

III.

Climbing Jacob's Ladder: Sacred and Profane Dreams in Protestant Conscience Literature

As *God* is worthy of praise, that preserves the night time: so it's praise-worthy in man to improve the time of the night. Yea, that part of the night wherein he sleeps, so as when his body is at rest, his soule is at worke: when his body lies still, his soul is ascending *Jacobs* ladder.

—Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 287

To dream that you are fighting, wins no victories: To dream that you are eating, gets no strength. To dream that you are running, rid[s] no ground: To dream that you are plowing, or sowing, or reaping, procureth but a fruitless harvest. And to dream that you are Princes, may consist with beggary.

—Richard Baxter, *The Life of Faith*, p. 15

For Protestant ministers concerned with practical divinity, dreams reflected the moral state of the soul. Grounded in the same Aristotelian consensus that gave authority to medical interpretations of dreams, the link between dream and humoral psychology dictated their connections with the base passions. The belief that the Devil enjoyed absolute power over the natural world meant that dreams of this kind were often instruments of his manipulation.¹ Their association with the corrupt imagination guaranteed that for the majority of believers, their perceptions and beliefs about the significance of dreams would be channelled by ministers towards fears about their connection to sin and temptation. It was in the context of such ideas, which ministers passed down in their sermons and written works to the literate godly, that beliefs about the relationship between dreams and the imagination were related to the theory of salvation, sanctification and moral action. For this reason, works of religious instruction are perhaps the most powerful sources for understanding how people were expected to regard and respond to dreams in their everyday lives.

¹ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, p. 161—178.

To understand the significance of dreams to English ministers and their listeners, we must examine more closely their understanding of the imagination and how dreams were related to it. I examine material from some of the key literary forms which developed out of the social practice of Protestant scholarly and pastoral work (the printed sermon, the devotional manual and the conscience manual) in order to find out how ministers advised individuals to understand and respond to their dreams. I draw upon figurative and metaphorical uses of 'dreams', 'dreaming' and 'dreamer' in the sermons of ministers from across the spectrum of Protestant ministry, from the evangelical works of Richard Greenham and William Perkins to episcopalian authors like Thomas Adams (1583–1652) and Robert Sanderson (1587–1663), from the moderate puritan theologian Richard Sibbes (1577?–1635), to dissenting ministers like Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), Joseph Alleine (bap. 1634, d. 1668), Richard Baxter (1615–1691), Thomas Manton (bap. 1620, d. 1677), and John Bunyan (bap. 1628, d. 1688). A unique work on the moral culture of dreams by the minister Philip Goodwin (d. 1667), *The Mystery of Dreames* (1658), will form a major point of reference throughout my analysis. Not only did the *Mystery* build upon ideas about dreams implicit in the wider theological works of the time, but in seeking to affirm the place of divine dreams as a source of God's grace in the life of the dreamer, I argue that Goodwin highlights key tensions in the contemporary demonology of the time, which often stressed the power of the devil in mental life over and above that of God and his angelic ministers.

I argue in this chapter that the moral difficulties of dreams must be seen in relation to persistent Protestant anxieties about idolatry and sanctification in worship, which had always manifested in fear of the devil's power to corrupt the mind, but took on a visible social aspect in the form of sectarianism in the 1640s and 50s. As a visual and mental phenomenon, dreams occupied an ambivalent space in Protestant conceptions of the holy. William Dyrness has argued that Protestant concerns about mistaking the correct order of sacred and profane things in religious worship, manifested in the culture of material iconoclasm, produced conflicting approaches to the regard and use of mental imagery in attempts to discipline the cognitive life of believers.² Protestant beliefs about the devil heightened fear about the corrupting potential of the imagination: Nathan Johnstone's work emphasizes that the bodily imagination was often seen as a means by which Satan could gain access to the soul, and his influence over the imagination was central to learned fears of 'enthusiasm' and melancholic corruption in the seventeenth century.³ Reid Barbour, Janine Riviere and Sasha Handley claim that these fears motivated clerical efforts to discipline the laity's attitude toward the dangers of fancy and of dreams,

² Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*.

³ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*.

through liturgical and devotional practices centered in the 'sacralised' spaces of the Church and the household.⁴ My own addition to this research will analyse how Goodwin's *Mystery* should also be read as an attempt to sanctify the dreaming experience, provoked by sectarian appropriation of dreams in the 1640s and 1650s. The ideas which Goodwin drew upon, however, form part of a larger body of Protestant work on nocturnal threats to the mind, and suggest that this culture was not peculiar to the later century.

To contextualize the culture in which the *Mystery* was conceived, I draw upon figurative and metaphorical references to dreams in sermons, since ministers understood these to point toward substantive truths about the world. Comparing such usage with theological works that analyzed the workings of the imagination demonstrates this fact effectively. Their theology used philosophical and medical ideas not as the primary lens through which to see human life, but as aids to explain and embroider the larger truths which they drew from Scripture's figure and verse. These texts brought together the wisdom of godly learning, evangelical preaching, and personal ministry, and provide examples of the manifold applications of the concept of 'dreams' and 'dreaming' as a mental activity, and as a form of knowledge. I will examine how sin was defined in respect of the mental life and activities of the sinner, specifically in terms of his imaginative powers, and how dreams and dreaming fitted into this model. We will then examine how these definitions of sinful mental activity were applied to categories and classes of sinners and heretics in theological texts of the mid-century as a result of ideas about godly and profane dreamers being filtered through the Biblical text. Finally, we will look at how understanding the nature of these mental activities and the religious identities they produced fed back into the didactic purpose of English divines, forming part of the rhetorical and pedagogical structure of their work. It will be observed that 'dreaming' could be applied broadly to describe attributes and characteristics of the imaginative life in general, as well as to the particular event of a dream, and that the relationship between these two uses was real and continuous rather than merely symbolic.

The Vanity of Imagination

Theologians have always required a theory of religious deviance. False forms of beliefs were explained as products of erroneous and sinful mental habits. Where there was superstition or heresy there was a superstitious or heretical condition of mind. Different labels are employed to identify different types of incorrect religious belief and practise. Generally, idolatry has been defined as

⁴ Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture*, pp. 91–117; Rivière, 'Visions of the Night', pp. 109–138; Sasha Handley, 'From the Sacral to the Moral', pp. 27–46.

worship of the wrong God; heresy, as belief and worship of the right God in contradiction to received authority; and superstition as worship of the true God by inappropriate and unacceptable means.⁵ Often, however, these categories are promiscuous and amorphous. Commentary on the nature of 'outsiders' to God's truth in early modern England was derived first from Scriptural passages, secondly from these theological categories that elaborated on Christian doctrine, and thirdly from the diagnostic categories of philosophy and medicine. All three acted as sources for representations of the human subject, and were in constant dialogue as theologians synthesized them into mutually reinforcing models of religious subjectivity. Those of the Scripture defined religious others as enemies of God and as objects of his wrath. Those of theology defined them in terms of their transgressions against doctrine that breached the moral order, and identified the sinful motivations behind their actions. Those of philosophy and medicine grounded these sins in models of disordered minds and bodies, supporting the idea that sin represented a pathological disruption of the order of nature.

The image of the dreamer as reprobate and heretic was built upon the precedent of Scripture, where they were identified with false prophets and other spiritual mediators. Some passages equated dreams with 'the wicked', which theologians took to represent man in his reprobate condition. In Job 20, one of Job's challengers, Zophar, says that the wicked 'shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night'. Calvin found it an apt description of fallen man's condition, because he lived in moral darkness until God illuminated him.⁶ The Presbyterian minister Thomas Manton stated in a sermon:

[W]icked men are Dreamers: 1. In regard of their state and condition, every carnal man is in a state of a *deep sleep*... 2. In regard of the suitableness between their *vain thoughts* and a *dream*. A dream you know *tickleth with a false delight*, and *deceiveth with a vain hope*.⁷

Dreams were both a metaphor for carnal imagination and a direct symptom of its character and actions. Richard Sibbes in *The Soules Conflict* (1635) and Thomas Goodwin in *The Vanity of Thoughts Discovered* (1638) provided anatomies of the imagination in which the language of dreams is prominent, and in which their qualities are shown not only to be metaphorical illustrations of the imagination, but literal ones. Imagination was vain, and its operations accordingly produced 'vanities', thoughts that were characterized by their ephemerality, promiscuousness, aimlessness, and impotency. Philip Goodwin

⁵ These definitions are drawn from Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, p. 4.

⁶ John Calvin, *Sermons of Master Iohn Caluin, vpon the booke of Iob* (London, 1574) p. 796.

⁷ Thomas Manton, *An Exposition with Notes on the Epistle of Jude* (London, 1657), p. 341.

depicted dreams as the natural continuation of the soul's imaginative activity and an assertion of its eternal motion.⁸ Philosophy turned theological definitions of sin into cognitive processes, and Richard Sibbes, Thomas Goodwin and Philip Goodwin all attempted to impose an ontological schema on its pathologies. Sibbes described how imagination manufactured errors which fed sinful misapprehensions in the soul:

Now *imagination* hurteth us, 1. By false representations. 2. By preventing *reason*, and so usurping a censure of things, before our *judgements* try them, whereas the office of *imaginati[ion]* is to minister matter to our *understanding* to worke upon, and not to leade it, much lesse misleade it in any thing. 3. By forging matter out of it selfe without *ground*; the *imaginarie* grievances of our lives are more then the *reall*. 4. As it is an ill instrument of the understanding to devise *vanity* and *mischiefe*.⁹

According to Thomas Goodwin, the vain nature of imagination was defined first by the unprofitable and shallow nature of its objects. The matters with which it routinely became fascinated and aroused were of no profit for spiritual tests and trials, for the expansion of the conscience, or the advancement of religion. For this reason the imagination was cursed with 'lightnesse', a lack of substantiality and profundity. It bred 'folly', because its leadings were void of understanding; it was inconstant and frail, because its objects and affections were transient and always 'perishing', and by extension undisciplined and unrefined. Most of all, they tended toward wickedness.¹⁰ The transience of dreams characterised the subjects of men's thoughts, especially as they pertained to the things of the world. Goodwin introduced a three-fold definition of man's thoughts derived from Bernard of Clairvaux, which described them progressively as 'vain, idle, roving and impertinent', 'violent, strong and immoderate' or 'vile, foul, and fearfull, uncleane'.¹¹ In the *Mystery*, Goodwin showed how intent (vanity and pride) and content (unlawfulness and filthiness) offended God by definition, and how violence was the greatest consequence of such corruption. Imaginative dysfunction developed and escalated from rebellious intentionality, through immoderate force, toward execrable ends.

Dreams were direct metaphors for the vanity of human achievement and worldly aspiration in the rhetorical discourse of preachers, which mirrored these technical descriptions of imagination's function. Ecclesiastes 5:3 stated that a dream 'cometh through the multitude of business', and that 'in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities'. These verses were taken by Philip Goodwin to signify the imagination's inconstant

⁸ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames Historically Discoursed* (London, 1658).

⁹ Richard Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict With Itself* (London, 1635), p. 183.

¹⁰ Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts Discovered* (London, 1638), pp. 20–24.

¹¹ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 159–160.

attention on affairs of the world, and the multiplicity of its desires. This state caused the vain cogitations that would 'generate, procreate, increase and multiply, [so that dreams] grow into great multitudes'.¹² Isaiah 29:8 warned, 'It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty'. It was a passage divines used repeatedly to warn against the spiritual impoverishment of carnal thinking. Thomas Manton promised that when the truth was revealed, 'the Dream of a hungry man torments him more', and spoke of the ungodly as being 'like Dreamers, that lose all as soon as they are awake; though they dream of enjoying Scepters and Crowns, yet they are in the midst of Bonds and Irons.'¹³ Joseph Alleine wrote that before conversion the carnal man 'found more sweetness in his merry company, wicked games, earthly delights, than in Christ'.¹⁴ Jeremy Taylor pointed out that men who fooled themselves in this way 'think themselves to be exalted, till the evil day overtakes them; and then they can expound their dream of life to end in a sad and hopelesse death.'¹⁵

The relationship between sleep and waking in the dreaming mind symbolised the soul's consciousness of spiritual truth. States of spiritual sleep or lethargy described the inertia, impotence or obfuscation of the reasoning faculties, and particularly the conscience, leaving the soul unable to perceive truth. It was able to see partially, but not wholly, like the liminal awareness in dreams described by Aquinas. Like the soul in sleep, the confusion of judgment produced an inability to act on spiritual knowledge, and was described as a form of weakness, of spiritual flatulency. The greatest contentment that man's 'speculations' garnered for him, wrote Robert Sanderson, were '*aegri somnia*' ('the *slumbring dreams* of a sick man; very short, and those also interrupted with a medley of cross and *confused fancies*') which did not afford him the 'calm and soft sleep sleep' that God gave his children.¹⁶ The theologian William Ames, described a '*benumbed Conscience*' as one '*dull and heavy in its Acts*', so that it was 'no more moved, then a man that sleepeth is by his owne dreames'.¹⁷ Taylor called it a sign of hardness of heart when a man acted the 'Businesses of the world' with 'perfect Action and full Resolution', but his religion made 'such Impressions as is the conversation of a Dreamer, and he acts accordingly'.¹⁸ Such unhappy men who laid their religion aside, he said, might 'dream of fine

¹² Ibid., p. 161.

¹³ Thomas Manton, *One hundred and ninety sermons on the hundred and nineteenth Psalm* (London, 1681), p. 786.

¹⁴ Joseph Alleine, *An Alarme to Unconverted Sinners* (London, 1672), pp. 50—51.

¹⁵ Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (London, 1651), p. 66.

¹⁶ Robert Sanderson, *Twenty Sermons Formerly Preached* (London, 1656), p. 116.

¹⁷ William Ames, *Conscience With the Power and Cases Thereof* (London, 1639), p. 42. See also Manton, *One Hundred and Ninety Sermons*, p. 412.

¹⁸ Jeremy Taylor, *Eniautos* (London, 1653), pp. 96—97.

things' but their dreams would ultimately 'prove contrary, and become the hieroglyphics of an eternal sorrow'.¹⁹

Dreams and Speculative Wickedness

A fixation of Protestant moral pedagogy was the imagination's capacity for the sin of 'speculative wickedness'. The concept of speculative wickedness was emphasized by many seventeenth-century Protestants, because it threw into sharp relief the distinction they wished to draw between outward conformity and inner conformity to the will of God. Speculative wickedness was the birthplace of positive sin, defined as the 'the *representing* or acting *over* [of] *sinnes*, in our thoughts and imaginations'.²⁰ Men's mind could speculatively rove from past, to present, to future, luxuriating in the memory of sins, in immediate and sensible pleasures, and fantasizing about and building their confidence on opportunities for future pleasures. Speculative wickedness massively expanded the possible scope of sin, because through it one could fantasize about fulfilling desires and committing sins which lay beyond one's reach and means.²¹ Protestants associated it with the hypocrisy of adhering to outward religious forms in word and deed while nursing irreligious desires: it was thus another focus for the opposition between appearances and truth.²²

Speculative wickedness was also the category in which the factual importance of dreams came to the fore. Dreams were generally claimed as one of the ultimate proofs of the wilfully 'vain' and chaotic nature of the imagination. According to Robert Sanderson,

in nothing is the Vanity of mens fancies more apparent, then in our ordinary dreams. Wherein we often fancy to our selves golden mountains, and many other such things, as never were, nor ever shall be in *rerum natura*.²³

As Thomas Goodwin explained, dreams were the pre-eminent demonstration of this corrupt tendency of the imagination. Speculative wickedness was 'evident to you by your dreames; when fancy playes its part most, and to allude to what the Prophet sayes, makes us beleieve *wee eate when wee are an hungry, to drinke*

¹⁹ Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (London, 1651), p. 66.

²⁰ Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts*, p. 74.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95–102.

²² See *Ibid.*, pp. 24–29 and Richard Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict*, pp. 203–210, on the point that men will be held accountable for their thoughts as well as their actions. The 'golden mountain' was a well-known example of a kind of imaginary phantasm, the composition of which Aquinas had described as one of the functions of the imagination. See Jean Michel Massing, 'Dürer's Dreams' in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 49 (1986), p. 240.

²³ Robert Sanderson, *Fourteen Sermons Heretofore Preached* (London, 1657), p. 402.

when our soules are thirsty.²⁴ Their chaotic and wandering nature, was associated with its passive and reactive nature, the inability of the carnal mind stay focused and ordered as opposed to the steady and disciplined nature of the mind guided by reason. In their independency, Goodwin said, thoughts appeared 'hanging oft together as ropes of sand', and this 'more evidently in dreames'.²⁵ He also noted how when the affections became violent and intemperately fixated upon particular objects of desire, they caused such great anxiety and perturbation that sleep itself was disturbed by night terrors.²⁶ In his *Mystery*, Philip Goodwin distinguished three major categories of sinful dream: deluding dreams, defiling dreams and vain dreams. These three types closely mirrored Bernard's three-fold hierarchy of sinful cognition. Deluding dreams were those that revealed erroneous ideas, opinions and doctrines, and had negative consequences for religious belief, religious practise, and secular social order. Defiling dreams revealed impure desires that resulted from uncontrolled lusts, primarily sexual in nature, which corrupted the soul and religious association. Vain dreams were the common currency of humanity, the root of the preceding corruptions, which sprang from the systematic weaknesses of the imagination described by Sibbes and Thomas Goodwin. The analytical progression of the *Mystery* therefore proceeds loosely through Bernard's hierarchy from top to bottom, though each division enfolded content, phenomena and intent, as well as consequence. The later chapters deal with God's use of dreams to impart correction and grace, and we shall examine these later.²⁷

The *Mystery* also dealt with the question of intention and responsibility in its discussion of vain dreams and defiling dreams. The idea that dreams epitomised speculative wickedness suggests the degree to which the power of imagination was believed to be autonomous, independent and automatic – subconscious in the modern usage, because it arose from the reflexive actions of the sensible nature beyond the scope of the will. If some were thought to argue that waking thoughts and imaginations were sometimes beyond man's responsibility, then dreams seemed to raise such an objection to another level. Intuitively, they seemed to be outside of man's volition. St. Augustine averred as much in his *Confessions*.²⁸ Yet despite holding a generally Augustinian view

²⁴ Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts*, pp. 74–75.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, *The Vanity of Thoughts*, pp. 74–75. Compare Philip Goodwin: in dreams 'Reason acts irregularly, intricately, inconsistently, fluctuating and roving up and down, [so] that things hang (as we say) like ropes of sand'—*The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 5.

²⁶ Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts*, pp. 74–75.

²⁷ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 159–162.

²⁸ Augustine's position is discussed by Jesse Couenhoven in 'Dreams of Responsibility' in Philip Cary, John Doody, Kim Paffenroth (eds), *Augustine and Philosophy* (Lanham, 2010), pp. 103–107. Couenhoven suggests that Augustine ignores the implications of his own philosophy concerning the relationship between body and mind, and that a more critical stance on his part would have concurred with the position we see taken by Perkins.

of the nature of sin, many English theologians and divines imputed guilt to the soul on account of dreams. William Perkins claimed that impure dreams violated the tenth commandment because 'all unchaste dreams... do arise from the force of concupiscence, or from the strength of any lustfull desires, which man doth suffer his heart to be possest withall'.²⁹ Anthony Wotton declared that all evil produced from original sin, which caused the imagination's infirmity, could be called voluntary. Thus 'dreames that are occasioned by any fault of ours, or by our naturall corruption, are our sinnes, and to them that are not in Christ, damnable.'³⁰ James Ussher wrote that the soul was condemned 'by evill motions and lusts stirring in the heart against the righteousnesse of the Law, which condemneth the very first motions of evill that arise from our corrupt nature.' Man's mind committed sin at night when he dreamed, because:

when it thinketh not of good, it thinketh of evill: and the godly may mark that after they have had any dreams of things unlawfull, their heart is in a measure wounded, till they obtaine peace and pardon from God.³¹

In particular, Protestants often took dreams as a signal of the soul's current state or condition of sanctity, and by extension, his culpability in sin. Man's dreams, Thomas Adams (1583–1652), declared, 'doe signifie to him those secret inclinations, to which hee thought himselfe a stranger, though they were home-dwellers in his heart.'³² Such signs were commonly negative, but nonetheless valuable for revealing the truth.

Philip Goodwin's *Mystery* is in one sense disappointing, because it largely omits one of the possible ramifications of its vitalist thesis, that dreams represent the thoughts of the wakeful soul during bodily sleep. Despite this confident statement, Goodwin never dealt with the problem that dreams appear to be outside of conscious control, alluding only briefly to the idea that our waking memories of dreams may be imperfect. Likewise, his advice on how to reform dreams is focused on preparatory and post-mortem prayer and reflective examination, never suggesting that dreams themselves can be consciously directed. On this apparent contradiction Goodwin was silent. He did, however, deal with the question of the extent to which one might be responsible for sinful dreams, from various perspectives. His two clearest statements on the subject aligned him firmly with the opinions of Adams and Ussher, declaring that dreams uncovered the '*secret word within thy heart, the evil whereof is hid*', and that their every motion was significant to the moral state of the soul:

²⁹ William Perkins, *An abridgement of the whole body of divinity* (London, 1654), pp. 125.

³⁰ Anthony Wotton, *A defence of M. Perkins booke* (London, 1606), pp. 120–121.

³¹ Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie*, p. 150.

³² Thomas Adams, *The Hapiness of the Church* (London, 1619), p. 216.

'These *Dreames* they are not *good*, therefore *evil*. There are no *Adiaphora*, or middle matters in the motions of mens mindes'.³³

In his chapter on vain dreamers, dreams were defined as negative or 'privative' evils because they continually veered away from the object of God, and from the duties the soul owed toward him in thought and observance.³⁴ Their objects corrupted reason, nurtured the temptations of Satan, and defiled its nature by diverting the soul from the highest good. 'Dishonouring *Dreames* of vanity,' Goodwin wrote, 'strip the soul of its dignity.'³⁵ His chapters on defiling dreams dealt with the question of culpability relative to Satanic inspiration: were 'filthy dreams' injected by Satan, or did he merely magnify and reflect the soul's native lusts and appetites? He considered in detail how the images of dreams themselves represented a particular entrance for the Devil, and how the soul's defences were particularly weakened in the state of sleep.³⁶ Since no time or place was free from the devil's surveillance and his power, he was able to discern these moments when the mind was open to attack. 'At such times when man moves least,' Goodwin warned, 'then the Devil moves most'.³⁷ If the mind was not fixed on correct objects, Satan would fill the empty space of an 'idle' mind with sinful motions.³⁸

These concerns were not particular to the *Mystery*. Protestants displayed considerable anxiety about what sleep meant for the security of the mind and of the soul. 'In the quiet silence of the night he will be fere to surprize vs, when he vnfallibly knowes we shall be vnarmed to resist,' said Nashe, 'and that there will be full audiorie granted him to vndermine or perswade what he lists.'³⁹ The fear of the devil touched both the physical body and the mind, and displayed again the anxiety engendered by the contingent nature of the imagination, which at night persisted at the expense of the conscious soul. 'How do you thinke you were preserued from his snares while you slept?' Elizabeth Joscelyn asked in an address to her as yet unborn son—'doe you thinke that he onely besets you when you are awake?'⁴⁰ Protestant fears about Satan's influence over them at night show the ambivalent nature of their beliefs about dreams. In the *Paradise of Prayers* (1613), a bedtime prayer asked God to 'defend my senses, and my thoughts, my soule and my body with al their powers from al the

³³ The 'secret word' is warned of in the Septuagint, in Deuteronomy 15:9 – found in Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 168; on *adiaphora* and dreams, pp. 165–166.

³⁴ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 165–169.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁷ Philip Goodwin, *Mystery of Dreames*, p. 114

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–114.

³⁹ Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night*, di. 7.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Joscelyn, *The Mothers Legacie to her Vnborne Childe* (London, 1622), pp. 19-20, quoted in Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, p.115.

assaultes, tentations & illusions of the Diuel'.⁴¹ The Protestant demonologist Henry Lawrence wrote that "[N]o time is free sleeping and waking' from angels and demons, since they could penetrate the mind 'when the senses are bound up, as in dreames'. Consequently, 'our communion is exceeding great with the Angells, both good and bad'.⁴² The state of the soul, Philip Goodwin claimed, was often defined by how 'conformably' it moved when exposed to either divine or demonic cogitations at night.⁴³ He distinguished between those who were passively afflicted with dreams by Satan, and those who were active participants in the Satanic dialogue. 'Of such Dreames to be *receptive* is sad,' he wrote. 'Of such Dreames to be *productive* is yet much worse.'⁴⁴ In the vein of much Protestant writing, Goodwin's demonology made it clear Satan's presence to the mind was perpetual wherever sin flourished. Demonic infiltration, then, was closely implicated in arguments about the passive or active nature of sin, in which maleficent spirits always stood ready to work upon the 'matter' already inherent within the flawed human mind, in order to draw out its appetites and inflate their ardour through distempering its constituent natures. The 'productive' sinner, equivalent with Thomas Goodwin's 'speculative' sinner, was clearly in a more degenerate and conscious state of evil.

As noted before, the *Mystery* fails to endorse any kind of lucid agency in dreams, which might have offered a unique perspective on fighting demonic influence in dreams. Instead, safety from the devil was dependent upon God's providence and on the dreamer's efforts to sanctify himself. Dissenting voices appear few, but they did exist. Theodore Beza, a French Protestant theologian whose works were influential amongst some English theologians, wrote that neither the 'rauing of franticke men, and the dreames of those that sleepe', were indicted under the tenth commandment, which condemned men's lust, though the latter would still stand 'in need of the mercie of God; especiallie, if they proceed from the euill cogitations, that wee haue had in the day time'.⁴⁵ Richard Baxter cleaved to a purer Augustinian stance on the question of culpability for dreams, stating that guilt arose only insofar as one was affected with their contents:

Dreams are neither *good* nor *sinful* simply in themselves, because they are not rational and voluntary, nor in our power: But they are often *made sinful* by some other voluntary Act: They may be sinful by *participation* and

⁴¹ Edward Mayhew, *A Paradise of Prayers* (Douai, 1613), p. 139, quoted in Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism*, p.94.

⁴² Henry Lawrence, *An History of Angells*, p. 39.

⁴³ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108–109.

⁴⁵ Theodore Beza, *Propositions and Principles of Divinitie* (Edinburgh, 1591), p. 99.

consequently. And the acts that make them *sinful*, are either such as go *before*, or such as follow after.⁴⁶

Beza and Baxter thus retained the general suspicion that dreams were contingent upon a sinful state of imagination, but insisted on defining culpability in terms of voluntary action, rather than *de facto* imputation from original sin. This suggested both the possibility of random dreams for which one was not responsible, and the innocence of men tempted by demonic dreams. The Caroline Archbishop William Laud also defended a distinction between willed and unwilled imaginations when his own dream diaries were introduced at trial as indictments of his spiritual character. 'Dreams,' he protested, 'are not in the power of him that hath them, but in the unruliness of the fancy, which in broken sleeps wanders which way it pleases.'⁴⁷ William Prynne's antithetical use of the diaries, to reveal Laud's sinful inclinations and hold him culpable for them, however, was well within the range of Protestant opinion, and built upon a strong tradition of suspicion directed at the imagination.⁴⁸

False Prophets and Filthy Dreamers

The most important categories of dreamer, however, were those associated not with common reprobation or superstition, but with false prophets, 'seducers' and heretics. Deuteronomy 13:3 gave injunctions to Israel not to 'hearken to a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams' preaching other gods, even if they offered signs and wonders as proofs of their power. The penalty for making such claims was death. The warning against dreamers was repeated in Jeremiah 23:25-28, and again in the New Testament, under Jude 27:4-8. Continental writings on apostasy and fanaticism helped English theologians to define the various forms of separatism, nonconformity and antinomianism that flourished amidst Protestant communities from the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. The Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement guaranteed a focus on the differences between the reprobate and sanctified subject in a significant proportion of English theological writing. The moment of the Civil War, however, saw the explosion of inner tensions and contradictions previously contained within the Protestant community of belief, with widely varying and competing visions of how religious authority should be structured and

⁴⁶ Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 407.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Reid Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture*, p.93—94.

⁴⁸ William Prynne, *A breviat of the life of William Laud, Arch-bishop of Canterbury extracted (for the most part) verbatim, out of his owne diary, and other writings, under his owne hand* (London, 1644), pp. 34—35.

promulgated in English society.⁴⁹ This represented a profound cultural and intellectual challenge to contemporary ideas about legitimate religious practice, which intensified polemical division and drove calls for varying degrees of religious liberty and toleration. At the crux of this religious crisis were competing representations of divisions between supporters of a national Presbyterian church and those claiming the right to independent assemblies, and the emergence of more radical religious sects, often thought of as beyond the pale.⁵⁰

In this context, the splenetic, private and multitudinous nature of dreams was an apt figure for the divisive spread of heretical belief in the Christian community. The mid-seventeenth century was sometimes conceived of as the era of the 'Dreamer' as a religious subject and deviant, whether unregenerate, apostate or heretic. Thomas Edwards, author of the heresiography known as the *Gangraena*, wrote that 'to all the sorts of Sects in this Kingdome... I may add this of *Sleepers* and *Dreamers*, which I am afraid are the most generall of any other'. They were to be found 'among all ranks, in Citie, Countrey, among the Magistrates, Ministers, and private Christians'.⁵¹ Philip Goodwin wrote that 'In later times Men have had here at home many a mistaking Dreame: Dreames drawn in by the Devil, which they have taken as tendred to them by the hand of a Holy God.'⁵² The vogue for Paracelsus, Jacob Boehme and other illuminist texts was due to the wave of 'Modern *Enthusiasts*' who had raked up 'the kennels of old fanatick Dreamers, with disguises and additions of their own,' said the Irish minister Claudius Gilbert.⁵³ In 1653 Oliver Cromwell issued a national call for fasting and repentance, since for a general 'want of Circumspection and care herein, and a due regard to sincerity and uprightness, have not many apostatized, running after *Fancies* and *Notions*, listning to filthy *Dreams*, *worshipping of Angels*, and been carried by their Impulsions[?]'⁵⁴ In 1665, the Rev. John Wilson observed:

⁴⁹ For the history of dissenting belief in English Protestant communities, see Como, *Blown by the Spirit*; 'Radical Puritanism, c. 1558-1660', pp. 241-251; Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge*; Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, pp. 169—230.

⁵⁰ See Morrill, 'The Puritan Revolution', pp. 72-79 and Como, 'Radical Puritanism, c. 1558-1660', pp. 241—258; Anne Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2004); See 'Introduction' in David Lowenstein and John Marshall (eds), *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge 2009), pp. 1-10; John Coffey, 'A Ticklish Business: Defining Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Puritan Revolution', in *Heresy, Literature and Politics*, pp. 108—129; Ann Hughes, 'Thomas Edwards *Gangraena* and Heresiological Traditions', in *Heresy, Literature and Politics*, pp.137—159.

⁵¹ Thomas Edwards, *The First and Second part of Gangraena*, (London, 1646), pp. 164—165.

⁵² Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 37.

⁵³ Claudius Gilbert, *A Sovereign Antidote against sinful errors, the Epidemical Plague of these Latter Days* (London, 1658), p. 112.

⁵⁴ Oliver Cromwell, *A declaration of His Highness the Lord Protector, inviting the people of England and Wales, to a day of solemn fasting and humiliation* (London, 1653).

There are many D[rea]mers in these times, the Q[au]ker hath his Dreams, and the S[ee]ker hath his Dreams, and I cannot reckon up all of them: and one Dream doth beget another, but the Lord doth testifie against them all.⁵⁵

As we saw in the last chapter, analysing the scholarly traditions of scholastic heresiography, false prophets and heretics were explained to be deluded by the devil, but were increasingly explained as enthusiasts and fanatics who suffered from disordered imaginations. Philip Goodwin's *Mystery of Dreams* was rooted in a continental Protestant discourse built on the assumption that heretics were zealous fanatics whose depraved minds ranged into various species of madness.⁵⁶ His own use of cognitive philosophy was grounded strongly on the theological roots of their corruption in sin. It did not dwell on a physician's analysis of melancholic imaginations, as Casuabon and More were to do, but looked to the Scriptural definitions of dreamers as sinners and enemies of God in order to describe their deviant psychology. Goodwin distinguished between the different kinds of dreamer at the same time as distinguishing different kinds of dreams, explaining the existence of heresy through the deepening corruption of the imagination. While the chapter on vain dreams described the common vanity of man, those on 'deluded' and 'defiling' dreams distinguished between the intellectual and sensual aspects of sin. These chapters focused on dreams as intellectual deceptions and sensual temptations, analysing these aspects as distinctive, but also as complementary components of the common factors of human corruption, congenital weakness, and man's dialogue with the devil. The intellectual delusions of dreams were associated with purveyors of formal heresy, the opposition to established Church doctrine, and rebellion against secular power. The sensual temptations of 'filthy dreamers' described the moral corruption of the people, and especially from within the godly community.

Analysis of intellectual delusion and confusion focused upon analysis of man's intellectual weaknesses, errors that followed the desires, through the doctrines of demonology, and through the tropes of Protestant heresiography.⁵⁷ The heresiographical content of the *Mystery* was both historical and current. The errors of the moment were compared very closely with notorious heretics of the German Anabaptist revolutions of the sixteenth century, which dominated Protestant perceptions of heresy. Demonological theory provided the metaphysical foundation for this history, and presented a detailed discourse on the nature of human complicity in evil, as it attempted to measure the

⁵⁵ John Wilson, *A seasonable vwatch-vvord unto Christians against the dreams & dreamers of this generation* (Cambridge, 1677), p.8.

⁵⁶ Heyd, *Be Sober and Reasonable*, pp. 11–43.

⁵⁷ See discussion in chapter two, pp. 14–15, also Hughes, 'Thomas Edward's *Gangreana* and Heresiological Traditions', pp.137–159.

boundaries between human and demonic agency.⁵⁸ Goodwin moved frequently between presenting evil as inherent to fallen humanity, to discussing the devil's ineluctable role in all resistance to and offence against God. His demonology, following the powerful precedents of English Protestant culture, projected the agency of an army of evil spirits deep into the fabric of society, which Goodwin described in terms of their great 'diversity', 'unity', 'sedulity' and 'subtilty'.⁵⁹ They were, he claimed, efficient, coordinated and omnipresent deceivers of humanity, a dialectic which juxtaposed the strength and wilfulness of demons against the weakness of the human mind. Fallen humanity was sufficient in its own lusts to do evil and alienate itself from God, but as victims of intellectual sin, they were primarily the dupes and the instruments of Satan.⁶⁰

The same demonic agency was seen behind the corrupting influences of the moment in English society. Goodwin referred to the 'bold presumptions' and 'proud predictions' which had 'appeared from some in their printed Pamphlets'.⁶¹ He portrayed the abundance of radical religious literature in England, as a snare of Satan, 'who sends out his Books as baits' in which 'Serpentine poison may be found in every line: These lay matter for delusive Dreames'.⁶² Notably, however, the sectaries and popular prophets of Goodwin's time did not loom large in the text. In contrast to the prodigious multiplication of categories and entries in the *Gangraena* of Thomas Edwards – a work whose sprawling entries Goodwin might well have associated with the multitudinous nature of man's errant imaginations – the *Mystery* kept to tight definitions of religious heterodoxy.⁶³ These defined the Church's enemies as purveyors of 'deceits' which pertained primarily to (1) attacks on the ordained chain of being (the sanctity of state, property, body and soul), explained as conceits of worldly ambition; (2) the correct ordering of the rules of conscience, providence and scriptures; and (3) the doctrines of sin, grace and justification.⁶⁴ This added to the perception that all of the historical emanations of heresy were part of the same phenomenon, and subsumed the identity of the sectaries under the agency and consciousness of the demonic conspiracy.

The *Mystery's* treatment of the transgressions of 'Filthy Dreamers', the purveyors of 'defiling' dreams, continued to explore the dialogue between man and the devil, but focused more closely on human sensuality as the conduit of demonic influence, as the source of the soul's 'pollution, and on 'defiling' dreams

⁵⁸ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, pp. 30–58; Clark, *Thinking With Demons*, pp. 43–93.

⁵⁹ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 48–50.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

⁶¹ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 36.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶³ Edwards, *The First and Second part of Gangraena*.

⁶⁴ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 79–84.

as offences against the natural order. Zechariah and Jeremiah had provided the typological headings for Goodwin's division on intellectual dreams, but the verses of Jude 1:7-8 were apt to the purpose of drawing links between heretical agents and the corruptions of the flesh:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Jude focused attention on the relationship between body and mind by evoking 'dreams', bodily lust and pollution, and the sins of Sodom, a soil fertile with allusive meanings for theologians. 'Filthy dreams' suggested a conception of sin focused on the ideas of contamination and pollution, and of 'dreamers' as individuals whose agency was defined by wilful acts of perversity. Jude's own description was built upon references in Jeremiah 23:25—32, in which false prophets were said to have 'perverted' the words of the living God, to have committed adultery with false gods, so that they were 'all them vnto me [God] as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah'.⁶⁵

Goodwin's use of these typological figures from Jude followed the precedents of authoritative exegetical authors, and he provided a range of their interpretations.⁶⁶ Were these misdemeanours actual, inspired by dreams? Or were they purely imaginary, only acted dreams? In the context of his own focus on dreams, Goodwin entertained the possibility that the passage referred literally to acts of sodomy like those committed in Sodom and Gomorrah, or dreams of the same.⁶⁷ However, he followed other biblical commentators in focusing on the expanded sense suggested by reading Jude as an echo of Jeremiah, which applied the language of adultery to idolatry and false preaching. Sodomy had great symbolic importance in the Christian imagination, where its meaning was expansive and often included all forms of lawful and unlawful copulation including bestiality and adultery. Complaints about sodomy articulated a discourse about natural relations in the cosmic order.⁶⁸ For early modern commentators, a natural connection also existed between the concept of adultery and idolatry. It expressed the idea both that the soul was unfaithful to the lawful object of its attentions, which was God, and that the

⁶⁵ *King James Bible* (1611), Jeremiah 23:14.

⁶⁶ Goodwin summarises the opinions of Vatablus, Erasmus, Aretius, Paraeus, Piscator, and Calvin, pp. 91—94. See also William Jenkyn, *An exposition of the Epistle of Jude* (London, 1652), Thomas Manton, *An exposition with notes on the Epistle of Jude* (London, 1657). Similar themes are also explored in John Brinsley, *The spirituall vertigo, or, Turning sickensse of soul-unsettlednesse* (London, 1655), though Brinsley employs Jude's metaphor of false prophets as wandering stars.

⁶⁷ Philip Goodwin, *Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 86—105.

⁶⁸ Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York, 1995), pp. 19—32.

mind was joined to the objects of its contemplation, and came to be moulded by them. '[A]ll *deviations* and *estrangements* from God and adhesion to forbidden objects,' wrote Taylor in an essay against the sects, 'is called *fornication* and *adultery*.'⁶⁹ Thomas Goodwin likened speculative wickedness to an act of incest, because the soul sought to satisfy its lusts with its own ideas, 'begotten in our own fancies, being the children of our owne hearts'.⁷⁰ Goodwin came to the conclusion that identification of these false teachers as 'dreamers' meant they were mental sinners – guilty of the 'speculative wickedness' which Thomas Goodwin condemned so thoroughly.⁷¹

The dreamers of Jude were linked to the dreamers of Zechariah and Jeremiah, and led to the outward challenge of authority and the same political violence that Goodwin spoke of in reference to intellectual dreams. In the logic of mimetic imagination, the heart followed the form of the mind. There was ultimate unity between intellectual and sensual sins, born of the 'union and mutuall dependance in being and working' between body and spirit.⁷² This symbiosis between flesh and spirit, mediated by the imagination, dictated that 'deluding Dreames do defile' and 'defiling dreames do delude'. Intellectual sins, as we have seen, were driven by sinful desires, and those desires constituted the weaknesses of the flesh that the devil preyed upon. If the soul came to follow the desires of his 'bodily' spirit, then, said Goodwin, 'By such filthy Dreams the whole man is made flesh... Their hearts are flesh and not spirit'.⁷³ In a similar thematic homily on Jude 1:8, Thomas Manton emphasized how sensuality made men 'self-willed', and 'seared the conscience' so that their fear was removed and they blasphemed against God and challenged ministers and magistrates. Manton echoed the explanation of Sibbes that unnatural and immodest sexual desires were errors that arose from judging the good and evil of things according to the 'animal' sensitivities of the body, and building intellectual conceits on the desires of the flesh, which seemed 'good' and pleasurable to those with no consciousness of spiritual law.⁷⁴

Goodwin used the examples of the Anabaptist revolutions to portray the escalating violence of the heretical imagination as the fulcrum of temporal

⁶⁹ Jeremy Taylor, *Eniautos* (London, 1653), p. 283.

⁷⁰ Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts*, p. 79.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁷³ Philip Goodwin, *Mystery of Dreames*, p. 102. Anthony Burgess used a similar language of 'pollution' to describe the effects of original sin on the soul's powers of imagination, memory, understanding and will. See *A Treatise of Original Sin* (London, 1658). See also *An Expository Comment... upon... the second epistle of St. Paul* (London, 1661), p. 266: 'For you must know, that the flesh, or to be carnal, doth not in the Scripture signifie the pollution upon the sensitive and bodily part only, but also upon the intellectual and rational: It's a fleshly mind, as well as fleshly affections.'

⁷⁴ Thomas Manton, *An exposition with notes on the Epistle of Jude*, pp. 342–342

rebellion and instability in Protestant societies. Dreamed delusion did not amount simply to private error as it might for the type of the reprobate and or wicked dreamer. The fierceness of carnal lusts ensured that the soul possessed with heretical deceits would come to act on them. In this sense, Goodwin said, the dreams of night figured the conception of desires in hidden thought, as a prelude to their public performance in the light of day, breaking out in public defiance of civil powers and threatening first the spiritual security and then the bodily safety of their Christian fellows.⁷⁵ Haestan's *Apocalypsis* also posed an extreme act of filial violence as the apotheosis of the corrupt heretical imagination, when the anabaptist Thomas Schucker, in the throes of an enthusiastic trance 'did... cut off his own Brothers head... and having forgotten the use of water, baptized him with his own blood'. He claimed the act was divinely inspired.⁷⁶ Manton also observed that the freedom to blaspheme was a gateway to more serious actions. Those who propagated carnal knowledge were called 'seducers', charged with pandering to lustful passions ('eating and drinking and the use of the woman in common copulation'). Most of all, Manton claimed, dreamers desired freedom to act out their imaginations free from temporal and spiritual laws, which tended irresistibly toward violence. Their lack of restraint was enabled by the fact that in turning away from God, they had stopped valuing the divine image within man himself: 'how shall we hope that they will spare *men*, that would not spare *God*?⁷⁷

Sanctifying the Imagination and Reforming Dreams

Protestant culture was built around the work of salvation, a work conceived of as necessary to restore the divine image in fallen man. The corruption of the imaginative faculties, as we have seen, was responsible for polluting and debasing the whole of the soul. According to salvation theology, these debased tendencies could be overcome only by the gift of grace bestowed upon the soul, which enabled the soul to place its faith in God.⁷⁸ But though Protestant theology rejected the importance of human works, and Calvinism imposed a strict predestinarian interpretation of man's individual fate, the content and character of protestant divinity was overwhelmingly preparatory and anthropo-technic in its character, focusing upon the actions that individuals must take toward conversion, to be assured in their election, to grow in godly virtue, and to similarly mould and influence the will and affections of others of

⁷⁵ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 53–60.

⁷⁶ Henrick van Haestens, *Apocalypsis* (London, 1658) p. 72; the same story is repeated in Spanheim, *Englands vvarning by Germanies vvoe*, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Thomas Manton, *An exposition with notes on the Epistle of Jude*, p. 346–356; see particularly p. 344, quote from p. 347.

⁷⁸ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 41–61; Harrison, *The Fall of Man*, pp. 52–88; Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689*, pp. 155–158.

the household or the flock. There was a duty on the part of every individual to undertake the work of reform, but also a duty on the part of the minister to call the people to this work and to guide them in its execution.⁷⁹ As ‘wee desire our whole man should be *saved* by Christ, so wee must yeeld up the whole man to be *governed* by him,’ wrote Richard Sibbes, because ‘God hath a sovereignty over the *whole* soule, and his *law* bindes the whole *inward* and *outward* man’.⁸⁰ It was the Scriptures, wrote Philip Goodwin, that required man to establish a ‘personall, perpetuall, universall and principle care for heartkeeping’ in his life.⁸¹

Awareness of corrupt thoughts was particularly heightened around what Philip Goodwin referred to as the ‘entrance’ and ‘progress’ of the night. Jeremy Taylor declared that a heart possessed with a true love for God would not be content to ‘endure the impurity of a dream’.⁸² In several places in Scripture, the bed was a sight of either holy meditation or spiritual vision, so that commentators designated it a place that should be kept holy. The theologian Andrew Willet called the bed ‘the fittest place for heauenly meditation, when the soule was sequestered from all worldly affaires’, and for this reason, care should be taken that it ‘be not defiled with any vncline pollutions’ and that the conscience ‘be carefully kept and watched over’.⁸³ These injunctions referred broadly to the content and activity of the mind in and around the bed, including evil meditations, onanism and wet dreams (understood by ‘nocturnal’ or ‘unclean’ pollutions), and the sinful dreams which could be consequent upon or implicated in both of these. Philip Goodwin looked to Psalm 1.3 to support the idea that it was ‘the proper practice of a pious man, to meditate in the *Law of the Lord both day and night*’, and that in the case of sinful dreams, ‘every man ought to use means for their preventing, and [therefore] his preserving’.⁸⁴

Practical methods for achieving this end were promulgated through the various offices of the minister, in the preaching of sermons, teaching at seminaries and conventicles, and the pastoral care delivered to parishioners and their households.⁸⁵ These ends were also furthered by the publishing of sermons and devotional texts. Teaching a method of reform was the ultimate end of those texts which described the fallen imagination, including those of Richard Sibbes, Thomas Goodwin and the dream manual of Philip Goodwin. Manuals of conscience provided a crucial resource for private education in the use of

⁷⁹ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 23–40, 79–94; Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689*, pp. 159–185.

⁸⁰ Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict*, pp. 204.

⁸¹ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 174–175.

⁸² Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living* (London, 1656), p. 266.

⁸³ Willet, *Hexapla in Danielem*, p. 239.

⁸⁴ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 174, 172.

⁸⁵ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 79–94.

meditation for this duty of heartkeeping, first for devotees in their households and immediate circle of fellows, and secondly for the training and inspiration of ministers who sought to be a vessel for the teaching and application of these techniques in their own right.⁸⁶ Meditative exercises, and their purported ability to move the soul and the mind, traced their lineage back to the thought of St. Bonaventure and Hugh of St. Victor, and continued to exercise great influence on both Reformation and Counter-Reformation spirituality. In the traditional meditative ascent of the soul towards god, these processes included stages of purgation from sins, illumination, in which the mind was enlightened by study of God, of union, when the will of the soul and God became one in love. Similar ideas can be perceived in the models which Protestant divines propounded for the practise of repentance, assurance, conscience-making and devotions.⁸⁷ In these manuals they described the goals of sanctification with regards to the cognitive faculties of the soul and their movements. Sibbes' *Conflict* said that the aim was to bring the 'risings' or passions of the soul into harmony with God's truth and the divine nature of man's own spirit, whereby it would become properly ordered by Reason.⁸⁸

Ministers set forth a programme of exercises to achieve the correction of judgments and affections, a set of actions intended to ameliorate the weaknesses and deficiencies of natural imagination. This programme of action was described as a series of seven duties by William Perkins, and laid down patterns which were echoed by Sibbes' *Soule's Conflict* and by Thomas Goodwin in *The Vanity of Thoughts*. It moved first through the act of self-examination, reflection upon the corrupt state of the mind, conviction for one's guilt, and repentance for the 'secret thoughts' that blasphemed against God though never translated into actions. This was demonstrated by prayer's asking for God's forgiveness. This stage of reflection ended with a resolution to reform the mind from its sinful condition. Next came the work of reform itself, which had the goal of establishing the thoughts of the mind on the foundation of God's law and his commandments. The exactitude of this observance would depend upon overcoming the self-willed and inconstant nature of the imagination. It would have to be confined to godly objects of thought, and strengthened against its tendency to wander after the worldly qualities of things as they were apprehended. Sibbes warned that when the imagination began 'once to runne out to impertinencies', it was necessary to '*confine* it to some certaine thing'.⁸⁹ To achieve this command over the affections, the mind often had to be 'elevated'

⁸⁶ Green, *Print and Protestantism*, pp. 325—410.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 277—288; Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, pp. 160—221. The Cambridge Platonists set forth the same model to distinguish different degrees of Christian piety. See James, *Passion and Action*, pp. 225—235.

⁸⁸ Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict*, pp. 183—184.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 189—90.

to God, a process of acknowledging the dependency of the soul upon God's grace in order to achieve this, through prayer, thanksgiving and contemplation. In these activities, the soul was to seek to find assurance in its knowledge of God's love, which was sufficient to overcome the fallen nature. This 'elevation' of the mind was to be consolidated in the act of meditation on the holiness of God. Like the elevating action of prayers and thanksgiving, these deeper meditations propounded holy objects to absorb the thought of the mind and to supplant carnal qualities and the desires they aroused.⁹⁰

While following this broadly similar pattern of examination and meditation, differences emerged in the advice of individual theologians over the role and use of the imagination. Differences in Protestant pedagogy emerged over whether it was the clarity of the understanding and the judgment that should be the immediate focus of reform, or the spiritual affections of the soul, which had first to be attracted toward truth. This distinction often dictated whether spiritual meditations and reforms were focused upon making abstract intellectual distinctions – 'practical syllogisms' in Perkin's words – or arousing passionate experiences in contemplation of divine figures or images in the mind.⁹¹ For some the primacy of affective spiritual experience was based on the superior theological status of love as the agent and object of faith, and as evidence of the inward movement of the Holy Spirit. This was the application of the principle that true religious knowledge consisted not in apprehension or judgment, but in experience and action, making Christian truth intuitive rather than discursive, a grasping through feeling rather than an algorithm of deduction.⁹² Richard Sibbes advocated a powerful role for the imagination, indicating that it should be used as a means of illustrating and therefore amplifying the spiritual dimensions of things. In this way, said Sibbes, the imagination was made 'serviceable to us in spirituall things', contriving to 'putting of *lively* colours upon *common* truths' in such a way as to quicken the affections, and enlarge the soul's ideas of God through natural and practical comparisons. A 'sanctified *fancie*' would 'make every creature a *ladder to heaven*.'⁹³

Dreams entered into this general model of imaginative reform, on the one hand, as objects and subjects of the soul's self-examination, as an occasion for conviction and repentance. Equally, however, the content of dreams, their images, might not simply be evidence of sinful cogitations, but also act as vehicles for worthy objects of contemplation. There were several instances in

⁹⁰ William Perkins, *A treatise of mans imaginations* (Cambridge, 1607), pp. 169–194; Thomas Goodwin, *The Vanity of Thoughts*, pp. 129–133; Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict*, pp. 83–195.

⁹¹ Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, pp. 143–182

⁹² Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith*, pp. 34–43.

⁹³ Sibbes, *The Soules Conflict*, pp. 198–203. Quoted from p. 198, p. 200.

which this could be seen to be true: first, the images of dreams and dreamers as figures, or exemplary accounts of dreams themselves, could be introduced in the preaching and writing of ministers in order to provoke passionate and intellectual responses; secondly, dreams could be produced by the soul's own intellectual powers, usually that of the natural conscience; third, they could be introduced to the soul supernaturally at God's instigation, and this to the end of conviction and correction, wrathful judgment, or a gift of grace. Whenever they were received, the images of dreams had the power to move the affections of the soul, and their inspiration was to be mediated by the mental tools and structures which the conscience literature enforced as spiritual duties for the godly.

The figurative meanings of dreams were used in preaching, and appear in printed copies of these sermons that were disseminated later. Much of the Protestant practice of preaching was founded in the 'voluntarist' understanding of faith, that a spiritual transformation could be affected only by affective transformation of the will.⁹⁴ The words of the preacher had to be an effectual vehicle of the Word, making its truths apprehensible to the human mind by stimulating the imagination, and thereby impressing the memory. Robert Bolton expressed the goal thus: 'I therefore desire and endeauour to awake them out of their golden dreame of imaginarie future happines; that with open eyes they may see their present spirituall pouerty, and so betimes preuent *the anger to come*.'⁹⁵ To draw out the exegetical 'figures' and 'types' of dreaming, like the one Bolton employed, was not simply a poetic conceit, but sought to explicate the stock of biblical imagery, to make them applicable and practicable in a way that allowed the listener or reader to utilise them in their prayers and mental habits. Those who heard sermons were encouraged to think with the metaphors and types of 'dreamers', to judge whether they themselves were 'awake' or 'dreaming', and, as we have suggested, judge their peers by similar standards. John Wilson encouraged his audience to perceive themselves as part of the 'Generation of Dreamers', a people and nation that had proven themselves susceptible to the allure of dissent, heterodoxy and separatism.⁹⁶ It was through making such strong impressions accessible to the understanding, that they would become apprehended realities, capable in turn of actuating the will first to repentance, and then acts of faith and love.

It was not unusual for preachers to use dreams as direct and literal figures to illustrate their arguments, or to direct their audience to think upon their own dreams. These dreams focusing on the disturbances of the unsanctified

⁹⁴ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 129–130.

⁹⁵ Robert Bolton, *A discourse about the state of true happinesse* (London, 1611), di.10.

⁹⁶ Wilson, *A seasonable vwatch-vword unto Christians against the dreams & dreamers of this generation*.

conscience, drew on traditional tropes in which dreamers saw visions of judgment and the afterlife (a tendency, ironically, which many Protestant authors condemned as excesses of medieval monasticism).⁹⁷ They were like natural analogues or companions to self-directed spiritual meditations in their ability to inspire powerful emotive responses, and leave lasting and formative impressions on the affections and will. Bolton directed listeners and readers to ‘but remember in what feare and dread sometimes thou seemest to be, when in a sleepe or vision, a glimpse of hell flashings are presented unto thee... how thou cryest and ravest with paine?’⁹⁸ Taylor told of a ‘Melancholy person’ who saw hell in a dream, and ‘would have chosen ten times to die, rather then feel again so much of that horror’.⁹⁹ Another tale emphasized the comparative and analogical nature method by which these feeling experiences pointed toward the greater spiritual reality. Confronted in a dream of the Final Judgment by the ‘upbraiding’ of his mother for his ‘follies and weak Religion’ and finding it unendurable, another of Taylor’s dreamers was caused to reflect on how much less he would be able to bear the reproach not only of God, but all the angels and saints in heaven.¹⁰⁰ Such dreams, Taylor said, should ‘actuate a meditation in every one of us’, and lead to more disciplined practise and reflection. The man who saw dreams of hell might subsequently ‘spend a year in such holinesse, that the religion of a few moneths would equal the devotion of many years, even of a good man’.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, he otherwise believed that ‘a frequent severe meditation’ would accomplish more than ‘a seldome and phantastic dream’—and that a faith lived by the affections would accomplish more.¹⁰²

Dreams did not have to be such catastrophic catalysts to trigger meditations on the state of the conscience. Bound up in the argument for the necessity of reform was the implicit message that the imagination was a contingent force in human nature. Outside of consciousness, it could be tamed only in terms of how one controlled its exposure to sensible conceits that were visual, lectionary, auditory or alimentary in nature. It was thus a source of intense vulnerability. Christians appeared to fear the effects of sinful dreams in the same way as infectious disease, and in their ‘elevations’ of the mind to God, they explicitly asked to be preserved from the effects and consequence of this vulnerability. Thomas Cooper instructed that before lying down to ‘to our sweete repose’, we

⁹⁷ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 123, 715, 735; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1583), Bk. 3, p. 175; Thomas Bromhall, *An history of apparitions, oracles, prophecies, and predictions with dreams* (London, 1658), p. 198–199.

⁹⁸ Robert Bolton, *The Carnall Professor* (London, 1634), p. 157–158.

⁹⁹ Taylor, *Eniautos* (London, 1653), p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁰² Jeremy Taylor, *A sermon preached at the funerall of that worthy knight Sr. George Dalston* (London, 1658), p. 27.

should seek to obtain the peace of God, so that sleepe heereby shall bee much sweeter' and dreams would be 'more comfortable' and free of 'nocturnall pollutions and vncleannesses'.¹⁰³ Philip Goodwin advised that 'As we must pray for good sleep in the night: So we must pray for good Dreames, in our sleep reading the Scripture.' To this end, some took the bible to their bed with them; others shared instruction with their families before sleep.¹⁰⁴ The exhortation from the *Paradise of Prayer*, noted before, was joined by numerous similar petitions in Protestant prayer-books. The prayer of Lancelot Andrewes asked that in sleeping

let me not dream anything,/ that may Offend Thee,/defile myself/Let not my loins be filled with illusions... Preserve me, without grievous fear from the dismal sleep of sin; and lay asleep in me all earthlie and wicked imaginations./Give me sweet sleep, free from all carnal and diabolical phancies.¹⁰⁵

Thomas Browne remarked in *Religio Medici* that he could not lay down to sleep without reciting a prayer, which included invoking the influence of good thoughts and dreams:

Let not dreames my head infest,
But such as *Jacobs* temples blest.
While I doe rest, my soule advance,
Make me sleepe a holy trance:
That I may take my rest being wrought,
Awake into some holy thought.¹⁰⁶

Prayers of this kind expressed the complete dependency of the soul on God for protection from Satan's absolute power to infiltrate and corrupt human nature, as displayed by Protestant demonology. To counterbalance the presence of malign spirits, Protestants appealed directly to God's protective power, or to the ministering power of angels. Goodwin reminded his readers that '*God* hath promised his *Angels* to defend his *Saints*, to encamp about them; which may principally imply night-protection', and that 'such night-safeguards *Prayer* procures.'¹⁰⁷

Christian tradition extended the activities of prayer and devotion into the season of the night, colonizing the natural intervals that existed in the pre-industrial sleep cycle.¹⁰⁸ In the 'progress' of the night, it was expected that one

¹⁰³ Thomas Cooper, *The Christian's Daily Sacrifice* (London, 1608), pp. 173—174.

¹⁰⁴ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 296.

¹⁰⁵ Lancelot Andrewes, *A manual of directions for the sick* (London, 1648), pp. 213—214.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁷ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 136—137.

¹⁰⁸ Ekirch, *At Day's Close*, pp.302—303, 307—308.

would find time to meditate on God. It was good, in 'the intervals or spaces between sleep and sleep to have the heart with God, to set our thoughts well a work' said Goodwin.¹⁰⁹ Thomas Cooper said that one should strive 'euen in the night when wee awake, to sigh for sinne, and hunger after mercy'.¹¹⁰ Directions to pray in the night had their several sources. Biblical injunctions expressed the perpetual duty both of worship and of vigilance over the heart, and were counted exhortations to prayer in the 'watches' of night.¹¹¹ Fears about the presence and heightened strength of the devil at night, and the strength of the solitary soul's own concupiscence, suggested the necessity of such disciplines. Isolation both separated the soul from the moderating influences of godly company, and work which was spiritually edifying. It also afforded excessive scope for melancholic reflection.¹¹²

But there was a countervailing line of thought, that the darkness and isolation of night, in separating the soul from human society, meant that one could be free of worldly distractions. As was so often the case, the context and condition of heightened sensitivity could be as advantageous as it was dangerous under the right circumstances. Craig Koslofsky notes that in the sixteenth century, belief in the ascetic value of night prayer was strongest in radical and Catholic mystical perspectives, but still penetrated the Protestant consciousness. To a limited extent, Protestants also employed the apophatic resonances of night—the belief that night symbolised the hidden and unknowable majesty of God, and the struggle this presented to the human soul in its quest for unity with him.¹¹³ Goodwin's passages on 'troublesome and affrighting dreams' noted that both periods of spiritual anguish and night terrors were ordained by God, and sometimes even came from his hand for the purpose of testing faith. Though Job usually 'lay upon his bed and *Gods* candle shined over his head', there came a time when 'the Candle out, he goes through the darknesse of the Night and his Soul sees no Light.'¹¹⁴ Slim comfort could be taken in the idea that such periods were ultimately productive afflictions, promoting the soul's good by confronting it with the terror of God's absence, and as a fierce contrast to spiritual comforts and securities: 'upon such shakes in the boughs,' Goodwin promised, 'Spiritual Joy grows more strong in the roots.'¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 296—295.

¹¹⁰ Cooper, *The Christian's Daily Sacrifice*, p. 173.

¹¹¹ Goodwin cites Psalm 4.4, 'Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still', Psa. 65. 6. 'Lord, I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night watches', Psalm 129.55, 'I have remembred thy name O Lord in the night' – see *Mystery*, pp. 296-297. While it was common to see these as literal exhortations to nocturnal prayer and meditation, Goodwin also employed them as Scriptural allegories of the soul's nocturnal vitalism in dreams.

¹¹² Nashe, *Terrors of the Night*, di. 6—7.

¹¹³ Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, pp. 73—86.

¹¹⁴ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 221.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

When sinful dreams did appear, ministers suggested that their common vanities made them fit subjects for examination, and the starting point for reformatory work on the imagination. Thomas Cooper directed readers to use dreams to ‘magnifie Gods mercie, that is is not so as we dreamed; or to checke our infidelity, in relying superstiously vpon dreames; or to condemne our security, and prophanenes in neglecting them vtterly.’¹¹⁶ He noted that waking in the night was not only an excellent opportunity for prayer, but also to ‘open our hearts’ to a chamber-fellow in confession.¹¹⁷ In spite of his Augustinian position on dreams, Richard Baxter advised in his *Christian Directory* that: ‘When you have found any corruption appearing in your dreams, make use of them for the renewing of your repentance, and exciting your endeavours to mortifie that corruption.’¹¹⁸ Thomas Adams directed the godly to make use of their dreams to ‘tell thee when thou wakest, what kind of man thou art’, and suggested a strategy for re-focusing the sinful affections of the imagination on God.¹¹⁹ He suggested that God intended to reform the *magi* who attended on Jesus by working to save their souls through their own vain desires and superstition in studying astrology and interpreting dreams. ‘Doe these Magicians loue *Starres* and *Dreames* [?], behold a *Starre* and a *Dreame* shall instruct them in the truth of God.’¹²⁰ This pattern in God’s correction, Adams claimed, had its place in a Christian’s personal practice, if he sought to replace the worldly objects of his vice (as revealed by dreams) with a Godly substitution. He who loved hunting should endeavour to hunt his sins; the dancer, to leap with joy at salvation; the covetous, to hoard the gifts and treasures of God.¹²¹ This was an inventive application of the call to ‘colour’ holy truths in the robust garb of physical and worldly pursuits. It was also a pessimistic interpretation of human nature, suggesting it could only begin to approach spiritual truth if it was first cloaked with carnal attractions.¹²²

Philip Goodwin also claimed that dreams often had powerful effects on the soul, and could inspire it to piety. His assertion that ‘the Recordation of Dreames have sadly distressed some of Gods Saints’, suggested how a decision to observe them could form part of a practise of conscientious reflection.¹²³ To see dreams

¹¹⁶ Cooper, *The Christian’s Daily Sacrifice*, p. 174.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 173–174.

¹¹⁸ Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, p. 407.

¹¹⁹ Adams, *The Happiness of the Church*, p. 216.

¹²⁰ Adams, *The Happiness of the Church*, p. 217.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 211–219.

¹²² A related opinion is found in John Wilkins, *A discourse concerning a new world & another planet in 2 bookes* (London, 1640), p. 20: ‘And hence is that observation, that the first reformers and drawers of men into Civill societie and the practise of Vertue, wrought upon the Will by the ministrie rather of the Fancie, than of rigid Reason’. See a discussion of the contemporary permutations of this idea in Mary Ann Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England: Reading The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 1–33, 96–110.

¹²³ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, di. 15.

as marks of sin would be to integrate them into the first step of a programme for self-examination, reflection, and conviction. Goodwin claimed that the evils of vain dreams had their root in the omission of holy meditations in the soul, waking and sleeping. The work of examination and reform, recapitulated daily, aimed to impose right order on the mind: 'On hatefull things to have hating thoughts, on lovely things to have loving thoughts, on transitory things to have transient thoughts, on durable things to have enduring thoughts, &c.'¹²⁴ Only shaping the soul to such a disposition was effective for 'the prevention of vain Dreames'.¹²⁵ Though Goodwin's manual dealt exclusively and directly with the intensely visual phenomena of dreams, it did not follow that his meditative methods were 'affective' in the vein of Sibbes and his followers. Goodwin did state that the affection of 'holy fear' was necessary to restore the imagination to sanctity. However, this fear appeared to be grasped through apprehending, intellectually, the nature of its transgressions against God as Goodwin propounded them. In 'right Reason' consisted a true apprehending of spiritual value, the meaning of sin as privation of good in the mind, and its presence as a consequence of violating divine command. Love and fear of the truth of God was 'a good defence against all false ways, false Doctrines, false Dreames.'¹²⁶

Nevertheless, Goodwin portrayed dreams as highly emotive events throughout the *Mystery*. In vain and filthy dreams, the recognition of sin was intended to trigger intense remorse. Likewise, in dreams that God sent to instruct or to display his wrath, the soul was inspired to passions of fear and horror by an apprehension of its own wretchedness and infirmity first in considering its sins, and second beside to the majestic presence of God, experienced through overwhelming passions that 'wracked' the body and mind. Distinguishing this carefully from the despair or depression of a suicidal, manic or superstitious fear, he instead presented it as a galvanizing and healing will, which overcomes the effects of passive and spurious passions on the intellectual and imaginative mind.¹²⁷ The *Mystery* thus combined both intellectual and affective approaches to spiritual reform. This was a theme that would continue when Goodwin turned to consider the spiritual effects of divine dreams. But whether it flowed first from the moral formation of the understanding, or from an affective encounter with the power of God in dreams, godly fear counteracted the inconstant and divided nature of the fallen mind and restored it to wholeness, founded on God as the total object of the good.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.

¹²⁷ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 178–183.

¹²⁸ 'Fear must unite and make the heart one, for the heart while it is divided, scattered and severed asunder, any evil easily enters, it lies open to all vanities, iniquities and sins.'—Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 180.

Pious Dreamers and Biblical Archetypes

The language of dreams was strongly associated with sin, but had its mirror figures and types as did any term in a system of thought based primarily in the principle of contrariety. It was thus possible to construct representations in opposition to those of 'dreams' and 'dreamers', or to define an opposed type of dreamer, a dreamer of holy or sanctified dreams. If the life of the sinner was ordinarily described as a dream, then the experience of conviction, conversion and salvation could be described using the language of awakening. 'In our sleepe of securitie, we leade a dreaming life, full of vile imaginations,' Thomas Adams wrote, 'But if wee confesse and speake our sinnes to Gods glory, and our owne shame, it is a token that Gods spirit hath wakened vs.'¹²⁹ To rise from sleep was also to rise from bodily corruption and death, a parallel to Christ's resurrection, and a foreshadowing of the physical resurrection in the next life. 'First awake,' wrote Manton:

and then arise from the dead, before which, Men have but such languid Notions of God and *Christ* and Salvation by him, as Men have in a dream, but when we come to weigh and scann things with affection and application, then the Soul is awaked.¹³⁰

Dreams presented an epistemological paradox for the philosopher, in which men seemed to occupy different worlds without any clear consciousness of the other. So did they express this paradox for the theological subject, and the language of dreams could be reversed. Before conversion, said Joseph Alleine, the carnal man 'took religion for a fancy, and the talk of great [spiritual] enjoyments, for an idle dream'.¹³¹ Encountering salvation, then, was like to finding oneself taken up in a dream, or having a dream come true. Richard Baxter illustrated the wonder and awe of the soul in a dialogue scripted for meditation on the act of communion. The soul repeatedly asks, 'Is this a dream! or am *I* waking?' The saved soul doubts whether this new truth can last, but unlike carnal dreams, testing this reality produces assurance:

But why a dream? [...] My heart is now at ease and quiet; surely something must be the reason why the Devil that but now had hold of me, hath left me.¹³²

These different moral applications of the dream to imagination and religious consciousness show us how flexible these representations could be, while still obeying logical relationships in contemporary epistemological thought.

¹²⁹ Thomas Adams, *The Deuill's Banket* (London, 1614), pp. 259–260

¹³⁰ Manton, *One Hundred and Ninety Sermons*, p. 396.

¹³¹ Joseph Alleine, *An Alarme to Unconverted Sinners*, pp. 50-51.

¹³² Richard Baxter, *Monthly Preparations for the Holy Communion* (London, 1696), p. 95-97.

What of the more literal kind, the dreams really dreamed? Here, the association of dreams with the vanity and the weakness of the imagination suggested that positive representations of dreamers might be difficult to find, at least outside of the specially designated realms of the Scriptures. This was true to a certain extent, especially when we think of contemporary rather than historical dreamers, and if we are focusing on learned and systematic theological texts, rather than personal writings and homilies. Outside of noting their connections to sin, this was a loaded topic, which almost by default conjured up dangerous and heterodox figures generally linked to paganism, superstition and sorcery—Artemidorus, Cardan and even Thomas Hill sometimes received public criticism in print.¹³³ For this reason, Philip Goodwin's *Mystery of Dreames* is fairly unique as a text from a clerical perspective which actively searches for positive images and types of real dreamers in biblical, classical and Christian literature, and seeks to apply them, though a wealth of such material was available in divinatory and occult texts. Whereas most Protestant ministers observed the utility of dreams to physicians for forecasting disease, and to divines for revealing characteristics sins, few of them went on as Goodwin did to assert that they should serve equally well to display the presence of God's grace in the heart.

According to Goodwin, sanctified dreamers were those whose spirits were vigilant and wakeful even while their mortal and exhausted bodies slept, and which moved freely in concord with and accommodation to divine thoughts. They were 'active' in all divine motions that entered the mind, while carnal recipients of divine dreams, like the Pharaoh and Abimelech, were passive and troubled recipients.¹³⁴ To the state of vigilance was added diligent and productive activity, identified with proper prayer, contemplation and worship of the divine at all times, which drew their Scriptural images primarily from the devotions of the Psalms and from Proverbs. By Proverbs 31, the soul was compared to a productive housewife, and its communion with God in the night season was figured in Psalms 4.4, 77.6, 119.55, and 63.6:

Proverbs 31:18, 13—15
(As quoted by Goodwin)

¹⁸ She perceiveth that her
merchandise is good:
her candle goeth not out by night.

¹³ She seeketh wool, and flax,

Psalm 77.6.

⁶ I call to remembrance my song in
the night: I commune with mine
own heart: and my spirit made
diligent search.

Psalm 119.55.

¹³³ Reginald Scot, *Scot's Discovery of witchcraft* (London, 1651), p. 132; Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night*, di. 15.

¹³⁴ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 274—278, 284—290.

and worketh willingly with her hands.

¹⁴ She is like the merchants' ships;
she bringeth her food from afar.

¹⁵ She riseth also while it is yet night,
and giveth meat to her household,
and a portion to her maidens.

Psalm 4.4

⁴ Stand in awe, and sin not:
commune with your own heart upon
your bed, and be still. Selah.

⁵⁵ I have remembered thy name, O
LORD, in the night, and have kept
thy law.

Psalm 63.6

⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as *with*
marrow and fatness;
and my mouth shall praise *thee*
with joyful lips:

⁶ when I remember thee upon my
bed,
and meditate on thee in the *night*
watches.

Such evocations might be read literally as pertaining to prayer vigils between the customary intervals of sleep, which Goodwin acknowledges.¹³⁵ However, he also asserts his vitalist theory to argue that in sleep, the sanctified soul must be:

as if in prayer ardent, in hearing diligent, in Christian conference earnest, as if at the Lords Table instant, where he thinks he sees Gods Minister giving, precious people receiving, yea it seems, as if he saw the Lord Christ thereat sitting, and thereupon the Spikenard smelling, Cant. 1.12.¹³⁶

This reading of the Scriptures as figuring the wakeful soul in the sleeping body sought to apply the ideals of devotional meditation to the mental imaging of dreams, to see it as a counterpart of the contemplative use of the imagination in waking life. The image of the sanctified dreamer which Goodwin evokes is one that receives God's graces and gifts, and responds appropriately, with a vigorous and life-enhancing joy, and a desire to share and impart grace to others. Divine dreams, when spoken of in this way, appeared as fully profound inspirations, but critically, their end was to offer the same spiritual graces that manifested themselves through the preaching, teaching and ministerial activity of the church. Their moral, monitory and didactic nature thus directed the believer back to the private duties of self-reflection and the public activities of building other members of the Christian community up by assurance, witnessing and experimental knowledge. This convergence of the visionary form of dreams with sacramental and ministerial purposes was intended to place them in an entirely different category from sectarian dreams which adjudicated on matters of faith and theology, and was said, through the figural types of the vain, filthy and deluded dreamer, to result in an abrasive and

¹³⁵ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 297.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 285—286.

isolating temperament, a passion for immoral conduct, and public opposition to the agents of the ordained social hierarchy.

The Cultivation of Divine Dreams

Learned discussions on the nature of pious dreams, at least as they applied to the common believer, were thin on the ground in Protestant England. Understandably, given the great fear and anxiety that was invested in the deceptive potential of dreams, and their usual origins in the corrupt heart or the perverted will of demons, few strayed outside of the cautious formula propounded by most theologians. They failed to confront lingering questions about the qualities of natural dreams and their relationship to piety. Were dreams purely products of vanity, or was it possible for a natural dream to be pious, or at least appear so? Protestants were certainly aware of these questions, and ready to probe the implications of the direct link that theologians drew between dreams and the content of the mind. John Cook, reflecting upon a dream in which he encountered Christ, knew that the role of memory in dreaming suggested God might appear to him at night without supernatural intervention:

I know that usually dreames follow mens naturall inclination or their daily conversation... And I having beene in a continued meditation of Jesus Christ his love, power, bowels of pittie towards his members, it was most likely that if I dreamed of any thing I should dreame of him as many times upon the Sabboths nights...¹³⁷

Cook seemed to believe that a natural dream, even if the subject was holy, might be vain. The Christian's duty was to 'distinguish between shadowes and substances' since dreams 'are but the appearances of things which are not'.¹³⁸ On the other hand, he was aware that dreams were sometimes associated with foresight, and with intellectual inspiration, as 'some Christians have had difficult places of Scripture expounded to them in their dreames, as they have told me', and that there existed circumstances and boundaries beyond which ordinary dreams might be supplanted with extraordinary ones. Thomas Browne touched on similar concerns in the *Religio Medici*, where he observed that men acted in sleep with 'conformity to waking sense', and could therefore draw both 'consolations or discouragements' from dreams. The difference between Cook, Browne and the moral directives of disciplinarian theologians lay with that dual emphasis on the good as well as the bad, the corresponding logic that good thoughts must engender good dreams:

¹³⁷ John Cook, *A True Relation of Mr. John Cook's Passage by Sea* (London, 1650), p. 14.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Virtuous thoughts of the day laye up good treasures for the night, whereby the impressions on imaginarie formes arise into sober similitudes, acceptable unto our slumbring selves, and preparatory unto divine impressions: hereby Solomons sleepe was happy.¹³⁹

However, the final sentiment was the crucial caveat: almost everyone who spoke of good dreams tended to see them as preludes to 'divine impressions'. This was, after all, the implicit message of Protestant cognitive culture: that as the corrupt mind inevitably became a nest for Satan, so a sanctified mind was necessarily illuminated and moved by God. Cook himself was compelled to redeem his own night vision with the opinion that godly dreams that worked to some effect were necessarily of a class with 'true' or 'extraordinary' dreams, suggesting that they must be inspired if they were to be separated from the natural. This appears symptomatic of the belief that human mediums and instruments of nature could never, in and of themselves, furnish or enable knowledge of the divine, but that this should be in a sense immediate, and must take the form of an 'impression' upon the mind rather than emanating from within it.

Goodwin, we saw above, emphasized the nocturnal activity of the mind in reflecting upon and attending to thoughts of God. He believed that the means to reforming the imagination were also instrumental for the end of attracting divine dreams. Personal, extended meditations, and the act of instructing the family in the word of God, were 'a mighty means to promote good Dreames'.¹⁴⁰ Yet such preparation and acts did not simply make the subjects of dreams pious. They were preludes to participation with the holy spirit, to the immission of holy thoughts, since '*God finds in holy hearts the habits of Heavenly graces, such supernaturall principles disposing them to receive further impressions from God*'.¹⁴¹ The gifts of such dreams to God's saints included spiritual consolation in times of doubt, warnings and preparations for trials and martyrdoms, and signs of his mercy that 'might strengthen their faith and also quicken their obedience'.¹⁴² The soul's understanding was expanded by holy dreams. Those 'desirous to know the beauties of holinesse and to behold the lustre of grace, the Spirit of the Lord hath given that light in Dreames', while places of Scripture and 'obscure graces in hearts' were sometimes revealed.¹⁴³ Just as dreams highlighted the worst sins, so 'Graces in the heart, like starres in the heavens, have shined in the night that were not seen in the day.'¹⁴⁴ Crucially, it appeared

¹³⁹ Thomas Browne, 'On Dreams', p. 230.

¹⁴⁰ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 292–298.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 287–290, 280–283. Quoted pp. 282–283,

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 288, 289.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

that the lodging of graces in the heart was inseparable from God's residence there. The pious soul did not exist apart from, but was always in contact with, the mind of God. For this reason, the appearance of good dreams always appears to have intimated a spiritual presence. Goodwin asserted that angels, as well as protecting against the power of demons, exerted an opposing influence on the mind:

When *Satan* by night with a sinfull fire brought from Hell would set mens souls on a flame; *Angels* bring a blessed fire from Heaven, that burns and heats mens hearts in holy Dreames.¹⁴⁵

It is clear through Goodwin's discussion that the difference between the presence of holy images in dreams and the presence of the divine itself was virtually non-existent. He asserted that in dreames 'a close communion may be held with God', and that he experienced a 'refreshing fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost'. Just as man battled Satan in his nocturnal mind, so might a man have 'close conversings with God, his *Bed* hath been as a *Bethel*, a place wherein *God* hath been present'.¹⁴⁶ Not only this, but such might further find oneself in 'a glorious world where he finds comfortable company, converses with *Angels, Apostles, Martyrs*, and holy men'.¹⁴⁷

Goodwin's *Mystery* treads close in these passages to the ground of visionary transports; exuberantly described by astrologers, magicians and mystical enthusiasts as celestial wanderings of the soul from the body. In this way it was unusual for the work of a conformist, and potentially controversial to the point of being judged as heterodox.¹⁴⁸ However, Goodwin was not alone in finding it difficult to untangle the association between pious subjects in dreams and God's supernatural presence in sleep. In general, it was a cultural disposition to see dreams of Christ, of God and of Heaven as spiritual benedictions. Ralph Josselin's son, Sarah Wight and Nemehiah Wallington all dreamed variously of Christ and heaven, and interpreted these dreams as graces or visitations.¹⁴⁹ Goodwin cited the case of the Christian M. Philpot, who was consoled by a vision of heaven.¹⁵⁰ A populist dream-book of the late century, the *Oniropolus*, stated that to dream 'of Saints is an Auspicious Dream', of angels 'is Happiness', of Christ 'doth Joy shew', and of praying to God 'good things by such Dreams very

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁴⁶ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 290.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁴⁸ It may be the case that this book played some role in Goodwin's ejection from the Church in 1660, though we have no evidence of this, and the case is sometimes over-stated. See Carter, 'Sleep and Dreams in Early Modern England', p. 98, 101, 172.

¹⁴⁹ Levin, *Dreaming the Renaissance*, pp. 77–80.

¹⁵⁰ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 281.

often falls'.¹⁵¹ Moreover, seventeenth-century thinkers never broke off the association of 'true' dreams with revelatory and prognostic ones. Goodwin's endorsement of dreams rested on a historical record replete with examples of revelatory and prophetic dreams, and his account of their spiritual graces blended spiritual edification with intellectual and prophetic revelation. Cook saw divine dreams as extraordinary and prophetic in nature: in the same way that God's grace imparted assurance to the soul, so if 'the party dreaming is confidently perswaded that it will come to passe it commonly proves accordingly'.¹⁵² Both John Smith and Moïse Amyraut affirmed the existence of predictive 'true dreams' which served the providential fortunes of believers rather than the prophetic fortunes of the faith.¹⁵³

Distinctions between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' motions were decidedly fuzzy when viewed in light of the belief of God's providential intervention in the daily affairs of the world (including expressions of judgment and his wrath which possessed a stark prophetic dimension), and with the easy way in which lay Protestants accommodated dreams to their practise of seeking providential patterns and marks of assurance in the sum of their day-to-day experiences. An illustration of the point, and the potential for divergent and yet still decidedly 'godly' views, can be found in the writings of John Beale, the reverend and polymath whom we have already encountered in the last chapter. In his private manuscripts, Beale undertook to directly confront the status of dreams as a form of superstitious observance in the view of many theologians. While seeking answers from God in dreams was a form of presumption and superstition in certain contexts, what he called 'the common course of providence', Beale believed that observing dreams had a lawful role in the judgment and government of truly precipitous matters – those touching the future of state, church and faith.¹⁵⁴ In such cases Beale said that formal periods of prayer and fasting were required to wait upon God, and an answer would be received by dreams, omens, or lots. This is significant, because by invoking such ascetic rites, Beale was not primarily echoing the forms of meditation or contemplation, but rather the public and communal rituals of faith which formed a prominent feature of contemporary Protestant religion. Mass gatherings for public fasting and prayer were a popular phenomenon, and exercised a particular relevance in the era of the Civil War and Interregnum when a Parliament dominated by the godly would submit itself to similar

¹⁵¹ Although to speak with such figures was often seen as ill fortune, as was to dream an image of God. This was probably an elliptical acknowledgement of the heretical associations of receiving knowledge by dreams or seeing God represented visually — see Frederick Hendrick van Hove, *Oniropolis, or Dreams Interpreter* (London, 1680), pp. 5–7.

¹⁵² Cook, *A True Relation of Mr. John Cook's*, p. 14.

¹⁵³ Smith, *Select Discourses*, pp. 183–186; Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, pp. 119–131.

¹⁵⁴ Beale, 'Interpreting Dreams', 25/19/28b in HP.

passages.¹⁵⁵ The goal of such gathering was to seek the will of God as a community, and as such, was intimately bound up in the practice of making elections, a communal counterpart to the kind of judgment and discernment practiced in singular meditations. Beale thus set out a context in which he believed Protestants might be able to reliably accept the directions of a dream: not in the lonely declarations of a prophet or enthusiast, but as an integral part of the deliberations of the religious conventicle, the public fast, or the godly regime.

Beale believed that the act of seeking God's instruction in dreams was consistent with the practices of experimental assurance. Goodwin's approach to pious dreams as a divine gift was novel because it addressed particular anxieties about the security of cognitive space in the life of the believer. It was not his appeal to their prophetic power, but his attempt to explain their benefit and use in terms which generally accorded with that of pious mental images in Protestant meditative culture, that was significant. This rationalised engagement with dreams both in the life of the believer, and communicatively in the life of the church community. As mental images were praised for strengthening the memory, and therefore the understanding, so Goodwin instructed that divine dreams, the consolations and graces they displayed, should be preserved in the memory by means of private reflection and public discourse.¹⁵⁶ These directions affirmed that good dreams were fitting objects for examination and meditation, and also for public exhortation, the transmission of God's grace by testimony and teaching. Both were acts that left marks on the cognitive powers of the soul. By debating the meaning of divine dreams in the mind, the soul's understanding of it would grow: the more clearly a thing was discerned by understanding, the memory would 'most firmly retaine'. The act of relating dreams to others, and consulting upon their meanings, was another means to the same end: 'to impart is to imprint' Goodwin said.¹⁵⁷ However the ultimate end of dreams, as of meditation, was to inspire godly action. In a mirror image to the night-nursed evils of Anabaptists and sectarians, the presence of God's divine work in sleep was to be translated into waking deeds. Every pious dream bestowed was to be 'as good seed God sows' which might 'bring forth plenty of good fruit in the day'.¹⁵⁸ By means of this argument, that dreams offered a source of spiritual grace which could be understood in terms of ordinary spiritual offices, and not just extraordinary prophecy, Goodwin advocated to his learned readers that holy dreams should be accepted and not feared by the godly.

¹⁵⁵ Alexandra Walsham, 'The Godly and Popular Culture' in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, pp. 286—287.

¹⁵⁶ Philip Goodwin, *Mystery of Dreames*, p. 298—304.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁵⁸ Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 304.

Conclusion

Chapter Three argued that ideas about the relationship between flesh and spirit, and the physiological basis of sin, were foundational to religious fears about the imagination amongst English evangelical writers and their 'hyper-Augustinian' beliefs about human corruption. In this context, ideas about the soul's vitalism were connected to a culture of surveillance, which focused initially on the weakness of the human spirit, but was bounded on all sides by the ever-present threat of demonic agency. This began with beliefs about the weakness of the flesh and its dominance over the spirit, to the idea that the devil crossed easily from the body to the soul through the gates of the senses, and to the rising fear of demonic influence on English society first in the form of apostasy, and then in the violence of sectarian heresies. They formed the basis for a whole complex of rhetorical tropes and imagery, which were connected to history by aligning theories of cognition with typological figures from the Scriptures.

In earlier writings of the century, concern centred on the spiritual lethargy and imaginative flatulency of the reprobate, the superstitious and the wicked, whose spiritual incontinence was held to play out in nocturnal fantasies, paradoxically, either of illusory safety, comfort and reward, or fearful nightmares stoked by a conscience that could never be fully suppressed. After 1640, the fragmented sectarian culture threatened the bed chamber more acutely with the shadow of heresy, as heterodox opinions and confessional stances emerged from the puritan underground into the public light. The lethargy of unbelief was now joined with the more 'putrid' sins of heresy, causing writers like Philip Goodwin and Thomas Manton to shift their attention toward the biblical type of the 'filthy dreamer' associated with anti-Christ through Jude 1:4-16. Philip Goodwin's *Mystery* represents an attempt to find a solution that suppressed the threat of supernatural dreams by creating practical methods for incorporating their instances and images into the devotional and meditational methods of the Christian household. In doing so he made a theologically bold and politically risky attempt to incorporate the many positive beliefs and associations of divine dreams which we find echoed by other Christian believers like John Cook and Ralph Josselin.¹⁵⁹ His adoption of nocturnal vitalism and sympathy to the visionary narratives he discovered in Christian literature and lore, however, had the effect of drawing his arguments dangerously close to religious radicals when he claimed that the pious soul held communion with God in the night.

¹⁵⁹ Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: An Essay in Historical Anthropology* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 183–198.

My analysis accords with the work of Craig Koslofsky, Reid Barbour, Janine Riviere and Sasha Handley, which argue that the seventeenth century saw increased efforts to sacralise the condition of sleep and the social space of the bedchamber. The embracing of the sacred and mystical potential of dreams in Goodwin's *Mystery* can be seen as part of a sadly un-influential attempt not just to apply theological strictures to beliefs about supernatural dreams, but reclaim the mystical space of sacred dreaming from the sectarians and radicals he wrote against. This would align Goodwin with some of the few Protestant authors that Koslofsky identifies as sympathetic to the mystical aspects of nocturnalised devotion.¹⁶⁰ Riviere and Barbour have both suggested that after the Restoration divines increasingly attempted to reform beliefs about dreams by promoting the liturgical and sacramental programmes of the Church as the central focus of religious meditation, implying that the sacred potential of the imagination must be conformed to the authorised spaces of Church worship and devotion.¹⁶¹ Handley argues, through study of late seventeenth-century devotional manuals, that these efforts extended to the devotional practices of the household, through an increasing emphasis on bedtime prayer and ritual in the writings of both Restoration divines and dissenting ministers.¹⁶² My own study of sermons, conscience manuals and devotional aids suggests that concern with sacralising the bed-space prefigured the Civil War, when they were motivated particularly by fear of the devil's role in the irreligious life of the reprobate. That sectarianism amplified and increased these concerns is evidenced by the increasing rhetoric surrounding dreams during the Civil War period, and by Philip Goodwin's theologically innovative work. This suggests a timeline in which theological preoccupation with the bedchamber was dominated initially by the devil's promotion of irreligion prior to 1640, shifting to an immediate concern with the 'gangrene' of heresy in the sectarian crisis of the Civil War and Republic, after which a powerful impulse toward discipline and reform of the disruptive psychic potential of dreams lingered in the years after the Restoration.

¹⁶⁰ Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, pp. 73–86.

¹⁶¹ Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture*, pp. 91–117; Rivière, 'Visions of the Night', pp. 109–138

¹⁶² Handley, 'From the Sacral to the Moral', pp.27–46.