

**A STUDY OF THE SOURCES OF  
BUNYAN'S ALLEGORIES: WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
DEGUILEVILLE'S PILGRIMAGE OF  
MAN, DISSERTATION, 1904**

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A Study of the Sources of Bunyan's Allegories: With Special Reference to Deguileville's Pilgrimage of Man, Dissertation, 1904 by James Blanton Wharey

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**JAMES BLANTON WHAREY**

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# A STUDY OF THE SOURCES OF BUNYAN'S ALLEGORIES

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

DEGUILEVILLE'S PILGRIMAGE OF MAN

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE  
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BY

JAMES BLANTON WHAREY

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## PREFACE.

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The quotations from Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of Man* cited in Chapter II are from a copy of MS. Ff. 6. 30 made by Mr. Alfred Rogers of the University Library, Cambridge. The pages refer to the pages of the original MS.

I take this opportunity to correct an error overlooked in the proof-reading: "the yere of our Lord MCCC and thyrtēn" (p. 12) should read "the yere of our Lord MCCCC and thyrtēn."





## INTRODUCTION.

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The question of Bunyan's indebtedness to his predecessors in the field of allegory is not new. In his own time he was accused of having stolen his allegory, as we know from the vigorous denial of such charges which, under the title of "An Advertisement to the Reader," he appended to the *Holy War*. Though Bunyan here declared that 'matter and manner too was all his own,' the suggestions of possible prototypes have gone on multiplying, until now the list of books and poems cited has grown to considerable length.

It would be interesting to know what specific charges of plagiarism Bunyan's contemporaries brought against him, but no evidence beyond the denial of Bunyan himself is at hand. The first specific suggestion which has come under my notice is the observation of Dr. Samuel Johnson, recorded by Boswell under date of April 30, 1773, that Bunyan may have read Spenser, and that the *Pilgrim's Progress* begins very much like the poem of Dante. A few years later, 1776, the Rev. Augustus M. Toplady, in the September number of the *Gospel Magazine* for that year, mentions Richard Bernard's *Isle of Man* as the book which "in all probability suggested to Mr. John Bunyan the first idea of his 'Pilgrim's Progress' and of his 'Holy War.'" Mention is also made of Dr. Simon Patrick's *Parable of the Pilgrim*, but no importance is attached to it as a possible source of Bunyan's allegory. Dibdin, however, in his account of Deguileville's *Pylgremage of the Soule*, published by Caxton, expressed the opinion that this book "rather than Bernard's 'Isle of Man' laid the foundation of John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.'" <sup>1</sup>

So far nothing more than bare suggestions had been made. In 1828 James Montgomery, in an essay prefixed to an edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, discussed briefly its probable connection

<sup>1</sup> *Typograph. Antiq.*, 1, 153.

with Cartheny's *Voyage of the Wandering Knight*, Bernard's *Isle of Man*, Patrick's *Parable of the Pilgrim*, Whitney's *Book of Emblems*, Dent's *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*. He pointed out a few parallelisms between each of these books and the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Robert Southey became interested in this aspect of Bunyan-study, and in his *Life of Bunyan*, written in 1830, devoted several pages to the probable influence upon Bunyan of *The Voyage of the Wandering Knight*, the *Isle of Man*, and Bolswert's *Dufykens ende Willemynkens Pelgrimage*. He regarded the first and last of these allegories as of little or no importance, but was of the opinion that the *Isle of Man* had "had a considerable effect upon the style of Bunyan's invention."

Robert Philip<sup>1</sup> was the next to discuss the question of Bunyan's sources. He attempted to give a short account of Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of Man* and *Pilgrimage of the Soul*, but confounded the two. To the books already mentioned he added the following: William Bond's *The Pilgrimage of Perfection*, 1526; Leonard Wright's *The Pilgrimage to Paradise*, 1591; William Webster's *The Pilgrim's Journey Towards Heaven*, 1613; Robert Bruen's *The Pilgrim's Practice*, 1621; Thomas Taylor's *The Pearl of the Gospel and the Pilgrim's Profession*, 1624; *The Pilgrim's Passe to the New Jerusalem*, "M. R. Gent.," 1659. To this list Wilson<sup>2</sup> added: Cavice's *Libro del Peregrino*, published at Venice in the early part of the 16th century; Gawin Douglas's *Palace of Honour*; George Herbert's *The Pilgrimage*.

As yet, with the possible exception of Montgomery and Southey, no one had made a serious attempt to investigate the value of any of these suggestions. The first to do so was George Offor, the indefatigable editor and ardent admirer of John Bunyan. In the third volume of his edition of Bunyan's works published in 1853, Offor sought to answer the question "Was Bunyan assisted in the Composition of his Pilgrim?" "Every assertion or suggestion

<sup>1</sup> Robert Philip, *The Life, Times, and Characteristics of John Bunyan*, London, 1839, pp. 557-565.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Wilson, *The Pilgrim's Progress with a life of Bunyan*, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, 1852.

of this kind," he declares, "that came to my knowledge has been investigated, and the works referred to have been analyzed. And beyond this, every allegorical work that could be found previous to the eighteenth century has been examined in all the European languages; and the result is a perfect demonstration of the complete originality of Bunyan."<sup>1</sup> No fewer than fifty books are mentioned by Offor, and abstracts given of all that were accessible. In the edition of 1867 the number is increased to seventy-four. While Offor's work is invaluable as a basis for further investigation, it is marred by the author's prejudice. Any suggestion of a possible source for the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Offor regarded as equivalent to a charge of plagiarism. Then the outlines which he gives are too meagre. This is especially true of the allegory most frequently cited in connection with Bunyan's sources—Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of Man*.

In 1858 a writer, who signs himself "L. A. H.," contributed to the *Methodist Quarterly Review*<sup>2</sup> an article entitled: "The Poet and the Dreamer. 1. The Faerie Queen by Edmund Spenser, 2. The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan." After comparing the *Pilgrim's Progress* with the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, the writer reaches the following conclusion: "To us it appears as evident that Bunyan had read, at least the first book of the Faerie Queen, as that Chaucer had read Boccaccio, or Milton, Dante. We cannot but think that it in some degree molded his narrative and colored his descriptions, for there are parallelisms that hardly would have occurred otherwise, although there is no borrowing and no imitation."

The same year, 1858, there appeared the most important contribution yet made to the subject of Bunyan's sources: *The Ancient Poem of Guillaume de Guileville entitled Le Pèlerinage de l'Homme compared with the Pilgrim's Progress of John Bunyan*. Edited from notes collected by the late Mr. Nathaniel Hill, London, B. M. Pickering, 1858. Hill used as a basis for this comparison the French text of Deguileville published by Barthele et Petit

<sup>1</sup> George Offor, *The Works of John Bunyan*, 3 vols., London, 1853, 2d ed., 1867, III, 12.

<sup>2</sup> *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, New York, April, 1858, pp. 209-227.