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FROM THE EDITORS

The sixth edition of *Studies in Puritanism and Piety Journal* gives students, pastors, and scholars the opportunity to read articles from three longstanding authorities on their subjects: Martin Klauber, Tom Schwanda, and Richard Muller.

Martin Klauber's essay introduces readers to the life and theology of Pierre Jurieu. Klauber contends that Jurieu's doctrinal formulations were developed in his unique circumstances—particularly the expulsion of the French Huguenots after the Edict of Nantes in 1598. This decree made Protestantism illegal, thereby forcing both pastors and congregants to flee and resulting in the destruction of many Reformed churches. The author argues that these events contributed to the development of Jurieu's doctrine, which he calls a "theology of refuge"—particularly in his views on eschatology, religious toleration, and Nicodemism.

Tom Schwanda's essay informs the reader of the heavenly piety of the Puritans by presenting the work of two preachers, Jeremiah Burroughs (1600–1646) and William Gearing (1625–1690). Schwanda compares their descriptions of the nature of heaven and the ways in which the saints can best prepare for eternal glory. He evaluates the views of both Burroughs and Gearing on the beatific vision in three related questions: *what is seen, how is it seen, and what are the benefits of seeing God?* Schwanda highlights many similarities between Burroughs and Gearing in the doctrine of heaven, but he also shows levels of discontinuity.

Richard Muller's essay focuses on William Perkins and his view of the Bible and tradition. He argues that although Perkins prioritized the Bible, he recognized the value of tradition—particularly the three catholic creedal formulations (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed), the early church fathers, and the authority of the church that embraced the *analogy of faith* for the development of ecclesiology.

We also have several scholarly book reviews in this edition. Adam Quibell has provided a review of two works published by Oxford University

Press—*Reliquiae Baxterianae* and *The Letters, Writings, and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*; David Irving has reviewed the *T&T Handbook of John Owen*, edited by Crawford Gribben and John Tweeddale; James Morrison has reviewed *Protestantism, Revolution and Scottish Political Thought: The European Context, 1631–1651* by Karie Schultz and published by Edinburgh University Press; David Reid has reviewed *Meeting Christ at His Table: Jonathan Edwards and the Lord's Supper* by David Luke and published by the Jonathan Edwards Society; and Allen Stanton has provided reviews for two T&T Clark publications—one on *Thomas Goodwin on Union with Christ* by Jonathan M. Carter, and another on *Supralapsarianism Reconsidered: Jonathan Edwards and the Reformed Tradition* by Phillip A. Hussey.

Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713): The French Reformed Theology of Refuge

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I have long contended that theological development must be evaluated in its historical context. Although I believe that Scripture reveals timeless truth, theology has been developed and shaped by historical events. This is why in my series of three books on French Protestant theology, I have divided the format by two categories—*historical context* and the *theological contributions* of key figures in the movement.¹ One of the most cataclysmic events for the French Huguenot movement took place at the end of the seventeenth century and can be compared to the Babylonian Captivity of Judah and the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 587 BC.

The Edict of Nantes was a royal decree issued by the King of France, Henri IV, in 1598. The decree provided some measure of religious toleration for the Huguenots. The edict remained in force from 1598 to 1685, when King Louis XIV revoked the decree and gave French Reformed pastors fifteen days to leave the country or convert to Roman Catholicism. Consequently, Louis XIV declared that Protestantism no longer existed in France. Furthermore, the king declared it illegal for Protestants to flee the country, even though about 150,000 people did so. Protestant places of worship were destroyed throughout France—including the magnificent church structure in Charenton, just outside of Paris. Of the approximately 870 Reformed pastors in France, about 680 chose to leave. The rest, however, stayed behind, for they were granted the opportunity to retire on a government-sponsored pension that required the abjuration of their Protestant faith.

1. Martin I. Klauber, ed. *The Theology of the French Reformed Churches: From Henry IV to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014); Martin I. Klauber, ed. *The Theology of the Huguenot Refuge: From the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes to the Edict of Toleration* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020); Martin I. Klauber, ed. *The Theology of the Early French Reform: From the Affair of the Placards to the Edict of Nantes* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2023).

The pastors who fled primarily found refuge in Holland, where many joined the Walloon congregations which needed more pastors to minister to the 35,000 French refugees. They had an abundance of good choices as there were about four hundred pastors who left France for the Dutch Republic.² The Walloons were a French-speaking people from Wallonia, a region in the southern part of the Netherlands (modern-day Belgium). Many of the Walloons converted to Protestantism and later fled to such places as Holland to escape religious persecution. The exiled Huguenots preferred to go to French-speaking churches and when the Huguenots were fleeing persecution, many joined the existing Walloon churches in Holland.³

The year 1685 proved an eventful one in England as well, when King Charles II died and was succeeded by his openly Roman Catholic brother, James II. Although James was fifty-one years old when he assumed the throne, his children remained Protestants and Parliament resisted his calls for tolerance for Roman Catholic worship throughout the land. In 1688, he had a son (also named James), whom he would raise as a Catholic. James was legally ahead in the line of succession to his Anglican sister Mary and her Protestant husband William of Orange. Suddenly, a real possibility developed that England would become a Roman Catholic nation.

During such political and religious turmoil, exiled Huguenot pastors saw an imperiled Reformed faith and needed to comfort their flocks that God remained in control. The most prominent of these refugee pastors was Pierre Jurieu, the so-called “Goliath of the Protestants.”⁴ According to Owen Stanwood, “Jurieu served as ‘a gatekeeper of the Refuge,’ and one of the key go-betweens linking ordinary refugees...to the avenues of power occupied by the Bishop of London or the Prince of Orange.... Alongside a network of pastors, military officers, and gentlemen stretching from London to Geneva, Jurieu attempted to organize and mobilize the masses of new arrivals who crowded into northern and central European cities. His first task was to seek the refugees’ physical survival.”⁵

2. Young Joon Chae, “*Beaucoup Plus Pasteur Que Théologien*: Huguenot Pastor and Professor Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713) and His Polemics in Context” (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2023), 76.

3. David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2015), 2.

4. Guy Howard Dodge, *The Political Theory of the Huguenots of the Dispersion: With Special Reference to the Thought and Influence of Pierre Jurieu* (New York: Octagon, 1972), 11.

5. Owen Stanwood, *The Global Refuge: Huguenots in an Age of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 26; Chae, “*Beaucoup Plus Pasteur Que Théologien*,” 53.

Jurieu was born in Mer, a town in the Loire Valley of central France. His father, Daniel Jurieu (1601–1663) served as a pastor there. His mother, Esther du Moulin (1604–1638), was the daughter of one of the most prominent Reformed theologians of the era, Pierre du Moulin (1568–1658). Jurieu married his first cousin, Hélène du Moulin (1644–1720), the daughter of Pierre du Moulin's son, Cyrus du Moulin (1608–ca. 1638), who served as a Reformed pastor at Châteaudun, a town southwest of Paris near the city of Orléans.⁶

After he was ordained (possibly in England), Jurieu returned to France to succeed his father as the pastor of the Reformed church in Mer. He enrolled in the Reformed Academy of Saumur, where he earned his Master of Arts degree in 1656. After completing his studies, Jurieu spent some time studying in Holland and then in England, where his two uncles resided—one of whom served as a priest at Canterbury Cathedral, the highest bishopric in the country.⁷

After receiving his doctorate at the Reformed Academy of Sedan in northeastern France, Jurieu became a pastor and professor of theology and Hebrew there in 1674. Ironically, his grandfather, Pierre Du Moulin (1568–1658), had held the same positions at the academy. However, Louis XIV ordered the school to close in 1681, so Jurieu left and served for the rest of his career as pastor at the Walloon church in Rotterdam and professor at the newly formed *École Illustre*.

The years immediately following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes were ones of sadness and hope for many of the Huguenots who fled abroad, especially those who fled to Holland. Hubert Bost has asserted that the Huguenots generally considered themselves as refugees from France, at least for the first ten years after they fled their homeland. Protestants were not technically exiles, says David van der Linden, for they left France of their own accord so that they could seek a better life where they could worship God freely. The only true exiles were the pastors who were expelled.⁸ Many displaced Huguenots hoped that Louis XIV would change his mind or that God would personally intervene to bring the Huguenots back to their homeland. The hope for God's direct aid was bolstered in 1688 by

6. Hubert Bost, *Pierre Bayle* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), 117.

7. Harry M. Bracken, "Pierre Jurieu: The Politics of Prophecy," in *Continental Millenarians: Protestants, Catholics, Heretics*, ed. John Christian Laursen and Richard H. Popkin, vol. 4, *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, International Archives of the History of Ideas 176 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2001), 85.

8. Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, 10–11.

the Glorious Revolution in England when King James II, a Roman Catholic, was ousted and replaced with a Protestant monarch, William III. The Huguenots hoped that William would intervene and convince Louis XIV to allow them to worship in France as they saw fit.⁹

These historical factors helped shape many aspects of Jurieu's theology, particularly in his *eschatology*, his view of *religious toleration*, and his approach to *Nicodemism*.

Eschatology

As a bridge to his *Accomplissement des propheties* (1686), Jurieu not only identified the papacy with the Antichrist, but also argued that the Reformed churches were the two witnesses in Revelation 11, who would be resurrected after three and a half years. By insisting that the Reformed movement would eventually return to France, Jurieu provided hope and comfort for Reformed believers who had suffered there. Jurieu supported the clandestine assemblies being held in Languedoc, where hundreds flocked to hear lay preachers despite intense persecution. These meetings supported Jurieu's vision of the resurrection of the Reformed movement in France, as well as his beliefs in the popular sovereignty of the people.

As evidence of such a restoration, Jurieu pointed to many alleged miraculous events, such as the sounds of heavenly or angelic singing of the Psalms even though no one was present. A second group of miracles surrounded the activities of the young prophets in the Dauphiné, Vivarais, and Languedoc regions including the young shepherdess, Isabeau Vincent.¹⁰ At the beginning of the *Accomplissement*, Jurieu set out his purpose to provide consolation for the "afflicted" churches in France by supporting the controversial appearance of prophecy among uneducated laypeople.¹¹

Furthermore, Jurieu predicted that the overthrow of the Antichrist, who the Reformed identified with the papacy, would take place in 1689.¹²

9. Hubert Bost, "L'Apocalypse et les Psaumes dans l'arsenal des *Pastorales* de Jurieu," in *Ces Messieurs de la R. P. R.: Histoires et écritures de Huguenots XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Hubert Bost (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 178; Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, 30.

10. Pierre Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales adressées aux fidèles qui gémissent sous la captivité de Babylon* (Rotterdam: Abraham Acher, 1688), 1:145; 3:59; F. R. J. Knetsch, "Pierre Jurieu: Theologian and Politician of the Dispersion," in *Acta Historie Neerlandica*, ed. J. Nordholt, W. Schulte, and D. van Arkel (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 218–21.

11. Pierre Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement des Propheties, ou La Delivrance Prochaine de l'Eglise* (Rotterdam: Abraham Acher, 1686), 1:3. See also Olivier Fatio, *Louis Tronchin: Une transition calvinienne* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015), 567.

12. Hubert Bost, "Entre mélancolie et enthousiasme: Pierre Jurieu, prophète de

In fact, he was so strident in labeling the papacy as the Antichrist that he called this belief a fundamental doctrine and questioned whether a person could be saved without believing it. Jurieu said that one would be confusing the kingdom of Christ with that of the Antichrist. He resolved, “Now is the time, when we must endeavor to open the eyes of the princes and the people of the earth; for, behold! The time is coming quickly when they are to eat the flesh of the beast and to burn it with fire; strip naked the whore of Babylon, tear off her ornaments, and make a full end of her, within a little while, great things must come to pass.”¹³

In Jurieu’s theology, the dragon is Satan, the beast is the Roman Empire, and the false prophet is the pope. There are two beasts mentioned in Revelation 13. The first, which has seven heads (representing the seven hills of Rome) symbolizes the Roman Empire *proper*, while the second, which has two horns, symbolizes the *religion* of the empire. Together, they symbolize the papacy.¹⁴

According to Hubert Bost, the most innovative aspect of Jurieu’s apocalypticism was his interpretation of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. The French Huguenots, Jurieu taught, collectively were the witnesses who prophesized for 1,260 days under the reign of the Antichrist. At the end of this period, the beast who rises from the abyss kills them and openly displays their bodies for public view. After three and a half days, God brings them back to life and they ascend to heaven. The execution of the witnesses, Jurieu taught, represented the eradication of the French Protestants by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The key is that the bodies were never buried but remained in public view. For that reason, the true believers in France only appeared to be dead since they were not buried. Then a cataclysmic event would destroy one-tenth of the city, and the true French church would come back to life in glory and strength. The date of

l’Apocalypse,” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 147, no. 1 (January–March 2001): 103–12; Jean Hubac, “Tyrannie et tyrannicide selon Pierre Jurieu,” *Bulletin de la société de l’histoire du protestantisme français* 152, no. 4 (October–December 2006): 583–609; R. J. Howells, *Pierre Jurieu: Antinomian Radical* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Walter Rex, *Essays on Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965); Elisabeth Labrousse, “Les Idées politiques du Refuge: Bayle et Jurieu,” in *Conscience et conviction: études sur le XVIIe siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996), 135–237.

13. Jurieu, *L’Accomplissement*, 1:32.

14. Jurieu, *L’Accomplissement*, 1:205.

the death of the two witnesses would not be precise because it took place over a period of time, presumably during the era of the *dragonnades*.¹⁵

In his discussion of Revelation 14:14–20, Jurieu made a distinction between God harvesting the crops and then throwing the grapes into the winepress to make the vintage. The harvest represents the Protestant Reformation, while the vintage was the Reformation of his own time (the post-Reformation period). The persecution that the French Protestants endured was near a conclusion, Jurieu believed. He wrote,

Now, the space of time that has already run out, since the reformation of the last age, does already equal the proportion of time, that is between the natural harvest and vintage: and consequently we must be very near the vintage, i.e. the time when God will begin the first blows, in order to complete the final destruction of the Babylonian kingdom. These things being so, this persecution must be the last, immediately after it shall be ended, we will begin the first events, which shall bring the popish kingdom to its final fall.¹⁶

The 1,260 years represent the reign of the Antichrist (the Roman papacy), but the key question was identifying the starting date. Jurieu proposed several possibilities—360 AD, 430 AD, or 450 AD—with a preference for the latter date. Jurieu preferred the starting date of 450 AD (during the papacy of Leo I) because that was around the time that the old Roman Empire fell in the West and was reconstituted under the papacy. As a result, the end date could be 1620, 1690, or 1710. Therefore, the end of this reign, Jurieu predicted, would come between 1710 and 1715. This would represent the harvesting of the crops that began with Luther and the Reformation.

At this point, France would break from the papacy and gradually, other countries would follow suit. The pope would take refuge in Spain, which would be the last country to abandon his rule. The end of the harvest period would be marked by the last great persecution of the true church as epitomized by the Reformed churches in France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The reunion of Christendom under the flag of the Reformation would take place around 1740. The union would serve as a pathway for the non-Christian nations to rally to its cause since the pagan nations would not join a divided faith. These last forty-five years or

15. Bost, "L'Apocalypse et les Psaumes," 180. Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement*, 2:156–57.

16. Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement*, 2:148–49.

so would be analogous to the work of Judas Maccabeus who took forty-five days after the purging of the temple to prepare its vessels for dedication.¹⁷

The vintage would begin, Jurieu explained, around the year 1690. If one were to divide the 1,260 years of the reign of the anti-Christian empire into seven periods, that would make 180 years per period. If the last period of the reign started with Luther's posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517, or the *Bull of Excommunication* by Pope Leo X in 1520, the vintage would start around 1700. Jurieu then subtracted ten years. He wrote,

[I]n our climates, harvest ordinarily begins at the end of July, the vintage at the middle of September. The same proportion is everywhere found: where harvest begins sooner, the vintage begins sooner also. They are about fifty days distant from one another, or little more; let us take fifty, which is a sacred number, made up of seven times seven. Fifty days make the seventh part of the year, (which is the period of the sowing, budding, springing, growth, and whiteness of grains and fruits) only there are ten days over.¹⁸

Therefore, 1690 would mark the beginning of the period in which France would throw off the shackles of the papacy.¹⁹

Once the harvest reached its fullness, it would still take a few years for the vintage to be produced and the earthly reign of Christ to begin. If one adds seventy years, the beginning of Christ's physical millennial reign on earth would start around 1785. During the era of the vintage after the reign of the Antichrist ended, there would be a mass conversion of both Jews and Muslims by a miraculous appearing of Christ. In addition, all schisms and divisions among Christians would be dissolved and all would come together in unity.²⁰

Religious Toleration

Typically, persecuted religious minorities support some form of religious toleration. In fact, the Edict of Nantes went beyond mere toleration and granted subsidies for the Reformed churches from public funds. Once the edict was revoked, Protestantism was no longer a legal or tolerated minority religion. One would think that Jurieu would argue that Protestants should be tolerated, and he did so. He based his argument, in part, on the idea that

17. Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement*, 2:60.

18. Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement*, 2:133.

19. Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement*, 2:133.

20. Jurieu, *L'Accomplissement*, 2:60.

the people of the country should be allowed to choose their religion, rather than a king with absolute power. The people, he argued, should be the ultimate source of state authority.²¹

In Holland, the state preferred Reformed churches to other groups, such as Roman Catholics, Mennonites, and Arminians (although the Dutch government still tolerated them). Jurieu, however, did not believe that such toleration should be extended to these disaffected groups. The reason he wanted religious toleration for Protestants was that he believed that the Reformed churches stood for the truth of the Bible rather than these other groups.²² Jurieu wanted the state to enforce the Reformed faith because he believed that it was the one true faith. He was concerned, however, that granting religious toleration to other groups would promote heterodoxy.

However, Jurieu allowed for toleration in matters of secondary importance. He even extended tolerance to the Jews because of their importance in his eschatological system.²³ In accepting this position, he ran into conflict with his colleague at the *École Illustre*—the enigmatic Pierre Bayle (1647–1706). Bayle argued that one should be free to follow one's conscience, even if that conscience remained flawed. It would be pointless to try to force someone to believe against his or her conscience. For Bayle, to disobey one's conscience was sinful.²⁴ However, Jurieu noted that following an erring conscience could lead to all kinds of heterodox ideas. He wrote,

If this principle is true that one never sins by following the movements of one's conscience, a man who has persuaded himself that tyrants must be killed: a papist who will be of the opinion of those who say that every prince who does not obey the Church must be exterminated, and that each particular person has the right to do so, may assassinate the sovereign without being guilty before God, and without one even having the right to oppose it. The ancient Gnostics were persuaded that the spiritual man could commit all sorts of

21. F. R. J. Knecht, "Pierre Jurieu: Réfugié unique et caractéristique: Récit d'une assimilation involontaire mais partielle," in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 115, no. 4 (October–December 1969), 464.

22. Fiormichele Benigni, "The 'Hereticide': Freedom of Conscience and Popular Indignation in a Debate around Pierre Jurieu," *Intellectual History Review* 32, no. 2 (2002), 219–37.

23. Chae, "Beaucoup Plus Pasteur Que Théologien," 163; Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1:33.

24. Pierre Bayle, *A Philosophical Commentary on These Words of the Gospel, Luke 14:23, "Compel Them to Come in, That My House May be Full,"* ed. John Kilcullen and Chandran Kukathas (Indianapolis: Liberty, 2005), 220; Chae, "Beaucoup Plus Pasteur Que Théologien," 154.

abominations without crimes; fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, brutality. They were then obliged in conscience to commit these crimes, they were not guilty in committing them. One cannot help conceiving that this maxim is detestable in morality.”²⁵

Jurieu contended that if Bayle were correct, God would not be able to hold people accountable for all kinds of sins and heresies, if they were acting according to conscience.²⁶

Furthermore, many suspected Bayle of having written a work entitled *Avis aux réfugiés sur leur prochain retour en France* (1690) under a Roman Catholic pseudonym. This work was critical of the Huguenots’ response to the revocation. The author of the work accused the refugees of conspiring with Protestant powers abroad against the French king.²⁷ The work also criticized Jurieu’s approach to popular sovereignty and denied that state authority lied in the people themselves rather than in the king.²⁸ Ironically, Jurieu’s Reformed predecessors had supported the monarchy even during the Fronde under the young Louis XIV, but this occurred under the protection of the Edict of Nantes.²⁹

To some extent, Bayle proved correct in his accusations. Many among the Huguenots in refuge in the Netherlands rallied around William III of Orange and clung to the possibility of promoting a Protestant holy war against Louis XIV.³⁰ Bayle held out hope that by supporting Louis XIV, the king might change his mind and welcome back the Protestant exiles to their homeland, where they would be free to worship as they pleased.³¹

25. Chae, “*Beaucoup Plus Pasteur Que Théologien*,” 164; Jurieu, *Le vrai système de l’église & la véritable analyse de la foy* (Dordrecht: Theodore Goris, 1686), 191.

26. Pierre Jurieu, *Des droits des deux souverains en matière de religion, la conscience et le prince, contre un livre intitulé: Commentaire philosophique* (Rotterdam: Henri de Graef, 1687), 27–33.

27. Gianluca Mori, “Introduction,” in Pierre Bayle, *Avis aux réfugiés: réponse d’un nouveau converti*, ed. Gianluca Mori (Paris: H. Champion, 2007), 10–23.

28. Bracken, “Pierre Jurieu,” 87.

29. The Fronde was a series of rebellions by rebels among the French nobility, the general population, and the regional parliaments between 1648 and 1653 over taxation to support the French war with Spain. The term *Fronde* literally means “slings,” and refers to the slings which the people in Paris used to hurl stones at the windows of the homes some of the supporters of the chief minister, Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661). See Richard J. Boney, *Society and Government in France under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1624–1661* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988).

30. Mara van der Lugt, *Bayle, Jurieu and the Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 72.

31. Van der Lugt, *Bayle, Jurieu and the Dictionnaire Historique*, 73.

Bayle argued that if Jurieu were in charge, intolerance would continue, only with the persecuted Reformed movement becoming the persecutors of others. Jurieu countered by insisting that the act of requiring someone to believe true doctrine is not in fact persecution since it would lead to that person's salvation.³² The hostility between the two men grew more and more intense and Jurieu persuaded the city council to have Bayle removed from his position at the *École Illustre* in 1693.³³ Bayle would ultimately have his revenge on Jurieu exacted in his famous *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, wherein Bayle excoriated Jurieu time and again as a fanatic in both direct and more subtle ways.³⁴

Nicodemism

The term *Nicodemism* comes from the Pharisee, Nicodemus, came to Jesus by night—presumably to escape the watchful eye of his religious colleagues (John 3:1–2). When someone lived in a country where the Reformed faith was illegal (like France in the seventeenth century), many chose to outwardly conform to Roman Catholicism while maintaining their true faith in secret. John Calvin addressed Nicodemism in his *Answer to the Nicodemites* (1544). Calvin considered it idolatrous to participate in the Mass. So, one had two choices: either flee the country to a place where one could worship freely or refuse to participate in idolatry and face the consequences. It seemed relatively easy for Calvin to provide such counsel while he lived in Geneva, but he had once been a Nicodemite himself before fleeing France in 1534. It should be noted that not all the Huguenots who fled did so immediately. Some stayed behind in France for a few years and attended the Mass before fleeing the country. Those who escaped to Rotterdam and wanted to join a Walloon congregation were required to confess their sin of Nicodemism before the consistory and then make a more public appeal for forgiveness.³⁵

Jurieu wanted to encourage the Huguenots who stayed behind in France after the revocation to keep the faith. While in exile, Jurieu attempted to console them through his biweekly publication of the *Pastoral*

32. Dodge, *The Political Theory*, 174; Pierre Jurieu, *La politique du clergé de France: ou entretiens curieux de deux catholiques Romains, l'un Parisien et l'autre Provincial, sur les moyens dont on se sert aujourd'hui, pour détruire la religion protestante dans ce royaume* (Cologne: Pierre Marteau, 1681), 237.

33. Van der Lugt, *Bayle, Jurieu and the Dictionnaire Historique*, 71–77.

34. Van der Lugt, *Bayle, Jurieu and the Dictionnaire Historique*, 89–90.

35. Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, 17.

Letters beginning in September 1686. As one of the most prolific writers of the dispersed Huguenot pastors after the revocation, Jurieu's *Pastoral Letters* stands out as one of his most important works of the period. Those left behind in France did not have any pastors and they had the difficult choice of either fleeing the country or converting to Roman Catholicism. However, it was illegal for the Huguenots to leave the country and, if caught, they could be arrested and sent to work as galley slaves in the French Navy. If they converted, they would be forced to attend the Mass even though they believed that it was idolatrous. Many of the Huguenots who remained behind in France tried to resist passively by not attending the Mass at all or by holding private devotionals. They were often subjected to increased pressure from the Intendants who tried to force them to attend the Mass and threatened to send their children to receive Catholic instruction.³⁶

Nicodemites justified their stance by minimizing the differences between the Reformed faith and the Roman Catholic faith. Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704) contributed to this tendency with his own series of letters to these so-called *nouveaux convertis* (new converts) in support of Catholic doctrine. Jurieu responded in his letters by refuting Bossuet. He usually listed a copy of Bossuet's letters with his own refutations and pointed out that outward conformity would be an insult to God and damaging to the faith. Some preferred to attend just the sermons of the priests while skipping the Mass. However, Jurieu saw no difference between attending the sermon and participating in the Mass, for the continued attendance of Catholic sermons would inevitably influence the *nouveaux convertis* who would fall victim to their sophistries, lies, and deceptions. Jurieu advised them to meet in secret, read the Word of God, and pray together despite the risk.³⁷

Jurieu argued that to conform outwardly would not just be an insult to God, but would also denigrate Protestants who were suffering in prison or serving as galley slaves on French ships. Jurieu provided lurid details of those who had been publicly mutilated, hung, burned, and yet they sang the Psalms on the way to their deaths, counting it a privilege to die for their faith. The joy that these martyrs showed amid such suffering served as a testimony to the truth of their faith. He pointed to entire congregations who were murdered by the dragonnades as they worshipped the Lord.³⁸

36. Van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile*, 34.

37. Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1:77–78.

38. Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1:13–18.

Jurieu pointed to the thousands of Protestants who fled the country illegally. They needed to leave behind their homes, possessions, livelihoods, businesses, and sometimes even family members. He pointed to forty thousand who were apprehended and thrown into prison or who were forced to serve as galley slaves on French ships. Many of them were tortured brutally on the rack. Some were wealthy men, such as the Marquis of Bordage who was condemned to the galleys and, if he survived, to serve life in prison. They could have easily converted to Roman Catholicism, but they refused.³⁹

In addition to those who fled, Jurieu pointed to the endurance of those who stayed behind and continued to profess their faith. He urged the Nicodemites to consider the Huguenots who found refuge in the Cévennes, a mountainous region in southern France. These believers, Jurieu pointed out, defied the French authorities by holding clandestine assemblies—even though many of them had lost their pastors to death or exile. God had raised up uneducated laypeople, even children, to teach and edify the faithful. Hundreds of believers met all night despite the real possibility that they would be discovered and arrested.⁴⁰ When they were caught, they would often sing the Psalms, such as Psalm 31:5. In French it reads,

Mon ame en tes mains je viens rendre
Car tu m'as racheté,
O Dieu de verité!⁴¹

Conclusion

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when many French Reformed pastors and laypeople fled France for Holland and other parts of Europe, provided their theologians an opportunity to explain why they believed God had allowed such a tragedy. It was not uncommon for them to look introspectively for personal sin and poor motives. They continued to encourage those who remained in France to keep the faith during times of persecution. Other theologians besides Jurieu attempted to make sense of the circumstances and to provide hope for a brighter future. For example, Jacques Basnage (1653–1723), who fled from Rouen to Rotterdam as Jurieu's fellow pastor, composed his *Lettres pastorales* to comfort his compatriots in France.⁴² Another example is Daniel de Superville (1657–1728)

39. Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1:14.

40. Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1:70–71.

41. Jurieu, *Lettres pastorales*, 1:81.

42. Jacques Basnage, *Lettres pastorales sur le renouvellement de la persecution, ou*

who went to Rotterdam where he published his work entitled *On the Duties of the Afflicted Church* (1691).⁴³ The unique circumstances of persecution and forced exile in France provided the occasion for French Reformed pastors and theologians to frame their theology, as well as to accommodate the emerging needs of both those were left behind in France and those who had fled.

Exhortation à la Pésevérence (Rotterdam: Abraham Archer, 1698). See Martin I. Klauber, "The *Lettres pastorales* of Jacques Basnage (1653–1723)," in *The Theology of the Huguenot Refuge*, 183–200.

43. Daniel de Superville, *Douze lettres de l'église affligée* (Rotterdam, 1691). See Martin I. Klauber, "Daniel de Superville (1657–1728) and the Theology of Comfort," in *The Theology of the Huguenot Refuge*, 225–40.

“Expectation and Preparation”: Two Puritan Views on the Saints’ Happiness in Heaven

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Gary Smith, a historian at Grove City College, accurately captures the “splendor of heaven” in the Puritan imagination from his study, *Heaven in the American Imagination*: “At the heart of the Puritan view of heaven was its residents’ relationship with God. In the beatific vision, the saints experienced ‘the full fruition and the sweet embraces of the thrice Blessed Trinity.’ By beholding, adoring, and serving ‘the Great, the Glorious, and Immense God of all Perfection’...the saints [would] gain inconceivable pleasure.”¹ This article will compare the insights of two Puritans, Jeremiah Burroughs (ca. 1601–1646) and William Gearing (ca. 1625–ca. 1690) on the nature of heaven and the experience of believers in the future life. More specifically, my research has been guided by two questions: what is the happiness of the saints in heaven? And how can they best prepare for it?

The Life and Ministry of Jeremiah Burroughs

Jeremiah Burroughs was as a British Independent minister who studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where Thomas Hooker was his tutor.² He developed an early friendship with Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) and William Bridge (1600–1670) and assisted Edmund Calamy (1600–1666) in his first pastorate. He was suspended in 1636 and deprived of

1. Gary Scott Smith, *Heaven in the American Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13. Portions of this quotation come from a sermon by the Puritan James Hillhouse.

2. The following biography is drawn from Tom Webster, “Burroughes, Jeremiah,” s.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 8:1010–1011; James Reid, “Jeremiah Burroughs,” in *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982), 155–61. Reid includes a complete list of his sermons; and Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, “Jeremiah Burroughs,” in *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Press, 2006), 118–25.

his ministry in 1637 due to his dissenting convictions, manifested in his preference for extemporaneous prayer and his refusal to bow at the name of Jesus. He moved to the Netherlands in 1638. In 1639, he began ministering to the English Reformed church in Rotterdam, where William Ames (1576–1633) previously served. He remained there until his return to London in the winter of 1640 when he began his efforts toward godly reform. Burroughs served on the Westminster Assembly and represented the Congregationalist perspective. Richard Baxter (1615–1691) affirmed the irenic spirit of Burroughs when he claimed that “accommodation could have been reached if all the episcopalians had been like James Ussher [1581–1656], all the presbyterians like Stephen Marshall [1595–1655], and all the congregationalists like Burroughes.” He reinforced his willingness to cooperate with people of different views by the Latin phrase above his study door, “Variety of opinions and unity of opinion are not incompatible.”³

Burroughs was a popular preacher at two of London’s largest congregations, Stepney and St. Giles Cripplegate. His fruitful pastorate in London earned him Thomas Brooks’s (1608–1680) enthusiastic affirmation of him as the “prince of preachers.”⁴ Many of his prolific works, primarily devoted to practical divinity, are still in print today. While several of his treatises were published during his lifetime, most were not issued until after his death. Cotton Mather (1663–1728) observed, “Some things of a Burroughs, especially his *Moses’s Choice*, [released before his death] will not make you complain that you have lost your time in conversing with them.”⁵

The Life and Ministry of William Gearing

William Gearing was also a British Puritan. Despite his extensive writing, much of his background remains a mystery. There are no entries for him in either the *Dictionary of National Biography* or the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, nor does he appear in Benjamin Brook’s classic, *The Life of the Puritans*. However, Joel Beeke and Randall Pederson provide a brief entry of him in *Meet the Puritans*.⁶ His ministry included Lymington (1657–1662) and in 1671 he became the first incumbent at Christ Church, Southwark (near London). There is no record that he attended

3. Webster, “Burroughs,” 8:1010.

4. Beeke and Pederson, “Jeremiah Burroughs,” 119.

5. Reid, “Jeremiah Burroughs,” 158.

6. Beeke and Pederson, “William Gearing,” in *Meet the Puritans*, 259–60.

either Oxford or Cambridge, which suggests that he may have lacked a university education.

Despite his apparent lack of formal education, Gearing’s writings reveal a deep knowledge of patristic and medieval sources. Cotton Mather also displayed a knowledge of Gearing. On September 14, 1724, he recorded in his diary, “This Day I read over the Book which contains the Life of Mr. Gearing, and his Experiences; and the Marks of an Interest in Christ, that my Soul may further improve in experimental Piety.”⁷ Since he is not listed in *Nonconformist’s Memorial* by Edmund Calamy, it appears that he was a conformist. Although little is known of Gearing’s life, his writings have been included in secondary sources on heaven, while the more popular Burroughs has not.⁸

Beatific Vision

Burroughs spoke of God’s presence as the key to being in heaven. He proclaimed, “Heaven, it were not Heaven without the presence of God. The presence of God in the most miserable place that can be, were a greater happiness than the absence of God in the most glorious place that can be.” Using Luther’s famous maxim, he declared that he “would rather be in Hell with Gods presence, than in Heaven God being absent.” Burroughs extended his reasoning that “if the presence of God takes away the dread of the shadow of the valley of death, and makes Hell to be more desired than Heaven, what will the presence of God make Heaven to be?”⁹ Building on this principle, Gearing confessed that he would not attempt to describe the joy of heaven since it is difficult to imagine what the future life will be. However, he reasoned, if one considers the benefits that God has provided for his creation and this is just a temporary lodging, how can it be compared to “our eternall Mansions, where we must abide for ever?”¹⁰

However, numerous Puritans focused on the general topic of heaven but more specifically, on the nature and experience of the beatific vision

7. Washington Chauncey Ford, *Diary of Cotton Mather* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957), 2:761.

8. See in particular Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Smith, *Heaven in the American Imagination*.

9. Jeremiah Burroughs, *Moses His Choice* (London: printed by John Field, 1650), 531. I am using the 1650 rather than the initial 1641 edition, as it corrected the numbering of the chapters.

10. William Gearing, *The Mount of Holy Meditation* (London: Francis Tyton, 1662), 146.

in the believer's life.¹¹ Among some of the notables were Isaac Ambrose (1604–1664), John Owen (1616–1683), Christopher Love (1618–1651), Thomas Watson (1616–1686), Richard Baxter (1615–1691), and John Howe (1630–1705).¹² According to Richard Muller, the “doctrine of the *visio Dei* or *visio beatifica*...was not mediated to the Protestant orthodox [post-sixteenth century writers] by the Reformers, who did not discuss the topic. Rather, the orthodox derived it from their reading of medieval systems.”¹³ Both Burroughs and Gearing confirm this by their abundant use of medieval Roman Catholic sources. However, Muller revised his earlier statement: “I would say ‘did not discuss the topic in their confessional writings and more systematic works’ given that there are exegetical sources for brief statements concerning the vision.”¹⁴ Three questions will guide our

11. Two detailed Puritan treatises on the beatific vision are John Owen, *Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ in His Person, Office and Grace*, in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, (London: Johnson and Hunter, 1850–1853), 1:273–415; and John Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous* (London: A. Maxwell and R. Roberts, 1678). Some Puritans addressed this topic in their writings on the four last things. For example, see Robert Bolton, *Mr. Boltons Last and Learned Worke of the Four Last Things* (London: George Miller, 1632); and William Bates, *The Four Last Things* (London, 1691), 267–489. Others, like Thomas Watson, examined this theme in the sixth Beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). Thomas Watson, *The Beatitudes, or A Discourse upon Part of Christ's Famous Sermon on the Mount* (London: Ralph Smith, 1660), 222–68. Watson also provides an extensive consideration in his treatise on the second petition of the Lord's Prayer (“thy kingdom come”). Thomas Watson, *A Body of Practical Divinity* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1692), 455–511. This is a selective list, and sources could easily be multiplied.

12. Hans Boersma, *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 315–38, 352–53; Tom Schwanda, “The Saints' Desire and Delight to Be with Christ,” in *Puritanism and Emotion in the Early Modern World*, ed. Alec Ryrice and Tom Schwanda (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 78–87; Suzanne McDonald, “Beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ: John Owen and the ‘Reforming’ of the Beatific Vision,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Mark Jones (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2012), 141–58; and Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, “Christopher Love on the Glories of Heaven and Terrors of Hell,” in *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 820–30.

13. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:260; cf. Carl R. Trueman, “Heaven and Hell in Puritan Theology,” *Epworth Review* 22 (1995): 78.

14. Richard Muller, personal conversation with the author, March 27, 2024. For a recent summary of Calvin's teaching on the beatific vision see Carl Mosser, “Recovering the Reformation's Ecumenical Vision of Redemption as Deification and Beatific Vision,” *Perichoresis* 18, no. 1 (2020): 9–18; cf. Boersma, *Seeing God*, 257–78.

examination of Burroughs’s and Gearing’s treatment of the saints’ happiness in heaven: what is seen? How is it seen? And what are the benefits of seeing God? Not surprisingly, these three questions overlap with each other.

What Is Seen?

John Owen’s masterful study of the beatific vision in his *Meditations and Discourses of the Glory of Christ* was published in 1684—long after Burroughs’s death and over a decade after the publication of Gearing’s *Prospect of Heaven*.¹⁵ Therefore, these earlier treatments lack much of the depth and detail of Owen’s work. Chronologically, Burroughs’s works were published first and his initial treatment of the beatific vision which appeared in *Moses His Choice* was published in 1641. He compared the human perception on earth in which God is seen “according to his several attributes” in the heavenly vision of God’s unity. Similarly, the believer’s sight of God is muted on earth while in heaven his glory is fully manifested. This face-to-face sight of God is a vision of the Trinity in which the saints will “see how the Father begot the Son, and how the Spirit did proceed from the Father and the Son.” Burroughs illustrated this by contrasting the sight of God “at an ordinary time” on earth with seeing him in heaven, decked in his royal robes, in his glorious splendor, wearing his crown, and seated on his throne with his scepter. This spectacular display of his glory will create “great happiness” for the saints. Furthermore, our earthly understanding of God is partial. Using apophatic language, Burroughs depicted this through God’s “incomprehensible” nature. To say that God cannot be comprehended is a negation of the human ability to grasp God’s nature. In heaven, however, God is known by his “positive excellency.”¹⁶

Later, in 1647, Burroughs wrote his treatise, *The Saints Happiness*, a collection of forty-two sermons on the Beatitudes (it was not published until 1660). He devoted three sermons to seeing God as based on the sixth beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).¹⁷ Bernard McGinn observes that this verse became one of the primary texts in the history of Christian mysticism that grew out of second century debates on what it means to “see” God. However, all recognized that contemplation

15. Owen, *Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ*, in *Works*, 2:273–415.

16. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 536–39. The quotation is taken from page 537.

17. All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

of God is the goal.¹⁸ Randall Pederson discerns that the beatific vision is a key indicator of the mystical strain within Puritanism.¹⁹

Gearing, however, demonstrated a greater appreciation for the contemplative use of language and theology than Burroughs. Burroughs added very little to what Christians see of God in heaven mostly because he discussed what he called the “beatificall vision” from the earthly perspective. He concentrated on how to prepare to see God by a pure heart. To guide his auditors, he defined the beatific vision as “the very touch and close of the soule with the essence of God that shall be in heaven, there is some degree of it even here in the world, in the sight of God, but we are not able to express it.” Therefore, Burroughs asserted that God’s “excellency, and glory, and Majesty, and Greatnesse” would be seen and enable believers to know God’s “mind and heart.”²⁰

Gearing admitted that part of the challenge of seeing God is due to his “infinite Majesty... [which] Heaven cannot contain and hold the infinite being of the Divine Nature.” He claimed that God is not more present in heaven than anywhere else in his creation nor is he more absent in any place because he is “every where alike essentially present.” But he does reveal “more glorious demonstrations of his presence” in heaven than elsewhere.²¹ We will examine this more fully when we consider how God is seen.

How Is God Seen?

Two of the most frequently cited biblical texts used by Burroughs and Gearing, and for that matter, all who investigated the beatific vision, were 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face,” and 1 John 3:2, “but we know when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”²² But what does it mean to see God and how do we see him? Burroughs taught that the believer cannot see God with bodily eyes because God has no body and, unlike human beings, has

18. Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 68.

19. Randall J. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603–1689*, Brill’s Series in Church History, vol. 68, ed. Wim Janse (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 73. Pederson’s specific interest is in Francis Rous (1581–1659). See *Unity in Diversity*, 153, 188–89.

20. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness* (London: Nathaniel Brook, 1660), 416–17.

21. William Gearing, *A Prospect of Heaven* (London: printed for Tho[mas] Passenger and Benj[amin] Hurlock, 1673), 124, 236–37.

22. Burroughs and Gearing also frequently cite 2 Corinthians 3:18.

no shape. He maintained that believers “shall know God by the eye of their understanding, and they shall come to enjoy God, for so, *seeing* is taken in Scripture.”²³

Gearing agreed that bodily vision can only see the corporeal. This means that it is impossible to see a soul, let alone the divine essence of God. Without rehearsing the medieval debate, Gearing taught that since God’s divine essence is “purely spiritual,” the “sight of God is rather an act of the mind, then of the Body; intellectual knowledg, not corporeal light.” While the divine essence is not visible to those in heaven, “yet the Divine Essence will abundantly manifest it self in the Humane Nature of Christ now glorified to our eyes,” Gearing wrote.²⁴ Perceiving the glorified humanity of Christ reflects Jesus’s statement that if a person has seen him, they have seen the Father (John 1:18; 6:46; 14:9), for to behold Christ reveals all of God’s divine attributes. Gearing declared that this is most evident when one compared Christ’s “Body, which was so foully disfigured upon the Cross for our sakes” with its fully restored and glorified wholeness in heaven. He described it as ravishing and quoted Bernard of Clairvaux (or “devout Bernard,” as he called him), who earlier proclaimed this is a sight “full of all sweetness and delight.” Furthermore, Gearing attempted to illustrate the glorious nature of Christ’s body in heaven and affirmed that it was “a thousand times more bright then the Sun.”²⁵

Expanding on Burroughs’s and Gearing’s shared understanding that the perception of God is intellectual, Carl Trueman maintains that Puritans followed medieval scholastics. Trueman recognizes “that the vision is intellectual, a sign that the saint’s human faculties have been restored to their pristine order.”²⁶ Gearing argued that one would see God with “the eye of the mind, not to the eye of the body” because the divine essence is spiritual. Following the Second Coming, the sight of God is mental, not ocular, since the saints possess glorified eyes to see Christ’s radiated light that will ravish the souls of the saints.²⁷ Burroughs also connected seeing God with understanding and argued that purity of heart created a higher understanding of spiritual things because an unclean heart would produce an inaccurate understanding of God. He followed the apostle Paul’s assertion

23. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness*, 404.

24. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 54.

25. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 108, 228, 231, 236, 371.

26. Trueman, “Heaven and Hell in Puritan Theology,” 78.

27. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 229–30.

that on earth we see through a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13:12) and that the clearer the glass the more the beams of the sunlight will radiate through it.²⁸

More impressive is that God will be seen in heaven as he is. On earth, we need to frame some “representations of him in our minds,” while in heaven we experience the “immediate presence of God.” In other words, on earth we know God through mediated means such as reading Scripture, receiving the Lord’s Supper, listening to sermons, and meditating upon creation. That will no longer be necessary in heaven since we will see God “as he is.”

Another distinction is that the beatific vision enlarges the understanding of the mystery of God’s counsels. On earth, we might not grasp the nature of God’s election or providence but, citing Augustine, Burroughs declares that these mysteries will be opened and resolved for believers in heaven. Burroughs used another analogy to teach the blessings of the saints’ beholding of God in heaven. On earth, it is like a stranger seeing a king without any relational connection or experiential awareness, but in heaven it is similar to the queen looking intimately at the king. The stranger might grasp something of the “Beauty and Majesty in the King,” but it will be abstract and have little impact upon them. For the queen, however, this majestic perception is personal. Consequently, when the saints see God in heaven, they can relate to God personally, and this produces great happiness in their souls.²⁹

Another dimension of the blessedness of the soul is that this knowledge would be a direct and unmediated experience of God or, as Gearing stated, God’s “immediate communications of himself.” Seeing Christ would not be limited to bodily eyes, for now the saints would perceive Christ “with the eye of their inner man,” unlocking the mysteries of the incarnation and the various aspects of the hypostatic union of humanity and divinity in Jesus Christ. Other mysteries of the faith would also be clarified, including justification, glorification, and “all the Prophecies, all the Figures, Types, and Symbolical shadows, all the mystical Senses” of Scripture. But Gearing adamantly affirmed that human understanding would never approach God’s infinite knowledge. Even if a person studied God for all eternity, he or she could never fully comprehend his infinite nature. He added to this an exclamation point affirming Aquinas, who taught that the glorified saints would never see God wholly.³⁰

28. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness*, 405, 414.

29. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 539–42.

30. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 53, 258, 287, 280. Gearing also proclaimed that the renewed, glorified sight of Christ would transform the affections and the will, thereby

Although the beatific vision is about seeing God in the language of sight, this can be restrictive of the other ways to perceive God’s presence. Gearing taught that seeing Christ in the fullness of his glory removed the earthly restrictions of the dimness of sight and deafness of hearing. This enlargement of the senses enables the saints not only to see but also to hear Christ verbally express his love to them. Gearing also acknowledged that the senses of touch, smell, and taste, which were often considered inferior in ancient and medieval times, will be rehabilitated. In heaven, Gearing wrote, taste will be “satisfied with incredible sweetness and delights” and, figuratively speaking, the saints will “have an experimental taste in themselves of the efficacy of his blood.” This reminder of Christ’s sacrificial death should inspire those in heaven that Christ “be eternally honoured as a Redeemer.”³¹

What Are the Benefits of Seeing God?

Perfection of Union with Christ

Central to the believer’s relationship with Christ is his mediatorial role that began on earth (with the justification of the believer and his engrafting into Christ) and will continue in heaven. Burroughs taught this when he claimed that if believers desire to walk with God, they must take Christ with them, and this is only possible with him as their mediator.³² Gearing added that even after Christ raises the saints to glory, he continues to exercise his mediatorial role; believers, then, never reach a point where Christ is no longer needed.³³

Gearing also claimed that the human soul is “alwayes empty till it got possession of Christ” because he is the *summum bonum*. Therefore, as the soul delights in Christ, it desires greater union and communion with him.³⁴ The Puritans often spoke of this union with Christ as a spiritual marriage.³⁵ Gearing followed that practice and proclaimed that Christians were “united

enlarging these faculties and raising them to glorious perfection. See Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 299, 301.

31. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 241–42, 244–45. The quotation is taken from pages 245 and 335.

32. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 322. *Walking with God* is combined with *On Conversing in Heaven*. Following page 116 in *Of Conversing in Heaven*, the page numbers increase by 100. Page 117, for example, is misnumbered as 217. Since this continues throughout both books, I will follow the printed page number, not the actual pagination.

33. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 281.

34. William Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse* (London: Nevill Simmons, 1665), 4, 23.

35. Tom Schwanda, *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative–Mystical Piety of Puritanism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), chapter 2.

to Christ” and that he is “their Husband, they are his Spouse” and the “time of the Marriage solemnity shall be at the appearing of Christ.”³⁶ In his sermons, *The Love-sick Spouse*, he counseled his listeners, “A Love-sick soul desireth nothing more than the presence of Christ here and in Heaven.”³⁷

According to Gearing, one of the primary benefits of heaven is that the saints who are “espoused to the Lord Jesus Christ” on that “great day” when they are received in glory will experience the “full consummation of the marriage.”³⁸ The fulfillment of marriage, then, awaits the final resurrection, when the bodies and souls of believers are reunited to join Jesus. Jesus offers the members of his church (his bride) abundant love to satisfy them from the long separation that existed from their conversion to the present. Turning to Augustine, Gearing’s most popular extra-biblical source, he instructed his auditors that since their marriage is consummated, the saints were fully satisfied, and their “perfect enjoyment of God” would no longer desire anything more than they had already experienced—for what could be added to a perfect relationship?³⁹ Burroughs echoed the same message that “the marriage of the Lamb” is solemnized only upon the day of judgment.⁴⁰

Burroughs expanded the nature of the believer’s relationship with God. First, it is a union initiated by God. Second, when God gazes upon his saints, he sees “nothing but himself in [their] souls.” Third, while the initial benefits of this union begin on earth, it will be perfected in heaven and enlarged by “an infinite inflamed love.” For all these reasons, it will be a “most glorious union.”⁴¹

Union with Christ overflows into communion with the Triune God. Burroughs defined communion as a mutual interaction in which the person’s soul approaches God and in response receives “the influence of the goodness and love and mercy of God into the soul.” Additionally, there is a “mutual imbracing and opening of hearts one upon another for the satisfying of the Spirits one of another.” More directly, “The Saints they see the face of God, and God delights in the face of the Saints.”⁴² Burroughs employed the same language of “mutual opening” earlier in his *Moses His Choice*, but added to this concept, “Why the bride was “brought into the

36. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 32.

37. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 36, cf. 37.

38. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 171–72.

39. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 316–17.

40. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 523.

41. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 551–52.

42. Burroughs, *Of Conversing in Heaven*, 109–10.

Chamber spoken of in Cant. 1:4:⁴³ He concluded in his work, *Of Conversing in Heaven*, by proclaiming this refreshing truth, that in heaven the soul will enjoy full communion with God and will “enjoy all that he hath purchased by his blood” for his saints.⁴⁴ Gearing provided an important corrective to the common contemporary concern that the spiritual life is often individualized when he articulated “that our Communion with Christ is furthered by our spiritual converse one with another.” He noted that this is particularly true when a person is struggling with a “weak and fainting heart.”⁴⁵ This is not intended to diminish the believer’s intimacy with God but to expand the understanding of the communion of saints. Likewise, he wrote, “in heaven you shall enjoy communion and fellowship with God, with Christ, with an innumerable Company of Angels.”⁴⁶

Fruition and Blessedness of God

Second, the *visio Dei* enables the saints to experience the abundance of God’s love and full enjoyment of him. Gearing cited Bernard twice to reinforce his teaching. First, he claimed that all earthly hindrances have been removed in heaven so that nothing can “oppose our happiness.” Next, he asserted that the human preoccupation with self-love that plagued our earthly lives has been banished from our souls so we can love God perfectly without any limitations.⁴⁷ He further taught with the validation of Augustine, that the “principal employment of the Saints in Heaven is to love God.”⁴⁸ This results from receiving God’s love first, and makes the saints reciprocate his love. Gearing’s treatment of the beatific vision is sublime. He claims that the saints in heaven “love as they see, and so much do they rejoice as they love.” Since God is the “chief object” of their sight, and because he is of “infinite goodness, beauty [and] sweetness,” the resulting joy is infinitely sweeter and more desirable than anything known on earth.⁴⁹ Gearing dovetails here with Burroughs, who cited Augustine’s *Confessions*: “O Lord, thou hast made us for thee, and our hearts are unquiet till they come to enjoy thee; and when the soul comes to rest in God.”⁵⁰ Burroughs returned to the

43. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 565.

44. Burroughs, *Of Conversing in Heaven*, 259.

45. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 13.

46. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 82.

47. Gearing, *The Mount of Holy Meditations*, 152–53.

48. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 302.

49. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 307.

50. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 573.

theme of love by playing off of Bernard of Clairvaux's four degrees of love without directly referring to him. He reduced Bernard's quartet to three degrees: "loving God for our selves, and loving God for himself, and loving ourselves for God." The third and highest expression of love is possible only for the "glorified Saints." The believer who experiences this deep love for self because of God's love for them will "be ravished with God, and be in a kinde of extasie eternally."⁵¹

According to Burroughs, tasting the depth of God's love formed the foundation for the "Work of Heaven" which is to "continually blesse, and magnifie, and praise the Name of God whom they see to be so infinitely worthy of all praise." Another way in which the saints are employed in heaven is by "the keeping of a perpetual Sabbath." The proper honoring of the Sabbath provides a context for this desired praise and blessing of God.⁵² Additionally, he recognized that the unlimited sweetness in "my Husband Jesus Christ" inspires believers to cultivate close communion with God.⁵³

While meditation is essential to prepare the believer for heaven, the primary work of heaven will be contemplation. Gearing distinguishes between meditation which searches for what is hidden, and contemplation which admires what has been found. Meditation is like the *preparation* of a meal, while contemplation is like the *savoring and enjoyment* of that meal. Meditation is like fanning the fire while contemplation is like the resulting flame.⁵⁴ Gearing taught that contemplation is basic to God and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit engage in perpetual contemplation of themselves. In other words, they engage in mutual enjoyment of each other as members of the Godhead. This pattern provides a model and motivation for the saints of heaven to join in the "everlasting contemplation of the God head."⁵⁵

For Christians to cultivate a contemplative attitude and gaze at God—and especially upon his truth—would result in "sweet satisfaction."⁵⁶ The Puritans frequently stressed the importance of contemplation as a means of grace on earth since it would be a common practice in heaven. But contrary to the efforts to practice contemplation on earth, there would be no

51. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 575–76.

52. Burroughs, *Of Conversing in Heaven*, 115.

53. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 211.

54. Gearing, *The Mount of Holy Meditation*, 22–24.

55. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 296, 302.

56. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 275.

hindrances to the enjoyment of God in heaven with unlimited "contemplation, love, and fruition of God."⁵⁷

A significant component of the fruition of God includes heavenly visions that, according to Gearing, ravish people into ecstasy while they are still on earth. One example he cited is the transfiguration of our Lord when Peter, James, and John beheld the transfigured radiance of Christ upon the mount (Luke 9:28–36). This momentary encounter on earth is but a pale comparison to what the saints will behold in heaven as they continually gaze upon the glorified presence of Christ.⁵⁸ Gearing's treatment soared to a more ecstatic pitch as he continued to expound the saints' enjoyment of God in heaven. Nine times he used some form of the word ravisment as he spoke of the "full fruition" and "extasie of Joy" that awaits the glorified saints.⁵⁹

Transforming Sight of God's Glory

Most significant in Burroughs's treatment of the beatific vision is that the "blessedness of the sight of God" is a "transforming sight." As one beholds God, his divine light shines into the believer's mind. Burroughs clarified that this is not a "meer notional sight" or only mental; rather, the person who sees God gains more than simply new knowledge about God, for their minds are transformed "into the same likeness with God." This led to his claim, "there is a great deal of difference between the notional vision of God, and the Deifical vision of God; for it is not only beatifical, but deifical; for it does transform a man into the likeness of God." As Burroughs often did, he employed an analogy to reinforce this. A deformed person may see a beautiful sight without changing his condition, but the soul of the saint who beholds God will become "glorious." The result is that "the sight of God will be a full sight." The believer's vision of God will be elevated "to see God in his excellency" and to gaze fully upon his face. This, writes Gearing, will be the reward of faith for the godly. Moses never experienced this desire (Ex. 33:18–23). Burroughs concluded this section by quoting 1 John 3:2, "We shall be like him."⁶⁰

Earlier, Burroughs traced the same measure that the saints would be "partakers of the Divine nature" by using 2 Corinthians 3:18, where Paul writes, "We beholding as in a Glasse, with open face, the Glory of the Lord.

57. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 218, cf. 257.

58. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 233–35.

59. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 233–38, 242, quotations at pages 235–36.

60. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 542.

We are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory.”⁶¹ Burroughs is clear that to be like God does not mean that one is equal to him, since the saints in glory would not be changed into the divine nature.⁶² Nonetheless, some people today are nervous about the language of deification because its meaning suggests “being made *like* God.” It is critical to grasp the term *like*. No form of Christianity teaches a merging of our humanity with the divinity of God. Rather, the doctrine of deification reminds us that we have been created in the image and likeness of God and will recover what was lost in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1:26–27). Eastern Orthodox theology makes the helpful distinction between the essence (or divine nature) and energies (or grace) of God. Even a glorified saint will never share in God’s essence but will experience the grace of God.

Moreover, this vision of God requires no effort on the believer’s part. Even better, the saints would never lose sight of God because “the eyes of the soul shall be eternally opened” to have a “continual view of God.” The overwhelming nature of seeing God is so spectacular that Burroughs concluded this chapter by declaring that if people understood what they would lose because of their sins, they would quickly cast them off.⁶³

Gearing’s development of this aspect of the beatific vision took a different path heavily dependent upon Christ’s resurrection as recorded especially in 1 Corinthians 15:13 and 19. He devoted over twenty-five pages that follows the reasoning of the apostle Paul: “If we deny the resurrection of the believers’ bodies, we deny Christ to be risen.” Gearing goes on to say that Christ “rose not as a private, but as a publick Person,” preparing for the resurrection of the saints. Consequently, the sight of Christ will restore the resurrected bodies of believers. In this glorious resurrection, writes Gearing, Samson will have his vision restored, and Mephibosheth will not be lame. Beyond restoring what humanity has lost, this transforming sight will also involve “glorified eyes” that can see more clearly.⁶⁴

This newly transformed “sight” allowed the saints to echo Job 42:5, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee” (KJV). This new knowledge will confirm what Christians have heard on earth and validate not only who God is in his nature, but also in his unlimited goodness to believers. Furthermore, this awareness of new knowledge

61. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness*, 426. This is Burroughs’s own translation.

62. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 575.

63. Burroughs, *Moses His Choice*, 543, 546.

64. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 179, 191, 213, 222.

extends also to Jesus since the saints “shall have a perfect knowledge of him as God and Man, as Mediator between God and Man.”⁶⁵

Preparation for Heaven

Given this expectation of Burroughs and Gearing regarding the saints’ happiness in heaven, how did they train believers to prepare for it? Three basic principles are evident in their sermons: being intentional about walking with God, promoting purity of heart, and cultivating a desire for union and communion with Christ.

Walking with God

Getting to heaven is not automatic; it requires intentional effort and discipline. Thomas Hooker once observed that none will “go to heaven on a feather bed.”⁶⁶ Burroughs’s sermon on Genesis 5:24 provided one popular Puritan metaphor for the preparation for heaven. One quality that distinguished Enoch from his generation was his righteousness and holiness. Later, in a rare reference to a secondary source, he cited Augustine for his comments that Noah also walked with God and that his life reflected similar holiness and reverence to that of Enoch. Burroughs characterized his own cultural milieu as a “declining, Wanton, Christ–denying age” that was parallel to that of Noah and Enoch. The context in which he found himself likely inspired his preaching of this text.⁶⁷

The action inherent in the metaphor of walking with God can stimulate the growth of the soul and deepen a person’s relationship with God, such that one “gets neerer and neerer to Heaven every day.” This is a primary way to prepare for heaven and the communion that awaits the believer. It is a “blessed thing to walk with God now,” writes Burroughs, since the believer’s blessings will expand into the enjoyment of God in heaven. Earthly friendship with God “is but as the forerunner of that glorious Communion that you shall enjoy with him...to all eternity.” To encourage the Christian’s earthly pilgrimage, God often sends a “Heavenly thought” to stimulate walking with him. Once a person recognizes the joy and sweetness of communion with God on earth, they know that it will be expanded exponentially beyond their imagination in heaven.⁶⁸

65. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 274, 278, 281.

66. Cited by Smith, *Heaven in the American Imagination*, 20.

67. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 263, 274, sig. A2.

68. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 283, 299, 304.

Perhaps God limits the depth of the earthly experience of him so that Christians do not become overly satisfied with him before heaven. This spiritual plateau is a wise reminder of the greater joy and communion with God that awaits believers in eternity. Or, in the words of Burroughs, “in Heaven we shall be able to improve our converse with God.” As Burroughs treats our heavenly enjoyment, his language soars to a high register of delight and enjoyment of God that one seldom sees in his writings. He quotes Bernard of Clairvaux: “How sweet if it were not so little!” (*rara hora brevis mora!*).

Knowing God on earth produces “soul-ravishing joys” that are rare and brief, but not sustained. In heaven, this will grow infinitely as Burroughs joyfully reported, “He shall have communion with God, and all those soul-ravishing comforts that he hath had in the presence of God in this world, he shall have them all together, and infinitely more than them. Oh this is that that will make their soul long after Heaven, and set a prize upon it.” His use of bridal language is often limited but, in this section, he continues his elevated language as he rejoices: “Oh what comfort is there in the comforts of my Husband Jesus Christ!”⁶⁹

Central to walking with God is the use of holy duties, for it is through them that the soul meets God. Burroughs infrequently used the Song of Solomon in comparison with Gearing. However, he included two citations that the king is in the galleries (Song 7:5) and that when the soul “is exercised in the Ordinances, it hath converse with Christ” and recognizes the voice of Jesus inviting the believer into deeper communion (Song 5:2).⁷⁰ Burroughs typically spoke in general terms in regard of the means of grace, but he emphasized Isaac who withdrew at night to meditate in the fields (Gen. 24:63). He stressed the importance of withdrawing from the world to better focus on God and to the use of meditation and prayer as a guide for walking with God to prepare for heaven.⁷¹ Gearing asserted the essential importance of the means of grace on earth that would no longer be necessary in heaven. “[I]n this life the Ordinances are a Glass to give us the sight of God; in Heaven the Humane Nature of Christ is a Glass to give our bodily eyes the sight of God.”⁷²

69. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 305–306, 311. For the reference to Bernard see Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Songs of Songs II*, trans. Kilian Walsh (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1976), sermon 23, 6.15.

70. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 280–82.

71. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 212–13.

72. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 54.

Purity

Burroughs’s analysis of the sixth beatitude extended to the opposite meaning of the text as well. If the pure in heart are blessed to see God, then it stands to reason that the impure person will not see him. Burroughs wrote that after death and the day of judgment, the one who “continue[d] in his sin” will have no sight of God. He went on to pity those who are consumed with their lusts instead of the prospect of seeing God. Earlier in these sermons, he develops this further and maintains that if anyone has unclean hearts, “then their spirits will not be able to have that right understanding in spiritual things.” He quoted Daniel 9:13, “That we might turn saith Daniel from our iniquities, and understand thy truth” (KJV). He stressed that iniquities defile the soul and prevent the person from grasping the truth. According to Burroughs, “The Lord takes no delight at all to reveal himself to one that hath an unclean heart.” From God’s perspective, “a filthy defiled conscience or heart” had rejected God and is not receptive to his truth. He continued that the reason for such ignorance is not because God’s truth is difficult to grasp, but due to the “filthiness of their hearts” they were unable to recognize it or grasp its meaning. The reason for their deafness is that their sins and lusts had carried them away and their minds were overwhelmed by corruption.⁷³

Burroughs insisted that one reason why people did not understand God or Scripture is due to errors that distorted their understanding. This error affected two types of people: those who were older and had failed to continue walking in faithfulness due to their carnal and sensual minds, and those who were younger and never took sin seriously. The teaching of Paul in 2 Timothy 3:8 supports this understanding: “As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (KJV). This passage illustrates the seriousness of corrupt thinking and how it affects a person’s faith and relationship with God. This produced a warning to discern and recognize false teachers and to avoid their preaching. Burroughs concluded this section by challenging his auditors that the best way to avoid error is to “purge your hearts, walk before God in uprightness, and the Spirit of God shall guid[e] you then into all truth.” Only in this way will a person create and maintain a purity of heart to see God.⁷⁴

It is interesting to observe that Burroughs employed only four citations from secondary sources in these three sermons: two from Augustine, one

73. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness*, 439, 405–407, 409, incorrectly numbered 490.

74. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness*, 411–12.

from Ambrose, and one from a Greek philosopher. This follows the typical Puritan pattern that when preachers revised their sermons for publication, they often added additional quotations. Since *The Saints Happiness* was published after his death, this is likely the reason why the editors did not expand Burroughs's use of secondary sources.

Desire

Burroughs taught that one way to increase the desire for heaven is to remind Christians that the "communion with God, and all those soul-ravishing comforts" which were experienced on earth, would be "infinitely more" in heaven. There is a principle of magnification or amplification here. The more one can taste and see the Lord's goodness, the more that person thirsts to experience God more deeply.⁷⁵ Gearing approached this from a different perspective and preached from Song of Solomon 2:5, "Stay me with Flag-gons, Comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love" (KJV), a passage which focuses on the nature of longing for Christ. These four sermons are significant since the desire for Christ is only satisfied once a believer reaches heaven. Burroughs distinguished between earthly and heavenly desires and articulated that once an earthly desire is satisfied, it no longer motivates a person to seek the object. But heavenly desires are never exhausted, for the initial enjoyment inspires continued longing. Gearing proclaimed that no Christian ever thinks that they have enough of Christ because "the more he hath, the more he doth desire."⁷⁶

One of the practical means that God has provided to facilitate this desire is through the means of grace. Gearing stated that the ordinances create communion with Christ and will enlarge our hunger for Christ. The use of these "holy dut[ies] should be like wings to raise us up to God, and as chains to fasten us to him." While the term "ordinance" can cover a wide range of devotional practices, he singles out public worship as a means to meet God and asserted that it should "lift up our hearts to God, and mount up to heaven upon the wings of faith, and an holy affection." The disposition of a person's attitude is critical. If it is inspired properly it "would raise our hearts, [and] our desires and affections." This is related to the reason why God ordained the means of grace to assist believers to "climb up to heaven" and to enjoy "a strong intercourse with God." While nothing is automatic or guaranteed about the use of spiritual disciplines, God often

75. Burroughs, *Walking with God*, 306, 314.

76. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 8.

uses them to draw nearer to believers. From the human perspective, when a person reads or hears the words of Scripture or prays, they believe it will provide them with a “fuller taste of [God’s] love in Christ.”⁷⁷

Gearing also stressed the importance of cultivating an attitude of *contemptus mundi* (contempt of the world). He warned his auditors that they could not be heavenly-minded if they were consumed with the fleeting pleasures of the earthly life.⁷⁸ In *A Prospect of Heaven*, he reiterated this: “We mind Earth so much, therefore do we expect Heaven so little.”⁷⁹ But if a person practiced meditation with focused attentiveness, it would not only prepare them for heaven, but it would also create a prelude and open the door to introduce them to “Heaven upon earth.”⁸⁰

In a display of God’s gracious accommodation to his creation, Gearing recognized that not all people had the equal benefit of faithful ministers. In such situations, he believed that God might comfort Christians in an “immediate way” without the use of the means of grace. This is a surprising provision, since the immediate experience of God is frequently reserved for heaven unless it is used in a more mystical sense.

Additionally, Gearing warned his listeners not to be content with a meager experience of Christ. He compared the afterlife with Luke 16:19–31, when the rich man, eternally banished to hell, begged Lazarus for a small drop of water, and with the spouse from the Song of Solomon who extravagantly desired the abundance of flagons. While sometimes this passage might be translated as raisin cakes, Gearing appears to be thinking of a large pitcher of wine. He continued by citing Ephesians 3:20, warning that human requests are often too modest when one considers the length and breadth and depth and height of God’s love.⁸¹

As he examined the nature and dynamics of love more closely, Gearing taught that the goal of love is to desire greater union and communion with Christ. When this love is hindered, it creates a sickness within the soul. Hence arises the need for vehement love to overcome any human restrictions or resistance. More specifically, he insisted that love created a “desire to be united to Christ, to enjoy the comfortable presence of Christ, to have fellowship and communion with him.” The goal of this intensity is fruition,

77. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 9, 11.

78. Gearing, *The Mount of Holy Meditation*, 179.

79. Gearing, *Prospect of Heaven*, 80.

80. Gearing, *The Mount of Holy Meditation*, 198–99.

81. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 16.

for love “is never at rest, till it can join it self to the object that it loveth; till it gets to enjoy and possess it.”

Since only Christ can ultimately satisfy the soul, the believer seeks to rest in Christ. This prompts him to speak more fully about lovesickness which he defined as “a strong impulsion of love in the soul after Christ, and a most vehement thirsting after him.” Solomon employed this term twice in Song of Solomon, once when the bridegroom is absent from the spouse, and the other when he is present with her. The former is a sickness of hope, the latter one of desire. Regardless, a person who is lovesick for Christ desires nothing more than his presence and a practical way to engage this while still on earth is through reading and meditating on Scripture and participating in the sacraments.⁸²

In comparing these sermons with others from Gearing, one immediately notices the scant use of secondary sources which is abundantly evident in his other writings. However, he does reference Bernard of Clairvaux with the reminder that love for Christ must be chaste and not adulterous. He pointedly asked whether we love Christ for *himself* or only for his *gifts*. This volume concludes with directions on how to prepare one’s heart to long for Christ with a consideration of what life might be without Christ and a careful reflection on the human need of Christ.⁸³

Conclusion

Jeremiah Burroughs claimed that while the fullness of communion with God would not be experienced until heaven, there is “some degree of it here in this world.” He also admitted that we could already catch a glimpse of the “beatificall vision,” which he defined as “the very touch and close[ness] of the soule with the essence of God that shall be in heaven.”⁸⁴ William Gearing concluded his *The Mount of Holy Meditation* by quoting Bernard of Clairvaux which he intended as both a challenge and an invitation to his readers. Through meditation, he taught, the believer “mounts up to Heaven by his desires” and receives a “large tast of the sweetnesse of heavenly pleasures” and happiness for those who are in Christ Jesus.⁸⁵

82. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 23, 26, 28, 36.

83. Gearing, *The Love-sick Spouse*, 32–33, 42–43.

84. Burroughs, *The Saints Happiness*, 417.

85. Gearing, *Mount of Holy Meditation*, 199.

“There be two kinde of writings... Divine or Ecclesiasticall”: Scripture, Tradition, and Catholicity in the Thought of William Perkins

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William Perkins (1558–1602) was one of the prominent formulators of Protestant doctrine at the close of the sixteenth century, whether as a defender of the Elizabethan Settlement, as a representative of early Reformed orthodoxy whose work paralleled that of Continental contemporaries, or as a forerunner of later English Puritanism.¹ His views on the use of the church fathers, as formalized in his distinction between divine, ecclesiastical and sometimes also “humane” writings, provide both an index to the impact and relative authority of tradition in early modern English Protestant thought and a partial answer to the debated question of the traditional roots of English Reformed and Puritan theology.

Perkins’s understanding of Scripture and tradition has been examined in several studies. Three of these studies have appealed to Perkins’s work as exemplary of Puritan theology.² Two studies have either argued an increasing minimalization of the value of the fathers by the English Puritans or contrasted the Puritan reception and use of the church fathers to the significantly greater traditional content of Laudian and later Anglican theology.³

1. On the life and work of William Perkins, see William B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Ian Breward, “The Life and Theology of William Perkins, 1558–1602” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1963).

2. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Anne-Stephane Schäfer, *Auctoritas Patrum? The Reception of the Church Fathers in Puritanism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012); and Coleman Ford, “‘Everywhere, always, by all’: William Perkins and James Ussher on the Constructive Use of the Fathers,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 7, no. 2 (July 2015): 95–111.

3. Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives*, 23–32; Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England*

On the other side of the question, one study has concluded that Puritan “iconoclasm” did not extend to the church fathers generally, and the Puritans were “deeply influenced by patristic thought,” although they tended to reference the fathers as *testes veritatis* rather than as primary sources of truth.⁴ Another has argued (stretching the bounds of what can be considered “Puritan”) a respect for and use of the patristic tradition among Puritans as evidenced in the works of William Perkins and James Ussher.⁵

Given the diverse conclusions found in these studies, further attention to Perkins’s thought is warranted. One issue in particular can be settled briefly. Perkins’s approach to tradition and of the use of the church fathers can only be properly understood when separated from the issue of “Puritanism,” given the problem of identifying Puritanism and, by extension, of identifying any particular view of the tradition and the fathers as a “Puritan” view. It is questionable to identify Perkins as a Puritan without significant qualification—and quite mistaken to extend the identification to Ussher. Perkins himself used the term “Puritan” negatively as the equivalent of “Cathar” and noted that it was used together with “Presitian” as an unjustified term of reproach for those who endeavored “to get & keepe the puritie of heart in a good conscience.”⁶ He never applied the term to himself.

Nor do Perkins’s views correspond readily with ecclesial views of those typically identified as Puritans in the Elizabethan era, although his theology generally was highly influential in Puritan circles as well as being representative of the Reformed theology of the Church of England in his time.⁷ Accordingly, Perkins’s analysis of the problem of Scripture and tradition, including the relevance and use of the fathers to the formulation of Christian

and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 105–14, note on 113; and Jean-Louis Quantin, “The Fathers in Seventeenth Century Anglican Theology,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 2:987–1008.

4. Schäfer, *Auctoritas Patrum*, 20, 399.

5. Ford, “Everywhere, always, by all,” 96, 110–11; also note Ian Breward, “A Neglected Protestant Patrology,” in *Studia Patristica* 17, pt. 1, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), 352–56.

6. Cf. William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Lords Prayer* (London: printed for John Legat, 1595); cited from William Perkins, *The Works of that Famous and Worthie Minister of Christ, in the Universitie of Cambridge, M. William Perkins* (Cambridge: John Legatt, 1612–1613), 1:342, col. 1; and William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition of Christs Sermon in the Mount* (Cambridge: printed by Thomas Brooke and Cantrell Legge, 1608); cited from Perkins, *Works* (1612–1613), 3:15, col. 1.

7. See Patterson, *William Perkins*, viii–ix, 40, 46–49.

doctrine, is instructive in piecing together a picture of the early modern English reception of the churchly tradition—not only among Puritans but also more broadly among the English Reformed. In this effort, moreover, Perkins’s thought evidences distinct parallels with that of various Elizabethan Reformed contemporaries, notably William Whitaker (1548–1595), regius professor of divinity, Cambridge, and chancellor of St. Paul’s, London; and Robert Some (1542–1609), master of Peterhouse, Cambridge.⁸

A second issue to be resolved concerns the meaning of the term “tradition” as debated by Perkins and his contemporaries. The term must be set into the context of its late sixteenth-century use and not employed as a general term for the course of Christian teaching as embodied in exegesis, doctrinal statement, and practice. It was typical of early modern usage to deploy a narrower and more specific understanding of tradition, typically looking to individual “traditions” and not to the broad historical trajectory of Christian teaching. In Protestant circles, moreover, the term was closely governed by the usages of *paradosis* in the New Testament.⁹ In what follows, Perkins’s thought will be shown to exemplify the complexity of the debate over the relationship of Scripture and tradition. Specifically, Perkins will be shown to have advocated the absolute priority of the biblical norm in the formulation of doctrine and the adjudication of controversies while at the same time assuming the value of patristic testimony and the authority of the church in determining practices within the bounds set by Scripture.

Perkins built upon the extant polemic concerning traditions, the use of the fathers, and the narrative of theological and religious decline during the Middle Ages in order to frame a positive pronouncement of the catholicity of Protestantism—one that continued the anti-Roman polemic of the Reformers but also presented a foundational statement concerning the biblical and traditionary nature of Protestant doctrinal formulation. Four of Perkins’s works are of particular importance in this regard: *Exposition of*

8. See F. G. M. Broeyer, “William Whitaker 1548–1595: A Cambridge Professor on the Doctrine of the Church,” in *Lines of Contact: Proceedings of the Second Conference of Belgian, British, Irish and Dutch Historians of Universities*, ed. J. M. Fletcher and H. De Ridder-Syomens (Ghent: University of Ghent, 1994), 5, 20; also Edward C. Brooks, “Dialogue and Syllogism in the Sixteenth Century: A Study in the Life and Theology of William Whitaker (ob. 1595)” (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 1971), 100–159; and Peter Lake, “Robert Some and the Ambiguities of Moderation,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 71 (1980): 254–78.

9. See Richard A. Muller, “*Traditio and Paradosis vs. Humanas Traditiones*: Calvin on the Problem of Tradition,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 33 (2022): 5–29.

the *Symbole or Creed of the Apostles* (1595),¹⁰ *Reformed Catholike* (1597),¹¹ *A Godly and Learned Exposition upon Christs Sermon in the Mount* (1608), and the *Probleme of the Forged Catholicisme* (1604).¹² Moreover, the argument found in these works was representative of Perkins's era, reflecting not only the position Perkins's English contemporary William Whitaker (1548–1595), but also the positions of continental Reformed writers like Amandus Polanus (1561–1610),¹³ Franciscus Junius (1545–1602), Lucas Trelcatius Jr. (1573–1607), and David Pareus (1548–1622).

William Perkins and Protestant Catholicity

William Patterson ably argued that Perkins's works not only reveal the profound connection between English Reformed theology and the thought of the Continental Reformed in the last decades of the sixteenth century, but they also document the insistence of the Church of England that its theology represented the catholic tradition of Western Christianity.¹⁴ As a theologian and apologist of the Church of England, Perkins was concerned not only for the biblical foundation of his theology, but also for the continuity of the teaching of the Church of England—and, certainly, of Reformed Protestantism in general—with the witness of the ancient church, prior to the decline of theology and rise of papal dominance and

10. William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbole or Creed of the Apostles According to the Tenour of the Scriptures, and the Consent of Orthodoxe Fathers of the Church* (Cambridge: John Legatt, 1595); hereinafter cited from Perkins, *Works* (1612–1613), vol. 1.

11. William Perkins, *A Reformed Catholike: or, A Declaration Shewing How Neere We May Come to the Present Church of Rome in Sundrie Points of Religion: and Wherein We must for Ever Depart from Them: with an advertisement to all favourers of the Romane religion, shewing that the said religion is against the Catholike principles and grounds of the Catechisme* (London: John Legat, 1597); hereinafter cited from Perkins, *Works*, vol. 1.

12. Originally in Latin: William Perkins, *Problema de Romanae fidei ementito Catholicismo Estq[ue] antidotum contra Thesaurum Catholicum Iodoci Coccij. Et propaideiae [sic] iuventutis in lectione omnium patrum. Editum post mortem authoris operâ & studio Samuelis Wardi* (Cambridge: Joannes Legat, 1604); in translation, *Probleme of the Forged Catholicisme, or Universalitie of the Romish Religion*, in *Works* (1612–1613), vol. 2; on which, see Breward, "A Neglected Protestant Patrology"; and note Breward, "The Life and Theology of William Perkins, 1558–1602" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1963), 110–13.

13. For an account of Polanus on tradition, see Byung Soo Han, *Symphonia Catholica: The Merger of Patristic and Contemporary Sources in the Theological Method of Amandus Polanus (1561–1610)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 95–101.

14. See William B. Patterson, "William Perkins as Apologist for the Church of England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 57, no. 2 (2006): 252–69; and Rosemary A. Sisson, "William Perkins, Apologist for the Elizabethan Church of England," *Modern Language Review* 47, no. 4 (1952): 495–502.

superstition in the later Middle Ages.¹⁵ He was also concerned to respond to Romanist claims that Protestants had simply abandoned positive recourse to the fathers and councils.¹⁶

The title page of Perkins’s *Exposition of the Symbole* indicates his intention to unfold the creedal doctrines “according to the tenour of the Scripture, and the consent of the Orthodoxe Fathers of the Church.”¹⁷ Perkins’s choice of words already signals a distinction. The basic doctrinal statement will be “according to the tenour” or general “purpose” or “effect” of Scripture, or “the course of meaning which holds on or continues through something written or spoken,” perhaps even implying the legal definition of “tenor” as “exact” or “literal,” where “tenour” is understood as the legal document of “tenure” indicating title and rights.¹⁸ This basic understanding of the exact purpose of effect of the doctrine will, however, be conferred with the understandings found in the fathers of the church and their “consent” or agreement in the interpretation.

Perkins adds a further gloss on this approach to the topics — still on the titlepage — by adding a citation from Augustine’s (354–430) book of questions on the Gospel of Matthew: “They are good Catholickes, which are sound of faith and life.”¹⁹ Perkins drew his definition of “Catholike” as well as his assumptions concerning the decline of true catholicity in the church from Augustine and Vincent of Lerins (d. 445). He cited the famous passages from Vincent’s *Commonitorium* that defined the faith of the church catholic as that “which hath been held in all *places*, at all *times*, and of all *professours*,” and that counseled a Christian “to beleeeve and professe that

15. Jordan J. Ballor, “Deformation and Reformation: Thomas Aquinas and the Rise of Protestant Scholasticism,” in *Aquinas Among the Protestants*, ed. Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley Blackwell, 2017): 27–48, here 29–33.

16. Cf., for example see Gregory Martin, *A Discoverie of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the Heretikes of Our Daies Specially the English Sectaries, and of their foule dealing herein, by partial & false translations to the advantage of their heresies, in their English Bibles used and authorised since the time of schisme* (Rheims: John Fogny, 1582), sig. av recto–verso.

17. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, sig. L1r.

18. Cf. John Rider, *Bibliotheca scholastica: A double dictionarie, penned for all those that would haue within short space the vse of the Latin tongue, either to speake, or write* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1589), s.v., Tenor (col. 1481); and note s.v., “tenor” and “tenour” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000–).

19. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, sig. K5r; citing Augustine, *Quaestionum septemdecim in Evanesium secundum Matthaenum liber unus*, xi.4 in PL 35, col. 1369: “Boni autem catholici sunt, qui et fidem integram sequuntur et mores bonos.”

onely, which he knowes the Catholike Church in ancient times did universally hold."²⁰

Augustine, similarly, had asserted the truth of "whatsoever the Church hath universally, and continually professed" as derived from the Apostolic "originall."²¹ Catholicity, for both Vincent and Augustine, was to be defined not by a present impression of universality but by the universal recognition, through time, of the most ancient, apostolic faith. This catholicity, moreover, stands in contrast to the "faith of the Romane Church... concerning the way and meanes of salvation": the Romanist rests his teaching not on the truly ancient faith but on the decisions of the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholicism, and "the Missal and Breviary which are reformed and printed by the command and authoritie of Pope *Pius* the fift."²² By implication, all of these recent documents fail to present the ancient faith of the church.

Augustine and Vincent prove the point. Inasmuch as they lived some twelve hundred years before his own time, Perkins notes that both Augustine and Vincent "held to be ancient... what would seem ancient unto them," namely, "such things as were received in the Apostles times."²³

Therefore not all *antiquity* of doctrine is to be approved, but that onely which *Lirensis, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Cyprian, &c.* held to be of and from antiquitie, and which they commended unto their posteritie, as also that *universalitie* is to be accounted true, and only that, which tooke place in all churches in the Apostles times, and in the next ages going before *Vincentius* and *Augustine*.²⁴

It is clear from Perkins's comment in his *Exposition of the Symbole* that this view of catholicity applied to the official teachings of the Church of England in its relation to confessional Protestantism. He identified "the Churches of Helvetia, and Savoie, and the free cities of Fraunce, and the lowe Countries, and Scotland... as the true Churches of God" and continued,

And no lesse must we thinke of our owne Churches in England and Ireland. For we holde, beleeve, and maintaine, and preach the true

20. Perkins, *Probleme*, 486, col. 1; cf. Vincent of Lerins, *The Commonitory*, ii.6; iii.2, ix.25, in *Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers*, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956) series 2, 11:132, 137. Hereinafter NPNE.

21. Perkins, *Probleme*, 486, col. 1, citing Augustine, *On Baptism Against the Donatists*, IV: xxiv, in *NPNE*, series 1, 4:461.

22. Perkins, *Probleme*, 486, col. 1.

23. Perkins, *Probleme*, 486, col. 1–2.

24. Perkins, *Probleme*, 486, col. 2.

faith, that is, that auncient doctrine of salvation by Christ. Taught and published by the Prophets and Apostles, as the booke of the articles of faith agreed upon in open Parliament doe fully shewe.²⁵

Even so, the ultimate measure of catholicity must be the maintenance of the “true faith” and the resultant evidence of its efficacy to salvation—“without which notes none can truly say they are of the Catholike Church. By which we may know the Church of England to be the true visible Church of God, called and sanctified in the truth, Joh. 8:31.”²⁶

Perkins’s words stand in pointed contrast not only to the Roman Catholic claims against the Church of England but also to the Puritan movement of his era, exemplified by the *Admonition to the Parliament* (1572), that characterized the Book of Common Prayer as “an unperfected booke, culled & picked out of the popish dunghill.... For some & many of the contents therein, be suche as are againste the woord of God.” The *Admonition* also contended that the Articles of Religion albeit “using a godly interpretation in a point or two...are either too sparely, or els too darekly set downe.”²⁷ Perkins scattered comments concerning the Book of Common Prayer and the manner of worship in the Church of England evidence no such negative reaction and point toward his positive acceptance of English practice as well as of the Thirty-Nine Articles as belonging to a Reformed catholic confessional consensus.²⁸ Perkins insisted these documents, as opposed to the Roman declarations, are both true to the ancient faith and observe the principles that he set forth concerning ecclesiastical traditions and ordinances.

Perkins on Catechizing and the Creed

From the more experiential or experimental side of his theological work, Perkins was overtly wary of rote memorization and confession of memorized formulae—neither was sufficient to Christian faith, he insisted. In the prefatory remarks to his early *Foundation of the Christian Religion* (1590), he argued that recitation of the three parts of the catechism (the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer) was insufficient if the “meaning of the words” was not grasped and applied

25. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 307, col. 2.

26. Perkins, *Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude*, 482, col. 2.

27. John Fielde and Thomas Wilcox, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (Hemel Hempstead: J. Stroud, 1572), sig. Aviii verso, Ci recto; also in W. H. Frere, and C. E. Douglas, eds., *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt* (London: S. P. C. K., 1907), 21.

28. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*, 57–59, 99–100.

inwardly to the conscience.²⁹ His *Foundation* was designed as a prologue, grounded in multiple citations of biblical texts, to the understanding of the catechetical topics as outlined in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and Lord's Prayer—motivated not only out of a desire to root out mere recitation but also out a sense of the spiritual ignorance characteristic of contemporary religious life. Beyond memorization, Perkins insisted on the application of Christian teaching “inwardly to... hearts & consciences, and outwardly to... lives & conversations.”³⁰

Perkins also prefaced his exposition of the Creed, prior to the explanation of the first creedal article as concerning both belief or faith and God, with a fairly extended comment on catechizing and on the nature and use of the Apostles' Creed. He was sensitive to the possible objection that he had begun his exposition of Christian faith without a biblical text, but only with the first words of the Creed, “I beleeve in God, &c.”³¹ Some of his contemporaries held that catechization should be conducted by the minister of the congregation much as he delivered sermons, setting forth Christian teaching by way of biblical texts. Since the creed is not Scripture, they held that it therefore ought not to be the basis of catechization.³² Perkins did not deny that catechesis on the basis of Scripture alone was valid. He even identified it as “commendable.” But he also felt justified in taking a different course, noting that ministers have a degree of freedom and even “in the usual course of preaching” may sometimes not “follow a certen text of scripture.”³³

Perkins identified a twofold basis for his own approach to catechizing: “the practise of the Primitive Church” and the biblical mandate expressed

29. William Perkins, *The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered into Sixe Principles* (London: Thomas Orwin, for John Porter, 1590), in *Works* 1, sig. A2v. Note also Leonard T. Grant, “Puritan Catechizing,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 46, no. 2 (1968): 107–27.

30. Perkins, *Foundation*, sig. A2v. Note the contemporary complaint against lack of sound catechizing registered by Robert Cawdry, *A Shorte Snd Fruitefull Treatise, of the Profite and Necessitie of Catechizing* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1580); and see Christopher Haigh, “Puritan Evangelism in the Reign of Elizabeth I,” *English Historical Review* 92, no. 362 (1977): 30–58.

31. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 121, col. 1. See the descriptions of catechetical methods and texts in Ian M. Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England, c. 1530–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 45–169.

32. Perkins does not indicate whose view he opposes. He may have in mind a work like Edward Vaughan, *A Method, or Briefe Instruction* (London: T. Orwin, for W. Holme, 1590), see the preface, third leaf, verso, of the volume.

33. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 121, col. 1.

in Hebrews 6:1–3, “Therefore, leaving the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, let us be led forward unto perfection...of the doctrine of bap-tismes, and laying on of hands, and of the resurrection from the dead, and of eternall judgement.”³⁴ Perkins would also have noted the lengthy annotations at verse 1 in the Geneva Bible that he typically followed in his citations of Scripture. The first of these specifically defined the word “doc-trine” as meaning “The first principles of Christian religion, which we call the Catechisme.”³⁵ The second, lengthier note described this basic teaching in the early church as the delivery of “certaine principles of a Catechisme, which comprehend the summe of the doctrine of the Gospel...in a few words,” intended as the form of a basic profession of faith at the point of baptism. The annotation also notes that the text of Hebrews indicates two of the basic articles of faith, “the resurrection of the flesh, and the eternal judgement.”³⁶ Several printings of the full Geneva Bible and of the Psalms, beginning in 1578, also included a version of the Book of Common Prayer with its form of confirmation, including the catechetical recitations of the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Decalogue.³⁷

As to the question of creeds in general and to the objection that there are several documents identified as creeds, Perkins builds on the meaning of “creed” as belief and argues that there is “but one Creed, as there is but one faith.”³⁸ Although there are several documents, namely the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, it is not the case that these creeds represent “severall faiths and religions,” but only one. The Apostles’ Creed takes precedence because it “is most ancient, & principall: all the rest are not new Creedes in substance, but in some points penned

34. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 121, col. 1, referencing Hebrews 1:1–3; the above citation is taken from *The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ translated out of Greeke by Theod. Beza*, trans. L. Tomson (London: Christopher Barker, 1576).

35. *The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ* (1576), at Hebrews 6:1, note “a” (386).

36. *The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ* (1576), at Hebrews 6:1, note “1” (386).

37. See for example, *The Bible: Translated according to the Ebrew and Greeke, and con-ferred with the best translations in diuers languages* (London: Christopher Barker, 1578), sig. Bv verso–Bvi recto. On these Bibles see Maurice S. Betteridge, “The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and Its Annotations,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 1 (1983): 41–62, cited here 44–45; and Ian M. Green, “Puritan Prayer Books’ and ‘Geneva Bibles’: an Episode in Elizabethan Publishing,” *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 11, no. 3 (1998): 313–49, argues convincingly against the older theory that the abbreviated forms of the Prayer Book found in these Bibles were the results of “Puritan” editing. This particular annotation cannot in any case be regarded as avowing a specifically “Puritan” perspective.

38. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2.

more largely for the exposition of it, that men might better avoid the heresies of their times."³⁹

In turning to the original form and purpose of the Creed, Perkins also returns to the issue of catechizing with which he began his exposition. The creed, he avers, was originally the set answer to a question posed to new converts from paganism to the "Primitive Church," namely, "What beleevest thou?"⁴⁰ Requirement of a statement of belief from converts prior to baptism was a practice of the earliest church, beginning with the address of Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch: "Philippe saide, *If thou dost beleewe with all thine heart, thou maist [be baptized].* Then he answered, *I beleewe that Jesus Christ is that Sonne of God.*"⁴¹ Directly borrowing the language of Augustine and reinforcing it by citation of Cassian, Perkins argued that the Apostles' Creed is "a summarie collection of thinges to be beleewed," namely, the *credenda*, "gathered briefly out of the word of God for the helping of memorie and understanding of men."⁴² In other words, the Creed is a foundational statement of belief in response to the basic question, "What beleevest thou?"—and as Perkins's defender, Robert Abbot (1560–1617) pointed out, the Creed does not include "principall doctrines beleewed in the Church of Rome," such as the Pope is the Vicar of Christ, "that there is a fire of Purgatory," that images of saints ought to be placed in church and worshiped, and that the Mass is a "propitiatory sacrifice daily offered."⁴³

Perkins's assessment of the purpose and relative value of the Creed included recognition that it was not written by the Apostles. Perkins offered three reasons. First and foremost, the Apostles' Creed contains "certaine words & phrases" not found in the genuine apostolic writings, such as, "descended into hell" and "Catholike Church." The latter phrase, Perkins

39. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2.

40. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2.

41. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2, citing Acts 8:37; note that this verse is omitted from many modern Bibles. Perkins here cites a variant of the Geneva Bible.

42. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1, citing Augustine, *Sermo 119, De tempore*, i.e., *In eadem feria de Symbolo*, in *Opera omnia*, ed. Erasmus (Basel: Froben, 1528–1529), 10: 614–17, cited here on 614: "Symbolum est breuiter complexa regula fidei, ut mentem instruat nec oneret memoriam, paucis verbis dicatur unde multum acquiratur"; and Cassian, *De incarnatione*, I.vi; in translation, *On the Incarnation of the Lord, against Nestorius*, in *NPNF*, series 2, 11: 555.

43. Robert Abbot, *The Third Part of the Defence of the Reformed Catholike against Doct. Bishops Second part of the Reformation of a Catholike, as the same was first guilefully published vnder that name, containing only a large and most malicious preface to the reader, and an answer to M. Perkins his aduertisement to Romane Catholicks* (London: George Bishop, 1609), 197.

noted, is clearly post-apostolic and reflects the dispersion of Christianity throughout the world.⁴⁴ As to the former phrase, Perkins was well aware of the contemporary controversy concerning its meaning and origin.⁴⁵ Further, if the Creed were an actual writing of the Apostles, it would have been identified as part of the canonical Scriptures. And finally, the short apostolic summaries of Christianity, their patterns of “wholesome words” consisted in two parts, faith and love—and the Creed deals only with faith.⁴⁶

If not written by the Apostles, the Creed nonetheless is an “ecclesiastical” writing and a valid summary of the “chiefe and principall points” of apostolic doctrine, conformable to the teachings found in longer form throughout their writings. Although not the actual words of the apostles or in their specific “style and frame,” the Creed conveys the “matter” of apostolic teaching.⁴⁷ This distinction between words or “style and frame” and the “matter” or substance of what is said will play out in Perkins’s further discussion of the difference between Scripture and churchly writings in general: the specific purpose of the creed was not only to gather doctrine out of Scripture but “to make a difference betweene it and other writings, and to shew the authoritie of it.”⁴⁸ For Perkins, the importance of the Apostles’ Creed rested on the assumption that although it was not directly apostolic, it was a valid summary of the most basic apostolic teachings, constructed by the earliest church as a rule to identify the canonical Scripture. Perkins, in short, recognized the relationship of the Creed in content and in purpose to the early rules of faith.⁴⁹

Divine and Ecclesiastical Writings

Perkins’s identification of the Apostles’ Creed as a churchly document of derived authority raised the issue the kinds of writings “in which the doctrine

44. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 121, col. 2.

45. On the controversy see Dewey D. Wallace, “Puritan and Anglican: The Interpretation of Christ’s Descent into Hell in Elizabethan Theology,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 69 (1978): 248–86.; and Jay Shim, “The Interpretation of Christ’s Descent into Hades in the Early Seventeenth Century,” in *Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation: Essay in Honor of Jame De Jong*, eds. Arie C. Leder and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2014), 157–84.

46. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 121, col. 2.

47. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 121, col. 2.

48. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1.

49. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, Dedicatory Epistle, I, sig. L3r, last paragraph of the dedication, citing, in margin, Augustine, *Sermo 119, De tempore*; and Ambrose, *Sermo 38, in Operum divi Ambrosii episcopi Mediolanensis*, ed. Erasmus (Basel: Froben, 1538), 3:335–36.

of the Church is handled.”⁵⁰ These writings are distinguished into two basic categories, divine and ecclesiastical—to which can be added a third category of purely secular or “humane books.”⁵¹ The formulation, stated positively by Perkins, has a polemical edge: Roman Catholic writers distinguished three kinds of traditions, all (as far as the Council of Trent was concerned) of normative status: divine in Scripture, apostolic beyond what is found in the epistles, and ecclesiastical whether written or unwritten.⁵² Perkins identified as strictly apostolic only what is found in the epistles and, accordingly, argued a twofold divine-ecclesiastical distinction. As Pareus would point out, inasmuch as the divine are infallible and the ecclesiastical not so, it is in the ecclesiastical writings that dissension erupts.⁵³

By divine writings, Perkins intended only the books of the canonical Old and New Testaments because they are “divine.” The writings of the prophets and apostles are “absolute and soveraigne” in their authority, writes Perkins. They are not only “the pure *word of God*” but they are also “the *scripture of God*,”⁵⁴ divine both in their “matter” or substance and in “the manner of revealing them.”⁵⁵ Perkins’s argument reflects the typical Reformed orthodox language identifying Scripture in its original languages as authoritative both *quoad res* and *quoad verba*.⁵⁶ Scripture also has a principal status, being sufficient in itself, needing no testimony to its authority from any creature, and not being subject to any censure. Scripture, therefore, is “binding” on “the consciences of all men at all times, and . . . the onely foundation of faith, and the rule and canon of all truth.”⁵⁷ Even so, Scripture is “the supream and absolute determination & judgement of the controversies of the Church.”⁵⁸

50. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1.

51. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, in *Works* 3:225, col. 1–2; cf. David Pareus, *Collegiorum theologicorum, quibus univrsa theologia orthodoxa & omnes prope theologorum controversiae perspicue & varie explicantur. Decuria una: cum indice tergemino, collegiorum, Locorum communium & respondentium* (Heidelberg: Jonas Rhodius, 1611), V.iv.16 (p. 547).

52. Cf. William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture, against the Papists, especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*, ed. and trans. William Fitzgerald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), VI.iii (500–502), citing Bellarmine.

53. Pareus, *Collegiorum theologicorum*, V.iv.14 (p. 547).

54. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1.

55. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, 225, col. 1.

56. On this distinction, see Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:269, 283, 326–27, 403, 414–16, 427–28.

57. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1.

58. William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng, Or, a Treatise Concerning the Sacred and Onely True Manner and Methode of Preaching first written in Latine by Master William*

This doctrine of Scripture relativizes but does not obliterate the value of ecclesiastical writings or remove the office of interpretation in the church: it only establishes the distinction between divine and ecclesiastical teachings.⁵⁹ These are writings of the church that stand in agreement or consent with Scripture. Perkins even goes so far as to state that ecclesiastical writings “may be called the *word or truth of God*” to the extent that their “matter or substance” agrees with the written Word of God as set down by the prophets and apostles. Ecclesiastical writings, however, can never be identified as the Scripture of God, namely as divine writings. Here again, Perkins reflects on the distinction between authority *quoad res* and *quoad verba*, a distinction that was typically used to distinguish the authority of the Bible in its original languages as *quoad res* and *quoad verba* from the authority of translations as only *quoad res*. For Perkins, moreover, the distinction also applies to ecclesiastical writings, which although not authoritative in themselves, do have authority *quoad res*, according to matter or substance, as long as they rest on the truth of Scripture. Ecclesiastical writings, therefore, have “authoritie in defining truth and falsehood in matters of religion,” not in a sovereign manner, but “subordinate” to Scripture. This subordinate authority, then, does not rest on human preference, not even on the decisions of church councils, but only on the agreement of the ecclesiastical writings with Scripture.⁶⁰

A further distinction must be made among “generall,” “particular,” and “proper” ecclesiastical writings. The general writings are universal creeds or confessions that belong to the whole church throughout the world, the preeminent general writing being the Apostles’ Creed. All of these general ecclesiastical writings “were either made or confirmed by the whole Church; as the Creedes of the Apostles, the Nicene, and of *Athanasius*: and the foure first generall Councils; and these have Catholike allowance, yet not absolute authoritie, but depending on Scripture.”⁶¹ The works of the councils and the fathers are to be respected, as written by “worthy men,” who were, however, “subject to error.”⁶²

Perkins; and now faithfully translated into English (for that it containeth many worthie things fit for the knowledge of men of all degrees) by Thomas Tuke (London: Felix Kyngston for E. E., 1607), iii, in Works 2:647, col. 1; cf. idem, A Godly and Learned Exposition, 225, col.1; and note Pareus, Collegiorum theologorum, V.iv.18 (p. 547).

59. Cf. Pareus, *Collegiorum theologorum*, V.iv.10–12 (546–47).

60. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1.

61. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, 225, col. 1.

62. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, 225, col. 2.

The term “particular writings,” Perkins reserves to the “Confessions” or to “the Catechismes and Confessions of particular Churches,” either written in a corporate manner in the churches or by members and accepted in the church by “generall consent.”⁶³ “Proper writings are the bookes and confessions of private men,” namely, works that are the *propria* of individual persons.⁶⁴ Like the general ecclesiastical writings, these particular works derive authority from Scripture and consent of the church. Further, “these kinds of bookes may be called *Gods Word*, so farre forth as they agree with Scripture: and yet they are also the word of men, because they were penned by men, and have both order and style from men: and in this regard, that they were partly mens workes, they are not authentically of themselves, but depend upon the authoritie of Scripture.”⁶⁵ This threefold approach to ecclesial writings reflects Perkins’s assumption that, in the wake of the Reformation, there remained—as the Creed itself indicated—a single Catholic church, but that the universal faith was also represented in and by several particular churches with their own confessional standards.

Perkins also acknowledged the value of “humane bookes,” even as he recognized that the church could devise human traditions in matters of practice. These human books, such as those concerned with natural philosophy, civil polity, and the arts, are entirely from human beings, “having both matter and style from men.” This purely human origin, however, in no way denies that “many of them containe excellent truths in their kind, yet gathered onely from experience and common reason.” What they lack is “that truth, which is *truth according to godlinesse*,” and which is found “in Scripture alone.”⁶⁶

These distinctions between kinds of works are paralleled by distinctions in authority. The Apostles’ Creed, although of less authority than Scripture, carries more authority than either the confessions of particular churches or the proper writings of individual Christians. This relative authority arises because of the presence of the fundamental substance of apostolic preaching in the Apostles’ Creed. This relates directly to Perkins’s conception of the analogy of faith as a twofold “abridgement or summe” of Scripture concerning belief and practice with the Creed governing “faith”

63. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, 225, col. 1; cf. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1–2.

64. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 1.

65. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, 225, col. 1–2.

66. Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, 225, col. 2.

and the Decalogue governing “practice.”⁶⁷ Since the Creed draws its authority from Scripture and is “received and approved by the universall consent of the Catholike Church in all ages,” its “meaning and doctrine” cannot be altered. Should a particular church desire to alter the order of its doctrines or express its doctrines in different words, this may not be done without the “catholike consent of the whole Church.”⁶⁸ The “whole church,” of course, would mean the entire Christin community and not merely the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church.

The case is different with the confessional statements of particular churches: these can be altered by a particular church both in specific doctrinal content and in the words employed “without offence to the Catholike Church.”⁶⁹ The Apostles’ Creed, therefore, stands alone among the particular churches as a standard or norm by which doctrinal statements and interpretations of Scripture are to be adjudicated. This status rests in the Creed “not because it is a rule of it selfe.” That status belongs to Scripture alone. The Creed remains a derived norm that draws its authority from Scripture, “with which it agreeth,” and having, therefore, given also its antiquity and universality, an authority accorded to no other human writing.⁷⁰ There is also a proper place beyond the Creed for human testimonies, in particular “ecclesiaticall” writings: they can be used in order to “convince the conscience of the hearer.”⁷¹ Such use, however, notably, of the church fathers, is legitimate only when they “agree with the rule of our faith, and the writings of the Prophets and Apostles.”⁷² Given the distinction that Perkins makes here between the rule of faith and the writings of the prophets and apostles, he is most probably referring to the Apostles’ Creed as the rule of faith—much in accord with the content of early rules of faith proposed by Irenaeus (130–202), Tertullian (150–220), and Hippolytus (170–235).⁷³

67. Perkins, *Arte of Prophecyng*, 651, col. 2–652, col. 1.

68. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2.

69. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2.

70. Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, 122, col. 2.

71. Perkins, *Arte of Prophecyng*, 664, col. 1.

72. Perkins, *Probleme*, 487, col. 1.

73. On the development of the rules of faith and the Apostles’ Creed, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1972; repr. Continuum, 2006). On Perkins’s understanding of the rule and analogy of faith, see Perkins, *Exposition of the Symbole*, Dedicatory Epistle, in *Works* 1 sig. L3r.

Tradition and the Problem of Human Traditions

Perkins's approach to the debated problem of tradition and traditions echoes the understanding of Protestants from the Reformation onward, as expressed by formulations of the problem both among the Reformers of the first and second generations and among the writers of the early orthodox era: "Traditions, are doctrines delivered from hand to hand, either by word of mouth, or by writing, beside the written word of God."⁷⁴ But authoritative traditions are also eventually written down—and, Perkins recognized, there are traditions even within Scripture.

Thus, as identified by the general definition of something handed down, tradition would include "the very word of God... delivered by tradition. For first, God revealed his will to Adam by word of mouth" and later to the patriarchs "by dreames, and other inspirations," for over two thousand years before the first writing of Scripture by Moses.⁷⁵ So also was the New Testament taught by word of mouth—traditions of teaching from Christ or the apostles—until it was later written down either by the apostles or "by others approved by them."⁷⁶ Even the Papists concede that tradition, as referenced by the church fathers, is often a teaching that had been handed down from Christ in the gospels or from the apostles in their epistles.⁷⁷

Even so, there are some biblical truths that have been set down in writing at times distant from their event. There are words and deeds of Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, brought forward by the process of tradition or delivery and recorded in Scripture. There are also words and deeds of Christ and the apostles not written in the canonical books of the New Testament but remembered later and recorded in writings of the early church. For example, in his second epistle to Timothy, Paul identifies the magicians who opposed Moses as Jannes and Jambres, information not found in the Old Testament. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews records Moses saying, "I tremble, and am afraid" while on Mount Sinai, the epistle of Jude tells that the devil struggled with Michael the Archangel over

74. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2; cf. Whitaker, *Disputation*, VI.i (497); also Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses*, vi.2, in *Opuscula theologica selecta*, ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1882), 120; and note Muller, "Not of Private Interpretation," 34–37, 39–40.

75. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2.

76. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2; cf. Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses*, vi.2, in *Opuscula theologica*, 120.

77. Whitaker, *Disputation*, VI.ii (498).

the body of Moses, and Christians also believe that “the Virgin Marie lived and died a virgin.”⁷⁸

Perkins argued that the church fathers understood “the doctrine received in the primitive church, taught by the apostles and recorded in their writings” as “tradition,”⁷⁹ which is to say “tradition” in the early church meant primarily the apostolic *paradosis*. The fathers also identified as tradition remembered and recorded doctrines, the “sense” or meaning of which was expressed in Scripture, but not directly stated in the words of the text.⁸⁰ Perkins also acknowledged that “in Ecclesiastical writers many worthy sayings of the Apostles and other holy men, are recorded & received of us for truth which neverthesse are not set downe in the books of the old or new Testament.”⁸¹ So called “unwritten traditions,” then, are not absolutely unwritten—rather that are not written in Scripture but have been written down by the early fathers, in the counsels, and in “the determinations of the Church.” These, however, are not to be given “equall credit with the written word of God.”⁸² Later on, Vincent of Lerins used “tradition” to indicate “the whole summe of Catholike doctrine,”⁸³ arguably as preserved in creedal formulation. Perkins did not reject tradition in any of these senses—what was directly biblical he held to be authoritative and what was rightly derived he held as acceptable formulation.⁸⁴

Furthermore, “tradition” is also the term of reference to “ecclesiastike rites” that are rules for the governance of the church and its order, but which are “not pertinent any way to divine worship, or the articles of

78. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2; cf. 2 Tim. 3:8; Heb. 12:21; Jude 8; similarly, Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude, Containing Threescore and Sixe Sermons*, in *Works*, 3:540, col. 2.

79. Perkins, *Probleme*, 511, col. 2, citing Cyprian, *Epistle 74* [73], *Ad Pompeium*, trans. in ANF 5:386; also cited in Whitaker, *Disputation*, VI.ii (497).

80. Perkins, *Probleme*, 511, col. 2–512, col.1, citing; Augustine, *De Genesi ad literam*, X.xxiii; cf. *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 2:127, and 284, n95.

81. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2.

82. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 612, col. 1; note that Whitaker, *Disputation*, VI.ii (p. 499), takes the point further and argues that when church fathers like Basil and Pseudo-Dionysius appeal to unwritten traditions, they mean only traditions not written in Scripture, but written down elsewhere: “They call, therefore, those dogmas and points of doctrine nowhere found in scripture, *traditions*.” Cf. Schäfer, *Auctorita Patrum*, 17–18, et passim, who too loosely identifies “unwritten traditions with “texts not contained in the biblical canon.”

83. Perkins, *Probleme*, 512, col. 1.

84. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2.

faith.” These traditions are often called “apostolic” in order to elevate them in importance, although, Perkins notes, many of them cannot be traced back to the apostolic preaching. These traditions cannot be normative in any sense and may not be declared necessary to salvation.⁸⁵ Nor can the Roman church justify its claims for a normative tradition or set of traditions inasmuch as it has shown itself unable to decide which of the so-called apostolic extra-biblical traditions known to the early church that it will follow and which it will reject.⁸⁶

Still, there remain legitimate traditions that include “ordinances, rules, or traditions, touching time and place of Gods worship, and touching order and comlinessse to bee used in the same.”⁸⁷ Perkins’s view is much in accord with that of Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), as framed in the Thirty-Nine Articles—that traditions should be guided by the Word of God, are relative to times and places, and that “Every particular or nationall Church, hath auctoritie to ordaine, chaunge, and abolishe ceremonies or rites of the Church ordeyned onely by mans auctoritie, so that all thinges be done to edifyng.”⁸⁸ Further, the Thirty-Nine Articles also declared that any person who “wyllyngly and purposely” broke with “traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the worde of God” and which had been upheld by churchly authority, “ought to be rebuked openly.”⁸⁹

In Debate with Rome: Perkins and the Broader Tradition and the Interpretation of Scripture

In accord with the Reformers and his Reformed contemporaries, Perkins did not identify “tradition” in the singular as a cohesive body of doctrine preserved and elaborated by the church over the course of centuries: rather, a tradition is understood to be a particular deliverance concerning doctrine or ecclesial practice.⁹⁰ Although they did not use the term “tradition” in its most general sense, Perkins and his Reformed contemporaries

85. Perkins, *Probleme*, 512, col. 1.

86. Perkins, *Probleme*, 512, col. 1–2.

87. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 1.

88. Thirty-Nine Articles, xxxiv, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, 3 vols., 6th ed., revised and enlarged (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), 3:509; and cf. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Tradition and Traditions in Thomas Cranmer,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 59, no.4 (1990): 467–478.

89. Thirty-Nine Articles, xxxiv (509).

90. On Calvin, see Muller, “*Traditio and Paradosis vs. Humanas Traditiones*”; among Perkins’s contemporaries, note Whitaker, *Disputation*, VI.i–iii (496–503); Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses*, vi–vii (120–22).

did have an equivalent identification for the doctrinal content of reliable ecclesiastical writings that could be referenced in support of theological formulation, namely, the “succession of doctrine,”⁹¹ a term posed directly against the Council of Trent and its criterion of succession.⁹² The argument for succession in doctrine had already been posed in general by Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) and in justification of the English church by John Jewel (1522–1571).⁹³ When Perkins and his contemporaries stated it, it was already a set-piece in the polemic.

As Perkins’s contemporary, Lucas Trelcatius Jr., noted, “Succession of doctrine...is Coincident with the true and essentiall markes of the Church.”⁹⁴ Perkins dealt with the issue of succession in some detail. In response to the objection that authority in doctrine and practice is vested in those who are “lawfully called, are ordained by them, whose auncestors have beene successively ordained by the Apostles,” namely ordained in the Roman succession, Perkins responded that,

Succession is three-folde, The first is, of persons and doctrine joyntly together: and this was in the primitive Church. The second is, of persons alone, and this may bee among infidels and heretickes. The third is, of doctrine alone. And thus our ministers succeed the Apostles. And this is sufficient. For this Rule must bee remembered, that the power of the Keyes, that is, of order & jurisdiction, is tyed by God, and annexed in the new Testament to doctrine.⁹⁵

There is also, Perkins indicated, the contextual issue of how the appeal to succession reflects the condition of the church. The early church fathers appealed to succession at a time when there was no “breach in the Romane

91. Cf. the references, above, chapter 3, note 91; and chapter 5, note 66.

92. Cf. *Canones et decreta sacrosancti oecumenici Concilii tridentini sub Paulo III., Iulio III. et Pio IV* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1866), 15; with *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad parochos Pii V. et Clementis XIII. pont. max.* (Ratisbon: Manz, 1866), *Proemium*, iv (7).

93. Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, ed. Thomas Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849–1852), 4:30–31; John Jewel, *Defense of the Apology of the Church of England*, in *The Works of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845–1850), 3:339, 348–49; cf. Edward B. Jones, “An Examination of the Anglican Definition of the Church as Expounded by Bishop John Jewel” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1963), 234–37.

94. Lucas Trelcatius, Jr., *A Briefe Institution of the Commonplaces of Sacred Divinitie*, trans. John Gawen (London: T. P. for Francis Burton, 1610), II. xiv (480).

95. William Perkins, *Commentarie of Exposition upon the Five First Chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians*, in *Works*, 2:171, col. 2–172, col. 1; hereinafter, cited as *Commentarie upon Galatians*.

Church” and “the truth of Apostolike doctrine” was generally recognized. Tertullian recognized that some churches lacked foundation in the original apostolic mission but were nonetheless apostolic “because of the unitie of their doctrine.”⁹⁶ Accordingly, “Succession in place only, from Peter, and from Christ himselfe, is no certen note of truth.... Succession then in true doctrine, is the only & sure note of true religion.”⁹⁷ With specific reference to the power of the keys, Perkins argued that this power rests with Christ himself who alone allows it to be exercised by those he has called to ministry. The church “can doe no more but testifie, publish, and declare whome God calleth, by Examination of parties for life and doctrine, by Election, and by Ordination.”⁹⁸ In agreement with contemporaries in the English church, Perkins posited that ordination itself, properly understood, is not a matter of succession of persons, but of succession in doctrine.⁹⁹

Given this emphasis on true succession as the succession of true doctrine and the assumption of historical decline in the church yielding an admixture of heresies and various unnecessary teachings with Christian truth, Perkins could argue that support for sound teaching and “the restoration of the Church” begun by the Reformers ought to be drawn “out of orthodoxicall writings” not only from the more recent reformist works, “but also from the more ancient Church.”¹⁰⁰ Inasmuch as the new heresies were little more than revivals of the old, the old remedies conceived by the “Councils and Fathers” should continue to be consulted as providing remedies for revived heresies.¹⁰¹

The problem of tradition for Perkins and his contemporaries, then, did not concern tradition or traditions *per se*, nor was it with the proper use of the succession of faithful doctrinal formulation. Neither did Perkins

96. Perkins, *Probleme of the Forged Catholicisme*, 599, col. 1.

97. Perkins, *Sermon in the Mount*, 237, col. 2; Perkins, *The Combat Betweene Christ and the Divell displayed: or A commentarie upon the temptations of Christ* (London: Melchisedech Bradwood for E. E., 1606), in *Works*, 3:289, col. 1.

98. Perkins, *Commentarie upon Galatians*, 172, col. 1.

99. Cf. Robert Some, *A Godlie Treatise of the Church* (London: George Bishop, 1582), sig. E4r–E4v, notes that to tie God’s grace to “seates and countries” by “personall succession” is a “grosse absurditie”; with William Whitaker, *Praelectiones doctissimi viri Gulielmi Whitakeri nuper sacrae theologiae in academia Cantabrigiensi doctoris.... In quibus tractatur Controuersia de Ecclesia contra Pontificios, inprimis Robertum Bellarminum* (London: John Legat, 1599), q. 5, *De notis ecclesiae* (282–83), similarly detaching succession in doctrine from churchly ordination.

100. Perkins, *Arte of Prophecyng*, 651, col. 1.

101. Perkins, *Arte of Prophecyng*, 651, col. 1.

make a generalized claim against what he identified as “ecclesiasticall” writings. Rather, the problem was concerned with what Protestants, since the time of the Reformation, had identified as “human traditions,” and, indeed, not with all of them. Perkins declared, “many things we hold for truth, not written in the word, if they be not against the word.”¹⁰² There are, for example, churchly ordinances or traditions concerning times and places as well as the order and usages to be observed in worship. The church has the power to establish such things, as evidenced by Paul’s commendation of the church at Corinth for maintaining the traditions that he had communicated to it and by the decree of the Council of Jerusalem to the Gentile churches that they “abstaine from blood, and from things strangled” as long as “the offence of the Jewes remained.”¹⁰³ Even so, traditions put in place by “general Councels or particular Synods” must be observed, as long as they “prescribe nothing childish or absurd to bee done,” are not “imposed as any part of Gods worship,” are “severed from superstition or opinion of merit,” and are not too numerous.¹⁰⁴

What Perkins, in common with other Reformed theologians, identified as the problem were Roman claims made about specific ecclesiastical traditions, whether unwritten or written, whether purportedly apostolic but out of accord with the canonical teachings of the apostles, or decreed by the church on particular occasions. These human traditions were claimed by “the Papists” as necessary beliefs both “profitable and necessarie to salvation.”¹⁰⁵ Against this Roman claim, Perkins posed a series of arguments taken from Scripture and the early church. Deuteronomy 4:2, “Thou shalt not adde to the wordes that I command thee, nor take any thing therefrom,” provides a clear indication that the written word of God is “sufficient for all doctrines pertaining to salvation.” To the objection that the text applies to unwritten words, the context is clear: Moses speaks here only of the written word commanded by God to be delivered in writing,

102. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 580, col. 2.

103. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 1; cf. 1 Cor. 11:2; Acts 15:20; cf. Perkins, *Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude*, 540, col. 2–541, col. 1.

104. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 1; cf. Amandus Polanus, *The Substance of Christian Religion, soundly set forth in two booke, by definitions and partitions, framed according to the rules of a naturall method* (London: R. F. For John Oxenbridge, 1595), 186.

105. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 1; cf. John Calvin, *Ioannes Calvinus Iacobo Sadoleto Cardinali, Salutem*, in CO, 5, col. 385–416, in translation, *Calvin’s Reply to Sadoleto*, in *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, ed. Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 1:25–68, here 53.

specifically of the commandments. Similarly, Isaiah 8:20 states, “To the law & to the testimonie. If they speake not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Again, it is the written word that is “sufficient to resolve all doubts and scruples in conscience whatsoever.”¹⁰⁶

Of the texts cited by Perkins, the most telling is 2 Timothy 3:16–17, “The whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable to teach, to improve, to correct, and to instruct in righteousnesse, that the man of God may be absolute, beeing made perfect unto every good worke.” This text, Perkins avers, contains two arguments that “prove the sufficiency of Scripture, without unwritten verities.”¹⁰⁷ First, given that Scripture is profitable in each of these four ways, unwritten traditions are clearly “superfluous.” Second, the text indicates that the “man of God” will be made “perfect” by Scripture “unto every good worke” — which is to say that it is a sufficient guide to life eternal. Again, unwritten traditions are unnecessary.

Nor, adds Perkins, is this view of the superfluity of unwritten traditions merely an exegetical opinion stated by Protestants. When Christ and the apostles sought confirmation of their teaching, they had recourse to the Scriptures of the Old Testament: they did not confirm their doctrine on the basis of unwritten tradition. This was also the opinion of the ancient church. Tertullian demanded that the heretics of his time defend their views on the basis of Scripture alone and he commented that there was no need for “curiositie” beyond what was given in Christ and stated in the gospel. Jerome (345–420) identified the tradition that “John the Baptist was killed, because hee foretold the coming of Christ” as unsubstantiated and “as easily...contemned as approved” because it was extra-scriptural. Augustine (354–430) even more clearly stated that all things necessary to living well are “plainely set downe in Scripture.” And Vincent of Lerins declared that the canon of Scripture “is perfect, and fully sufficient in it selfe for all things.”¹⁰⁸ Perkins adds, rhetorically, that if unwritten traditions were actually necessary to salvation, then the writings of the apostles as well as

106. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 1.

107. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 2.

108. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 581, col. 2–582, col. 1, citing Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis*, iii (ANF, 3:547); Jerome on Matthew 23; and Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, II. ix (NPNF, 2:539); Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, iii; *The Commonitories*, trans. Rudolph E. Morris, in *Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 7:269. Note that of these, Vincent adds that although Scripture is perfect, given the many possibilities of interpretation, the ecclesiastical rule of “universality, antiquity, and consent” — belief everywhere, always, and by all — should be followed.

those of the “auntient fathers” must be suspect because they are not always to be believed.¹⁰⁹

Several arguments were brought by Roman Catholic theologians against these conclusions. Perkins notes first, an objection based on 2 Thessalonians 2:15, “stand fast and keep the instructions [or “traditions”], which ye have been taught, either by word, or by our epistle.” Paul may be taken as indicating normative unwritten traditions beside his own written epistle. But this, Perkins argues, may well be the first epistle ever written by Paul, despite its placement in the canon. Some things deemed by Paul to be necessary to salvation may not have been written down when the apostle wrote to the Thessalonians, but, given that these epistles were Paul’s earliest writings, those things were most certainly set down in later epistles.¹¹⁰

A further objection, resting on the Roman argument that the church preceded Scripture, is that Scripture is only known to be Scripture because of the unwritten tradition that it is the Word of God. Perkins’s response relies on the fairly typical Protestant view that Scripture attests to itself—although he does not deny the consent of the church to the canon and authority of the text:

Scripture proves it selfe to be Scripture: and yet wee despise not the universall consent or tradition of the church in this case; which though it doe not perswade the conscience, yet is it a notable inducement to moove us to reverence and regard the writings of the Prophets and Apostles. It will be said, where is it written that Scripture is Scripture? I answer, not in any one particular place or booke of Scripture, but in every line and page of the whole Bible, to him that can reade with the spirit of discerning, and can discern the voyce of the true pastour, as the sheepe of Christ can doe.¹¹¹

To the further objection, based on Old Testament references to lost books, like the “booke of the warres of God” (Num. 21:14), that the truths contained in these works must now be handed on by tradition, Perkins agrees that there are lost books. He disagrees, however, that their loss in any way undermines the sufficiency of the remaining canon in conveying the truths necessary to salvation. He also cites Romans 15:4, “whatsoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning, that we may through patience and comfort of the Scriptures [might have hope],” as an indication

109. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 582, col. 1.

110. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 582, col. 1.

111. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 582, col. 2.

from Paul that the canon is complete sufficient—most probably in agreement with the note in the Geneva Bible that the things “written afore time” is a reference to “Moses and the Prophets.” The lost books of the Old Testament appear to have been nothing more than chronicles or in the case of lost books of Solomon, works dealing with philosophy, not with matters of salvation.¹¹² As for the “Jewish” claim of secret doctrines given to Moses on Mount Sinai that “sundry Papists follow,” Moses himself refuted it when he stated that nothing should be added to the law.¹¹³

Perkins was aware of a Romanist reading of Hebrews 5:12–14, where a distinction was made between those “inexpert in the word of righteousness,” who “have need of milke,” and those who are “of age” and capable of digesting “strong meate,” as a justification for making a distinction between the plain meaning of Scripture for the average Christian and the “strong meate” of “unwritten traditions, a doctrine not delivered unto all, but to those that grow to perfection.”¹¹⁴ The biblical text, Perkins responds, has nothing to do with unwritten traditions and ability of more sophisticated Christians to deal with them. Rather it concerns differences in the manner of “handling and propounding” the same texts:

For being delivered generally and plainly to the capacite of the simplest, it is milke: but being handled particularly and largely, and so fitted for men of more understanding, it is strong meat. As for example, the doctrine of the creation, of mans fall, and redemption by Christ, when it is taught overly and plainely, it is milke: but when the depth of the same is thoroughly opened, it is strong meat. And therefore it is a conceit of mans braine, to imagine that some unwritten word is meant by strong meat.¹¹⁵

Perkins also opposed to the Romanist claim that there are difficult passages in Scripture, subject to different interpretations, that can only be rightly understood by recourse to the tradition of the church in order “that the true sense may bee determined, and the question ended.” In response, he argued that Scripture itself is its own best interpreter according to two basic approaches, “first, by the analogie of faith, which is the summe of religion gathered out of the clearest places of Scripture: secondly, by the circumstances of the place and nature and signification of the words:

112. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 582, col. 2.

113. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 583, col. 1, referencing Deut. 4:2, without citation.

114. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 583, col. 1.

115. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 583, col. 1.

thirdly by conference of place with place.”¹¹⁶ Perkins’s response is not an argument against the use of church fathers or of older readings of a text as aids to interpretation, nor is it a general rejection of written and unwritten traditions—it is a very specific rejection of the use of churchly traditions, either purportedly unwritten or of late written attestation as the primary norms for reading particular passages of Scripture. The objection remains an opposition to “humane traditions” as a prior norm, as if “Gods word [were] not sufficient to comfort and direct.”¹¹⁷

Conclusion

From Perkins’s perspective, the problem of tradition or traditions posed by the Roman Catholic Church was not a problem of tradition in general or of the proper use or application of either the writings of Christian teachers throughout history or of churchly rites and ceremonies, nor was it a question of the use of the broad tradition of interpretation of Scripture as a guide or resource. Rather, it was only of the misuse of the teachings of the broader tradition, notably the writings of the church fathers, and of the normative application of human traditions not grounded in Scripture in the establishment of doctrine and practice. Perkins identified the positive tradition of Christian teaching as a legitimate “succession” of doctrine resting generally on Scripture and more specifically on the apostolic teaching of salvation in Christ as found in the New Testament. Following out the Protestant tendency to use “tradition” with reference to a problematic *paradosis* and “instruction” or “succession of doctrine” was true “tradition” with reference to a biblical and apostolic, *paradosis*.

Perkins’s views on Scripture, tradition, and catholicity, following on the views of predecessors like John Calvin (1509–1564) and Bullinger, Cranmer and Jewell, are characteristic of the early modern Reformed understanding of the norms of Christian faith and practice and their churchly context. His understanding does not oblige a neat distinction between Puritan and Anglican, nor does it exhibit the “minimalization” of the fathers that has been claimed of various Puritan writers, but rather evidences a broader pattern, both positive and critical of early modern Protestant reception of the fathers. Together with several contemporary early orthodox writers, Perkins developed and nuanced the Reformed argument concerning tradition to identify kinds of traditions and to state more clearly and fully than the

116. Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, 583, col. 1.

117. Contra Quantin, *Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 54.

Reformers precisely which traditions were acceptable, albeit not necessary for salvation, and which were unacceptable.

Contrary to various narrow and selectively documented views of Protestant approaches to doctrinal authority,¹¹⁸ Perkins did not pose a rigid or exclusivistic notion of *sola Scriptura* against churchly tradition and summarily reject tradition as such. Rather, he made a far more nuanced distinction between the “divine” writings of ultimate normative value, “ecclesiasticall” writings that offer instruction and advice with various degrees of usefulness, and various problematic “human” traditions and purely secular writings that have no place in the formulation of doctrine and practice. These distinctions enabled a nuanced valuation of tradition that obliged both the narrative of decline from the relative purity of the earliest church and the Protestant assumption of truth maintained in the longer tradition, notably in the church fathers and in some of the argumentation of the “sounder scholastics.” Perkins, together with his Reformed contemporaries, absolutely rejected only those merely “human traditions” that had deviated from an obedient interpretation of Scripture and had imposed new norms that constrained the conscience and stood in the way of a full and proper reception of the biblical message.

118. For example, see Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 86–100.

Book Reviews

N. H. Keeble, John Coffey, Tim Cooper, and Tom Charlton, eds., *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ Or, Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

The first scholarly edition of Richard Baxter's autobiography is an incredible achievement. The five volumes are meticulously edited and annotated by preeminent scholars in the history of dissent, offering an unparalleled exploration of key sources, not only for studying Baxter's life and thought, but also for understanding the religious and political landscape of seventeenth-century England. As one of the most enduring figures of dissenting literary culture, Baxter's sometimes painful habit of reflection on matters from the nationally important to the most prosaic has been a gift to students of Puritanism. Compared to many other figures of great interest to today's academics, pastors, and laymen—such as his rival John Owen—we know an astonishing amount about Baxter's inner-life, his activities, and the way he viewed his world. Yet, despite the many editions of *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* that have appeared since its first publication in 1696, this is the first edition that does justice to his original text, and which will allow the reader to enter more easily into what is both a labyrinthine memoir, and a polemic for what Baxter saw as moderate Puritanism under attack from competing historiographies of Revolutionary and post-Restoration Britain.

As the editors explain in the introductory sections in volume 1, Baxter's work underwent significant change between his original text and the first printed edition. Substantial changes are documented thoroughly in volume four and offer many striking examples of alterations by Baxter's first editor, the nonconformist minister Matthew Sylvester (ca. 1636–1708). Many of these changes have a significant impact upon our understanding of Baxter's opinions of people and events, for instance by presenting his opinion of

John Owen's involvement in the events of Richard Cromwell's downfall in a worse light than suggested through the diplomatic edition of these sections under Slyvester. By going back to the surviving manuscripts and restoring these changes, the editors have produced a text which is more interesting and more faithful to Baxter.

The edition rearranges a great deal of documentary material originally included in the narrative into their own volumes. As those interested in the book and reception history will always need to return to earlier editions, this seems a sensible decision to enhance usefulness and navigability, particularly for those who may be accessing it who are not Baxter specialists. Anyone who has tried to navigate editions in special collections departments or through accessing *Early English Books Online* have encountered the issue of tracking Baxter's own reflections and his chronology while coming across his sometimes-small treatise-length insertions. To have them gathered into one place, while linked to the narrative through the scholarly apparatus, not only makes the text more readable, but allows readers to take in at a glance the array and types of material Baxter was dealing with at different points of his life. While this is not the way that historical readers encountered *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, or the way in which Baxter arranged his own material, the editorial decision is well-argued and provides a helpful model for creative ways that early modern documents may be edited to the highest scholarly standards while sensitively and responsibly recognizing such claims as accessibility. Every edition is by nature a production for a particular purpose, and generations of Baxter scholars, and those with access to a good seminary or university library will be grateful for the tools placed at their disposal in this text.

The general introductions, expository, historical and literary apparatus, including extensive entries on figures on whom Baxter makes comment, make this edition an outstanding resource for scholars of a wide range of subfields in seventeenth-century history. The apparatus is a powerful tool for mining the wealth of Baxter's experiences and reflections that have previously been obscured or difficult to parse in its original printed form. The biographical feature is especially helpful in providing a step before a full *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* search by providing the essential information in relation to Baxter's purpose in invoking a particular person.

This edition of *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ* is a landmark publication that will serve as a valuable tool for scholars and the committed Baxter reader. It offers a richly annotated and carefully edited text that illuminates Baxter's fascinating, tedious, frustrating, and sometimes surprising reflections

on his social, political, and ecclesiastical context. For scholars, this edition provides an indispensable resource for detailed study and analysis. For the dedicated minister who may be reading editions of Baxter's pastorally oriented works, it offers a wealth of insight into his practical experiences and his evaluation, clear-eyed or otherwise, of his own and other's actions. Sylvester's unfortunately deficient edition of Baxter's mammoth project lasted for over three centuries. By preserving and reprinting Baxter's autobiography, this will be the edition through which *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ's* place in accounts of seventeenth-century Puritanism and wider histories of the period will receive its due recognition for what will hopefully be centuries to come.

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John Morrill, Andrew Baclay, Tim Wales, Elaine Murphy, Micheál ó Siochru, Jason Peacey, Joel Halcomb, Patrick Halcomb, Patrick Little, and David L. Smith, eds., *The Letters, Writings, and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.

This new edition of Oliver Cromwell's letters, writings, and speeches has satisfied the longstanding need of both academics and general readers for a scholarly, reliable, and accessible version of the much-loathed and much-loved champion of the Puritan Revolution. Through over one thousand texts, the editors have made a profound contribution to the study of Cromwell and of the wide variety of historiographies he informs by replacing the previous mixed attempts at compiling such an edition. The work of the nineteenth-century historian, Thomas Carlyle, in the earliest collection of Cromwell's writings is well-known for including the editor's own musings. By modern critical standards, this reduces the edition to be itself a subject of study rather than a usable edition of Cromwell's own materials. The work of Sir Charles Firth and Sophia Lomas greatly improved Carlyle's reliability through new manuscripts but still followed his edition as a base text. Wilbur Cortez Abbott was the third scholar to work on the Cromwell project. While his edition remains useful for the sheer amount of material included, this feature is also its main weakness. The value of Cortez's work was diminished by a lack of rigor in distinguishing documents in which

Cromwell may have had the loosest engagement from those he penned directly, and a mixed approach to the texts of the speeches.

Removing all the content that Abbott included indiscriminately while listing omissions as part of the apparatus, this edition provides a clear and rigorous focus on what Cromwell himself said and wrote. In fact, it is fascinating to read through the range of material which was not included, along with the editors' brief descriptions and reasons for doing so. While removing a large amount of Abbott's material, this edition still manages to be more comprehensive by integrating many new finds, such as original autograph and holograph letters, and unpublished speeches delivered in the Long Parliament between 1640 and 1648. The editors have been particularly careful regarding authorship of the pieces included. All forgeries have been removed and special warnings are provided where the evidence of Cromwell's authorship is reasonable but unconfirmed.

A full scholarly apparatus is provided, with thorough introductions to every piece, along with generous annotations informing the reader about places, persons, and events which occur in the text. The result of all this is an eminently easy-to-use edition and safe guide to the writings and speeches of one of the most important figures in English history in general and the religious and political history of England in particular.

Beyond the usefulness of the volumes for its subject matter, the edition is an outstanding exemplar for other similar projects through the editors' commitment to clarity in methodology and presentation, and dedication to providing the most accurate text possible through detailing where significant differences exist between variant copies of material. The description of how the project came together and was executed by the expert team of scholars under the general editorship of John Morill, presents a picture of a real labor of love for which students and scholars of this iconic figure owe a deep debt of gratitude. It will be an important source for those who take seriously the need to study the works of Puritan figures in context, shedding light on a figure who many Puritans believed God had specially raised to accomplish his eschatological purposes. As interest in early modern Christian political theory has recently increased, the introductions and texts offered here will provide informed, rather than hagiographical, background to one of church history's most well-known and controversial men of power.

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Crawford Gribben and John W. Tweeddale eds., *T&T Clark Handbook of John Owen*. New York: T&T Clark, paperback 2024.

Abel, though he died, still speaks (Heb. 11:4). John Owen died in 1683, but he still speaks, more loudly now than ever before. The proliferation of resources by and about John Owen, coupled with a recent shift in Owen scholarship, calls for an up-to-date reference volume. The *T&T Clark Handbook of John Owen* ably answers that call. The *Handbook* is divided into three parts: Owen's contexts, Owen's writings, and Owen today. It includes twenty chapters written by nineteen different contributors. In addition to the chapters, it also contains a chronological list of Owen's works, a forty-page bibliography of his writings, related primary sources, and relevant secondary literature, and a useful index of Owen's works cited within the *Handbook* for easy reference.

Editors Crawford Gribben and John Tweeddale observe that "studies of Owen have begun to shift focus" from concentrating primarily on his theological ideas towards situating Owen and his writings in their historical-theological and social-theological contexts (3–4). As a result, part 1 (almost half of the book) engages ten of these contexts: biographical, theological, intellectual, political, homiletical, educational, ecclesiastical, polemical, scientific, and philosophical. These chapters give readers a sense of the man and his work in their native place and time. They helpfully dispel misconceptions that the "Atlas of Independency" was merely a static or ahistorical incarnation of theological ideas and devotional writings by demonstrating that Owen is best interpreted within the polemical and political webs of seventeenth century England.

Among the many insights in this section of the *Handbook*, Martyn C. Cowan shows the significance of Owen's preaching for understanding his work as a whole. First, "much of his scholarly writing found its origins in his preaching (145)." Second, his sermons were "events," which took place in specific personal, ecclesiastical, and political contexts. By understanding his sermons as events, readers will be led away from a mischaracterization of Owen "as an abstracted academic theologian" and better grasp the intended functions and applications of Owen's theology (118, 145).

Part 2 explores, in chronological order, eight of Owen's best-known works: *A Display of Arminianism*, *The Death of Death*, *Mortification of Sin*, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, *A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*, *The Nature of Apostasie*, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, and *Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ*. Of particular note in this section

is John Tweeddale's study of Owen's commentary on Hebrews. While the *Handbook's* authors are not unanimous as to which of Owen's works is most famous (*Death of Death*, 303; *Mortification of Sin*, 336), Tweeddale argues that the Hebrews commentary was most significant to Owen himself. He contends that "Owen believed his project on Hebrews was central to his overall work as a biblical scholar and theologian... indeed, Owen's 'whole life' revolved around the production of his commentary (373, 383)." It "provided Owen with an exegetical foundation for extended theological reflection on the Christian faith (368, cf. 378, 420f)." The *Hebrews* commentary was the "capstone" of Owen's literary career and the foundation of his theological writings (379). Tweeddale's work "challenges older narratives by arguing that the first volume of *Hebrews* not only establishes the trajectory of his overall project but also recasts Owen as a biblical exegete and scholar (8)."

This mutuality between biblical exegesis and theological writing is not unique to Owen. Bruce Gordon writes that John Calvin,

[I]nsisted that the *Institutes* were an introduction to scripture to be read by ministers alongside his commentaries. There was a symbiotic relationship between the *Institutes* and the commentaries in that both served the purpose of elucidating scripture, but from different perspectives... to be able to interpret Scripture properly one already had to be versed in doctrine and scripture... Calvin, like the other reformers, understood that scripture could not stand without a framework of interpretation (Gordon, *Calvin*, 108).

The "symbiotic relationship" between theological writing and exegetical commentaries in both Owen and Calvin raises suggestive questions for further research. Is this symbiosis ubiquitous among the early modern Reformed period? If so, how did exegetical works inform and ground the theological writings of Owen's contemporaries? And how has the symbiosis of exegetical and theological writing shaped modern interpretations of early modern theological works?

Part 3 of the *Handbook* contains just one chapter, Kelly M. Kopic's on "Retrieving Owen." In it, Kopic describes the spread and influence of Owen's works among a diverse audience of theologians, pastors, and lay Christians. He shows that "although Owen was certainly read and appreciated during his lifetime, his popularity grew after his death (490)." His popularity among modern audiences is due, in part, to Owen's "overlap of interests" in areas like dogmatics and human psychology (490). Kopic concludes, "Whatever one's current opinion of this Puritan divine, it is clear

that his influence remains broad and that interest in his life and theology seems only to increase (515)."

The *Handbook's* attention to historical context paints a rich and, at times, complex portrait of Owen and his work across its three sections. One interesting example of this complexity, illustrated in each section, is that Owen changed his beliefs over time. In addition to an early shift away from presbyterian church government towards congregationalism, Owen also changed his positions on politics and the atonement.

Crawford Gribben chronicled Owen's political shifts in his chapter, "Owen and Politics." Owen preached before Parliament the day after Charles I's execution and served as a member of the Protectorate Parliament (83). After the restoration, however, he "valorized Charles II" and participated in a plan to loan £40,000 to the Crown (83). Later still, he "turned against the Caroline court, the sins of which he believed were bringing divine judgment on the nation (83)."¹ The year he died (1683), he was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the failed Rye House plot (84, 115). So, Owen defended republicanism in the 1650s, supported monarchy in the 1660s, and opposed the king's court at the end of his life (85). These political shifts, Gribben argues, show that "Owen was not an ideologue, and...in almost every respect his interventions in politics were pragmatic and defensive of his own position...his long-term goal of ensuring the toleration of Protestant dissenters (85)." The toleration of orthodox Protestants was the thread of "underlying consistency" that ran throughout Owen's "political instability" (116).

Timothy Robert Baylor identifies a second, and perhaps more surprising shift on a subject for which Owen is best known today, namely, the atonement. He observes that in Owen's 1648 *Death of Death*, Owen "thinks it absurd to argue that God's power was constrained by his justice, such that God 'could not have mercy on mankind unless satisfaction were made by his Son' (316)." However, "Owen would eventually reverse his opinion on this in his *Diatriba de justitia divina*," published only five years later 1653 (316). Baylor writes, "Literature on Owen has frequently taken this chapter [*Death of Death*, Book III, Chapter VII] as a definitive statement of his views. This is unfortunate since Owen wrote *The death of death* fairly

1. John Owen appears to call Charles I "our late king, of glorious memory" and his execution one of "the late miscarriages of some professing the Protestant religion" in his 1671 treatise *Animadversions on A Treatise Entitled "Fiat Lux"* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 14:108f.

early in his career, and his thought developed considerably in the years following its publication. His *Diatriba de Justitia divina* (1653) revises central elements of his argument here, and yet these rarely qualify critiques of his atonement theology (322).”

The *T&T Clark Handbook* was preceded by an earlier guide to Owen’s life and thought, the 2012 *Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen’s Theology*. While the two volumes share numerous themes and contributors, a few differences between them are evident. The T&T Clark is much longer than the Ashgate, with 220 more pages of text. More significantly, and illustrative of scholarship’s change in focus, the *T&T Clark Handbook* gives more attention to Owen’s contexts. Gribben and Tweeddale accurately write in their introduction to the *Handbook*,

The Ashgate research companion...did more than anything else to underscore Owen’s status as a subject of academic enquiry, and, as the title suggests, to emphasize that this enquiry was focused on theological ideas. However...studies of Owen have begun to shift focus...in the direction of the social history of ideas, by considering Owen’s life and work in contexts outside the world of Reformed dogmatics (3).

Gribben himself has likely played the most significant role in this shift through his 2016 biography *John Owen and English Puritanism: Experiences in Defeat*. Gribben is cited in all but three of the twenty chapters, often repeatedly.

The *T&T Clark Handbook of John Owen* successfully introduces readers to the content and contexts of a wide range of Owen’s works and helpfully summarizes recent trends in scholarship. Academic readers will benefit from engagement with primary and secondary literature as well as trajectories for further research. Any reader could profitably use this *Handbook* as an introduction to specific Owen treatises or to better understand the man, his writings, his significance, and his contexts.

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Karie Schultz. *Protestantism, Revolution and Scottish Political Thought: The European Context, 1637–1651*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024.

The wars that raged across Europe in the wake of the Protestant Reformation have often been interpreted in two different ways. Scholars such as Roland Bainton, James Turner Johnson, and Michael Walzer have claimed that early generations of Reformed thinkers contributed to these conflicts by abandoning traditional just war theories and replacing them with a new justification of holy war. In contrast, other intellectual historians, most notably Quentin Skinner and Christopher Hill, have downplayed the impact of Reformed convictions on the revolutionary fervor of the period. They have understood the insurgency to have emanated from more secular, legal, and constitutional priorities. While most recent scholarship has chosen to consider the relationship between various shorter-term factors in the outbreak of these conflicts, there remains within the scholarship a tension between religious and more secular justifications. It is within this historiographical context that Karie Schultz provides a helpful account of the ecclesiological and political ideas that contributed to the revolutionary culture in Scotland in the middle of the seventeenth century.

This monograph is made up of six thematic chapters that build on the research conducted by Schultz for her doctoral thesis at Queen's University Belfast in 2020. In the first chapter, the author provides an analysis of the views of early Reformed thinkers on the relationship between church and state, not least in relation to the role of the magistrate in governing spiritual affairs. She makes an important contribution to the growing body of secondary literature on the reception of European intellectual traditions in Britain in the sixteenth century by examining the ways in which the approaches prevalent among Protestant Reformers on the Continent were received in Scotland. As in Europe, a broad consensus emerged in Scotland which included the promotion of a "godly commonwealth" within the accepted aim of politics. However, "little agreement existed regarding how exactly magistrates and subjects achieve[d] this goal in practice, and what methods they might employ for its attainment" (42). This chapter lays a foundation for the rest of the book. In particular, Schultz goes on to persuasively demonstrate over the course of the following chapters the various ways in which Scots on all sides exploited these uncertainties to reach rather different conclusions regarding the purpose of politics, the duties of the magistrate, and the responsibilities of the ordinary subject.

The debates which emerged leading up to the National Covenant regarding the legitimacy of King Charles I's ecclesiastical reforms are considered in the book's second chapter. The author focuses on how Covenanters and royalists developed varying conceptions of *adiaphora* ("matters indifferent") together with the consequential impact that these approaches had on views of royal supremacy. Schultz argues that "matters indifferent" played a significant role not only in how Scots thought about the legitimacy of the king's reforms but also in his authority over civil laws governing the church. By excluding anything from worship not commanded by Scripture through the General Assembly and Parliament, Covenanters set a precedent for the limitation of the monarch's civil authority. In contrast, objectors invoked a more expansive understanding of *adiaphora* to defend royal authority over church government and ecclesiastical laws. Thus, "these theological debates about *adiaphora* and royal supremacy ultimately presented an important model for how Scots articulated political ideas about absolute and limited monarchy" (63). This chapter exhibits one of the strengths of Schultz's volume. By placing her analysis of Covenanter convictions alongside those of royalists, Schultz is able to offer a more comprehensive analysis of the political and theological ideas prevalent in early modern Scotland than has hitherto been provided in the secondary literature.

In chapter three, Schultz continues in this vein by considering how royalists sought to answer the questions raised by the Covenanters about the nature of monarchy. Like in the other chapters of this volume, Schultz diligently situates her research within existing scholarship. Schultz then compares the various arguments which royalists drew on from Scripture, nature, and legal theory to defend the king's civil authority. Although their arguments have sometimes been interpreted as "secular" political ones, Schultz contends that the political convictions of the Scottish royalists have an important theological context that should not be ignored. This leads the author to a striking conclusion. After noting that royalists frequently resorted to a political theory that emphasized a divine requirement to obey the world's natural hierarchy and maintain God's right over government, the author concludes that it was the "Scottish royalists—rather than the supposedly theocratic Covenanters—[that] maintained a high view of direct sovereignty over political life" (88).

While Schultz ably demonstrates that early modern Scottish society was not characterized by an ardent division between Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism, she recognizes the importance of the most contested issue lying at the center of early modern ecclesiological and political

debate—church government. Schultz begins her fourth chapter by examining royalist criticisms of Presbyterianism, which was advocated by the Covenanters. In particular, she notes how royalists challenged Presbyterianism as politically subversive by comparing it with the Roman Catholic debates regarding papal deposing power and conciliarism. In response, a number of prominent Covenanters (not least those commissioned to the Westminster Assembly), justified Presbyterianism as demanded by Scripture, together with the right of the church (not the magistrate) to excommunicate. Thus, the debates between Covenanters and royalists in Covenanted Scotland were neither concerned exclusively with the internal governance of the church nor the external governance of society. “[C]ompatible forms of church and civil government could not easily be distinguished within seventeenth-century Scottish intellectual culture” (111).

The volume’s last two chapters continue to trace the development of the Covenanter community’s political thought. In chapter five, Schultz examines the ways in which the Covenanters responded to other points leveled by royalists, such as the need for absolute monarchy and civic peace. Building on the research in her second and fourth chapters, the author helpfully highlights the impact of European theological traditions on seventeenth-century Scottish intellectuals. Schultz notes the manner in which leading Covenanters merged the political theory of Catholic scholastics with a uniquely Reformed emphasis on the covenanted nation. This enabled them to conceive of the commonwealth as a delegation of power from God to subjects who could recall the power they had vested in their king should the monarch fail to uphold the promises which he had made at his coronation, particularly in relation to the defense of the faith. “In contrast to royalist ideas about the civil state, the supposedly theocratic Covenanters thus infused the temporal kingdom with a greater amount of human activity by making the king accountable to inferior magistrates and to God” (132). Not incidentally, this political position supported the Covenanters’ ecclesiological concern to defend their proposed religious settlement for Scotland.

In the final chapter, Schultz considers the evolution of Covenanter political theory through the end of the 1640s and the beginning of the 1650s. The author shows how the unity between the General Assembly and Parliament upon which the political outlook of the Covenanters became increasingly strained through the Engagement Controversy, the Acts of Classes, the Regicide, and the coronation of Charles II. This resulted in an “intellectual disintegration” of the Covenanter movement; some Covenanters eventually justified the purging of Scotland’s civic institutions to preserve

their vision of a godly commonwealth, while others sought to accommodate royalists and Engagers to resist the greater threat of the English Independents. Although the leadership of the Covenanting community began from a shared Reformed position on political resistance through the first half of the 1640s, it could not withstand the unexpected and dramatic events of the second half of the decade, which resulted in the intellectual breakdown of the movement.

Schultz should be congratulated on providing a valuable contribution to the scholarship of religious and political ideas in early modern Scotland. She demonstrates a strong grasp of the relevant literature, which she then builds upon by shedding further light on the complexity of ideas and events which influenced the political theory of both royalists and Covenanters. Perhaps most significant is the author's sensitivity to the nuanced and inextricable relationship between political and ecclesiological ideas that contributed to the revolutionary culture in Scotland during the period. By avoiding the dichotomic tendency characterizing much of the existing scholarship, this volume shows how both religious and political factors emerge conjointly in our understanding of the revolutionary atmosphere of early modern Scotland. As such, this study will be of interest not only to those working on British political history within early modernity, but also those who are interested in the theology of Scotland's leading churchmen from the period, such as Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661), Robert Bailie (1602–1662), and George Gillespie (1613–1648), whose works will no doubt be much appreciated by readers of this journal.

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David Luke, *Meeting Christ at His Table: Jonathan Edwards and the Lord's Supper*. Treatises on Jonathan Edwards. Fort Worth, TX: JESociety Press, 2023.

Having published several works on Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), who is widely regarded as America's foremost philosophical-theologian, David Luke applies academic rigor and pastoral insight to examine the sacramental theology of this luminary of the New England divines. This book, while both concise and introductory, proves to be essential reading as an informative study in an area that to date has received little scholarly attention.

Previous ecclesiological and theological studies have often focused on the situation surrounding Edwards's approach to participation at the Lord's Table that resulted in his dismissal as minister of the Northampton Church in June 1750. This is known as "the Communion Controversy." His late-grandfather and predecessor in the Northampton pulpit, Solomon Stoddard (1643–1729), had admitted professing yet nominal believers as communicants. He believed that the sacrament would facilitate their conversion. By the late 1740s, however, Edwards allowed only those exhibiting "genuine" and "visible" Christians to participate in the Lord's Supper. This uncompromising stance exacerbated an already difficult situation within his church and ultimately led to his dismissal.

Setting a brisk pace, Luke immediately references the relevant historical and ecclesiastical context while noting previous scholarly oversight. In five chapters, Luke delivers a methodical and well-researched account of Edwards's sacramental theology, not only regarding qualification for admission to Communion, but also as to the fundamental principles and benefits regarding its observance. The structure is typical of similar historiographical-theological works, with a clear literary style and judicious citations of relevant Edwardsean authorities.

Beginning with the Latin Mass of the Middle Ages, chapter one traces the ecclesiological development of the Communion sacrament. This includes its subsequent observance during the Reformation and post-Reformation eras, and celebration by the Puritan-influenced New England church of the late-seventeenth century. The author cites relevant sources of Reformed and Protestant orthodox dogmatics which greatly influenced the colony's ministers and theologians. These include John Calvin (1509–1564), William Perkins (1558–1602), William Ames (1576–1633), Francis Turretin (1623–1687), and Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), as well as New England minister John Cotton (1585–1652).

In chapter two, Luke commences with William Danaher's observation regarding the overemphasis of the Communion Controversy by noting the vital resources afforded by Edwards's sermons that span his extensive preaching career. Many of those cited by Luke were preached on sacramental occasions and are to date unpublished (although available online through the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University). The author utilizes this homiletical treasure trove to great effect to extract and present Edwards's theology of the Lord's Supper and references the Reformed position which informed Edwards's view. The chapter then deals with the significance of Communion: first, as a *memorial*; second, as a *covenant seal*; and third, as

nourishment. Calvin, when commenting on the third view, declared that “Christ is therein given us for food.”

In chapter three, Luke begins by examining the Reformed view of what is meant by Christ’s presence at the Table. He then outlines Edwards’s assertion that Christians enjoy Communion, not through the physical properties of the emblems, but, in a very real sense, by receiving the benefits obtained by Christ’s atoning death. Furthermore, not only does this celebration express the union of Christ and his church, but also of that between the communicants themselves. Importantly, Luke highlights Edwards’s assertion that Communion occurs with each person of the Godhead—a view that is consistent with his thoroughly Trinitarian theology.

In chapter four, Luke then turns to matters of introspection and Edwards’s four areas for self-examination. Establishing the relevant Reformed context with appropriate citation of secondary literature, Edwards’s theology is set out by reference to sacramental discourses and other sermons from his extensive corpus. The fact that many of these remain unpublished underscores the scholarly oversight as an untapped theological resource. It is noteworthy that the contents of chapters three and four enable Luke to challenge Hughes Oliphant Old’s depiction of Edwards as obsessed by issues of qualification and admittance to the Lord’s Supper. Instead, Edwards is shown to be someone who, in Luke’s words, “held a generous spirit by which he sought to encourage congregants to come to the sacrament” (104).

In the final chapter, Luke returns to the Communion Controversy in greater detail. He discusses whether Edwards altered his position to a more accommodating one on the matter. He advances an alternative theory suggesting that Edwards had, in fact, held a stricter view of admittance since around 1730, but delayed adopting it for almost two decades. He offers supporting evidence from Edwards’s sermons, important “*Miscellanies*” entries, and, most notably, from Edwards’s own account of the controversy written in 1749, *An Humble Enquiry*. In the latter, Edwards reflects that he had only adopted a stricter position on admittance to the Lord’s Table to that of his grandfather, “after long searching, pondering, viewing, and reviewing” (134).

The book concludes with George Marsden’s insightful observation that Edwards, on the question of Communion, “was Timothy Edwards’ son more than he was Solomon Stoddard’s grandson” (134). A slightly longer closing statement, in the author’s own voice, might perhaps have been a more apt conclusion. However, that minor observation aside, Luke’s work is not only an excellent introduction for further study in this area, but an

invaluable academic contribution providing a full and historically accurate appreciation of Edwards's ministry.

Two byproducts of this book are first, the demonstration of the valuable resources available in Edwards's extant unpublished sermons and second, its timely reminder of the practical aspects of participation in Communion. *Meeting Christ at His Table: Jonathan Edwards and the Lord's Supper* is a welcome addition to Edwardsean studies. It is a balanced, informative, and eminently readable account of Edwards's sacramental ecclesiology and theology.

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Jonathan M. Carter, *Thomas Goodwin on Union with Christ: The Indwelling of the Spirit, in the Participation in Christ and the defence of Reformed Soteriology*. T&T Clark Studies and English Theology. London: New York: and Dublin: Bloomsbury, 2023.

In *Thomas Goodwin on Union with Christ*, Jonathan Carter leaves no stone unturned. In this work, Carter builds upon his 2016 doctoral thesis at the University of Edinburgh, where he was supervised by Susan Hardman Moore. In the first chapter, the author is critical in understanding the nature of this monograph: "Goodwin's scheme holds union with Christ as occupying a fundamental role in the application of salvation" (2). He states that Thomas Goodwin's (1600–1680) notion of real union affects every aspect of salvation, including the incarnation, Christ's mystical indwelling by faith, justification, sanctification, regeneration, infused grace, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

After a brief biography of Goodwin as a "major theologian in the Reformed orthodox period" (2–6), Carter then assesses the state of Goodwin scholarship from 1950 to the present. Some major influences of this study have been through the works of Paul Brown, Rembert Carter, Stanley Fienberg, Paul Blackham, Michael Horton, Paul Ling-Ji Chang, Thomas Lawrence, Mark Jones, Jon Vickery, and Hyo Nam Kim. Throughout the book, Carter critically interacts with those scholars. He considers Lawrence as the first to specifically pay attention to Goodwin's unfinished

“grand project” (21–22). Carter continues Lawrence’s research, thereby filling a scholarly void.

Carter contends that Goodwin embraced a *real* union rather than a *relative* union. Goodwin distinguished the use of the term *real* as the “mystical union with Christ forged by his indwelling within the believer” from a “mere *relative* union, that is, a legal union external to the believer” (23). He spends significant time explaining the difference and effect of Goodwin’s real union within Christian soteriology.

In chapter two, Carter divides Goodwin’s arguments into two stages: early Goodwin (1620s) and the mature Goodwin (1650s). In the 1620’s, although Goodwin understood that union with Christ involved all three persons of the Trinity, he prioritized the person of Christ. However, as Carter argues, Goodwin’s doctrine of real union with Christ “was neither entirely satisfactory nor consistent with his later views” (47). In the 1650’s, Goodwin reversed his previous opinion by asserting that Christ indwells the believer because of the Spirit’s indwelling, and this equally applies to both the Father and the Son. “In Goodwin’s mature thought, therefore, real union with Christ is forged by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers” (55–56). The chapter ends with a reflection of union with Christ as contained in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

In chapter three, Carter begins with Goodwin’s description of the doctrine of regeneration and transformation of life in relation to union with Christ. In Goodwin’s mind, transformation is the goal and object of this union. Goodwin believed in the essential nature and complete passivity of regeneration in the heart of the believer as a transition from a depraved sinful nature to a spiritual nature infused with new graces or habits. Once a person receives the new birth, he or she confirms it by living a holy life as the continuation of the sanctification process.

In the fourth chapter, Carter recognizes that, according to Goodwin, “Justification is secondary to receiving Christ himself” (160). Nevertheless, Goodwin prioritizes justification over sanctification, focusing on how Christ imputes his active and passive obedience to the saints in justification. Goodwin maintained that justification *causes* sanctification. Similar to John Calvin (1509–1564), Goodwin contended that the double graces of “justification and the role of sanctification *result from real union with Christ*” (163). He further explains how justification has priority over sanctification. However, justification does not have priority over regeneration, for “regeneration was unequivocally prior to justification as its instrumental cause” (170).

In chapter five, Carter discusses Goodwin's concepts this union where believers partake of "all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). In fact, all the benefits of salvation are first accomplished by God in Christ, and then to the saints. These are divided according to the benefits of Christ's person (in the hypostatic union) and Christ's merit (redemption, justification, the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience, and vocation or calling), both of which are applied to and accomplished for the elect (assurance of the love God by the baptism of the Spirit, redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, resurrection, ascension, and glorification).

Carter persuasively convinces his readers that Goodwin believed all mankind stands between Adam and Christ as a common head. Just as Adam merited for mankind sin and death, so Christ is a common head to believers who merit redemption. As such, he is a "public person" in all the areas "throughout his personal history" (191): his preincarnate state, earthly state, and exalted state (191–97). In conclusion to this chapter, Carter asks, why was union with Christ so fundamental to soteriology in Goodwin's scheme? He answers,

Union with Christ, therefore, is central for Goodwin's soteriology because it allows the elect to participate in Christ. Since Goodwin's soteriology is the extension of Christology, his conception of real union with Christ is an implication of the nature of Christ's person... Goodwin advocated a rich Spirit-Christology, such that all that Christ accomplished and received as the head of a new humanity occurred by the Spirit. Only by the elect's reception of the same Spirit can Christ's human nature be replicated in them (229).

In his concluding chapter, Carter reiterates the "main argument" that "mystical union with Christ [is] forged by him indwelling the believer rather than upon mere relative union (i.e. legal union external to the believer)" (231). He then repeats the arguments of the previous chapters and concludes with two appendices locating and dating Goodwin's works.

This leads me to two correlating criticisms. First, this volume becomes quite repetitive. The phrases "already mentioned" or "as already stated" are a refrain throughout the book. Repetition, while warranted for a dissertation, should be kept to a minimum for a book. The second critique is that this volume contains complicated themes and complex chapters. I would like to have seen the chapters divided for more accessible reading. As it was, the length per chapter accumulated to over forty and fifty pages. Those

criticisms aside, this volume is a thorough treatment of Goodwin's "grand project" and Carter accomplished what he set out to do.

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Phillip A. Hussey, *Supralapsarianism Reconsidered: Jonathan Edwards and the Reformed Tradition*. T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology. London: New York: T&T Clark, 2024.

Phillip Hussey's book of theological retrieval focuses on the doctrine of modified supralapsarianism as codified by Jonathan Edwards. Originally a dissertation under his advisor, Michael McClymond, this study elaborates Edwards's lapsarianism which has infrequently been explored. He interacts with Edwardsean scholars with varying opinions and sometimes gives evidence of his disagreement. The author states that Edwards's position is in fact the "penultimate goal of the present work." The ultimate purpose is, however, "to engage the fundamental question at the heart of the debate, and, in turn, provide a constructive, though modest, dogmatic account of integrating God's decree concerning Christ's predestination, God's decree concerning creation, and human predestination" (54–55).

Hussey covers much ground in this volume as it is divided into three parts. In part 1, the author provides the theological context of the debate by separating three Reformed theologians from others: Francis Turretin (1623–1687), Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), and Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680). These theologians varied in their lapsarian approach, and each were read by Jonathan Edwards. Turretin is described by the author as "Infralapsarianism Exemplified," Mastricht, "Lapsarianism Mediated," and Goodwin, "Supralapsarianism Modified." He states, "All in all, this vignette of seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy presents a diversity of lapsarian opinions with varying degrees of theological complexity and nuance" (54).

In chapter two, Hussey considers the work of Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) and Karl Barth (1886–1968), the two foremost critics of lapsarianism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Bavinck described the "inadequacy" of the debate between infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism and discussed problems with both. Barth offered a "Purified Supralapsarianism," as he exposed the weaknesses of

supralapsarianism in the seventeenth century and provided what he saw as a better version.

In part 2, Hussey describes the primary focus of the book as an account of “Edwards lapsarianism.” In three chapters, he covers all the major categories where the doctrine is logically necessary for Edwards’s form of supralapsarianism. He articulates his subject with significant detail. Fortunately for readers, the volume summarizes the decrees as they are uncovered. In the final chapter, Hussey summarizes the seven decrees, then consolidates and expounds them in the following pages.

The first decree is *the election of Jesus Christ ad extra*. According to Hussey, Edwards teaches that the election of the Son, who eternally and naturally proceeds from the Father (*ad intra*), leads to his election (*ad extra*). This election *ad extra* is neither Arian nor adoptionist theology but rather points to the declarative glory of the Father’s love toward the Son. This is also demonstrated in the decree of the Triune God to create the world. Establishing this election of Christ *ad intra* and *extra* leads to the following decree.

The second decree is *the decree of the incarnation and salvation of the elect*. In the covenant of redemption, Edwards maintained that God made this covenant, thus establishing the decree of the incarnation and the hypostatic union of the birth of the God-man in order to redeem the elect. This pact, Hussey writes, “is a contrivance and intervention of wisdom for the executing of the decree of redemption” as revealed in the fifth statement (149). This involves the decree to create mankind liable to the Fall (*creabilis et labilis*). Edwards describes the covenant of redemption as finding fulfillment in the covenant of works, whereby Christ perfectly fulfilled all the obligations given to Adam.

The third decree is *the decree of the covenant of works*. Edwards’s thinking about the covenant of works was consistent with the Reformed tradition except in one point. The census of Reformed orthodoxy frequently mentioned that if Adam had kept the requirements of the covenant, he would have inherited everlasting life. Edwards objected to this, “The natural order cannot, even in perfect obedience, merit heaven apart from God’s gracious condescension in Jesus Christ” (130). Hussey comments, “One of mankind had to belong to heaven already in order for the rest of mankind to inherit such a habitation. The hypostatic union... enables human creatures to share in God’s happiness in a manner impossible for the natural state of humanity” (131). Christ, as the heavenly man, would fulfill in his life and death all duties of this covenant thus giving man eternal life.

The fourth decree is *the decree of the Fall*. In chapter five, Hussey argues that Edwards had a modified supralapsarian position similar to Thomas Goodwin (172). He explains that God permitted the Fall for humans to receive the “greater benefits as a result of the Fall.” He describes the *felix culpa* (175), (or “happy fault”), as capturing Edwards’s explanation that the Fall brought elect mankind into an estate of happiness because they would experience the redemption accomplished in Christ (184).

The fifth decree is *the decree to redeem*. The covenant of grace finds its eternal moorings in the covenant of redemption, but this is historically accomplished with the elect in the covenant of grace. This covenant involves two parties: Christ and the church. Edwards illustrated this by the “marriage covenant,” wherein both parties are obligated to accept each other. Edwards said, “Through possession of Christ, the spouse’s enjoyment of Christ shall be like the Son’s intimate enjoyment of the Father” (147). This is God’s primary design. However, according to Edwards, a covenant partner does not exist if he does not historically exist. In the covenant of redemption, the Father and Son historically existed; in the covenant of works, God and Adam historically existed; and in the covenant of grace, Christ and the church *must* historically exist to experience redemption (147). In short, “distinctions need to be made and maintained between (1) the decree of redemption; (2) the covenant of redemption; and (3) the historical work of redemption” (150).

The sixth decree is *the decree of particular election and rejection*. This decree, according to Edwards, happened *after* the Fall. This is a significant alteration from the traditional form of supralapsarianism. Normally, these thinkers advanced that predestination happened *before* the Fall. In one sense, according to Edwards, the predestination of the elect happened before all time by virtue of the covenant of redemption. However, in another, God hates man’s sin only after Adam sinned. In this modified supralapsarianism, God responds with mercy to the elect (according to the decree to redeem) and only after man fell does God respond with judgment to the reprobate. In the words of Darren Pollock, “Edwards attempts to depict God’s counsels in a way that is supralapsarian with regard to the elect, but sublapsarian with regard to the reprobate.”²

The seventh decree is *the decree of damnation*. “Hell,” according to Edwards, is a “world of hatred,” which God prepared “on purpose for the

2. Darren M. Pollock, “Reprobation,” in *The Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema and Adriaan C. Neele (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), 496.

expression of God's wrath" (189). Edwards firmly believed that God did not create man specifically to reprobate and damn the sinner and distinguishes reprobation from damnation. Hussey comments, "The rationale is straightforward: if the human creature refuses to answer actively that ultimate end for which she was created, then God will act upon her "passively" in her destruction, and, in so doing, glorify the hypothetical end of vindictive justice" (189).

Part 3 consists of one chapter before Hussey's conclusion of the book. He advances a modest proposal of "supralapsarianism reconsidered" in the tradition of Edwards's modified version. According to Hussey, there are certain problems with Edwards's account (such as whether the incarnation would have happened without the Fall, and the problematic view God's vindictive justice). Nevertheless, there are also promises that go a "long way toward answering the critical questions intimated in the critiques of Karl Barth and Herman Bavinck" (213). Hussey finishes with a "Desiderata for Supralapsarianism" and an exposition of the *felix culpa*.

I have three points of criticism about this book that in no way detract from the insight of the work. First, in chapter four, Hussey addresses the angelic covenant and reward (132–34). In my mind, this treatment does not seem relevant to Edwards's lapsarianism. Second, a significant refrain for Hussey is the *felix culpa* ("happy fault"). Although Edwards's thought may have been consistent with the *felix culpa*, I am concerned that doing so is rather anachronistic; without evidence that he actually used the phrase, I would have preferred if Hussey had used it sparingly. Third and finally, I would have preferred Hussey to do a more chronological study, such as the development of Reformed lapsarianism from seventeenth to the twentieth century using the same theological figures: Turretin, Mastricht, Goodwin, Edwards, Bavinck and Barth. From there, he could have cited Edwards as providing a defense of modified supralapsarianism to answer the objections of Bavinck and Barth.

These criticisms aside, Hussey's monograph is a laudable book which requires the full attention of the reader to trace out the tightly reasoned, logically consistent implications of Edwards's lapsarianism. Although I am not convinced that we need to resurrect the infralapsarian and supralapsarian debate, this volume is very persuasive. Anyone who deals with Edwards's order of the divine decrees will need to reckon with this volume.

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