortality*, p. 73.

¹⁸⁶ Baxter, *Immortality*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁷ Specifically, Matthew 3:16, Luke 3:22, and John 1:32.

attributing to it a kind of consubstantiation, determined that 'the *shape* thereof that appeared was that of a *Dove*; but the substance it self I judge was of a *fiery Nature*, an *aethereal Substance* shaped in the form or resemblance of a *Dove*'.¹⁸⁸ Briefly but thoroughly surveying the spiritual meanings of fire and the uses to which it is put in scripture, and in illustrating the operations of the holy ghost, Owen observed that 'the Holy Ghost is often compared to fire because he was of old typified or represented hereby'.¹⁸⁹ The 'visible Tokens of the coming of the Holy Ghost', as described in Acts 2:3,¹⁹⁰ for example, assumed the shape of 'cloven tongues like as of fire'.¹⁹¹ Like God, who 'absolutely is said to be a consuming Fire', the holy spirit was to be understood as a 'Spiritual, divine, Eternal fire'.¹⁹² The ethereal substance can be said to exist literally (and presumably materially), though for Owen, in a passage Bunyan would have approved of, the 'consuming' intensity of fire also had an instructive symbolic function: 'God by all these signified, that no sacrifices were accepted with him, where Faith was not *kindled in the Heart* of the Offerer by the Holy Ghost, represented by the *Fire* that kindled the Sacrifices on the Altar.'¹⁹³

Baxter correctly observed that both (or rather all four, including Glanvill and Owen) believed in the substantial and immediate qualities of spirit and desired to rescue the fact from the morass of philosophical details. This view requires adjusting the judgments that both Thomas Jobe and Allison Coudert have passed on the subject. For Jobe, Glanvill and More endeavoured to establish a theology informed largely by mechanical

¹⁸⁸ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 53.

¹⁸⁹ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 53.

¹⁹⁰ 'And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.'

¹⁹¹ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 54.

¹⁹² Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 54.

¹⁹³ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 53. There are multiple symbolic and anatomical reasons for why the *ignis spiritus* should, with ease, be associated with heart, heat, and passion for seventeenth-century Protestant thinkers. Greek medicine posited that a 'fundamental element' of life was heat and the source of the body's vital heat was the heart. Its placement next to the cooling lungs allowed for the alleviation of its periodic passionate excitation. These assumptions were compounded by the heart's place in the passage of blood through the body: 'The ancient art of phlebotomy or bloodletting ... was essentially a method by which residues that have accumulated in the blood because of too much nourishment could be removed in order to restabilize the equilibrium of the humoral body. The doctrine of pure and impure blood was a physiological analogue to the Judeo-Christian notion of the ambivalent heart housing a variety of good and evil impulses, pure and impure thoughts and intentions.' See Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart: 1600-1750* (Pennsylvania, 1997), pp. 2-7.

philosophy along Anglican lines against the erstwhile radical Webster, an occultist and student of Helmontian alchemy.¹⁹⁴ Jobe's discussion is valuable, particularly its analysis of the political implications of these beliefs. It is no doubt true, for example, that Glanvill and More preferred to perceive sectarians and enthusiasts as possessed by malevolent forces. From Webster's point of view, who wrote also with the objective of vindicating alchemy from accusations of witchcraft, the devil might profitably be eradicated from the material world.¹⁹⁵

But Jobe's generalization lacks nuance. There is no clear axis for dividing establishment Anglicans equipped with mechanical philosophy from enthusiasts of spirit and spiritual presence. Glanvill and More believed that the main problem with Webster's thinking was not his enthusiasm but his rationalism, his drift away from revealed religion into one that lacked a spiritual presence, either in the material world, in the form of spirits, or within the individual's heart. This is not to say that Glanvill and More were consciously in confederacy with Baxter, Owen, Bunyan, or other nonconformists (although they were Latitudinarians). But they all shared deep concern about this apparent development in Restoration religion. This view has Glanvill and More defending what was perceived in some quarters as enthusiastic religion against Webster, by then reconciled to the religious and political establishment. Acknowledging Glanvill's and More's preoccupation with demonology, Trevor-Roper insists that the spirit-haunted world of their Neoplatonism and of Webster's Paracelsianism is nevertheless logically incompatible with the 'crude form of witch-belief which had been established on the basis of scholastic Aristoteleanism'.¹⁹⁶ This is a fair exoneration for their brand of witch hunting, at least from a modern perspective. Certainly More could never be charged with thinking through problems in a crude manner. But their interest in witches and apparitions did have an additional very simple if demanding context, namely the affirmation of holy spiritual presence in a religious and cultural environment where it seemed lacking.

So it should perhaps come as no surprise that Glanvill and More were somewhat out of step with their establishment contemporaries. More

¹⁹⁴ Jobe, 'Restoration Science', p. 344.

¹⁹⁵ Jobe, 'Restoration Science', p. 346.

¹⁹⁶ Trevor-Roper, 'Witch Craze', p. 133.

himself was forthcoming about his own eccentricities. Despite embracing the Restoration Church, More remained 'a target for some of the more rigid Anglicans' on account of his 'theological tolerance and heterodox character'.¹⁹⁷ In *A Collection of Philosophical Writings* (1662), he wrote, very candidly, why he was a suitable critic of religious enthusiasm:

I must ingeniously confess that I have a natural touch of enthusiasm in my Complexion, but such as, I thank God, was ever governable enough, and I have found at length perfectly subduable. In virtue of which victory I know better what is in Enthusiasts than they themselves, and therefore was able to write what I have wrote with life and judgment.¹⁹⁸

Despite his erudition, he seems to have also been driven, in part, by a kind of anti-intellectualism. 'Atheistical wits', he wrote, 'who are forward and skilled enough to draw forth the absurd consequences that lye hid in false assumptions' are one with the 'inconsiderable philophastrs' who "'hoot" at the very mention of the word "spirit".¹⁹⁹ John Henry concluded that More's sympathies ultimately seem to reside with the vulgar.²⁰⁰ For Glanvill's part, as Michael Hunter has shown, his multiple retellings of the story of the Drummer of Tedworth between 1668 and 1682 exhibited self-conscious awareness of the growing scepticism with which the story was being received. Sensitive to scepticism, Glanvill repeatedly modified his approach, always attempting to convince the 'fashionable detractors' who took the story for nothing more than a 'loud laugh'.²⁰¹ Belief in witchcraft and evil spirits was declining as early as the 1650s, and by the 1690s when, in the words of Andrew Fix, the 'traditional Christian view of Angels and Devils [was] seriously questioned',²⁰² Glanvill and More must indeed have felt they were fighting to save a vanishing conception of religion from

¹⁹⁷ The Anglicans Joseph Beaumont and Samuel Parker poured heavy scorn on More for some of his heterodox opinions. These were, for Beaumont, his belief in the pre-existence of the soul, and for Parker, his overall Platonic world view. See Robert Crocker, 'Henry More: A Biographical Essay', in Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More (1614-1687): Tercentenary Studies* (Boston, 1990), pp. 7, 15. More replied to his critics in *A Modest Inquiry Into the Mystery of Iniquity* (London, 1664). An overview of these encounters, and also the source of the quoted text above, is Sarah Hutton, 'More, Henry (1614-1687)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. (24 August 2010).

¹⁹⁸ Henry More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings* (London, 1662), p. x.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Henry, 'Materialism', p. 192.

²⁰⁰ Henry, 'Materialism', p. 192.

²⁰¹ Hunter, 'New Light', pp. 17, 19.

²⁰² Fix, 'Angels, Devils', p. 536.

coarse-grained philosophers and other spiritually complacent Christians.

Allison Coudert's revision of Jobe's thesis also misses the mark. Correctly noting, contrary to Jobe, that the main targets of Glanvill and More were not occultism or civil war-era radicalism, but atheism, Coudert outlines the specific sources of atheism they sought to purge. This 'diabolical pantheon' of atheism consisted of Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza.²⁰³ But the problem for Glanvill and More, as well as for Baxter, Owen, and Bunyan for that matter, was rather more diffuse and systematic than that. It was not embodied in the thought of these three individuals, though none would deny their influential cultivation of it. It was a certain kind of disposition, approach, and attitude to religion and religious practice that seemed to be corrupting the Church, and most especially her more learned and elite practitioners, from within.

From this point of view the operation of the holy spirit takes place not in the Church but in the heart and, as Bunyan and Baxter are most strident about pointing out, securing its holiness was a turbulent, difficult process that could be streamlined by comfortable assumptions about the utility of reason or human nature. Bunyan, who also, it is worth noting, believed with the others in the reality of witchcraft and Satanic possession,²⁰⁴ was throughout his life committed to a piety that demanded not merely intense engagement with the obligations and expectations concomitant with Christ's dispensation. Bunyan, like Owen, made the spirit's interpenetration with the flesh a complete and necessary experience for the regenerate individual. The physical, psychological, and spiritual intensity of this process naturally compelled the complacent, the duplicitous, or the ignorant to climb over the wall, in the manner of Hypocrisy and Formalist, instead of passing through the gate. Bunyan's holy spirit can no more fulfil its functions within the set forms of Anglican episcopacy than the Anglican communicant can.

But spiritual presence, acknowledged in the various ways described here, was also understood by nonconformists from a wider angle. Although the kind of apparitions and poltergeists that excited Baxter were apart from the holy spirit, they had in common with it a purpose and an origin in God's

²⁰³ Allison Coudert, 'Henry More and Witchcraft', in Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More (1614-1687): Tercentenary Studies* (Boston, 1990), p. 118.

²⁰⁴ Greaves, *Glimpses*, p. 120.

unpredictable designs for human beings. Indirectly, they were also useful for conditioning individuals into taking the holy spirit seriously. Baxter, Owen, More, and Glanvill saw the connection between belief in such a holy spirit and belief in other supernatural spiritual substances and beings. Certainly, in some ways, these men make strange bedfellows. But they believed in common that much could be lost by surrendering too much to reason, including the turbulent spirit of religion that found its most uncompromising expression in Bunyan.

Nonconformists and certain conformists such as Glanvill and More return to the idea that adherence to set forms and rational objections to spiritual activity were not only defiling the national Church but also contributing to the weakening of the intensity of Christian devotion. Their worries, if one may allow a whiggish look back, were justified. Hogarth's 1756 print, 'Credulity, Superstition, Fanaticism: a Medley', targeted belief in witches and ghosts as one form of many enthusiasms. Hogarth's thermometer of fanaticism, mounted on two books, one of which is labelled 'Glanvill on Witches', has for a decorative ornament a small drummer bearing the name 'Tedworth'. As early as 1716, Joseph Addison used the story as inspiration for a sceptical play, *The Drummer, or the Haunted House*.²⁰⁵ The events that marked the holy spirit's intervention in one's inward spiritual life as well as its capacity for filling 'men with wonder', for 'surprising' them with 'a sense of the presence of God',²⁰⁶ were targeted by critics precisely because of their dynamic power for those who waited for them.

²⁰⁵ Both of the foregoing references, Hogarth and Addison, are drawn from Hunter, 'New Light', p. 2.

²⁰⁶ Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 93.