

Iconoclasm, Iconophobia, and graphic novel adaptations of John Bunyan's

*The Pilgrim's Progress*¹

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Introduction

John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (PP) has never been out of print since its first publication in the last quarter of the seventeenth-century (Part I in 1678).² From the third edition in 1679, the text was accompanied by woodcut illustrations.³ Illustrated versions have proliferated ever since.⁴ The very popularity of an allegorical work that emerged from the lower classes rather than the literary elite, expressing populist Protestant theology in demotic vernacular suggests that adaptation to another medium of non-elite popular artistic expression in the shape of graphic novels is entirely fitting.⁵ And there are graphic novel adaptations. Despite comics' long twentieth-century history, these emerge only late in the twentieth century with Marvel's collaboration with Christian publisher Thomas Nelson, followed swiftly by a Christian market comic for Barbour.⁶ A further flourishing from the most recent decade uses a Christian marketplace niche as well as thriving in self-published opportunities that internet marketing and print on demand makes possible. It is impossible to ignore the suspicion of a problematic fit of PP and the graphic novel genre given Bunyan's Puritan kind of Protestantism, and that of his evangelical heirs, is associated for many with a suspicion of visual representation understood

through the terms ‘iconoclasm’ or even ‘iconophobia.’ This would mean that an attitude allegedly warranted by the very religiosity of the text of PP renders it a carrier of this very antagonism to or even fear of images. If this is the case, whatever graphic novels may claim to be in relation to Bunyan’s text, they might be judged cultural co-options of an alien form, maybe even redemptive repristinations of the same, rather than fitting adaptations.

Adaptation theory as a field is ambivalent about the value of considering faithfulness as a criterion of judgment. Is there ever really an uninfluenced pristine original work that sets for all time a trajectory for how it should be handled and received? Are not all cultural products palimpsests, overwriting one text upon the form and content of others, ‘an endless process of recycling, transformation and mutation with no clear point of origin’?⁷ Much work has been done among Bunyan scholars to draw out the historical, social, cultural and political context in which his PP was written.⁸ Bunyan’s imaginative world bears the imprint of ballads, emblems, and morality plays, the Geneva and King James Bibles, the social standing of Puritans, of non-conformists, the turmoil of revolution and civil war, enclosure-driven vagrancy, the fire of London and the Restoration fears of threats to Protestant nationalism it engenders. All these gains of knowledge for understanding the larger and local seventeenth-century, ‘timeful’ contexts of Bunyan’s allegory do not, however, determine the current in which reception runs. Many today continue to read PP because they see it as a ‘timeless’ spiritual classic. The ‘timeful’ material circumstances of its writing, production and dissemination, while interesting to historians or literary scholars, do not necessarily reflect the concerns that these readers bring to the text, shaped as they are by a desire to find spiritual illumination or instruction. While it is not at all obvious that the ‘timeful’ and ‘timeless’ receptions must be contradictory, some way of recognizing the difference is useful. In unpacking the criterion of faithfulness, I assume that *any* reception, because shaped by prior ‘timeful’ expectations, desires or prejudices of a particular audience, is a form of adaptation. For

a book like PP, its continued re-publication sends signals to readers of its importance. Its listing among classics, or allusions to it in sermons, its appearance on school curricula or for family bedtime reading all affect an adaptation of the original to the imagination of the recipient. That is, all elements of character, plot, language, religious world and authorial intention will be interpreted, and weighed by their importance to the recipients. For example, reading for an English literature assignment focuses on critical appreciation of the literary craft, which affects a different disposition in the student, than were PP being read for household devotions. Fidelity, then, is normed by the context of reception.

Judgments about fidelity cannot be a final ground of refusal of an adaptation as an adaptation, although these might gesture toward, or the step over the line from, adaptation into appropriation or co-option. Julie Sanders suggests that '[a]ppropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain,'⁹ but the key here to any perspective on fidelity is the notion of an 'informing source,' even as concern about originality is set aside. If adaptation is, according to John Ellis, 'a means of prolonging the pleasure of the original presentation, and repeating the production of a memory,' there is still a requirement of recognition that prompts a fidelity thread: 'Adaptation as *adaptation* involves, for its knowing audience, a conceptual flipping back and forth between the work we know and the work we are experiencing.'¹⁰ PP, looked on as a Protestant Christian classic of spirituality, is subject to a communal memory within a tradition rather than supposing that target readers of graphic novels are already readers of the seventeenth-century text.¹¹ Pilgrim's Progress would arguably be best adapted according to concepts within the very tradition that informs its initial production. By focusing on graphic novels as the form of adaptation I problematize what fidelity looks like given certain iconoclastic leanings among PP's primary Christian readers. Marvel Comics and the Barbour 1990s versions are taken as foundations of the contemporary genre, and

compared to the commercial Christian product from Kingstone Comics, a 2-volume edition graphic novel (2011).¹² Further adaptations by Stephen Moore (2007/2010), Steve Vossos (2018/2018/2019), and Ralph Sanders (2018) are presented and assessed.¹³ All of these are examined for textual fidelity, spiritual legacy, and creative, even iconoclastic recontextualization.¹⁴ The last criterion is meant to remind the reader of the literal and metaphorical meanings of iconoclasm. If graphic novels are not going to literally attack images, they may still attack cherished concepts or understandings, whether these belong to the area of spirituality for the reception audience or to the conventions of a comics genre. The literal form of iconoclasm occupies the first section of the article, to be followed by a theoretical framing of a Christian theology of adaptation that permits the reader to follow the concerns of Christian readers who engage PP as part of their spiritual tradition. Description, sample images, and critical engagement with the graphic novels flow from these argumentative positions.

Iconoclasm – The problem of adaptation from Word to Image

Iconoclasm of various sorts has a long history in Christian response to images. One problem for a faithful graphic novel adaptation of PP in spiritual terms is glaringly one of transitioning a work from word to image. For many readers, it might be hard to move beyond the assumed trope of the Puritan despisers of theater, and thus representation and thus visual art. Not least because there are documented expressions of violent iconoclasm associated with this hotter sort of Protestant. Just so, graphic novels of PP might be simply seen as a mistake or a (possibly unwitting) subversion of a draconian Protestant sensibility to images.¹⁵ In broad brushstrokes, the medieval settlement in the Christian West sees massive and significant change at the Reformation. It is with the advent of Protestantism that the issue of iconoclasm and the suspicion of visual imagery bears on the relationship between Bunyan's text and today's graphic novels. Theologically, Martin Luther held images to be of secondary importance, and beneficial to the extent that, with Albrecht Durer's

woodcuts, they could illustrate the proclaimed word of gospel preaching.¹⁶ Luther opposes the more radical iconoclasts in his own circles at Wittenberg. Nevertheless, within a generation, Calvin, showing great familiarity with Patristic sources and early church debates on the question, ensures that images would have no part in worship.¹⁷ The Protestants who shape English and eventually American Christianity are confirmed as a people who are hearers of the word not gazers at images, or more pointedly, idols. For Bunyan's English context, Reformers are behind the sustained destruction of monasteries and 'stripping of the altars' and rood screens from parish churches. The sixteenth-century English Book of Homilies, establishing reformed doctrine to be preached in the reformed Church of England, 'denounced the catholic use of relics and images by arguing, 'Should we not, good brethren, much rather embrace and reverence God's holy books, the sacred Bible, which do represent Christ unto us more truly than can any image?''¹⁸ This state-orchestrated and individually-motivated purging of visual space for the word proclaimed and written, along with, at times, virulent anti-Catholic nationalism, gives Bunyan his cultural inheritance. Should the word-based Protestant tradition in which Bunyan clearly stands should be considered iconophobic? My short answer, theologically, is No. If illustrations seem to contradict iconophobia, it might be noted of the woodcuts which early on came to illustrate Bunyan's text, that the image of Faithful's martyrdom at Vanity Fair very clearly echoes the woodcuts that Bunyan would have consumed in his copy of that ultra-Protestant text, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Anti-Catholic nationalist spirituality did not eschew all images, even if elite preachers worried about deviation from the word. But these images of partisan Protestantism did support a firmly iconoclastic imaginary in opposition to the visual and performative influences of foreign popery. Still, a long iconographic tradition for PP does not deny the existence of a practical expression of fear of populist sensual imagery in Protestant cultural imagination through to the present, as is indicated in response to comics art.

The problematic for comics is expressed by the editors of a recent volume addressing graphic novels and religion in this way: ‘In contrast to Reformation-era and Enlightenment Protestantism, which prioritizes the holy Word and maintains a certain suspicion of images as being overly sensual, comics fuse words and images in complex combinations that frequently give images the final authority.’¹⁹ Kate Netzler exposes the manner in which contemporary ‘Christian’ comic book art isolates itself from the mainstream comics industry into a kind of evangelical ghetto in its projection of an ‘alternative’. This, she says, is because of the continued insistence that the form of communication is merely a servant to the message. This evangelistic use of comic arts is most obvious in the prolific tract art of Jack Chick. And ‘use’ of the genre continues to dominate more recent sympathetic evangelical accounts of comics. Even while commending this marketing strategy, an analysis cannot ignore that still evangelical ‘detractors complain that this medium overall is filled with too much violence as well as with immorally clad superheroes who accomplish feats that only God could undertake.’²⁰ Netzler asserts that this false dichotomy between medium and message weakens both the art and the evangelism of Christian comics. Graphic novel adaptations of PP move beyond the ‘hesitant embrace’ of the genre subverting a simple subservience of form to message.²² It is clear that the very manner in which Bunyan chooses to depict his vision of the Christian life allegorically, through the conceit of a narrated dream, fuels an imaginary that is always open to visual representation being given material expression in response to his writing.

[A Theology for Graphic Novel Adaptation](#)

Bunyan’s opening verse apology for PP recognizes that his ‘falling into allegory’ poses a problem to some godly readers.²³ For some of his contemporaries, truth was truth and ought not be embellished with fiction or, in other words, falsehood. Bunyan shows at length how Scriptures themselves, including the prophets, and even Jesus, use metaphors or in his terms, similitudes, to

better draw. His conclusion at the close of Part I is therefore significant. Having desired that his book should make a ‘travailer/traveler’ out of the reader, he warns lest the journey into imaginative realms blind the pilgrim reader to the underlying spiritual message of his allegory.²⁴

The setting out of his allegories in the parts of characters is a strong echo of the craft of playwrights who draw on the common morality play tradition with its stock visual characters, as if medieval animated cartoons. Nevertheless, Bunyan does not make an argument for concrete visual images. We might surmise that this is in part because he belongs to a spiritual tradition where the image has had a contested place, at a specific time when images in relation to the pursuit of faith are very much associated with the Catholic enemies of both England and Protestantism. For example, Patrick Collinson reports an early seventeenth-century collection of ‘contemplative pictures’ as having exactly no pictures, by the author’s logic that the images he offers in words are “not Popish and sensible for superstition, but mentall, for Divine contemplation.” The rejection of ‘sensible’ pictures as ‘popish’ was, in effect, to repudiate images as falling foul of the Second Commandment, on which Calvin placed a distinct emphasis, insisting that it made idols and images effectively indistinguishable.²⁵ If the human heart is indeed a factory of idols, does it follow that all images are idolatrously contrary to the salvific Word of God? Not necessarily so.

A rationale for the work of visual adaptation that counters iconophobia and iconoclasm can be expounded with evangelical confidence. The incarnation of the eternally begotten Son of God, God made flesh, is the most straight forward theological entry way into a defense of images. ‘Could Jesus be thought of as a filial form of adaptation?’²⁶ The one who is the image of the invisible God is come near and at hand, visibly. The present and eternal significance of the eternal incarnation of the now ascended and glorified Christ signifies the abiding presence of created humanity in the full presence of God. The pointers of the incarnation, not least in the Gospel of John’s prologue,

back to creation and forward to the eschatological redemption of all things, sustain a confidence in the visual material goodness of creation, whose substance and form will be redeemed by glorification and purification but not effaced by apocalyptic judgment. The imagination of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation that funds Bunyan's destination of the Celestial City itself borrows heavily as it adapts previous prophetic oracles. Ultimately, it is an incarnation warranted security of human imaging that grounds the possibility and freedom of graphic depiction of humans and human action with full confidence, theologically speaking. Adaptation, on the same logic, where a created cultural good is taken up in another form, bespeaks the same confidence and lack of anxiety about breaking sacred limits. Rather, adaptation takes it that fidelity is oriented not only backward to its source, but vertically before God, and also forward to the day of judgment when works will be tested through fire. For now, in this framing, comics or graphic novels of PP stand under theological judgment no more nor less than the 'original' text as pointing to the complex truth of what it means to be human before God, and only then, to the standard of faithfulness to the original text. Yet, given the clear communicative task of these works to theological truth of the gospel in line with the original, to the extent that they are then not only illustrative but instructive, the weight of their prophetic Christian instruction through aesthetic style, transformation, correction, omission of elements of Bunyan's text is subject to proleptic prophetic judgment. In short, theology can weigh in among other perspectives with preliminary and participative rather than authoritarian judgments about faithfulness. Another way of saying this is that once an adaptation of PP is ventured, it is drawn into a world of religious significance, and no doubt aimed at a religious marketplace where form and content ought to be judged together. The goodness of the artist's craft is tied to and not, as with Netzler's concern, ultimately subordinate to, the goodness of the message told by the art.²⁷

Add to the incarnational gospel its further New Testament Pentecost-driven missionary and church life and you find imaginative experience upheld with dreams and visions empowered by the Holy Spirit. So fidelity to the incarnation and its salvific mission is empowered by God through human word and testimony, preaching and prophecy, and thus necessarily calls for analogical rather than reiterative dissemination. This is the good known to missiology as contextualization, affirming a universal act of a saving God in local dialect and imagery. This freedom authorized by the word of Scripture in the Spirit allows for great divergence of expression. It also allows for empowered contestation of faithfulness within the community of faith, importantly, learning from and leaning on wisdom, insights and images from the wider culture outside the church. All of which is to say, in non-theological terms, that Christians are committed by their faith, including the faith expressed in the similitudes of Bunyan's PP, to be continually re-telling the 'old, old story' – adapting. The Reformation's oft-vaunted sacralization of the ordinary, or secularization, is taken up in art as a liberative license to depict all manner of human activities and scencescapes without having to turn to a patron's exclusively biblical religiosity or classical retrieval for justification. Popular art and populist adaptation find a home, according to this logic, in the same theoretical space occupied by Bunyan's work.

What cannot be gainsaid, however, is that the evangelistic heart of Protestant reformational theology, focused on the doctrine of justification by the grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone at the hearing of the preached word of Scripture alone to the glory of God alone (the Reformation's 5 'solas'), provides a gravitational pull away from the creative human agency of image and icon toward the passivity of the hearer. And if the 'simul iustus' of imputed rightouesness is always by divine grace, then the flip side is that human work is always in danger of being conflated, despite the rich biblical possibilities expounded above, with the 'simul

peccator'. Hence the iconoclastic leaning that pulses through even an illustrated spiritual classic like PP. The graphic novel adaptations themselves bear these oscillating theological imprints.

The Graphic Novel Adaptations – At Vanity Fair

Each of the graphic novel sources is examined with a focus on the key narrative episode at Vanity Fair in order then to offer comparative and contrastive analysis. Readers may need a summary of this incident: meeting with Evangelist, Christian and his companion Faithful are warned of the town of Vanity. It is of ancient foundation under the rule of Beelzebub with a year-round Fair. There, one of them, they are told, will pay for their testimony to Christ with blood. Upon entering the Fair, the two pilgrims stand out for their clothing and speech, and by their refusal to buy any wares on sale – “We buy the Truth” they cry. Chaos ensues as they throw the denizens into a frenzy of argumentative violence. Order is returned by caging them, before bringing them before a judge and jury for trial – an extensive dialogue narrative follows, naming Lords and noblemen as those apparently defamed by these vagrants. Faithful testifies in his own defense, condemning the town, whose false worship is contrary to revelation, to hell. Whereupon Faithful is condemned to die, viciously tortured and burned to death at the stake. Christian providentially escapes to immediately meet Hopeful coming out of Vanity to covenant together with him in Christian faith. We later learn that Faithful had testified to Hopeful and led him to take up on the narrow path of salvation. This is sufficient summary to enable us to see how the episode is adapted in the graphic novels below. These thick descriptions lead into judgments on the forms of adaptation displayed in each source. This variform judgment indicates the essential plasticity of the phenomenon of adaptation, as each artifact displays definite and differing perspectives on the adaptive task, focusing on three criteria: textual fidelity, spiritual legacy, and creative recontextualization.

Comics Adaptations for the 1990's Genre Market

Marvel Comics collaborated with Christian publisher Thomas Nelson to produce 'The Christian Classics Series' in the early 1990s of which PP is a title in 1992. That crossover from niche faith publishing into mainstream is followed swiftly in the Christian market by publisher Barbour in 1994 with a 'New Barbour Christian Comics' series. Consistent with the comics genre, the authors are not given any front cover recognition beyond a small artist's signature, as the brand, title and images establish the rapport with the consumer. Marvel identify the creative team on the inside first text title page. There is a small banner within the first quarter page horizontal panel of the Barbour comic. For this reason, I want to recognize the team of writer Martin Powell, artists Seppo Makinen, Bob Downs, Jennifer Stevens, and editors Darryl Winburne, Hildy Mensik and Tom De Falco for Marvel and writer and artist Al Bohl for Barbour. Yet I use the comics producers names for reference as an indication of the authorizing structures of comics publishing for consumers. (Both recognize John Bunyan as the originating author in information panels but not on the front covers.) These two 1990's comics serve as the base for critical analysis of the graphic novels of the 2010s. This move recognizes Marvel's preeminent standing in comics evolution and its commercial success, and Barbour's alternative Christian niche market positioning as an exemplar of parallel evangelical subculture.

The Marvel cover art depicts the dramatic fight action between a blonde, musclebound, sword-wielding Christian and the vivid green dragon-demon Apollyon. The drawing and coloring are in the distinctively bold primary colors of superhero comics for which Marvel is famous. Vanity Fair is a carnivalesque fairground whose inhabitants immediately display their barely hidden devilishness in scary clown make up. They transform fully into the demonic monsters they really are as the later trial and execution take place. Another interesting note is that, true to hero type, Christian and Faithful try to fight their way out!

FIGURE 1

Figure 1. M. Powell, S. Makinen, B. Downs, and J. Stevens, 1992. The Pilgrim's Progress™ (The Christian Classics Series). New York: Marvel. © Marvel Entertainment Group.

As Faithful burns, Christian is sprung from his dungeon by a dreadlocked, black, body-building fellow prisoner, Hopeful. “Karrack!” Christian garrotes a demonic jailer around the neck with his chains, holding him up for Hopeful to knock out. This is the Christian story of sanctification stretched by adaption to be faithful to a comics genre of well tested success.

Barbour’s cover less sensationally features superimposed images of protagonists in adventure mode with the Celestial City shining front right, and Christian bearing his burden and carrying his book, flanked by the Interpreter on his left and on his right Evangelist, wind-swept, cloak billowing, glove pointing to the city ahead. Bohl creates a remarkably comprehensive abridged adaptation in 32 pages in comics seventeenth century setting. A Bible verse with reference is displayed in Evangelist’s inscribed scroll, warning Christian to ‘Flee from the wrath to come! Matthew 3:7’ (3), the Interpreter explicitly tells Christian of ‘God’s Spirit’ guiding him (9), and ‘the suffering of Jesus Christ...the payment for sin’ is flagged at the cross, where Christian released from his burden, exclaims ‘Jesus has set me free from the power of sin.’(10) The explicit Christianity of the allegory is brought out simply for the Christian market.

CAUTIOUSLY CHRISTIAN AND FAITHFUL ENTERED VANITY. A FAIR FILLED THE STREETS WITH EXCITEMENT.



Vanity's Fair is not of visual import, rather the conflict over truth is foregrounded (Fig 2). In notable contrast to Marvel's market crossover, suggesting how this paradigmatic Christian market product operates conservatively, Christian and Hopeful are simply laid hold of, because 'struggling was useless against the riotous mob' (19). Where Christian is released from his cell, it is an angelic 'Ka-wack!' that pulls his bars down (21). This is the pious evangelical ethos set out in comics form without taking on superhero pretensions. These two products set markers for the possibilities of fidelity examined in the graphic novels of the 2010s.

A Graphic Novel Adaptation for the 2010's Christian Market.

Christian commercial comics publisher, Kingstone Comics, produces graphic novels for books of the Bible and episodes of Church history. In the manner of an evangelical parallel industry, with high visual standards and much in common with the Marvel genre heroic figures, adapters Lee Tung and Johnny Wong give themselves two printed volumes to cover the journey of Bunyan's PP Part I. This allows for slower movement, greater effort at faithfully keeping the dialogue motifs and the serial encounters from Bunyan's original. There is a more explicit evangelical identity, at least for those in the know, with constant citation of Scripture. This is done by simply putting Bible in the mouths of the characters, whereas Bunyan very deliberately wanted to point his readers to the Bible with his clear marginal notations. This indicates an expectation that their readers are already biblically literate. Vanity Fair is depicted in another carnival scene (Figure 3), with a full double spread panel conveying the scope of the city and the all involving participation of its dwellers.



Figure 3, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Volumes 1 and 2. Adapted by Tung L and Wong J, illustrated by Creator Art Studio. (Leesburg, FL: Kingstone Comics, 2011). © Kingstone Comics (2011b) (Every reasonable effort has been made to secure permission. Reuse not permitted.) Vanity Fair, left half of double spread panel, p 40.

There are exotica such as elephants to ride, and following panels show laughter accompanied circus acts, drinking, gambling, boxing, and pimp-guarded female prostitutes, by implication all manifestations of the Fair's vices. There is strong stress on the mockery the pilgrims receive as they refuse to buy and are eventually caged (Figure 4).



Figure 4, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Volumes 1 and 2. Adapted by Tung L and Wong J, illustrated by Creator Art Studio. (Leesburg, FL: Kingstone Comics, 2011). © Kingstone Comics (2011b) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Vanity Fair, Mockery of Pilgrims, p 43.

Awaiting trial, we get a glimpse of the detail of the hubbub they cause as Bunyan describes it, in that there are some who suggest they have done no wrong. Fighting breaks out around them as they patiently submit to their punishment. Tung and Wong faithfully keep elements of Bunyan's courtroom dialogue too. Through the episode, the pilgrims' Scriptural confession from Hebrews 11:13 is preserved, admitting to be 'pilgrims and strangers in the world' (45). Scriptural allusions are piled high throughout. In keeping with some of Bunyan's explicit references, we get allusions to earning the crown of life (Rev 2:10), and buying the truth (Prov 23:23), as well as additional biblical material from Psalm 23:1, John 14:6, as well a visual allusion to Acts 12:6-11 and Peter's miraculous escape from jail, when Christian prays and his cell door breaks open and he is able to walk out as the guards are asleep standing up! A theological reversal of the Marvel theatrics, more in keeping with Barbour. Here he meets the young girl, Hopeful, to continue the journey with her. That Hopeful is female is a relief against the male gaze fostered through the Vanity Fair episode whose women are wide-eyed temptresses against the clean cut, broad shouldered male pilgrims. That the only hopeful woman is a girl may still be objectionable to some.

While both Marvel and Kingstone sit visually within the genre of muscular hero, the former leans toward the device of telling the Christian story in action-packed terms accessible to a young comics fan – adapting PP to hero comics, while the latter, like its slimline Barbour predecessor, takes greater pains to include much more Bible to appeal to the Christian reader who likes comics, adapting comics to a Christian heroism. In keeping with both, the adapters are noted without prominence on the inside cover in deference to the publishing brand. By contrast, the three works that follow, all self-published, give insight into the creative reception of PP in contemporary graphic novel adaptations that demonstrate the best of amateur appreciation – in the sense of love for the work.

A consumer would likely be a fan or internet inquirer after PP to turn up the following texts. Each self-published, the author/artist comes to prominence. This is particularly the case as Stephen T. Moore's re-telling mixes allegory with the spiritual autobiography also famously associated with John Bunyan.²⁸ Text panels narrate the protagonist's thought life in the first person, and Moore uses himself as the model for Christian. This certainly picks up the personal and affective piety of Puritan religion that continues to flow in contemporary evangelicalism.²⁹ Hints of the flavor of adaptation to a North American evangelical imagination that differs from Bunyan's comes in naming the place where Mr Worldly-Wiseman lives as 'Secular Humanism,' or having the emblematic apocalyptic dream of judgment day at the Interpreter's House illustrated with a page long visual of people floating upward at the rapture. The closing, cosmically floating golden cube of a heavenly city, topped by a colossal tree of light, bespeaks a faithful Scriptural literalism in regard to the visual imagery of Revelation 21-22.³⁰



Figure 5, © Stephen T. Moore, (2010) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) np. Double page Vanity Fair opening.

There is a visual echo of American landscape quintet classic Thomas Cole's 'The Course of Empire' at the stage of its finest 'Consummation of Empire,' even if this may be refracted through fantasy genre appropriations of the Lord of the Rings movie trilogy's closing scene at Grey Havens. A fantasy noir dominates the design of Moore's novel, keeping focus on the key figures with the background a haze of color. Refusing to buy market wares, Christian and Faithful meet a chained up black woman, Hopeful, and proclaim the gospel to her with scriptural quotation. Mysteriously receiving a literal sword of the Spirit in faith, she breaks her chains and is free. Pursuers, upset at losing their captives (an echo of Acts 16's riot at Philippi at the healing of a divining slave girl) give chase and Faithful tells the other two to go on while he holds up the townsmen. "Um...do any of you guys want to put down those clubs and talk about Jesus?" (Figure 6 below)



Figure 6, © Stephen T. Moore, (2007,2010) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Faithful enables Christian and Hopeful's getaway. np.

Accusations follow upon Faithful's use of the sword to free captives allowing him to recite Jesus' words of Jubilee from Luke 4, and Paul's words of Acts 26:29, climaxing with Hebrews 4:12, "The sword I brought into the City is a sharp two-edged sword, dividing bone from marrow, soul from spirit...It's living and active, quick and powerful. It judges the thoughts and intents of the hearts. This sword will one day destroy the very foundations of this city." Scripture-soaked again, Moore's tale is one of emotional description through facial close up, with action happening in slow motion in the case of the assault on Faithful above, and with Christian and Hopeful fleeing out of the center right panel's background (Figure 6). Here we see an imaginative interpolation of the evangelistic encounter with Hopeful that leads to this character's conversion, now set amid the growing awareness of evangelicals of the intersected issues of race and gender. The book closes with a description of the production technique and an evangelistic appeal addressing the reader in the second person directly with the hope of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Steve Vossos signals his commendation of Bunyan's pastoral counsel through his allegory by first, inking out full verbatim pastoral conversations in PP all other adapters omit or abridge, and second, when changing tactics, explicitly pointing readers to the omitted doctrinal riches of the dialogues excised. Vossos' distinctive approach to adaptation changes two volumes into his three-volume graphic novel. Volumes 1 and 2 see him use every single word of Bunyan's original PP. The original author is given a profile, as Vossos has the delightful tactic of portraying Bunyan as the dreaming narrator in a number of scenes as one looking out from behind the bars of his cell in Bedford jail (Top left Figure 7, and middle right of Figure 8, below). By the time Volume 3 opens with Vanity Fair, Vossos has changed tactics. The switch from recorder of full text to narrative adapter actually highlights the adaptation that was already at play even with verbatim text copying. Once the text is not just occasionally illustrated but accompanied throughout with art, the narration becomes intertextual interaction with the eye grabbing images, and not just the other way round. The decision in Volume 3 to omit extensive dialogue that occupies much of the second half of PP is explained in Vossos' 'Foreword, wherein the Inkstained Illustrator Attempts an Apologetic Explanation!' 'The discourses that I excluded are unarguably significant to Bunyan's desire to elaborate on his doctrinal points, and so I would encourage readers to augment this Volume by reading Bunyan's original work and thereby enjoying many moral and spiritual conversations between Christian, Faithful, Hopeful and Ignorance, and many other unforgettable characters.'³²

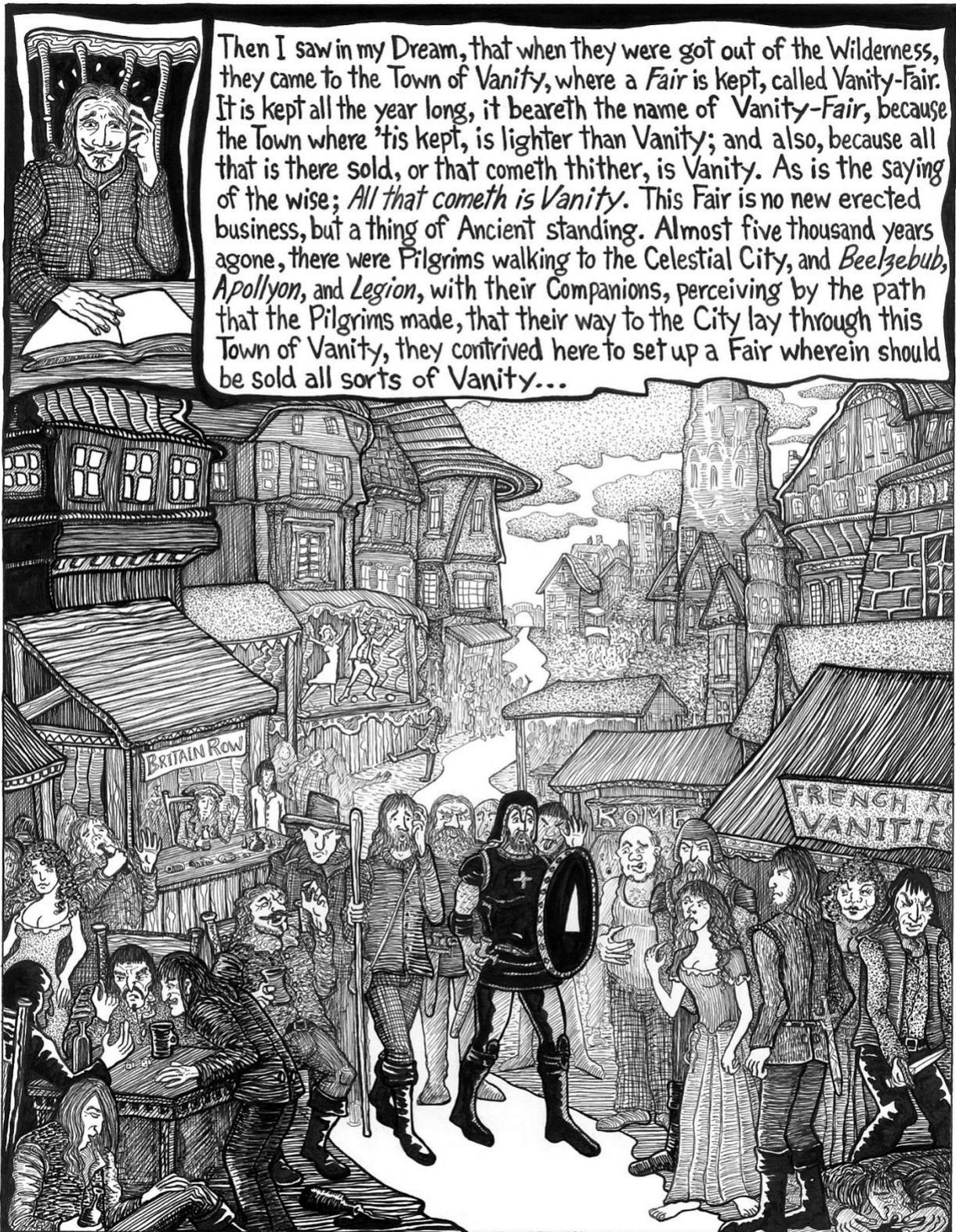


Figure 7, Steve Vossos, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Volume 3* (Boonk, 2019). ©Steve Vossos (2019) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Entry to Vanity Fair. p.6.

The people of the Fair were of this world and in thrall to *Beelzebub*, the Chief Lord of the Fair. And so they began to mock the Pilgrims, whom they saw as being outlandish fools. The Merchants saw that the Pilgrims would not look upon their wares. One chanced mockingly to say unto them...



At that, the Townspeople despised the Pilgrims, and the Fair fell into a hubbub, insomuch that all order was confounded. At the command of the great one of the Fair, some Rogues attacked the Pilgrims and beat them...



They then put them into a Cage, so that the Pilgrims might be made a Spectacle to all the people of the Fair...



Then the Examiner of the Fair charged the Pilgrims of being guilty of the Hubbub, insomuch that he concluded their death. The Pilgrims called to mind what they had heard from their friend Evangelist, and confirmed by their way and sufferings what he told them would happen to them.

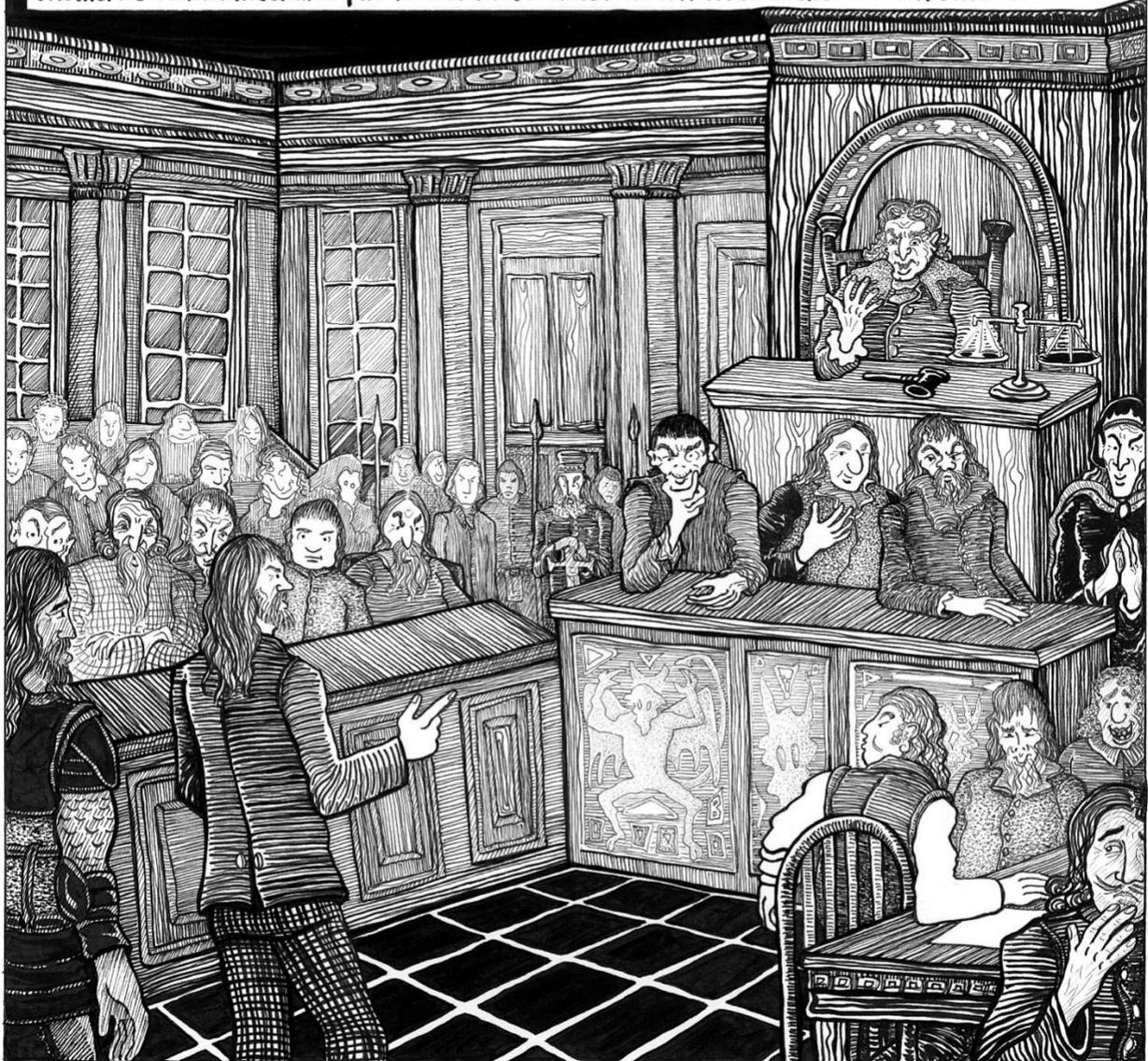


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Figure 8, Steve Vossos, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Volume 3 (BooInk, 2019)* ©Steve Vossos (2019) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Hubbub at Vanity Fair, p.7.

When all the text is given, is this an adaptation or sumptuously but merely an illustrated manuscript? Vossos actually helps us see that even illustrated texts are themselves adaptations for images are just as able to distort, or simplify an author's concern in any one episode as to reflect it 'accurately' – whatever that is taken to mean. The keeping of the godly conference of Christian's conversations, his repetition of his testimony at numerous points certainly slows down the action as it might also point out the way in which Bunyan was writing to encourage a people of the word, who were readers of the word, and who were being encouraged to patiently suffer for their commitment to the word alone, over against conformity to the Book of Common Prayer. The visual impact of all the inked text of Vossos' Volumes 1 and 2 tell a truth about Bunyan's PP that adaptations that are effectively abridgments miss. If Bunyan's goal is explicitly to have his readers pointed back to the Bible through his marginal references, at least Vossos, while not replicating this, is devoted in his pointing back to the originating text, even to the seventeenth century peculiarity of Bunyan's idiosyncratic spelling. In Volume 3 then, we see that Vossos keeps, even as he abridges, the tone of Bunyan's narratorial style. But now we have evident decisions made about what to keep and what to overlook. Vanity Fair is a short and clearly religiously spiritual episode, diminishing any social critique Bunyan might have had. Equally missing are later episodes with Demas and the pitfall into hell which revolves around commentary on love of money. Also, and very significantly, the other hell-bound event that classically closes PP is omitted. Vossos merely has his Ignorance fall behind his pilgrims on the way, and not end the novel bound and carted off to Hell. Interestingly, Marvel keeps the Ignorance storyline pointing Ignorance to Hell, whereas Barbour merely uses his appearance to underline that 'It is only by faith in Jesus Christ that we are saved.'(29) leaving his fate implicit.

Then they were brought forth to their Trial in order to their Condemnation by their Enemies. The Judge's name was Lord *Hategood*. Their Indictment was one and the same in substance, the essence whereof was "That they were enemies, disturbers, and in contempt of the Law of their Prince." Faithful answered: "I make no disturbance, being myself a man of Peace. And since your Prince is *Beelzebub*, the Enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his Angels." There then came in three Witnesses, who swore that Faithful spoke contemptibly of Prince *Beelzebub* and that he was thus a Heretic. Then the Judge called to the Jury: "You see this man and hear what the Witnesses said. It lieth now in your breasts to hang him, or save his life." Then the Jury unanimously concluded that Faithful was guilty of Heresy and must die. (Of Christian, nothing was said). One of the Jury said that the Heretic, Faithful, must be hanged. Another thought hanging too good for him, and that he should be condemned and put to the most cruel death that could be invented.



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Figure 9, Steve Vossos, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Volume 3* (BooInk, 2019) ©Steve Vossos (2019) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Trial at Vanity Fair, p.8.



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Figure 10, Steve Vossos, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Volume 3 (Boonk, 2019) © Steve Vossos (2019) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Martyrdom at Vanity Fair, p.9.

In ‘timeful’ period setting, what is noticeable about Vossos’ rendition is how male Vanity Fair’s populace and agency is, with Barbour, over against Marvel’s monster citizens and Kingstone’s more bawdily if problematic feminine allure. Figure 9 also makes clear in the narration that heresy against Beelzebub was at stake. There is even a demonic cast figure gleefully observing proceedings (Figure 10, top right). This is essentially a religious spiritual confrontation, and hence is met in its climax with a celestial delivery of Faithful’s chariot translation to heaven. Christian’s escape from Vanity explicitly repeats Bunyan’s narratorial providential explanation without quite the same mystery, given that the visual image shows the door sprung open.

A Graphic Novel for the Post-Secular Age

Ralph Sanders’ independently published *Pilgrim's Progress. The Graphic Novel* (Whistle Key Books) is a companion contrast to Vossos, and sharply different to other sources. Predominantly black with white etchings, individual panels often take up an entire page or full double spread. Set in a contemporary dystopia, Christian in this adaptation has become Pilgrim, a motorcyclist discerning ill tidings on his laptop screen. Demonstrating the iconic power of word as abstract image, the novel has no spoken text bubbles or narratorial text, but only scenic words mimicking the ubiquity of the brand placement of wording encountered at every turn in the modern West. This is a world of militarized violence, corporate greed, and industrial pollution of nuclear power plant despond. Evangelist is a revival tent inhabited by a giant octopus with signs for all major religions at the end of each tentacle: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Taoism.

Another way to highlight Sanders’ distinctive difference of adaptive approach is by comparing endings. For him there is no celestial city, allegorical or otherwise, but celestial freedom – souls flying through space to find success in orbit around Saturn. The last page of the novel shows a

celestial space-scape and the face of a man, seemingly Sanders from the resemblance to his self-portrait overleaf, flying through the universe trailing the words 'Time Well Spent.' In these ways Sanders shows sympathy for the spiritual in post-secular frame, deconstructing Bunyan's doctrine of the narrow way for a more humanist vision. The only visual allusion to the cross is by way of a gap, and absence, between solid objects – piles of tires on a scrap heap.

Vanity Fair is a fairground annex to a shopping complex - 'Superstition Mall,' emblazoned with a full wall hoarding proclaiming, 'We sell anything, we only buy the truth.' A reversal of Bunyan's pilgrims' refusal to buy. (Figure 11)

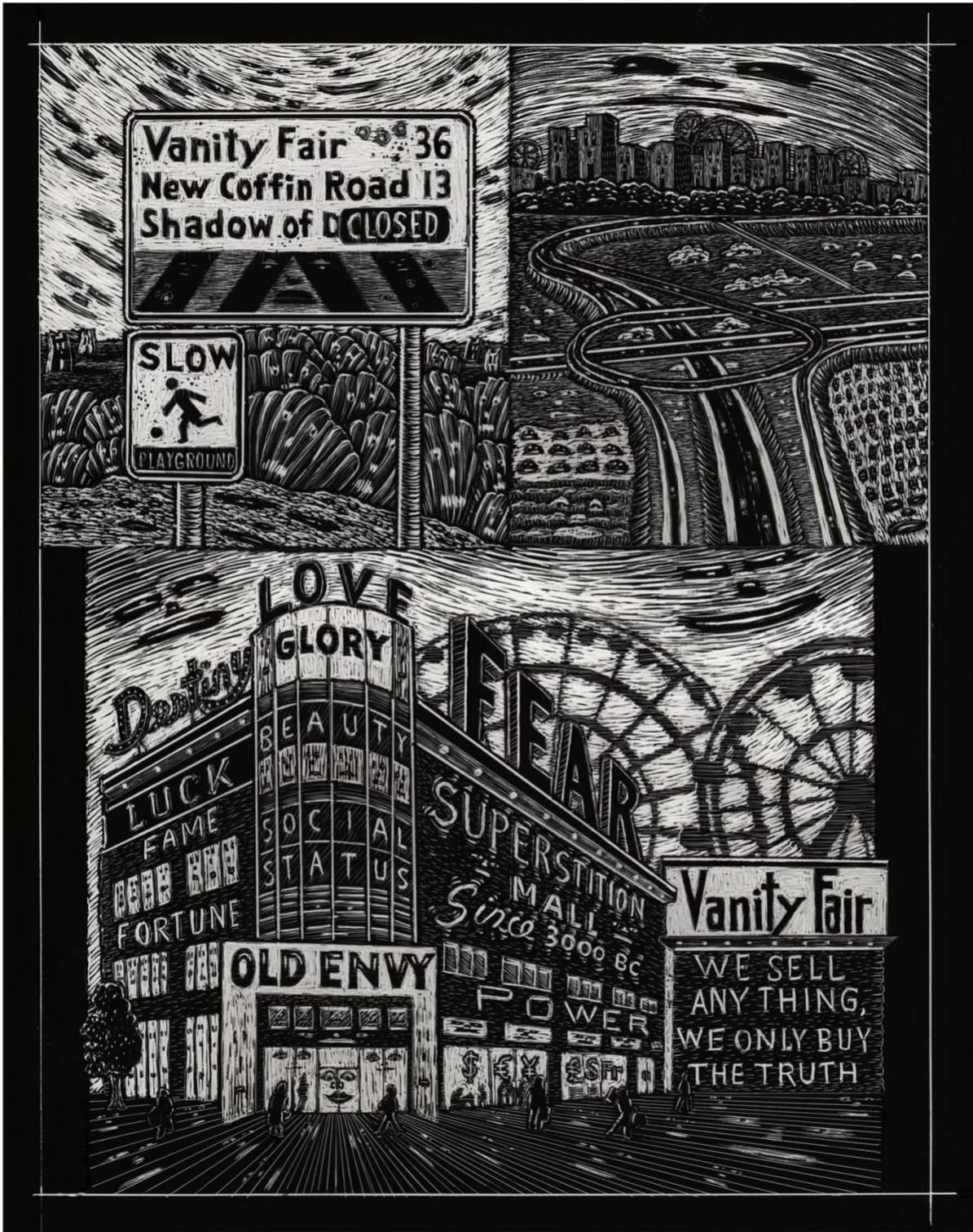


Figure 11, Ralph Sanders, *Pilgrim's Progress. The Graphic Novel* (Santa Cruz, CA: Whistle Key Books, 2018)©Ralph Sanders (2018) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Approaching Vanity Fair, p. 17.

If we take it that Sanders' Pilgrim has dismounted and is walking the Mall to give us our perspective, nothing indicates that the motorcyclist is tempted by its offerings. (Figure 12)

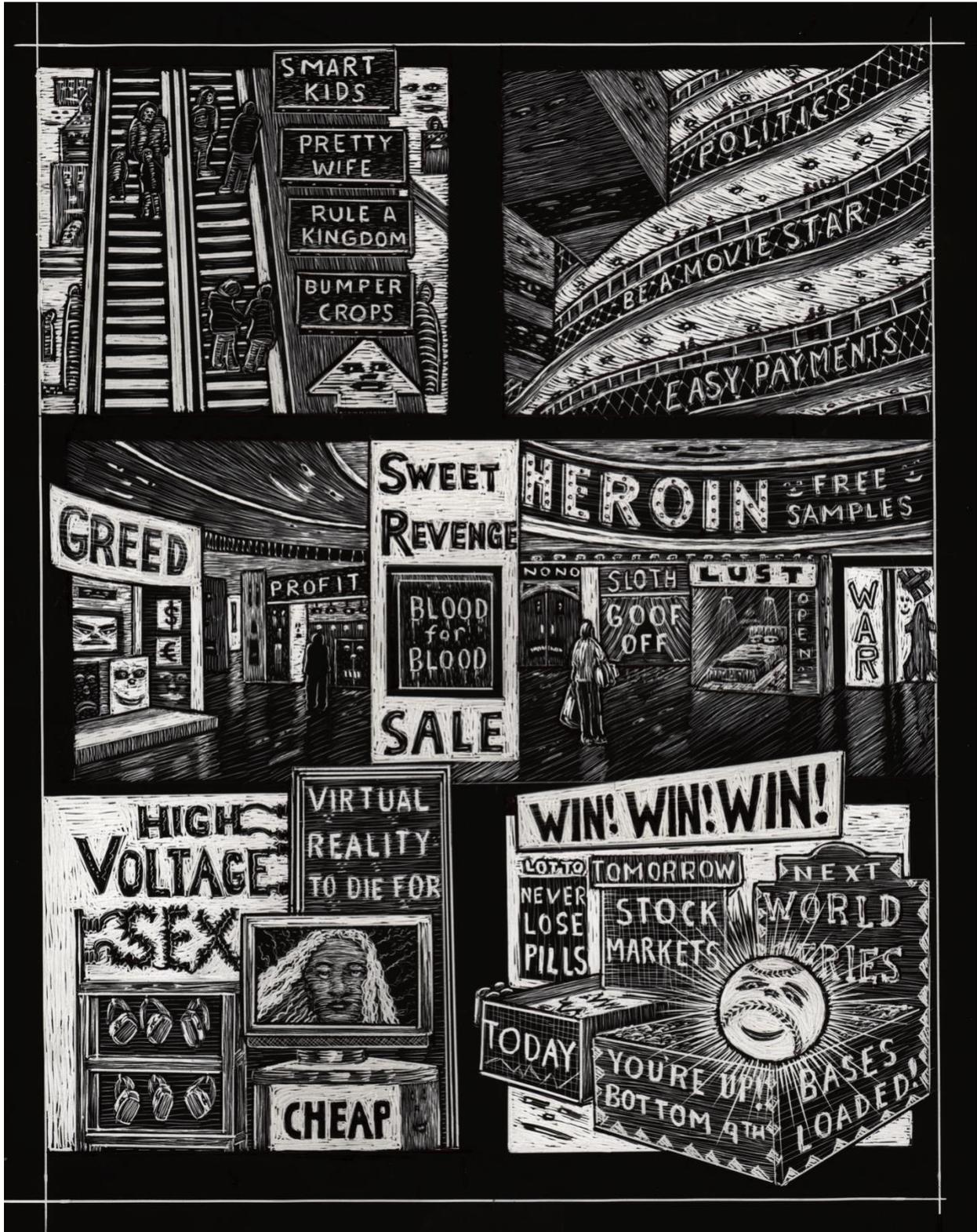


Figure 12, Ralph Sanders, Pilgrim's Progress. The Graphic Novel (Santa Cruz, CA: Whistle Key Books, 2018) ©Ralph Sanders (2018)
(Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Inside Superstition Mall, p. 18.

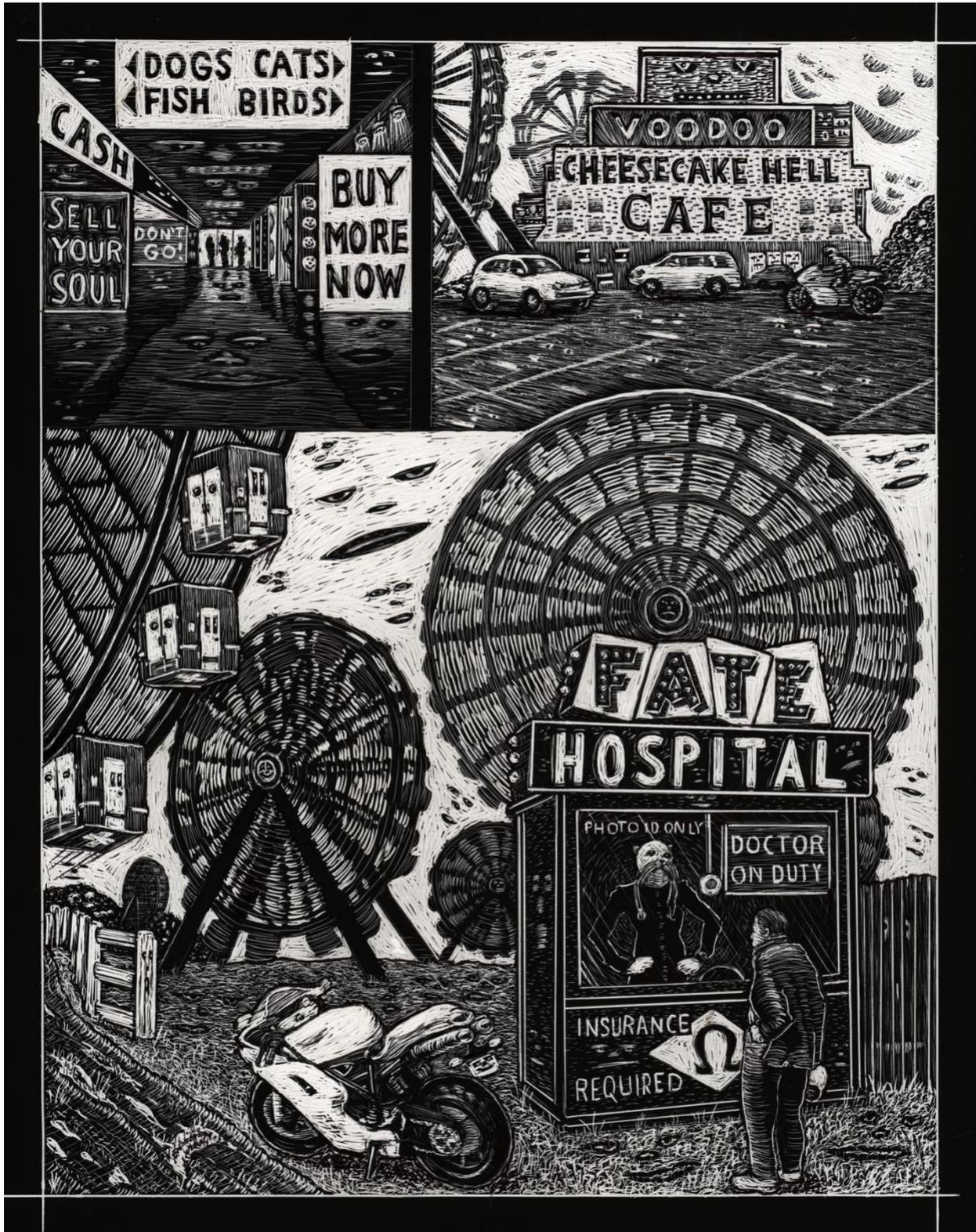


Figure 13, Ralph Sanders, *Pilgrim's Progress. The Graphic Novel* (Santa Cruz, CA: Whistle Key Books, 2018) ©Ralph Sanders (2018) (Used with permission. Reuse not permitted.) Fate Hospital at Vanity Fair, p. 19.

Hoardings alongside the ascending escalator advertise Bumper Crops, Rule a Kingdom, Pretty Wife, Smart Kids, while another corridor offers Greed, Profit, Sweet Revenge on Sale! Another store offers free samples of Heroin, alongside Sloth, Lust and War; virtual reality and high voltage Sex, and gambling opportunities to win, win, win! The exit corridor invites the shopper to ‘Sell Your Soul for Cash’ (Figure 12). Leaving brings you to the fair proper with its Cheesecake Hell Café (Figure 13). The lonely pilgrim motorcyclist manages to leave the domineering ferris wheels behind but not without needing to consult the Fate Hospital booth, that accepts Omega insurance. Does this hint at the likely toll this run through Vanity Fair has taken on his chances to get to the end of his fated journey? That last letter of the Greek alphabet is commonly a pointer to the eternal in conjunction with the first, Alpha. This insurance policy, together with not having succumbed into buying anything, will get Pilgrim through.

Conclusion

Marvel’s pilgrims righteously fight monsters; Barbour’s adventurers struggle along with doctrinal support; Kingstone have moral vice defeated by Scripture, the raising up of a female pilgrim; with Moore, white saviors of a black enslaved woman meet worldly substance abuse; Vossos offers religiously persecuted opposition to Satanic vanity and violence; and Sanders sets out the evils of competitive commercialism and consumerism displayed and disdained by the individual pilgrim passing through.

Textual Fidelity

It is futile, on the face of it, to bring a charge of iconoclasm against graphic novels. Yet, if that which makes PP a classic of Protestant spirituality is precisely its devotion to the word of the Bible and Christ, some will judge faithfulness in adaptation in relation to this Word-ness. So, there is something distinctive in Vossos’ early volumes’ dedication in preserving every word of the

original within his adaptation. His art thus functioned as an adornment for the text. PP's classic status is kept as pristine as possible in this curating, making Bunyan's text iconic in significant ways. In some ways, then, this is an illustrated manuscript, but precisely in being so, it adapts PP to a visual mode of communication. Even with a dilution of this commitment in Volume 3, Vossos' commitment to Bunyan's narration still gives him the wordiest panels. Fidelity to the original text is vital for Vossos in producing a faithful adaptation. Even as his later third volume abridges, it still gives the narrator a key role. This, we might say, allows for a religious control over against possible doctrinal deviations in how to read Bunyan, hence the charges of true or false religion in the Vanity courthouse. To the extent that a true adaptation is an adaptation of Bunyan's text as narrated dream, no other graphic novel reaches this degree of fidelity. Bunyan certainly wanted to guide his readers to correct interpretation and the dreaming narrator this plays this role that endures only in Vossos' rendering. Vossos even commends to his readers his omitted doctrinal material in his Foreword to Volume 3. Nevertheless, the decision, as a key doctrinal issue, to downplay hell leaves Vossos arguably less textually faithful than Kingstone who keep all the original incidents of Bunyan's narrative in their adaptation, as also Barbour and even Marvel. Kingstone softens doctrine in adapting, for example, the text's incident of angelic chastisement of the pilgrims after being netted by the Flatterer. This episode is transformed from divine chastisement to angelic relief, as the 'net' of thorny bushes thrown up around the pilgrims is split apart by the angel's whip, rather than used to beat the errant wanderers! Is Vossos' omission of the entire incident not also a softening by the same logic of textual fidelity, or perhaps more so? This is one of the more idiosyncratically arbitrary of Bunyan's original episodes – and Barbour's *Al Bohl* faithfully gives it two of his thirty-two pages.

Broadly speaking, an adaptation trajectory or spectrum in relation to the text would have Vossos at the nearest point on the left proximate to the original for language, followed by Barbour, then

Kingstone whose fidelity is in inclusiveness of narrative events, to Moore, Marvel, and then Sanders over at the other end. Yet, Sanders' work invites consideration of the decisions involved in adaptation where the graphic novel is a contemporary medium that also calls for faithfulness to the present concerns of a readership. It is worth pointing out that those graphic novels whose intent is to explicitly maintain faithfulness to Bunyan's spirituality through use of Scripture and confessional dialogue are equally those whose costuming places the story. For Vossos, Kingstone, and Barbour, this is found in the visual historical past, or for Moore in the fantasy past. There is a certain irony here, given the contemporaneity of Bunyan's textual imagery in his very present seventeenth-century dissenting context. So even Marvel's 1990's environmentally conscious setting for the city businessman is an attempt at adaptation to the contemporary imagination, even as this gives way quickly to a fantasy genre heroics in its literal rendition of Christian's armor of sword and shield. A 'timeful' fantasy or nostalgic past visual setting misses the presentness possible for a 'timeless' classic true to Bunyan's communicative intent that only Sanders, in fact, captures in a 'timefulness' for today.

Spiritual legacy

Spirituality and doctrine are inextricably entwined in a Christian perspective. Vossos, Moore, Kingstone, and Barbour all communicate Bunyan's essential theological convictions about the narrow way to salvation being faith confessed in Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross atones for human sin. Marvel too pays heed to the heroic suffering of Jesus on the cross, which liberates Christian of his burden. Yet, as with Marvel's Vanity Fair sequence, there is a conflict between the agency of heroes in the comics genre and the essential passivity of the Christian receiving welcome and forgiveness through no work of their own. Even where Kingstone strains to keep this passivity in the Vanity Fair episode, they cannot but help portray the narrative as also about Christian's heroic confidence through an almost Stoic expression of chisel-jawed faith, as opposed

to the vulnerable emotions that thrive in the seventeenth-century Puritan imagination. This illustrates the peculiar shift that evangelicals have effected in their theology of salvation since Bunyan. Contemporary evangelicals may doubt along the way, but their salvation is accomplished quickly through decision and a sinner's prayer. All that is needed then is to live faith out or hang on until heaven. Bunyan's curiously staggered journey of salvation for his Christian is, for godly adaptations today, foreign territory. Differently Sanders, although deliberately moving away from the narrow path of orthodox Christian salvation, still conveys progress of spiritual development in opposition to death-dealing individual and collective lifestyles, as intimated in the mockery of commercialism in Sanders' *Vanity Mall*. If anything, something of Bunyan's protagonist's passivity is kept as Pilgrim just plugs away on his motorcycle journey, heading onward, ever onward.

Creative recontextualization

Creative recontextualization is interestingly framed by Vossos, whose woodcut-looking black and white style, seeks to represent historically plausible seventeenth-century figures indwelling Bunyan's allegorical dream. The spectrum of contextualization in visual impact almost comes full circle in that Ralph Sanders's black and white scratchboard, albeit darker in tone, carries a similar artistic expression. We have seen how Vossos sticks to the original account and characterization. Sanders, by engaging a solo, silent pilgrim radically recontextualizes the story. There is also a distinctive twist to the narrative as Moore makes his journey an auto-biographical one in first person language and thought-structure. The loss of the narrator or second-person perspective brings his recontextualization closer to Sanders' in being an individual's journey, conveyed through internal reflection and self-expression. Critics who see the continuity between Bunyan's earlier published spiritual autobiography and *PP* will recognize a commonality of vision, and others who see the broader concurrence of early modern spiritual autobiographies and the rise of

the modern individual self will see fidelity of trajectory here also. If, as some contend, Bunyan's Christian is the proto-typical modern individual, then the denouement of modern individualism in secular humanitarianism is seen in Sanders's politically attuned global pilgrim for whom all spiritualities and none are equal in achieving cosmic enlightenment.

The other site of recontextualization is not in relation to the individual but rather to group identity politics, both in terms of gender and race. Whereas Bunyan's only black-skinned character is the devilish Flatterer,³³ Hopeful is depicted by Marvel and Moore as a person of color. Vossos' and Kingstone's cast is thoroughly white throughout. Kingstone and Moore casting Hopeful as female overcomes an almost exclusive maleness in Bunyan's characters evident in Barbour's and Vossos's faithfulness (the significance of the female characters in *Palace Beautiful* tend to be under recognized in the original – and these are very well represented in Vossos, Barbour, and Kingstone too). Sanders' book focuses on a solo male biker, with no companions on his journey, where other characters are either rendered anthropomorphically as animals or anonymously. Yet arguably this book achieves greater inclusivity with its individualistic everyman. Within Sanders' approach, this transformation of Bunyan's Christian is a valid approach over against anxiously checking identity boxes to the inevitable exclusion of some readers. Indeed, the silence of Sanders' pilgrim can be read as an iconoclastic rejection of the cheap words of contemporary soundbites, social media, and advertising, allowing Sanders to dissent from his contemporary context as Bunyan was himself a non-conformist, dissenting from his.

Do any of these inclusive recontextualizations effectively rule out fidelity to Bunyan? To the extent that the adaptation evokes the affective impact of the original and strikes a chord with memories then it is an adaptation. All the graphic novels fall into this broad category. Does the Christian theological perspective add anything further? In keeping with the concern for theology that we

know animated Bunyan in PP and throughout his writing, theological judgments are in order: Sanders and Marvel are furthest from faithfulness. But Christian readers ought be theologically committed to seeing, hearing and diligently caring for expressions of human creativity, perhaps especially as these arise in intertextual conversation with a spiritual classic like PP. So rather than defensiveness, appreciation is in order. Both Marvel and Sanders hit on key contemporary concerns in their highlighting environmental degradation and urban social isolation. Bunyan was most exercised by the political possibility of persecution when he wrote of Vanity Fair, decrying the abusive prerogatives of the unjust rich and noble, and commending the social encouragement of the gathered Christian church. So too, then, the greater crises of our age can frame the spiritual significance of his work today. Sanders' blistering critique of late modern consumer capitalism is now not so far from the tinker's original vision. Treating a 'timeless' classic as either, with Barbour, Vossos, and Kingstone, a clarion call from a godly past, or with Moore, an existential fantasy, aligns with spiritualizing readings of PP but is not the only way to adapt it faithfully and 'timefully.'. A material and earthy hope emerging from the vernacular dialects and delightfully described social scene in Bunyan's original also supports Moore's creative collaging, which showcases mixed media materiality, or Sanders' relentlessly contemporary technological dystopia.

Much more careful attention could profitably be given to each of these graphic novels. Each is an accomplished adaptation. From a Christian theological perspective, fidelity, spiritual legacy, and creative recontextualization account for an array of interpretative differences in rendering early twenty-first century adaptations of a Protestant spiritual classic, which stand up to discerning judgment and appreciation in the light of Bunyan's 1678 originating text and Scripture itself. Iconophobia should not govern Christian responses to graphic novel adaptations of a key spiritual classic text. The visual form does not merely deliver the immaterial message. It participates in its ethos. Each novel counters the accusation that form is subordinated to message. Rather the form

of the graphic novel transposes and illuminates the transformative possibilities the classic holds out to its pilgrim readers. In fact, these visual adaptations re-ignite the metaphorically ‘iconoclastic’ potential of a dissenting text.

¹ I am grateful to my Associate Dean, Joanne Jung at Talbot School of Theology, for conversation on an early draft of this paper. Further clarity has been afforded by anonymous reviewers, many but not all of whose recommendations I have gladly taken up.

² Numerous popular and critical editions exist, textual references in this paper are drawn from John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, eds. James Blanton Wharey and Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

³ Critical literary editions now include those woodcuts published within Bunyan’s lifetime, through numerous editions. See John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, edited by W.R Owens, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, ‘Note on the Text’ pp.xxxix-xliii; John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, edited by Roger Pooley, London, Penguin, 2008, ‘Note on the text and illustrations’, pp. xlv-xlvii.

⁴ Natlie Collé is the present acknowledged expert on illustrations of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, ‘The Role of Illustrations in the Reception of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*’ in *Reception, Appropriation, Recollection. Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress*, edited by W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim, Bern, Peter Lang, 2007 pp. 81-97; and ‘Wayfaring Images: The Pilgrim’s Pictorial Progress’, in *The Oxford Handbook of John Bunyan*, edited by Michael Davies and W.R. Owens, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 624-649.

⁵ Hence the popularity of emblems as a genre made accessible to the most humble reader in chapbook form, Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories. Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth Century England*, Athens, GE, Georgia University Press, 1981.

⁶ Martin Powell, Seppo Makinen, et al., *The Pilgrim’s Progress™ (The Christian Classics Series)*, Marvel Comics, (New York: Marvel Entertainment Group, 1992); and Al Bohl (Retold and Illustrated by), *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, New Barbour Christian Comics, Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour and Company Inc, 1994. I am grateful to Mr Bohl for sending me a copy of his comic after private correspondence.

⁷ Yvonne Griggs, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Adaptation Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) p. 4.

⁸ Most recently and thoroughly, Michael Davies and W.R. Owens, *Oxford Handbook of John Bunyan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁹ Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 24,26.

¹⁰ *ibid.* 139.

¹¹ Shannon Murray’s observation about the new intended audience of an adaptation not being expected to know it, especially when addressed to children, in ‘Playing Pilgrims: Adapting Bunyan for Children’ *Bunyan Studies. A Journal of Reformation and Nonconformist Studies*, 18 (2014) p.81.

¹² Tung L and Wong J, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Volumes 1 and 2. Adapted by Lee Tung and Johnny Wong, illustrated by Creator Art Studio. (Leesburg, FL: Kingstone Comics, 2011).

¹³ Stephen T. Moore, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, May 24, 2011); Steve Vossos, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Volume 3 (BooInk, 2019). <https://boo-ink.com/about-booink/the-pilgrims-progress/> Accessed 1/16/20, n.d.; and Ralph Sanders, *Pilgrim’s Progress. The Graphic Novel* (Santa Cruz, CA: Whistle Key Books, 2018)

¹⁴ See also an abbreviated Manga version by Shonen Bag, *Run. The Pilgrim’s Progress* at webtoons.com (https://www.webtoons.com/en/challenge/run-the-pilgrims-progress-%E3%83%94%E3%83%AB%E3%82%B0%E3%83%AA%E3%83%A0%E3%81%AE%E3%83%97%E3%83%AD%E3%82%B0%E3%83%AC%E3%82%B9/list?title_no=187097 (n.d., accessed March 20th, 2020) and a Kindle e-book, *Pilgrim’s Progress. The Cross Edition* by artist Masako Sato (Tokyo: Kiyose Kingdom Church, 2014). The most extensive Manga version I have come across is C K Choi, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, (Korean Language) (3 Volumes) Seoul, Word of Life Press, 2019. Children-friendly versions are often illustration dominant, such as Alan and Linda Parry, *Go with Christian!* (Wordkids, 1996) or Paul and Stephanie Cox (RefToons.com), *Pilgrim’s Progress. A Poetic Journey* (H&E Publishing, 2019.)

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- ¹⁵ Christian iconoclasm and internal theological critique of the same can be found in, e.g., John de Gruchy, *Christianity, Art and Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); or William Dyrness, *Visual Faith. Art, theology, and worship in dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2001).
- ¹⁶ Bonnie Noble, *Lucas Cranach the Elder. Art and Devotion of the German Reformation*, (Lanham, University Press of America, 2009).
- ¹⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, edited by John T. McNeil (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960) (Volume 1) Book 1, Chapters 11-12, pp. 99-120.
- ¹⁸ Quoted in Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 294.
- ¹⁹ Christine Hoff Kraemer and A David Lewis 'Introduction', in *Graven Images. Religion in Comic Books and Graphic Novels*, edited by Kraemer and Lewis, (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 2.
- ²⁰ Thomas J. Carmody, 'Converting Comic Books into Graphic Novels and Digital Cartoons', in *Understanding Evangelical Media: The Changing Face of Christian Communication*, edited by Quentin J. Schultze, Robert Herbert Woods Jr. (Westmont, IL, IVP, 2008, p. 195.
- ²² Kate Netzler, 'A Hesitant Embrace: Comic Books and Evangelicals', in *Graven Images*, pp. 218-229.
- ²³ Bunyan, 1960, pp. 1-7
- ²⁴ Bunyan, 1960, p. 6; 'The Conclusion', p. 164.
- ²⁵ Collinson, 'From iconoclasm to iconophobia. The cultural impact of the second English reformation', in Peter Marshall (ed) *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997) p. 295.
- ²⁶ Ella Shohat, 'Sacred Word, Profane Image. Theologies of Adaptation' in *A Companion to Literature and Film*, edited by Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2004), pp. 23-45, p. 37.
- ²⁷ John 1:1-18, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3, Genesis 1, 2, Revelation 21, 22, cf. Isaiah 61, 62, 65:17-25.
- ²⁸ Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, edited by Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).
- ²⁹ Thomas Kidd, *Who is an Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis* (New Have: Yale University Press, 2019), p. 17-23, 155-156.
- ³⁰ Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse. A History of Modern Evangelicalism*, Belknap Press, 2017; Crawford Gribben, *Writing the Rapture. Prophecy Fiction in Evangelical America*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.
- ³² Vossos, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Volume 3, p. iii. Also set out a little more cryptically in 'A Graphic Novel Adaptation of The Pilgrim's Progress', for the International John Bunyan Society Annual Newsletter of 2018, *The Recorder*, Volume 24, pp. 10-13. <https://johnbunyansociety.org/the-newsletter/past-issues/> (n.d., accessed March April 11th, 2020).
- ³³ Bunyan, 1960, p. 133.