Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500–1800

PURITANISM AND EMOTION IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

EDITED BY ALEC RYRIE AND TOM SCHWANDA

Puritanism and Emotion in the Early Modern World

Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500–1800

Building upon the recent recovery of interest in religion in the early modern trans-Atlantic world, this series offers fresh, lively and inter-disciplinary perspectives on the broad view of its subject. Books in the series will work strategically and systematically to address major but under-studied or overly simplified themes in the religious and cultural history of the early modern trans-Atlantic.

The series includes:

Benjamin Bankhurst
ULSTER PRESBYTERIANS AND THE SCOTS IRISH DIASPORA, 1750–1764

Jordan Landes
LONDON QUAKERS IN THE TRANSATLANTIC WORLD
The Creation of a Transatlantic Early Modern Community

Crawford Gribben and Scott Spurlock (*editors*)
PURITANISM IN THE TRANS-ATLANTIC WORLD 1600–1800

Alec Ryrie and Tom Schwanda
PURITANISM AND EMOTION IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500–1800
Series Standing Order ISBN 978–1–137–31152–8 hardcover
(*outside North America only***)**

You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and one of the ISBNs quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

---

Puritanism and Emotion in the Early Modern World

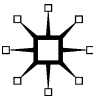
Edited by

Alec Ryrie
Professor of the History of Christianity, Durham University, UK

and

Tom Schwanda
Associate Professor of Christian Formation and Ministry, Wheaton College, USA

palgrave
macmillan



PURITANISM AND EMOTION IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2016 978-1-137-49097-1

First published 2016 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of Nature America, Inc., One New York Plaza, Suite 4500, New York, NY 10004-1562.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978-1-349-69655-0
E-PDF ISBN: 978–1–137–49098–8
DOI: 10.1057/9781137490988

Distribution in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world is by Palgrave Macmillan®, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

A catalogue record for the book is available from the British Library.

Contents

Figures

Contributors

Keith Condie is Dean of Students and Lecturer in Ministry and Church History at Moore Theological College, Sydney.

Willem J. op 't Hof is Professor of the History of Reformed Pietism at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.

Karl Jones is a non-stipendiary minister of the Church of England working in the Durham area.

Kate Narveson is Associate Professor of English at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

S. Bryn Roberts is a tutor for the International Christian College, Glasgow and teaches at Bede Academy, Northumberland.

Alec Ryrie is Professor of the History of Christianity at Durham University.

Tom Schwanda is Associate Professor of Christian Formation & Ministry at Wheaton College.

David Walker is Professor of Seventeenth-Century English Literature at Northumbria University.

Nathaniel Warne is a Research Fellow at the University of Notre Dame.

Adrian Chastain Weimer is Assistant Professor of History at Providence College.

Introduction

Alec Ryrie and Tom Schwanda

There was a time when the title 'Puritanism and Emotion' would have seemed like the set-up for a weak joke. Fortunately, the study both of Puritanism and of the history of the emotions has long ago passed that point. It no longer needs to be said that Puritans had emotions, nor indeed that their emotional range extended beyond lugubrious malice. The purpose of the chapters in this volume is only incidentally to display the variety, complexity and vigour of Puritans' emotional lives – although any readers who still doubt that will find ample evidence of it here. The reason for assembling a volume such as this is, rather, to raise a series of deeper and, we believe, more fruitful questions about Puritans and their emotions. What kinds of emotional patterns were characteristic of Puritanism? What did Puritans understand their emotions to be? What, indeed, did they desire them to be and what work did those emotions do for them? How did they deal with, and discipline, emotions which did not sit neatly with their ideals? How did they cultivate emotions in relationships with their family and friends as well as with God?

The only sensible way to tackle such sweeping, general questions is, of course, with detailed and specific answers which do not claim to have any sort of universal applicability. For all their common themes, the chapters collected in this volume do not deal with 'Puritanism' or indeed with 'emotion' in the abstract, but concentrate on the specific emotional experiences or theories of particular Puritan or Puritan-leaning individuals. Several of them, indeed, focus unashamedly on one or two of the big names of seventeenth-century Puritanism: Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, Thomas Goodwin, Ralph Venning and Thomas Watson. Others venture beyond these commanding peaks of Puritanism into the more thickly populated foothills of everyday godly life in old and new England

in order to examine how a wider range of believers found assurance, dealt with affliction, understood the purpose of human friendship or celebrated the joys of experiencing God.

Naturally, therefore, the contributors do not share a single interpretative framework for understanding these issues. If there is an overall picture to be had, it can properly only emerge from collections such as this rather than determining their shape in advance. However, and perhaps inevitably, the volume is grounded on two shared premises. First, Puritans did not merely have emotions, but their emotional life was rich and complex, and is essential to grasp if we are to understand their religion and its impact on the seventeenth-century world. Willem op 't Hof's chapter on the fruitful encounter between Anglophone Puritanism and the more emotionally cautious world of Dutch Reformed piety is an important reminder that Puritanism's emotional culture was in fact *unusually* rich by some contemporary standards. Second, all of these authors approach their Puritan subjects with a degree of sympathetic understanding. Some of us would see ourselves as, to one degree or another, following in the Puritans' own spiritual tradition; others of us would not. All of us are willing to be clear-eyed in our criticism when necessary. But, as will become apparent, we also share a certain humane appreciation of the authenticity and, at times, the costliness of the lived experiences this volume describes. This is no great achievement of empathy. The texts themselves often speak so vividly that such an appreciation is virtually unavoidable.

*

Even if we are not advancing a unified thesis, we have had the nerve to put two fiercely contested abstract nouns in our title. Some overview of what we mean by 'Puritanism' and by 'emotion' is unavoidable.

'Puritan' is a word both too useful to be abandoned and almost too weighed down with dubious intellectual baggage to be useful.[1] It began as a term of abuse in Elizabethan England, a near-synonym to less enduring terms such as 'precisionist' or 'Novationist', all of which were applied to Protestants who were dissatisfied with the rigour, depth and authenticity of the Reformation of the English Church. The most visible of these Puritans pressed for further structural change, a

[1] J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim, 'Introduction' in J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

campaign which was blocked at every turn by the Elizabethan regime and which ended in bitterness.[2] The label continued to be applied to and eventually accepted by those in seventeenth-century England who chafed at the half-reformed state of the English Church and the almost unreformed state of many of their neighbours' lives. This was especially so once the regime of King Charles I began steadily to close down the space which remained for Puritan consciences in the established Church. A few had already chosen exile or separatism, but in the 1630s a larger exodus began. Many went to the Dutch Republic, where their influence on Reformed piety would be subtle but profound. Many more went to North America and established a series of self-consciously Puritan colonies whose religious culture would become the keystone of Anglophone American identity. In the meantime, back home, the collapse of Charles I's rule into civil war in the 1640s stirred Puritan hopes (and indeed drew a great many of the exiles home).[3] But the 'Puritan revolution' that followed foundered in the end. The final result was that a restored Church of England did its best to drive Puritanism out and that Puritans endured a generation of persecution before finally securing a measure of grudging tolerance.

All of this is true, but it is now clear that there was much more to the story of Puritanism than that heroic tale of struggle. Ever since Peter Lake drew our attention to the 'moderate Puritans' of Elizabethan England (some of them bishops) who fought to change the system from within,[4] we have struggled to produce any clear definition of who was a Puritan and who was not – or, indeed, to decide whether that is a meaningful question. Perhaps we should instead talk of who had puritan characteristics, or replace the P-word altogether. Recent scholars often refer, sometimes unproblematically, to the 'godly' or use the sly term unearthed by the late Patrick Collinson, 'the hotter sort of Protestant',[5] to indicate that 'Puritanism' was at least as much a matter of mood and practice as of doctrine and polity. The blurring of Puritanism into the

---

[2] For the classic account of this struggle, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967). On the 'Novationist' tag and its implications for the earliest origins of Puritanism, see Robert Harkins, 'Elizabethan Puritanism and the Politics of Memory in Post-Marian England', *Historical Journal*, 57 (2014): 899–919.

[3] Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

[4] Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[5] Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 27.

mainstream of English culture has become a regular theme of modern scholarship. As Collinson's most eminent student has put it, 'zealous Protestantism could . . . be a popular religion'.[6] If you squint at the early modern world hard enough, you begin to see Puritanism everywhere. Perhaps it is not only an English phenomenon: Scottish Puritanism, and even German and Hungarian Puritanism begin to seem like useful categories.[7] Or, if you squint with the other eye, it disappears altogether. The most recent study of William Perkins, regularly seen as the prince of English Puritan theologians, makes a powerful argument that he should not be seen as a Puritan at all.[8] And we are all the time squinting at a moving target. As John Spurr has argued persuasively, a term such as 'Puritan' was too useful to contemporaries ever to have a single, stable meaning in such a fast-changing world.[9] This complexity and fluidity has led some scholars, for example, Ann Hughes, to speak in terms of Puritanisms.[10]

For the purposes of this volume, fortunately, we do not need to pursue the will-o'-the-wisp of precise definition, but simply to note some parameters. The chapters in this volume deal with seventeenth-century Puritanism inclusively, ranging from unmistakable separatists such as Bunyan through to the godly conformists described in Kate Narveson's chapter. They also recognise Puritanism's porous boundaries, influencing and being influenced by other religious and national traditions. And they recognise that Puritanism was never simply a religio-political agenda, but a culture, a set of mind and a way of life. It is that which makes discussion of the Puritan emotions worthwhile.

The old stereotype of Puritan emotionlessness owes something to the way in which certain Calvinist and post-Calvinist cultures have come to be seen in the modern world. American Puritans stereotypically became

---

[6] Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 325.

[7] David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism 1590–1638* (Oxford University Press, 2000); W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); Graeme Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier 1600–1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungry and Transylvania* (Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. Chapter 6.

[8] W.B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

[9] John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603–1689* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), esp. 7–8.

[10] Ann Hughes, 'Anglo-American Puritanisms', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (January 2000): 1–7.

the 'frozen chosen' who assumed an effortless New England superiority, who found the emotionalism of revivalist religion distasteful and who saw it as their religious duty to police, or at least to deplore, their society's morals. Hence the most famous modern definition of Puritanism, from the acerbic Baltimore journalist and sceptic H.L. Mencken: 'the haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be happy'. That was, of course, a satirical jibe at Mencken's contemporaries rather than any sort of historical assessment, and the monumental study of *The New England Mind* published by Mencken's younger contemporary Perry Miller in 1939 made it plain how much richer the seventeenth-century picture had in fact been. Three decades later, Eugene E. White's analysis of the rhetorical strategies of Jonathan Edwards and other eighteenth-century Puritans helped to question the simplistic opposition between reason and emotion beloved of that age's polemicists.[11]

And yet suspicions persist. The association between Calvinist predestination and pervasive despair, for example, continues into contemporary scholarship, as in John Stachniewski's work. As real as Puritans' despair could be, however, there is now every reason to think that this part of their emotional landscape should not be exaggerated.[12] In this volume, Kate Narveson draws attention to the assured contentment which, it may well be, characterised Puritanism's silent majority, and David Walker points out that, given the medical, political and other worldly crises which many seventeenth-century Puritans faced, we do not need to seek deep theological or existential explanations for their emotional turmoil. When times were better, as Bruce C. Daniels' *Puritans at Play* (1995) has demonstrated in the North American context, Puritans' supposed pathologies are not nearly so visible, although their distinct religious culture certainly shaped their emotional self-expression. And even during the revolutionary turmoil, as S. Bryn Roberts' *Puritanism and the Pursuit of Happiness* (2015) has argued, Puritan theologians could and did set their emotional compasses by other stars than the gloomy stereotype might suggest. The theological turn in recent literary scholarship has also contributed. It is now, mercifully, impossible to confine Puritan writings to a subculture or to read them through a secular filter in search of themes such as tolerance or the rise of the individual, as

[11] Eugene E. White, *Puritan Rhetoric: The Issue of Emotion in Religion* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972).

[12] John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); cf. Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 27–39.

demonstrated by recent literary-historical works on broad Puritan culture by Andrew Cambers, Elizabeth Clarke and Narveson herself.[13] Both of the editors of this volume have contributed to this exploration of Puritanism's emotional palate. Tom Schwanda has written on the theme, explored further in his chapter in the volume, of how Puritan piety drew on the emotional depth of the mystical tradition.[14] And Alec Ryrie has argued that the intensity and dynamism of the emotional culture of pre-Civil War British Protestantism are the keys to understanding Protestant religious practice.[15]

These longstanding questions have been energised in the last decade or more by the history of the emotions as a scholarly theme in its own right. This arose partly out of new-historicist literary scholarship which needed urgently to find ways of handling inner experience in a historically sensitive way, a need which gave rise to programmatic works such as Jerome Kagan's *What is Emotion? History, Measures and Meanings* (2007) and groundbreaking collections of essays such as Gail Kern Paster *et al*. (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions* (2004). A parallel interest from anthropologists of religion such as John Corrigan and Douglas Davies has helped to provide a firm theoretical underpinning.[16] Early modern scholarship has embraced this new field eagerly, from tackling the thorny issue of just what emotions, passions, affections and feelings were understood to be in the period – all of them, of course, are moving targets – to bringing these new methods to bear on key texts, notably Thomas Burton, whose irresistibly rich work on melancholy crosses literary and scientific histories so promiscuously.[17] An exciting range of work continues on this fledgling field, not least thanks to a feast of

---

[13] Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580–1720* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); Elizabeth Clarke, *Politics, Religion and the Song of Songs in Seventeenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Kate Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

[14] Tom Schwanda, *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative-Mystical Piety of Puritanism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012).

[15] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, esp. Part I.

[16] Douglas Davies, *Emotion, Identity, and Religion: Hope, Reciprocity, and Otherness* (Oxford University Press, 2011); John Corrigan (ed.), *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

[17] Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Angus Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mary Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine, and Religion*

projects gathered under the umbrella of the Australian Research Council. What unites the field as a whole, much like this volume, is not a particular interpretation, but the conviction that no understanding of historical cultures can be convincing unless it is grounded in the inner experiences of which those cultures consisted.

Perhaps surprisingly – or perhaps not – amongst early modern scholars, the historians of religion have been slow to incorporate these insights into their work. There are exceptions, notably Susan Karant-Nunn's *The Reformation of Feeling: Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany* (2010). We conceived and assembled the present volume – much of which draws on the coal-face work of current and recent doctoral students – in the conviction both that the histories of early modern religion and of the emotions need one another, and that this need is in fact being met by scholars, whether in history, theology or literary studies, whose work deserves a wider hearing.

*

If the depth and richness of the Puritan emotional life is unmistakable, the chapters gathered here demonstrate that the old stereotypes are correct at least in one respect: Puritans were intensely self-conscious of – and, indeed, fascinated by – their own emotions. One of the reasons why it is possible to assemble a volume of this kind is that the fiercely focused attention which many Puritans paid to their emotional lives generated rich bodies of source material. Several of the chapters here make use of those sources to watch Puritans' emotional experiences and aspirations, and their attempts to nurture the emotions they desired.

Keith Condie's chapter uses the thought of Richard Baxter, to modern eyes the most humane of the Puritans, in order to survey approaches to the underlying problem of Puritan emotions: how do they relate to reason and the intellect? For Baxter, as indeed for any Puritan who gave the matter serious thought, the answer went far beyond the simplistic head/heart dichotomies which seem so natural to our own age. Intellect and the passions needed one another in order for either one to reach its true fruition. Indeed, as Jonathan Edwards would insist in the following century, there are circumstances in which intense emotion is

---

in Early Modern England: Reading the Anatomy of Melancholy (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

the only rational response. Reason's role is not only to channel, manage, discipline, nurture and deepen that emotion; sometimes, reason is required even to awaken it.

The fundamental rationality of emotion is likewise a theme of Karl Jones' exploration of Thomas Goodwin's theories on the nature and functions of joy. The striking feature of Goodwin's view is that joy is not, primarily, a human emotion. True joy is derived from God's nature. It is dependent both upon who God is and upon what God does in the created world. Therefore, any joy that can be experienced by humanity is only possible to the degree to which God reveals it to the believer. For Goodwin, this involves a lifelong journey that moves the saint from the initial position of rebellion progressively through faith by grace into ever increasing clarity of vision that beholds the presence of Christ and ultimately of God himself. This, as Puritans invariably believed, was the supreme happiness of humanity, whose purpose, the Westminster Confession insists, is to 'enjoy' God forever.

It is a beautiful theory. The problem is not, chiefly, that 'joy' has here acquired a rarefied meaning some way from its vernacular sense. More troublingly, as Baxter recognised, Puritans' lived reality did not always reflect these ideals. Puritans tended to aspire to emotional states which were settled and enduring, often even seeing these traits as a measure of those states' reality. And, indeed, they might often, albeit fleetingly, attain emotional states which *felt* as if they were settled for as long as they in fact endured. In practice, however, they often lived with instability, perhaps not even as regular as an ebb and flow.[18] Puritan pastors were regularly concerned with how to help their people to overcome or, more realistically, to live with this instability. One response, of which Perkins was the doyen, was to cast doubt on the spiritual reliability of emotional experiences, insisting that human emotion was not an index of God's grace. Another entirely compatible response was to focus attention on the 'peak' experiences themselves. Tom Schwanda's chapter looks at the mystical experiences pursued ardently by Thomas Watson and certain other mid-seventeenth-century English Puritans. Watson's experience was that the great hope of all Christian saints – the beatific vision of the glory of God – could truly be glimpsed in this life. The Heaven-focused spiritual disciplines, most notably contemplation, which Watson cultivated were built around attaining such glimpses. They could be used to feed the believer's quotidian life, but,

[18] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 82–3.

more importantly, they constituted a foretaste of the deeper reality of enjoyment of God, for which even the highest earthly religious passions are merely signposts.

S. Bryn Roberts' chapter turns from these dizzying heights to the daily reality of the Puritan life and from the sharp pangs of heavenly joy to the this-worldly ideal of happiness. To guide his treatment, he draws upon Francis Rous, John Norden and Robert Bolton to consider the Puritan awareness of the nature of happiness, the means towards attaining it and the warning not to substitute short-term sensual pleasures for the enduring happiness of focusing on God. Puritans taught that happiness, often understood in terms of blessedness or delight, could be experienced across a broad range of emotions: not only spiritual joy and ravishment, but also contentment, freedom from the fear of eternal death and, ultimately, the fullest expression of the foretaste of heavenly delight. For all of these Puritans, as indeed also for Goodwin and Watson, the joys of heaven were fundamental, but their experience was also that a very real earthly happiness could be built on that foundation.

But the Puritans were also realists, and experienced pastors, who fully grasped the fragile nature of spiritual happiness. A more pressing pastoral difficulty was presented by affliction, a subject which Adrian Chastain Weimer explores through the lives of New England ministers and laypeople. It is all very well to preach happiness, but the reality of life in the seventeenth century – or indeed any age – is that it is filled with hardship. It was necessary to learn how to discipline the dangerous passions of anger, fear and resentment through bearing one's cross in meekness and cheerfulness. The challenge was addressed in both numerous devotional manuals and the correspondence between ministers and laity to mature in sanctification of one's affliction. Careful attention to ascetical practices could refine one's condition and usher one into divine comfort and even joy, while a faulty engagement would continue the spiral of distress and spiritual deadness.

Equally inescapable, as many scholars have recognised and as the thinkers of the period were acutely aware, was the reality of melancholy or, as we might call it, depression. David Walker's chapter turns to two of the more prominent nonconformist ministers of the seventeenth century, Richard Baxter and John Bunyan, to probe the nature of their spiritual and mental health, using their spiritual autobiographies as windows into their souls. This spiritual practice of writing functioned therapeutically to guide Baxter and Bunyan to process the psychological torments of their stress and anxiety as well as the despondency that could arise from their mental and spiritual crises. No person lives in a

vacuum and that context functions in a formative way in complicating how a person navigates life. If post-1660 English Puritanism was emotionally troubled, this evidence suggests that was an entirely rational and appropriate response to the worldly travails it was enduring.

Since Max Weber, or even since eighteenth-century anti-Calvinism, those travails have stereotypically included agonising despair occasioned by the doctrine of predestination. In the face of that argument, the much-preached, heart-centred doctrine of assurance has received relatively little attention. This is the focus of Kate Narveson's chapter. She traces the experience of assurance in the writings of three pre-Civil War Puritan laypeople: Nehemiah Wallington, Richard Willis and Grace Mildmay. For all their diversity, she argues that their cases suggest that assurance was a disposition that was born out of the same doctrinal matrix that prompted anxiety. It therefore served as an essential counter-balance to the demanding Puritan process of salvation. Significantly, assurance was experienced by ministers and laypeople alike, and was the product of what might often seem, at least to our own age, to be unforgiving systems of ascetical and devotional practices.

These struggles over salvation were, for Puritans, always profoundly individual. Yet Nathaniel Warne's chapter signals the importance attached to community in the formation of emotions and virtue – in two senses. First, experientially: the Puritans' experience and belief was not only that the passions could and should support the development of virtues, but that this process was made possible by the Christian community, that is, by the individual believer's place in the web of hierarchies and friendships which comprised the divinely-ordained social order. The dynamic interaction between emotions and virtue fostered moral development, and this in turn reinforced the concept of friendship and the communal role of moral development that was fulfilled in friendship with God. Second, intellectually: for while Puritans and other Protestants disowned much of their medieval inheritance as corrupt, they were nevertheless its heirs, and worked shrewdly, selectively and creatively to draw what resources they could from it. As Warne demonstrates, the Puritans' *eudaimonistic* understanding of human flourishing drew deeply not only on Aristotle, but also on Aristotle as mediated through Thomas Aquinas. As in Schwanda's reading of Watson's contemplative piety, Puritans could find the medieval tradition to be a rich resource.

A further set of conversations across the supposed boundaries of Puritanism are on display in the final chapter here, Willem op 't Hof's examination of the affective devotional writings of the Dutch

Reformed Pietists. The linguistic boundary between the English- and Dutch-speaking worlds is rarely crossed by modern scholars, but in the early modern period the two were woven together by intermingling waves of migrants and exiles who carried their religious cultures with them. Initial interest in the Puritans' emotion-rich literature inspired first translation efforts and eventually the creation of indigenous writings for the Dutch. For some Dutch ministers, the Scottish expressions of this writing became more sought-after than the English. The popularity of this devotional diet, heavily heart-centred and often (in the fullest sense of the word) mystical, is easily measured by tracing the record of translations and successive republication of what became classics of piety for both clergy and laity. This chapter is only an important first foray into a much-neglected field: not only how the emotional culture of Puritanism related to those of its Continental Protestant brethren, but how both fed into the pietism and revivalism of the succeeding age.

Although such questions about Puritanism's long-term development are beyond the scope both of this volume and of our expertise, we would wish to argue that, at least across the seventeenth century, the nature of Puritan piety did not experience a major evolution. As Charles Hambrick-Stowe argued over 30 years ago: 'As the movement adapted in response to changing political and social pressures over the course of the seventeenth century, the themes of Puritan spirituality and practical divinity remained remarkably constant.'[19] While some scholars suggest that post-Restoration piety became more fascinated with 'heavenly mindedness',[20] there were numerous earlier writers such as Francis Rous, John Preston, Richard Sibbes, Richard Baxter and Isaac Ambrose, to name only a brief selection, who wrote passionately on heavenly meditation. Nor is there any evidence that the sharp changes in many Puritans' ecclesiology across the seventeenth century were matched by any similar changes in their pious emotions. Although more research is clearly needed, our suggestion would be that the themes of piety remained remarkably consistent across the period, but that there was some shift in the actual practices. In particular, the popularity of Puritan

[19] Charles Hambrick-Stowe, 'Practical Divinity and Spirituality' in Coffey and Lim (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 204; cf. Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), ix.
[20] Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *The Spirituality for the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), xvii.

devotional manuals of the first half of the century waned in comparison to the latter half. In addition, the earlier almost total resistance to singing hymns of human creation began to weaken, with the emergence of the psalm paraphrases of Benjamin Keach and reaching full development with Isaac Watts.

What is clear, however, is that Puritan piety, whose emotions were subtle and self-aware as well as profound, was sought-after and influential well beyond its English heartland, whether in the European mainland, the American colonies and, as Reformed Protestantism slowly became a global religion, in the world beyond. This volume argues, simply, that this emotionalism was a vital component of Puritanism's religious life. Much more could be said on the subject. We have little to say here, for example, on the emotions associated with the stages of the life-course, from the sorrow of losing children at birth or of deathbed experiences to the heightened and sometimes startlingly un-'Puritan' joys of marriage that many Puritan manuals, tracts and diaries describe. It is our hope that there is enough here to spark such further scholarship and in the meantime to demonstrate the humanity of Puritan culture, and, even, to suggest that there are continuities between the seventeenth century and the challenges of living in today's world.

1

'Light Accompanied with Vital Heat': Affection and Intellect in the Thought of Richard Baxter[1]

Keith Condie

Should we value emotions or treat them with caution? Humanity has wrestled with this question since the time of antiquity, and the ambivalent answers that emerged continued in the early modern world. On the one hand, most conventional treatments affirmed that the passions performed an essential function in motivating behaviours that were necessary to human survival and flourishing. On the other hand, there was an alertness to the dangers they posed, that to grant the passions a free hand could enslave or corrupt the soul and thereby undermine well-being and morality.[2] Central to these discussions was the place of reason in moderating the passions and promoting virtue. The Stoics held that the good life was a state of *ataraxia*, or tranquillity, attained when all passion was overcome by reason. For the Aristotelians, the passions contributed to virtue, but required the direction of reason to restrain them and ensure they responded appropriately to their objects. Then there was the perspective of the Platonists, who believed that some emotional responses should be intense while others should not be felt at all.[3] Philosophical enquiry in the early modern period drew upon

[1] I would like to thank to my colleague, Andrew Leslie, and my son, Michael, for reading an earlier draft of this chapter.

[2] S. James, 'The Passions in Metaphysics and the Theory of Action' in D. Garber and M. Ayers (eds), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), I, 913–14.

[3] S. James, 'Reason, the Passions, and the Good Life' in D. Garber and M. Ayers (eds), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), II, 1360, 1373–4.

this classical heritage, but made various modifications in the light of ongoing intellectual developments.[4]

Perspectives on emotions in the history of Christian thought

Christian doctrine played a central role in this refashioning of traditional understandings of emotions and rationality and their significance for the virtuous life. Rejecting the Stoic binary opposition of passion and reason, Augustine affirmed that the goodness or the otherwise nature of affections was determined by the state of the will.[5] When the will loves in a rightly ordered and directed manner, that is, in accordance with the ends for which God created human beings, then the various affections that follow are fitting and praiseworthy:

> the citizens of the holy city of God, who live according to God in the pilgrimage of this life, both fear and desire, and grieve and rejoice. And because their love is rightly placed, all these affections of theirs are right.[6]

This voluntarist strain of spirituality, acknowledging the importance of the human will and the affections, particularly love, in the pursuit of the godly life, influenced Christian thought and practice in subsequent centuries. At the theological level, this Augustinian emphasis came to be particularly associated with Duns Scotus, who believed that the will was the noblest of the human faculties and that final blessedness was an act of will – loving the God who is the greatest good (*summum bonum*) of the human soul. Such an approach resisted theological speculation and viewed theology as primarily a matter of practice, since its aim was to move people to love God. This voluntarist position can be contrasted

---

[4] See the two articles by Susan James already noted. See also R. Strier, 'Against the Rule of Reason: Praise of Passion from Petrarch to Luther to Shakespeare to Herbert' in G.K. Paster, K. Rowe and M. Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 23–42.

[5] Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 2000), Book 14, sects 6–7, 447–9. See James, 'Passions in Metaphysics', 920; Elena Carrera, 'The Emotions in Sixteenth-Century Spanish Spirituality', *Journal of Religious History*, XXXI (2007): 237.

[6] Augustine, *City of God*, Book 14, sect. 9, 452.

with the intellectualism of Thomas Aquinas, who granted the intellect precedence over the will on the grounds that the true end of humankind is the intellect's vision of God in all his truth and glory. The consequence of intellectualism is a more theoretical and contemplative theology.[7] However, neither reason nor affection was shunned by either of these perspectives; yes, the Thomists stressed the knowledge of God over the love of God, and the Scotists vice versa, but both systems were attuned to a necessary role for both thought and sensibility in the lives of the upright.

The theologians associated with the Protestant Reformation and its ongoing development engaged with these medieval traditions and, generally speaking, affirmed that theology 'was both theoretical and practical, both intellectual and voluntary, with the emphasis on the practical or voluntary element'.[8] What ultimately mattered was that hearts regenerated by a gracious divine work should live for the glory of God and enjoy his blessedness forever. What, then, did this mean for the place of emotion and reason in early modern Protestant practice and, in particular, for that species of Protestant spirituality known as Puritanism?

However one chooses to resolve the vexed problem of defining 'Puritanism',[9] many historians would acknowledge that heightened emotional states were a characteristic of this movement. For some time, scholarship has distanced itself from suggestions that Puritans were stunted in emotional expression.[10] On the contrary, contemporaries of

---

[7] For this contrast between Scotus and Aquinas, see R. Muller, '*Fides* and *Cognitio* in Relation to the Problem of Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin' in *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 162, 171.

[8] R. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Volume One: Prolegomena to Theology*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 354.

[9] For a recent overview, see J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim, 'Introduction' in J. Coffey and P.C.H. Lim (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[10] Note, for example, the claim of M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), 105: 'the entirely negative attitude of Puritanism to all the sensuous and emotional elements in culture and in religion, because they are of no use toward salvation and promote sentimental illusions and idolatrous superstitions'. Other scholars who hold similar views are noted by N.H. Keeble, *Richard Baxter: Puritan Man of Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 104–5.

the Puritans identified this group as the 'hotter sort of Protestants',[11] while recent writers have noted the 'intensity'[12] of their religious experience. This focus on emotion, however, was never at the expense of vigorous intellectual endeavour. In the words of John Spurr: 'Puritans built their religion on head *and* heart.'[13]

The significance of Richard Baxter

The point can be simply illustrated with an example from the work of the seventeenth-century Puritan divine Richard Baxter. Baxter believed that certain emotional responses were of the *esse* of authentic Christian living. When outlining the marks of spiritual maturity in his treatise *The Life of Faith*, he claimed that:

> in the affections there must be vivacity and sober fervency, answering to all those motions of the will: in love, delight, desire, hope, hatred, sorrow, aversation, and anger; the complexion of all of which is godly zeal.[14]

Yet to affirm the emotional was not to deny the intellectual. The same outline of graces and duties found in *The Life of Faith* that are indicative of a 'complete and entire' believer and grants such weight to the affections also affirms the necessity of knowledge and understanding.[15] For Baxter, the rational nature of Christian faith and experience must never be disregarded. 'God hath made reason essential to our nature',

---

[11] The expression was used by the pamphleteer P. Wilburn, *A Checke or Reproofe of M. Howlet's Untimely Schreeching*, (1581) quoted in P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 27.

[12] A. Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 3; Coffey and Lim, 'Introduction', 3.

[13] J. Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603–1689* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 5 (emphasis added).

[14] R. Baxter, *The Life of Faith* (1660), Part III, Chapter 6 (PW3, 689). Most references to Baxter's works are drawn from *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter with a preface, giving some account of the author, and of this edition of his practical works; an essay on his genius, works and times; and a portrait*, 4 vols (Morgan: Soli Deo Gloria Publications), a reprint of the 1846 edition published in London by George Virtue. Where this is the case, the volume from which the relevant treatise is drawn will be indicated in brackets by the abbreviation 'PW' followed by the volume number.

[15] Baxter, *Life of Faith*, Part III, Chapter 6 (PW3, 688).

he maintained: 'It is not our weakness, but our natural excellency, and his image on our nature.'[16]

Baxter's acknowledgement of a role for both 'head and heart' in religious expression matches the common understanding held not only by mainstream Puritans, but also by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant thought more generally. Divergent opinions did exist. As we shall see, there were Protestant 'Enthusiasts' who marginalised the role of reason, while the Latitudinarianism that emerged in post-Restoration England trod warily when it came to emotional expressions of faith. Baxter, however, sat with the majority in drawing upon scholastic and other treatments and affirming a place for both reason and affection. Although his intellectual convictions at this point may not have been novel, he does provide a particularly helpful window into the nature of Puritan and early modern Protestant sensibility, for two reasons.

First, Baxter was a key leader within Puritanism. His life (1615–91) and ministry traversed the dramatic political, religious and social upheavals that marked seventeenth-century England.[17] While his initial pastoral impact was localised – serving as a chaplain for the parliamentary forces during the Civil War and ministering in the village of Kidderminster, Worcestershire throughout the years of the Interregnum – the reach of his pastoral expertise, ministerial methodology and theological understanding was soon extended by means of correspondence, published writings and association with other pastors. This more indirect pastoral work and consequent influence continued post-Restoration after Baxter entered the ranks of nonconformity when, as a matter of conscience, he was unable to assent to the religious settlement of 1662. Even though he had declined a bishopric in 1660, his natural leadership abilities could not be restrained by lack of official position. Writing in the early eighteenth century, the English clergyman Stephen Nye noted: 'He found himself *Archbishop* of a whole Party, and therefore (I think) cared not to be *Bishop* only of a *Diocess*.'[18] In short, Baxter was an influential figure

---

[16] R. Baxter, *The Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1667), Part II, Chapter 6 (PW2, 98).

[17] For biographical details, see N.H. Keeble, 'Baxter, Richard (1615–1691)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

[18] S. Nye, *The Explication of the Articles of the Divine Unity, the Trinity, and Incarnation, commonly receiv'd in the Catholick Church, Asserted and Vindicated* (London: John Darby, 1703), 86; quoted from D.S. Sytsma, 'Richard Baxter's Philosophical Polemics: A Puritan's Response to Mechanical Philosophy' (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2013), 17.

who shaped thinking, practice and debate over many decades. His analysis of the emotional dimension in human and religious experience is therefore worthy of careful consideration.

Second, Baxter's vast literary deposit[19] provides more detailed information regarding Puritan and early modern perspectives on emotionality than much of the other literature of the time. There were some Puritan and other Protestant treatises that addressed the specific topic of the affections.[20] But the greater part of the Puritan writing bequeathed to later generations is of a devotional nature, being published sermons and other such texts seeking to promote godly living. As Perry Miller noted, psychological processes tended to be assumed rather than articulated within these texts.[21] Although Baxter's reputation has been built primarily on practical writings of a similar nature, the full breadth of his literary corpus ranges across a variety of genres.[22] Baxter believed that Christian practice derived from Christian doctrine. So too did all Puritan divines.

---

[19] It has been claimed that Baxter was 'the most voluminous English theologian of all time'. See J.I. Packer, 'A Man for All Ministries: Richard Baxter 1615–1691', *St Antholin's Lectureship Charity Lecture* (1991), 4.

[20] D.S. Sytsma, 'The Logic of the Heart: Analyzing the Affections in Early Modern Orthodoxy' in J.J. Ballor, D.S. Sytsma and J. Zuidema (eds), *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 471–88 identifies the following works: J. Weemes, *The Portraiture of the Image of God in Man* (1627); T. Cooper, *The Mysterie of the Holy Government of our Affections* (1620?); W. Fenner, *A Treatise of the Affections; Or the Soules Pulse* (1641); J. Ball, *The Power of Godlines* (1657); and E. Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man* (1640).

[21] P. Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, Harvard, 1939), 242–3. Note also Isabel Rivers' warning concerning the reading of early modern religious texts: 'the reader needs to be aware of what is taken for granted, the unstated moral and theological assumptions to which the preacher appeals'. I. Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780, Vol. I: Whichcote to Wesley* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7–8.

[22] In an appendix to the 1681 edition of his *Compassionate counsel to all young men*, Baxter himself classifies his works according to seven types: (a) doctrinal; (b) practical for all sorts; (c) practicals for the unconverted; (d) practical for the faithful; (e) controversies against popery; (f) English church controversies; and (g) doctrinal controversies. Baxter's reputation, however, derives mainly from a collection of his material published in four volumes as *The Practical Works of the Late Reverend and Pious Mr. Richard Baxter* by a group of nonconformist ministers in 1707. These four volumes were re-edited into a 23-volume form by William Orme in 1830. The original four-volume set has also been reprinted, most recently in the 1990s by Soli Deo Gloria Publications – see note 14.

But whereas the theological and philosophical presuppositions informing their treatises were often covert, the theoretical foundations for Baxter's pastoral ministrations were often foregrounded, not only in his explicitly doctrinal treatises, but also in his more practical works. Furthermore, Baxter engaged with the breadth of the Western intellectual tradition. Although an autodidact, in the field of theology he claimed to 'have read most of the Writers of great note'.[23] He made a similar assertion regarding philosophical enquiry: 'I have read almost all the physics and metaphysics I could hear of.'[24] The extent of Baxter's personal library[25] and the level of scholarly engagement within his books and letters suggest this is not simply overstatement. The import of all this is that Baxter provides a rich resource for studying the place of emotion in Puritan thought and practice. His writings help explain not only *which* emotional responses should and should not mark the faithful, but also *why* this should be the case.

In exploring the relationship between feeling and thinking in Baxter's works, it will become apparent that he had a profoundly integrated model of human functioning. As he drew from existing resources in metaphysics, natural philosophy and ethics, all critiqued and modified in the light of Scriptural teaching and his own intellectual scrutiny, Baxter affirmed that, by dint of creation and redemption, every aspect of the human soul and body should be exercised 'either upon God or for God'.[26]

Affection and intellect in Baxter's theological anthropology

Baxter's treatment of the affections and their relationship to the intellect was grounded in his understanding of what it means to be human. In keeping with the dominant tradition in Western thought, he maintained that a person was comprised of two unlike components, a body

---

[23] R. Baxter, *Rich. Baxter's Apology* (London, 1654), 154.
[24] R. Baxter, *A Treatise of Knowledge and Love Compared* (1689), Part I, Chapter 1 (PW4, 557).
[25] See G.F. Nuttall, 'A Transcript of Richard Baxter's Library Catalogue: A Bibliographical Note', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, II (1951): 207–21; and G.F. Nuttall, 'A Transcript of Richard Baxter's Library Catalogue (Concluded)', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, III (1952): 74–100.
[26] R. Baxter, *A Christian Directory* (1673), Part I, Chapter 6, Tit. 2, Direct. 14 (PW1, 254).

and a soul,[27] both of which had a bearing upon emotional and intellectual responses. The soul was a spiritual substance that gives life to the body.[28] Without negating the created goodness of the body, Baxter granted priority to the soul as 'the prime, essential part of the man'.[29] It was the soul, therefore, that occupied the bulk of Baxter's deliberations concerning the nature of humanity.

The basic framework for Baxter's view of the workings of the soul derived from the faculty psychology of Aristotle outlined in his work *De Anima* (*On the Soul*). Within Aristotle's treatment, a 'faculty' was a power or capacity to do something. All living things possessed such powers – it was this that distinguished them from inanimate objects. Aristotle's understanding was subject to commentary and debate, particularly within Renaissance thought and medieval scholasticism, but the idea that key faculties existed in the human soul, and that these explained its functioning, dominated the Western intellectual tradition until the new mechanical philosophy emerged in the seventeenth century. Baxter had no difficulty accepting the essentials of this commonplace understanding; for him, it was simply the science of his day that made rational sense of the world he inhabited. 'There are many natural truths', he wrote, 'which the Scripture meddleth not with: as physics, metaphysics, logic, &c.'[30] Moreover, this viewpoint was entirely in keeping with the mainstream intellectual currents of Baxter's time that perceived no conflict between natural science and theology.[31]

Yet natural truth was not adequate to understand fully the human condition. Also required was an awareness of the discontinuities in human nature that feature in the various stages of salvation history revealed in the biblical testimony. Three or four stages were commonly identified and employed within Puritan and other early Protestant

---

[27] See, for example, R. Baxter, *The Catechising of Families* (1683), Chapter 2 (PW4, 69); R. Baxter, *The Poor Man's Family Book* (1674), 'A Short Catechism' (PW4, 263–4).

[28] 'I'le tell you *what the Soul of man is: a Vital, Intellectual, Volitive Spirit, animating a humane organized Body.*' R. Baxter, *Of the Immortality of Man's Soul* (1682), 27.

[29] Baxter, *Catechising of Families*, 102. Note also R. Baxter, *The One Thing Necessary* (1685), (PW4, 771): 'let the body and its interest keep their place. Remember how far it is below the soul'. Cf. *Life of Faith*, Part III, Chapter 11 (PW3, 694); R. Baxter, *The Last Work of the Believer* (1662), (PW4, 954).

[30] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part III, Chapter 2, Direct. 11 (PW1, 557). Cf. Part III, Quest. 173 (PW1, 729).

[31] See G.M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 66, 76–7.

works: humanity as created, fallen, redeemed and, in some texts, glorified.[32] This conceptualisation provides a helpful entry point into Baxter's understanding of the soul's workings and, more specifically, of the place of affection and intellect.

Created humanity

While indebted to an existing intellectual heritage, Baxter's analysis of the soul's operations does feature some unique elements. In particular, he trichotomised the various elements of the working of the soul. This was a direct consequence of his ontology – he believed that the impress of the Trinitarian God (*vestigia Trinitatis*) lay upon every aspect of the created order, and no more clearly than in those made in his image and likeness.[33] In keeping with scholastic conventions, he held that God created the human soul with three '*general Faculties*, that is, *mental*, *sensitive*, and *vegetative* (or igneous)'.[34] But by the application of his trichotomising methodology, each of these general faculties (which he also described as 'souls') was further subdivided into a trinity of more specific powers. The three faculties of the vegetative nature (motive, discretive and attractive), common to all plants and animals, enabled the functions of nutrition, growth and reproduction that were necessary to life.[35] It is the other two faculties, however, that are particularly relevant for our purposes. The sensitive faculty was shared with animals and involved powers of movement ('Vitally active'), perception ('Sensibly apprehensive') and inclination or desire ('Sensibly appetitive'),[36] where emotional responses come into play. The latter was further trichotomised and Baxter subsumed the passions under one of these

[32] A classic articulation of this approach was the work of the Scottish Protestant divine Thomas Boston in *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* (Edinburgh, 1720). The subtitle describes the four stages as: 'Of primitive integrity, entire depravity, begun recovery, and consummate happiness or misery.' See also Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 101–2, who notes the presence of this fourfold framework in Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux.

[33] For the centrality of the *vestigia Trinitatis* in Baxter's thought, see S.J.G. Burton, *The Hallowing of Logic: The Trinitarian Method of Richard Baxter's* Methodus Theologiae (Leiden: Brill, 2012), especially Chapter 3; Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 140–51.

[34] R. Baxter, *An End of Doctrinal Controversies* (1691), xi.

[35] Baxter, *End of Doctrinal*, xi; *Catechising of Families*, Chapter 9 (PW4, 85–6). See the discussion in Burton, *Hallowing of Logic*, 153–4.

[36] Baxter, *End of Doctrinal*, xi; cf. *Catechising of Families*, Chapter 9 (PW4, 86).

branches, which he designated 'Appetitus Vitalis'.[37] Baxter adopted the traditional schema of distinguishing between the concupiscible passions (those that simply pursue or avoid some object) and irascible passions (those that face some difficulty in relation to pursuing or avoiding their object), but, once again due to his trichotomising method, modified the Thomistic classification that recognised 11 passions. The result was a catalogue of six concupiscibles and nine irascibles as well as a number of irascible passions of mixed type.[38]

The final general faculty, the mental (or intellective or rational), distinguished humanity from other sentient beings. It, too, was marked by three '*distinct Faculties*' or particular capacities: '*Vital Active Power*, *Intellect* and *Will*.'[39] The active power gives the soul a propensity to do things and achieve purposes.[40] It functions in two ways, first 'exciting' the intellect and will, and then enabling the fulfilment of the directions of the intellect and will 'as executive'.[41] The second rational faculty, the intellect or understanding, is the power to know, which God has made with an inherent inclination towards truth and goodness.[42] Finally, the mental soul also possesses its own appetitive faculty, the will, which desires goodness and comes to love that which it has apprehended to be good.[43]

The human constitution as described by Baxter was created by God for a purpose – what Packer has aptly described as 'rational action'.[44] Each faculty played its part in enabling a person to live rightly and reasonably in relation to God. But the faculties stand in a particular relationship with each other and there is a clear hierarchy in functioning, with 'the operations of the lower faculties, vegetative and sensitive . . . subordinate to the use and operations of the intellectual part, which is the higher'.[45] This process is not automatic, however,

---

[37] J.I. Packer, *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Vancouver: Regent College, 2003), 109, with reference to R. Baxter, *Methodus theologiae christianae* (1681) I, 9, 225.
[38] Baxter, *Methodus* I, 9, 225.
[39] Baxter, *End of Doctrinal*, x.
[40] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 4, sect. 7 (PW1, 229).
[41] Baxter, *End of Doctrinal*, x.
[42] Baxter, *Catechising of Families*, 'Reasons and Use' (PW4, 65); R. Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, 2nd edn (1651), Part I, Chapter 4, sect. 7 (PW3, 20).
[43] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Direct. 2 (PW1, 124) and Part I, Chapter 3, Appendix (PW1, 154).
[44] Packer, *Restoration and Restoration*, 109.
[45] Baxter, *Knowledge and Love*, Part II, Chapter 18, sect. 3 (PW4, 634).

and depends upon self-government, reflecting the governing attribute of the God in whose image humanity is made. For Baxter, within this schema, senses and passions should be subject to the intellect and will.[46] To operate in such a way is to 'live according to true human nature' and in a manner corresponding to the purposes for which God created the human race.[47]

Although there is a privileging of the intellect over the passions in this hierarchical structure, both elements fulfil a necessary function in achieving God-ordained ends. Beginning with the intellect, this faculty performs an essential gatekeeper role for the soul to ensure that the will and affections are not led into error.[48] The information external to the soul that is subject to review by the intellect derives from two sources: the senses and the fantasy (or imagination). The latter has the ability to retain images from sense perceptions and thoughts.[49] While external objects are known through sense, the intellect possesses other modes of action that contribute to human knowledge. These include self-perception (which enables the soul to grasp the nature of its own internal workings) and the ability to think abstractly and conceptually ('Abstractive Knowledge by Reasoning').[50] It is these non-sensory forms of knowing which enable the human soul to grasp the truth about matters beyond sense perception, including knowledge of the invisible God. In the pre-lapsarian state, these acts of the intellect were free from any corruption. Although the intellect would experience ignorance until true knowledge of a matter was attained, the faculty itself was 'sound', and its various acts and habits were without sin or error.[51] The overall picture is of a reasoning faculty furnished with a set of operations that granted humankind the ability to seek and grow in knowledge.

Baxter also believed that emotional responses made a vital contribution to human life in the state of created integrity. The passions and

---

[46] Baxter, *Catechising of Families*, Chapter 5 (PW4, 72).
[47] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 8 (PW1, 332).
[48] Baxter, *Saint's Rest*, Dedication (PW3, 2) and Part III, Chapter 1 (PW3, 125).
[49] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part III, quest. 126 (PW1, 705). See Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 107.
[50] Baxter, *End of Doctrinal*, ix, xxxiii. Baxter summarises the various means to true knowledge in *Knowledge and Love Compared*, Part II, Chapter 19 (PW4, 640).
[51] R. Baxter, *The Judgment of Non-conformists of the Interest of Reason, in Matters of Religion* (1676), 4. For discussion of Baxter's understanding of the different forms of reason, see Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 99–104; and Burton, *Hallowing of Logic*, 72–8.

the rational soul stood in mutual dependence. As constituents of the sensitive soul, the passions required the direction of the rational faculties. At the same time, however, the rational soul had need of the passions to catalyse it into action. Baxter held that without the spark of passion, the intellect is slow to receive truth and the will lacks the inclination to choose and to act. For him, two images that were Puritan commonplaces explained this effect: the passions are 'the wheels or the sails of the reasonable soul, to speed our motion for God and our salvation'.[52]

Yet emotions were not confined merely to this lower order of human functioning. They were not only a means to an end, but also an end in themselves. The human will was created not only with the capacity to love God and desire him, but also for this very purpose: 'love is the highest duty, or noblest act of the soul of man; the end and perfection of the rest'.[53] Baxter's understanding of what love actually is extended beyond mere sentiment. Yet the emotional dimension was critical – 'love itself is a delighting act' and 'what is love without . . . affection?', he claimed.[54] The picture painted by Baxter is therefore that before the entry of sin into the world, the first humans not only grew in true knowledge of God in their intellects, but were moved by affections such as love, delight and joy in response to this knowledge.

It is apparent from this overview that a teleology underpinned Baxter's conception of the human state in its created innocence. The soul as described is a 'living, active principle'; it cannot remain idle, but must act 'upon some end, or for some end'.[55] As has been described, each of the soul's constituent parts and functions were designed by God to serve particular purposes. But these purposes are subsumed under a more ultimate goal: to further the objective that humanity was made

---

[52] R. Baxter, *A Treatise of Self-Denial* (1660), Chapter 16 (PW3, 402); *Christian Directory*, Part III, Chapter 7 (PW1, 591). Cf. Fenner, *Treatise of the Affections*, 66–8, who makes use of the same images and affirms that affections are a blessing from God due to their ability to quicken the soul. Fenner indicates a debt to Plutarch for these images. See also R. Sibbes, 'The Spiritual Favourite at the Throne of Grace' in A.B. Groshart (ed.), *Works of Richard Sibbes*, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983 [1640]), 97.

[53] Baxter, *Reasons of Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 12, sect. 2 (PW2, 42).

[54] Baxter, *Reasons of Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 12, sect. 41 (PW2, 45); *Dying Thoughts*, Doct. 2, sect. 5 (PW3, 1025).

[55] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 4, sect. 7 (PW1, 229).

for, that is, to live to the glory of God.[56] This teleological perspective is in keeping with Augustine and others, who assign moral significance to aspects of human functioning, including emotional states, on the basis of their synchrony with this God ordained *telos* for the human race.

Fallen humanity

For Baxter, the first human beings, Adam and Eve, were created with a nature akin to what has just been described. They were made responsible beings, subject to the Law of Nature that promised life for obedience and death for rebellion. Their souls were inclined to good and thus to love of their maker, but their wills remained free from external constraint and in consequence there was the potential for sin.[57] Therefore, it was only by persuasion that Satan could draw Adam into sin and he succeeded in doing so by means of a process of temptation that targeted the natural workings of faculties. Adam's sin then resulted in divine punishment and the corruption of human nature, a condition bequeathed to all born after him.[58] In this fallen state, the operations of all of the faculties are distorted.[59]

Although there are manifold varieties of sin, they are all the result of yielding to temptation in the same way that the human progenitors succumbed, and by taking note of this process, we see the nature of the deformity that characterises the fallen faculties. Baxter held that the process begins at the level of the sensitive appetite, with the devil making some appeal to the human senses. The tempter then engages the imagination so that the sensory object is perceived to be very desirable, causing the sinner's thought world to become obsessed with the pleasure of it. Then the passions and affections come into play – the imagination stirs them into action and 'they violently urge the will and reason'. The will cleaves to what is temporal and forbidden; the understanding forgoes its responsibility to resist wrongdoing and instead approves of what is evil.[60] The net effect, therefore, is an inversion of the divinely

---

[56] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 15 (PW1, 146); cf. Part III, Chapter 1, Direct. 2 (PW1, 548) and R. Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (1649), Appendix, 88.
[57] Baxter, *Poor Man's*, Short Catechism (PW4, 264–5).
[58] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part II, Chapter 22, Direct. 9 (PW1, 480–81).
[59] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 8 (PW1, 83).
[60] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 9 (PW1, 93); cf. Part II, Chapter 26 (PW1, 506).

created order of the soul's workings, whereby 'the servant is put into the government, and the commanding powers do but serve it'.[61] Elsewhere Baxter described this disorder of soul functioning as a 'schism in our faculties', claiming that a barrier ('a hedge of separation') exists between senses, intellect, will and affections 'so that the communion between them is violated'.[62] Baxter's perspective here – that the fall has tainted every aspect of human functioning – aligns with the Reformed consensus. In contrast to the Jesuits, Baxter believed that even the first motions of the soul could be sinful.[63] Moreover, he was hostile to philosophical positions such as that of Spinoza, who was prepared to make positive moral assessments of human appetites, even those arising within a person that have not been subject to any evaluation from the workings of human reason.[64]

Within Baxter's analysis of the course of sin, it is clear that emotions carry great power in determining the inclinations of the soul. Passions and affections are not inherently evil and were intended to aid the intellect and will for good.[65] But they are sinful when they are set upon the wrong objects, when they seduce the understanding or rebel against the will, or when they are excessive or immoderate, or promote wrongdoing.[66] For Baxter, the sad truth was that fallen humanity is habitually disposed to such wayward emotional responses due to being 'too easily and violently moved by the sensitive interest and appetite'.[67] Such a tendency mirrors the behaviour of 'brutes', that is, animals, which cannot help but be controlled by their senses and passions due to the lack of an intellectual soul.[68] But for those made in God's image who have

---

[61] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 9 (PW1, 93).
[62] Baxter, *Dying Thoughts*, Doct. 2, sect. 5 (PW3, 1025).
[63] See Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 266, note 86, referencing the Jesuit writer Marcus Becanus, *Summae theologiae scholasticae pars secunda* (Paris: Josephus Cottereau, 1620), tract. II, cap. 5, q. 3.
[64] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part III, Chapter 11 (PW3, 197); R. Baxter, *The Second Part of the Nonconformists Plea for Peace* (London, 1680), 7. See Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 265–6.
[65] Baxter, *Treatise of Self-Denial*, Chapter 59 (PW3, 458); *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 7 (PW1, 273); Part III, Chapter 7, Direct. 6 (PW1, 591); Part IV, Chapter 1, sect. 2 (PW1, 739).
[66] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 7 (PW1, 273).
[67] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 1 (PW1, 86); Part I, Chapter 6, direct. 7 (PW1, 248).
[68] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 4, sect. 3 (PW1, 227); R. Baxter, *Short Meditations on Romans 5.1–5* (1683), (PW3, 1068; originally published at the conclusion of *Dying Thoughts*).

been granted such capacities, the failure to govern the passions appropriately is a betrayal of their high calling and renders them worthy of judgment.

Redeemed humanity

Baxter's soteriology, while maintaining some idiosyncratic views on the doctrine of justification,[69] follows the Protestant emphasis upon the objective work of God in Christ that takes place outside the believer. But for Baxter, the application of that objective work to the human soul so that the great end of heavenly felicity in the service of one's maker might be achieved requires restorative work on the faculties. Within his scheme of divinity, true spirituality is dependent upon healthy psychology. The nature of that psychological rectitude is in essence a return to the state of pre-lapsarian functioning. For Baxter, grace is not opposed to nature. The divine work of salvation does not create new powers of human operation to enable sinful people to live holy lives; rather, 'God healeth, elevateth, and perfecteth nature' so that the redeemed can begin to live in keeping with the manner for which they were made.[70] Not all expressions of Protestant piety would concur. One of the 'erroneous opinions' subject to critique during the Antinomian controversy in New England was the view that 'in the conversion of the sinner . . . the faculties of the soule, and workings thereof, in things partaining to God, are destroyed and made to cease'.[71] But Baxter's sense of the concurrence between God's desires for humankind in creation and his intentions in redemption are apparent when, speaking of Adam, he says: 'For it is the

[69] For key discussions of Baxter's doctrine of justification, see H. Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993); Packer, *Redemption*, Chapter 10; J.V. Fesko, *Beyond Calvin: Union with Christ and Justification in Early Modern Reformed Theology (1517–1700)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), Chapter 16; J.J. Ballor, 'The Shape of Reformed Orthodoxy in the Seventeenth Century: The Soteriological Debate between George Kendall and Richard Baxter' in J.J. Ballor, D.S. Sytsma and J. Zuidema (eds), *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 665–78.

[70] Baxter, *The Divine Life* (1664), Part II, Chapter 6 (PW3, 838–9). See also *Treatise of Self-Denial*, Chapter 29 (PW3, 421) and *Compassionate Counsel*, Chapter 9 (PW4, 19).

[71] D.D. Hall (ed.), *The Antinomian Controversy 1636–1638: A Documentary History*, 2nd edn (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 219.

same end that he was created for, and disposed to by nature, and that we are redeemed for, and disposed to supernaturally.'[72]

Such a restoration of corrupted faculties is beyond human capability and depends upon a divine work through the Holy Spirit. 'Without Christ and his Spirit', claimed Baxter, 'we can do nothing.'[73] In his treatise *The Divine Life*, he likened the regenerate to a 'living engine'. Although the believer has a responsibility to keep the various parts in good working order by means of appropriate discipline and spiritual exercise, the ability to attain an overall harmony of the faculties within the redeemed soul is principally a work of the Spirit.[74] The Spirit works upon each of the depraved faculties and awakens them from their sluggishness.[75] The mind and will are turned from a focus on pleasing the flesh and immediate sensory gratification to a desire to seek after the 'heavenly' and 'future blessedness'.[76] The intellect provides right direction to the soul, guiding the will to choose objects of true goodness to value and then to fix the affections upon them.[77] Baxter's understanding here follows the Augustinian tradition and accords with the Puritan consensus that the setting of affections upon proper objects is dependent upon God's work of regeneration.[78]

Both intellect and affection fulfil critical functions within Baxter's description of the redeemed life. He believed that the sanctification of the soul begins with the rectifying of reason due to its primacy in the chain of command of the faculties' operations.[79] One 'principal use' of this restored reason is to 'rule the passions'.[80] Yet, as was apparent in the discussion of the soul in its pre-lapsarian state, the intellect must also perform a communicative and actuating role upon the affections.[81] True

---

[72] R. Baxter, *A Treatise of Death* (1660) (PW4, 831). Cf. Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 6 (PW3, 835).
[73] Baxter, *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 988).
[74] Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 1 (PW3, 817). Cf. *Saints' Rest*, Part II, Chapter 3 (PW3, 92); *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 988).
[75] Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II, Chapter 6, sect. 5 (PW2, 110).
[76] Baxter, *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 988–9). Cf. *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 4 (PW1, 167).
[77] Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 1 (PW3, 817). See R. Baxter, *A Treatise of Conversion* (1657), sects. 17–23 (PW2, 418–24) for Baxter's description of the changes in affections that arise from the work of conversion.
[78] See C.L. Cohen, 'The Saints Zealous in Love and Labor: The Puritan Psychology of Work', *Harvard Theological Review*, LXXIV (1983): 477.
[79] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part II, Chapter 3 (PW3, 91).
[80] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 7, Direct. 14 (PW1, 295).
[81] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part III, Chapter 8, sect. 4 (PW3, 177).

spiritual knowledge is never merely notional, but must 'pass into affections'. Thoughts are 'the bellows' to evoke these spiritual emotions.[82] What captures the affections becomes one's god, hence the need for a rightly informed intellect to ensure that the believer's love, desire and other such affections are rightly located upon the one true living God.[83] Furthermore, these affective responses to God are necessary for the ongoing welfare of the redeemed soul. 'Affection holdeth its object faster than bare judgment doth', claimed Baxter, which meant that the soul captured by delight in God was more steadfast in resisting temptation and pursuing godliness.[84]

Baxter's view of the role of reason in governing emotional responses is far removed from the Stoic goal of moving the soul towards a state of dispassion. On the contrary, Baxter affirmed a form of Aristotelian eudemonism. For him, to be human carries a natural and inherent desire for one's own preservation and happiness.[85] Such a desire readily sits alongside a faithful and authentic Christian spirituality, because the human soul was designed for holiness, and the life of holiness is the true pathway to happiness.[86] Although this will involve a turning away of the affections from the things of the world, this will be no loss for those who have grasped that they have so much more in having had their hearts 'taken with the glory and goodness of the Lord'.[87] The restoration of reason, therefore, does not result in a negating of emotionality, but resets disordered affections upon proper objects.

In sum, whereas the devil's strategy is to press the faculties to act in a 'backward' manner, God works in the regenerate through Christ and the Spirit to enable them to function in keeping with their true created nature so that godly living is once again possible.[88]

---

[82] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part I, Chapter 8 (PW3, 64); *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 4, sect. 7 (PW3, 832).

[83] R. Baxter, *The Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ* (1658), sect. 17 (PW3, 527); *Divine Life*, Part I, Chapter 2 (PW3, 769).

[84] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Conclusion (PW3, 346); Part IV, Chapter 3 (PW3, 269); Part IV, Chapter 5 (PW3, 289).

[85] R. Baxter, *A Call to the Unconverted* (1658) (PW2, 535).

[86] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 2, Direct. 13 (PW1, 51); *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 977–8); Baxter's letter to Robert Boyle, 14 June 1665 in M. Hunter, A. Clericuzio and L. Principe (eds), *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), II, 474–5.

[87] Baxter, *Treatise of Self-Denial*, Chapter 6 (PW3, 392).

[88] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3 (PW1, 96); *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Conclusion (PW3, 345).

Glorified humanity

The inextricable link between psychological realities and the nature of spiritual experience is again apparent in Baxter's conception of the glorified state. As noted above, the work of redemption brings real change to the soul. Yet transformation remains incomplete in the period of earthly habitation, and the perfection that the faculties of the intellectual soul naturally incline towards remains thwarted.[89] Baxter believed that in the glorified heavenly state, each of these faculties would be perfected – the intellect in understanding and wisdom, the will in conformity to God's purposes and the active power in fulfilling the good works that remain a feature of the state of blessedness.[90] No longer will the human frame be subject to any defect in functioning; 'when the obstructions between the eye and the understanding are taken away, and the passage opened between the head and the heart', each faculty will faithfully fulfil the task for which it was designed.[91]

Of particular note is the manner in which Baxter conceived of emotional states in this heavenly context. In essence, he believed that there will be a flawless match between emotional responses and their objects. As the soul comes to fully apprehend God, the perfect object, this will issue in perfected affections.[92] An awareness of the depth of God's love will beget perfect love for him in return.[93] Desires will find their fulfilment and termination in him.[94] Moreover, in the presence of God, the believer will find incomparable joy, as relationship with him is the end for which humanity was made. Due to the perfecting of human nature, these affections will be experienced with a depth beyond anything possible in the earthly realm.[95] Yet, in keeping with Baxter's emphasis upon the rational nature of true spirituality, this enjoyment will be experienced more in the intellectual soul than the sensitive, that is, in the faculties of 'the intellect and affections' rather than in the

[89] Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 14, sect. 11 (PW2, 56–7).
[90] R. Baxter, *Directions and Persuasions to a Sound Conversion* (1658), Direct. 9 (PW2, 635); *Saints' Rest*, Part I, Chapter 7, sect. 7 (PW3, 49); *Dying Thoughts*, (PW3, 1023).
[91] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part I, Chapter 7, sect. 1 (PW3, 38).
[92] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part I, Chapter 4, sect. 9 (PW3, 22); *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 12, sects. 37–43 (PW2, 45).
[93] Baxter, *Directions and Persuasions*, Direct. 9 (PW2, 635).
[94] Baxter, *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 1058).
[95] Baxter, *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 1049).

'bodily senses'.[96] The overall picture is one of affections perfectly concurring with the soul's intellectual apprehensions, as the completeness of knowledge of God issues in fullness of love towards him.

Christians have always lamented the inadequacy of their earthly spiritual experience and Baxter was no different. He longed for the day when he would experience the completion of the divine supernatural work and all of his faculties would be perfected.[97] In the meantime, his plea to God was that he might be granted a deeper grasp in the present of the emotional experience that awaits him in the future: 'O Give me now, at the door of heaven, some fuller taste of the heavenly felicity . . . that love of thine, which will draw up my longing soul to thee, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God.'[98]

To summarise this discussion of affection and intellect within the context of Baxter's theological anthropology, we note that his treatment of the emotional and rational aspects of human functioning are located within a fairly traditional psychological framework which must be further understood in the light of the doctrines of creation and redemption. The divine work following the human fall into sin includes the restoration of the faculties so that they are able to act in accordance with the purpose for which they were originally designed. Therefore, his approach to feeling and thinking, like Augustine, resides within a teleological moral framework whereby these human processes may be virtuous or vicious depending upon their degree of alignment with divine purposes.

Further analysis of the relationship between affection and intellect in Baxter's thought

Emotional states: both sensitive and rational

So far we have used terms such as 'affections', 'passions' and 'emotions' almost interchangeably. At this point, it may be helpful to comment briefly upon some of the conceptual difficulties associated with contemporary discussion of emotional states in the early modern/modern time period. Thomas Dixon has argued that Enlightenment thinking

---

[96] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part III, Chapter 2, sect. 1 (PW3, 130); cf. Part III, Chapter 2, sect. 15 (PW3, 137–8).

[97] See the description in Baxter, *Dying Thoughts* (PW3, 1008–25); see also *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II, Chapter 12 (PW2, 164–6).

[98] Baxter, *Short Meditations* (PW3, 1068).

led to a shift in meaning of the word 'emotion'. The subtle differences encompassed in the terminology pertaining to human feelings that had characterised earlier discourse (e.g. 'passions', 'affections', 'sentiments' and 'appetites') became subsumed under the umbrella of this catch-all term. Furthermore, Dixon maintains that the moral significance granted to terms such as 'passion' and 'affection' in the pre-Enlightenment era tended to be lost in the later discussions in which emotions were interpreted in a somewhat more amoral framework.[99] From the discussion so far, it is apparent that Baxter's approach to emotionality is located in the earlier setting. The questions that arise are the extent to which he distinguished terms such as 'passion' and 'affection' and whether or not there is any significance (moral or otherwise) in his understanding of where these emotions were situated within the human soul.

Puritan divines held a range of viewpoints on the relationship between passions and affections and their location within the structure of the soul. First, some used the terms interchangeably and located both of them in the appetite of the sensitive soul. Second, other Puritans used the terms interchangeably and located them in the appetite of the rational soul (the will). For example, William Fenner stated: 'I know Aristotle and most of our Divines too, doe place the affections in the sensitive part of the Soule, and not in the will, because they are to be seene in beasts, But this cannot bee so, for a mans affections doe most stirre at a shame or disgrace.'[100] A third group distinguished between passions and affections, locating the passions in the sensitive soul and the affections in the rational soul. This perspective reached its mature expression in the thought of Jonathan Edwards, who defined affections as 'the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul' and believed that passions were emotional reactions less subject to the control of the mind.[101] Finally, and most commonly, some Puritans did not draw a clear distinction between passions and affections, and held

---

[99] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also D. Thorley, 'Towards a History of Emotion, 1562–1660', *The Seventeenth Century*, 28(1) (2014): 3–19, who argues that the meaning of the word 'emotion' was in flux during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, while 'it has certainly not . . . acquired the amorality and autonomy that Dixon found in its later use', emotions did begin to be distanced 'from the physical' and become more associated with 'the mental realm' (4, 15).

[100] Fenner, *Treatise of the Affections*, sigs. B^{r}–B2^{v}.

[101] J. Edwards, *Religious Affections*, J.E. Smith (ed.), *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959 [1746]), 96, 98.

that they were located in both the sensitive and the rational appetites.[102] Baxter belonged in this latter category.

Baxter was more concerned with distinguishing between sensitive and rational emotional states than with whether an emotion is best described as a passion or an affection. On a number of occasions he used the language of passions and affections as virtual synonyms.[103] But he was much more careful to differentiate between the sensitive and rational dimensions of feeling experiences due to the differing propensities of these two appetites. On the one hand, the affections of the sensitive appetite (those in common with 'beasts') are not inherently sinful, but they do tend toward self-regard, and the soul seeking holiness needs to be aware of this. Baxter held that the work of grace is not designed to destroy these sensitive affections, but to enable them to be appropriately ruled and moderated.[104] On the other hand, the affections of the rational appetite do not automatically incline towards the most worthy objects. As discussed earlier, the intellect plays a necessary role in appropriately directing them. Baxter considered that affections such as love and delight exist in both sensitive and rational forms, but with the latter, the affection does not terminate on earthly objects apprehended by sense and fantasy. Instead, reason grasps the true nature of God in all his goodness and glory which then elicits this higher form of affection.[105]

Yet while distinguishing between sensitive and rational affections, Baxter did not entirely separate them. For example, with regard to the affection of love, he believed that 'sensitive love is oft without rational, (always in brutes,) but rational love is never totally without sensitive, at least in this life'.[106] Although he was not entirely sure of why this

---

[102] See, for example, Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties*, Chapter 5. The discussion in this paragraph draws upon J.S. Yuille, *Puritan Spirituality: The Fear of God in the Affective Theology of George Swinnock* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 72n5. See also N.A. Warne, 'Metaphysics, Emotions and the Flourishing Life: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Use of Aristotle on Religious Emotions' in D.J. Davies and N.A. Warne (eds), *Emotions and Religious Dynamics* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 75–94, especially 78–83. For a broader discussion of the nature of the affections in relation to medieval scholasticism and Reformed orthodox authors more generally, see Sytsma, 'Logic of the Heart', 476–9.

[103] For example, Baxter, *Treatise of Self-Denial*, Chapter 59 (PW3, 458); *Treatise of Conversion*, Chapter 1, sects. 17–21 (PW2, 418–22).

[104] Baxter, *Life of Faith*, Part III, Chapter 25 (PW3, 742); cf. *Catechising of Families*, Chapter 43 (PW4, 148).

[105] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 13 (PW1, 138); Part I, Chapter 3, Appendix (PW1, 154).

[106] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Appendix (PW1, 154).

is the case, he did suggest that the inherent unity of the soul and its organic connection with the body implies that the rational faculties will be subject to the influence of the sensitive faculties.[107] There is therefore a complexity in the connection between these higher and lower emotional responses.

Two implications flow from Baxter's understanding of the relationship between sensitive and rational affections. First, in a manner akin to contemporary cognitive theories of emotion,[108] he believed that to a large degree, emotional states are not purely involuntary reactions, but are open to the influence of reason and therefore are subject to direction and modification. As he put it: 'There is a feeling that is merely natural, and not subject to the command of reason and will; and there is a feeling which is under reason, and is voluntary.'[109] Even 'holy passions' require careful management through rational means.[110] Throughout his works, he frequently urged his readers to employ their intellectual capacities in a manner that will curtail emotional waywardness and elicit appropriate affections for objects of true worth. We therefore note that a strong element of human agency is at play in emotional experience and that reason plays an important role in the exercise of that agency. This observation accords with other scholarship that recognises that within early modern discussions, emotions cannot simply be equated with a state of passivity.[111]

Second, the fact that affections are both sensitive and rational to some extent relativises the significance of emotions in the life of faith. Although Baxter believed that certain affectionate responses were indicative of true godliness, they were not the only measure of spiritual vitality. Because the human soul is embodied, passions and affections, especially those of the sensitive appetite, are influenced by temperament

---

[107] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 11 (PW1, 121); Part I, Chapter 3, Appendix (PW1, 154, 159).
[108] See, for example, W. Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 1980); R.C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life*, 2nd edn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993); and the discussions in M.A. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), Chapter 1 and A.J.B. Cameron, 'What is at Stake? A Cultural Overview of the Emotions' in M.P. Jensen (ed.), *True Feelings: Perspectives on Emotions in Christian Life and Ministry* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2012), 37–64.
[109] Baxter, *Crucifying of the World*, sect. 6 (PW3, 508).
[110] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 9 (PW1, 346).
[111] See further Carrera, 'Emotions'.

and other bodily factors.[112] Affections can therefore deceive believers as to the reality of their spiritual condition.[113] The nuances of Baxter's approach are apparent in a discussion on the nature of true repentance. An element of sorrow is neither irrelevant nor determinative in assessing the authenticity of a conversion experience. Genuine Christian faith will normally evoke feelings of sorrow once the conscience has been awakened to the reality of sin. Yet the manifestation of such sorrow will vary from person to person – for some, there will be tears and strong emotional responses, while for others, there will not. Baxter therefore counselled caution in making emotions the marker of authenticity. Safer measures are the thought processes of the intellect, the choices of the will and the issue of these acts in practice.[114] Thus, for Baxter, good pastoral practice would grant little significance to the emotions of the sensitive appetite and instead would focus attention upon the workings of the rational faculties.

Neither intellectualism nor strict voluntarism

Earlier we noted that Protestant theology in the early modern period, while never neglecting intellectual concerns, tended in a voluntarist direction that recognised the priority of the will and Christian practice in the life of faith. In light of the fact that Baxter granted such significance both to rational affections and to reason, where did he sit in relation to these alternatives?

If it were a matter of a simple choice between the Thomist or Scotist positions, Baxter would certainly have veered in the voluntarist direction. He acknowledged an interdependent relationship between the intellect and the will, citing with approval Aquinas' claim that although the intellect takes the lead in providing information to the will to inform its acts (*quoad actus specificationum*), the will is the initiator of

---

[112] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 6, Direct. 13 (PW1, 266); Part I, Chapter 7, Direct. 18 (PW1, 275); R. Baxter (1680) *The True and Only Way of Concord*, Chapter viii (PW4, 716); R. Baxter, *Obedient Patience* (1683), Chapter 2, case 20 (PW3, 971).

[113] Baxter, *Knowledge and Love Compared*, Part II, Chapter 19 (PW4, 644).

[114] Baxter, *Directions and Persuasions* (PW2, esp. 604–5, 627); cf. *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 6, Direct. 13 (PW1, 265–6); *One Thing Necessary*, Use 1 (PW4, 779). Baxter's approach here is similar to the later work of Jonathan Edwards in *The Religious Affections*, who also highlighted that affections that were genuinely a work of grace would bear fruit in Christian practice.

action, including that of the intellect itself (*quoad exercitium actus*).[115] But essentially Baxter believed that the intellect played a preparatory and subservient role to the acts of the will. Within his scheme of divinity, bare knowledge of an object, even with some assessment of its worth, was inadequate without a corresponding movement towards what was perceived to be good, a role that could only be fulfilled by the will. This is why he deemed the will 'the excellentest faculty' and considered love to be the most noble act and duty of the soul, an activity that would find its ultimate realisation in final beatitude.[116] Moreover, Baxter, in keeping with the broader Protestant and Reformed tradition, held that the renewal of the will was the key to the restoration of the soul.[117] All this therefore points towards Baxter affirming the voluntarist position.

Yet these observations do not paint a complete picture of the relationship between the rational faculties in Baxter's thought, since it fails to grant due acknowledgement to the Trinitarian nature of his anthropology. Baxter was dissatisfied with existing theological schemas and it appears that during the early 1660s, he began to develop his own system in a more thoroughly Trinitarian direction.[118] In correspondence with his missionary friend, John Eliot, he wrote: 'If we had a right Scheme of Theology (which I never yet saw) Unity in Trinity would go through the whole Method.'[119] As noted earlier, Baxter came to an understanding that the impress of God lay upon all of creation (*vestigia Trinitatis*) and therefore he sought to conceptualise all of reality in a Trinitarian fashion, including the human soul. For him, if he was to work through the implications of this position in a consistent manner, final blessedness of the soul could not reside in only one rational faculty, but must involve all three:

---

[115] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 8, sect. 2 (PW3, 306); *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II (PW2, 181).

[116] Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 11 (PW2, 35, 42); *Saints' Rest*, Part III, Chapter 11, sect. 11 (PW3, 195); *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 4 (PW3, 831); Part II, Chapter 6 (PW3, 836); *Knowledge and Love Compared*, Part II, Chapter 2 (PW4, 614–15); *True and Only Way*, Chapter 4 (PW4, 713); *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 3, Grand direct. 11 (PW1, 122); *Treatise of Self-Denial*, Chapter 62 (PW3, 458).

[117] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 7, Direct. 9 (PW1, 299).

[118] Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 140; Burton, *Hallowing of Logic*, Chapter 2.

[119] Richard Baxter letter to John Eliot, 30 November 1663, in M.P. Clark (ed.), *The Eliot Tracts: With Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter*, Contributions in American History (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 435. Cf. Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 5, sect. 31 (PW2, 17).

> I suppose that the *Thomists* grossly err in placing beatitude chiefly in the Intellect, and their Reasons . . . are very weak; and the *Scotists* are more sound, who place it in the Will, and those other most sound who place it in the perfection of the whole man actively; but objectively in God.[120]

The apparent tension in Baxter's thought, with an acknowledgement along Scotist lines that the acts of the soul culminate in love and delight in God, while at the same time maintaining his Trinitarian account of the 'inseparability and co-equality' of the rational faculties,[121] is resolved in his 1689 treatise, *A Treatise of Knowledge and Love Compared*. There he provides a series of proofs to argue that love is the perfecter of all of the other acts of the soul, and thereby can uphold both voluntarist and Trinitarian emphases.[122]

Baxter's understanding of the theological task bears witness to his belief in the necessity of a whole person response to God. He defined the study of theology as 'scientia affectiva-practica', that is, an affective, practical knowledge.[123] True knowledge of God can never terminate in notions in the mind. Because of who God is, a true apprehension of him must move the will and affections and issue in godly living. Reflecting upon the Scripture, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent' (John 17:3), Baxter wrote that 'to know him' is 'an affective, practical knowledge . . . words of knowledge do imply affection. It is the closure of the whole soul with God, which is here called the knowing of God'.[124] What is required, therefore, is a full intellectual engagement with what God has revealed about himself as well as the expression of the appropriate affections and practice that arise from such insights. As Packer has noted, Baxter's perspective here is typically Puritan, but he does draw out the implications of this understanding in a unique manner. The three noted by Packer are: first, that heresy has more to do with godless living than any imprecision in theological understanding, especially

---

[120] R. Baxter, *Catholick Theologie* (London, 1675), Part II, 'A Premonition', 25.
[121] Baxter, *Knowledge & Love Compared*, Part II, Chapter 1 (PW4, 612).
[122] See Burton, *Hallowing of Logic*, 378–81.
[123] Baxter uses this term frequently, for example, *Rich: Baxter's Confession of His Faith* (London, 1655), 14; *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II, Chapter 12 (PW2, 162); *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 2 (PW3, 820).
[124] Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part I, Chapter 1 (PW3, 765 – the word 'practical' is misspelt 'partial' in this edition).

matters of a speculative nature; second, that 'any doctrinal scheme which did not demand and promote holiness was of necessity Satanic'; and, third, that since affections and practice are the true measure of a living faith, then some 'Papists' are genuinely Christian.[125] These implications reveal Baxter's understanding of how God has ordered the operations of the soul for the ends of true virtue and divine glorification, and the inadequacy of an intellectual response that is not accompanied by appropriate acts of the will. In sum, we see that Baxter's explanation of the nature of theology once again points to integration of the intellective and the affectionate in the life of faith while affording great significance to the emotional dimension.

Neither 'enthusiasm' nor rationalism

Baxter's concern for the affectionate dimension of Christian experience never drifted into an irrational 'enthusiasm'. In England during the 1620s and 1630s, a new religious outlook emerged that distanced itself both from Established Church conformity and from mainstream Puritanism.[126] This sentiment continued into the following decades and featured in various sect-like groups commonly branded with negative descriptors such as 'Antinomians', 'Fanatics' or 'Enthusiasts'. Baxter was one of those happy to use such labels, for he believed these movements presented a genuine threat to the Puritan agenda of establishing England as a godly commonwealth. These groups tended to deviate from mainstream Protestant thought by driving a wedge between God's work through his word and that through his Spirit, and by divorcing reason from faith, which at times issued in irrational expressions of emotion and behaviour.[127] John Eaton was a case in point, marginalising the role of reason in true belief. He claimed that the message of free grace in the gospel of Christ involves believing 'things that doe to reason, sense, sight, and feeling, shew a contrariety and impossibility'.[128] For

---

[125] Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 87–8.

[126] See T.D. Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion & Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and D.R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford University Press, 2004).

[127] See G.F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1947]).

[128] J. Eaton, *The Honey-Combe of Free Justification by Christ Alone* (London, 1642), 178, cited from Bozeman, *Precisianist Strain*, 192. See also Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*, Chapter 2.

Baxter, however, this was a false dichotomy. He maintained that faith was itself a form of rational action. 'Faith is an act, or species of knowledge', he claimed, 'it is so far from being contrary to reason, that it is but an act of cleared, elevated reason.'[129] As Burton has argued, Baxter held that although this elevated form of reason transcended natural reason, it was not contrary to it, and therefore truths revealed by means of the special revelation of Scripture, such as the doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation and resurrection, can never be deemed to be irrational.[130] Furthermore, just as reason and faith are linked, so too are reason and the work of the Spirit. 'It is a distracted conceit of the quakers, and other fanatics', claimed Baxter, 'to think that reason and the Spirit of God are not conjunct principles in the same act.'[131] This means that, for Baxter, the 'Enthusiasts' committed a grave error by bypassing the role of the intellect and Scripture and granting spiritual significance to ideas, emotions and actions derived, he believed, from 'their diseased Phantasies, and Passions'.[132] Once again, we see in Baxter that in the life of the redeemed, emotional expressions must be subject to the moderating influence of reason, as well as his commitment to the normative status of Scripture in determining the genuineness or otherwise of a spiritual work.

It is this normative role of Scripture that prevented Baxter's interest in right thinking from veering into rationalism. Here Baxter can be contrasted with another style of religious expression that arose in the late seventeenth century, latitudinarianism. The 'latitude-men' espoused a form of religion that had an essentially rational basis, in reaction against what they described as atheism (libertinism, atomism, the ideas of Hobbes, etc.), enthusiasm (forms of spirituality that separated faith from reason) and superstition (the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church).[133] The latitudinarian tradition, although very wary of any extremes of emotional expression, did not neglect affections. But as Isabel Rivers has demonstrated, their approach was different from that of the Puritans. In preaching, they sought to persuade by means of reason. If the affections were to be reached, that should be by reason and

---

[129] Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II, Chapter 6 (PW2, 98); cf. *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 6, sect. 1 (PW3, 838).
[130] Burton, *Hallowing of Logic*, 74–6, making reference to Baxter, *Methodus*, I, 24.
[131] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part II, Chapter 16, Direct. 2 (PW1, 465).
[132] Baxter, *Judgment of Non-conformists*, 2; cf. 17–18; *Life of Faith*, Part III, Chapter 20 (PW3, 730).
[133] Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, 34–5.

judgment rather than sense and imagination.[134] The chief proponents of this movement were theologically orthodox,[135] but by turning aside from the traditional Protestant understanding of the authority of Scripture and setting reasonableness as the measure of religion, as well as adopting such an optimistic outlook on human nature, they sowed the seeds of rationalism and theological liberalism.[136]

Some scholars have argued that Baxter's thought carried the same tendency. For example, Dewey Wallace identifies a form of natural theology within some of Baxter's works that 'paralleled the approach of conformist Anglican Latitudinarian apologetics in their insistence that Christian faith could be proved by reasoning'.[137] Similarly, Carl Trueman suggests that Baxter's belief that there were analogies of the Trinity in the natural realm, a conviction arising from his Trinitarian metaphysic that had been shaped by the Italian philosopher Tommaso Campanella, was 'a small step towards rationalism'.[138] But these claims fail to adequately contextualise Baxter's thought. They neglect the background to his Trinitarian metaphysics in the patristic and medieval tradition of *vestigia trinitatis*, his debt to Reformed sources in his approach to faith and reason, and his strong awareness of the noetic effects of sin.[139] It is true that Baxter did affirm a natural theology and makes much of evidence to establish the truthfulness of the Christian faith,[140] but the knowledge available by means of human reason alone is limited. For example, Baxter believed that reason is able to grasp something of the *effects* of the Trinity because God's power, wisdom and goodness have been made manifest in the created order. True knowledge of the

---

[134] Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*, 52–3.
[135] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 81–2.
[136] Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*, 87–8; R. Popkin, 'The Religious Background of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy' in D. Garber and M. Ayers (eds), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), I, 400–01.
[137] D.D. Wallace, Jr., *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660–1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 174–5.
[138] C.R. Trueman, 'A Small Step Towards Rationalism: The Impact of the Metaphysics of Tommaso Campanella on the Theology of Richard Baxter' in C.R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark (eds), *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 181–95.
[139] Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 36–7, 90–5, 149–59; Burton, *Hallowing of Logic*, 9–10, 74, 247–8.
[140] For example, in his 1667 treatise, *The Reasons of the Christian Religion*, and his 1672 work, *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*.

persons of the Trinity, however, is only accessible via special revelation.[141] Furthermore, any deep understanding of the nature of created realities requires the aid of Scripture. 'The Redeemer is necessary to reveal the Creator more clearly', wrote Baxter, '& to teach us by the *book of Scripture* a truer exposition & use of the *book* of nature.'[142] This means that Baxter's affirmation of the necessity of reason to oversee the emotions and other areas of human functioning has nothing to do with any rationalising tendency in his thought. Rather, in keeping with traditional Reformed and Puritan emphases,[143] his perspective on the role of reason is constrained by deeper theological commitments – a recognition of the corruption of the intellect due to sin and of the necessity of special revelation to obtain a comprehensive theology and a saving knowledge of God.

Shaping emotional responses

Baxter's approach to the pastoral task aligned with the Puritan consensus that worked to see the work of reformation completed in England. National change began at the level of individual conscience; therefore, pastors needed to focus on the conversion of their flock and then to grow them in holiness by means of an astute ministry of the word and effective discipline.[144] Yet within this broader framework, the tight nexus between psychological realities and spiritual experience that we have observed profoundly shaped Baxter's approach to pastoral ministry. The effective pastor requires a thorough grasp of the divine revelation in Scripture, but he also must understand the workings of the human soul and how best to elicit among his flock those acts of the various faculties that accord with God's purposes. Baxter maintained

---

[141] Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part II, Chapter 10 (PW3, 137). See the careful argumentation on this point in Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 149–51. Note also W. Lamont, *Puritanism and Historical Controversy* (University College London Press, 1996), Chapter 9, especially 165–8.

[142] Baxter, *Methodus*, Part I, 152, cited from Sytsma, 'Philosophical Polemics', 133.

[143] On the Puritan perspective on reason, see J. Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Towards Reason, Learning, and Education, 1560–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), Chapter 3. For the Reformed perspective, see Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 398–405.

[144] For a thorough analysis of the particularities of Baxter's approach to the pastoral task, see J.W. Black, *Reformation Pastors: Richard Baxter and the Ideal of the Reformed Pastor* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004).

that the Spirit's operations upon the soul reflected the intrinsic constitutional structure of human personhood. As he was wont to say: 'We are men before we are Christians.'[145] God was the one who had created the human faculties and set in place their various operations, and so it was to be expected that he would not bypass these functions in the work of sanctification. In classic Puritan fashion, Baxter affirmed: 'That God doth work Grace on man by *means, ordinarily.*'[146] Thus, unlike Quaker and other 'Enthusiasts' who held that the Spirit's action on the soul was immediate and direct, Baxter highlighted the significance of preaching, prayer, public worship, the Sacraments, meditation and the like as the means by which divine power produced growth in grace. As we consider two examples – Baxter's perspective on preaching and his approach to meditation – we will once again detect the centrality of sensibility in his conception of the spiritual life.

Good preaching, Baxter maintained, must appeal both to the mind and the affections of the hearers: 'A discourse that hath judgment without affection is dead, and uneffectual; and that which hath affection without judgment is mad and transporting.'[147] As already noted, knowledge will not issue in faithful Christian practice without the heart and affections being called into play; desire is antecedent to action. The preacher must therefore move beyond simply informing the intellect and seek to move the will and affections. 'Every truth of God is a message to your hearts, as well as to your heads', Baxter claimed.[148] The style and manner of preaching is critical in this process. Truth should be communicated plainly, but also with liveliness and affection, since it 'seldom reacheth the heart of the hearer, which cometh not from the heart of the speaker'.[149] There is a circular movement in Baxter's approach to preaching here that highlights the significance of emotions in the process of Christian growth. It is true knowledge about God and his purposes that elicits virtuous affections. But the communication of that truth in an affective manner will facilitate its reception: 'For serious affection quickeneth the mind to serious consideration, and causeth men speedily and

---

[145] Baxter, *Catechizing of Families*, Chapter 42 (PW4, 147).
[146] Baxter, *Catholick Theologie*, Part III, sect. 4, 16. Cf. *Poor Man's Family Book*, 'A Short Catechism', quest. 6 (PW4, 269).
[147] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part III, Chapter 14 (PW3, 232).
[148] Baxter, *Directions and Persuasions*, Direct. 8 (PW2, 633).
[149] Baxter, *Compassionate Counsel*, Chapter 9, sect. 5 (PW4, 19). Cf. *Christian Directory*, Part II, Chapter 16, Direct. 1 (PW1, 465).

deeply to receive that truth which others receive but slowly, superficially, or not at all.'[150] Baxter's advice, therefore, was for believers to seek to 'live under a lively ministry' where the minister 'first feels what he speaks'.[151] And if access to such preaching is not available, a similar outcome can be achieved by reading 'the practical holy writings of our English divines', which impart Christian truths 'in so warm a working manner as is likest to bring them to the heart'.[152] Much of Baxter's own published work was known for achieving such an effect. As the Church of England minister and Fellow of the Royal Society Joseph Glanvill said in correspondence with Baxter: 'I admire your affectionate, piercing, heart-affecting quickness . . . for there is a smartness accompanying your pen that forces what you write to the heart.'[153] In sum, the effective preacher (and writer) will be attuned to the normal operations of the soul's faculties and will use emotion to move truth into practice.

Baxter's method of meditation demonstrates this relationship between intellect and affection within his approach to Christian living and ministry even more clearly. In *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Baxter argued that the duty of heavenly meditation has particular benefit in growing Christian maturity. His approach to meditation was essentially continuous with an existing indigenous strain of Puritan meditative practice that arose in England in the sixteenth century.[154] The focus upon heaven, however, is noteworthy and reveals a teleological underpinning to his advocacy for this practice. Baxter believed that to understand the nature of one's everlasting destiny taught one how to live rightly in the present. 'Such as a man's principal end is', he said, 'such is the man, and such is the course of his life.'[155] The reason why meditation is so effective in creating this state of heavenly-mindedness is because it takes full account of psychological functioning. We have seen that true spiritual knowledge moves beyond cognitive awareness to involve affections. Yet right affections cannot be evoked without accurate conceptions in the intellect. For Baxter, the great benefit of

---

[150] Baxter, *Compassionate Counsel*, Chapter 9, sect. 5 (PW4, 19). Cf. *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 1, sect. 10 (PW3, 815).
[151] R. Baxter, *Now or Never* (1662), Direct. 3 (PW2, 568); *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 4, Direct. 7 (PW1, 175).
[152] Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Part III, quest. 73, Direct. 16 (PW1, 730).
[153] Letter located in Baxter, *A Second True Defence of the Meer Nonconformists* (London, 1681), 180.
[154] See K. Condie, 'The Theory, Practice, and Reception of Meditation in the Thought of Richard Baxter' (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2010).
[155] Baxter, *Directions and Persuasions*, Direct. 9 (PW2, 634).

meditation is that it provides a deliberate means for focusing the mind upon the most worthy of thoughts and then moving that knowledge to the level of affections. In other words, here was an effective method for moving truth from head to heart. The first step in the process, what Baxter termed 'consideration' (or 'cogitation'), involved careful thinking upon 'matters of great weight'. It was the work of consideration to take these truths and present them in the most convincing way to the will and affections.[156] This process took time – only 'frequent and deep consideration' could restore reason to its rightful position of ruling the soul, enabling the other faculties to rise from their inertia and commence functioning aright. If the role of reason was marginalised in any way, Baxter believed that the lower faculties of sensitive appetite and passions would hold sway.[157] The second stage in meditation was 'soliloquy'. This is 'a preaching to one's self' that involves internal debate and pleading until truths about God and the eternal rest he has promised pierces the heart and issues in affection.[158] Finally, this spiritual engagement will move the one meditating to prayer and praise to God, and will ultimately produce the fruit of Christian practice.[159]

The difficulty, however, is that the soul in an embodied state is much less emotionally responsive to spiritual matters than to objects perceived by sensory means. Baxter's intellectual schema provides a way forward. In contrast to the Aristotelian and scholastic principle that there was nothing in the intellect that has its origin independent of the sense (*nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*), Baxter veered in the Platonic direction, maintaining that the intellect has the capacity to know things past, future or absent, not only that which is present and accessible to sense.[160] At its heart, the Christian life is about knowing such non-sensory spiritual phenomena, which, to Baxter's mind, are in fact more real than objects accessible to sense.[161] Though beyond sense,

---

[156] Baxter explains the nature of consideration in *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 8 (PW3, 306–8; quote at sect. 4, 307).
[157] Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part I, Chapter 17, sect. 12 (PW2, 73); *Directions and Persuasions*, Direct. 3 (PW2, 588–9).
[158] The affections to be raised are explained in *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 9 (PW3, 308–16) and the nature of soliloquy in *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 10 (PW3, 316–18).
[159] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 10, sect. 4 (PW3, 318); cf. *Christian Directory*, Part I, Chapter 6 (PW1, 258–9).
[160] R. Baxter, *More Reasons for the Christian Religion* (1672), Part II (PW2, 230).
[161] Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part I, Chapter 6 (PW3, 778); *Treatise of Death* (PW4, 844).

these spiritual realities can be truly known *by faith*.[162] Baxter believed that the practice of meditation is one of the most effective means to raise up the soul to attain such faith-based intellectual and affectionate knowledge of divine truths: 'faith hath wings, and meditation is its chariot; its office is to make absent things as present'.[163] Furthermore, ever aware of the disparity between the sensual and the spiritual in their ability to evoke affections, Baxter urged practitioners to 'fetch help from sense'.[164] He frequently suggested that his readers make use of sensory material to improve their apprehension of heavenly realities. 'We must', he wrote, 'while we are in the body, in our daily thoughts fetch as much help from sensible similitudes as we can, to have a suitable imagination of the heavenly glory.'[165] This perspective led him to endorse a commonplace practice that had existed within the Western contemplative and meditative tradition for many centuries, that is, making spiritual use of the creatures. He believed that since God's nature was impressed upon all created reality, 'every creature must become a preacher to us'. Created objects must not be worshipped, but 'because God appeareth to us in them . . . we must hear the message which they bring us, and reverence in them the name of the Creator which they bear'.[166] Baxter believed that this employment of the senses would bear the spiritual fruit of more lively and affectionate Christian experience. Thus, in this practice of meditation, we once again observe Baxter's ability to employ his psychological awareness to facilitate good order in the functioning of both intellect and affection.

Conclusion

Puritan piety was deeply affectionate, but also welcomed the role played by the intellect. In the tradition of Augustine and Aquinas, Baxter acknowledged that certain emotional states, when subject to the control of reason, are indicative of vibrant and positive spiritual experience. As with other forms of affectionate spirituality, emotional responses are not merely a form of self-expression; rather, they are fitting responses

---

[162] Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part I, Chapter 6 (PW3, 778); cf. *Life of Faith*, Chapter 1 (PW3, 575).
[163] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 3, sect. 7 (PW3, 271).
[164] Baxter, *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 11, sect. 1 (PW3, 318).
[165] Baxter, *Catechising of Families*, Chapter 47 (PW4, 163). Cf. *Saints' Rest*, Part IV, Chapter 11 (PW3, 318–27).
[166] Baxter, *Divine Life*, Part II, Chapter 1, sect. 9 (PW3, 814).

to cognitive apprehensions of truth and help direct the will to action. In fact, they are not only *fitting* responses, but also *necessary* responses. Baxter's emphasis upon the role of reason in informing the will is in keeping with a long tradition that held that rational self-government of the soul is necessary for moral knowledge and action. But whereas classical thinkers essentially located virtue in external acts, Baxter was aligned with an alternate Christian belief that affirmed the central place of the inner workings of the soul – the intentions, motivations and affections of the heart are critical to the constitution of a virtuous life. Affectional states are therefore a measure of spiritual vitality, because they are the internal force that drives the outward actions that befit the person who belongs to God.

However, this understanding did have the potential to raise some pastoral challenges. Emotional states are inherently turbulent and unstable; if one senses that one does not love God enough or lack joy in his service, does this necessarily imply some spiritual insufficiency? What are the implications, both personally and communally, for those who struggle to fulfil the requisite duties prescribed in the Puritan approach to spirituality to elicit godly affections? These are important questions, but they lie beyond the scope of this investigation.[167]

For Baxter, the significance afforded to affection and intellect in the life of faith and effective ministry practice was formed not merely by Scriptural injunction, but also by psychological reality. He believed that there was no contradiction between the two, as the same divine mind undergirded both. A careful reading of both of God's books, his special revelation in Scripture and his general revelation in creation, would enable the pastor to know how to effectively minister to his people. Such a ministry would shape thinking, feeling and action to enable believers to live for what they were made for and redeemed for, until they attained the state of glory when they could do so perfectly and completely.

---

[167] For discussion of the relationship between emotions and spiritual health in Baxter's pastoral practice, see A. Searle, '"My Souls Anatomiste": Richard Baxter, Katherine Gell and Letters of the Heart', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 12(2) (2006); and Condie, 'Meditation', Chapter 5. For discussions on the demands and disciplines of the Puritan conception of the Christian life, see Bozeman, *Precisianist Strain*; and Como, *Blown by the Spirit*.

2

Thomas Goodwin and the 'Supreme Happiness of Man'

Karl Jones

The upheaval of the mid-seventeenth century has naturally focused scholars' attention on the politics of nation and church. As a result, theologians of the period have often been defined by their ecclesiology or by their views on the more openly debated theological issues of the day. In the process, we risk overlooking some of the more subtle issues of personal devotion to which many of the pastors and teachers of the time gave considerable attention. Thomas Goodwin (1600–80) is most often studied for his substantial contribution to the formation of Independent ecclesiology. Yet alongside this radicalism, the devotional writing which formed the bulk of his published work had a very different, quasi-mystical focus. In this, at least, he was no extremist. The mystical tendencies evident in Goodwin are by no means fringe cases or idiosyncrasies peculiar to him alone. Rather, Goodwin represents a kind of piety that was thriving among some of the godly of his day. His importance in respect of the puritan understanding of joy lies in the clarity with which he develops the idea of the saints' journey of faith leading to the ultimate joy of an unhindered view of God.

Joel Beeke describes Goodwin as the 'cream of Puritanism, capturing the intellect, will, and heart of his readers'.[1] As an author, Goodwin was passionate and exhaustive. He was influential not just through his own works, but also in preparing the works of Jeremiah Burroughs (1599–1646), John Preston (1587–1628) and Richard Sibbes (1577–1635) for publication. As a pastor, his manner was warm and helpful, seeking to offer constant aid to the saint whose joy in God is lacking, or failing,

[1] Joel R. Beeke, 'Introduction' in Joel R. Beeke (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), I, 1.

in some respect. He was also central to the theology of the developing Independent movement, from the period before the Civil War to the ejection in 1662. His fortunes, and the fortunes of Independency, followed those of the Commonwealth. He was a key figure in both the Westminster Assembly (1643–9) and the Savoy Assembly (1658), proving highly influential in the declarations of both meetings. As an Independent theologian, he left a substantial legacy of written works, less than half of which were published in his lifetime. The majority of studies on him have focused on this aspect of his life and work.[2]

Goodwin's theology has not, however, been ignored as a topic for study in itself. Issues such as his theology of covenant, doctrines of election, predestination, assurance, justification and sanctification have all been considered, in which context his continuity with Calvin is regularly stressed.[3] More recent authors have moved away from a consideration of the formal doctrines surrounding the process of salvation

---

[2] Authors such as Burgess, Carter, Dallison, Fienberg, Walker and Wilson have sought to outline and assess Goodwin's contribution to the debate between Presbyterian and Independent, and have tried to establish what was at the core of Goodwin's thought that led him to take an Independent stand. John Paul Burgess, 'The Problem of Scripture and Political Affairs as Reflected in the Puritan Revolution: Samuel Rutherord, Thomas Goodwin, John Goodwin and Gerrand Winstanley' (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1986); R.B. Carter, 'The Presbyterian Independent Controversy with Special Reference to Dr. Thomas Goodwin and the Years 1640–1660' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1961); John F. Wilson, 'A Glimpse of Sions Glory', *Church History*, 31(1) (1962): 66–73; A.R. Dallison, 'The Latter-Day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 58 (1986): 53–68; S.P. Fienberg, 'Thomas Goodwin, Puritan Pastor and Independent Divine' (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1974); S.P. Fienberg, 'Thomas Goodwin's Scriptural Hermenuetics and the Dissolution of Puritan Unity', *Journal of Religious History*, 10 (1978): 32–49; Graham Harrison, 'Thomas Goodwin and Independency' in Brian Freer (ed.), *Diversities of Gifts* (London: Westminster Conference, 1981), 21–44; David John Walker, 'The Language of Canaan: The Typology of Thomas Goodwin' (MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1977); and David John Walker, 'Thomas Goodwin and the Debate on Church Government', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 34(1) (1983): 85–99.

[3] K.-S. Cha, 'Thomas Goodwin's View of the Holy Ghost in Relation to Assurance' (PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1989); P.E. Brown, 'The Principle of the Covenant in the Theology of Thomas Goodwin' (PhD thesis, Drew University, 1950); Guy Davis, 'Thomas Goodwin: His Life, Times and Quest for Assurance', *Congregational Studies Conference Papers*, (1994): 55–83; James Fry, 'The Grace of Election in the Writings of Thomas Goodwin' (MA thesis, Durham University, 1970); Alexander McNally, 'Some Aspects of Thomas Goodwin's Doctrine of Assurance' (ThM thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1972); Brian Freer, 'Thomas Goodwin, the Peaceable Puritan' in Freer (ed.), *Diversities of Gifts*, 7–20;

to the areas of pneumatology, the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and Christology.[4] However, while any consideration of assurance and sealing will touch upon issues of emotion, there have been no substantial studies of his work explicitly intended as a consideration of the emotional life. One small paper was delivered at the Westminster Conference in 1980 concerning Goodwin as a mystic, arguing that the kind of mysticism in his writing is not the mysticism of George Fox or the classical mysticism later described by Evelyn Underhill, but was rather a biblically founded belief in the immediacy of the Spirit's work. It is this form of mysticism that underlies some aspects of our study into Goodwin's understanding of Christian joy.[5]

This chapter will examine Goodwin's understanding of the saint's increasing joy as they pass from their natural state as a fallen human being into a state of grace and on to eternal glory. This is a journey which is characterised by an increasingly clear apprehension and understanding of God; initially seeing God in creation, then by faith in Christ, then seeing God in the actual presence of Christ, and ultimately in sharing the view of God that Christ himself has. In gaining this understanding of joy in its fullest, spiritual, sense, we obtain an insight into

---

and M.S. Horton, 'Thomas Goodwin and the Puritan Doctrine of Assurance: Continuity and Discontinuity in the Reformed Tradition, 1600–1680' (PhD thesis, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and Coventry University, 1995).

[4] Paul Blackham, 'The Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin' (PhD thesis, King's College, London, 1995); Paul Blackham, *Thomas Goodwin: Word and Spirit* (London: Congregational Memorial Hall Trust (1978) Ltd., 2001); Paul Ling-Ji Chang, 'Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) on the Christian Life' (PhD thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2001); D.I. Childs, 'Thomas Goodwin's Teaching on the Person and Work of Christ' (PhD thesis, University of Cardiff, 2004): Mark Jones, 'Why Heaven Kissed Earth: The Christology of Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680)' (PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2009); Valdeci da Silva Santos, 'A Light Beyond the Light of Ordinary Faith: Thomas Goodwin's View on the Seal of the Holy Spirit' (ThM thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 1997); Thomas Goodwin, Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Habitual Sight of Him: The Christ-Centered Piety of Thomas Goodwin* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009); and T.M. Lawrence, 'Transmission and Transformation: Thomas Goodwin and the Puritan Project, 1600–1704' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2002). Lawrence takes a careful look at the dating of Goodwin's works. While much of Goodwin's published work is often considered to be the product of his old age, Lawrence persuasively demonstrates that the bulk of Goodwin's works were completed before the mid-1650s. Indeed, Lawrence demonstrates that Goodwin was working on a major four-part theological work, the structure of which was totally obliterated by his sons' later publication.

[5] Paul Cook, 'Thomas Goodwin – Mystic?' in Freer (ed.), *Diversities of Gifts*.

the devotional life of the saint of the seventeenth century, for whom the joys of eternity far outweighed the fleeting shallow joys of this world, and in the face of which the life of restraint and self-control was a more than fair exchange.[6] It is therefore far closer to the heart of Goodwin's thought and experience than were the controversies into which he was drawn during the Civil War era.

The joy of God

For Goodwin, the joy of the saint is rooted in God's own joy. God is perfectly happy in himself; he has been and will be for all eternity. God's ultimate happiness 'lies in his enjoying himself, and his own Glory', This glory pre-dates any action of creation on God's part; God enjoyed himself eternally 'for he was alone'. From all eternity God rejoiced 'in the knowledge and enjoyment of himself'.[7] Indeed, Goodwin tells us that since 'all things, past, present, and to come, are present unto him', God 'possesseth the Joys of all Time in one Instant continual'. As 'his immense Being encompasseth all Beings, so his immense Duration doth all Time, and there is but one Now of Eternity to Him'. Since God knows all things and is himself beyond time, Goodwin argues that God rejoices in all things and experiences all joy in the fullness of one eternal moment.[8]

Goodwin takes great pains to demonstrate that the persons of the Godhead have a 'union and communion' that is unique to themselves. This 'union and communion' constitutes the eternal unchanging life of the Godhead, a realm completely set apart from all other relationships, one that is incommunicable to all others and which can be understood only in similitudes. This unique union leads Goodwin to a consideration of their communion, the inner relationship within the Trinity, a communion as of persons with a shared mutual interest, who have a shared knowledge of each other and who share a common 'glory and

---

[6] Thomas Goodwin, *The works of Thomas Goodwin, D.D. Sometime president of Magdalene Colledge in Oxford . . . Containing, an Exposition on the First, and part of the Second Chapter, of the Epistle to the Ephesians. And Sermons Preached on Several Occasions*. (London: J.D. and S.R. for T.G, [1681–]1704), vol. V: *A Discourse of the Blessed State of Glory which the Saints Possess After Death*, XV, 112.

[7] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. II. *Of the Knowledge of God The Father, and His Son Jesus Christ*, Book I, V, 30 and VI, 37, 38

[8] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. I. *An Exposition of the First, and Part of the Second Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Part II, Sermon XX, 270.

blessedness'. The persons' mutual enjoyment of one another is central to this union: 'And the Life of all three is God, and the enjoying of the Life of God, and exercising all the Acts of Life among themselves.'[9] The special union enjoyed by the members of the Godhead results in mutual love, and this love is the immediate cause of their eternal joy. The Father loves the son with 'a transcendent, primary love' and 'loves the Son for himself; with a natural Love, as that is wherewith he loveth himself'. The Father's love for the Son is the same love that the Father has for himself.[10]

It is the role of the Holy Spirit, in this relationship of love, to make that love known to humankind and to stimulate reciprocal love for God:

> So that there is a love towards the Spirit in a Christian; a love in us to the Spirit, for the Spirit's own love to us. As also, because it is the Spirit that sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. The Spirit works in us love to God and faith in Christ Jesus: but he lies hid, and as it were dormant in our hearts, and we little perceive how he is in us.[11]

This mutual love for, and delight in, one another pre-dates creation and is essential to the life of the Godhead. It continues and will continue eternally as being 'their proper, natural, incommunicable delights each in other; as their Union is, and was, afore the World was'. As the three members of the Trinity dwell in each other, so they rejoice 'in one another always'. Goodwin's understanding of the Trinity is never quite full perichoresis; rather, the shared life of the Trinity is one of mutual love, purpose and self-disclosure.[12]

It follows that, since God is eternally happy in himself, he needs nothing from without. The life of the Father, Son and Spirit is entirely sufficient and infinitely satisfying. God need not engage in the act of creation or create anything to increase his happiness. God need not invite other beings to share in his joy. However, he chooses to do so: 'He would not be happy alone; he would have others . . . who might

---

[9] Goodwin, *Of the Knowledge*, Book I, IV, 13–18.
[10] *Ibid*., 18–20.
[11] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. I. *Thirteen Sermons Preached on Diverse Texts of Scripture upon Several Occasions, A Sermon on Ephesians 3:17*, 31.0
[12] *Ibid*., 16–20.

see his glory, and be glorified in seeing of it.'[13] For Goodwin, the purpose of God creating is so that his creation may see and enjoy his glory.

God's desire to have other beings beside himself does not show any lack in the life of God; rather, it flows from the abundance of his satisfaction in himself. His choice to create other beings with which to share his glory (derivatively) is motivated by the love and happiness that the members of the Trinity have with one another. It was the desire to share the 'sweetness, and delightfulness of their own proper *Consortium*', which 'induced them to have more company'. These new creatures would be 'partakers of their joy, who might rejoyce together with them in their capacity and proportion'. The enjoyment of God by the creatures makes 'their joy, if possible, more full; they would not be happy alone'.[14]

While God's 'intrinsecal' joy focuses on himself and his eternal Trinitarian life, his 'extrinsecal' joy focuses both on the works he does and on his eternal reflection of those works. Since God knew from eternity the certainty of all that he would do, he can rejoice in all his actions before the events themselves. By choosing to carry out sovereign works, God adds for himself another eternal realm of enjoyment:

> And it was the thoughts of these mutual delights, in our, and their fellowship one day to be had and enjoyed, when we should actually exist, was a special Objective matter of delight unto their thoughts so long afore; They infinitely pleased themselves in the view, and contemplation of this.[15]

Those 'extrinsecal' works in which God delights eternally include the acts of creation and redemption in particular. God contemplated the act of salvation from eternity and delighted in that contemplation, 'this delight he took aforehand, whilst his heart was only in the expectation of it, and his mind but laying the plot of it'. When God intends to do a work: 'He delights in it ere he doth it.' Goodwin asks if God had eternal

---

[13] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. II. *A Discourse of Election, of the Free and Special Grace of God Manifested Therein; the Absoluteness and Unchangeableness of His Decrees; and their Infallible Accomplishment*. Book II, VI, 124.
[14] Goodwin, *A Discourse of Election*, Book II, VII.II, 142.
[15] *Ibid.*, 141.

pleasure in the contemplation of his action, 'how much more will it delight him when he comes to do it?'[16]

God's eternal consideration of redemption does not end at the contemplation of simply saving the elect; rather, it extends to an anticipation of the ensuing relationship with his chosen people. God has 'delighted himself from all Eternity to think of his communicating his Blessedness to some of his Creatures'.[17] That this relationship with the elect would cost the death of the Son was part of the eternal knowledge of the Trinity. The willingness of the Son to offer himself, and the willingness of the Father to accept that offering for the sake of the elect, is intrinsic to the eternal joy of the Trinity. This is an eternal covenant between the Father and the Son and 'their greatest Delights have been taken up with it, ever since; so as never in like manner with anything else'. Indeed, the joy that the Father and Son share in the contemplation of salvation causes an overflow of joy. 'There was never such Joy in Heaven, as upon this happy Conclusion and Agreement. The whole *Trinity* rejoyced in it.'[18] It is therefore upon the person of Christ in eternity that all the joys that would be enjoyed by the saints were bestowed. The fundamental work of salvation was established in eternity, and Christ's temporal acts were the outworking of what he and the Father had covenanted eternally would happen.[19]

When talking of Christ's joy, Goodwin struggles with the paradoxes inherent in the incarnation. On the one hand, Christ shares the eternal, unchanging fullness of joy that belongs to the Son in perfect communion with the Father. This joy is complete and incapable of addition. Christ being God has a far greater vision and enjoyment of the Godhead than the saints will ever have, even in their final eternal state. Christ is 'nearer the Fountain than all Creatures are, for he is one Person with the Son of God'. As such, 'the communication of God, and all the fulness of the Godhead, to him must needs be so much the greater by how much, the union is nearer'. As a result, 'he hath the joys of God, which none else can have'. Christ is at 'God's right hand for ever', so 'he doth enjoy . . . a *fulness of Joy* immediately in God himself, and this for ever'.

---

[16] Thomas Goodwin, *Encouragements to faith. Drawn from severall engagements both of Gods Christs heart to receive pardon sinners* (London: R. Dawlman, 1642), 25, 26.
[17] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. V. *Of the Work of The Holy Ghost (The Third Person of The Trinity) in Our Salvation*, Book X, VII, 469.
[18] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. III. *A Discourse of Christ the Mediator*, Book I, XI, 30.
[19] Goodwin, *An Exposition of the First and Part of the Second Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Part II, Sermon XX, 271, 272.

Similarly, the glories which Christ received following the resurrection 'remain to eternity likewise, and they are a natural due to him', but 'less than his Father as he is God-man'.[20] This joy is constant 'such as admits not any addition or diminution, but is alwayes one and the same, and absolute and entire in itselfe'. It requires nothing else to supplement it and is eternally sufficient, 'though he should have had no other comings in of joy and delight from any creature'.[21]

On the other hand, Christ, as the God-man, progressively receives his reward from the Father, experiences greater and greater joy as he sees the fruit of his work, and rejoices in the elect being raised to see his glory: 'As Sonne of God he is compleat, and that of himself; but as an Head, he yet hath another additional fulnesse of joy from the good and happinesse of his members.'[22] Christ's joy will not be complete until all the elect have come into the presence of God. Christ 'accounteth [the saints] his fulness'. When Christ sees another of the elect come to faith, 'it is a part of my *fulness* (saith he) his Joy is full by it'.[23] Indeed, Christ's concern for the saints is such that 'there is a lesse fulnesse of joy and comfort in Christs heart, whilst he sees us in misery and under infirmities, comparatively to what will be when we are presented to him free of them all'.[24]

Thus, for Goodwin, while Christ shares the eternal joy of the Godhead by nature, he also as God-man has an increasing joy as the fruit of his redemptive work is manifest. Christ will come into the fullness of his joy when all the saints will come into the presence of God.[25]

The joy of the elect in the state of nature

Goodwin considers Adam's first state as 'the *Estate of pure Nature* by Creation Law', which is based on a relationship between God and the

---

[20] Goodwin, *An Exposition of . . . Ephesians*, Part I, Sermon XXXI, 418 and Sermon XXXIII, 438.

[21] Thomas Goodwin, 'The Heart of Christ in Heaven' in his *Christ set forth in his death, resurrection, ascension, sitting at Gods right hand, intercession, as the cause of justification and Object of justifying faith* (London: W. E[llis] and J. G[rismond] for Robert Dawlman, 1642), Part II.II, 97.

[22] Thomas Goodwin, *Certaine select cases resolved: specially tending to the comfort of beleevers, in their chiefe and usuall temptations* (London: R[obert] Dawlman, 1644.); Goodwin, 'The Heart of Christ in Heaven', Part II.II, 98.

[23] Goodwin, *An Exposition of . . . Ephesians*, Part I, Sermon XXXVI, 492.

[24] Goodwin, 'The Heart of Christ in Heaven', Part III.II, 130.

[25] Goodwin, *An Exposition of . . . Ephesians*, Part I, Sermon XXXIII, 447.

creatures by virtue of God choosing to create them. Goodwin argues that God did not have to create anything, but that since he chose to do so, there was a 'congruity, dueness, meetness' about what and how God created. This dueness means that if God creates a human being, Adam, he will do for him what is fitting for him and what is worthy of him.[26]

This 'dueness' of God means that Adam has been created with suitable faculties to experience and enjoy the rest of creation. For Goodwin, humankind is created in a world that is designed to be able to both stimulate and satisfy desire. God has so framed the world that it is able to provide satisfaction for all the lawful desires that Adam may have, and so framed Adam that he is equipped to enjoy all that the world has to offer. God provided for every 'Sensitive, or other Faculty in Man himself . . . a meet Object suited in Nature to them'. God provided Adam with all the means to enjoy the comforts of the world, and every need that Adam had was suitably accounted for by the creatures.[27]

Similarly, it means that, since God choose to create Adam with an intelligent nature, then it is fitting that God should also endow him with 'his own image of Holiness' to enable him 'to know, to love and to delight in' communion with God. Not to do so would frustrate Adam's fundamental natural desire to commune with God.[28] However, while God gave the promise of eternal life to Adam, it is a conditional promise that requires Adam's obedience. While God is not obligated to his creatures, the creatures are obligated to him. Adam is created under a covenant of works implicit in creation.[29]

Adam's fundamental desire is to know God and, for Goodwin, it is this knowledge of God which is the source of Adam's joy. Adam knew God mediately in his relationship with God's creatures, through obtaining a 'peace of conscience following the doing of his will' and through supernatural experiences of God communicating to him.[30] Goodwin compares Adam's knowledge of God, and his subsequent joy in that knowledge, rather unfavourably with the knowledge of God in the eternal state, referring to it as 'seeing one of his footsteps and shadow'. Adam's joy is, nevertheless, real and overwhelmingly satisfying for him.

---

[26] Goodwin, Works, vol. II. *Of the Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*. Book II, I, 20, 21.
[27] *Ibid*., 22.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *Ibid*., 22, 23, 24.
[30] *Ibid*., III, 35.

Adam's state was a 'blessed condition' with a natural 'height and true elevation'. He was 'estated into paradise', knowing himself to be truly happy:

> No sooner did he open his eyes, but he saw himself most happy . . . There was not a desire could arise in him, but something or other he might find, to satisfie it; nor was there a Creature, in the universe, towards which he might not find something in himself to be well pleased in it.[31]

Adam was given Eden in which to live, the garden planted by God, 'the best Gardiner for skill that ever was', furnished with all the 'choicest Rarities and Glories' that the world had to offer. Not only did Adam have the faculties to enjoy this physical world, but God gave him a soul that enabled him to see God clearly in creation.[32]

Adam was happy under the covenant of works. It was his desire to know God, and he knew him to be holy and trustworthy. Although Goodwin points out several deficiencies in Adam's happiness, it nevertheless 'infinitely surpassed the best state that since the Fall ever was, or can be supposed to be on Earth'. Adam, indeed, could not have imagined any way in which his happiness could be bettered.[33] Yet, unavoidably, Adam's joy was limited by his partial knowledge of God, so much so that Goodwin claims Adam's joy was inferior to that of those who now know Christ by faith. An important way in which Adam's joy was seriously limited is that it could never be consummated by entry into heaven and the immediate enjoyment of God himself. According to Goodwin, Adam's reward for obedience was to live forever in the paradise created for him on earth. As a natural being, heaven and its supremely subtle joys were impossible for Adam to attain.[34] Goodwin argues that Adam's happiness would not have been lessened by his not attaining the glory of heaven. Adam's estate was perfect, not absolutely perfect, but perfect according to his nature. Adam had all that he could desire, and that which was out of his reach he could not desire.[35]

---

[31] *Ibid.*, III, 36 and IV, 37.
[32] *Ibid.*, 38.
[33] *Ibid.*, 38.
[34] *Ibid.*, 45–9.
[35] *Ibid.*, 48, 49.

The joy of the elect in the state of grace

Overwhelmingly satisfying though it was, Adam's best state in nature was a 'shadow' of that happiness which was to be established in Christ. Goodwin considers it part of God's 'everlasting Purposes' and 'fore-ordained' plan to lead the elect through several 'Estates and Dispensations' before 'the last and most Royal Crown of Glory be set upon their heads'.[36]

For Goodwin, humanity's falling into sin was an important part of the journey to glory. To be sure, the state of sin is 'utterly contrary and perfectly opposite to that Happiness [God] intended'. Nevertheless, for Goodwin, it was always a part of God's plan to allow the fall. The simple fact of the fall implies that God had no obligation to prevent it, since he could not have failed in that responsibility. Goodwin is not willing to concede, in any way, that God is culpable with regard to the fall. God is neither tempted by evil nor tempts his creatures, and cannot be held responsible for the fall of either angels or human beings.[37] Yet he does allow all humanity to fall and as a result:

> gives forth the Gospel, which discovers Christ, as a redeemer from sin and wrath, who withal brings a Life and Immortality to light, which by Faith apprehended by us, puts us into the state of Grace, and a participation of Christ; such as is suitable to the Relation of the Gospel in this life, far excelling Adam's state.[38]

Hence, for Goodwin, God allows the fall so that he can raise the elect to a state of joy far higher than is possible in the state of nature. Had the fall not occurred, the highest joy would have been that of Adam.[39]

We should note that for Goodwin, 'God, *known* and *enjoyed*; is the supreme happiness of Man in all Conditions'.[40] What differs in the various states is the way in which God is known and therefore enjoyed. While Adam knew God through his natural faculties, seeing him in and through his creatures, the elect know God in Christ by faith. In the hierarchy of knowledge of God, Adam's joy mediated by the creatures is far exceeded by the joy of the saint knowing God in Christ by faith.

---

[36] *Ibid.*, III, 31 and IV, 37.
[37] *Ibid.*, II, 25 and III, 31.
[38] *Ibid.*, III, 31.
[39] *Ibid.*, IX, 81.
[40] *Ibid.*, III, 35.

Goodwin is quick to point out, however, that he does not mean that Adam's 'Condition did not then afford him a more sensible, constant felicity, and a more actual quiet ease and contentment'. On the contrary, the saints' enjoyment of God is disadvantaged by the 'outward afflictions' of life and the 'Chastisements of God for Sin'. Yet the fact remains that if the saints' knowledge of God 'were but completed and filled up', it would render him 'infinitely more happy' and 'more replete with glorious contentment' than Adam ever was.[41] For while Adam too knew God by faith, that faith was entirely natural to him. In contrast, the faith that the saint has is entirely supernatural. As such, it is a free gift of grace and is over and above that which is possible through creation or through natural understanding. As such, it is 'a light above the way of nature, and the way of man's understanding things'.[42]

This supernatural faith is required since humanity, by virtue of the corruption of the fall, has lost that image of God that made knowledge and understanding of God natural to them. There is now no clear apprehension of God through the created order, although God has allowed 'some rude Notions of a God' to remain within even the heathens by which they may apprehend something of the 'invisible attributes' of God.[43] Yet the need for supernatural faith reflects not just the weakness of corrupt flesh, but also the new heights of the knowledge of God available to the saint. Goodwin points out that the 'objects' of faith for the saint are 'utterly above the due and right of pure Nature in Adam', being the 'wisdom of God', not of human beings.[44]

This being so, the 'light' by which those things are understood is that much more subtle. For Goodwin, 'as is the Object, such is the Light we see it with'. The object is no less than the 'Glory of God in the face of Christ', so, in contrast to Adam's natural light, the light of faith is 'Glorious and wholly Supernatural'. This new light is no less than the light of the Holy Spirit. Here Goodwin hints at the final joy of the believer, the light of God immediately experienced:

> So here we see Christ and God by the Spirits Light and Representation, though of a lower kind than we will see him in heaven . . . And

---

[41] *Ibid.*, IV, 37–9; for a fuller discussion, see Goodwin, *A Discourse of Election*, Book II, I, 79–88.
[42] Goodwin, *Of the Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*, Book II, V, 40, 41.
[43] *Ibid.*, 42, 43.
[44] *Ibid.*, VII, 54–6.

> the more immediate the Light is from God, the more Supernatural, the higher it is, and we the more passive in it. The Light of Glory will be God's light immediately; he both is the Object and Efficient, *All* in *All*; and so we shall be swallowed up with it.[45]

This supernatural light does not destroy reason; rather, it subordinates, restores and rectifies it. God, says Goodwin, 'possesseth and clotheth' the natural faculties with 'an higher light than ever inbred in us' by virtue of 'the Revelation of the Spirit', which converts the faculties into 'engines' of further understanding. Hence, the Holy Spirit is the carrier of the divine light.[46]

For Goodwin, God the Father is revealed in the person of Christ, who is apprehended by the light given by the Holy Spirit. It is this light of the Spirit that is the direct giver of joy to the saint in this life and is fundamental to Goodwin's understanding of assurance. It is the immediate light of the Holy Spirit witnessing that the saint truly belongs to Christ that is at the start of true joy, for Goodwin 'joy unspeakable'. Whereas Adam's natural knowledge of God was in some senses deductive, the supernatural light is more 'intuitive' and presents God himself, even though it is 'as in a Glass, in the Gospel'. While even the saint may, at times, know God's love 'but by signs only', and in a sense may be deductively 'gathering' and 'collecting' evidence of God's love, the Holy Spirit nevertheless 'joyns a testimony in the conclusion' which 'seals up' the truth of God's love. At other times, knowledge of God's love comes from 'an immediate Light of the Spirits sealing up that Light, and the taste of it, and revealing Gods heart and mind in itself towards us'. This intuitive knowledge is so transcendent that it works 'joy unspeakable and glorious'.[47]

It is not, however, simply the knowledge of God or even the knowledge of God as merciful that forms the ground of faith. For sinners, knowledge of God's merciful nature alone offers no comfort and could not unless 'God upon the Fall first unbosomed himself, and declared his *Purposes of Mercy* towards us in his Messiah'. It is not God, or simply God as merciful, but God who has a declared merciful will and good intention towards the elect that forms the appropriate object of faith.[48]

---

[45] *Ibid*., 56, 57.
[46] *Ibid*., 59.
[47] *Ibid*., 60, 61.
[48] Goodwin, *Works*, vol. IV. *Of the Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*, Part I, Book I, I and II, 1–6.

Goodwin suggests that even God as merciful by nature, mercifully disposed to the elect, is not rightly the object of faith unless he is properly understood through the person of Christ through the Holy Spirit: 'There are two grand objects our faith doth act upon; God the Father, and Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit being the person who anoints us, generally teaching us all things.'[49]

Goodwin points out that true joy is based not simply on the knowledge of eternal life in the gospel, which knowledge may make them 'happy by having an Interest in this life'; rather, it is a matter of Spirit-given assurance. The saint will only 'gladly rejoice' when they 'know the Life they have to be eternal', knowing it personally and directly. This will cause them to 'exult with a full Joy'. This immediate knowledge is not just for 'prophets', 'apostles' and 'Christians of the first magnitude', but for 'fathers', 'young men' and 'little children'. Indeed, Goodwin notes that, in fulfilment of Matthew 13:11 and as an expression of God's sovereign grace apart from any suggestion of merit, it is to 'little children' this knowledge is more often given.[50]

It is important that we do not over mystify Goodwin at this point. Goodwin's immediacy is not that of the Catholic mystic; rather, it is the witness of the Spirit manifest in the Scripture as opposed to the witness manifest in the changed life of the believer. Goodwin does not suggest union with God in a mystical sense. For Goodwin, union with God is in Christ, and Christ is known through Scripture, and the truth of Scripture and the saint's interest in it are given 'immediately' by the Holy Spirit. The mode of operation of the Spirit, as it were, is through the application of the biblical promises to the heart of the saint.[51]

For Goodwin, it is impossible to have true joy without salvation *and* the assurance of it. It is only through the inner certainty of God's favour that 'perfect Love and full Joy result: For there cannot be perfect Love in the Heart of any Believer which nourisheth a fear of any future Hatred or Enmity which God may have against him'.[52] In elaborating on this joy, Goodwin uses a whole range of descriptive metaphors. For him, the Church's assurance is also her 'rudder to steer her in a storm', protecting her from 'whirlpools of fluctuating conscience' and 'hurricanes of temptations'. Joy in the Holy Spirit is a 'harbour', while objections to assurance are 'rocks'. Again, Goodwin sees joy springing from the Spirit

[49] *Ibid*., Part I, Book II, I, 109.
[50] *Ibid*., Part II, II, VIII, 119–20.
[51] Goodwin, *An Exposition of . . . Ephesians*, Part I, Sermon XVI, 206–16.
[52] Goodwin, *Of the Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*, Part II, Book II, VIII, 122.

as a fountain of 'Clear, lively and refreshing Waters', which are 'bubbling up to Eternal Life'. Further, Goodwin compares the light of the Spirit to drops of honey, which 'bedews the Soul with the most delicious sweetness'.[53]

Indeed, Goodwin finds the greatness of joy in the Holy Spirit inexpressible: 'a Joy so full, that we may rather be said to enter into it, than that to enter into us'. The greatness of the joy reflects the greatness of its source, which is the communion with the Father and with Christ in the Holy Spirit. Communion with God is the only truly life-giving experience; those who are carnal are dead even while they live. This communion cannot, however, be accomplished through the lower faculties of the soul, since it is not fully equipped to able to embrace the fullness of the experience. Although the spirit is 'more sublime, pure and more lively than any other' and is capable of 'infinitely greater pleasures' than any part of the mind, the 'gates' through which the world is experienced, the 'sense and appetites', are wholly inadequate. There is a great divide between the joy the spirit can experience and what the senses can provide to rejoice in. Instead, the rational soul, 'which only is immortal', opens itself up to God, 'whom yet to receive even these Passages of the Soul are too narrow, tho' they are never so much enlarg'd'. Nevertheless, the soul of the saint cannot have true rest and satisfaction until it is 'in the Bosome of this their Father'. All delights that the saint experiences 'lightly' in other ways they 'in a super-eminent manner do find and taste in God, who alone can fill and satisfie the various Desires of our Mind'. This enjoyment of God is no less than a sharing of God's enjoyment of himself and is eternally sufficient for the satisfaction of all the saints.[54]

This fullness of God is a joining in the mutual love between the three persons of the Trinity and the saint:

> For as soon as that threefold most blessed and kind Aspect of the Trinity . . . hath shin'd on the Soul, she kindles with an Heavenly Flame, and a reciprocal Love to God ariseth in her, for the Love of God manifested to her, doth as with a Fan make this Flame of Divine Love to break forth: . . .[55]

---

[53] *Ibid.*, 122, 124. For a detailed discussion of the idea of 'sweetness', see Mary Carruthers, 'Sweetness', *Speculum*, 81 (2006): 999–1013.
[54] *Ibid.*, 122, 123.
[55] *Ibid.*, 124.

Here the joining of God with the soul in love is seen as wholly a work of God. It is God's love extending to the soul that causes the soul to flow with a 'reciprocal' love.

Simply loving God and being loved by God are not enough. The soul yearns to be united with him, and this desire is satisfied in union with Christ. Here Goodwin takes up the language of marriage. Christ is the absent bridegroom, with whom the soul desires to be 'melted', and into whose likeness she desires to be 'transformed'. The unity of the soul with Christ is as a 'husband and wife', rejoicing in one another. Goodwin quotes Canticles 1:2, referring to Christ's kisses, and seeing the soul as Christ's 'Spouse filled with himself, and full of joy'. By this point, Goodwin is struggling to express himself within the bounds of language. Even the sensual language of marriage is inadequate to convey his intentions:

> *These kisses of his mouth* are better known by the Impressions which they make upon us, than they can be by any of our Expressions; we may experience the joy, but are not able to speak what it is . . . Nor doth Christ only give the Kisses of his Mouth, but the entire possession of himself, so that the soul takes hold on, and posseseth whole God, wholly as her own, so as 'tis free for her to draw out . . . and taste all the pleasures which can be drawn from Christ, even to Eternity.[56]

Although Goodwin cannot speak too highly of the joys of being known and loved by God in Christ, there is another level of joy available for the saint – one that is even greater. This is the joy of knowing God for God's sake and for his glory alone. This joy cannot be separated from the love that the saint has for God and which the saint receives from God, but this joy is the joy that the saint who loves God has in seeing God glorified. This joy is 'yet more full, and abundant, and flows to a greater exuberancy'. This joy rejoices in seeing God's perfections bringing glory to God. Love seeks not its own interests and glory; rather, love for God 'with a pure disinterested flame, loves God for himself' and 'loves all those Perfections, which it sees to be infinite in God'. This is the same joy that God has in loving himself, not just the same kind of joy, but an actual sharing in God's own joy. The 'believer doth congratulate and rejoice at all that Beauty, Glory, Goodness and Sweetness,

[56] *Ibid.*, 125.

which he believes to abound most affluently in God'. This is Christ's joy as he meditates upon his perfect view of his Father, that 'very same joy with which Christ rejoiceth'. This is a sharing 'not into that joy only with which Saints and Angels do rejoice, but with which God himself rejoiceth'. Just as three persons whose mutual love expresses one mind, so too the joy of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit joins into one 'flame' this is 'the fullest encrease of joy', and it is this joy that the saint 'borrows' from Christ:

> I will speak in a word what is the Sum of all, and what is the highest top of this joy, the joy of a Believer is in God, and on the account of God, their joy is in God himself, and the joy of God himself, who himself is the God of Peace, and of Joy, and of all Consolation.[57]

This particular aspect of Goodwin's exposition of joy seems to draw very clearly on Bernard's four degrees of love, although Goodwin only explicitly references him once in this context.

The absolute fullness of this joy, of course, is not to be experienced in this life. While the sealing of the Holy Spirit furnishes the saint with an earnest of this joy, the fullness will not be known until the final eternal state of glory, when the saint will 'be more throughly and deeply plunged into the fountain of the Deity, where one flood of joy will continually follow another, without any interruption'.[58]

The joy of the elect in the state of glory

Goodwin suggests three divisions within the state of glory: the intermediate state, the resurrection and millennial kingdom, and the eternal kingdom when God is all in all.[59] When elaborating on the glory of these states, Goodwin sees an increasing level of joy, each level eclipsing that of the previous state. However, for him, the difference in the joy of each state is not simply one of degree; there is also a fundamental difference in the way in which this joy is produced. In this life joy is based on faith and comes from Christ, but Christ is not physically present with the believer. It is only by faith that the saint can approach Christ and only by faith that joy is obtained. In spite of this, the saint can know

---

[57] *Ibid.*, 125, 126

[58] *Ibid.*, 125–6.

[59] Goodwin, *Of the Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*, Book II, III, 34.

joy unspeakable. In heaven, however, the saint will have unobscured sight of Christ. Faith will cease to function as a means to know him. Goodwin concludes that if the least sight of Christ by faith produces a joy that outshines all the joys of the world, then how much greater will be the joy produced by the actual presence of Christ when the saint will 'see him top to toe' and 'be in the presence of him, in which is fulnesse of joy'?[60]

The object of glory, the object of happiness, is none other than God himself:

> the object of this happinesse, why it is not any other creature, but God himselfe, no creature in Heaven and Earth is the matter of our happinesse, but God himself will be made happinesse to us, he will not only be the efficient cause, but the material cause of our happinesse.[61]

Here we reveal the very core of 'joy' in Goodwin's thought. God is the source of all happiness and joy. This does not mean simply receiving joy from God; it is receiving God himself. God 'promises himselfe, not heaven separated from himselfe'. The glory that God gives is his own glory:

> Though there be many glorious things in Heaven, though there be the fruition of the company of Saints and Angels, yet that is not it which makes us happy, but God is our happinesse. Indeed the glorious societies of the glorified bodies of Saints is very delectable and ten thousand times excels all the delights of creatures here below, yet I say, we have no need of them to make us happy: it is but overplus, God himself and Christ Jesus make our Heaven & happinesse.[62]

The focus and recipient of glory is the soul of the saint. Goodwin believed that rather than being itself dissolved until the resurrection, there is an immediate state of glory for the soul while apart from the body. He argued from 2 Corinthians 5:1–5 that the soul is found unclothed and naked following the dissolution of the body, that this

---

[60] Thomas Goodwin, *The happinesse of the saints in glory, or, A treatise of heaven* (London: E. Griffin for Robert Dunscomb, 1638), 13, 14.
[61] *Ibid.*, 37.
[62] *Ibid.*, 38–40.

is undesirable for the soul, and so God, in his mercy, provides a special glory with which the soul can be re-clothed until the resurrection. Goodwin argues that the sealing of the Spirit is the earnest of this glory. For him, God's work of grace during life is in preparation for the glory to be received by the soul after death, and that eternal glory begins the moment the body dies. Goodwin is at pains to point out that the idea of salvation includes everything from joy unspeakable in this life to eternal joy in the final state, including the time when the soul and body are separated:

> the *Salvation of the Soul* is intended also of that Salvation, which falls out in the midst between these Joys (*the Earnest*) in this Life, and that ultimate Salvation at the Resurrection, that is the Salvation of the Soul, whilst separate, as being the next.[63]

The intermediate state leads on to the resurrection and millennial kingdom, at which point the saints will be resurrected in bodily form. The natural body, importantly, is a hindrance to a fullness of joy. The soul is capable of receiving great joy by faith; however, 'the weakness of your bodies, and bodily spirits, will not permit you to have so much of this joy'.[64]

It is not the sinfulness that limits joy so much as the weakness of the body:

> whilst indeed the soul is at *home in this body*, (this earthly tabernacle) it is not capable of this sight, of the Glory of God, that is, so as to continue in the body, and enjoy it; for it would crack this earthen vessel.[65]

Nevertheless, the soul is destined for resurrection in a real bodily form. The believer's body at the resurrection, however, is not like Adam's body that was destroyed at death; rather, it is like the glorified body of Christ. Indeed, there is a happiness that belongs to the body itself. The body is raised in a glorified state and enjoys a happiness derived both from being indwelt by a glorified soul, and because both the soul and the

---

[63] Goodwin, *A Discourse of the Blessed State of Glory*, XI, 74.
[64] Thomas Goodwin, *A state of glory for spirits of just men upon dissolution, demonstrated* (London: J.G. for Robert Dawlman, 1657), 31.
[65] *Ibid.*, 18

body are indwelt by the Holy Ghost. There is then another level of joy available to the saint at the resurrection.[66]

Having expounded the joy of the intermediate state, Goodwin recognises that questions may be raised as to whether or not the saints may somehow be diminished by their leaving heaven and being resurrected. In fact, Goodwin does not suggest that leaving heaven causes any break in the saint's appreciation of God in Christ. He argues that since Christ can leave heaven without loss of his essential glory, the saints can leave heaven without losing their sight of that glory in Christ.[67]

The joy of the saints is caught up in the joy of Christ. As God's son, Christ has a kingdom by right. The world to come, however, is Christ's reward for obedience to his Father, compensating him for humbling himself in the incarnation. In the millennial kingdom, Christ will subdue his enemies and put all powers and authorities under him. In this Christ is glorified, and he rejoices both in his glory and in the presence of the saints, who both witness his glory and glory in it themselves. Thus, both Christ and his saints share and rejoice in his glory. In this Christ is further glorified. When all those whom the Father gave him are brought together – when it shall be seen that all are present, that none given to Christ have been lost and that Christ has completed his commission – then Christ will rejoice and be yet more fully glorified.

The joy of the resurrected state is still not the pinnacle of joy. As the joy of the saints now in heaven transcends all the joys of earth, even those joys in the Holy Ghost, so too the joys of the saints after the judgment will transcend these joys by the same degree.[68] After the resurrection and judgment, all the saints will finally be brought together in heaven. Christ will present them perfect to his Father, thereby completing the commission given to him from before the foundation of the world. In so doing, Christ will himself come into the fullness of his joy. The joy of Christ is echoed by the joy of the Father and the angels who look on share in their joy.

For Goodwin, there are two ways of knowing God immediately. The first is by knowing Christ face-to-face and thus knowing the Godhead indirectly in him. This way of knowing God is characteristic of the first

---

[66] Goodwin, *Of the Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*, Book II, XI, 103, 104.

[67] Thomas Goodwin, *The world to come. Or, The kingdome of Christ asserted* (London: to be sold in Popes-head-Alley, and in Westminster Hall, 1655), Sermon II, 37.

[68] Goodwin, *The Happiness of the Saints in Glory*, 15.

two states of glory. The second way of knowing God is to share Christ's own full vision of the Godhead. This is what raises the joy of the eternal state to an even higher level than that previously experienced. In the former two states, the saints have rejoiced in Christ, glorifying in his glory. In the final state, they rejoice in God, seeing him like Christ himself does; God presenting himself to them as he presents himself to Christ. This sight of God goes beyond seeing him reflected in Christ; rather, the saint directly apprehends God as he presents himself to them. At this time, the saint will:

> behold that glory as in itself, and as this his Son, that before represented it to us, himself sees it; and for God himself to be his own presenter of himself, will infinitely yet more transcend.[69]

As the source of all glory, happiness and joy, all things are summed up in God himself. It is God alone who can inherit all things and in whom all things can find fulfilment. Goodwin refers to 1 Corinthians 15:24–28. In the eternal kingdom, all things will be summed up in God, Christ will surrender all that is his, and God will be all in all. The saints will 'inherit all things', God will be 'meate and drinke, wife, husband, and whatever else unto us' and, most importantly, 'he will be all things to us himselfe'. God will be the joy of the saints, and that joy will transcend all other possible joys. God will 'poure out all his glory' to the saints and yet even the slightest drop of this glory will 'fill thee full', and not just full, but full with 'fullnesse of the best kind'.[70] The joy that the saints experience in eternity will be an expression of their love for God: 'it is the nature of love, that it rejoyceth in the love of the person beloved'. The saint shall rejoice in all that God rejoices in, both his 'intinsecal' and his 'extrinsecal' joys, delighting both in who God is in himself and in what God has accomplished.[71]

In spite of the degree of unity that the saints will have with God, Goodwin is careful not to blur the boundary between creator and creature. God will share his glory, but he will not share his essence. God will remain God, he will be glorious in himself, and the saints will enjoy his glory derivatively in Christ, 'yet it shall as truly seeme to make us happy as it doth to make him glorious'. Further, the saint will be united

---

[69] Goodwin, *Of the Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*, Book II, III, 35.
[70] Goodwin, *The Happiness of the Saints in Glory*, 41–5.
[71] *Ibid.*, 48–50.

with God in Christ 'as far as the creature is capable of' and will share his happiness. That which makes God most happy is God himself, and that which makes Christ most happy is his being united with God. The saint can never be one with God as Christ is one with him and, yet, there will be a real, lesser, unity:

> To be one with him then must needs make us happy … And againe, being made one with God, we shall rejoyce in all that God rejoyceth in, that God is so glorious a God it shall make thee glorious, thou shalt have all those joyes by revenues of which he now lives in Heaven, thou shalt rejoyce more in Gods happinesse than in thine own, the more happinesse riseth to God, the more riseth to thee.[72]

Here we have Goodwin's summary of joy: 'the more happinesse riseth to God, the more riseth to thee'. All the joy that the saint will enjoy in eternity is the joy of God himself. It is this truth that makes sense of all. It is this that shifts the focus from the saint and onto God. It is this that motivates the saint to submit to God, to worship God and to seek God's glory alone, because at the end of all things, he will be their eternal joy.

For Goodwin, then, joy is essentially Christological. The joy of the saints is Christ's joy in his relationship with God. The joys of the three eternal states depend on this knowledge of God, hence the varying degrees of joy to be experienced, both in the eternal state and during life. The more a believer apprehends and understands God, the more love they will have for God. This in turn determines the degree to which the saint can rejoice in God's glory. In the first two states, the intermediate state and the resurrected state, that knowledge of God is deemed to be immediate, although seen only in Christ: '*in quantum cognoscimus, in tantum amamus; in quantum amamus, in tantum gaudemus*. So much, or so far as we know God aright, we love him; so far as we love him, we rejoice in and are made happy by him'. In the final state, the eternal state, the knowledge of God is in God purely as himself, knowing God as Christ knows God and so truly sharing Christ's joy.[73]

That true joy is inextricably entwined with the knowledge of God which is, as far as this world is concerned, in Christ, serves to balance our view of puritan spirituality. For the saint of Goodwin's day, the devotional life was not entirely dominated by fear of God's discipline, but

---

[72] *Ibid*., 45–8.

[73] Goodwin, *Of the Creatures, and the Condition of their State by Creation*, Book II, III, 35.

was, at least partially, motivated by the very real possibility of supreme spiritual joy in the here-and-now. The drive for self-control and discipline was as much aimed at eliminating those aspects of sin which hindered godly joy as it was aimed at preventing God's displeasure. The picture of the strait-laced puritan rejecting all suggestion of pleasure and joy is replaced by one who embraces a higher emotional life, for whom the search for joy is both accepted and valued, and for whom true joy is rooted not in the pleasures of this world, but in the fervent desire to know God in Christ.

By acknowledging the importance of joy in puritan spirituality, we enter into an altered paradigm within which to understand the devotional landscape of the seventeenth century. This opens the way to a more sympathetic appraisal of the life of social and moral self-discipline, and rigorous devotions, that was embraced by the true divine. This self-control was not to earn favour with God, but to minimise the possibility of being distracted from attaining true joy. Furthermore, we come to understand that true joy was an experience that the saint had a very real hope of attaining in this life, and not just in the life to come.

3

The Saints' Desire and Delight to Be with Christ

Tom Schwanda

In his 1660 work on the *Beatitudes*, Thomas Watson searches for adequate language to describe the 'blessed sight of God' that awaits believers in heaven. He confesses that his desire is to assist readers in better understanding this future glorious sight. He asserts that Jesus 'shall infinitely amaze and delight the eyes of the beholders'. He draws a parallel to the resplendent glory of Jesus' transfiguration and declares: 'if God be so beautiful here in his Ordinances, Word, Prayer, Sacraments; if there be such excellency in him when we see him by the eye of faith through the prospective glass of a promise, O what will it be when we shall see him *face to face!*'[1] The tension and attempted resolution between the partial experience of Jesus on earth and the eschatological longing for its fulfilment in heaven has occupied the attention of both believers and theologians since the days of Jesus' earthly life. This chapter seeks to explore the dynamics involved in that contrast through the affective cycle that Augustinians, in particular, have named desire and delight.[2] John Howe, one of Watson's fellow Presbyterians, expressed it more eloquently: 'Desire and Delight, are but two acts of *Love . . . Desire*, is therefore, *love in motion*; *Delight*, is *love in rest.*'[3]

---

[1] Thomas Watson, *The Beatitudes or a Discourse Upon Part of Christs Famous Sermon on the Mount* (London: Ralph Smith, 1660: Wing (2nd edn) W1107), 260, 261.

[2] See, for example, Margaret R. Miles' book on Augustine, *Desire and Delight: A New Reading of Augustine's Confessions* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1991, 2006).

[3] John Howe, *The Blessedness of the Righteous* (London: Ed. Gellibrand, 1678: Wing h3017), 81, 82. Stephen Charnock, who worked alongside Watson after the Act of Uniformity, has a variation of this: 'There is an inchoate delight in motion, but a consummate delight in rest and fruition.' Stephen Charnock, *A Discourse of Delight in Prayer* in *The Works of the Late Learned Divine Stephen Charnock* (London: Thomas Cockerill, 1684: Wing C3705), II, 57.

Not surprisingly, this affective cycle could produce some of the most mystical and contemplative writings in Puritanism.[4] The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* affirms that specific assessment in relation to Watson's early sermons, declaring that they were 'primarily meditational, at times even mystical, and often expressed in ecstatic language'.[5] Thomas Watson (c. 1620–86) was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and spent his entire ministry in London. He was a member of the Presbyterian movement and was ejected by the Act of Uniformity (1662), although he continued preaching in scattered locations. The themes of desire and delight are present in Watson's first major work, *The Christians Charter* (1652) and are consistently interwoven throughout his entire corpus, including his best known, the posthumously published *A Body of Practical Divinity* (1692).

The nature and importance of desire

Alec Ryrie accurately observes the great importance of emotions within the Puritan culture since they 'expected to meet God in them. Emotion was a form of revelation'.[6] Watson's writings abound with examples depicting emotions as dynamic and life-giving expressions of the soul. In his major work on spiritual duties, he claims 'affections are the *feet of the soul*, by these we move towards God';[7] in the same treatise, he envisions them 'like wings of the bird, which make the soul swift in its flight after glory';[8] and elsewhere he contends that desires 'are the sails of the soul, which are spread to receive the gale of heavenly blessing'.[9] Similar imagery appeared in his *Saints Delight* sermons on meditation. There he observes: 'He that delights in God doth not complaine he hath too much of God, but rather too little: he opens and spreads the sailes

---

[4] Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), xviii.

[5] Barry Till, 'Watson, Thomas (*d*. 1686)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004). Available at: http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28867 (date accessed 28 September 2015).

[6] Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 40, cf. 42, 19.

[7] Thomas Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1669: Wing W1127), 202; cf. Thomas Watson, *The Art of Divine Contentment* (London: Ralph Smith, 1653: Wing (2nd edn) W1101), 245.

[8] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 16.

[9] Thomas Watson, *The Holy Eucharist or the Mystery of the Lords Supper Briefly Explained*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1668: Wing W1129), 54.

of his soul to take in more of those heavenly gales, he longs for that time when he shall be ever delighting himself in the sweet and blessed vision of God.'[10] Even more so, a desire for spiritual things does not quench the thirst, but serves to stimulate it further. This is evident from Watson's sermon on the initial question and answer of the Westminster Catechism: 'There is so much Fullness in God as satisfies, yet so much Sweetness that the Soul still desires . . . God is a *delicious* Good. That which is the chief good must *ravish the Soul with pleasure*; there must be in it Spirits of Delight, and Quintessence of Joy.'[11] Clearly, for Watson, a taste of God's love and mercy inspires believers to seek God more fully. These words further indicate that affections are a means of experiencing God. Affections transport a person to heaven while they are still on earth and God 'doth sometime sweetly unbosome himself to the soul in Prayer'.[12] Further, since emotions directed to heaven contain the potential to encounter God, they need to be cultivated because 'the higher our affections are raised towards Heaven, the sweeter joy we feel'.[13] Therefore, believers were expected to direct their emotions to Jesus Christ, God or the heavenly kingdom.

Significantly, the desire for Jesus and the Father is less for the benefits that one could receive than for a deeper experience of that person of the Godhead. Watson confesses: 'He desires Christ for himself; not only for his *Jewels*, but his *Beauty*.'[14] Many Puritans drew from the writings of the Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux. Watson is no exception in frequently employing Bernard in framing his teaching on emotions and desire.[15] In this same work, Watson affirms Bernard's citation: 'He is *unsatisfied* without Christ.'[16] More pointedly, he challenges his readers' motives: 'Do we desire as much to look like Christ, as to live

---

[10] Thomas Watson, *The Saints Delight to which is Annexed a Treatise of Meditation* (London: Ralph Smith, 1657: Wing (2nd edn) W1142), 50. Elsewhere Watson repeats the imagery: 'He spreads the sails of his desire to receive the fresh breathings of Gods spirit.' Thomas Watson, *A Plea for the Godly* (London: A. Maxwell, 1672: Wing W1138), 13.

[11] Thomas Watson, *A Body of Practical Divinity* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1692: Wing W1109), 11.

[12] Thomas Watson, *The Godly Mans Picture* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1666: Wing W1124), 261.

[13] Watson, *Holy Eucharist*, 104.

[14] Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 14.

[15] The best study of desire in the writings of Bernard is Michael Casey, *Athirst for God* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988).

[16] Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 14.

with Christ?'[17] Further, Bernard contends that the nature of a person's 'discourse demonstrates what the heart is'.[18] Clearly Watson's goal is guiding his auditors into the formation of 'unfeigned desires after God'. He defines these desires as focused exclusively on, and being able to be satisfied only in, God. The maturity of these emotions is gradual, but the trajectory is to be increasingly consumed by Christ.[19]

Watson recognised the challenge of maintaining this high level of emotional desire and realised that by living in the fallen world, emotions were susceptible to decay and loss of focus and fervency. The resulting danger was that diminished desires were closely linked with increased corruption.[20] Watson names this 'spiritual consumption', of which one possible sign is that a person's prayers are 'formal and frozen' and the 'Chariot wheels [of devotion] are pulled off'.[21] Puritans were realists and understood not only that healthy emotions could dwindle, but also that if they had the potential to draw one closer to God, they also had the capacity to lead one astray from God. Since the Puritans recognised this potential and the depth of human depravity, they understood, in the words of Belden Lane, that 'Desire had to be controlled',[22] though they might have preferred the term 'transformed' or 'redeemed'. While they might be worried about diminished desires or even 'misdirected longing', there was an equal concern for the potential of excessive desires. What Belden Lane observes regarding marriage and sex actually covers a broader arena of affections. He contends: 'This is why the Puritans were necessarily so concerned about propriety and purity – not because they were innately prudish, but because their very piety lent itself to an excess of ardor.'[23] In his study on contentment, Watson argues for a careful examination of a person's affections. He recognises that unhealthy or misguided emotions can tempt a person to acquire more than is necessary for life. Instead, he counsels listeners

---

[17] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 119.
[18] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 72.
[19] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 463.
[20] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 108, 174, 190.
[21] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 104–5.
[22] Belden C. Lane, *Ravished By Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 136.
[23] Belden C. Lane, 'Rivers of Pleasure, Waters of Affliction: Covenant and Desire in Puritan Spirituality' in Steven A. Peay (ed.), *Yet More Light and Truth . . . Congregationalism, Covenant and Community* (Milwaukee: Congregational, 2003), 77.

to mortify and moderate their appetites by reason.[24] Ryrie neatly summarises this matter, stating that 'the affections had to be disciplined, but they ought not be restrained'.[25]

Before proceeding further, it is essential to comprehend that for the Puritans, desires do not exist in a vacuum and are dependent upon the foundational principles of union with Christ and the role of the Holy Spirit. Typically, Western Catholic writers utilise the vocabulary of union with God, while Protestants[26] and, in particular, the Puritans[27] frequently employ the more specific designation of union with Christ. The premiere biblical book for medieval mysticism was the Song of Songs and, again, both Western Catholics and Puritans relied upon the metaphor of mystical union or spiritual marriage, as it was often called.[28] Because this is a 'marriage-union with Christ', Watson speaks of it as a 'holy marriage'.[29] This relationship with Jesus Christ was understood to begin when the person believed in Jesus and was ingrafted into Christ and only perfected when the individual reached heaven.[30] In one of Watson's funeral sermons, he comforts the bereaved: 'If we are *in Christ* while we live, we shall go to Christ, when we dye; union is the ground of privilege; we must be *in* Christ, before we can be *with* Christ.'[31] Further, this union with Christ involves each person of the Trinity. Watson taught that 'God the Father gives the bride, God the Son receives the

---

[24] Watson, *Divine Contentment*, 244–5.

[25] Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 19.

[26] For a helpful introduction to mystical union within Protestantism, see Kimberly Long, *The Eucharistic Theology of the American Holy Fairs* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 25–60.

[27] For the Puritans on mystical union, see Tom Schwanda, *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative-Mystical Piety of Puritanism* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2012), 54–72; and Jean Williams, 'The Puritan Quest for Enjoyment of God' (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1997), 159–76.

[28] Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 28–9; and John Coffey, 'Letters of Samuel Rutherford' in Kelly M. Kapic and Randall C. Gleason (eds), *The Devoted Life: The Invitation to the Puritan Classics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 104.

[29] Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 346.

[30] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 499, 464, 475; cf. Watson, *Beatitudes*, 118. Watson contrasts the difference between the godly having a portion of the spiritual marriage on earth with its eventual fulfilment after death. *Godly Mans Picture*, 168, cf. 347–8.

[31] Thomas Watson, *The Holy Longing: or The Saints Desire to be with Christ* (London: Ralph Smith, 1659: Wing (2nd edn) W1130), 39.

bride, God the Holy ghost tyes the knot in marriage; he knits our wills to Christ, and Christs love to us'.[32] As a reflection of the marital intimacy, Puritans often employed the imagery of the 'nuptial knot'.[33] Significantly, the elect share in the blessed kingdom of heaven by virtue of their union with Christ, which is a union that cannot be broken.[34]

The Spirit is also active in preparing and directing believers towards heaven. Preparation in the form of purifying and clarifying desires is necessary due to the reality of living in a fallen world. According to Watson, the Holy Spirit shines upon the believer's heart to bring increased clarity and further revives the sluggish nature of the person's desires. Using the biblical account of Philip assisting the curious Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8: 28–31) in learning to understand Scripture, Watson reminds readers that they are no different and cannot grasp the meaning of the Bible unless the Spirit '*shines into our hearts*' and 'the fresh gales of the Spirit do sweetly revive and refocillate grace' upon them.[35] In the book of Acts, the Spirit is described as wind and fire and, according to Watson, they serve to purge and purify the human heart.[36]

Further, the Spirit also intensifies desire for God. Artfully configuring the word picture of the mariner at sea, Watson cautions that it is not enough to spread the sails unless there is strong wind to fill them. He continues: 'so we may spread the sails of our endeavor, but we cannot get to the Haven of Glory without the North and South-wind of Gods Spirit blow'.[37] Consistent with his normal practice, Watson frequently duplicates a metaphor in other works because of the alluring image it creates for his listeners. In reference to Ezekiel's vision of the wheels that were empowered by God's Spirit (Ezek 1:21), Watson insists: 'When God's Spirit blows upon us, now we go full sail to Heaven.'[38] Again

---

[32] Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 344.
[33] Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 331, 344, 349; cf. Thomas Watson, *A Pastors Love Expressed to a Loving People in a Farwel Sermon* (London: [s.n.], 1662: Wing W1136), 15; and Thomas Watson, *Gods Anatomy Upon Mans Heart* (London: Ralph Smith, 1654: Wing (2nd edn, 1994) W1125A), 28.
[34] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 480; cf. Thomas Watson, *Christians Charter Shewing the Privileges of a Believer* (London: Ralph Smith, 1655: Wing (2nd edn., 1994) W1114), 163.
[35] Watson, *Divine Contentment*, 20, 218.
[36] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 255–6.
[37] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 498.
[38] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 189; cf. Watson, *Christians Charter*, 157, where Watson combines the ministry of the Holy Spirit and contemplation as a means to elevate a believer to heaven.

drawing upon the metaphor of the wheels, but this time enhanced by the enflaming power of God's Spirit, a person is 'carried up to heaven in a *Fiery Chariot* of Devotion: This holy Fervency is caused by the Spirit of God, which both indites and inflames the Saints prayers'.[39] Therefore, the Spirit's guidance in prayer and other spiritual duties will reinforce their proper use. This relates to Ryrie's conclusion that the best way to stir up desire is 'through the everyday staples of piety' and, in particular, through prayer.[40]

Cultivation of emotions through spiritual duties

Watson returns once more to the vivid language of the chariot to compare and contrast the ways of performing spiritual practices: 'Holy Duties increase Grace, and as Grace ripens, so Glory hastens; the Duties of Religion are irksome to Flesh and Blood, but we should look upon them as Spiritual Chariots to carry us apace to the Heavenly Kingdom.'[41] The very term 'spiritual duty' conveys that effort is required to cultivate these practices of faith. But without the proper attitude, duty, even spiritual duties, can turn tedious and become a burden to the person and to God. In other words: 'Without this holy delight we weary ourselves, and we weary God too.' Watson continues: 'When duties are a burden to us, they are a burden to God, and what should we do with them? When a man is weary of a burden, he will cast it off. Let all this quicken delight in God's service.'[42] Unholy duty can never bring delight, for by its very nature it is counterfeit and hypocritical. Even with inordinate effort, it is impossible to produce authentic desire from a corrupt and divided heart. To counter this, the affections must be 'on fire in passionate longings after Heaven'.[43] Quoting Matthew 11:12, the Puritans frequently spoke of a 'holy violence' or even a 'sweet violence' to express the intensity of the grace-inspired effort required when performing spiritual duties.[44] However, this should not obscure the reality that some duties initially

---

[39] Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 25.
[40] Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 68.
[41] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 482.
[42] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 50. Watson also warns of the danger of performing spiritual duties with 'a plodding formality': *Saints Delight*, 323.
[43] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 15; cf. Thomas Watson, *Divine Cordial* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1663: Wing W1121), 88.
[44] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 10, 129, 83; cf. 169–94 for specific guidelines in cultivating 'blessed violence'.

begun out of obligation can mature and reach this proper attitude of delight. This also is an expression of grace.

Another dimension of Watson's teaching on motivation is the importance of humility and gratitude for the healthy nurturing of spiritual duties. Citing Bernard of Clairvaux, Watson affirms that 'thankfulness [is] the sweet balm that drops from a Christian'.[45] Gratitude is also related to humility that shapes the proper receptivity to both welcome gifts and respond in appropriate thanksgiving.[46] A direct outgrowth of gratitude is its ability to train a person's focus on God. There is nothing in God to 'dull our affections' and the 'more we enjoy' God, 'the more we are ravished with delight'.[47] Another way of ensuring the proper motivation for cultivating duties is that they are 'mingled with love', for 'Love is the most noble and excellent grace, it is a pure flame kindled from Heaven, by it we resemble God who is *love*'.[48] Just a few pages later in the same work, Watson counsels his readers: 'Our affections should be kindled at the fire of Gods love.'[49] From the broader perspective of the history of emotions, Watson's language resonates with the Roman Catholic mystical tradition. Richard Foster suggests that 'the two most common words used to describe the contemplative way of life are *fire* and *love*. Purging, purifying fire. Enveloping, comforting love'.[50] Significantly, this echo of the Western Catholic devotional terminology suggests there is more continuity with Puritan piety than many readers may imagine.

As well as proper motivation, recognition of the appropriate purpose of spiritual duties is also essential. To that end, Watson delineates three specific aims of spiritual exercises: to guide the person in growing more like God, to experience greater communion with God and to bring more glory to God. An awareness of these principles and intentionality in performing them will create a renewed sense of fervency in devotion.[51] Further, in order to accomplish this shaping of healthy emotions, it is

---

[45] Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 191; cf. Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 97, 100.
[46] Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 194; cf. Thomas Watson, *A Sermon Preached July 2, at the Funeral of Mr. John Wells* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1676: Wing W1143), 13.
[47] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 118.
[48] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 116. Watson further counsels readers to perform holy duties in a holy manner. *Beatitudes*, 244; cf. Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 230.
[49] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 119.
[50] Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 49.
[51] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 465.

valuable to follow the example of a godly person. Such an individual 'whose devotion is inflamed, and his heart boyls over in holy affections' will serve as a positive model to imitate.[52]

Fulfilment of desire and the future life

Scripture records the elusive presence of God. Moses, among others in the Hebrew Scripture, deeply longs to see God (Ex 33:18). God's response is that no one can see God and live (Ex 33:20). But God accommodates Moses' desire by allowing him to catch a partial and fleeting glance of God's back (Ex 33:23). While most writers throughout history understood that this privilege to see God 'face to face'[53] was reserved for heaven, some felt special exceptions were granted for Paul (2 Cor 12:2–4) to see God in this life.[54] This topic was debated throughout the patristic and medieval periods, but neither Luther nor Calvin devoted much attention to it. The Puritans reveal a renewed interest in the beatific vision[55] and, according to Richard Muller, the 'doctrine of the *visio Dei* or *visio beatifica* . . . was not mediated to the Protestant orthodox [i.e. post-sixteenth-century writers] by the Reformers, who did not discuss the

---

[52] Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 7.

[53] For a helpful overview of this history in Roman Catholicism, see Veerle Fraeters, 'Visio/Vision' in Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 178–88; and M.J. Redle, s.v. 'Beatific Vision' in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edn (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2003), 168–77. The limited attention this topic receives in the recent reference work on Christian mysticism is surprising. See Julia A. Lamm (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism* (Malden: Blackwell, 2013).

[54] Bernard McGinn, 'Visions and Visualization in the Here and Here After', *Harvard Theological Review*, 98(3) (2005): 230.

[55] 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 William H. Goold (ed.), *Works of John Owen* (London: Johnson and Hunter, 1850–53) I, 273–415; and Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*. Some Puritans addressed this topic in relation to heaven in their writings on the four last things. See Robert Bolton, *Mr. Boltons Last and Learned Worke of the The Foure Last Things* (London: George Miller, 1632: STC (2nd edn) 3242); and William Bates, *The Four Last Things* (London, 1691: Wing B1105), 267–489. Others, like Watson, addressed this theme in the sixth Beatitude, 'blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Mt 5:8). Watson, *Beatitudes*, 222–68. Watson also provides an extensive consideration in his treatise on the second petition of the Lord's Prayer (thy kingdom come). Watson, *The Lords Prayer* is published in Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 455–511. This is a selective list and sources could easily be multiplied.

topic. Rather, the orthodox derived it from their reading of medieval sources'.[56]

While Watson addresses this topic in numerous places, his most sustained treatment comes in his discussion of the sixth beatitude: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt 5:8).[57] Bernard McGinn notes that this verse became one of the primary texts in the history of Christian mysticism and that already by the second century, Christians were debating what it meant to 'see' God.[58] Unlike the Puritans, the seventeenth-century German and Dutch Pietists did not reveal this same interest even though they often had a similar theological and devotional agenda.[59] One exception among seventeenth-century writers is the Italian Reformed scholastic theologian Francis Turretin.[60]

Puritan authors employed a variety of definitions to describe this experience of seeing God. Robert Bolton simply states it in the negative, that hell is the 'unhappy banishment from the beatificall vision'.[61] He also expresses it positively: 'We shall be beatifically illightened with a cleare and glorious sight of GOD Himselfe: which the Divines call Beatificall Vision.'[62] Thomas Watson follows in a similar fashion: 'We shall have an immediate Communion with God himself, who is the inexhausted Sea of all Happiness: This Divines call, *The Beatifical Vision*.'[63] Elsewhere, Watson expounds the beatific vision as simply '*they shall see God*'. A marginal reference to Cassiodor[us] (c. 485–c. 580), a

---

[56] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), I, 260; cf. Carl Trueman, 'Heaven and Hell in Puritan Theology', *Epworth Review*, 22 (1995): 78.
[57] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 222–68.
[58] McGinn, *Foundations of Mysticism*, 68.
[59] For the Lutheran see [Johann] *Gerhard's Sacred Meditations*, C.W. Heisler (trans.) (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1896), 274–8. For the Dutch, see Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Bartel Elshout (trans.) (Morgan: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995), IV, 365–7. The term also appears in Willem Teellinck, *Sleutel der Devotie: Ons Openende de Deure des Hemels* (Amsterdam: Johan Evertszoon Cloppenborch, 1624), 70a–71a. I am grateful to Willem op 't Hof for providing the Teellinck citation.
[60] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, James T. Dennison, Jr. (ed.), George Musgrave Giger (trans.) (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1997), III, 608–17.
[61] Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 96.
[62] Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 150.
[63] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474; cf. William Strong, *A Discourse of the Two Covenants* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1678: Wing S6002), 284 for a similar focus on happiness.

Roman monk and biblical scholar, adds that this 'contemplation of the Divinity alone produces such happiness as nothing else can'.[64] John Owen's definition also stresses the experiential nature of this blessed sight, declaring: 'The enjoyment of God by sight is commonly called the BEATIFICAL VISION.'[65]

Three questions must be raised to examine Watson's treatment of the beatific vision: what is seen, how is it seen and what is the result? First, what do the saints see when they reach heaven? There is consensus among the Puritans that even in heaven, no one actually sees God, for God is spirit and spirits have no physicality upon which a person might gaze with their bodily eyes.[66] What is seen is no longer the limited earthly understanding gained through God's attributes, but now, directly, God's essence. Though the heavenly saints now perceive God's essence, it is not the full essence with all God's perfections,[67] for God is infinite and cannot be fully contained even in heaven.[68] What is comprehended is the glorified human nature of Jesus Christ[69] that will far exceed his transfigured body that Peter, James and John witnessed during his earthly life (Mt 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 19:28–36). This is a continuation of Jesus' teaching in the New Testament; no one has seen the Father but Jesus, Jesus makes him known and if you see Jesus, you have seen the Father (John 6:46, 1:18, 14:9). Therefore, through Christ, the dread and terror of the Divine Essence has been removed and the saints 'shall see God as a friend, not as guilty *Adam* did, *who was afraid, and hid himself*'.[70] Further, God graciously enlarges the capacity for saints to see so that, increasingly, they will be able to recognise God

[64] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 259.
[65] Owen, *Works*, I, 292. I will intentionally limit my interaction with Owen due to the two recent studies that examine his teaching on the beatific vision in greater depth. See Suzanne McDonald, 'Beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ: John Owen and the "Reforming" of the Beatific Vision' in Kelly M. Kapic and Mark Jones (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 141–58; and Kyle Strobel, 'Jonathan Edwards' Reformed Doctrine of the Beatific Vision' in Kelly Van Andel, Adriaan C. Neele and Kenneth Minkema (eds), *Jonathan Edwards and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Dunedin, 2011), 163–81.
[66] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 259.
[67] Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 286, 291.
[68] Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 117.
[69] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 260; and Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474.
[70] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 262.

more fully even in heaven.[71] No one will ever tire or fully experience this glory, since 'every Moment fresh Delights spring from God into the glorified Soul'.[72]

Second, how do the saints in heaven perceive this *beatifica visio*? Watson speaks of the 'double sight' of the believer;[73] on earth they see God by faith, but in heaven it will be by actual sight.[74] At this point, Watson's treatment might appear confusing. While he maintains that the beatific vision is reserved only for heaven, he believes that the 'spiritual' sight of faith that reflects Paul's prayer, 'the eyes of your understanding being enlightened' (Eph 1:18) does provide believers with a deeper awareness of God's presence even on earth. Faith enables a person to see 'Gods glorious Attributes in the glass of his Word; faith beholds him shewing forth himself through the Lattice of his Ordinances'. Watson recalls Moses' experience that a person could only see God 'as it were vailed over', but in the future life, the believer's ability to see God will be transformed.[75]

There was common agreement that the saints would experience immediate communion with God[76] and not be delayed until the final resurrection. This language refuted the distortion of 'soul sleep'.[77] Further, this sight was not through bodily eyes, but a direct intuitive and intellectual sight of God.[78] Watson clarifies that this intuitive sight is with the 'eyes of the mind'.[79] Yet he continues and asserts that 'this sight of God in glory' is not only mental and intellectual but also partially corporeal. He quickly clarifies that a person cannot see the bright essence

---

[71] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474. Williams also refers to the incomplete knowledge a person has in heaven. Williams, 'Puritan Quest for Enjoyment of God', 265n203.
[72] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 476.
[73] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 258.
[74] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 258, 267; and Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 191; cf. Owen, *Works*, I, 288 374–5, 384; Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 286; and Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 114.
[75] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 258–9.
[76] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474; cf. Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 65 and Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 287.
[77] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 265. The Western Catholic Church denounced this heresy by refuting the teaching of Pope John XXII. See Severin Valentinov Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment in Medieval Scholastic Debates* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 122n12.
[78] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474; cf. Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 49, 52, 53, 65, 113 and Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 290.
[79] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474.

of God's glory with bodily eyes, but 'we shall with bodily eyes behold *Jesus Christ*, through whom the glory of God . . . shall shine forth to the soul'.[80] Carl Trueman maintains that Puritans again followed medieval scholastics in recognising 'that the vision is intellectual, a sign that the saint's human faculties have been restored to their pristine order'.[81]

Third, what is the result of this heavenly sight? While there are many benefits that a person will receive in heaven, Watson emphasises three in particular. First is the perfection of the saints' union with Christ. He writes that the saint 'rejoyceth in the mystical union which is begun here, and consummate in heaven: Thus the joy of the Saints is a joy *full of glory*'.[82] Related to the perfection of the union with Christ is fulfilment of knowledge and love. Watson and other Puritans understood the hotly contested scholastic debates that focused on the age-old dispute regarding intellect versus the will. Aquinas championed the priority of knowledge, while Scotus affirmed that the will and affect took precedence. As Watson reviews this argument, he concludes that 'certainly true blessedness comprehends both; it lies partly in the *understanding*, by seeing the glory of God richly displayed; and partly in the *will*, by a sweet delicious taste of it, and acquiescence of the soul in it'.[83] Unlike John Howe, who engages in a more detailed summary and critique of Aquinas and Scotus,[84] Watson merely inserts the name 'D. Arrow' into his margin. This no doubt refers to Dr John Arrowsmith (1602–59), a noted English Puritan and member of the Westminster Assembly.[85] Watson's resistance to entering this debate reveals the Puritans' belief that the

---

[80] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 259–60.

[81] Trueman, 'Heaven and Hell in Puritan Theology', 78.

[82] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 118; cf. Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 464, 475, 478.

[83] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 263. Owen appears to be the exception among the Puritans considered in this chapter favouring the intellectual emphasis of Aquinas. See McDonald, 'Beholding the Glory of God', 144–5, 147n22. See also Bates, *Four Last Things*, 307, 308, 339, 479; Howe *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 87; and Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III, 609 for other Puritans who intentionally stress the integration of knowledge and the will.

[84] Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, esp. 55–6, 59. Space does not permit an exploration into the complexity of this important medieval debate. For an excellent overview, see Kitanov, *Beatific Enjoyment in Medieval Scholastic Debates*. For a brief but valuable summary, see McGinn, 'Vision and Visualization in the Here and Here After', 227–46.

[85] The origin of Watson's citation is John Arrowsmith, *Tactica Sacra* (Cambridge: Joannes Field, 1657: Wing A3777), 343. Richard of Middleton was likely the medieval source for the integration of the intellectual and volitional dimensions. I am grateful to Richard Muller for this insight.

scholastics peered more deeply into the mysteries of God than necessary.[86] After raising numerous concerns about these lengthy disputes 'which the Schoolmen [are] audaciously discourting', Bolton simply concludes his treatment by affirming: 'But it is sufficient for a sober man to know, that in heaven we shall see Him *face to face*.'[87]

Second, those in heaven tasted the fruition of eternal enjoyment of God and all of God's benefits. This joy was understood to be continual. Watson declares that 'from this fruition of Christ a torrent of divine joy will flow into the soul'.[88] He reinforces this with a reference to Matthew 25:21: 'enter thou into the joy of the Lord'. Elsewhere he uses almost identical language and then cites Bernard: '*Enter thou into the joy of the Lord*; not only *behold* it, but *enter* into it.'[89] Christopher Love enlarges this principle by exhorting that 'you enjoy God in measure, there is but a little enjoyment of God here, but there you shall enjoy God above measure; here you have the fullness of a bucket, there you shall have the fullness of an Ocean'.[90] Other Puritans employed different wording to capture this heavenly delight. Bates' favourite terms were happiness and felicity.[91] Bolton often favours the term 'joy' or 'enjoyment'.[92]

Third, beholding God's glory was a transformative sight. What Moses experienced on Mount Sinai by being in God's presence (Ex 34:29–35) would become permanent in heaven. Watson affirms this expectation: 'this sight of God will be a transforming sight: 1 *John* 3.2. *We shall be like him*: The Saints shall be changed into glory'. Yet he is quick to clarify 'not that they shall partake of Gods very *essence* . . . the Saints by beholding the lustre of Gods Majesty shall be glorious creatures, but creatures

---

[86] Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 55. For a sampling of the Puritan treatment of the Western Catholic controversies over the beatific vision see Watson, *Beatitudes*, 262–3; Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 129, 134, 140, 150; Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 54–7, 59, 81, 85, etc.; Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 285, 286; and Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III, 609.

[87] Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 150, 151; cf. 129, 134, 140 for Bolton's criticism of these scholastic disputes.

[88] Watson, *Holy Longing*, 34; cf. Watson, *Beatitudes*, 262; Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 231, 475; Thomas Watson, *The Fight of Faith Crowned* (London: Joseph Collier, 1678: Wing W1123), 14; Bates, Howe and Strong also emphasise the importance of fruition: Bates, *Four Last Things*, 314, 328; Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 129; and Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 292.

[89] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 263.

[90] Christopher Love, *Heavens Glory, Hells Terror* (London: John Rothwell, 1653: Wing (2nd edn) L3161), 98.

[91] Bates, *Four Last Things*: for happiness, 284, 374; for felicity, 272, 315.

[92] Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 127, 144; cf. Bates, *Four Last Things*, 272, 383.

still'.[93] Nonetheless, the glorified saints undergo a significant change and Watson quotes Bernard to the effect that believers 'shall not only see Gods Glory, but some of his Glory shall be put upon us'.[94] Howe recognises the typical transformative nature of the beatific vision,[95] but also emphasises the assimilation of God's revealed glory that is reflective of his neoplatonism and participation in this divine glory.[96] Regardless of the language employed, Puritans agreed that the transformative nature of seeing God face to face was dynamic and created continued growth in heaven. In fact, so overwhelming is this transforming experience that Watson declares that 'the soul will be wholly swallowed up in God and acquisce [*sic*] in him with infinite complacency'.[97]

The richest emotional collection of Puritan devotional writings focused on the believers' union with Christ or spiritual marriage. Whether it was the initial experience of tasting the joy of being Jesus' bride on earth or the consummate delight of that in heaven, the emotional register soars at this point. This reinforces Fiona Somerset's suggestion that readers of historical texts should be attentive to 'where they [i.e. feelings] are most visible', not where they are absent.[98] Somerset also observes that 'mystical writers are emotion-artists: they are specialists in the observation and description of emotion'.[99] Wallace recognises this and asserts that: 'Puritan spirituality became most affectively mystical with regard to such topics as heavenly mindedness and union with Christ.'[100]

Clearly an experience of the beatific vision literally stimulated the senses. In particular, this landscape was flooded with the 'emotional script' of sweetness and ravishment.[101] This language is reminiscent of

---

[93] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 261, 262; cf. Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 232 and Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 51.
[94] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474.
[95] Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 18, 182.
[96] On assimilation, see Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 67, 78, 130, 169, etc. On participation, see Howe, *Blessedness of the Righteous*, 22, 67, 235, etc. On Howe's neoplatonism, see Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660–1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 32, 59, 203.
[97] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 50.
[98] Fiona Somerset, 'Emotion' in Hollywood and Beckman (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, 303.
[99] Somerset, 'Emotion', 298.
[100] Wallace, *Spirituality of Later English Puritans*, xviii.
[101] The term was coined by Anna Wierzbicka. See Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in*

the bridal mysticism of the Song of Songs. Not surprisingly it appears in one of Watson's funeral sermons. Sandwiched between references to Augustine and Chrysostom, he declares that 'to have intellectual transforming sights of God, will ravish the Elect with infinite delight'.[102] Elsewhere he attempts to capture the dazzling nature of this vision, ebulliently proclaiming that 'the sight of Christ will amaze the eye with wonder, and ravish the heart with joy'.[103] Or earlier in the same treatise: 'So sweet will God be, that the more the Saints behold God, the more they will be ravished with desire and delight.' Unlike the temporary and brief earthly encounters with God's glory, this ravishing sight is permanent.[104]

Often sweetness was used in conjunction with the heavenly sight. Once again, Watson draws upon Bernard, his favorite medieval writer, to reinforce his own teaching that there is 'sweetnesse in communion with God'.[105] Watson can be more elaborate and even lyrical as he writes of this sweetness. After citing Estius about the contemplation of the beatific vision, he writes: 'A gracious soul hath sweet intercourse with Heaven; he goes to God by prayer, and God comes to him by his spirit; How happy is that person who hath the Angels to guard him, and God to keep him company.'[106] In addition, it was common for Puritans to speak of the eternal life as one of blessed rest in God's heavenly kingdom. Watson, ever sensitive to the fountain of heavenly emotion, motivates his readers with this future expectation: 'This Rest is when

---

the Cultural History of Emotion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 10.

[102] Watson, *Fight of Faith*, 14.

[103] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 262, cf. 268 and Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474.

[104] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 264; cf. Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 151 and Watson, *Saints Delight*, 370 for other combinations of sweet and ravishing. Watson repeatedly returns to the use of ravishment in describing the beatific sight. See Watson, *Christians Charter*, 106; Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474, 509; and Watson, *Saints Delight*, 302. The usage of ravishment is common in other Puritans when describing the beatific vision. See Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 144; Bates, *Four Last Things*, 305, 310, 322, 324; and Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 291.

[105] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 50. For a helpful treatment of this topic from Bernard's perspective, see Mary Carruthers, 'Sweetness', *Speculum*, 81(3) (2006): 999–1013. For a fine overview from Watson's perspective, see I. John Hesselink, 'Calvin, Theologian of Sweetness', *Calvin Theological Journal*, 37(2) (2002): 318–32.

[106] Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 41. The reference to Estius relates to Willem Hessels van Est (1542–1613), a popular Dutch Catholic biblical scholar. For other uses of sweetness in relation to gazing on the beatific vision, see Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 261; Watson, *Saints Delight*, 290 (incorrectly numbered 282); and Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 474.

the Saints shall lye on Christs bosom, that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume.'[107]

According to the Puritans, contemplation was central to preparation for heaven, but it was also the only natural response of the glorified saints to express their love and gratitude to God. Barbara Newman emphasises the 'language of seeing'[108] in her examination of the medieval culture of visualisation and this imagery nicely links with the practice of beholding in Puritan piety. Beholding can be a shorthand for contemplation, since a compelling object has captured the person's gaze. Watson combines these terms as he imagines what happens in heaven: 'The Saints shall behold Gods glory; the pure in heart shall have the same blessedness that God himself hath; for what is the blessedness of God, but the contemplating his own infinite beauty.'[109] Repeatedly, Watson employs this language of beholding as the proper response of the saints in heaven.[110] God's heavenly glory is engaging because, for believers, it is not 'an *affrighting* Vision' as seen by those who 'live in sin' and 'whose souls are dyed black with the filth of hell', but rather a '*beatifical* Vision'.[111]

Other Puritans also reinforced the essential practice of contemplation in heaven. Owen, while focusing on the saints' experience in glory, comforted his readers, claiming: 'Hereby shall we be enabled and fitted eternally to abide in the contemplation of the glory of Christ with joy and satisfaction.'[112] For Bates, the 'Life of glorified Spirits above' is preoccupied 'in continual contemplation of the Divine Excellencies'.[113] Strong agrees with the conclusion of his Puritan colleagues that 'the main and essential part of glory doth consist in contemplation'.[114] Since the compelling beauty of God as revealed in Jesus Christ captivates the glorified saint, there is unlimited fruition and enjoyment of God. In Watson's exposition of the believers' privileges at death, he proclaims that the saints will 'enjoy the Love of God' and that 'this will cause a Jubilation of Spirits, and create such Holy Raptures of Joy in the Saints

---

[107] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 475.
[108] Barbara Newman, 'What Did it Mean to Say "I Saw?" The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture', *Speculum*, 80 (2005): 23, cf. 28.
[109] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 267; cf. Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 234.
[110] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 261, 262, 264, 267; cf. Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 231, 481 and Watson, *Fight of Faith*, 14.
[111] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 266.
[112] Owen, *Works*, I, 406.
[113] Bates, *Four Last Things*, 453–4.
[114] Strong, *Discourse of Two Covenants*, 289.

as are Superlative, and would soon overwhelm them if God did not make them able to bear'.[115] Watson again illustrates his fondness for Bernard as he quotes the Cistercian monk insisting that 'there is no Surfeit' of the delight in heaven.[116] The high resonance of emotional delight is ever renewed because 'the more we enjoy him, the more we are ravished with delight'.[117]

Renewed importance of spiritual duties

The Puritan desire for deeper union and communion with God not only expanded their longing for heaven and the beatific vision but also elevated the importance of spiritual practices during one's earthly life. In Watson's sermon aptly entitled 'A Christian on Earth still in Heaven', he examines how a person can still be with God even amidst their daily life. He names the Eucharist and contemplation as two specific spiritual duties that can guide a believer in tasting the heavenly delight proleptically.[118] He stresses the urgency of this preparation more succinctly elsewhere as he counsels: 'You shall never go to heaven when you die, unless you begin heaven here.'[119]

The Eucharist was appealing because it revealed the beauty of Christ so dramatically and offered the believer a brief glimpse of the future life in heaven.[120] It also presented a foretaste of the heavenly supper in paradise with God.[121] Watson adapts the imagery of Jacob's ladder (Gen 28:12) to communicate the direct link between heaven and earth: '*Ordinances* they are the golden ladder by which the soul climbs up to heaven.'[122] The term 'ordinance' had a broader meaning for Watson and the Puritans, and often referred to prayer and Bible reading and other

---

[115] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 226; cf. 232, where Watson reiterates this phrasing with a citation from Augustine to reinforce his point.
[116] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 232; cf. Watson, *Beatitude*, 263 and Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 232.
[117] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 118.
[118] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 290 (incorrectly numbered 282), 291 (incorrectly numbered 253).
[119] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 312. For the broader Puritan treatment of 'heaven on earth', see Williams, 'Puritan Quest for Enjoyment of God', 125n353.
[120] Watson, *Beatitude*, 261; cf. Hambrick-Stowe, *Practice of Piety*, 214–15 for the sacrament's connection with heaven.
[121] Watson, *Holy Eucharist*, 19.
[122] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 460, cf. 247, 445. For variations on Watson's usage of the ladder imagery, see Watson, *Divine Contentment*, 273; Watson, *Saints Delight*, 349; and Watson, *Christians Charter*, 263.

spiritual duties.[123] Drawing upon Song of Songs 2:9, Watson evokes the strong visual imagery of Christ's pleasure with his followers: 'The Ordinances are the lattice where Christ looks forth and shewes his smiling face to his Saints.'[124] Celebration of the Lord's Supper created a deepening desire for a fuller experience of Christ. Watson argues: 'Desire is an holy Dropsie . . . A glympse of Christ through the Lattice of an Ordnance is sweet; and now the Soul will never leave longing, till it sees him face to face.'[125] Elsewhere Watson develops this theme and encourages his auditors that a regular practice of the sacraments creates renewed assurance for them: 'The Ordinances are the Lattice where Christ looks forth, and gives the soul a smiling aspect. As Christ was made known to his Disciples *in the breaking of bread* . . . Christ makes a glorious discovery of himself to the soul . . . They who would find Christ with comfort, and have the *kisses of his lips*, shall be sure to meet with him in the Temple.'[126] This language of 'the kisses of his lips' is strongly present in Bernard.[127]

Watson expands the richness of this intimate language as he playfully combines multiple images from the Song of Songs. In his posthumous work, he taught: 'In the Word we hear God's Voice, and in the Sacrament we have his Kiss; this is enjoying God . . . Now Christ hath pull'd off his Veil, and showed his smiling Face, now he hath led a Believer into the Banqueting-house, and given him of the spiced Wine of his Love to drink; he hath put in his Finger at the hole of the Door, he hath touch'd the Heart, and made it leap for Joy.'[128] He clarifies one aspect of his ministry, asserting that: 'Ministers are *Paranymphi*, friends of the bridegroom. This day I come a wooing for your love.'[129] He woos his readers

---

[123] Hambrick-Stowe, *Practice of Piety*, esp. 93.

[124] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 393; cf. Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 151 and Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 10, 395. Thomas Goodwin employed the same imagery earlier when describing Christ's presence in the sacraments: 'He also follows us to the Sacrament, and in that Glasse shews us Christs face smiling on us, and through his face his heart; and thus helping of us to a sight of him, we goe away rejoycing that we saw our Saviour that day.' Thomas Goodwin, *Christs Heart Now in Heaven, Unto Sinners on Earth* in *Christ Set Forth* (London: Robert Dawlman, 1642: Wing (2nd edn) G1232), 34.

[125] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 463.

[126] Watson, *Beatitudes*, 442; cf. Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 123 and Watson, *Saints Delight*, 393.

[127] Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs I*, Kilian Walsh (trans.) (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publishers, 1971), esp. sermons 2–4.

[128] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 10.

[129] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 387.

by asserting that they will receive the kisses of Christ in the sacrament. In an even more dramatic proclamation that strikingly elevates the sacrament over Scripture, he delightfully declares: 'The Sacrament hath a peculiar excellency above the Word preached. In the Word there is the Breath of God; in the Sacrament the Blood of God; in the Word we hear his Voyce, in the Sacrament we have his kisse. The Word proceeds out of Gods mouth, the Sacrament out of his sides.'[130] Clearly, this high view of the Lord's Supper rivals John Calvin's similar understanding of the Eucharist. Again Watson demonstrates the direct connection between the Eucharist and motivation of healthy emotions towards God when he avers: 'So when the flame of your love is going out, make use of Ordinances, and Gospel-promises, as fuel to keep the fire of your love burning.'[131]

Equally important was the intentional cultivation of contemplation. Jean Williams observes that for the Puritans, contemplation could anticipate heaven, but it 'could never rival the beatific vision'.[132] Like the Eucharist, it created a foretaste for the enjoyment of God and motivation for its continual practice during the Puritan's earthly pilgrimage towards heaven. For Watson, the elevation of contemplation as a preparation for heaven is evident.[133] He begins by challenging his readers to have righteous thoughts and continues: 'a righteous man is got upon the top of Mount *Tabor*, solacing himself in *Jehovah*; he contemplates the beauty of Holiness, the love of Christ, the felicity of Saints glorified . . . The Soul while it is musing on Christ, is filled with holy and sweet raptures, it is caught up into Paradise, it is in Heaven before its time'. The richness of this summons is embellished by Bernard's citation that amplifies this as the 'grace of contemplation'.[134] Significantly, this is not an isolated thought for Watson, as he reinforces this truth in other treatises. When he accentuates the importance of hearts purified by faith,

---

[130] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 17. Watson finds great delight in recalling the affective nature of Christ's kisses. For other variations of this love language, see Watson, *Saints Delight*, 18, 290 (incorrectly numbered 282); Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 17, 52; Watson, *Beatitude*, 25; Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 212; Watson, *Fight of Faith*, 23; Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 201; and Watson, *Godly Mans Picture*, 282.
[131] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 138.
[132] Williams, 'Puritan Quest for Enjoyment of God', 265, 266.
[133] For a broader treatment of Watson's understanding and use of contemplation, see Tom Schwanda, 'The Sweetnesse of Communion with God: The Contemplative-Mystical Piety of Thomas Watson', *Journal for the History of Reformed Pietism*, 1(2) (2015): 34–63.
[134] Watson, *Plea for the Godly*, 13.

he challenges the 'Real Saints' to 'spend much time in musing upon these glorious Benefits which you shall have by Christ at Death. Thus might you by a Contemplative Life, begin the Life of Angels here, and be in Heaven before your time'.[135] Watson is bold enough to suggest that every person should spend at least 15 minutes daily in 'contemplating heavenly objects'.[136] Further, in his volume on spiritual duties, he exults: 'What delight in holy contemplation! A Christian hath such illapses of the Spirit, and meets with such transfigurations of soul, that he thinks himself half in Heaven.'[137] Elsewhere he writes that the 'first fruit of love is *musing of the mind upon God*'. The person who 'loves God, is ravished and transported with Contemplations of God'. Watson claims such a person is already on the 'Heaven Road'.[138] Recalling the identical figure of speech of the 'Heaven Road', elsewhere he asks: 'Are we heavenly in our Contemplations . . . Are our Minds heavenliz'd . . . ?'[139]

Watson is not unique among Puritans in recognising the value of cultivating loving contemplation upon God as one of the best means of preparing for the future life.[140] Bolton counsels others: 'O with what infinite sweetest delight may every truly gracious soule, bathe it selfe before-hand, even in this vale of teares, in the delicious and ravishing contemplation of this most glorious Place, wherein he hath an eternall blisfull mansion most certainly purchased and prepared already, by the bloud of JESUS CHRIST!'[141] Clearly nurturing the spiritual duty of contemplation was one tangible means for the Puritans to prepare a person for the future sight of glory by the act of faith on earth.

The combination of spiritual duties in preparation for heaven demonstrates the importance of both communal and personal practices. The

---

[135] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 234.
[136] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 55.
[137] Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 139.
[138] Watson, *Divine Cordial*, 95.
[139] Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 486; cf. 509 and Watson, *Beatitudes*, 455 and Watson, *Heaven Taken By Storm*, 55, 213 for the importance of contemplation as a preparation for heaven. Hambrick-Stowe, *Practice of Piety*, 287 also stresses the link between contemplation and heaven.
[140] For a helpful summary of the distinction between contemplation and meditation in the Puritans, see Schwanda, *Soul Recreation*, 123–4.
[141] Bolton, *Foure Last Things*, 126; cf. Bates, *Four Last Things*, 450; Owen, *Works*, I, 275, 292, 312, 333, 375, etc.; Nathanael Ranew, *Solitude Improved by Divine Meditation* (London: J.M., 1670: Wing R248), 237, 383; and Williams, 'Puritan Quest for Enjoyment of God', 265n201 for the importance of contemplation as a means of preparing for heaven.

Eucharist is a public spiritual duty even though each person would have varied experiences of the triune God within that communal celebration. Contemplation is more personal, though it can occur amidst the challenges of everyday life. Watson skilfully borrows the graphic paradigm from the biblical story of Zaccheus to integrate the major themes for cultivating contemplation. Due to his small physical stature, Zaccheus could not see Jesus and climbed a sycamore tree to gain a clearer sight of him (Luke 19:4). Watson allegorises the story and exhorts: 'When we are in a croud of worldly businesse, we cannot see Christ: Climb up into the tree by divine contemplation: If thou wouldst get Christ into thy heart, let heaven be in thy eye: *Set your affections upon things above*. Colos. 3.2.'[142] Elsewhere he reinforces this teaching, citing Bernard's counsel to leave all worldly thoughts behind in contemplation because Christ is bashful and it is necessary to retire to one's closet for communing with him. However, Watson also recognises the active dimension of gazing on God in love and quotes John Cassian that contemplation 'canot be perfected without the pratick'.[143]

Summary

We have now reached a point where a number of themes can be summarised and assessed. The previous pages have demonstrated that Thomas Watson was deeply fascinated by the beatific vision and addressed this not only in the obvious sources on the Beatitudes and the kingdom of heaven but also throughout his entire corpus. Similarly, Watson provides convincing evidence of the use of the Lord's Supper and contemplation as a means for stretching the imagination and preparing for heaven while still on earth. His writings on desiring and delighting in God are saturated with an abundance of emotional scripts. This chapter has also been attentive to Watson's sources for developing his theology and has revealed a strong dependence upon patristic and medieval sources. Unquestionably Watson's favorite medieval writer was Bernard of Clairvaux. There is also value in briefly comparing Watson with some of his Puritan colleagues in their development of the saints' experience with the *beatifica visio*. Unlike Owen and Isaac Ambrose, who possessed a strong christological focus to their treatment of the beatific

[142] Watson, *Christians Charter*, 94–5.
[143] Watson, *Saints Delight*, 63, 206, 270.

vision,[144] Watson is similar to Bolton, Howe, Bates, Strong and Turretin in emphasising the anthropological concerns of the believers' experience in heaven. Space does not permit a more nuanced examination of the unique contributions of these and other Puritans, since more research would be required not only into the writers included in this study but many others who also preached on the beatific vision.

This also raises the question whether ecclesial background affected the development of a person's piety. Or, more particularly for this chapter, did Presbyterians following the civil wars reveal a greater interest in the contemplative desire and delight for enjoyment of God than other streams of Puritan piety? On the one hand, Watson, Howe, Bates and Isaac Ambrose were Presbyterian and clearly emphasised the themes of longing for and delighting in God through the love language of the Song of Solomon. This list could easily be expanded with the addition of other Presbyterians such as Christopher Love, Joseph Alleine, Stephen Charnock, John Flavel, Thomas Doolittle, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Bruce and many more. Bruce was a forerunner and representative of the importance of the Eucharist in the highly spiritualised 'sacramental occasions' of the Scottish Church.[145] A profitable area of further research would be a careful examination of the piety that arose from those who wrote on the Lord's Supper. This chapter has argued that Watson reveals some of his most contemplative-mystical themes in his discussion of the Eucharist. Further, Wallace is interested in observing the features that could create greater receptivity among the Presbyterians to a more contemplative–mystical piety. He asserts that the Presbyterians 'were also usually less rigid in their Calvinism than the Independents or Congregationalist Dissenters' and that their writing emphasised 'affectionate divinity'.[146] Yet on the other hand, recent scholarship has convincingly argued against overly rigid boundaries between the various schools of Puritan theology. Wallace himself recognises that 'the boundary between these Presbyterians and the Independents was also porous'.[147] Indeed, Owen and Thomas Goodwin,

---

[144] For Owen's christological emphasis, see Strobel, 'Jonathan Edwards and the Beatific Vision', 164–8, 170, 173–5. For Isaac Ambrose's treatment of the beatific vision, see Schwanda, *Soul Recreation*, 143, 148–62.

[145] For an excellent introduction to this topic, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communions and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton University Press, 1989). See also Long, *Eucharistic Theology*.

[146] Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 22, 142.

[147] Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, 23, cf. 24; cf. Kapic and Gleason (eds), *Devoted Life*, 23–4; and Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 6–9.

as Independents, reveal a similar interest in themes of contemplation and heavenly-mindedness. This begs the question of where to place Peter Sterry, Richard Baxter or William Strong and Francis Rous, who both began as Presbyterians before becoming Independents, though Rous wrote his most mystical writings before exchanging his allegiance. More significantly, Ryrie argues that the gap created by 'divisive issues of doctrine' quickly fades as one examines devotional practices, and indeed it does.[148] One additional concern is that most Puritans wrote descriptively of how they envision theology and piety to intersect, while relatively few recorded their actual personal experiences in their journals or letters.[149]

It is appropriate that Watson should have the final word on this subject. Wisely, he recognises that after all that has been written, there is still much mystery as to the details and reality of seeing God face to face in heaven. In one of his funeral sermons he borrows the medieval imagery and calls the day of a person's death 'the Saints *Coronation* day'. This ushers the believer into 'extasies and divine raptures of joy'. Yet Watson quickly adds that 'The delights of Heaven may be better *felt* than expressed'[150] and that mystery remains in the future for each person.

[148] Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 7.
[149] At this point, the personal writings of Ambrose and Alleine are most suggestive of their robust contemplative-mystical piety.
[150] Watson, *Fight of Faith*, 15.

4

‘Milke and Honey’: Puritan Happiness in the Writings of Robert Bolton, John Norden and Francis Rous

S. Bryn Roberts

> The enjoyment of God is the joy of our life, and the life of our joy; whatever our fare be, that alone is our chear; how well soever we fare, that alone is our welfare. (Ralph Venning)[1]

The theme of happiness is notable by its absence from the otherwise extensive study of the early modern emotions edited by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd Wilson. In fact, in his study of Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Douglas Trevor suggests that ‘those souls elected to the quintessence of happiness, eternal salvation, exhibit a non-mirthful relation to the world that indicates moral uprightness and Christian devotion’.[2] However, Trevor recognises that while this sadness entails a ‘depress[ion] in spirits’, it does not preclude the experience of religious ecstasy and ‘joyes’.[3] Indeed, it is set in stark contrast to the joylessness characteristic of the characters ‘Despair’ and ‘Sansjoy’.[4]

---

[1] Ralph Venning, *Milke and Honey, or A miscellaneous collation of many Christian experiences, sayings, sentences, and several places of Scripture improved* (London: John Rothwel, 1653: Wing (2nd edn), V206), 36.

[2] Douglas Trevor, ‘Sadness in The Faerie Queene’ in Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 241.

[3] Trevor, ‘Sadness’, 247.

[4] Trevor, ‘Sadness’, 248; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*, I.ix–x; I.v.

Despite this omission, when it comes to a study of 'hotter Protestant' texts of the seventeenth century, one is struck by a repeated emphasis upon happiness.[5] For example, Thomas Goodwin wrote of the *Happinesse of the Saints* in 1638, Jeremiah Burroughes evaluated the *Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* in 1647[6] and Ralph Venning proposed a *Way to True Happiness* in 1654.[7] In fact, for Venning, the pursuit of happiness was fundamental to his pastoral theology.[8] Works related to the theme of the happiness, blessedness or delight of the believer were similarly published by John Howe and Richard Baxter.[9] What is significant is that this happiness was not reserved solely for the afterlife, but rather should characterise the experience of the godly in this one, although its ultimate fulfilment is postponed until heaven.

In this chapter, I shall explore the puritan notion of happiness as illustrated by the works of Francis Rous, John Norden and Robert Bolton. Each of these authors is categorical in respect of the possibility of attaining such happiness. Rous published *The Arte of Happiness* in 1619, in which he 'searcheth out the happinesse of man', 'discovers and approves it' and 'sheweth the meanes to attayne and increase it'.[10] Furthermore, he identifies himself as: 'A Seeker of Happinesse for himselfe and thee.'[11] Indeed, for Rous, the Church is 'a house-hold of Love, of

---

[5] Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford University Press, 1967), 26–7.

[6] Jeremiah Burroughes, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (London: Peter Cole, 1647: Wing (2nd edn), B6102), 71–2, 94, 98; cf. Jeremiah Burroughes, *The Saints Happinesse. Together with the severall steps leading thereunto* (London: Nathaniel Brook, 1660: Wing (2nd edn), B6112), To the Christian Reader. It should be noted that the 'rarity' of the 'jewel' does not imply its scarcity, but rather its value for Burroughes.

[7] Thomas Goodwin, *The Happinesse of the Saints in Glory, Or, A Treatise of Heaven* (London: Robert Dunscomb, 1638: STC (2nd edn), 12039); Ralph Venning, *The Way to True Happiness, Or, The Way to Heaven Open'd* (London: John Rothwell, 1654: Wing (2nd edn), V232).

[8] I explore in detail the importance of the theme of happiness in Venning's theology in *Puritanism and the Pursuit of Happiness: The Life and Ministry of Ralph Venning, 1621–1674* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015).

[9] Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest: Or, a Treatise Of the Blessed State of the Saints in their enjoyment of God in Glory*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton, 1649: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), B1382A); John Howe, *A Treatise of Delighting in God* (London: Sa. Gellibrand, 1674: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), H3043).

[10] Francis Rous, *The Arte of Happines* (London: John Haviland, 1631: STC (2nd edn), 21339), Frontispiece.

[11] Rous, *Arte*, sig. A9r.

Faith, of Holinesse, and of Happinesse'.[12] Similarly, John Norden published *A Godlie Mans Guide to Happinesse* (1624) and as far as he was concerned, the distinguishing mark of his puritan readership was that they 'long for tru happiness'.[13] Likewise, Robert Bolton took up the same theme in *A Discourse About the State of True Happinesse* (1637), a work which he developed from sermons preached both at Oxford and at Paul's Cross: the 'national pulpit'.[14] Bolton's expressed concern was threefold: to exhort those whose profession of faith was merely 'formall'; that his readers might determine whether or not they were in a state of salvation whereby they might experience true happiness; and to provide a guide as to how it might be enjoyed by the believer.[15] Each of these works was published in handy, pocket-sized, relatively inexpensive octavo. As far as these puritans were concerned, happiness ought to characterise the experience of every believer. Before going any further, however, it is essential to consider exactly what happiness meant to the seventeenth-century reader.

Defining happiness

Defining happiness presents something of a challenge, as does defining the emotions in general and their relationship with religion in particular.[16] As noted by scholars of the emotions in the early modern period, emotional scripts do not necessarily translate easily across the historical and cultural divides, nor does their terminology.[17] In order to avoid imposing a twenty-first-century understanding upon the seventeenth-century mind, it is essential that we define happiness according to the puritans' own terms. As Trevor appreciates, Edmund Spenser's use of 'sadness' is a case in point.[18] He interprets 'sadness' in Spenser's

---

[12] Rous, *Arte*, 181.
[13] John Norden, *A Godlie Mans Guide to Happinesse* (London: John Marriott, 1624: STC (2nd edn), 18608), Frontispiece.
[14] Patrick Collinson so describes Paul's Cross because of its religious and political prominence. Cf. P. Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988), 20.
[15] Robert Bolton, *A Discourse About the State of True Happinesse* (London: Edmund Weaver, 1611: STC (2nd edn), 3228), 118.
[16] For a discussion of the difficulties, see John Corrigan, 'Introduction: Emotions Research and the Academic Study of Religion' in John Corrigan (ed.), *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 6, 7–13.
[17] Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 4, 12.
[18] Trevor, 'Sadness', 240–41.

Faerie Queen (1590) according to the medieval idea of tristitia: a firm, moral steadfastness and solemnity rather than as purely a 'depression of spirits'.[19] Care must equally be taken when defining happiness.

In respect of the word itself, the *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the usage and meaning of the word 'happiness' as shifting from 'good fortune' and 'success' in Late Middle English to 'pleasant appropriateness' and 'felicity' or a sense of 'deep pleasure in, or contentment with, one's circumstances' by the late sixteenth century.[20] As Alec Ryrie suggests, the puritan understanding of the word 'happiness' may have differed from that of their contemporaries,[21] but it also had much in common with definitions current at the time.

For Thomas Wright, following Aquinas, delight or pleasure was amongst the six 'Concupiscible' passions.[22] He illustrates the humoral understanding of the emotions, proposing, for example, that old men are prone to sadness – here in the sense of 'unhappiness' – due to the coldness of their blood.[23] Wright also proposes that:

> Pleasure and delight, if it bee moderate bringeth health, because the purer spirits retyre unto the heart, and they helpe marvellously the digestion of bloud, so that thereby the heart engendereth great abundance, and most purified spirits, which after being dispersed thorow the body, cause a good concoction to be made in al parts, helping them to expel the superfluities; they also clear the braine and consequently the understanding.[24]

A similar view is expressed by Edward Reynolds, Westminster Assembly divine and Restoration Bishop of Norwich. In writing of 'corporall delights', he explains:

> A second effect of Joy is Opening and Dilation of the heart and countenance, expressing the serenity of the mind, whence it hath the name of Latitia, as it were a broad and spreading Passion.[25]

---

[19] Trevor, 'Sadness', 240, 245.
[20] *Oxford English Dictionary*.
[21] Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 83.
[22] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall in Sixe Bookes* (London: Anne Helme, 1620: STC (2nd edn), 26041), 22.
[23] Wright, *Passions*, 39.
[24] Wright, *Passions*, 60.
[25] Edward Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man* (London: Robert Bostock, 1647: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), R1294), 217.

Its first effect is 'repayring the breaches and ruines of our decayed Natures . . . for preserving ourselves in a good ability to execute Offices of a higher Nature', for which 'medicinall' view of temporal happiness he draws upon Aristotle.[26] Although Reynolds distinguishes between two categories of happiness – corporal and spiritual – the physiological effects are the same.

Happiness: what it is not

Puritan authors defined happiness in both negative and positive terms – what it is not as well as what it is – although their primary concern is where it should be sought. As far as Rous is concerned, true happiness must logically consist in something greater than temporal objects as from a 'transitorily or narrowly good [end] he can receive but a transitorie and narrow advancement'.[27] Not only are such enjoyments limited in their duration, but they may also be detrimental to one's attainment of happiness: things 'seeming good, but a reall evill, may by attayning, puffe up his imagination, but shall substantially lessen and ruine himselfe'.[28] Arguing from experience and a shared early modern understanding of the affections' relationship to the soul, he writes:

> They that are past, have not satisfied; they that are to come, will bee but the same, and shall not satisfie. There is nothing left of the former, neither shall there be of the latter, but all are bounded within one and the same vanitie . . . carnall pleasures have this venom ordinarily in them, that their height groweth, or continueth, by the diminishing or suppression of the reasonable soule; and commonly the excellent soule is used but as a slave to supply the lusts of the body with base satisfaction, whiles her selfe goes away without any wages of pleasure.[29]

Happiness is therefore distinct from a purely sensual pleasure, which at best fails to satisfy and at worst is actually harmful to the happiness of the greatest part of the individual: the soul.

---

[26] *Ibid.*; cf. 197, 204. A similar view is presented by Jean-François Senault, although it is the pleasures of the mind which are therapeutic. Jean-François Senault, *The Use of the Passions*, Henry Earl of Monmouth (trans.) (London: John Sims, 1671: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), S2505), 450.
[27] Rous, *Arte*, 2–3; cf. Norden, *Happinesse*, To the Reader.
[28] Rous, *Arte*, 3; cf. Senault, *Use*, 460.
[29] Rous, *Arte*, 20–21.

A similar view is expressed by Norden, who cites the inadequacy of temporal wealth in granting happiness.[30] For him, reasonable reflection upon the temporary nature of things was an inducement to the pursuit of lasting happiness. He writes that each individual would surely:

> cast their most precious things over-boord into the sea of contempt [if they] did duely consider the shortnesse and inconstancie of these deceiving vanities, and other inferiours that delight themselves in all kindes of vices, would but call themselves to minde, what they lose by these false baytes of Sathan.[31]

Happiness must be in one's own best interests and contribute to one's genuine well-being: there is nothing harmful in happiness, otherwise it ceases to be happiness.

For Bolton likewise, true happiness is distinct from the enjoyment of material possessions, worldly success and sensual pleasure.[32] Reasoning from its non-material nature, the 'capacities of mans soule cannot possibly bee filled with the sufficiencie of any creature; no not with a world of creatures: for they are all nothing to the worth of a mans soule'.[33] Bolton shares with his fellow authors, including Wright, the view that sensual pleasure 'dispoileth the soul of all rest and quietnes'.[34] Nevertheless, these puritans are more open to the value of sensual enjoyment than is the Catholic Wright. Bolton, for example, does not preclude the enjoyment of things in the world, proposing rather that it is an 'uneasy conscience' which spoils the happiness that might otherwise be gained from them.[35] These 'lawful delights' do not include the theatre, however, and Bolton is vociferous in his condemnation of 'prophane and obscene Playes'.[36] There is also a potential danger even in 'lawful' pleasures – those warranted by Scripture and conscience – if they distract

---

[30] Norden, *Happinesse*, Epistle Dedicatory.
[31] Norden, *Happinesse*, To the Reader.
[32] Bolton, *Discourse*, 9, 11.
[33] Bolton, *Discourse*, 1; cf. Reynolds, *Treatise*, 526.
[34] Wright, *Passions*, 201.
[35] Bolton, *Discourse*, 11. A similar view would be reflected by Richard Baxter amongst others. Cf. Baxter, *A Christian Directory: or, A Summ of Practical Theologie and Cases of Conscience* (London: Nevill Simmons, 1673: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), B1219), 112; Ralph Venning, *Canaans Flowings Or a Second Part of Milke and Honey* (London: John Rothwell, 1653: Wing (2nd edn), V198), 107.
[36] Bolton, *Discourse*, 73; cf. 26.

from the happiness of the soul. For this reason, abstinence is recommended by William Fenner.[37] Addressing the 'formalist' or 'civil' person, Bolton similarly warns:

> the formall hypocrite doth falsely perswade himselfe to bee in the state of true happinesse and salvation: and that is an outward happinesse and successe in worldly matters, much plenty and prosperitie in his outward state. For thus hee reasons in his owne thoughts, and playes the cunning Sophister to deceive his owne soule.[38]

As far as these authors were concerned, then, as well as other early modern writers on the passions, happiness is distinct from, though not opposed to, the experience of material and sensual pleasure.[39] Perry Miller noted the essential Augustinianism of puritan piety[40] and we see here a reflection of Augustine's view that 'a happy life does not consist in the evanescent joy which sensible objects can yield'.[41] Aristotle and Seneca are equally influential upon this aspect of early modern thinking on happiness, as is reflected in Edward Reynolds' *Treatise*, although puritanism's relationship with Stoicism was certainly ambivalent.[42]

Happiness: what it is

Having defined happiness in negative terms, Rous defines it positively, as do his fellow puritans, as necessarily concerning the soul. He writes:

> the beatificall obiect of Man, must bee the most agreeable obiect of his most excellent part. Now, Man's chiefest part is a lightsome, reasonable, and understanding spirit. Therefore that from which can issue unto Man the greatest ioy, must be a most wise, reasonable,

---

[37] William Fenner, *A Treatise of the Affections; or the Soules Pulse* (London: J. Rothwell, 1641: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), F706), 126.
[38] Bolton, *Discourse*, 50.
[39] Senault, *Use*, 445–6.
[40] Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 53, 97.
[41] Augustine, *Epistolae*, 3.4; cf. *Confessionum*, I.i; *Civitas Dei* IV.23; XIX.xx.
[42] Reynolds, *Treatise*, 197, 199, 205. Reynolds' influence upon puritan thought on the emotions is illustrated by Venning, who quotes him at length. Cf. Ralph Venning, *Sin, the Plague of Plagues* (London: John Hancock, 1669: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), V226), 350–52.

> and lightsome spirit; likenesse, agreeablenesse, and harmonie, being the foundations of pleasure; and consequently, the most excellent Like, powring into his inferiour Like, the most conformable, naturall, and kindly ioyes; from which ariseth an inioying, even in perfection, contentment, & rest.[43]

Happiness, to be worthy of the term, must also be perfect – in the sense of being complete – and eternal:

> Man must possesse the soveraign Good; for he can never bee happy by inioying imperfection, but that only which is perfectly good, can make a man perfectly happy. He must also inioy this soveraigne Good in a perpetuitie, else the feare of losing happinesse, must needs lose part of it before it be lost; and if not so, yet he cannot be termed happy, who shall have a time when hee shall be without happinesse.[44]

Such a view is, in fact, also proposed by Jean-François Senault, who similarly insists that the joy to be sought should be that which is not subject to the 'injuries of men, nor the insolence of Fortune'.[45] Likewise, Reynolds writes: 'The Endlesnesse of Happinesse is that only which maketh it a perfect End.'[46] Only a happiness above and beyond sensory experience could truly satisfy the immortal soul of the individual.

As already noted, the puritans were not alone in proposing a happiness distinct from the physical senses. For Wright too, a superior happiness could be experienced in this life as a 'certain kind of manna' in the form of 'secret joyes, which proceed from a good conscience grounded upon a confident hope of future salvation'.[47] It was experienced not only in 'the sweetnesse of fervent prayers, but the infinite suavitie and happie contentation, which once fervent believing lovers shal enjoy in thy blessed companie and heavenly conversation'.[48] On the whole, however, in Wright's view, such happiness is postponed until the next life, few experiencing it on earth, although this is largely their own fault.

---

[43] Rous, *Arte*, 9–10; cf. Reynolds, *Treatise*, 526.
[44] Rous, *Arte*, 8–9.
[45] Cf. Senault, *Use*, 473; cf. 472.
[46] Reynolds, *Treatise*, 525.
[47] Wright, *Passions*, 203.
[48] Wright, *Passions*, 203.

These puritan authors were far more optimistic, not purely for polemical reasons of attracting converts (although this rhetorical intention should not be ignored), but also reflecting their understanding of divine grace as an intervention in human experience.

The puritans' notion of happiness is distinct, then, from a purely Galenic, humoral understanding of the body and soul. However, it recognises the interconnectedness of the two and, in particular, the positive influence of the happiness of the soul upon the body. In this, puritans reflect a common early modern view. While for Reynolds, bodily pleasures – provided they were not in excess or unlawful – were beneficial to the body, enabling it to function more effectively in noble pursuits, a superior happiness should be sought. In its highest form, happiness concerns the soul, the 'most excellent part' of the individual, and the puritans are consistent with fellow Protestants in rejecting a materialist view of the soul.[49] Indeed, puritan discussion of the theme of happiness illustrates the 'unacceptability of any theory of the emotions that accounted for the passions or affections in purely humoral terms'.[50]

The way to true happiness

Having defined happiness, the puritans were equally concerned to set out to their readers how it was to be attained. Norden observes: 'It is not to be doubted, but that every man that liveth, desireth to live a happie life: but every man taketh not the right course to be truly happy.'[51] A similar observation is made by Venning.[52] Key to experiencing true happiness – in this life and the next – was to seek it in the correct way. According to Rous, the believer's experience was one of increasing happiness – enjoyment growing in tandem with spiritual maturity.[53] He writes: 'hee that sets before him a Marke & End truely and perfectly good, by attayning it, shall make himselfe truly and perfectly happy, and the more happy in degrees, as in more degrees hee doth enioy it'.[54] However, consistent with the paradoxical nature of puritan predestinarianism, this required more than passive submission on the

[49] Cf. Trevor, 'Sadness', 241, 243.
[50] Trevor, 'Sadness', 243.
[51] Norden, *Happinesse*, To the Reader.
[52] Venning, *Happinesse*, 1–2.
[53] This understanding of the Christian life would also be developed and proposed by Venning. Cf. *Venning's Remains, or, Christ's School* (London: John Hancock, 1675: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), V225), To the Reader.
[54] Rous, *Arte*, 3.

part of believers. Rather, in order to enjoy the superior happiness of spiritual delights, Christians 'must strive to raise our selves to their excellent degree, we must lift our selves up to a nature proportionable unto them'.[55] Each individual was responsible for his or her personal attainment of happiness, and the means by which it was to be achieved was godliness, defined by puritans as obedience to the commandments of God.[56]

George Herbert, whose influence upon puritanism has been noted by Robert H. Ray,[57] reflects the association between godliness and happiness as he does other aspects of the British Protestant understanding of the emotions:[58]

> If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the paines;
> If well, the paine doth fade, the joy remaines.[59]

A similar view is reflected by the puritan Thomas Watson, amongst others, whose 'Godlie Man' is distinguished by his experience of happiness.[60] Equally, this is reflected in Spenser, for whom the 'House of Holiness' is a place of joy, in stark contrast to that of the character Despair.[61] A connection between godly obedience and happiness is likewise made by the influential puritan John Preston:

> the Law of God is the rule that we must walke by, *following it as a rule we are happy*: hee that keepeth the Commandements shall live in them: hee that departeth from them is dead.[62]

---

[55] Rous, *Arte*, 165.
[56] Venning, *Happinesse*, 15.
[57] R.H. Ray, 'Henshaw, Venning and Bates: Quoters of the Bible or of Herbert?', *George Herbert Journal*, 6(1) (1982): 34–5; R.H. Ray, 'The Herbert Allusion Book: Allusions to George Herbert in the Seventeenth Century', *Studies in Philology*, 83(4) (1986): 50.
[58] Richard Strier, 'Against the Rule of Reason: Praise of Passion from Petrarch to Luther to Shakespeare to Herbert' in Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 41.
[60] Thomas Watson, *The Godly Mans Picture, drawn with a Scripture Pensil* (London, 1666: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), W1124), 40, 52; cf. Venning, *Happiness*, 27–8.
[61] Potkay, 'Donne', 54; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen . . . Together with the Other Works of England's Arch-Poet* (London: Matthew Lownes, 1611: STC (2nd edn), 23083.3), 135, 139.
[62] John Preston, *Four Godly and Learned Treatises*, 3rd edn (London: Michael Sparke, 1633: STC (2nd edn), 20222), 13; cf. Samuel Ward, *The Happinesse of Practice* (London: John Marriot and John Grismond, 1621: STC (2nd edn), 25044), 8; Venning, *Flowings*, 17.

Also essential to the attainment of happiness was prayer. Norden exhorts his readers to begin each day in this exercise – specifically that they might resist their own fallen human nature, which inclines towards the misery of sin, and attain happiness.[63] For Norden, happiness was rooted, as was every other aspect of spiritual and temporal life, in divine grace. He recommends the prayer: 'by thy Grace, grant Lord, that I may enter into the light of new and sincere knowledge and obedience'.[64] For Fenner, prayer was not only a means of grace, but also a source of happiness in itself. Similarly, Wright suggested that amongst the 'secret joyes' enjoyed by the believer are the 'sweetnesse of fervent prayers' and the 'infinite suavitie and happie contentation, which once fervent believing lovers shal enjoy in thy blessed companie and heavenly conversation'.[65] Other 'godly exercises' such as hearing sermons were further means to happiness in this life as well as the next. In this, the 'hotter Protestant' clearly differed from his or her contemporary, who would doubtless have found other pursuits more pleasurable. As far as the puritan was concerned, he or she would have chosen a lesser or even false delight over a greater one.

There were specific areas of life in which one was particularly to seek happiness. Reflecting the spiritual significance ascribed to family life, the household was an important forum in which one was to pursue happiness.[66] Norden urges prayer by godly parents, especially those who are 'afflicted in minde for the disobedience, and ungodly lives of their children'.[67] The well-ordered family ought to be a source of delight rather than misery. Also typical of puritan piety is the importance placed upon the wider community – the 'commonwealth' – and one's employment within it. Indeed, for Norden, a 'calling' that is 'lawfull, agreeable to the word of God, honest, or necessary for the use and societie of men' is essential to the attainment of happiness.[68] This calling was to be pursued not for selfish ends, but for God's glory and the benefit of one's

[63] Norden, *Happinesse*, 54, 57–65.
[64] Norden, *Happinesse*, 64.
[65] Fenner, *Affections*, 112; Wright, *Passions*, 203.
[66] Domestic guides illustrate the way in which puritans sought to turn the early modern household into a school for the promotion of godliness. Cf. William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London: William Bladen, 1622: STC (2nd edn), 12119); or John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Household Government* (London: Thomas Man, 1630: STC (2nd edn), 5388).
[67] Norden, *Happinesse*, 156.
[68] Norden, *Happinesse*, 124–5.

community, promoting happiness that was not individualistic, but communal.[69] Bolton is equally concerned about idleness, which he sees as the root of sins such as adultery, which are contrary to the happiness of the community and the higher happiness of individuals.[70] Even though the couple concerned might enjoy their relationship immensely, they were choosing a lower pleasure, the ultimate end of which would be divine judgment, over a higher, eternal happiness: that of the soul.

Furthermore, alluding to Psalm 1:1, Bolton states:

> That man, and that man alone is truly, & everlastingly happy, That walketh not in the counsell of the wicked; that is, that doth not delight in their vaine imaginations, sinfull affections, lustfull desires, speculative wantonnesse . . . That doth not partake of their impotent passions, unhallowed policies; their exorbitant, and indirect projects, for their pleasures, honours, and profits.[71]

The rejection of sin, the source of misery, was essential to the attainment of happiness and to be diligently sought through careful, honest introspection.[72] Happiness was attained by the rejection of 'sinful affections' and the worldly pleasures of sin, with the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes as the Biblical outline for this approach.[73] The dangers of overzealous introspection upon one's sins in producing melancholy are clear, although the ultimate aim was nevertheless the enjoyment of happiness. The affections, moreover, were not to be suppressed, but rather redirected towards godliness. According to Fenner, even such an affection as melancholy could be turned to positive ends by divine grace, which transformed it into sorrow for sin.[74]

Godliness is defined by Bolton as distinct from the 'civil honesty' of 'formalists' and hypocrites, which he is particularly concerned to address, as well as the virtue of 'heathen' philosophy. All of these fall short of 'being in Christ, and consequently, of true happinesse'.[75] True

---

[69] Cf. Venning, *Plague*, 322.
[70] Bolton, *Discourse*, 73; cf. 26.
[71] Ibid, 3; cf. 4–5.
[72] Ibid, 17, 27–8.
[73] Ibid, 5.
[74] Fenner, *Affections*, 80.
[75] Bolton, *Discourse*, 17–18, 24, 30, 34.

happiness is rooted for Bolton in the 'righteousness of faith and sanctification' imputed by grace to the believer in Christ through the Holy Spirit.[76] Bolton therefore identifies true happiness with regeneration. The 'formalist', though diligent in piety, cannot attain to it or enjoy it. Bolton warns that 'the formal hypocrite doth falsly perswade himselfe to be truly happy, and so (by consequence) that keeps him short of the state of grace'.[77]

The poet Andrew Marvell shares the opinion that the reasonable, thinking soul is the true subject of happiness, and also the view that a superior happiness to that of the body is attained through godliness. Although his father may have been 'Puritan-inclined', his own religious views are complex.[78] Nevertheless, his 'Resolved Soul' in dialogue with 'Created Pleasure' similarly insists:

> My gentler rest is on a Thought,
> Conscious of doing what I ought.[79]

For Bolton too, happiness was both enjoyed through godliness and served as an encouragement to greater endeavours. 'A joyful sense then of these precious priviledges and blessings of Heaven, in which no unregenerate man hath either part or fellowship, is a most powerfull and peculiar motive to the Christian.'[80] In this, he shares the views of Senault and Wright, for whom the passions were also to be directed to serve virtue.[81]

In Rous' writing on the subject, there is an element of mysticism to his understanding of godliness as the pursuit of happiness. Drawing a sharp distinction between the soul and physical pleasure, he argued that in order to find happiness, the believer must:

> in his inquirie lay aside his bodie and the doctrines thereof; and hee must retire into his innermost, and most secret closet of Light and

---

[76] Bolton, *Discourse*, 21.
[77] Bolton, *Discourse*, 59–60.
[78] Jerome Donnelly, 'Fickle Freethinker', *America*, 204(16) (May 2011): 31. Nigel Smith explores his ambivalent relationship to puritanism in *Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
[79] Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous Poems* (London: Robert Boulter, 1681: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), M872), 2
[80] Bolton, *Discourse*, 200; cf. Senault, *Use*, 452.
[81] Wright, *Passions*, 15; Senault, *Use*, 140.

> Reason, and there aske of his Soule assured truths and resolutions, concerning his chiefe and soveraigne Good.[82]

It is noteworthy that reason plays an important role in determining the proper direction of the affections for Rous.[83] However, this endeavour is necessarily imperfect by consequence of the Fall which 'hath much dimmed the light of the Soule'.[84] Reynolds similarly writes that the corruption of the human understanding and will disrupts its search for happiness, causing it to 'yeeld unto it selfe all Present Satisfaction, and not to suffer it selfe to be swayed with the Preoccupation of a Future Estate'.[85] For Rous, such confusion and 'darkness' of the understanding is in fact indicative of the true source of happiness: the 'need to returne to that uppermost Light, by which at first she was kindled, thence to receive a second inlightning, that by an addition of the highest Light, shee may finde out her highest and chiefest happinesse'.[86]

The source of happiness

While godliness and a regenerate state are the means by which the believer attains to true happiness, the ultimate source is God himself. Indeed, the effect of such meditation on happiness, Rous proposes, is to direct one towards God as the ultimate source of happiness. As Bolton agrees, to attain to happiness required:

> purenesse of heart, holinesse of life, constancy in course of sanctification, which only lead unto the face, and presence of God; where and with whom alone is the highest perfection of blisse, a river of infinite pleasures, the well of life, and endlesse rest of all created desires.[87]

The puritans were not alone amongst early modern authors in holding this view. Wright similarly argued that happiness, joy or delight was to be found in God,[88] who is the 'fountain of water of life, the true paradise

---

[82] Rous, *Arte*, 4–5.
[83] Senault, *Use*, Author's Preface, 6.
[84] Rous, *Arte*, 5.
[85] Reynolds, *Treatise*, 521; cf. 522.
[86] Rous, *Arte*, 5. The concept of the Chief Happiness illustrates the continuing influence of Aristotle upon Protestant theology. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.i.
[87] Bolton, *Discourse*, 1.
[88] Wright, *Passions*, 202.

of pleasure, delight of delight' and the source of 'ineffable joyes' beyond this life.[89] Fenner held a similar view: the affections are themselves everlasting and infinite, and therefore can only be satisfied in an everlasting, infinite God.[90] Indeed:

> The fruition of God is the happinesse to which [Man] was appointed; that he might be subservient to this end, and obtaine this happinesse, hee bestowed on him a reasonable soule consisting of an understanding and a will, that by the one he might contemplate and behold the beauty of the Lord, by the other he might embrace him.[91]

This view contrasts starkly with that of John Stachniewski, who viewed the puritan concept of God as a projection of Calvinist despair.[92] Rather, God – supremely happy in Trinitarian relationship – is viewed as the source of true happiness.[93] By regeneration and obedience to his commandments, the believer shares in that happiness on earth as well as its ultimate fulfilment in the afterlife.

Moderation in all things . . .

Essential to the believer's happiness, according to these puritan authors, is the moderation of the natural, sensual affections which could otherwise conflict with his or her attainment of happiness. Indeed, as Ethan Shagan has identified, a distinctive emphasis upon moderation, understood as 'self-governance', was fundamental to puritanism.[94] Thomas Venner, for example, proposed that the key to a long, healthy life was moderation of one's emotions by 'reason and understanding', as Schoenfeldt notes.[95] Rous, Norden and Bolton share Fenner's view that the believer, by grace, attains to happiness through setting his or her affections upon heavenly delights rather than worldly ones. Their

---

[89] *Ibid*.
[90] Fenner, *Affections*, 49, 64; cf. Reynolds, *Treatise*, 527.
[91] Fenner, *Affections*, To the Reader.
[92] John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 7.
[93] Cf. Venning, *Milke*, 36.
[94] Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 151.
[95] Schoenfeldt, 'Passions', 51; cf. Thomas Venner, *Via Recta ad Vitam Longam. Or, A Treatise Wherein the Right Way and Best Manner of Living for Attaining a long and Healthfull Life, is Clearly Demonstrated* (London, 1650).

understanding reflects the common early modern view that 'the reasonable soul' ought to rule over the affections rather than be ruled by them.[96] In his study of Milton, Michael Schoenfeldt notes the intensity of the pre-lapsarian pleasure attributed to Adam in *Paradise Lost*, although the dangers inherent in such strength of feeling are also clear.[97] Schoenfeldt notes Milton's ambivalence and adds that while he extols the 'capacity of rightly directed emotion to move one to virtuous action, he also fears the loss of rational control passion can entail'.[98]

In its moderation, as well as its desire for godly discipline within the Church, puritanism reflects a deep-seated tension between its respect for classical Stoicism and its humanist appreciation for emotion in the pursuit of virtue, as identified by Richard Strier.[99] Margo Todd goes so far as to propose that puritan reverence for the Stoics, especially Seneca and Cicero, was second only to that shown to Scripture.[100] This tension is moreover a legacy of the Protestant Reformation and the ongoing influence of both Luther and Calvin. The affections were central to Luther's understanding of human nature and, for him, the justified believer was still subject to passions which opposed their 'full and continual joy in God'.[101] As Strier notes, Calvin similarly rejected 'The iron philosophy' of Christians attempting to live without allowing a place for the emotions.[102]

However, as for Wright, the affections or passions must nevertheless be moderated by reason.[103] Bolton insists that reason should ultimately govern one's pursuit of happiness, although not in the sense that the affection be restrained. Rather, as for Fenner, it is reason's responsibility to direct, not repress, the affections. Furthermore, concern for

---

[96] Cf. Senault, *Use*, Epistle Dedicatory; Wright, *Passions*, 9, 15.
[97] Michael Schoenfeldt, ''Commotion Strange': Passion in Paradise Lost' in Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 43, 45.
[98] Schoenfeldt, 'Passion', 46.
[99] Richard Strier, 'Against the Rule of Reason: Praise of Passion from Petrarch to Luther to Shakespeare to Herbert' in Paster, Rowe and Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, 28–9; cf. Schoenfeldt, 'Passion', 46; Shagan, *Rule of Moderation*, 151–2.
[100] Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 29.
[101] Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, Erasmus Middleton (trans.), John Prince Fallowes (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1979), 127.
[102] Strier, 'Reason', 32; John Calvin, *Institutio Christianae Religionis*, III.viii.9, 10.
[103] Wright, *Passions*, 68, 183.

reason and the reasonable soul undergirds puritan discussion of happiness. Each of the puritan authors considered agrees that it is contrary to reason that one should pursue false, temporal happiness over the true, eternal form. Bolton writes:

> It is strange and fearefull, that so noble and excellent a creature as man, endued with reason and understanding like an Angel of God; having (besides the preciousnesse of the holy Booke of God) those great and universall motives, the immortalitie of the soule, the resurrection of the dead, *the joyes of the kingdome of heaven*, the endlesse paines of the wicked, which except he be a damned Atheist, hee doth certainely beleeve; and where as hee might live on earth with unconquerable comfort, and shine hereafter as the brightnesse of the firmament; bee a companion of Saints and Angels, and stand in the glorious presence of the highest Majestie for ever and ever: yet for all this, will even wilfully against the light of his conscience, and with the certaine knowledge of his heart, by his grosse hypocrisie, secret abominations and uncleanesse, privie practices for some wretched pleasures and preferments.[104]

Bolton dismisses as irrational such a choice of short-term, sinful, sensual pleasure over everlasting, spiritual happiness and lawful temporal pleasures. A similar view is proposed by Richard Baxter, who otherwise differs in emphasis from his fellow puritans and is more in keeping with Wright in almost exclusively deferring the experience of happiness to heaven.[105] Nevertheless, it is never a question of suppressing the affections, but rather seeking happiness in its highest form. On the contrary, pure rationality is characteristic of the 'formalist' who lives without the transformation of his or her affections and of the outer life by the 'illustration' of the Holy Spirit.[106] The regenerate believer, in contrast, has the:

> sacred light of Gods holy truth, is habituated and incorporated into the conscience of Gods Child; and is the onely and constant rule and square, by which, with all humilitie, uprightnesse of heart, a free

[104] Bolton, *Discourse*, 32–3.
[105] Richard Baxter, *The Character Of a Sound Confirmed Christian* (London: Nevill Simmons, 1669: Wing (2nd edn, 1994), B1249), 32.
[106] Bolton, *Discourse*, 104; cf. Strier, 'Reason', 28.

> entire submission and obedience unto it, he frames all his thoughts, affections, and actions.[107]

According to Bolton, as also for Fenner, the believer is enabled by grace to direct his or her affections through a transformed mind, which in turn shapes outward behaviour.[108] Indeed, the primary work of grace for Fenner is the 'ruling of the affections aright, it takes them off from the things here on earth, and lifts them up to the things that are in Heaven'.[109]

Wright describes the relationship between mind, the centre of reasoning, and body in explicitly Galenic terms: 'passions engender humors; humors breed passions', which in turn 'disquiet' the mind.[110] He proposes that the 'perturbations of the mind' affect the humours, while 'inordinate passions' aroused by the humours 'blind reason' and 'in rebellion to vertue are thorny briars sprung from the infected root of original sinne'.[111] Indeed, while reason may act as a restraint upon the passions, this is insufficient for their proper ordering as they will ultimately rebel against such control.[112] He affirms that the reasonable soul is to 'govern the body, direct the senses, guide the passions'.[113] In contrast to Stoicism, however, Wright insists, like Senault, that the passions are not to be extinguished, but rather directed to the service of virtue.[114] The exemplar for Wright is Christ, who was 'subject to passions', but moderated them by 'reason, guided by vertue'.[115]

For Rous, the pursuit or 'art' of obtaining happiness, though surpassing reason, 'yet contayneth this doctrine no unreasonable contrarieties, or repugnances, but onely things high above comon reason, such as well befit a Deitie, higher by farre then his owne creature'.[116] It is a reasonable happiness, by which Rous illustrates the importance of reason's restraint upon the affections common to early modern thought.[117]

---

[107] Bolton, *Discourse*, 117.
[108] Bolton, *Discourse*, 121; cf. 138–40; Fenner, *Affections*, To the Reader, 7.
[109] Fenner, *Affections*, 57.
[110] Wright, *Passions*, 68.
[111] Wright, *Passions*, 2.
[112] Wright, *Passions*, 9.
[113] Wright, *Passions*, 13.
[114] Wright, *Passions*, 17.
[115] Wright, *Passions*, 15.
[116] Rous, *Arte*, 56.
[117] Rous, *Arte*, 174.

However, what distinguished true happiness from the other affections was that it could not be sought excessively:

> those noble Delights which arise from heavenly causes, doe withal cause a sweet thirst and longing in the Soule after more, as some colours do both delight the sight and strengthen it: For while God is the Object, there cannot bee either the satiety to cloy the Soul, nor such a full comprehension as will leave no roome for more. Thus they who delight in the fruition of God by Grace, doe desire a more plentifull fruition of him in glory; and they that delight in the sight of Gods Glory doe still desire to be for ever so delighted.[118]

As far as the puritans were concerned, then, in order to attain true happiness, the mind had to be engaged, by grace, to seek it in the correct places. It had to satisfy the soul, the most significant part of the individual, and was found through the well-ordering and direction of the emotions towards a worthy object.

The experience of happiness

Having considered the puritan definition of happiness, the means by which it is to be sought, and its ultimate source, the question remains: what was it like experientially? According to Wright, it is the humours acting upon the heart that produce pleasure or pain.[119] Furthermore, they can influence the soul 'when passions arise up and oppose themselves against Reason'.[120] Such 'inordinate passions' cannot be satisfied, are vain and thus produce unhappiness.[121] Rather, 'as reason concerneth the principall part of man, so reason specially should stirre up, or suppresse the affections of man'.[122] As reason is rooted in the soul, it is also essential to one's happiness that reason be contented. Wright shares the concern of the puritan writers when he suggests that most are led rather by 'sense' or the passions which are engendered by their senses, particularly sight.[123]

---

[118] Reynolds, *Treatise*, 217–18.
[119] Wright, *Passions*, 34.
[120] Wright, *Passions*, 68.
[121] Wright, *Passions*, 74, 150.
[122] Wright, *Passions*, 183.
[123] Wright, *Passions*, 150.

Fenner ascribes the depth of experience of happiness, as of the other affections, to the degree of 'apprehension' of a good, the chief of which to the believer is God himself. A profound apprehension results in the experience of 'dancing and leapings of the heart'.[124] For Rous, at its most basic, happiness displaces feelings of misery with a positive 'sense' of pleasure and contentment:

> That which shall make Man happy, must first bee able to bestow on Man an absence of miserie: for Happinesse & Miserie cannot dwell together in one subiect. Againe, it must give a man a reall possession and enioying of the chiefest good, and that in perpetuitie & everlastingnesse.[125]

Though happiness in this world is fragile (puritans were of course no less familiar with the vagaries of life than any of their contemporaries), subject to conflicting passions and circumstances, Rous insists that it is possible to experience 'true' happiness in this life. Moreover, it is integral to the experience of the believer. It is contrary to his understanding of the character of God 'that he which made every thing so orderly in his parts, should make a confusion in the whole; and that he who hath made so excellent things for Man, should make Man for basenesse, vanitie, and miserie'.[126] Rather:

> I thought it most likely and safe to beleeve that the Creator had not fayled in his Creation, but that the Creature had erred from the course and scope of his Creation, and that Man by some fault of his owne, was gone out of the way, both in regard of imployment and happines; which two, in all probabilitie, should be found in one path, it being most agreeable to wisedome, that a Creature should then be in the best and happyest case, when hee doth the worke appointed him by his Creator.[127]

Rous recognises a distinction between the common, sensual understanding of happiness amongst his contemporaries and the happiness with which he and his fellow puritan authors are concerned. He writes: 'yet Man is not quiet; hee is not in good liking with this kind of happines; for

---

[124] Fenner, *Affections*, 9.
[125] Rous, *Arte*, 8.
[126] Rous, *Arte*, sig. A6v.
[127] Rous, *Arte*, sigs. A6v–7r.

hee complayneth it is thin and ayrie, and his fleshly palate hath more savour in the taste of flesh, then in the taste of spirituall happinesse'.[128] Reynolds makes a similar acknowledgement, attributing this to the fallen state of post-lapsarian human nature.[129] The happiness to which the puritan aspired was of a different kind from that associated with the sensual passions of the body.[130] Nor is it available to all, although all are capable of directing their affections to some degree towards this higher happiness, according to Fenner.[131] Rather, according to Rous, it is the spiritual person who is enabled to seek spiritual happiness.[132]

The language of spiritual ravishment, an ecstatic experience of spiritual joy associated by Fenner with the affection of love, is not unique to Rous amongst the puritans.[133] As Ryrie notes, it appears in a number of works of Protestant theology as well as diaries and journals, although it presents its own complications as not 'straightforwardly happy'.[134] Nevertheless, it is employed by puritans in their discussions of the believer's delight in God and the happiness of the regenerate in this life, reflecting not only an ideal expectation but also, apparently, the author's personal experience. Schwanda has noted in Isaac Ambrose's mystical writings the centrality of 'the contemplation of the richness of joy, for the saints "enjoy God, so they enjoy themselves in God"'.[135] Similar language and views have been identified by Jean Williams in the writings of John Janeway, Joseph Alleine and Thomas Wadsworth, who are also 'notable' amongst puritan mystics.[136] Samuel Rutherford could write of the 'ravishments of heavenly joy' gained while imprisoned.[137] The Song of Songs furnished a language of emotion to puritanism through which it was able to express these 'ecstatic joys'.[138] Like Rous, Bolton also writes

---

[128] Rous, *Arte*, 161.
[129] Reynolds, *Treatise*, 530; cf. 521, 522.
[130] Cf. Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 95.
[131] Fenner, *Affections*, 31, 63.
[132] Rous, *Arte*, 163.
[133] Fenner, *Affections*, 9.
[134] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 91, 94.
[135] Tom Schwanda, *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative-Mystical Piety of Puritanism* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 128.
[136] Jean D. Williams, 'The Puritan Quest for Enjoyment of God: An Analysis of the Theological and Devotional Writings of Puritans in Seventeenth Century England' (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1997), 345–52.
[137] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 356.
[138] Elizabeth Clarke, *Politics, Religion and the Song of Songs in Seventeenth Century England*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 11–12, 21–3; Williams, 'Enjoyment', 358.

of the experience of happiness in mystical terms of 'spiritual ravishment'[139] and of happiness as the 'rest of a good Conscience'.[140] The believer's experience of happiness therefore included a range of emotional experience from contentment, akin to the general understanding of the word in the early modern period, to the intense feelings of ecstatic ravishment and rapture.

For Norden, true happiness was characterised by an experience of 'comfort', 'safetie' and 'good success', which could be enjoyed in daily life through prayer.[141] Similarly, for Bolton, the experience of happiness was rooted in the regenerate mind operating subjectively upon the 'affections'. He writes:

> the knowledge of divine mysteries in Gods childe, is entertained and enjoyed with a peculiar kinde of sweetness; with an impression of incomparable joy and pleasure: It is farre sweeter unto him then honey, and the honey-combe: He hath more delight in it then in all manner of riches: It is more precious unto him then the gold, yea then much fine gold: It begets and stirres in him flagrant desires and affections correspondent to its preciousnesse and excellencie.[142]

According to Bolton, true happiness was the experience of contentment and also, on occasion, of a 'spiritual ravishment'.[143] It was also:

> Gods child feeling himselfe everlastingly acquit, freed and protected by the bloud and mediation of the Lambe, from the terrour of Gods Tribunall, and from the curse and poyson of all the judgements in his Booke; can heare and digest from a Son of thunder, the most terrible denunciations of damnation and death against impietie and

---

[139] Bolton, *Happinesse*, 139; cf. Venning, 'The Triumph of Assurance' in *Orthodox Paradoxes: or, A Believer Clearing Truth by Seeming Contradictions*, 5th edn (London: John Rothwell and L. Chapman, 1652: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), V219), 23.
[140] Cf. Ralph Venning, *Things Worth Thinking On, or Helps to Piety* (London: Robert Duncombe and John Hancock, 1664: Wing (2nd edn), V227), 12–13; cf. Venning, *Flowings*, 32. Such a view also has its roots in the Heidelberg reformers. Cf. Zacharias Ursinus, *The Summe of Christian Religion*, D. Henrie Parrie (trans.) (Oxford: Joseph Barnes STC (2nd edn, 24536)), 51; cf. 50, 55.
[141] Norden, *Happinesse*, 55.
[142] Bolton, *Discourse*, 103.
[143] Bolton, *Discourse*, 139–40.

> impenitency, with a pleased and joyfull patience, with an humble and holy tryumph.[144]

The experience of happiness was rooted in – but not limited to – the mind and the understanding of the personal effects of the *evangel*. The mind and understanding was, in fact, the source of both fear and comfort according to Bolton, holding the believer's hope in tension with the ongoing struggle with personal sin.[145] True happiness and remorse for one's sins were not incompatible. Indeed, repentance was a means to the attainment of happiness.

For Rous, the believer also experiences happiness in the form of relief that the threat of eternal death has been taken away. It is derived from a transformed attitude towards this life. He proposes that 'sorrow, sicknesse, temporal death, and all other outward evils, may cease to be evils, yea they may be turned into benefits'.[146] Rather than being understood as 'punishments', they are to be considered 'exercises of the Spirit dwelling in us, or . . . chastisements of the corruption yet remayning'.[147] Even death itself is a 'dore, both to goe out of this life of wretchednesse, and to goe into a life of happines'.[148] Even negative emotional experiences may be rationalised as ultimately to one's good: 'present griefe is a sharpe spurre to the heart of Man, & provokes him to runne hastily from these remnants of miserie, unto perfect felicitie'.[149] Having been redeemed from the 'wrath and terrors of God, so hee gives us the pleasures and happinesse which are in the presence of God for evermore', all imparted to the believer by the Spirit of God.[150] Moreover, 'by our union with Christ, we have a new right in the Creatures'.[151] According to Rous, the regenerate believer can and should enjoy lawful, temporal pleasures.

Furthermore, the believer's happiness is a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven, which:

> makes the Soule drunken with high comforts, raptures, and extasies: which inward comforts meeting and clasping with outward joyes,

---

[144] Bolton, *Discourse*, 208.
[145] Bolton, *Discourse*, 153.
[146] Rous, *Arte*, 144–5.
[147] Rous, *Arte*, 149.
[148] Rous, *Arte*, 150.
[149] Rous, *Arte*, 157.
[150] Rous, *Arte*, 146.
[151] Rous, *Arte*, 181.

> fill up a Man with an excesse of Joy and Happinesse, that he shall be even swallowed up and over-ravished with Joy. And yet their Happinesse stinteth not; for there is an addition of a most delectable and soule-pleasing Harmonie. Harmonie is a chiefe pleasure, and the most excellent Harmonie is the chiefest of this chiefe Pleasure; and the Harmonie of the most excellent Essences, is the most excellent Harmonie; and the most excellent Essences are Spirits; and the Harmonie of Spirits is in the Kingdom of glory.[152]

Ultimately, for these puritans as for other early modern writers on the subject, happiness will only be experienced fully beyond this life in the consummation of the believer's relationship with God, the source of happiness. There:

> the Soules seated in Beatitude, passe their time, which shall never bee past, in the very top of Blisse and Delectation: They laugh at sorrowes past, and are secure for infinite joyes to come. God is theirs and they are Gods, and in this Unitie is the fulnesse of Felicitie.[153]

As for Reynolds, happiness is attained with the full satisfaction of desire by its highest possible object.[154]

The realisation of happiness

Having considered the nature of the experience of happiness, the question remaining is the extent to which it was actually experienced by puritans. Was it purely aspirational, an attempt to mollify the godly, a polemical device for attracting converts, or merely an additional source of anxiety? According to Lancelot Andrewes, anti-puritan Bishop of Winchester, happiness had been irrevocably lost at the Fall only to be regained at Christ's return,[155] and the moderate puritan John Howe is similarly negative, maintaining that the 'blessednesse of the righteous' could not be attained in this life, although faith in Christ offered a foretaste of heaven.[156]

---

[152] Rous, *Arte*, 499–500.
[153] Rous, *Arte*, 506.
[154] Reynolds, *Treatise*, 526.
[155] Lancelot Andrewes, *XCVI Sermons by the Right Honorable . . . Lancelot Andrewes* (London: Richard Badger, 1629: STC (2nd edn), 606), 88, 125, 140, 206.
[156] John Howe, *The Blessednesse of the Righteous* (London: Ed. Gellibrand, 1678: Wing (CD-ROM, 1996), H3017A), A Proemial Discourse.

However, and contrary to Potkay's assertion that the believer's happiness was elusive and itself the root of Protestant anxiety, there is evidence for happiness, both spiritual and temporal – as well as the full range of other human affections – in the ordinary experience of puritans.[157] Puritan diarists, as Williams notes, recorded their spiritual 'enjoyments' for their own use, as catharsis and sometimes to inspire others.[158] While there might be some suspicion of 'window-dressing' the godly life in order to attract converts in the latter case, as Ryrie suggests, this is unlikely in the former.[159] Nevertheless, Williams is right to identify a tension in many puritan autobiographies 'between the awareness that some individuals had attained special heights of communion with God, and the conviction that all believers were capable of similar enjoyments'.[160]

The much-cited example of puritan emotional life, Nehemiah Wallington, describes having experienced a sense of 'ravishment' in prayer: 'as I desired nothing nor feared anything, but was filled with joy unspeakable'.[161] On the other hand, of course, he also experienced temptations to commit suicide and discouragements in his business life.[162] Even so, he writes of happiness not only in prayer but also, reflecting the importance of the godly community to puritan piety, in relationship with his fellow godly.[163]

The diary material certainly gives examples of inner struggle and discouragement in the pursuit of the enjoyment of God.[164] As Williams notes, James Fraser records a three-year experience of 'desertion' by God, resolved by a recognition of what we might now term his emotional state, that he lived 'more by sense than any other way, and therefore I fell and rose as sense was up and down, and so never came to any settlement'.[165] Amongst the causes of this emotional oscillation, she posits the unrealistic expectations of some diarists. They expected to experience spiritual ecstasies and, when they did not, they became

---

[157] Potkay, 'Donne', 44, 49.
[158] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 329–30.
[159] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 79.
[160] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 332.
[161] D. Booy (ed.), *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618–1654* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 23, 33.
[162] Wallington, *Notebooks*, 25, 34–5.
[163] Wallington, *Notebooks*, 287.
[164] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 334.
[165] James Fraser, *Memoirs of the very Reverend Mr James Fraser of Brea* (Edinburgh, 1738), 87–8.

discouraged and melancholic.[166] She observes that 'the reality is that Puritan believers did not always find it easy to trace the archetype of spiritual experience in their own lives'.[167]

Of course, allowances must be made for individual temperament, a point recognised by Fenner.[168] Personality traits such as a 'cheerful constitution', or indeed an angry or melancholic one, are not suppressed but redirected by grace. Williams therefore identifies in Baxter a more 'calm and optimistic' and 'unemotional' personality which is therefore more stable.[169] Indeed, she proposes that the 'ordinary state of the believer was of belief and obedience rather than of strong emotion'.[170] However, even the 'stoical' Baxter was challenged by the emotions engendered by the loss of his wife, finding 'small comfort in sleepy Reason'.[171]

To determine whether Ryrie's assertion that happiness was 'longed and prayed for more than it was enjoyed' would require a more extensive analysis of puritan autobiographical material than is possible in this chapter.[172] However, there is evidence that such happiness was indeed part of the devotional experience of many puritans. Richard Rogers, for example, describes his experience of the godly life in terms of the enjoyment of pleasure and happiness.[173] It was also aspirational – Rogers' experience of this spiritual happiness inspires him to seek more. Rogers writes that 'this is mine harty desire that I may make godlines, I meane one part or other of it, to be my delight through my whole life'.[174] This delight or happiness, he perceives, goes hand-in-hand with struggle, specifically against sin, the power of which he believes will diminish as he grows in godliness.[175] He thus reflects an optimism about the puritan experience and the enjoyment of happiness, which is akin to that proposed by the devotional writers whose works we have considered in this chapter.

---

[166] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 340; cf. Fraser, *Memoirs*, 198.
[167] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 340.
[168] Fenner, *Affections*, 57.
[169] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 342.
[170] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 342.
[171] Williams, 'Enjoyment', 344; Richard Baxter, *Poeticall Fragments: Heart Employment With God and It Self* (London: B. Simmons, 1681: Wing (2nd edn, 1994), B1349), 62.
[172] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 82.
[173] M.M. Knappen (ed.), *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward* (London: SPCK, 1933), 64, 70, 99.
[174] Knappen, *Diaries*, 65.
[175] Knappen, *Diaries*, 67.

Conclusion

The theme of happiness not as a future hope of blessedness but as a reality in the temporal experience of the believer was central to the puritan piety reflected by Bolton, Norden and Rous. Happiness was integral to their understanding of the Christian life, attained and enjoyed through a life of godly obedience. As for the puritan use of the word 'happiness', it had much in common with the word's everyday usage amongst their contemporaries as a sense of contentment and felicity. The puritan distinctive was in the emphasis upon godliness and grace as the means by which it could be attained, although even in that, the puritans shared much in common with contemporary, non-puritan authors on the affections, including Wright and Senault.

While there was doubtless a tension between ideal and reality, reflective of the 'now and not yet' eschatology fundamental to Protestant theology, devotional and autobiographical material does suggest a more positive inner experience than has been proposed by some scholars. The puritan attitude towards sensual pleasure was suspicious at best, although in this it reflects other early modern views on the affections. Despite their high regard for the moderation of Stoicism, far from repressing the affections, puritans were encouraged to actively pursue the highest form of happiness, which, they believed, was found in God alone: reflecting a combined heritage in Augustine and Aristotle. While the reasonable soul was the proper subject of happiness, puritan understanding did not necessarily rule out the enjoyment of temporal pleasures – whether food, wealth, music or sex. However, all pleasures should be weighed against the highest happiness, attained through godliness. There is certainly an element of the polemical and rhetorical to these texts on happiness, primarily with a view to promoting godliness. However, it is disingenuous to suggest that the authors were not convinced that a profound happiness was part of the experience of the believer – both eternally and temporally – and that many wrote from their own experience of that happiness.

5
Affliction and the Stony Heart in Early New England

Adrian Chastain Weimer

In 1669, the New England farmer Joseph Tompson cared for his wife through a serious illness. During this difficult time, he reflected on his spiritual state. His journal reveals a strong view of providence, or the direct action of God in human and natural events. It also shows the significance of affliction as a diagnostic of the heart in puritan culture. Tompson wrote:

> I took notis in mine owne hart that my spirit was secretly disquieted under the disposeing hand of god. I found my spirit very confused under this aflicion if that I did atend meditacion, I found it verye hard to be in the dutye, fearfull I was that I did not get good by the aflicion & therefore I thout it would not spedily be removed. Sometimes I found sweet refreshing from the word but it did not long continue.[1]

Although Tompson's wife did recover, he then underwent 'depe humiliation' for not adequately prizing her health. The language of repentance in accounts like Tompson's is commonly psychologised in terms of anxiety or self-loathing – a 'morbid preoccupation', 'religious masochism'

[1] Joseph Tompson, *Journal*, February 1669, Ms. Am 929, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Tompson became a militia captain as well as a deacon and town Selectman. For more on the Tompson family, see Kenneth Murdock, *Handkerchiefs from Paul* (New York: Garrett Press, 1970), xvi–xvii; Charles Francis Adams, *History of Braintree, Massachusetts* (Braintree: Riverside Press, 1891), 14–21; Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (London, 1702), III, 119–20; Matthew P. Brown, 'The Thick Style: Steady Sellers, Textual Aesthetics, and Early Modern Devotional Reading', *PMLA*, 121(1) (2006): 78–9.

or even 'obsessive spiritual autoflagellation'.[2] Efforts to sanctify or 'get good' from afflictions were central to the religious culture of early New England. Though usually performed in prayer closets or on solitary walks, these were communal rituals, mutually fostered within family, congregational and epistolary networks.[3] Dwelling on the nature and meaning of hardship, examining one's life for inconsistencies, mourning for sin and untangling conflicting desires – these practices could produce a special kinds of 'experimentall' knowledge which might be unavailable at other times.[4] The devotional aim was not humiliation, but rather strength, so that the heart could bear hardship with grace. Tompson's reflections illustrate one of the major cultural schisms between pre-modern and modern ways of dealing with suffering. In the

---

[2] Donald E. Stanford, 'Introduction' in Donald E. Stanford (ed.), *The Poems of Edward Taylor* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), xxxiv. Michael J. Colacurcio writes that Thomas Shepard's 'odd preference for affliction may or may not suggest a certain religious masochism': '"A Strange Poise of Spirit": The Life and Deaths of Thomas Shepard', *Religion & Literature*, 32(1) (2000): 12; Francis Sypher, 'The "Dayly Obseruation" of an Impassioned Puritan: A Seventeenth-Century Shorthand Diary Attributed to Deputy Governor Francis Willoughby of Massachusetts', *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 91 (1981): 101. Philip Greven finds puritan roots in an evangelical temperament 'dominated by a persistent and virtually inescapable hostility to the self and all of its manifestations': *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Meridian, 1979) 12. David Leverenz sees puritan self-examination as evidence of their 'obsessive-compulsive personality' stemming from their 'relatively anxious, distant, weak, or repressive fathers': David Leverenz, *The Language of Puritan Feeling* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 3. An earlier generation of scholars, including Perry Miller and Geoffrey Nuttall, laid the groundwork for the study of puritan spirituality: Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), Chapters 1–2; Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), Chapters 4–5.

[3] One of the most important contributions of affect theory is to connect 'emotion' to its many-layered and diffuse contexts: Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 12, 16–17; Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 8.

[4] For a defence of 'experimental knowledge' in the spiritual realm, see Richard Rogers, *Seven Treatises* (London, 1603: STC (2nd edn)/21215), 278–9. See also Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, 2–3; David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 10, 19–20, 168; Michael McGiffert, *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge*, 2nd edn (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 10.

face of hardship, many puritans were not satisfied with coping; they expected to grow.

Providentialism and discernment

Tompson believed that his wife's sickness was sent by God's 'disposeing hand'. Ascribing events to God's hand was shorthand for an understanding of the world as intricately orchestrated by divine providence. Providentialism and science were in no way exclusive cultural frameworks.[5] Tompson and other early New Englanders sought medical care. An intensely providential way of encountering the world in which God's hand actively sent life's events was largely shared by Protestants and Catholics. Applied providentialism formed a hallmark of the cross-confessional seventeenth-century devotional renaissance.[6] Yet puritans – both ministers and laypeople – deserved their reputation for vigour in attempting to discern the hand of God in the minutiae of life. Listening to sermons and reading scripture were staples of the devotional repertoire, but puritans also spent much energy reading their own experiences, tracing the action of the divine hand on their lives. As the Cambridge minister Thomas Shepard explained, 'there is a voice of love to the saints engraven in all mercies, in all afflictions, in all God's leadings of them, though it be in a wilderness'.[7] Both the broad sweep of history and the most intimate experiences were direct expressions of God's concern for his people. Puritan life-writing was itself a devotional practice, a means of nurturing awareness of 'direct correspondence between outward experience and . . . spiritual

---

[5] For an example of two families' negotiations of medicine and providence, see David Harley, 'The Theology of Affliction and the Experience of Sickness in the Godly Family, 1650–1714: The Henrys and the Newcomes' in *Religio Medici* (London: Scolar Press, 1997), 273–92.

[6] Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 23; T. Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 74, 90; Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 2–3, 8–20; Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7–9, 18–19.

[7] Thomas Shepard, *The Parable of the Ten Virgins,* in *Works of Thomas Shepard*, vol. II (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 141–2.

condition'.[8] Dexterity in reading the message of an affliction was a way of encountering a personal divine message.

Another staple of puritanism was concern over spiritual calcification. The problem with Christians, seventeenth-century New England ministers told their congregations over and over again, was that their hearts were hard. The heart was considered a 'spiritual entity' or 'inner person', the seat of the soul and the affections.[9] When spiritually healthy, it was soft. When spiritually endangered, it was hard. Edward Taylor captured this assessment poetically when he described the human condition as: 'Hearts Stonifide/Flinty Affections, Conscience Chalybdine.'[10] While other branches of the Christian tradition viewed cycles of apathy and intensity as normative, for puritans, complacency was faith's worst enemy, the gateway to hypocrisy. How then to soften a stony heart, to warm icy affections? Puritans were convinced that the devotional use of mercies and afflictions could forge a culture of sustained affective piety.

---

[8] Owen Watkins, *The Puritan Experience: Studies in Spiritual Autobiography* (New York: Shocken Books, 1972), 65; see also 76–81, 126–8. On suffering and providentialism, see Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 122–3; J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), Chapter 2; Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, 228; Michael McGiffert, *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 5–6; Walsham, *Providence*, 15–20; Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 135.

[9] Charles Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 36–7. Norman Fiering sees this vigorous attention to the emotional life as in part a reaction to late sixteenth-century Neo-Stoicism: Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard: A Discipline in Transition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press/Omohundro Institute, 1981), 151–7. Sarah Rivett finds extensive evidence for the close relationship between puritan efforts to map Christian experience and early modern natural philosophy and empiricism: Sarah Rivett, *Science of the Soul* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press/Omohundro Institute, 2011), 37–9. See also Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 20–22; Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 140.

[10] Edward Taylor, 'Meditation Isai 52: 14' in Stanford (ed.), *Poems of Edward Taylor*, 31. Chalybeans were 'an ancient nation of Asia Minor famous for their skill in working iron'. 'Chalybean', OED Online, March 2014. Available at: www.oed.com/view/Entry/30314?redirectedFrom=Chalybean (date accessed 13 October 2015).

Affliction in puritan devotional literature

Instructions on how to improve afflictions and mercies abounded in puritan practical divinity. Improving an experience meant understanding its theological and personal significance in a way that led to spiritual renewal; it was an exercise of the mind and the heart. Devotional writers drew on patristic, medieval and contemporary Western Catholic models as well as Protestant sources such as collections of martyrs' letters. Competing with Jesuits, puritans created elaborate manuals instructing laypeople how to approach everyday life. Improving afflictions and mercies was a significant way that devotional life was being 'linked everywhere to ascetic personal discipline'.[11] Of mercies and afflictions, afflictions were the more common of the two kinds of life events to fuel devotional exercises. The 'patient bearing of affliction' became a central component of 'the new obedience', or the sanctified life.[12]

One of the formative early guides to affliction, Thomas Becon's *A Sycke Man's Salve*, went through at least 20 printings by 1631. Becon's works were such a success that other writers had treatises printed under his name to boost sales.[13] In part *momento mori* and in part treatise on virtue, *A Sycke Man's Salve* takes the form of a dialogue between the ailing Epaphroditus and a group of visitors led by Philemon who hope to comfort and instruct him. They find Epaphroditus cursing the day he was born, and labour to convince him his sickness is actually a 'loving visitation of god . . . not for your hurt and destruction: but for your commodity and salvatyon'. Epaphroditus, sounding surprisingly modern, stalwartly protests that no father treats his children that way and that he had no need of chastising.[14]

---

[11] Bozeman, *Precisianist Strain,* 74, 90; see also Fiering, *Moral Philosophy*, 158.

[12] William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine* (London, 1600: STC (2nd edn)/19646), 128–9. Calvin also treated dealing rightly with afflictions, or 'Bearing the Cross', as a branch of self-denial: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Henry Beveridge (trans.) (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1846), Book III, Chapter 8. There is also some discussion of God's afflicting work in Book I, Chapter 17 on 'Use to be Made of the Doctrine of Providence'. For an overview of the English devotional manuals on affliction, see Ann Thompson, *The Art of Suffering and the Impact of Seventeenth-Century Anti-providential Thought* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003); and McGee, *Godly Man in Stuart England*, Chapter 2.

[13] Symour Baker House, 'Becon, Thomas', *ODNB*.

[14] Becon, *Sycke Mans Salve* (London, 1561: STC (2nd edn)/1757), copy at Folger Shakespeare Library, 13–15.

For Becon, life's hardships are not necessarily linked to sin. They might simply be a test. Using the stories of Lazarus, Job and other scriptures, Philemon and his cohort argue that God sends 'sicknes or trouble . . . unto the godly' not in wrath, but as a 'manifest signe of his good will, love, and favour towarde us'. The most powerful example is that of the blind man Toby, based on the Book of Tobit. In Becon's version, Toby was healed only after he endured the trial in a godly way. God is ultimately merciful. He 'scourgeth and healeth . . . killeth and maketh alive . . . after weeping and heavinesse, geveth great joye'.[15] After hearing Toby's story, Epaphroditus is deeply comforted and begins to pray. Then he stops, realising that the 'testing' framework which assumes an innocent sufferer is not entirely on the mark in his case. He admits that his own 'imperfection, yea, such aboundaunce of sin' might have justly provoked God's anger. The response is telling. Philemon assures him that his humbling of himself is a 'sure token of your everlasting salvation'. He then repeats verses of repentance from the Psalms, evoking Epaphroditus' exclamation: 'Oh my hart. Ah, what a grevous paine did I fele nowe even at my very heart. God be mercifull unto me.' Mourning for sin surpasses the grief of the sickness. There follows an elaboration of true repentance, contrasted with the reflections of 'voluptuous Epicures' in hell, who spend eternity regretting their pride. For Becon, even when linked to sin, adversity is a sign of God's mercy rather than his judgment.[16]

Becon also drew on the story of 'that godly and couragious Bishop' St Ambrose visiting a wealthy home. When he learned that the rich man had 'never tasted any kynd of adversitie', St Ambrose immediately left. As he did so, the 'earth sodenly opened & swalowed up the man with all that ever he had'. Becon's contemporary Hugh Latimer was also fond of this anecdote.[17] As a believer in *sola fides*, Becon did not accept the Catholic doctrine that human sufferings could add to the redemptive sufferings of Christ. Affliction was necessary not because of any link

---

[15] Becon, *Sycke Mans Salve*, 20–21, 40–41.

[16] Becon, *Sycke Mans Salve*, 46–8, 54–7. Ian Green argues that English Calvinist works from the 1580s to the 1610s spent more time on the 'feelings experienced' during repentance 'and the need for introspection to detect the deep remorse and other marks that distinguished true from half-hearted repentance': *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 326.

[17] Becon, *Sycke Mans Salve*, 60–61; Hugh Latimer, 'Upon the Lord's Prayer' in George Elwes Corrie (ed.), *Sermons by Hugh Latimer* (Cambridge University Press, 1844), 435–6. See also Ryrie, *Becoming Protestant*, 242.

to justification, but because of its link to sanctification. The result of a godly response to affliction was transformation of both the inner and outer life – the afflicted, when healed, 'become newe men . . . mortify their carnall affectes . . . [and] garnishe their conversation with godly and christen manners'. One of the model prayers at the end of Becon's treatise reads: 'O Lord take away from me that stony heart, whiche can not repent, and geve me that fleshly heart, which gladlye and willingly lamenteth her synnes and miseries, and unfainedly delyghteth in a newe lyfe.'[18] Life's afflictions, used properly, could soften the stony heart.

The impetus to develop methods of practical piety gained intense traction in the 1590s when Elizabeth I's principled moderation disappointed puritan political ambitions. Drawing on works such as Becon's as well as Catholic and Continental Protestant works, devotional manuals flooded the bookshops, instructing laypeople on the paths to spiritual growth.[19] As they developed a rich language for describing religious experience, puritans insisted that religion was hollow if it did not engage the affections. While there is no standard manual, patterns emerge over the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as dozens of writers both reflected and shaped a subculture of interior asceticism, or a disciplined heart.

Alongside outward behaviour, the manuals give detailed instruction on the affective life. Ministers and devotional writers elaborated on the ways in which men and women could improve mercies and afflictions for the recalibration of their desires. For example, when the bestselling writer Richard Rogers outlined nine daily duties of the Christian life, he included both 'using prosperitie well' (with moderation) and 'bearing afflictions rightly'. For Rogers, believers should see afflictions as an exercise or trial sent by God and should bear them 'meekly & with chearefulnesse', acknowledging that 'our heavenly Father knoweth what is best for us'. The affliction was sent for a reason, and so the proper response is to 'waite upon the Lord patiently in our chastisements'. Seeking ways to avoid the hardship was allowable as long as it could be done without sin. But otherwise the believer should seek wisdom as

[18] Becon, *Sycke Mans Salve*, 82–3, 403. Ronald Rittgers has explored the earlier process by which Protestants 'rejected the coupling of suffering and salvation in traditional penitential theology and piety': Ronald Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7, 81–3, 146–7.

[19] For a survey of these practical devotional works and their printers, see Green, *Print and Protestantism*, 250–74, 303–71.

to why it was sent, praying 'for a good issue' of 'wisdome, experience or comfort'.[20]

Devotional guides like that of Rogers increasingly prescribed a close watch on the affections during the affliction itself. Examining oneself for any past sin is crucial, but it is also important to observe at the moment 'how we be affected' during times of trouble – a diagnostic of the heart. If the believer feels heavy, confused, distrustful or 'other daungerous passions', it is a symptom that the heart is not well-governed. This self-examination is important not only in 'great and unwonted losses' and troubles, but also 'those also which fall out verie oft and commonly, as . . . discommodities and harmes in family matters'. Rogers anticipates a common objection: does this practice add an extra burden to those already weighed down? No, he replies, it is actually the path to 'ease . . . an hundred fold'.[21] An act of spiritual purgation, repentance opens up the heart to divine comfort.

Later manuals would include instructions for affliction in specific vocations. One of the most popular of these, John Flavel's *Husbandry Spiritualized*, makes the analogy that as: 'Frosts and snows conduce very much to the well-rooting of the seed, and make it spread and take root much the better . . . So do sanctified afflictions, which usually the people of God meet with after their calling, and often in their very seed time.'[22] Planting his seeds in the cold climate of Massachusetts, Joseph Tompson treasured *Husbandry Spiritualized*. In his later years he also read Flavel's *Mystery of Providence*, which exhorted: 'Search but a few years back . . . Have you not found some rod or other prepared by providence, to rouse you out of your security? Why this is so common a thing with Christians, that they many times presage an affliction coming from the frames they find their own hearts in.'[23] Increase Mather turned to Flavel during a season when he was: 'Being thoughtful because of afflictions & distresses by reason of outward straits.'[24] Across oceans and

---

[20] Rogers, *Seven Treatises*, 385, 393–4; see also Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 240.
[21] Rogers, *Seven Treatises*, 394–6.
[22] Flavel, 'Husbandry Spiritualized' in *Whole Works of John Flavel* (London: Baynes and Son, 1820), V, 68.
[23] Flavel, 'Mystery of Providence' in *Whole Works of John Flavel*, IV, 384; Tompson, *Journal*, November 1726.
[24] Increase Mather, *Diary*, July/August 1664, Mather Family Papers, Box 3, Folder 1, transcription by M.G. Hall, American Antiquarian Society. When he was in London in 1689, Mather would write a laudatory preface for a collection of Flavel's sermons (*Whole Works of John Flavel*, IV, 17). For a full treatment of Flavel on the devotional uses of affliction, see Brian H. Cosby, *Suffering and Sovereignty:*

lay–clerical divides, puritans expected that sanctified afflictions would produce lively, decalcified hearts.

Affliction and self-knowledge in early New England

Long before New England's colonisation, instructions on affliction found their way into proverbial forms. The 'graces of Gods children', like the 'vertues of … fruits', emerge 'when they are cut and powred out, or beaten, or burned, or bruised'. Or: 'God's children are like Starrs, that shine brightest in the darkest night; like Spices, that smell sweetest when pounded … Their temporal losses are made up in Spirituals.' The letter 'J' in the *New-England Primer* declared: 'Job feels the Rod yet blesses God.' The primer also instructed the student to 'keep a strict watch over his wandering Lusts and Affections … [and] prepare himself to bear the Cross by what means soever it shall please God to exercise him'.[25] Settled for the most part by self-selecting reforming Protestants, the culture of early New England was steeped in the assumption that pain could soften and strengthen the heart.

Thomas Shepard further probed the inner architecture of desire. The 'unofficial chaplain of Harvard College', Shepard was one of the most revered spiritual guides in early New England.[26] His monumental work on hypocrisy, the *Ten Virgins*, is little studied by historians, though the sermons he preached on this material were very popular. For Shepard, Christians could improve or attempt to benefit from their afflictions through self-examination and repentance, but do it 'overly' (or superficially), and therefore not experience a full flowing of the heart towards God.

For Shepard as for many puritans, affectivity was an index of the true Christian life. Like most Protestants, he condemned Catholic displays of emotionality, and especially publicly staged weeping, because it seemed contrived, performed rather than truly felt. Yet strong affections were essential, not optional. A Christian was in trouble if he or she could 'confess sin without sorrow or shame, petition without thirsting, live without love, do without life, because there is no spring, but a dry heart

---

John Flavel and the Puritans on Afflictive Providence (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books), Chapter 5.

[25] John Cotton, *A brief Exposition of the whole book of Canticles* (London, 1642: Wing/C6410), 132, 135; Increase Mather, 'A Sermon' (Boston, 1682), Wing/M1251, 15; *New-England Primer* (Boston, 1727), n.p.

[26] McGiffert, *God's Plot*, 6.

within'. True feelings were not, however, self-generated. Trying to manufacture piety away from Christ, the fountain of life, would result in a 'dead work'. This was true of 'hypocritical hearts' who thought they were saved but were not, yet it was also true 'in a great measure, in saints, when the spirit is quenched'. Believers could live in varying degrees out of the life of Christ. Loss of affection, or dead, dry hearts, might be a symptom of hypocrisy.[27]

However, hypocrites could also mourn for sin or love God and neighbour. It was affliction which often showed the difference between a hypocrite and a saint. 'God hath his trying times', which were sent only to 'discover who were dross, who were gold'. For example, 'a man loaths the people of God, but he saith he loves them'. Then the 'people of God' start to offend and dishonor him – this is his trial. Or he says he is 'content to be at the Lord's disposal' no matter what happens. But then his wife is 'cross' with him and his contentment leaves. Or a governor comes 'with pretenses of religion and protection', but really curtails liberty under pressure. Shepard concludes that 'you shall see this chaff will take old birds now'. The proverb would have been well known to Shepard's hearers – chaff, or the outer covering of grain that was not real food, would not work effectively in a snare for older, more experienced birds.[28] Yet the trials God sent would catch even experienced hypocrites. Afflictions were divinely ordained to expose the true nature of a person's desires.

When affliction came, saints were advised to enact thorough self-examination and thorough repentance. Any growth in the Christian life began with piercing through the haze of worldly perspectives to view the corrupt heart in clear light. 'Overly search of sin hath made overly decay of sin, and hence overly grace and affection.'[29] 'Overly' or 'shallow' searching would lead to shallow affections. It was deep, profound repentance which opened up the possibility of strong godly desires. Shepard affirmed a longstanding tradition when he insisted that

---

[27] Shepard, *Ten Virgins,* 275, 285, 290–91, 299; Michael Colacurcio, *Godly Letters: The Literature of the American Puritans* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 387–9; Watkins, *Puritan Experience*, 9–14. This elaboration of the work of the Holy Spirit into an expectation of 'experiential immediacy' had developed in puritanism from the 1570s onwards in parallel to a rising concern about hypocrisy. See Norman Pettit, *A Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 103.

[28] Shepard, *Ten Virgins*, 348–9; Bartlett Jere Whiting, *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 33.

[29] Shepard, *Ten Virgins*, 349.

this repentance had to encompass more than sorrow for an isolated sinful act. In addition to mourning for 'particular acts', believers should 'Labour to feel and mourn under thy whole corrupt principles' or original sin. Ministers and laypeople readily acknowledged that thinking of one's own heart as pervasively sinful was not a natural estimation. The Christian life involved intense laboring to see not only the human condition as corrupt in the abstract, but also one's own condition as vile to the core.

Yet a clear vision of sin was not enough. For the true Christian, the sight of the heart's sinful state led to an intense hatred and grief for sin itself. This is where most Christians err: 'Now many see it, but not the evil of it, nor mourn under it.' Feeling the 'wound to the bottom' means mourning for the soul's depth of depravity.[30] The hyperbole of these statements has become fodder for stereotypes of puritans as dour and life-hating, yet the exercise is most effective when it is most exhaustive. One colonist summarised in sermon notes that 'wee are never rightly grieved und[e]r affliction unless wee are grieved for Sin . . . theres no peacable fruits of righteousness the products of affliction but such as are agrieved under them'.[31] This depth of mourning had a purpose, which was to purge the heart of self-reliance or the sense that one deserved God's grace. Natural 'self-confidence' only served to 'stop the Spirit', which flowed freely when grace was experienced as a gift rather than an entitlement. Shepard knew his critics would say 'this is a high pitch'. But he appealed to collective experience, natural theology and the Bible to argue that believers should mourn for their departure from God more than for any other ailment.[32]

Shepard feared that superficial repentance was keeping the hearts of the saints stony and dry. When hardships came to most people, the temptation was to 'either game it, or work it, or sleep it away'. It was very important not to find distractions in the midst of hardship, but rather to experience its full benefit. The temptation was to quench the Spirit by rushing through the ritual. Shepard posed a reasonable

---

[30] Shepard, *Ten Virgins,* 290–91, 349. For another paradigm of thorough repentance, see Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 156–8.

[31] Sermons: manuscript, 1689, 7r–7v, MS Am 974, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Meredith Neuman, *Jeremiah's Scribes: Creating Sermon Literature in Puritan New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 94; Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* 53–4.

[32] Shepard, *Ten Virgins*, 294, 308.

objection – 'How shall I know if the work is overly' or superficial? His answer was 'If sudden and violent, it is usually overly' and thus inadequate. Just like a man whose garment had 'leopard spots, which in our garments can not be washed out easily', so 'God's thorough work is seeking and searching'. Interestingly, Shepard here expressed caution about intense spurts of feeling: 'violent, sudden sorrow and joys, and reformation' might not result in lasting sanctification. As one woman said 'of affliction, "I pray God this plaster may never cease cleaving, till healed"'.[33] Thorough repentance led to thorough healing. The rewards of these practices were immense. 'Desires that were wet on a thousand things before, all long after him, love only tasteth him . . . The Lord letting the soul taste the sweetness of Jesus and his grace, the soul joys, and love embraceth . . . when it is here, thinks one heart too little; nay, one life, one soul.' Shepard again voiced the objections of his critics: did Christians really feel this? Was the heart not always divided? And again he argued from multiple sources to say yes, this was normative for the Christian life. One New Englander summarised it thus: 'Joy is that which all kindly griefe under Gods afflictions is turned to.'[34] Christians were not perfect, but their affections were changed.

Overall, the prescriptive literature on afflictions was more elastic than rigid. Shepard affirmed that, in the end, if your response to a hardship was to pray, you were on the right track. Thomas Hooker insisted that one must only endure the afflictions one was called to – 'it is a duty to avoid' an affliction one was not called to. It was better 'to shun the snare then to be caught by it'. Hooker also told Christians who were 'over-borne with troubles' that all was not lost – the true saint could still acknowledge his 'shame' and be 'couragious afterward'.[35] Seventeenth-century writers for the most part followed Becon in remaining open-ended in their interpretations of affliction. Hardships were always purposely sent by the providential hand of God, but whether they were sent as judgments for sin or as trials to test the hearts of his special servants was an open question. In practice, New Englanders tended to interpret affliction in both ways at once – simultaneously as a rebuke for sin and as a trial intended to fortify their graces. They could

[33] Shepard, *Ten Virgins*, 301–2; McGiffert, *God's Plot*, 22–3. On the dangers of desire in puritan theology, see Lane, *Ravished by Beauty*, 136–41.
[34] Shepard, *Ten Virgins*, 320, 323; Sermons: manuscript, 1689, 7r–7v, Houghton Library.
[35] Thomas Hooker, *The Christians Two Chiefe Lessons: viz. selfe-deniall, and selfe-tryall* (London, 1640: STC (2nd edn)/13724), 73, 80.

almost always find some sin to grieve, and they also maintained a sense that being singled out for affliction meant being specially chosen for a refined heart.

Lay reflections

In poetry, letters, diaries and commonplace books, New England laypeople's responses to suffering and loss show remarkable familiarity with the ideals in the ministers' guidelines. Yet, at the same time, men and women creatively negotiated their own relationship to this devotional tradition. This is the case both when they modified and when they appropriated the guidelines.[36] Anne Bradstreet testified her experience of 'abundance of sweetness and refreshment after affliction and more circumspection in my walking after I have been afflicted'. Yet she dismissed the implication that her relative prosperity in life might signify a lack of fatherly care: 'I have not been refined in the furnace of affliction as some have been, but have rather been preserved with sugar than brine, yet will He preserve me to His heavenly kingdom.' Even so, ordinary hardships gave plenty of opportunity for spiritual reflection. Divine 'correction' came for her in the form of 'sickness, weakness, pains, sometimes on my soul, in doubts and fears of God's displeasure and my sincerity towards Him; sometimes He hath smote a child with sickness, sometimes chastened by losses in estate'. She told her children that when 'the Lord laid His hand sore upon me and smote with the smallpox' as a teenager, she 'besought the Lord and confessed my pride and vanity, and He was entreated of me and again restored me'. Her well-known poem on the burning of her house, when she 'blest His name that gave and took', gives only a glimpse of a devotional practice she embraced throughout her life.[37]

Bradstreet not only experienced this profit herself, she also shared it with her family and, through her poetry, with the broader community. High mortality from sporadic epidemics and childbirth meant that she shared it often. When her daughter-in-law Mercy died following

---

[36] Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 8–11; Martha Finch, *Dissenting Bodies: Corporealities in Early New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 171–2.

[37] Anne Bradstreet, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, Jeannine Hensley (ed.) (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 242, 257, 241, 292.

childbirth at the age of 28, Bradstreet mourned with her son Samuel, but also counselled: 'Cheer up, dear son, thy fainting bleeding heart,/ In Him alone that caused all this smart;/ What though thy strokes full sad and grievous be,/ He knows it is the best for thee and me.' Anne Bradstreet was very close to her daughter-in-law and she consoled herself as well as her son. Using the biblical metaphor of a furnace, she advised another son, Simon, in 1664 of the spiritual dynamic that: 'Iron, till it be thoroughly heat, is uncapable to be wrought; so God sees good to cast some men into the furnace of affliction and then beats them on His anvil into what frame he pleases.'[38] She was drawing on one of the most common biblical foundations for this view of suffering: 'Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction' (Isaiah 48:10, KJV).[39] For herself and for her loved ones, Bradstreet attempted to translate the message of providence and find deprivations inverted into spiritual abundance.

Similarly, John Paine, a deacon in the church at Eastham, Massachusetts, worked to understand the meaning of his own family's hardships. Within a few months, his 'faithfull & trusty aprintice' had died of a 'violant feavour', and a son and daughter had also fallen ill with fevers. Paine recorded in his journal, 'thus the lord hath been trying us by various exercises of his providence'. He prayed 'oh that God would do us good by all & bring us near unto him Self [an]d grant that when we are tried we may come forth as gold'.[40] He saw the proper response to hardship as a touchstone of the sanctified life. On his fifty-sixth birthday, when praying for his family's spiritual well-being, he asked the Lord to 'fit me and mine for whatever tryals or temptations thou in thy fatherly wisdom Shall please to Exercise any of us with all'. For his own spirit, he prayed: 'O most blessed Jesus Seeing my Self to be poor and miserable & wretched and blind and naked I come unto thee for gold tried in the fire to inrich me.'[41] For him, preparing for and using afflictions were essential spiritual practices.

Unexpected fires were common in early New England, where buildings were made of wood rather than stone. After a 1650 fire at Charlestown, Deputy Governor Francis Willoughby began his diary entry by lamenting his 'deadness' of heart, along with his 'vanity & sloth & carnality & slightness & what not'. God had been 'gracious . . . in

[38] Bradstreet, *Works*, 239, 277.
[39] The metaphor also appears in Malachi 3:2–3 and 1 Cor. 3: 9–15.
[40] 'Deacon John Paine's Journal', *Mayflower Descendant*, VIII (1906): 183.
[41] 'Deacon John Paine's Journal', *Mayflower Descendant*, IX (1907): 137.

many p[ar]ticulars' for which he should have praised him, but his 'spirit' was 'no way sightly to him as at other times'. The Lord had sent 'a sad visitation among us in this towne to ye burning of 11 or 12 houses . . . a visitation to be taken notis of & ye Lord to ask his mind & will & helpe pore creaturs to owne his stroaks & to fooule [fall] under ye same'. Willoughby acknowledged the duty of all to read the providential message. He then proceeded to reflect on both the mercy and affliction of the day: 'much mercy was moved & severall distingwishing p[ro]vidences yet I desird not to forgitt: & the Lord teach my soul & help me to look into my heart & to examine what is amiss & the Lord leave me not to slight & to neglect such a dispensation but to be wise to know his hand soon'. Even the discernment of the meaning of the providence was a divine gift. He recorded a fear that is common in lay accounts: that if he did not respond in the right way to the affliction, further judgment would follow. Perhaps mindful of warnings against superficiality such as that given by Shepard, Willoughby again asked for the Lord's help 'in observing him rich [fully] and well'.[42]

Laypeople and ministers often started their prayers in times of affliction by acknowledging their lack of desire to even pray. For Willoughby, it was a pattern to find that 'much deadness vanity & folly of spirit hath & doth impugn I can't be serious to consider my heart & ways but those teach much slightnes & deadness'.[43] Joseph Tompson routinely began his diary entries with words like 'being sabath day I took notis of myne hart to be exeding dead in duty & exeding indisposed for the saboth dead in hearing and paryer & singing both publicke & privat'.[44] Initial soul-examination often found disinterest in spiritual things, leading to repentance for hardness or coldness. These entries are both a recording of affective states and an exercise in warding off hypocrisy. As Shepard had argued, hypocrites could muster up counterfeit affections. The authentic work of grace – true love and God and true mourning for sin – could not be self-generated. A truly changed heart had to be a gift, an infusion of grace. As one puritan layperson wrote: 'What if thy prayers be dead, thy affections dead & thy hart dead, yet cast thy self upon the bare power of God. Cast thy self by faith upon the living God.'[45] Expressing initial spiritual apathy served as a way of eschewing

[42] Sypher, 'Diary Attributed to Deputy Governor Francis Willoughby', 100–01.
[43] Sypher, 'Diary Attributed to Deputy Governor Francis Willoughby', 99–100.
[44] Tompson, *Journal*, 20 February 1669/70; see also Fiering, *Moral Philosophy*, 176–7; Cohen, *God's Caress*, 106–7.
[45] Anon., 'Miscellany, *ca*. 1650', Ms. V.a. 281, Folger Shakespeare Library, Pt I: 7r.

false piety. When men and women first acknowledged their lack of interest in spiritual things or their reluctance to attend worship, they were in a sense inviting the external influence of the Holy Spirit.

Many lay reflections on affliction are terse, in a few lines expressing hope, success or failure in improving their experience. When the tailor John Dane's house caught fire in 1661, he first read the event in order to see God's hand and found 'severall providensis', or providential messages. He then noted his success in regulating his affections and hoped that he would spiritually profit: 'I doe not know that i did murmer at it, but was silent loking up to god to san[c]tifie it to me.' A schoolteacher in Roxbury experienced the birth of a stillborn son followed by his wife's protracted illness. He wrote in his commonplace book: 'I desire to acknowledge the hand of God in all, & quietly to submit unto him, and I think that I never did once murmer ag[ains]t God for this stroke; but have cause to say that God has punished me far less than I deserve . . . O that I could walk more humbly circumspectly and thankfully before God all my days.'[46] Expressing repentance, acknowledging divine justice and desiring to be sanctified in the midst of affliction were themselves significant, even if the requisite sanctified feelings did not follow.

Affliction and community

Talal Asad has said that pain is not simply an emotional state, but a set of intersubjective relationships.[47] Techniques of 'improving' affliction were also embedded in communal expectations, resources and relationships. Ministers and laypeople sent letters urging friends and family to piety in the midst of difficult circumstances and chiding them if they seemed inappropriately to chafe at their experiences. There was a deeply communal aspect to these modes of dealing with suffering.

One of the most important tasks of Congregationalist ministers was to visit parishioners in their homes. New England preachers might spend their days 'visiting and comforting the *Afflicted*; Encouraging the *Private Meetings; Catechizing* the Children of the Flock; and managing

[46] 'John Dane's Narrative' in *Puritan Personal Writings: Autobiographies and Other Writings* (New York: AMS Press, 1983), 155; 'The Commonplace Book of Joseph Green', *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 34 (1943): 250.
[47] Talal Asad, 'Agency and Pain: An Exploration', *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 1(1) (2000): 31–2, 40–41, 47–8.

the *Government* of the Church; and attending the *Sick*'.[48] Ministerial guidance could be local or transatlantic. Writing back to England in the mid-1630s, James Cudworth asked his former minister, Dr John Stoughton, to write frequently, for he knew his own propensity to grow cold, and his 'daily need' for 'some exhortation and consolation, both to provoke to the practice of holy things and to support us in the time of temptation or affliction, that we may wade through all the difficulties of this short life with cheerfulness of heart'. Cudworth desired to benefit not only from God's mercies but also from his 'chastisements, that they may correct and amend us our judgments, that may terrify us our afflictions, that they may refine us'.[49] Ministers were expected to guide laypeople through hardship to renewal of heart.

Yet ministers did not undergird piety alone. Laypeople frequently encouraged each other to bear hardship well. Offering comfort and exhortation to a suffering friend was itself a devotional exercise. As the English devotional writer Jeremiah Burroughes had exhorted, 'when you come to comfort them, come not in a meer carnal way and say, Brother you must be content', but rather find 'some Word of God that is suitable to that particular affliction . . . And indeed this is an excellent friend'.[50] Becon's character, Philemon, provided an important model. John Winthrop's correspondence offers a glimpse into the communal nature of the practices surrounding affliction. In the early years of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, after the Lady Arbella had died and many others had fallen ill, Governor Winthrop reflected on the colonial experience. The Lord was humbling the colonists, he wrote to his wife, but not in order to 'cast us off, but, in his due time, will do us good, according to the measure of our afflictions. He stays but till he hath purged our corruptions . . . that he may have us rely wholly upon himself'.[51] He explained his spirituality of hardship more fully in an earlier letter: 'Let men talk what they will of riches, honours, pleasures, &c.: let us

---

[48] Cotton Mather, *A faithful man, described and rewarded* (Boston, 1705), 26; E. Brooks Holifield, *Era of Persuasion* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 91.

[49] James Cudworth to Dr John Stoughton, in Everett Emerson, *Letters from New England: The Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629–1638* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 139–40.

[50] Jeremiah Burroughes, *Gospel-Worship* (London, 1647: Wing (2nd edn, 1994)/B6084), 25.

[51] John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop, 9 September 1630, in John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, James Savage (ed.), 2nd edn (Boston Little, Brown, 1853), Appendix 47, 452.

have Christ crucified, and let them take all besides. For, indeed, he who hath Christ, hath all things with him; for he enjoyeth an all-sufficiency, which makes him . . . full of joy and consolation in the sharpest afflictions, living in death, and possessing eternity in this vale of misery.' For Winthrop, having Christ meant having an affective experience of divine comfort.[52]

As Bradstreet counselled her sons, so Winthrop counselled his sister in a letter during the 'affliction' of her husband's sickness: 'Go on cheerfully, (my good sister,) let experience add more confidence still to your patience.'[53] His sons tried to live up to this standard. After the death of his mother, Samuel Winthrop wrote to his father: 'I thought I could have born [the news] with a great deale more patience then now I finde I canne. Praie God so to season it to me that out of this greatest affliccion I maie receive greatest benefit. he hath promised that all things shall prove to the best to those that love and feare him . . . Greife cuts me offe that I cannot write either what nor as i would.'[54] The relationship between father and son was such that Samuel could write honestly about his inability to deal with grief as he knew he should. Yet this very admission was also a plea for prayer and connection.

Losing much of his estate in the early 1640s through the incompetence of his manager James Luxford, Winthrop received many letters of condolence that included strong expectations for how he would respond to his losses. John Endicott wrote to acknowledge 'many sad thoughts about your afflicction', yet he hoped for spiritual benefit from Winthrop's financial straits. Perhaps God was 'uppon the tryall of your selfe in the exercise of your faith and patience and other graces'. This might be yet another way in which God would bless the country through Winthrop – 'now hee will make you beneficiall another way to us all in an exemplarie cheerefull undergoinge of Gods afflicting hand in wisdom and patience'. God had already benefited many in this way, including Endicott, through Winthrop's spirit in his 'last Sicknes'.

---

[52] John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop, 8 May 1629, in Winthrop, *History of New England*, Appendix 25, 429; Francis Bremer, *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 193–4, 281–3.

[53] John Winthrop to Priscilla, 26 March 1628, in Winthrop, *History of New England*, Appendix 22, 425.

[54] Samuel Winthrop to John Winthrop, from St. Christopher's, 30 August 1647, in *Winthrop Papers* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929–), V, 180. Samuel would later become a Quaker.

Endicott then reiterated the classic theodicy that the Lord's 'corrections are the corrections of a loving Father', along with an expectation for his affections: 'I ame glad to heere you are chierfull.'[55] Similarly, Edward Winslow, a leading Plymouth statesman, wrote first to Winthrop of how much he was 'affected with those losses and crosses are befallen you by your unfaithfull servant'. But he consoled him: 'I judge you neerer happines in the losse of them; not dowbting but our gracious God will sanctefie his hand unto you, assuring my selfe it will be good for you in the end.' He then encouraged a faithful response: 'let us shew foorth his praise by patient submitting to his hand, joyning therewith a diligent enquiry after the cawse twixt him and our selves'.[56] Emmanuel Downing, Winthrop's brother-in-law, expressed an expectation close to Endicott's and Winslow's: 'I pray doe not you nor my sister oppresse your spiritts herewith, but wayte with cheerfull patience on the lord, who alone can and ordinarily doth bring good out of evill, and confident I am, he will in his owne way and tyme performe yt to you.'[57] Discerning the meaning of providential action was both a personal and a communal exercise.

Lucy Downing, Winthrop's sister-in-law, tried to write with the same confidence, but admitted she had found difficulty with the rituals of affliction. She began: 'Ohe hapy pitch, could wee indeed say with Job, though he kill us yet to trust him, and to take the stem of bitter as willinglie as the stem of prosperity becaus from god.' Then she qualified her words with her own intellectual struggle with this affective ideal: 'I think this wee ought to indevor but for my part the scripture it selfe hath not convinct me of a president of such a temper att all times.' However, she believed that God would be lenient, for 'he that best knowes our frame knowes wee can return but what he is pleasd to furnish us with'. At the same time, she warned Winthrop 'yet good sir remember the perill and

---

[55] John Endicott to John Winthrop, from Salem, 2 February 1639/40, in *Winthrop Papers,* IV, 188–9. See also John Endicott's letter to John Winthrop in his sickness, c. January 1635/6 in *Winthrop Papers* III, 221–2. In contrast, Edmund Morgan characterises Winthrop as primarily success-oriented, arguing that Winthrop's arguments for emigrating 'were those of a man accustomed to success and intending to have more of it'. Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1958), 38–9.

[56] Edward Winslow to John Winthrop, from Careswell (Winslow's farm in Marshfield, Massachusetts), 17 February 1639/40, in *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 192.

[57] Emmanuel Downing to John Winthrop, from Salem, 9 January 1639/40, in *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 173. See also his letter of 24 February 1639/40, in *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 201–2.

disadvantage of deiection of spirit', hinting that the misuse of afflictions could bring further calamity.[58]

Winthrop seems to have taken these encouragements to heart. Writing to the minister Ezekiel Rogers, he reflected: 'I prayse God, it dothe not greive me to departe with any thinge, to pay my debts.' He did write of being troubled at friends who seemed to be taking advantage of his financial circumstances. Several years later, he told his son John Winthrop, Jr. that he had little estate to leave him, but hoped he would 'see the Vanity of these Temporal things, and learn Wisdom thereby, which may be of more use to you, through the Lord's Blessing, than all that Inheritance might have befallen you'.[59] Winthrop's epistolary network illustrates the ways in which laypeople urged friends and family members to search out the divine message in the affliction, to acknowledge God's justice and love and, most of all, to expect supernatural benefit in the midst of their pain. Even when partial, incomplete or unsatisfying, the devotional exercises surrounding affliction supplied a common language of consolation.

Suffering and assurance

In both ministerial and lay writings, afflictions appear as a test that, if passed, could function as a powerful token of divine favour. For example, Arthur Dent in his devotional classic *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heaven* listed eight 'infallible notes and tokens of a regenerate minde'. In addition to signs such as 'A loue to the children of God', 'A delight in his word' and 'Often and feruent prayer', Dent included 'Patient bearing of the crosse, with profit, and comfort'.[60] Patience in affliction was a sign of true salvation, of sincere faith. Richard Greenham similarly included a discussion of the use of affliction in a treatise aimed to comfort troubled consciences. God sent afflictions not as a final judgment, but as a means to purify, assure and 'cause a more plentifull fruite of their faith'.[61] Thomas Hooker went so far as to ask

---

[58] Lucy Downing to John Winthrop, c. January 1639/40, in *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 171. See also Ryrie, *Becoming Protestant*, 126, 240–42.

[59] John Winthrop to Ezekiel Rogers, March 1640 [not sent], in *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 208–9; John Winthrop to John Winthrop, Jr., c. 1643, in *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 366.

[60] Arthur Dent, *The Plaine Mans Path-way to Heauen* (London, 1607: STC (2nd edn)/6629), copy at Folger Shakespeare Library, 30.

[61] Richard Greenham, *The workes of the reuerend and faithfull seruant of Iesus Christ M. Richard Greenham*, ed. H.H. (London, 1612: STC (2nd edn)/12318), 117.

'those that doubt of sincerity' to 'Try they selfe by the crosse'. He advised simply 'as thy suffering is, so is thy sincerity'.[62] The layman Benjamin Lynde urged his sister to take advantage of this relationship between affliction and assurance. If 'outward good things' are 'denied you', he wrote, 'submit to the Allwise Providence of God'. Assurance would follow: 'Make this improvement of all your afflictions, that if you be heartily upright before God they are certain proofs of your adoption.'[63] Affliction provided a test of sincerity. If the response to affliction was a godly one, it was a good sign that the stony heart was melting.[64]

Gospel inversions

In modern lexicons, humiliation is something to be avoided. For many New Englanders, it was a way of tapping into the inversions of the gospel that unleashed its power, bowing low in order to be raised up. Through textual immersion, prayer, devotional writing, conversations and letters, men and women strove to feel deeply that the Father's will is always good for his children. Puritans tried to experience hardship as an act of mercy, a fire to soften their stony hearts. Human affections were both distrusted and vitally important to the Christian life. These strategies were not unique, but they tended to be deliberately cultivated within puritan communities. Scottish Presbyterians developed a parallel devotional tradition. For example, Samuel Rutherford's letters are full of consolation to the afflicted, urging that 'whether God come to His children with a rod or a crown, if He come Himself with it, it is well' and assuring that 'I knew and saw Him with you in the furnace of affliction; for there He wooed you to Himself,

---

[62] Hooker, *Christians Two Chiefe Lessons*, 78; see also John Preston, *Three godly and learned treatises* (London, 1632: STC (2nd edn)/20221.7), 75–6. Preston was a friend of Thomas Hooker and John Cotton, under whose preaching he converted; he was also a mentor to Thomas Shepard. John Davenport was chosen by Preston to edit his Lincoln's Inn sermons, including *Three godly and learned treatises*. Jonathan D. Moore, 'Preston, John', *ODNB*.

[63] Benjamin Lynde to his sister Sarah, from the 'Papers of Judge Lynde', c. 1689, in Fitch E. Oliver (ed.), *The Diaries of Benjamin Lynde and Benjamin Lynde, Jr* (Boston: [Priv. print.], 1880), 1–2. See also Cosby, *Suffering and Sovereignty,* 108–11.

[64] For a full treatment of this point, see Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensations, and Heart Religion* (Lewiston: Mellon, 2002), 57; Fiering, *Moral Philosophy*, 158–66.

and chose you to be His'.[65] The divine message most puritans heard through their providential reflections remained safely within the biblical domain. Quakers and Gortonists would hear more imaginative, less circumscribed divine messages, and others would interpret their afflictions less mercifully. Additional practices, found especially among loyalist intellectuals but also among some puritans, drew on the stoicism recovered by Renaissance humanists and minimised 'the importance of events external to the self', valorising self-reliance and serene wisdom.[66]

In puritan communities the divine hand used affliction to renovate his children's hearts. This approach to affliction involved a highly developed response to the problem of evil, or a way of understanding human suffering. Thomas Cartwright wrote to a woman in 'great afflictions' not to let it 'abashe youe' when suffering more than others, but 'by . . . your afflictions [God] prepareth the ground of harte & soule unto theise pleasant fruites of Sommer'.[67] Affliction formed a normative part of Christian experience, with the potential not so much for unique shame as for unique holiness.

The conviction that suffering was central to the spiritual life has a long trajectory in the history of Christianity. Catholics had long insisted that believers' sufferings were grafted onto the sufferings of Christ, playing a role (albeit a dependent one) in the economy of salvation. Most Protestants rejected this view in their conviction that salvation was a free gift. By making everyday suffering the catalyst for sanctification, puritans once again made it essential, and essentially meaningful, to the Christian life. The study of the devotional practices surrounding

---

[65] Rutherford to Lady Kenmure, 26 June 1630 and 15 November 1633, in Thomas Smith (ed.), *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1881), 381, 397. See also John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 82–90; and Todd, *Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, 160–63. For an example of early modern Lutheran consolation literature, see Ronald K. Rittgers, 'Grief and Consolation in Early Modern Lutheran Devotion: The Case of Johannes Cristoph Oelhafen's *Pious Meditations on the Most Sorrowful Bereavement* (1619)', *Church History*, 81(3) (2012): 601–30.

[66] Raymond A. Anselment, *Royalist Resolve: Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988), 14. For a comparison of puritan and other Anglican responses to suffering, see McGee, *Godly Man in Stuart England*, 57–65; Thompson, *Art of Suffering*, 26–8, 44.

[67] Thomas Cartwright to D.B., 1575, 1576, in Albert Peel and Leland Carlson (eds), *Cartwrightiana* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951), 105–8.

affliction is in part a study of the process by which men and women acquired certain desires. Yet desire was not in itself the end of the ritual. For puritans, as for many early modern Christians, human desires themselves were transitory.[68] The stony heart could soften, but it could only anticipate the affective reality of heaven.

[68] Susan Juster, 'Eros and Desire in Early Modern Spirituality', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 60(1), Sexuality in Early America (2003): 205.

6

Piety and the Politics of Anxiety in Nonconformist Writing of the Later Stuart Period

David Walker

The analysis of literature in relation to the cultural history of the emotions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is at the cutting edge of literary scholarship in early modern studies. Recent works of historical and literary scholarship in this area have tended mainly to emphasise the medico-scientific aspects of emotion and affective piety. Such works demonstrate an advanced awareness of early modern melancholy and depression, fear, anxiety and hope, and draw upon relevant medical and scientific knowledge from the period.[1] Less attention has been paid to date regarding the literature of religious nonconformity and emotions in the mid- to late seventeenth century, particularly in

[1] Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997); Gail Paster Kern, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013); Angus Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); M. Heyd, 'Robert Burton's Sources on Enthusiasm and Melancholy: From a Religious Tradition to Religious Controversy', *History of European Ideas*, 5(1) (1984), 17–44; Mary Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine, and Religion in Early Modern England: Reading the Anatomy of Melancholy* (Cambridge University Press, 2010); S. Bryn Roberts, *Puritanism and the Pursuit of Happiness: The Ministry and Theology of Ralph Venning c.1621–1674* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015); Jeremy Schmidt, *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul: Religion, Moral Philosophy and Madness in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Christopher Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford University Press, 2007); J.F. Sena, 'Melancholic Madness and the Puritans', *Harvard Theological Review*, 66(3) (1973): 293–309.

relation to positive emotions such as pleasure, hope and joy.[2] Writers and their works, it is argued in this chapter, are often motivated more by political and religious anxiety than medical illness. Psychological and even physical ill health may be symptoms of the political and religious context. The argument posited here draws out the relationship between public life and private feeling in selected works by Richard Baxter and John Bunyan. Their anxieties and fears concerning salvation and election, the politics of prayer, reason, enthusiasm and hope, from the 1640s onwards, are palpable in their written work and in their actions. Both wrote freely on religious matters throughout their professional lives. They did so from within a complex, violent and continually evolving political and religious context.

Religion in seventeenth-century England is famously a very difficult terrain to map. John Spurr has argued that for too long, historians have often concentrated narrowly on a binary of conformist and nonconformist that takes little account of significant distinctions. In reality, he states: 'there never had been, nor ever would be, a time when all Puritans were Calvinists and all Episcopalians Arminians'.[3] For Anthony Milton, likewise, a 'rigidly dualistic' view of early Stuart religion that emphasised strict binary oppositions does not do justice to a very complex bigger picture. The Venetian ambassador in the second decade of the seventeenth century, for instance, identified 12 different religious parties in England.[4] Conforming puritans and church papists too can be found throughout the seventeenth century.[5] Baxter himself occasionally conformed.[6] Diversity of belief within English Protestantism increased dramatically with the growth of sects

---

[2] See Roberts, *Puritanism and the Pursuit of Happiness*, 1–12 for a survey of what is still a relatively small field of secondary literature.

[3] John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1660–1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 314.

[4] *Calendar of State Papers Venetian 1617–19*, 387, cited by Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 7.

[5] On conforming puritans in the early modern period, see Marcus K. Harmes, *Bishops and Power in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England: The Caroline Puritan Movement, c. 1620–1643* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); Daniel W. Doerksen, *Conforming to the Word: Herbert, Donne, and the English Church before Laud* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997).

[6] N.H. Keeble, 'Richard Baxter' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004–11). Hereinafter *ODNB*.

and separatism from the late 1630s onwards. The polemical literature of the period testifies to a multitude of antagonistic sects, whose published disputes were combative and visceral. Bunyan's first published works were polemical, in defence of his faith against the Quakers and Ranters in the 1650s.[7] He wrote prolifically in prison (1660–72) and, upon his release, he again took up the pen in dispute with the Latitudinarians and Anglicans, and intermittently with all comers. Baxter, too, had a lifelong antipathy to antinomianism and did not shirk in print or in the pulpit in making his views public on this and many other issues. Like Bunyan, his debut work was polemical: the anti-antinomian *Aphorismes of Justification* (1649), whose 'apparent retreat from predestinarian orthodoxy' involved him in 'prolonged controversy'.[8] We should not assume, therefore, that as nonconformists, Baxter and Bunyan were in accord. In *The Scripture Gospel Defended* (1690), Baxter describes Bunyan's beliefs as antinomian and therefore beyond the pale.[9] Of particular note for our purposes, in their autobiographical and other works, Baxter and Bunyan demonstrate very different reactions to melancholy, its origins and its treatment.

Melancholia, reason and enthusiasm

Melancholy or melancholia was the medical term favoured by early modern people for what we now term depression.[10] It was a so-called 'fashionable' disease, a pose affected by lovers or the cynically, and intellectually, disenchanted. Although the term 'depression' is anachronistic when applied to seventeenth-century writers, its symptoms have been known to the medical profession and to philosophers and writers of imaginative fiction for many centuries.[11] For serious sufferers,

---

[7] John Bunyan, *Some Gospel Truths Opened* (1656) and *A Vindication of Some Gospel Truths Opened* (1657), in Roger Sharrock *et al*. (eds), *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, 13 vols (Oxford University Press, 1976–94), vol. 1. All references to Bunyan's work unless otherwise specified are to this edition, hereinafter abbreviated to *MW*, followed by the volume and page number.

[8] Keeble, 'Richard Baxter'.

[9] See the preface to *The Scripture Gospel Defended* (1690: Wing B1397), 2.

[10] See the General Introduction by Allan Ingram and Leigh Weatherall Dickson (eds), *Depression and Melancholy, 1660–1800* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 4 vols, and the Introduction to vol. 1, *Religious Writings*, ed. David Walker and Anita O'Connell, xxiii–xxxvii.

[11] For an overview, see Clark Lawlor, *From Melancholia to Prozac: A History of Depression* (Oxford University Press, 2014); Jennifer Radden (ed.), *The Nature of Melancholy from Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

melancholy was not the affectation of a chic pseudo-illness. According to Baxter, melancholy prevented the sufferer from understanding 'plain truths'. It 'doth breed and feed . . . blasphemous thoughts against God or the Sacred Scriptures'. Few who suffered from this disease escaped the belief 'that they are miserable, undone creatures'. Rather than take comfort in the calming exercise of reason and rational thought, sufferers instead became the prisoners of enthusiasm and inspiration, making them vulnerable to the allure of antinomian sects such as the Ranters. In Baxter's view, education was the enemy of enthusiasm and its cure. For him, melancholy was derived from the organs of an overactive imagination in those given to 'Prophecies, Revelations' and, in a dig at Quakers, 'the exalting communications of light unto themselves'. In his view, melancholy was properly cured by the ministrations of (right) religion and not an exclusive belief in the sufficiency of the Spirit. Ignorance went hand in glove with enthusiasm. 'Baxter did not hold that the receipt of grace rendered human learning superfluous.'[12] Early modern Protestants of a less moderate disposition than Baxter demonstrated all too vividly many of the symptoms he referred to, though many would have disagreed vehemently with his form of religion as a cure. Their own acute psychological pain manifested itself through anxiety-inducing introspection and extreme self-analysis. Exceptionally intense scrutiny of the self was encouraged in the writings of some influential Puritans. William Perkins, for instance, 'the foremost theologian of experimental Calvinism', particularly 'urged self-examination' for evidence of salvation.[13]

Beyond the purely medical diagnosis of melancholy, there existed a widely recognised philosophical and ethical explanation. Jeremy Schmidt states that the overlap between fear and sorrow in the early modern period was considerable: 'in this context it made a great deal of sense to consider melancholy itself under the category of a moral philosophical disease of the soul'. For Puritans in particular, who were thought by many of their opponents and critics to be especially prone to religious enthusiasm and spiritual depression, the care of the soul was

---

[12] Richard Baxter, *God's Goodness Vindicated* (1671: Wing B1278), 3; *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696: Wing B1370), I, 7. See also N.H. Keeble, *Richard Baxter: Puritan Man of Letters* (Oxford University Press, 1982), 32.

[13] Kathleen Lynch, *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 6. Lynch is drawing in particular on Perkins' *Armilla Aurea* (1590: STC 19655), translated into English as *The Golden Chain* (1591: STC 19660).

crucial. The integrated relationship between philosophy and medicine in the study of melancholy was one that Robert Burton fully recognised in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.[14] It was also felt to be a particularly English problem. For William Congreve, susceptibility to melancholy was a national characteristic: 'Is there anywhere a people more unsteady, more apt to discontent, more saturnine, dark and melancholic than ourselves?'[15]

After 1660, darkness and melancholy was an understandable condition for those Protestants who refused to conform to the re-established Church of England. They faced implacable opposition from a vengeful church and state. One of the various accusations aimed at dissenters was their association with republicanism and regicide; another was their perceived intellectual failings. Many, for instance, lacked a university education. Baxter was embarrassed by his lack of qualifications.[16] Consequently, in the eyes of their persecutors, their religion was born of enthusiasm and inspiration rather than true understanding. In the writings of Neo-Platonists and Latitudinarians such as Henry More, Edward Fowler and Joseph Glanvill, Nonconformists who emphasised extempore prayer and claimed movement by the Holy Spirit were victims of their own ignorance and overly susceptible to superstition. They were, in other words, *un*-reasonable and, by extension, uncivilised. More, Fowler and Glanvill believed that reason – 'thinking, persuasion, argument' – was essential to happiness, whereas submission to unreasonable feelings – 'anger or fear', bodily needs and wants – was anathema and the mark of the unenlightened.[17] Therefore, More believed that melancholy could be overcome by resorting to philosophy: despair was the result of enthusiasm.[18] Baxter too, as we have seen above, considered

---

[14] Schmidt, *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul*, 28, 29. For a thorough and invigorating consideration of early modern emotions and moral thought, see Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason*, Chapter 1, *passim*; on Burton, see Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy*; Heyd, 'Robert Burton's Sources on Enthusiasm and Melancholy'; Lund, *Melancholy, Medicine, and Religion in Early Modern England*.

[15] William Congreve, *Amendments of Mr Collier's False and Imperfect Citations, &c.* (1698), in *The Complete Works of William Congreve*, 3 vols, D.F. McKenzie (ed.) (Oxford University Press, 2011), I, 73–124, at 124.

[16] Keeble, *Richard Baxter: Puritan Man of Letters*, 35.

[17] Cummings and Sierhuis, 'Introduction' in their *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture*, 1.

[18] See Henry More, *Enthusiasm Triumphatus* (1656: Wing M2655); and *Divine Dialogues Containing Sundry Disquisitions and Instructions* (1668: Wing M2650), 'Dialogue 3', 407.

the uneducated as being particularly susceptible to superstition.[19] In the mouths of many Anglicans and moderate Nonconformists, the word 'enthusiasm' was often a synonym for fanaticism and was antithetical to religion itself. Benjamin Whichcote believed that: 'Enthusiasm is the Confounder both of Reason and Religion: therefore nothing is more necessary to the interest of religion than the prevention of Enthusiasm.'[20] Such a sentiment was representative of enlightened thought: 'the idealization of reason marked late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century politico-religious discourse and helps explain not only the emergence of idealised concepts of a public sphere but also the rules of public discourse'.[21]

The central role of philosophy in the understanding of rational religion is central to Locke's 1695 publication, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. The content is reflected fully in its title. In his 1681 essay 'Religion', Locke writes: 'Inspiration . . . barely in itself cannot be a ground to receive any doctrine not conformable to reason.'[22] A 'philosophic Physician' who came to 'insist that articles of faith submit to reason', Locke was born to Calvinistic parents 'with leanings to Presbyterianism'.[23] In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), he demonstrated his views on reason, revelation and faith with considerable rigour. He set out to 'lay down the measures and *boundaries between faith and reason*', arguing that the former is supported by the latter.[24] Like many born into the turbulent seventeenth century, Locke's religious journey was long, complicated and marked by political radicalism and the shifting currents of religious toleration.[25] The unifying

---

[19] See above, note 11.

[20] Benjamin Whichcote, 'Moral and Religious Aphorisms' in C.A. Patrides (ed.), *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 330; Walker and O'Connell (eds), *Religious Writings*, xxx–xxxiii.

[21] Mark Knights, 'How Rational was the Later Stuart Public Sphere?' in Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (eds), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2007), 252–67, at 252.

[22] John Locke, 'Religion' (1681), in Mark Goldie (ed.), *Locke: Political Essays* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 278–80, at 279. See also 'Reason, Passion, Superstition' (1681), 280–82.

[23] Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2001), 102; Roger Woolhouse, *Locke: A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

[24] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Yolton (ed.) (London; Dent; abridged edn, 1993), 4.18.1.

[25] See Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton University Press, 1986), Chapter 3, *passim*.

principle of his often disparate thoughts on religion in his own time has been described as 'the urge to harmonize the potentially conflicting claims of reason and faith', arrived at through an 'essentially conservative quest'. His overall intent was to 'establish a defensible base for religious faith'. Locke eventually found spiritual peace in latitudinarian Anglicanism, 'whose broad and tolerant views he found congenial'.[26] He was not the only seventeenth-century philosopher arguing in this vein. Similar calls to caution can also be found in the works of Hobbes and Spinoza.[27] For the Nonconformists, however, the answer lay down a different path.

Bunyan and Baxter: salvation, melancholy and Protestant autobiography

When it became time for Nonconformists to lay bare the soul, the literary vehicle *par excellence* was spiritual autobiography. It was this particular literary form that often foregrounded the emotional importance of faith over reason. Nonconforming Protestants took seriously the Biblical instruction from 2 Corinthians 13.5 that they should examine themselves in order to prove themselves: 'Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?'[28] Writers of spiritual autobiographies related their individual experience in often forensic detail: uncertainties about spiritual health were very often motivated by political crises or by persecution. This in turn was manifested in severe mental and/or physical illness. The most vivid literary example of this in early modern prose is Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), a work that brilliantly charts its author's search for the certainty of election and salvation during years of unprecedented political turmoil. Thoughts of redemption are pervasive in Bunyan's other writings from the 1660s. *Prison Meditations* (1663), as the title page makes plain, is 'Directed to the Heart of SUFFERING SAINTS

[26] Samuel C. Pearson, Jr., 'The Religion of John Locke and the Character of His Thought' in Richard Ashcraft (ed.), *John Locke: Critical Assessments*, 4 vols (London: Routledge, 1991), I, 133–50, at 133, 134.
[27] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Richard Tuck (ed.) (Cambridge University Press, 1996), Part 4, 417–82; Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, Jonathan Israel (ed.) (Cambridge University Press, 2007). For an in-depth discussion, see James, *Passion and Action*, 124–56.
[28] II Corinthians 13:15 (King James Version).

AND REIGNING SINNERS'.[29] In its concern for the salvation of his soul, the poem is intimately related to *Grace Abounding*; its content is an extension of his spiritual autobiography by other literary means. Bunyan's recourse to such writing arises as a result of severe psychological distress, itself precipitated by persecution. Richard L. Greaves speculates convincingly that Bunyan suffered regularly from clinical depression, to the extent that 'recurring periods of anxiety probably triggered dysthymia'.[30] Such torments were exacerbated in many respects by his relations with the state in its various forms in the mid- to late seventeenth century.

In *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan writes of the appalling psychological and physical pain he felt when confronted with, and then tempted by, antinomian beliefs, apostasy and a falling away from spiritual purity. He illustrates his fear with reference to Francis Spiera, a famous apostate in sixteenth-century Italy. Spiera's abjuration of Protestantism in 1548 plunged him into despair. He is said to have died of a broken heart. Over a century later, the tale was still common currency in England.[31] Similarly, Bunyan feared for the integrity of his conversion and doubted his own ability to remain constantly in God's grace. This, he informs us, 'struck into [me] a very great trembling, insomuch that at sometimes I could for whole days together feel my very body as well as my minde to shake and totter under the sense of the dreadful Judgement of God'. He is terrified that he will be one of those sinners that 'should fall'. He considers the weight of sin with which he is burdened, identifies himself with the Bible's most notorious fratricide and considers the mark of

---

[29] *MW* VI, 42.

[30] Richard L. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent* (Stanford University Press, 2002), 41. On Bunyan's creative strategies, Calvinist soteriology and despair, see Stuart Sim, *Negotiations with Paradox: Narrative Practice and Narrative Form in Bunyan and Defoe* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990). On Bunyan's doctrine as 'accommodating and consoling', see Michael Davies, *Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan* (Oxford University Press, 2002); for a nuanced reading of Bunyan and melancholy, see Anne Dunan-Page, *Grace Overwhelming: John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress and the Extremes of the Baptist Mind* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006).

[31] John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Roger Sharrock (ed.) (Oxford University Press, 1962), 49–50. All further references are to this edition. See also Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know Itself* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 252; Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 50; Dunan-Page, *Grace Overwhelming*, 205.

Cain that has been placed upon him by a righteous God.[32] Throughout the text, he is concerned about his spiritual constancy. Though not insurmountable, backsliding and infirmity of purpose is an ever-present worry.[33]

In contrast, *The Autobiography of Richard Baxter* is not a conventional spiritual autobiography in the mode of other works produced in the genre. Although it is without doubt concerned with confessional writing, it does not have as its central theme the attempt 'to render one man's particular experience of grace'. Instead, 'Baxter's own personal experience serves to particularize and typify that of the Puritans at large'.[34] As well as being a direct relation of his thoughts and private experience, and his spiritual and physical health (or lack thereof), the work also comments trenchantly on the public world of politics and civil conflict. Like Bunyan, Baxter demonstrated in his autobiography that he was susceptible to enticement. In his own words, 'the Tempter strongly assaulted my faith, and would have drawn me to infidelity itself'. In an effort to test himself fully, Baxter tells us that he allowed himself free rein to grow into any scepticism he felt. By this means, he hoped to weather 'the storm of this temptation'. He credits his success to judicious use of reason and the intellect. Reliance on both leads him to the conclusion that all those who believe not in God, or in Christianity as a religion beyond compare, 'are mad'.[35] In later works such as *God's Goodness Vindicated* (1671) and *The Cure of Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow by Faith and Physick* (1683), Baxter is keen to demonstrate that the cure for melancholy lies in the steadfast Christian's willingness to embrace reason and to cast out enthusiasm. The true Christian recognises that reason makes passion quiet and that 'when the *Brain and Imagination* is crazed and Reason partly overthrown by the Disease called *Melancholy*, this maketh the cure yet more difficult'.[36]

In *God's Goodness Vindicated*, Baxter has it that the root of melancholy proceeds from excessive introspection. 'This unhappy disease', he writes,

---

[32] Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 50. See also *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Roger Pooley (ed.) (London: Penguin, 2008), 65–70.
[33] *MW* III, 61
[34] N.H. Keeble (ed.) *The Autobiography of Richard Baxter* (London: Everyman, 1974, abridged; revised edn, 1985), xxviii.
[35] Keeble, *Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, 27.
[36] Richard Baxter, *The Cure of Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow by Faith and Physic*, Sermon XI (1683) in Samuel Annesley (ed.), *A Continuation of Morning-Exercise Questions* (1683: Wing A3228), 263–303, at 269.

'is first seated in the Organs of Imagination and Passion . . . in the spirits, and in the very Imagining faculty it self.' Melancholics perceive themselves as 'undone', without grace or hope. The disease begins with some 'worldly cross, loss, or trouble', which through excessive introspection impacts upon 'Conscience'. Eventually, says Baxter, a disease that originates in material concerns eventually turns the individual 'against *God* and *Scripture* . . . through Satan's special instigation'. The cure for the disease is the diversion of the patient, who must not be left alone to brood: suitable and constant conversation must be provided that does not include 'displeasing persons and things', and a regular change of 'aire' is recommended. Above all, the patient must not be idle. Labouring in a 'lawful Calling' is an essential part of the recovery process.[37] When he writes on sorrow, Baxter likewise maintains that the best guard against depression is an appropriate blend of religion and reason. An *inappropriate* blend is religion and enthusiasm: superstition breeds sorrow and 'when Men make themselves Religious duties which God never made them', inevitably 'some come short in them'. He also sees a direct relationship between self-control and the state: 'As Civil, and Ecclesiastick, and Domestick Government are for edification, and not for destruction, so also is self-government.'[38]

Baxter's remarks on civil obedience are pertinent in the charged circumstances of 1683, when *The Cure of Melancholy* was published. Charles II had triumphed over the opposition to his Catholic brother as heir to the throne. Consequently, Nonconformists were forced to endure a new and intense period of persecution.[39] Baxter himself was fined £195 in October 1682 for preaching, and his goods seized in payment, 'even to the bed I lay sick on'. The death of close friends in 1680 and his wife in 1681 added grief to the burden of genuine fear for his liberty and his life. He was arrested in November 1684 and was bound over to keep the peace, only to be arrested again in February 1685 for sedition and imprisoned in Southwark to appear before Judge George Jeffreys.[40]

And yet, at least by his own lights, Baxter was the very opposite of seditious. He disliked and distrusted enthusiasts. His belief in reason and

---

[37] Baxter, *God's Goodness Vindicated*, 3–8.
[38] Baxter, *The Cure of Melancholy and Overmuch Sorrow*, 265–6.
[39] See Douglas R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661–1689: A Study in the Perpetuation and Tempering of Parliamentarianism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969), Chapter 8, *passim*.
[40] Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 3 parts (1696: Wing B1370), III, 191; cited by Keeble, 'Richard Baxter'.

education, and that God's grace was open to all, put him close to Neo-Platonists and Latitudinarians such as More, Glanvill and Fowler. In his works and in his actions, Baxter personified 'reasonableness, good sense, and moderation' that characterised 'the line of developing rationalism', which in turn led to 'John Locke and the Deists'.[41] Enthusiasm for Baxter went hand in glove with antinomianism, which signified for him, as for many moderate Puritans, a tendency towards social and political anarchy. His lifelong antipathy to antinomians was theological and spiritual, and originated in the 1640s. The 'nonsense' that antinomians preached, he asserted, could properly be learned from 'Mr Edward's *Gangraena*' (1646), a massive and highly influential work in three volumes that classified and anatomised the beliefs of sectarians.[42] In the charged political world of Restoration London with its plots, 'confrontations over dissent, popery, arbitrary government, and religious liberty', the currency of *Gangraena* remained high.[43] Baxter's consistency in warning against the evil of antinomianism is of a piece with similar warnings by Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*.[44] Baxter was saved from antinomianism by conversion. In *Aphorismes of Justification* (1649), he writes that he 'remained long in the borders of *Antinomianisme*, which I very narrowly escaped'. The date of publication is, again, auspicious. The Civil War motivated the vehemence of Baxter's attack on a theological position to which, by his own admission, he nearly succumbed. This was exacerbated enormously by the execution of Charles I, met by Baxter, as it was by many thousands of others, with horror. He describes it, amongst other things, as 'an unspeakable injury of the Christian name and Protestant cause'. This was the age which formed Baxter, theologically and politically, and it provided the lens through which he interpreted worldly events for the rest of his life.[45]

Even in later life, when hindsight is often tinged with nostalgia, Baxter was anything but sentimental about the war in which he served as an army chaplain. The *Autobiography* for the years 1645–7 is revealing

---

[41] Keeble, 'Richard Baxter'.

[42] Keeble, *Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, 56. On the importance of Edwards and *Gangraena* to the taxonomy of sects, see Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

[43] Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution*, 425.

[44] Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 16–17.

[45] Richard Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*; (1649: Wing B1185), appendix, 163; cited in Tim Cooper, *Fear and Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: Richard Baxter and Antinomianism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 91. See Keeble, *Richard Baxter: Puritan Man of Letters*, 4, 15–16, 70.

about his own naïvety and candidly relates his shock when he first came into contact with politicised soldiers immersed in radical religious views. Hitherto Baxter believed that the war was being fought to protect church and state against 'Papists and schismatics', and for 'the true happiness of king and people'. Instead, his visit to Naseby field, two days after the battle, revealed to him a world in which the army was inhabited by a 'swarm of Anabaptists'. 'When I came to the army among Cromwell's soldiers', he wrote, 'I found a new face of things which I never dreamt of. I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both Church and State.' By the winter of 1647, Baxter felt himself polemically to be battling soldiers who were committed 'Anabaptists, Antinomians, Seekers, or Separatists', all of whom 'are tied together by the point of liberty of conscience'.[46] Cromwell annoyed many moderate Puritans with his liberal views on religious toleration. This was particularly true in relation to his officers, who were chosen 'for their strength of character and depth of religious conviction', even if they were Baptists.[47] In a letter written to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, after the Battle of Naseby, Cromwell wrote: 'Honest men served you faithfully in this action . . . He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience and you for the liberty he fights for.'[48] 'Within the evangelical Protestant community', says John Coffey, Cromwell 'had no problem with pluralism'.[49] Baxter, however, had little time for the Commonwealth which Cromwell oversaw after the King's execution. In his view, 'most of the ministers and good people of the land did look upon the New Commonwealth as tyranny and were more alienated from them than before'.[50]

In the narration of his life, Baxter describes how, after the end of the first Civil War, he fell seriously ill. During the process of recuperation, he

---

[46] Keeble, *Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, 49, 56.
[47] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1978), 109.
[48] W.C. Abbott (ed.), *Writing and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937–47), I, 360; cited in N.H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 14.
[49] John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 148. See also Blair Worden, *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford University Press, 2012), Chapter 3.
[50] Keeble, *Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, 66.

underwent a powerful 'soteriological transformation' that was Pauline in its intensity.[51] Isolated from his friends and his role as an army chaplain, he turned to his Bible: 'I set to study the truth from thence, and from the nature of the things, and naked evidence; and so, by the blessing of God, discovered more in one weeke, than I had done before in seventeen yeares reading, hearing and wrangling.'[52] Baxter's recourse to the Bible in a moment of intense need provided him, as it did many Protestants, with a cure for the medical and spiritual illness that ailed him. It helped too in accommodating himself to the political situation. Given that he was almost always in pain, this must have been a regular experience. In the *Autobiography*, he writes graphically of the sickness and extreme discomfort that he suffered over a 40-year period. He complains that his illness has not been understood by the medical profession and has often been diagnosed by physicians as 'hypochondriac flatulency, and somewhat of a scorbutical [that is, scurvy] malady'. He looks back to 1658 as being a particularly bad year, when 'I felt both my kidneys plainly indurate like the stone'. Although he goes on to state that he refused to give into melancholy and that he has a 'wonderful cause of thankfulness to God, for the ease which I have had these forty years', there is more than a touch of bitterness that his doctors have refused to take his illness seriously.[53] Insofar as his claim that he did not resort to melancholy goes, he seems to protest too much.

Baxter's two bouts of illness in 1647 and 1658, mentioned explicitly in the part of the *Autobiography* covering the Civil Wars, Commonwealth and Protectorate, coincided with moments of significant political tension: the Putney Debates and the subsequent mutiny by Levellers in the army, on the one hand, and the death of Oliver Cromwell, on the other. It would seem possible at least that Baxter's physical ill health and acute spiritual anxiety were linked to his negative view of religious and political radicalism in the 1640s and 1650s and fears of the sway that he felt was being exercised by unruly sects and a radicalised army. The publication of *A Holy Commonwealth* in 1659 demonstrates his desire for a Christian commonwealth free from the upheavals that had characterised his life to date. Events, as its most recent editor has pointed out, frustrated the completion of *A Holy Commonwealth*. It was rushed into print: 'hence the disjunction in mood between text . . . and two "Prefaces"'. The immediacy of events reveals much 'about the oscillation of

[51] Cooper, *Fear and Polemic*, 96.
[52] Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, appendix, 110–11.
[53] Keeble, *Autobiography of Richard Baxter*, 237–8.

moods between hope and fear'.[54] The lengthy full title tells us that its author is writing to heal the 'Mistakes' and 'Resolve the *Doubts* that most endanger and trouble England at this time: (if yet there may be hope)'. The Preface is addressed 'To all those in the Army or elsewhere, that have caused our many great Eclipses since 1646' and is true to the sentiment displayed in its title, laying all of the blame for the nation's ills at the door of a radicalised soldiery.[55]

As we have seen, Baxter and Bunyan's spiritual and mental health was often affected by the political events of the day, especially as they impacted upon their vocation. When this was threatened – as it was from 1660 onwards – heightened anxieties found their outlet in protest and print. The restoration of the monarchy had severe consequences for Nonconformist ministers, thousands of whom, including Baxter, lost their livings. Baxter described the period as an 'Inundation of Calamaties, which in many Streams overwhelmed thousands of godly Christians'.[56] Like Christ and his followers, Nonconformists perceived themselves as a persecuted people, subjected to a godless regime. Some eventually conformed, broken by the pressures brought to bear by government legislation and sustained persecution; others stayed resolute and suffered stoically for their faith. A smaller number plotted secretly, and a very few rebelled openly against church and king in what proved to be fruitless attempts to enforce their will against the state.[57] In this respect, works written by Nonconformists should be seen in the light of the literary relationship between form and content: authorial intention and what can be reasonably inferred from the texts' rhetorical strategies. Reactions against persecutory measures can be seen in the dense metaphors deployed by authors of literary and biblical allegory. The most famous artistic example of this is, of course, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a work published in 1678, but written for the most part during the second

---

[54] William Lamont (ed.), *Baxter: A Holy Commonwealth* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), x, xv.

[55] Lamont, *A Holy Commonwealth*, 3.

[56] Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, II, 385; cited in Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 45.

[57] For a comprehensive analysis of nonconformist plotting against the state in the period, see the following trilogy by Richard L. Greaves: *Deliver Us from Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660–1663* (Oxford University Press, 1986); *Enemies under His Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664–1677* (Stanford University Press, 1990); and *Secrets of the Kingdom: British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–1689* (Stanford University Press, 1992).

half of Bunyan's imprisonment.[58] We shall see in the final section of this chapter, however, that Bunyan made his views clear to his readership in forms other than fiction. These factors are most clearly demonstrated when one considers the dialectical nature of many Nonconformist literary works. They speak not only of the self in an isolated fashion – laying bare fears and hopes about salvation and redemption – but also as defined against specific individuals and groups, ideological and spiritual positions, and the structures of belief in church and state. In 1665 Bunyan turned his hand to rendering a Christian utopia of an altogether different kind from that attempted by Baxter in 1659.

Hope, piety and prison: Bunyan's *The Holy City* and the Christian commonwealth

A common factor across many works of Protestant dissent is the intimate relationship between private feelings and public life. Bunyan and Baxter were seen by others as leaders as well as pastors. Accordingly, they engaged with the politics of the day in defence of themselves and their brethren as a duty as well as a vocation. They did so as a matter of course. Given the inseparable nature of politics and religion in the seventeenth century, there was often no distinction to be made between political and spiritual suffering. Such suffering was inevitably politicised. The fate of Bunyan in the 1660s is famous in literary and nonconformist history. In November 1660 he was arrested for holding a conventicle and, in 1661, was imprisoned in Bedford gaol for refusing to cease preaching,. This sentence of initially three months was extended to 12 years. Bunyan wrote prodigiously from prison and at a very high level of literary achievement: millenarian works such as *The Holy City, or, the New Jerusalem* (1665), a sermon for the imprisoned godly based on a close reading of Chapters 21 and 22 of the Book of Revelation, and its sequel *The Resurrection of the Dead* (1666); a brilliantly radical attack on the Book of Common Prayer entitled *I Will Pray with the Spirit* (1662); a significant body of poetry that remains understudied; and *A Relation of His Imprisonment* (written in 1665, although not published until 1765). And in *Grace Abounding* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, he penned two masterpieces that have exercised an enormous influence on the history of the English novel.

---

[58] Christopher Hill, *A Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People: John Bunyan and His Church* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 198–9. Greaves dates the composition to 1668–71 in *Glimpses of Glory*, 638.

The Holy City started life as a sermon composed to offer hope and spiritual sustenance to the godly. According to Greaves, Bunyan was feeling particularly 'spiritless and barren' at this time, and was struggling to find 'something to say to his fellow prisoners', when by the grace of God he happened across Revelation 21:11.[59] During his incarceration, Bunyan transformed the experience of Restoration prison for many by adopting a position of leadership and responsibility commensurate with the role of pastor in the Baptist church. Accordingly, upon his release in 1672, the Bedford congregation saw fit to 'call forth and appoint our brother John Bunyan to the pastoral office or eldership . . . and received of the elders the right hand of fellowship'.[60] His evangelising role in Bedford gaol and his writing in the early years of his sentence was a conscious act. He wished to proselytise for his faith, offer spiritual comfort and hope to his brethren, and to guard himself against well-documented tendencies to despair. *Christian Behaviour* (1663) documents a strongly felt need to provide spiritually for his fellow sufferers in person and in print: 'I have taken [the] opportunity', he tells his readers, 'to present these few lines unto you for your edification.'[61] To edify is not merely to inform; it has the much stronger meaning of moral and intellectual instruction. In using such language, Bunyan is establishing and advertising his credentials as a teacher and a leader.

The Holy City introduces us to a millenarian vision of the perfect city and, as such, stands in stark contrast to the reality of the early modern urban space so familiar to Bunyan and his contemporaries. In *The Holy City*, Bunyan deploys language and imagery drawn from a range of sacred and secular discourses: biblical exposition and commentary sits comfortably alongside idioms and analogies drawn from the commercial, legal and material worlds to support and enhance the sermon's fulsome apocalyptic rhetoric. Hope will be realised when the prophecy is accomplished: 'these promises are to be fulfilled in the last days', writes Bunyan, 'at the time of the pouring forth of the last Vial, which is the time of the sounding of the last of the seven Trumpets, for then this City shall be builded, and Lucifer fallen from heaven'.[62] It is in prison that Bunyan's genius for organisation, and for writing works that evangelise

[59] Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 176.
[60] H.G. Tibbutt (ed.), *The Minutes of the First Independent Church (Now Bunyan Meeting) at Bedford, 1656-1766*, Publications of the Bedford Historical Society, 55 (1976), 63–5; cited in Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 287.
[61] *MW* III, 62; cited in Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 161.
[62] Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 165.

and enrich the spiritual commitment of his congregation to the Baptist faith, is confirmed and enhanced. In the process, he made his 'incarceration not only sufferable but meaningful'. He depicts jails as schools 'in which Christ teaches his followers how to die'.[63] By advertising hope instead of despair, however, his jailhouse sermons also teach the true Christian how to live. Although the body is imprisoned, the soul is free.

The Holy City shares with other texts by Bunyan from the 1660s – *Christian Behaviour* and *The Resurrection of the Dead, Grace Abounding, Prison Meditations* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* – the central theme of 'the solitary and exemplary nature of the Christian's journey to Heaven'.[64] *The Holy City* is also concerned to different degrees with the use of violent resistance by means of armed force, the promise of hope in salvation, the gift of God's grace and, with it, the assurance of redemption. The language of the text demonstrates its status as prison literature and is on occasion nervously self-aware, conscious that it might be mistaken for a work that actively promotes rebellion, and is linguistically wary for that very reason. As a consequence, the rhythms and pitch of the work conform to a repetitive pattern. First of all, we are caught up in a rising wave of rhetoric full of confidence and commitment. Qualifications are then introduced in a hesitant and slightly apologetic manner. Because of this, the progression of the text is uneven and the conclusions it draws are ambiguous. The tone and content are by turns contradictory: frustrating, angry, apologetic; at once, full of the language of resistance, before capitulating and urging compliance to the new regime. For instance, reference is made to an aggressive martial God who physically threatens: '[He] will at the day of his rebuilding the New Jerusalem so visibly make bare his arm, and so exalted before all by his power towards his people, that no people shall dare to oppose (or stand if they make the least attempt to hinder) the stability of this city.' This is immediately followed up by a fire-and-brimstone quotation from Isaiah 14, with its prophecy of God freeing Israel from an oppressive yoke. As the argument develops, however, a tonal shift occurs when Bunyan seemingly remembers that he is in prison. Rebuilding the New Jerusalem will be achieved by the 'power of the word and the spirit' and not 'by the might' of the arm.[65] This linguistic ebb and flow of threatening and conciliatory language is stylistically indicative of Bunyan's continuous emotional turmoil.

---

[63] *MW* VI, 45; Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 160.
[64] *MW* III, xviii.
[65] *MW* III, 89.

Bunyan's contribution to the literature of nonconformity in the 1660s, whilst not at all demonstrative of active engagement in radical activity per se, nevertheless registers anger with the authorities who have imprisoned him and despair at ever being released. Rather than calling for revolution, rebellion or an uprising in the mould of Thomas Venner's ill-designed and ill-fated rising of the Fifth Monarchists in 1662, Bunyan instead delineates a principled opposition that reacts against the intolerant and persecutory mood of the times.[66] Indeed, Bunyan's works in the 1660s often advertise themselves as 'prison books'.[67] In this he is consistent. He continually foregrounds his plight and that of his brethren. In 1662, for instance, he reacts in print to the imposition of the much-hated and now-revised Book of Common Prayer, described by its most recent editor as 'vigorously Laudian in its aims'.[68] *I Will Pray with the Spirit* is a frank and robust critical response and an impassioned plea for the right to practice extempore prayer. In *Christian Behaviour* (1663), he advertises himself on the title page as a 'Prisoner of Hope' and writes what is an extremely positive view of his future. This is all the more remarkable given the very real threat of exile he faced 'according to the terms of the Elizabethan statute under which he was held'.[69] Bunyan accordingly had to tread very carefully.

The Holy City does not consciously set out explicitly to undermine authority and allegiance. However, its millenarian content, its close commentary on the Book of Revelation and the manner in which it posits a utopian Christian commonwealth do raise a series of interesting issues, not the least of which is the prominent display of an alternative mode of governance. The commentary on Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation forms the structure of Bunyan's text. In the majority of its content, however, it departs from the 'formal exegetical structure of a sermonic work'.[70] This allows for greater flexibility in terms of content. In its close reading of Scripture, the sermon draws on the secular idioms of the law, and references the social, economic and material culture of

---

[66] For a useful survey and analysis of Bunyan's ambiguity politically, see Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and Theology, 1550–1682* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2008), 205–12.
[67] N.H. Keeble, *The Restoration: England in the 1660s* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 133.
[68] Brian Cummings (ed.), *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Oxford University Press, 2011), xliii.
[69] Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 161.
[70] Beth Lynch, *John Bunyan and the Language of Conviction* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 52.

Restoration England. It does so through the crucial figure of the city. Bunyan establishes early on in the narrative that 'this City is nothing else but the Church returned out of captivity from under the reign of *Antichrist*'. Only in the figure of a city can the complexity and diversity of a large membership and its existence in the modern world be properly represented in terms that can be familiarly understood. It also serves the added purpose of making easier the social 'traffick' – as he calls it – between the City/Church and the 'Nations and Kingdoms of men'. 'Grace and Life', we are informed, are the 'Merchandize' of the city. And 'what wonderful custom the Church of God at this day shall have among all sorts of People, for her Heavenly Treasures'.[71] The recourse to commercial metaphors and similes here is altogether more positive than would appear some years later in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, with its harsh rendition of the market in the Vanity Fair episode, or in the sermon from 1657, published as *A Few Sighs from Hell*. Instead, Bunyan draws upon the familiar to render an interpretation of the dense and opaque allegory that is Revelation plainly in the easily recognised language of everyday life.[72] As befits a commentary on the Bible's most controversial book, the sermon's language very skilfully supports and enhances the apocalyptic rhetoric with which the text abounds. One intention of *The Holy City* is to explain that the second coming will soon be realised. Bunyan further seeks to describe a Christian commonwealth and address issues of spiritual and political governance in a context that is critical of savage persecution from the state and the Anglican Church. In offering a visionary alternative, Bunyan promotes hope in conditions of extreme adversity.

In his engagement with the Book of Revelation and its recourse to military, legal and commercial language and imagery, we can perhaps better judge Bunyan's concern with the contemporary mood. In his commentary on Revelation, he is seeking to make a statement. In the 'Epistle to the Reader' that precedes the text, we read the usual disclaimers about his lack of education and reading in the literature of the apocalypse and the new millennium. He also embraces as a virtue the ridicule that he risks when offering his thoughts on a scriptural text renowned for its allegorical sophistication. In language that is perhaps prideful in its humility, Bunyan rejects the 'Language of the Learned'. It is full, in

[71] *MW* III, 80–81.

[72] For a particularly rigorous reading of Bunyan and the market, see David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580–1680* (London: Palgrave, 2001), Chapter 9, *passim*.

his view, of the 'Spirit of Whoredom and Idolatry' that leaves 'GOD's glory . . . stained and diminished thereby'. We are assured as readers that the false gospel of academic learning will have no place in the author's commentary: 'I honour the Godly as Christians', says Bunyan, 'but I prefer the BIBLE before them; and having that still with me, I count myself far better furnished than if I had (without it) all the Libraries of the two Universities . . . What GOD makes mine, by the evidence of his own Word and Spirit, *that* I do make bold with.'[73] Bunyan, of course, was far more knowledgeable about learned theological works than he was willing to admit. In the prefatory Address to the Reader before *Light for Them that Sit in Darkness* (1675), he again informs us that his doctrine is derived from the Bible and not the libraries of the educated elite.[74]

Bunyan is keen in *The Holy City* to stress human agency in the creation of the New World Order. The agents of change are the Elect, the builders of the New Jerusalem. They are described as:

> They whose Light breaks forth as the Morning, they that are mighty for a Spirit of Prayer, they that take away the Yoke, and speaking Vanity, and that draw out their Soul to the Hungry, they that the Lord shall guide continually . . . It was thus in all Ages, in every Work of God, SOME of his People, SOME of his Saints in Special in all Ages, have been used to promote, and advance, and perfect the Work of their Generations.[75]

Bunyan tells us in *The Holy City* that 'The time of the return of the Saints to build the ruinous City is near, yea, very near' and that there shall be 'an oneness of Judgment and Understanding in the Hearts of all Saints'. Until that time, the saints are as 'an Army routed', unsure and uncertain about themselves and their calling, prone to 'mistake the word of their Captain General, the Son of God'. In the end, however, the New Jerusalem will bind the Saints in a common understanding of Scripture, thus overcoming 'the one great reason for that crossness of Judgement and Perswasion . . . that hath caused that lingering and disputing about the glorious state of the Church in the latter days'.[76] To an audience confined in prison cells for the crime of nonconformity, or

---

[73] *MW* III, 72 (emphasis added).
[74] *MW* VIII, 51; on the breadth of Bunyan's reading, see Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 5–6.
[75] *MW* III, 85.
[76] *MW* III, 92, 94.

scattered, or deprived by lesser forms of persecution, huddled perhaps in secret conventicles, the prey of informers and hunted by magistrates, this is hope-stirring rhetoric of the highest kind. And with hope comes redemption. It reads like a battle cry and – to the chosen – it inculcates a spirit of elitism. It heightens expectations dramatically. The Elect, the reader may infer with some confidence, are shock troops for the faith.

Anyone familiar with Bunyan's work knows him to be a formidably literal reader of Scripture. He has no qualms, however, about making bold with the word and spirit when required; indeed, he glories in it. *I Will Pray with the Spirit* makes all too apparent Bunyan's view that an active bar to extempore prayer shackles the spirit, represented throughout this tract by a sustained attack on prayer books in general and the Book of Common Prayer in particular. In words that are echoed in *The Holy City*, Bunyan condemns conformists for their 'ignorance, prophaness, and spirit of envy'. These are men that are 'hot for the forms and not for the power of prayer'. They favour procedure rather than passion. They live 'cursed, drunken, whorish, and abominable Lives, full of Malice, Envy, Deceit' and take pleasure in 'Persecuting the dear Children of God'.[77] Given the similarities between this passage and the anti-Catholic rhetoric of whoredom and idolatry that concludes the 'Epistle to the Reader', it seems clear that Bunyan sees little difference between Church of England clergy and their Roman Catholic colleagues. He concludes the 'Epistle', for example, with a resounding rejection of the 'Mother of Harlots', also called the 'Mistris of Witchcrafts' here.[78]

Towards the end of *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan mentions again that in the early years of his imprisonment, despair nearly overcame him. Such was his state that he thought himself 'not fit to die'. It was a trial sent by God, he writes, that he should stay true to his calling and hold fast to his beliefs, 'and never to denie my profession though I have nothing at all for my pains'. Working on *The Holy City* was a means by which he staved off the ravages of despair. Given its 'highly optimistic theme', there was 'left little time for gloomy introspection'.[79] His decision to write was born of moral and emotional necessity; in terms of form, content and message, and given his location, it was a courageous choice. From the certainty of his election, in the confines of his prison and in

[77] *MW* II, 240.
[78] *MW* III, 72–3.
[79] Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, 100–01; Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 189.

his desire to offer hope for the benefit of his brethren, there seems no text more appropriate for a sermon than Revelation. Like Revelation, *The Holy City* was written in 'the aftermath of war'. Indeed, we cannot fully understand the visions and prophecies of the biblical book unless we accept that this is 'wartime literature', written by a man who 'may actually have witnessed the outbreak of conflict in Jerusalem in 66 C.E, when militant Jews . . . [fought] an all-out war against Rome's occupation of Judea in the name of "God and our common liberty"'.[80] The likeliest period of Revelation's composition – 81–96 CE, under Domitian – witnessed an increase in the cult of the Emperor. Revelation compares Rome to Babylon. The waning years of Domitian's reign was also a time when 'Christianity began to be seen as a religion distinct from Judaism'.[81] A new religion persecuted violently by an oppressive state was something to which Nonconformists could easily relate and in which they could invest hope and joy.

Given the temper, tone and content of Bunyan's 'Epistle', we are prepared as readers for a sermon that is on one level an exercise in escapism. By imagining a city free from persecution and a persecutory class, *The Holy City* provides its audience and its readership with a utopian vision, one that offers hope to the faithful in dangerous times and a template for organisation when emotional rather than physical resistance against the enormous pressure to conform is not merely necessary, but also required. Both Baxter and Bunyan demonstrate in the works that have been analysed above no distinction overall between personal and political suffering. Both were dogged by debilitating psychological and physical illness across much of their adult lives. Where feelings of despair were at their most acute and when stress and anxiety, melancholy and depression were at a heightened state for both, this coincided with severely pressurised political contexts. In resisting successfully the almost overwhelming compulsion to fall into despair, they created a body of literature that is a fitting testament to the depth of their faith and the strength of their leadership.

---

[80] Elaine Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Viking, 2012), 2, 7.

[81] Gerald Hammond and Austin Busch (eds), *The English Bible: the King James Version* (New York: Norton, 2012), Headnote to *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, 570.

7

Resting Assured in Puritan Piety: The Lay Experience

Kate Narveson

Nehemiah Wallington is notorious for the near-suicidal fear of damnation that led him to take his shoes for devils and contemplate throwing himself out of the garret window. Though he ultimately came to feel assurance of election, his case is taken as an example of the way in which predestinarian theology could fuel desperate anxiety, and some historians of puritanism see his as an 'age of anxiety'.[1] Theodore Bozeman finds the early Stuart years a period of anxious introspection with 'failing surety' becoming 'a cardinal theme of pietist preaching'. Still, Bozeman also argues that laypeople could, in practice, soften the rigours of 'making sure' their salvation, and that many of the godly 'were upbeat much of the time'.[2] Leif Dixon casts even stronger doubt on the causal connection between election and anxiety, arguing that 'ministers sought not to inculcate anxiety about whether one was elect, but instead urged the assured saint to be anxious not to disappoint the God who had chosen them'.[3] Taking up the suggestion that many puritan laypeople did attain assurance, it seems natural to ask what that experience was like. The causes and cures of puritan anxiety have been well

[1] John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 50; David Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford University Press, 2004), 133–7.
[2] Theodore Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain*: *Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 128, 171. See also Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 20–22, 89.
[3] Leif Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, 1590–1640* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 11.

described; this chapter will examine the emotional experience of assurance witnessed by lay writers, looking in particular at Wallington and at two early Stuart figures who record much different experiences: Richard Willis and Grace Mildmay.

Among English Calvinists, the term 'assurance' was used both for a transient emotion and for a steadier disposition. As emotion, it denoted a sweet confidence of election, which clustered with joy, comfort and peace.[4] As a disposition, it referred to a settled confidence, given by grace and gained over time. The latter will be my subject. I will not be looking at it strictly as theological construct, but descriptively, as part of what Barbara Rosenswein calls a system of feeling typical of an emotion community.[5] Emotions have been defined as 'the "names" a society gives to certain kinds of "feeling"', a definition that recognises the cultural and cognitive component of emotions, since appraisal situates feelings in a network of meaning in which some are named, valued and cultivated.[6] As Douglas Davies puts it, feelings become 'embedded within sets of emotional attitudes and forms of responses such that social values and attitudes come to be, as we say, second nature to us'.[7] Assurance was part of puritanism's second nature. It took shape in connection with

[4] Charles Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 109; Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 44–7. In theory, this feeling of assurance was not in the person's power to attain by their own efforts, and it was subject to ebb and flow, alternating with stretches of anxiety or frustration at deadness. Ryrie points out that even with the stress on a feeling faith, pastors recognised the possibility of a faith without feeling, so that in the final analysis, 'emotion was no index to true faithfulness' (47). Dixon makes the related point that Calvinists saw faith as a kind of knowledge, an apprehension registered experientially; he traces the appeal of this concept to late medieval epistemological crises which impelled a desire for certainty (Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England*, Chapters 1–2).

[5] In 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passions in Context I* (www.passionsincontext.de/uploads/media/01_Rosenwein.pdf), Rosenswein calls for study of 'what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them (for it is about such things that people express emotions); the emotions that they value, devalue, or ignore . . . and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore' (11).

[6] Douglas Davies, *Emotion, Identity, and Religion: Hope, Reciprocity, and Otherness* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 14; Rosenswein notes that emotions can be seen as 'a certain type of appraisal' ('Problems and Methods', 9).

[7] Davies, *Emotion, Identity, and Religion*, 24.

the puritan narrative of godly selfhood; it was experienced because the subject felt her life to conform to that pattern.[8]

Some might wonder whether I will have much to talk about, since more pages of puritan self-writing are filled with accounts of spiritual deadness or sin than of assurance.[9] Richard R. Niebuhr offers one way to understand this imbalance; he points out that happiness does not find articulation in the same way as what he calls 'shipwreck', the feeling of unsettled anxiety, which is often the subject of extended self-analysis. He argues that 'gladness and rejoicing issue more easily through channels other than the verbal', such as work and 'the exercise of [one's] ordinary abilities'.[10] The same could be said of confidence: while confidence may not find explicit articulation, it may be manifest in the way a person goes about something. I will argue that laypeople's writings indicate a connection between a practised exercise of devotion and assurance of salvation. Dixon explains it thus: the 'process of constant self-regulation was designed to prevent small doubts from metastasizing into despair'. Bozemen comments that 'all the busy rituals of the pietist way counted with almost mechanical sureness as a ground of certitude'.[11] I would put even more emphasis on the way in which devotion underwrote confidence and even optimism. Skilled in the practice of piety, people could gain an assurance that functioned to anchor their experience of other emotions, including anxiety at the continuing presence of sin in the heart.

---

[8] For the narrative component of experience, see Davies, *Emotion, Identity, and Religion* 24–5; and Stephen Crites, 'The Narrative Quality of Experience', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39 (1971): 291–311 on stories that 'orient the life of people through time', both in individual and corporate experience (295). For the puritan narrative of despair as an emotion incident to the life of the elect, see Michael MacDonald, 'The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira: Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992): 3–61.

[9] In using the term 'self-writing', I follow Andrew Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-writing in England, circa 1580–1720', *Journal of British Studies*, 46(4) (2006): 796–825. Tom Webster usefully notes that a wide range of writing, from commonplace books to notes on meditation, similarly contributed to devotion and could be called 'ego-literature'; see 'Writing to Redundancy: Approaches to Spiritual Journals and Early Modern Spirituality', *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996): 33–56, at 35–6.

[10] Richard Niebuhr, 'The Widened Heart', *Harvard Theological Review*, 62 (1969): 127–54, at 145.

[11] Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England*, 136; Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain*, 135. Dixon stresses the practical nature of puritan devotion, leading to the term 'practical predestinarians' (12).

Assurance as an anchoring disposition

Historians see assurance as a problematic feature of puritan piety. Although the godly were called to rest on the sure promises of God, they were also taught to see their life as a constant, often unsuccessful struggle against their sinful nature. Perpetual vigilance over wayward thoughts and desires, rather than assurance's liberating trust in God's work, would seem to be at the heart of puritan experience. Indeed, the call for assurance has seemed a source of angst, reintroducing a focus on works as signs of election, or leading to endless introspection, so that the expectation of assurance was (so to speak) a bug, not a feature; it created rather than solved problems.[12] John Stachniewski, for instance, declares that the confidence required by Calvin 'tended to split puritan communities, at the extremities at least, into obnoxious prigs . . . and quaking obsessives'. He points to Richard Baxter's view that 'the majority of those who took their religion seriously in the preceding [early Stuart] era, in which assurance was a condition of salvation, were consumed by despair'.[13] And, if achieved, assurance could be seen as a false consciousness. David Como points to the anguish about election felt by Wallington and Dionys Fitzherbert, and suggests that while 'each of these troubled people might be taken as a vindication of the power of puritan divinity to provide lasting spiritual succor', there is a 'less charitable' view whereby they were victims of 'ideological bondage'. From this viewpoint:

> By awakening in their listeners a sense of all-consuming sin and hopelessness, mainstream puritan ministers opened up a gaping spiritual void, a void which only they themselves could fill. For on their own account, only they – the ambassadors of God, the mouthpieces of the spirit – could convey the redemptive power of Christ.

Puritan divinity could, then, appear 'a deceptive species of spiritual addiction, imposed by a tyrannical ministry' and involving a rigidly disciplinarian piety.[14]

---

[12] Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain*, 135; Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England*, 19–20. In his account of puritan practical divinity, Como focuses on figures for whom the doctrine was troubling because their experience helps us understand the fissures in early Stuart puritanism that led to antinomian alternatives (*Blown by the Spirit*, 132–7).
[13] Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, 22, 61.
[14] Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 136–7.

While we can grant the high psychic cost that could in some cases accompany the attempt to follow the puritan emotion script, it would be wrong to take this 'less charitable' view as a characterisation of the experience of most lay puritans. As Como acknowledges, 'there is good reason to believe that the system proved effective for the vast majority of godly people'.[15] The view that ministers instilled anxiety and then produced the cure underestimates the extent to which lay believers thoroughly mastered the pastoral theology and devotional practices that had been elaborated to help people gain assurance, and the way in which this practical competence served as grounds for a confident – and even cheerful – faith. Insofar as emotions are experienced according to the labels and values that a person learns to attach to them, the study of emotion helps us to see where embodied experience meets ideology in ways that are both culturally scripted and individual, as the believer uses words to give shape to and direct emotional experience. Beyond the narrative component of assurance, Bozeman notes that 'considerations of behavior' were a central 'ingredient to consolation'.[16] Where that behaviour was a matter of well-defined practices, open to lay mastery, it could be a dependable source of assurance. Further, assurance rested on such varied grounds that people could find evidence in accord with their individual temperament. Ultimately, it was the product of a buy-in to the narrative provided by practical divinity, whereby believers could situate themselves and their experience in the world, and thereby gain stability in their sense of identity. We are liable to speak of people as 'grounded'; early modern English Calvinists favoured the emblem of the anchor.[17] A ship that is well anchored can swing with the shifting winds of godly emotion without ultimate anxiety about being driven onto the shoals. Assurance allowed laypeople to participate in a key devotional practice, the stirring-up of godly emotions, because as an anchoring disposition, it allowed

[15] *Ibid.*, 132. Scholars such as Bozeman and Dixon have corrected some of the over-emphasis on the anxiety of predestinarian piety, but there has not been much done on the actual experience of this 'vast majority' of lay believers.
[16] Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain*, 124.
[17] See, for instance, Francis Quarles, *Emblemes* (1635: RSTC 20540), 232–5; Alison Adams, *Webs of Allusion: French Protestant Emblem Books of the Sixteenth Century* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003), 285. The anchor is associated with hope in Hebrews 6:19; assurance and hope of salvation were felt to be intimately connected emotions.

them to expect and desire emotional intensity without being emotional wrecks.[18]

The acquisition of assurance began with internalisation of practical divinity, what Dixon has called a chart of 'the workings of grace on the subjective plane of experience'.[19] Treatises and sermons insisted that believers could know and embrace that God had worked their salvation, and that it was therefore utterly sure. Protestant polemicists accused Catholicism of keeping men's consciences 'on the rack of Romish divinity', never certain whether they had satisfied God.[20] English Calvinists followed Theodore Beza in seeing assurance as something that arose from perceiving one's faith, though the nature of this knowledge was variously conceived. Samuel Ward told the godly to 'chew on' God's promises 'till thou feele some sweetnesse in the palate of thy soule', whereas Richard Baxter, facing the rationalism of the Restoration, stressed the cognitive, stating that the Christian can have assurance by reasoning on what one perceives in the soul; we gain assurance because of 'the internal sense of the soul, whereby it is able to feel and perceive its own acts, and to know whether they be real or counterfeit'.[21] Thus, the assuring perception of faith was variously described as a cognition or a feeling. But how could one be sure one had a true perception? Pastors taught that affliction of conscience was itself a sign of faith, since only those with faith would recognise their sinfulness. Further, such affliction is a sign of divine favour, since God only awakens the saved. The godly will still be subject to sinful motions,

---

[18] This is not to argue that puritans did not feel despair at times or that they suffered deeply when in its grip. As MacDonald argues, among puritans, despair came to be seen as common to the Christian experience ('The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira', 45–9), yet it was embedded in a narrative that helped the believer regard it as a 'slough' or 'prison' from which others had escaped, so that even in despair, assurance functioned to help the puritan keep hold of the larger narrative of grace.

[19] Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England*, 6. The following discussion is also indebted to Cohen, *God's Caress*, 94–103; Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain*, 63–169; Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety*, Chapters 2–3; and Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 117–32.

[20] Thomas Wilson, quoted in Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England*, 180. See also, among many others, Nathaniel Cole, *The godly mans assurance* (1633: RSTC 5537), 2–5.

[21] Samuel Ward, *The Life of Faith* (1621: RSTC 25049), 38; Richard Baxter, *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* (1651: Wing B1384), III, 138.

but will hate their power over the heart, itself a sign of their regeneration. Similarly, believers may lack full assurance at first, but will hunger for it, and this desire will spur their growth in grace. Godly exercises will aid that growth; believers should seek out the 'means of salvation' God has provided, knowing that the Spirit will work in their hearts thereby and that assurance is of gradual growth.[22] Thus, though believers were taught that faith was not merely notional but also felt, a wide range of feelings functioned as signs of faith, and a range of devotional exercises could help people locate and understand the import of those feelings.

Spiritually earnest laypeople, perhaps especially those with access to godly books and immersion in a godly household, mastered not only the individual concepts but also their interaction, the narrative component of piety. We see the way in which these commonplaces worked together as narrative in a treatise by Richard Bernard, who taught that assurance comes 'not at once, but by little and little'.[23] Among the means by which the believer would grow in assurance, Bernard lists meditation, the inspiration of the Spirit and sanctification. Meditation should be on God's 'unchangeableness', focusing the believer outside the self onto stable, divine grounds. From God's everlasting decrees, irrevocable promises and covenant, 'the foundation of God remaineth sure'. Next, one is to seek 'an internall sanctification' and to make sure his salvation 'by knowing, feeling, and ever retaining such graces as are Gods good workes, wrought in a man effectually called'. True knowledge of Jesus is one such grace, faith is another, 'after this followeth a plyable hart to obey God' and 'lastly, the Lord worketh an union of hart and spirit with others in Christ'. Those inward graces further manifest themselves in action as believers find themselves to be fruitful in good things, their actions shaped by 'perseverance following Christ, love to the godly, faith in Gods promises, love to Gods ordinances, his word and sacrament'.[24] Bernard's account indicates the multiple grounds people were directed

[22] On the 'means', see Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 123–7. For an account of the interplay between doubts, godly exercises and assurance in the experience of Isaac Ambrose, a puritan pastor, see Tom Schwanda, *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative-Mystical Piety of Puritanism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 90–99. Ambrose saw assurance as a disposition, writing that 'the best cure and remedy of doubtings, is to perfect and strengthen our assurance'.

[23] Richard Bernard, *The Sinners Safetie* (1609: RSTC 1963.3), 46.

[24] *Ibid.*, 47–58.

to in strengthening their assurance – divine promises, the experience of good motions and desires, and the use of godly exercises.[25]

Manuscript remains by pious lay writers indicate that they embraced the call to focus on divine promises. William Carter, an engraver, is typical in heading a page 'promises' and then copying out Scripture verses. The anonymous writer of a manuscript book entitled 'A Golden chayne of Divine sentences of scripture, collected, and lincked togeather, for the souls comforte' included places of Scripture that contain the blessings and promises that attend Bible reading. One annotator of Richard Bentley's *Monument of Matrones* consistently marked in the margins those places that promised grace and forgiveness. Lady Anne Twysden's gathering of verses containing God's promises was an important enough endeavour that her son made a fair copy, along with several of her prayers. The work is titled 'Certayn comfortable places of Scripture', and to read the verses Twysden gathered is to get a sense of a sweet and comforting belief in a Christ who is merciful, who takes human sin upon himself, delivers from fear and leads believers in the truth. Such lists indicate the way in which devotional practices could help create a confident and hopeful frame of mind.[26]

A sermon by Richard Sibbes illustrates how assurance fit within a network of meaning.[27] Sibbes told his hearers that 'it is a duty to joy in the Lord as our portion'. But 'who can be thankful for that which he knows not?' Therefore, 'we must be certain of his love first': assurance is a necessary foundation for other godly emotions. The London merchant Thomas Eyre expressed this connection in a manuscript treatise he wrote for his father-in-law:

> when wee see and knowe this truth; the heart of every man and woman chosen of God yeildeth obeydience thereunto sayeing presently with confidence in God upon a particular assurance from him, that hee is his, or her God.

---

[25] Webster demonstrates the recursive nature of these practices, complicating the idea that puritan experience followed a straightforward *ordo salutis*; see 'Writing to Redundancy', 52–3.

[26] BL Sloane MS 141, f. 95r; Hampshire Record Office MS 44M69/M7/8; Richard Bentley, *Monument of Matrones* (1582: RSTC 1892), Folger Library copy; Kent Archives MS U1655/F.8.

[27] 'The Matchless Love, and In-Being', in Richard Sibbes, *The Saints Cordials* (1629: RSTC 22503); the sermon did not appear in later editions.

> My Pillar; my staye; my susteyner: My creator: my maker; My husband; my rock: my Redeemer: my Savior: My Lord, My God: thou art myne and I am thine: this is livelie faith. Thrice happy are they that have it./ hee that hath this Mine, (the Eternall to be his God) hath more then all the Mines of India.

With this pun, Eyre captures the way that knowledge, faith, assurance and joy go together through their anchoring in God. Sibbes rejects 'the abominable doctrine of popery – I cannot speak too hardly of it – which teacheth that we ought to doubt of God's love [and] that there is no way or means to gain assurance'.[28] Rather, he instructs his auditors how to draw on their assurance. Those who doubt God's love because they fall into sin need to humble themselves and repent, for it is Satan who 'comes with "If," [saying] "If thou wert in the love of God, and the love of God in thee . . . would God follow thee thus and thus?"' Sibbes explains that 'Satan is wonderful prone to take these weapons . . . of sin desertions, sometime of temptations and outward afflictions; and so he comes with his "If"'. The assured Christian, though, 'retorts' that afflictions are corrections. We might say that Satan and sin open up hypothetical narratives of identity. Assurance evinces itself in the ability to inhabit one's part firmly, rejecting alternate roles. Believers must be ready with the counter-narrative 'that God loves us as he loves his Son, that he chastiseth every son; and that God's love is not always and only manifested in exempting of us from these things'. An assured faith, Sibbes explains, can 'plead against all the suggestions of Satan and accusations of conscience'.[29]

Assurance was, then, cultivated through practices, such as gathering Scripture promises, and was rehearsed as part of an emotional script. Laypeople learned concrete skills – Bible reading, meditation, prayer, attendance at worship, godly conference – that focused them on God's salvific work.[30] In the traces of devotional practice found in manuscript records of Bible reading, prayer and the rehearsal of doctrine, laypeople do not go back to ground zero and wonder whether they are elect. They copy out the grounds of assurance and so put afflictions and other causes of doubt in their place, as God's chastisements, any suggestion

---

[28] Thomas Eyre, BL MS Stowe 983, f. 59v; Sibbes, *The Saints Cordials*, 92.
[29] Sibbes, *The Saints Cordials*, 95–6.
[30] Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety*, 93–193; Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 123–7.

to the contrary being the work of Satan and the old man.[31] Certainly, assurance, like other habitual dispositions, needed strengthening, and miscellanies show that laypeople had studied devotional manuals that mapped out how to identify and construe one's emotions.[32] Competence in being able to see one's life in those terms gave confidence in one's identity.[33] Further, one was able to throw oneself into the role. Puritan emotional life was famously strenuous, as believers exhorted themselves to feel particular affections more intensely. While some emotions were spontaneous, in the case of godly affections – terror at sin, sweetness of divine communion – intensity of feeling resulted from cultivation. In either case, these emotions were always construable in terms of a spiritual dynamic: anxiety about money reflects the sinful heart's failure to depend on God; the overwhelming grief at the death of a child witnesses the continued power of the natural man. As the believer was able to fit all emotions into a godly narrative, this fact confirmed the narrative's explanatory adequacy.[34] Thus, confidence in one's election could seem to the believer a response to the examination of the evidence of one's life – having seen this, I feel thus. Assurance rested on the acquisition of an interpretive facility.

When we look at laypeople's accounts of their experience of assurance, then, we should bear in mind several points. First, puritan piety accommodated a variety of temperaments and experiences of what was assuring.[35] Second, there was a wide range of knowledge and skills

---

[31] Dixon rejects the notion that pastors 'encouraged believers to oscillate between the extremes of presumption and despair in a way that brought them back, again and again, to the question of whether they were saved'. Rather, 'a great many predestinarian ministers . . . emphasised the life of the saint *post* assurance' (*Practical Predestinarians in England*, 11).

[32] Cohen has pointed out the stress on keeping the habit strong by continual practice (*God's Caress*, 103). See also Kate Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers: Gender and Self-definition in an Emergent Writing Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), Chapter 3 on 'application to the self' as a skill mastered by the laity.

[33] Or, as Webster finds of puritan diaries, 'a past sense of grace nurtured a present assurance and future hope'; the practice of writing served to fix and validate experience. Webster, 'Writing to Redundancy', 47.

[34] George Herbert wrote that his 'life makes good' the narratives in Scripture, which conversely 'find me out' and 'in another make me understood' ('Holy Scriptures' [II], lines 9–12). For practical divinity's ability to hold together elements of piety in tension with each other, see Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 132.

[35] Cohen, *God's Caress*, 108; Dixon argues that the 'evangelical effort would have been self-defeating had ministers over-defined the properties and manifestations

which puritans could master. Third, when believers had mastered this blueprint, they had command of the skills needed to see themselves as in the company of the godly, whatever the situation. Laypeople who left religious writings had, commonly, achieved this sort of assurance. To write was to construe one's experience in conformity with the godly pattern, and to desire to fix one's self-accounting on the page. The pages of their manuscripts can be seen as the material form that assurance assumed.[36] Devotional exercises that cultivated godly emotions, the reflexive act of interpreting and recording that emotion experience, and the feeling of assurance were all connected – skill at the first two grounded the latter.[37] In reading texts by laypeople, one is struck not only by their assurance of salvation but also by the assurance with which they have performed their devotional work.

Assurance in the notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington: anchor against anxiety

As we now turn to look at examples of the experience of assurance recorded by laypeople, it is worth recalling that, whether meditations or self-writing, their work witnesses how people had been taught to think about their feelings and what emotion states they sought to repress or cultivate. Texts thus offer an emotional narrative rather than raw expressions of feeling, and they were usually written for the eyes of others, as a record of the person's achievement of godly insight or as a rehearsal of godly ideas intended to ignite and fan the appropriate emotional responses. Lay writers observed their 'inward motions' as particular instances of emotional states that characterised the godly in general, alternating easily between 'I' and 'we'. That said, there are ways in which

---

of saving faith' and that 'most English predestinarians argued that saving faith manifested itself in a variety of ways' (*Practical Predestinarians in England*, 175).

[36] We cannot have access to the experience of those who did not write, but the use of godly conference suggests that people had ways of narrating and thus fixing their identities through oral witness in a community of the like-minded. Lake and Como have documented the degree to which London puritanism was a community of people who shared a cultural script that was refined and debated orally; see Peter Lake and David Como, '"Orthodoxy" and its Discontents: Dispute Settlement and the Production of "Consensus" in the London (Puritan) Underground', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (2000): 34–70.

[37] Given the need to learn the puritan blueprint, it is not surprising that much writing by laypeople was written in mid-life or later. Letter-writers seeking pastoral counsel present an obvious exception.

such writing does reveal the writer's particular experience. Many writers report on the 'motions' they feel, whether of the old Adam or of the Holy Spirit. Further, works have a characteristic tone and imagery revelatory of the writer's emotional disposition. The variations in tone among writers remind us that while it is possible to speak of characteristic puritan emotions or an emotional repertoire, the particular performance of those emotions will vary according to the individual.

I will begin by sketching Nehemiah Wallington's experience of assurance, since he is often seen as a typical puritan, and will then look at meditations left by Grace Mildmay and Richard Willis as examples of securely possessed assurance that stretch our sense of what that disposition could entail. For all of these writers, assurance rests on diversified grounds of both knowledge and skills. They have become adept at distinguishing sinful and gracious motions of the heart. They regularly experience that God 'brings to mind' Scripture verses when they need light cast on an issue or situation. They scan their lives for signs of special providence and work out the significance of mercies or afflictions. They make lists of God's promises. Because much of what they write reflects a conventional rehearsal of what they have been taught to see, it may strike us as expressing learned ideas rather than experience. Nonetheless, each instance, for the writer, involved success at framing the raw material of experience in divine terms.

Wallington came of age during the height of puritan practical divinity and his is a case where, although assurance did not ensure the end to anxiety, it nonetheless performed the function for which it was designed.[38] Wallington records intense emotional ups and downs, noting 'the days of faith, are like the days of the yeare, whereof some are faire, some foule . . . even dayly is there a change by turns'.[39] In the face of this changeableness, assurance anchored Wallington's self-identity. He regularly records the 'means' to which he had recourse when troubled

[38] For an excellent account of Wallington's attainment of assurance, see Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford University Press, 1985), 39–44. Seaver concludes that 'it was not introspection but reflection upon the nature of Christ that seems finally to have produced a conviction that he was numbered among the elect' (43), confirming pastoral advice to turn outward to Christ. Christocentrism may have corresponded with a more settled, happy faith; Twysden and Mildmay's piety also supports this conjecture. I am grateful to Derek Hirst for the suggestion.

[39] Nehemiah Wallington, *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1619–1654*, David Booy (ed.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 52; see also 33.

by sin. Some that he notes are devotional, some 'outward'. He recounts, for instance, that as a young man, God 'opened min eyes of my understanding' to his sin, 'for this sharp Master makes me feall what sinne is, and what heall is, and in regard of both what myselfe is'. After his awakening, he set himself 'meanes to overcome and concker my sinne and corruption'. His list of means to aid against lust starts with devotional practices: 'often prayer with teares to God' and reading and meditating on places of the Bible that 'speake against hordom'.[40] It continues with 'outward meanes' such as 'abstaining the companie of women' and 'painfulnesse in my calling', as well as fasting and getting up early.[41] Throughout his life, he had recourse to the steps prescribed for the troubled: 'I did forttifie myselfe with comfort out of Gods promises in his word and sweet meditations I had . . . I went often to God in holy prayr in private and found much comfort which made me to believe that hee would helpe me because his holy spirit did so move me to seeke him.'[42] These practices did not free Wallington from the emotions that troubled him, but they provided a framework of tasks that he could undertake.

Further, Wallington could undertake those tasks successfully because he was a good student of the narrative that explained the significance of his changeable emotions. His account of his struggles rarely surprises us: he is able to fit his experiences into the standard pattern of the contest between the old man and the new. But that is itself significant, signalling his assured mastery of that discourse. However vividly he describes his episodes of oppression by sin and terror of judgment, those emotions are always subordinated within a narrative of election. His accounts of his spiritual angst are part of repeated retrospective self-examination that expects to find evidence of a heart that is deeply sinful before the Holy Spirit begins its mollifying work. The pattern positions his heart as a 'stie of fillthynes within me', yet that awareness leads to a hatred of and grief at his sin, so that despite labouring 'exceedingly under some corruptions of my filthy polluted heart', he also found that he 'could never set to commit any sinne willingly but oh the goodnesse of my God in making mee to hate sinne so much the more'.[43] He does not claim credit for resisting temptation. In fact, he relates that one time he resolved that he would 'follow all those wicked corsses that my filthy and odious heart was given unto'; at that point, though, he was 'striken

[40] *Ibid.*, 41.
[41] *Ibid.*, 42–3.
[42] *Ibid.*, 80.
[43] *Ibid.*, 40.

in a grate masse and astonied and as it ware tied hand and foote (in my mind) that I could not stirre "in that kind"'.[44] God gets the credit for restraining Wallington here and in many similar situations.

Wallington thus can seem full of self-loathing not only because he describes his heart as a filthy sty but also because he represents any resistance to sin as God's doing, whether directly or through the agency of his family, friends and pastor. During his most troubled years in his early twenties, according to his account, there were days and weeks at a time when he saw devils and feared being alone, and during one bad stretch the devil tempted him to buy and eat rat poison. These passages make it clear that for a person of his anxious and gloomy temperament, puritan teachings led at times to intense misery. But within the framework of retrospective narrative, these episodes are also evidence of the mercy of God. Though he does not take credit for his success, the very fact that he came through these bouts of temptation without succumbing is evidence of his elect status. He pauses in one section recounting his business troubles to remember God's mercies to him, and then concludes: 'Yet as if theses mercies of God ware to little hee hath bestowed grater one me in giving me his Gospel . . . with peace of conscience and comforts of his spirit whereas he might have left me to horrower and terrower of conscince'.[45] Such peace and comfort are two marks of election. Wallington's 'Record of Gods Marcys' is a record of his success at the process of ensuring his election. Eleven of the 50 notebooks he lists as having written during his life record such comforting mercies, witnessing the importance of his ability to fit all the events of his life, even his most troubled years, into the pattern of a godly life.

This assurance not only conditions how he experiences passing emotions, but it can also find voice as its own emotion state, a triumphant, defiant confidence. In another account of God's mercies and his own spiritual growth, 'The groth of a Christian', Wallington reports that 'mee thinkes the Lord hath subdued my sinnes in a grat measure', placing his five great sins under his feet. Like Sibbes' believer who can 'retort' to Satan, Wallington 'can stare them [his sins] in the face. And I can say to them through the helpe of my God (as it is sayd of death) O sin I will be thy death' and can give thanks to God 'which hath given me victory through my Lord Jesus Christ'.[46] Wallington immediately

---

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*, 74.

[46] *Ibid.*, 167. Alec Ryrie notes that puritans placed the blame for temptation to despair on the devil, giving rise to a sub-genre of devotional dialogue between the

adds that he can 'see farr more abominations in my corrupted heart' than the world can see, and that his sin is 'a grat torment unto me'. But, he continues, 'here is my comfort, that I see a power overpowering all my corruptions and that I shall through my Lord and captain Jesus Christ overcome at last and be acceptable through this my sweet Saviour'.[47] As this passage suggests, he favours imagery of spiritual combat, giving his assurance a strenuous edge. For that reason, the kind of assurance that his account represents does not necessarily convince us that predestination was a sweet and comfortable doctrine. Wallington's experience follows the same pattern we find in the spiritual accounts of Dionys Fitzherbert, John Bunyan and Sarah Wight, terror of damnation requiring assiduous pastoral intervention before it gives way to confidence in God's mercy, and even the assured believer seeing life in terms of warfare and vigilant discipline of one's perverse natural affections.[48]

Assurance as source of comfort and joy: Grace Mildmay and Richard Willis

We are still left asking whether there was room for a more comfortable puritan piety. The Scriptural meditations of Grace Mildmay indicate that there was. They show us the emotional life of someone who, brought up in a godly household, internalised Calvinist teachings without personal crisis and found deep comfort in the assurance that her devotional practices brought.

Skill helps to dispel anxiety, and Mildmay's meditations testify to the skill that could be achieved with practice. At her death, she left a bound manuscript of her meditations that fills 900 pages, ranging over the central topoi of Calvinist faith. She developed each meditation on a foundation of Bible verses, filling her margins with references. Some of the meditations are composed by piecing together verses or whole passages, directly quoted, while others are her own pronouncements

---

soul and Satan, marked by this stance of defiance (*Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 32).

[47] Wallington, *Notebooks*, 167.

[48] See Katharine Hodgkin, *Women, Madness and Sin in Early Modern England: The Autobiographical Writings of Dionys Fitzherbert* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Richard Sharrock (ed.) (Oxford University Press, 1963); Henry Jessey, *The exceeding riches of grace advanced by the spirit of grace, in an empty creature (viz) Mris. Sarah Wight* (1658: Wing J692).

on a topic, with marginal texts tying her words to their Scriptural warrant. This kind of composition through collation was a method taught laypeople for the digestion of Scripture.[49] Mildmay records that every day she 'did read a chapter in the bookes of Moses, another in one of the prophetes one chapter in the Gospells, & another in the Epistles to the end of the revelation, & the whole psalmes appoynted for the daye'.[50] She drew on her own thorough familiarity with the Bible rather than an existing concordance and, in meditating, biblical verses 'came into' her mind, given, she reports, by God.[51]

This thorough immersion grounded Mildmay's assurance, which she frequently refers to as a given. She knows with 'assured confidence' that Christ 'accepteth me as a beloved servant'.[52] Her regular rehearsals of Calvinist soteriology culminate in statements of assurance. First, Christ deflected 'the strokes, wounds, & blowes from us, even to his very death, which he suffred to restore us unto lyfe./ And hath raysed himselfe from the grave for our victory'. Second comes the gift of faith with other blessings. God 'hath sanctifyed our bread, he hath blessed our children, he hath given unto us his peace, & hath endued our harts with a participation of his joye'. Third comes assurance of justification, as the work of the Spirit, for God 'hath sent downe & given unto us his holy spirit, to dyrect & comfort our spirits, & to assure our harts that we are the sonnes of God, & that he loveth \us as/ his deare children'. The list is in the past tense, a record of the work of God accomplished.[53]

---

[49] Narveson, *Bible Readers*, 34–9, 55–65.

[50] Grace Mildmay, *Meditations*, Northampton Central Library, Northamptonshire Studies Collection, Phillipps MS 2569, prefatory memoir, 45; the manuscript is now held by the Northamptonshire Records Office.

[51] For a fuller account, see Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers*, Chapters 6 and 7.

[52] Mildmay, *Meditations*, 90. Mildmay notes more than once that she has had assurance since childhood, recounting, for instance, that she was called by the Holy Spirit 'when young and tender' in her father's house (*ibid*., 617). Linda Pollock notes this firm assurance in her description of Mildmay's piety, but because it is based more on the experience of the Holy Spirit than on self-examination, and because Mildmay writes frequently of the need for diligence in good works, she sees her piety as atypical, 'more humane and optimistic than we have come to associate with Calvinist Protestantism'; see Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman* (London: Collins & Brown, 1993). Both features, though, were standard topics in godly treatises and self-writing.

[53] Mildmay, *Meditations*, 138–9. See also, for instance, 166–7.

Mildmay's meditations return again and again to the stability, confidence and peace of conscience she found in God. Repeatedly, she affirms that believers must trust only in God, who cannot deceive or fail and who will keep them from evil. 'All creatures, both in heaven & in earth will deceave our trust : but he alone, he onely is juste & true', she declares, exhorting her readers: 'Let us hang, & depend upon him, & all his promises onely; for assuredly he will not fayle us in any tittle thereof'.[54] The earth will pass away, but those who trust shall 'be sure to stand when all earthly things shall falle', for 'it is not possible for him to deceive us, he being the eternall truth it selfe'.[55] Further, God's love would keep his children secure despite their weakness: 'It is the love of God in Christ Jesus which holdeth us in this intire manner unto himselfe; for of our selves we cannot but continually runne from him.' The images of hanging on God and of being held close by him are typical of the way that Mildmay regularly figures God as loving parent whose presence gives security and peace. She cannot recall a day when God did not support her 'as a mother stayeth up her infant from falling when it beginneth to goe'.[56] When she finds her 'estate of regeneration' weak, she prays that God will 'lead and hold us therein by his arm, his hand'.[57] She also figures regeneration in parental terms, praying 'let him wash our faces for the renewing of our myndes'.[58]

God's power as the shaper of history also grounds her confidence. 'The Sunne is not more certaine in his rysing in the firmament at the tyme prefixed', she declares, 'then the Sonne of God was in his comming into the world at the tyme appoynted . . . according unto the oath & promise of God'.[59] This is an

> unfallible testimony of the truthe of Gods words, & promises unto all them that beleeve in him even for ever. The Sunne, the Moone, & the Starres, with the whole firmament shall fayle : & the whole earth shall be melted with fyre./ But the word, oath, & promises of God, unto

[54] *Ibid.*, 513.
[55] *Ibid.*, 518.
[56] *Ibid.*, 168. This image echoes Mildmay's description of her own mother's care for her religious development: she 'examined me in my tender age, what were my thoughts when I was alone'. Just as God brought meditations into her mind, so, Mildmay recalls, her mother 'taught me also her meditations and prayers by heart' (*ibid.*, 29).
[57] *Ibid.*, 164.
[58] *Ibid.*, 158.
[59] *Ibid.*, 514.

> Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, & David shall stand for ever, for the stabilitie & strength of all his redeemed people.

Stability, strength, certainty, infallibility, firmness in standing when all else deceives and fails – the regularity with which Mildmay returns to these themes suggests their emotional power. The sure promises of forgiveness, union and everlasting life are a 'cornerstone', a 'foundation', a 'pillar', her 'stabilitie' and joy.[60] In an image based on Jacob's dream, she figures Christ as a 'ladder' firmly linking believers to God:

> Christ reacheth from heaven unto the earth, & we ascend from the earth unto the heaven by him alone[.] The stepps whereon our feete maye be stayed in our ascending, is, to be joyned unto Christ in our faith & obedience unto him whereby we may walke, & rest in him./ God the father standeth upon the toppe of the ladder, to staye the same that it cannot moove.

This homely image of God steadying the ladder indicates her imaginative investment in divine stability and the assurance it gave.[61]

This assurance rests on communion with God, enjoyed through Mildmay's practice of meditation on Scripture. It is a regular exercise that gives access to the strength and safety that only God offers. Believers should:

> be prepared every daye even with the rysing of the sunne, to enter into the place of our strength & safetie./ which is to meditate & stedfastly believe in the word & sure promises of God in Christ Jesus: unto all that put theyr trust in him, & departe from iniquitie./ It is our

---

[60] Mildmay also declares that when a person seems at sea, 'tottering with every wynde', God is our 'stay and help' (*ibid.*, 655).

[61] The interpretation of Jacob's ladder as a typological foreshadowing of Christ comes from John 1:51, in which Jesus tells Nathanael: 'Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.' The Geneva marginal gloss to the story of Jacob's ladder explained that: 'Christ is the ladder whereby God and man are joyned together, and by whome the Angels minister unto us.' While the association of the story with devotional ascent and descent has a long history, I have not yet found a source for the idea of God steadying the ladder from the top, although the woodcut in Martin Luther's 1534 Bible shows God as king at the top of the ladder. For Luther's modifications of medieval tradition, see David Steinmetz, 'Luther and the Ascent of Jacob's Ladder', *Church History*, 55 (1986): 179–92.

> onely arke to cary & lifte us up: & the onely Cittie of our strength & defence.[62]

Meditation is one topic on which Mildmay regularly wrote in the first person, seeking to capture its emotional power. She tells her readers that:

> all these my meditations which the holy spirit of the Lord hath gathered & brought into my remembrance, are testimonyes unto my conscience of his gratious presence./ And when I presente them unto him, in the sincere devotion of my mynde, my soule receiveth unspeakable consolation./ which is also a testimony unto my Conscience, of his presence & of his gratious favoure & love.[63]

Mildmay, in other words, experienced the ideas and verses that came to her in meditating as Christ's work. She calls Jesus 'myne ancient friend and myne oldest acquaintance, as my conscience beareth witness by many unfallible tokens thereof betwixt thee and my soul'.[64] Not only did receiving the meditations bring assurance of God's presence, but using them brought a 'consolation' that also witnessed God's favour. That she experienced her meditations as something that Christ brought into her memory indicates that meditation came easily after years of Bible reading and practice. For her, the solace and stability she found in meditation was rooted in her remarkable facility.

It is true that Mildmay feels her heart to be utterly sinful, but she has internalised the Calvinist idea that believers continue to struggle with their sinful nature throughout life. Her failings therefore do not shake her assurance. In a meditation on her experience of letting slip godly motions, she recounts that:

> Often tymes I dreame that I heare the word of god \with great devotion,/ & pray with teares—:And, though it be but a dreame yet it is a good motion, & so I take it as coming from God./ And when I awake therewith all, I call to mynde & presente my wonted prayers & meditations unto God, with full determination to aryse early that morning being the Sabaoth, & to seeke the Lord with my whole harte . . . And even in the same very instant I fall a sleepe, & slept out all that tyme whereby that holy exercyse was prevented & those gratious motions

[62] Mildmay, *Meditations*, 522.
[63] *Ibid.*, 685.
[64] *Ibid.*, 168.

> which the holy spirit of God wrought in me were revoked, but against my will, God knoweth.

We might expect this record of Mildmay's failure to cause consternation, or at least grief, and that if concern about election were a central focus of devotional exercise, she would take pains to analyse the significance of this experience. However, she in fact uses it as an occasion to meditate on her election. She notes a similar experience of resolving to spend all the Sabbath afternoon meditating on the sermon, but instead taking a nap. Not at all anxious, she concludes: 'Herein the Lord revealeth my weakenesse & inclination to swarve from him, & his owne wonderfull mercy & patience towards me that he dealeth not with me accordingly, but spareth me.' She declares that God makes his gracious motions good to the believer, 'accepting them/ though wee performe them not as we ought'.[65] Indeed, 'when we feele the least sparke of grace, faith & feare of God, kindle & be maintained with in us', then 'We maye be sure, these are the most unfallible tokens & markes of our regeneration and new birth in Christ Jesus'.[66] It is this identity as God's chosen that inspires effort, not the attempt to determine election. Mildmay exhorts her readers that given the 'undoubted tokens' of God's love, we should 'be the more exact, speedy & earnest in our endeavours',[67] examining our thoughts to determine which are from Satan and bearing hearts filled with thanks and desire for further grace. God's Spirit is evident: 'Assuredly we maye most sensibly feele the working of Gods spirit within us.' True, there will also be periods of deadness when 'the Lord doeth hyde hymselfe & withdraweth the gratious motions of his holy spirit', but that is for a purpose – that 'we maye knowe our selves, & that we can doe nothing but what we are moved thereby'.[68] Further, she understands assurance in connection with perseverance. She adjures herself:

> Now then, if I can saye in the truth of my conscience betwixt God & my soule, & that God himself ratifieth the same & answereth thereunto that hee hath ever beene with mee from my childhood unto this daye, & hath caryed & ledd me as his deare beloved, & hath given mee from tyme to tyme the true markes & tokens thereof./ How

[65] *Ibid.*, 691.
[66] *Ibid.*, 691–2.
[67] *Ibid.*, 692.
[68] *Ibid.*, 693.

> should not I stedfastly believe that the same God of truth & mercy, will be unto me the same faithfull God for ever & \ever/ without end?[69]

Mildmay has mastered the Calvinist map of godly experience, interpreting good motions as from God and as signs of her election, and the absence of good motions as a salutary reminder of her dependence on the Spirit, and seeing all of her experience as part of the life of a child of God, ratified to her even as she nears the grave. The next meditation is on her mortal body as it approaches death; she does not fear falling into the grave, 'for as much as I am predestined from before all beginnings to rise agayn from the grave unto lyfe for Christ my saviour hath enlightened and enabled me there unto by his resurrection'.[70] Her grasp of this theology allows her to acknowledge all emotions with equanimity.

While the grasp of theology is clearly a key grounds for Mildmay's sense of assurance, her confidence is also based on her skill at the 'means' that the godly were enjoined to use. During times when the Lord seems to have withdrawn the Spirit, for example, we should 'exercyse our prayers & meditations in the word of God, & our faith therein, with an humble spirit, evermore confessing our sinnes',[71] and we must prepare our hearts and 'Watch & praye that ye enter not into temptation'.[72] Because Mildmay was able to root her rehearsal of Calvinist doctrine in Scripture, often unfolding it by means of nothing but Scripture quotation, she was convinced of the authority and truth of her meditations. Anchored in a web of cross-referencing, her meditations were, in her words, 'the stability of my mind' and her 'Jacob's pillar'. Her religious identity was developed and found expression through writing. Her possession of assurance, in other words, is not simply indicated by her declarations about her predestination or even by the intense moments of communion with Christ that she experienced, but also by her output: meditation never ceased working for her.[73]

---

[69] *Ibid.*, 694–5.
[70] *Ibid.*, 696.
[71] *Ibid.*, 694.
[72] *Ibid.*, 699.
[73] For the confidence that meditation provided Mildmay, see also Retha Warnicke, 'Lady Mildmay's Journal: A Study in Autobiography and Meditation in Reformation England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 20 (1989): 55–68, at 68.

Mildmay's meditations, then, witness how a puritan could find assurance a stabilising disposition, anchoring all her other religious affections. She is recognisably puritan in her sense of the distinction between godly and wicked, the need to shun the company of the ungodly, the need to take stock of God's mercies and the need to be vigilant in keeping the heart pure as a dwelling for Christ.[74] Less focused than Mildmay on vigilant self-discipline, Richard Willis' meditations, published in 1639 when he reached 75, exhibit a positively cheerful faith, and to consider his assurance alongside Wallington and Mildmay perhaps calls for a capacious sense of puritan piety, yet he was an enthusiastic reader of puritan devotional works and wrote his meditations under the prompting of one of them. Calling his book *Mount Tabor. Or Private exercises of a penitent sinner*, in reference to the site of Christ's transfiguration, Willis devoted his meditations to 'renewing our faith (the Life of our Soules) by Prayer and Meditation' in order to have a 'continuall feast, to rejoyce alwayes with the Lord'.[75] In so doing, he followed exhortations that he found in *The Life of Faith* by the Ipswich puritan Samuel Ward, which called people to a 'daily diet': 'Looke how duely thou refreshest thy body, by use of repast or recreation; so often at the least be sure to cheare up thy soule by the use of thy faith.'[76] It is not a matter of locating one's faith, but of heightening one's sense of it. Ward tells readers: 'Looke what promises and priviledges thou doest habitually beleeve, now actually thinke of them, roule them under thy tongue, chew on them till thou feele some sweetnesse in the palate of thy soule.'[77] He lists six topics, which Willis uses along with a seventh of his own to round out the week. The topics include 'how excellent a thing it is to have all thy debts cancelled', 'How glorious a thing to be the son of God' and 'How happy a condition for thee, upon thy perseverance, to be assured of thy salvation'.[78] Ward, in other words, assumes assurance in his readers, even if, as is typical among experimental predestinarians, he hedges in noting the need for perseverance. Willis embraces these suggested topics wholeheartedly. He does declare his wretched state by nature, but always moves quickly to celebrate God's mercy and goodness

[74] See, for instance, 340–44, 843–5, 617–20 and 305; these themes recur throughout.
[75] Richard Willis, *Mount Tabor. Or Private exercises of a penitent sinner* (1639: RSTC 25752), 1.
[76] Quoted in Willis, *Mount Tabor*, 2.
[77] Ward, *The Life of Faith* 34.
[78] Willis, *Mount Tabor,* 3.

in blotting out his sins, with the result that praise is the dominant tone of his seven initial meditations. These seven are followed by another 37 occasional meditations, which evince a lively interest and satisfaction at how God's ways can be observed in the world.

Willis wrote in old age, a stroke having forced his retirement as a secretary to Lionel Cranfield, and in composing his meditations, he reveals that he has mastered the devotional skills that pastors recommended. He is a reader of godly books, mentioning volumes by Ward, Bolton, Sutton, Lansberque and Perkins, usually identifying them not only by title but edition and page number as well. He is a taker of sermon notes; one meditation is on the discovery of notes he took 40 years earlier, which he found as he went through old papers. He gathers texts from Scripture; each of his deliberate meditations begins with a collation of Scripture verses on the subject, and the second meditation is divided into three heads, each bolstered by multiple proof texts, which also suggests that he kept a Scripture commonplace book. He promotes religious exercises in his family; he and his wife pray together, and his wife assigns their seven-year-old granddaughter daily Bible reading. He consults his pastor on cases of conscience, and transcribes a letter his pastor sent him in response to one case.

Yet so little anxiety is expressed in these devotions that we might hesitate to take Willis as a puritan. In the first meditation, he does acknowledge his 'manifold and grievous offenses' and asks 'what surety will come in to be my baile, in this desperate and forlorne condition?'[79] Yet the answer comes quickly and easily:

> This satisfaction can no way be made but by thine own blessed selfe (O most gracious Lord Jesus, one only Saviour) who being God and Man in one person, hast vouchsafed out of thine infinite mercy and goodnesse, together with our fraile nature, to take also our debts, all our sinnes upon thy selfe; and so (as my most glorious surety and Redeemer) to free me from that insupportable burthen, which otherwise had pressed me downe to the nethermost hell.[80]

This consideration leads Willis to pray for grace to strike his stony heart so that he may lay fast hold on Christ with the hands of faith, 'that so this allsufficient satisfaction of thine applied to my soule and conscience, and thy faith become mine, may make me assured, that all

[79] *Ibid*., 14.
[80] *Ibid*., 14–15.

my huge and burthensome debts are cancelled'.[81] The impression one gets, that Willis embraces without struggle the sufficiency of grace and assumes that Christ will grant his request, is reinforced by his use of the governing metaphor of account books throughout the meditation. He starts with every sin 'a grievous debt indeed, and a debt upon record, in Gods owne debt-booke' and carries the metaphor through, noting that it is not possible 'that the blacke lines of my debts of sinne could bee crossed or blotted out of Gods debt-booke by any other meanes, then by the red lines of thy most precious blood',[82] whereupon it follows that Christ will make satisfaction for him and ease his fearful conscience 'in assurance that all my debts are paid, and crossed out of Gods Debt-booke by thee my most blessed surety, never to bee demanded of mee againe'.[83] The metaphor has a tidy logic to it. It focuses on the way in which God operates his account books, freeing Willis from dwelling on his sins or the adequacy of his faith. Indeed, in the prayer that follows, Willis asks for grace 'not to stand onely poring and gazing upon my sinnes the objects of confusion, but to lift up the eyes of my soule unto thee (my gracious Saviour) the proper object of consolation, and to be wholly and truly enflamed with thy love'.[84] This prayer carries him back into meditation, enjoining his soul to 'rejoyce together with joy unspeakable and glorious' and to 'sing and be merrie in the Lord'.[85] Assurance that his debts are paid is a 'blessed comfort of all comforts' and allows him to conclude by praying that he may 'with joy and gladnesse, comfort and cheerfulnesse, walk before thee this day'.[86] One imagines Willis putting down his quill and leaving his prayer closet humming a psalm and beaming with beneficence.

Throughout the seven deliberate meditations that open his book, Willis dwells far more on comfort and joy than on fear. He does lay out the fearfulness of God's justice, but mainly as a springboard to celebrate 'those most blessed and extraordinary privileges' that he enjoys, starting with being 'borne an Englishman, in the time of the most glorious Sun-shine of the Gospell of grace' when peace reigns and the kingdom has been preserved from the 'Spanish invincible Armado' and the 'Popish hellish Powder plot', and also for particular mercies, above all

[81] *Ibid.*, 16.
[82] *Ibid.*, 15.
[83] *Ibid.*, 17.
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] *Ibid.*, 18.
[86] *Ibid.*, 19.

'the assurance thou hast given me of the upshot of all the finall and crowning mercies, in the life to come'.[87] When Willis does consider his sins, he desires that his 'hard and dull heart' may be quickened and 'truly broken and dissolved into sighs of true contrition', but he recognises that though he should weep day and night, 'yet all could not serve to draw thy mercy upon me, for . . . nothing could serve the turn, but the precious blood of Jesus Christ'.[88] His inadequacy does not cause agitation, though, because he can remind his soul of 'a true principle in the heavenly art of comforting afflicted consciences; that so soone as a man is heartily humbled for all his sinnes, and wearie of the waight', Christ shall welcome him, for 'it is not so much the muchnesse and measure of our sorrow, as the truth and heartiness of it' that counts.[89] Willis has no need of a spiritual physician. He has absorbed all the commonplaces of consolation and easily sees his case in those terms. With remarkable confidence, he notes the 'unspeakable comfort' given by the fact that the 'sonnes of God know most certainly that God is become their heavenly Father. For in this that they are taught of God by his owne spirit to acknowledge him' so that 'they cannot be deceived of their generation: but with more freedome of spirit, yea, and surer knowledge they call God their Father, then any son of the world is able to call upon his earthly father'.[90] Focusing on the happy state of the godly, Willis easily embraces the language of election and adoption.

This perspective grounds Willis' diligence in compiling the occasional meditations that follow, in which he spiritualises sights and events that he remembers, with an elderly man's nostalgic sentiment. Like Wallington and Mildmay, he knows that we must 'make it our studie and care to use all blessed meanes for renewing his image in us, which our former sins have defaced',[91] and his chosen means, meditation, helps him confirm his new gracious perspective, since the world turns out to be infinitely open to moralisation. The occasional meditations are not particularly revealing of his emotions, since he writes in first-person singular only initially, in describing the event or object that prompted each musing, and then writes in the plural voice of the human condition in general when explicating the spiritual import. We do get one glimpse of the tenor of his confidence and optimism, though, when he recounts

[87] *Ibid.*, 29.
[88] *Ibid.*, 33.
[89] *Ibid.*, 33–4.
[90] *Ibid.*, 43–4.
[91] *Ibid.*, 72–3.

that his granddaughter one morning came in, dropped to her knees for a blessing, and then 'knowing that I heard her, she (without expecting any verball answer from me, out of the confidence of my fatherly love) riseth up assuring herself of the blessing shee desired, and so betaketh her selfe to the employments of the day'.[92] Willis takes this as a lesson in the sort of confidence we ought to have in God, asking 'why then should not I with as much (or rather much more) confidence and assurance relie upon thy paternall love?'[93] and exhorting himself 'O then, let my soule for ever rejoyce in this priviledge of thy children'.[94]

Assurance as emotional habit

Can the doctrine of assurance, then, help to give particular shape and force to a disposition toward cheerfulness and optimism, in some believers at least? Willis conveys none of the anxiety we associate with puritanism. This may be a function of genre: he wrote his meditations as public documents meant to explore the shared condition of the Christian, and so they tend towards the formulaic. But Willis refers to godly emotions such as remorse for sin and fear of divine justice without using the rhetorical means to convey the full affective force of such emotions that we associate with puritan writing. Nor do his meditations convey the rigorous self-monitoring of puritanism, or the importance of godly conversation. Willis seems not to have been particularly beset by the Pauline sense of a will at war with itself. He refers to his 'sinful deservings' and 'human infirmities' and 'wretchedness' – but if he recorded particular struggles with sin, the manuscripts have not survived. Lacking these hallmarks of puritan style, Willis could be seen as an example of how far the practices of piety that we associate with puritanism in fact characterised English Protestantism in general among those who took the call to devotion seriously. Or perhaps he achieved the cheerful assurance that puritans were taught characterised a Christian, and we should add him to our picture of the spectrum of puritan emotion.

However we label Willis, Mildmay shows us that there were puritans who expressed no anxiety about their election and who experienced assurance as an ongoing disposition that anchored their experience and construal of other godly emotions as they performed their godliness in

[92] *Ibid.*, 211.
[93] *Ibid.*, 212.
[94] *Ibid.*, 213.

writing. It is possible that assurance was an emotion achieved only in middle age. Wallington was in his forties when he was able to see grace in his preservation from the temptations to do away with himself, and to read with hard-won confidence the evidence of his life as witnessing election. Mildmay, Wallington, and Willis all wrote later in life, and their assurance seems to have been fed by what they experienced as ongoing divine support. Willis speaks of himself as 'espous'd' to God and united by grace to Christ, so that he is ready for the 'second step' to eternal life, which is death. Mildmay meditates on 'what a sweete thing' it will be to 'sleepe in the grave with Christ, to rest from our labours'.[95] They can thus be seen as examples of the 'self-confident and assertive everyday saints who would be able to engage constructively with others because they were not constantly fretting about themselves', a type of layperson that Dixon suggests puritan practical divinity aimed to cultivate.[96] Still, while we might connect their assurance with their fullness of years, it may also be that for Mildmay and Willis, it reflects their coming of age in the 1570s and 1580s, their piety established before the spiritual physicians began calling for quite so rigorous a course of treatment in making one's election sure. It could also be that their secure social and financial position contributed. In contrast, along with Wallington, Robert Woodford gives the impression of a puritan trying to talk himself into the right attitude of thankfulness and into seeing afflictions as signs of fatherly love, but without complete success, given constant economic stress.[97] While we need further study of the factors underpinning assurance, our sense of puritan emotions needs to expand to recognise the role it played as an anchor in a godly layperson's feeling of their inner weather.

[95] *Ibid*., 670.
[96] Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England*, 7. Sir Richard Paulet is another puritan of secure social standing whose prayers and meditations assume his election without question; see Hampshire Record Office MS 44M69/L66/5–7.
[97] John Fielding (ed.), *The Diary of Robert Woodford* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

8

Emotions and the Development of Virtue in Puritan Thought: An Investigation of Puritan Friendship

Nathaniel Warne

Recent theological and philosophical meta-narratives paint the Puritans as the impetus behind a massive shift in history highlighting the individualistic nature of the spiritual life they promoted. This shift in emphasis from a communal to a more personal piety ultimately led to individualism in ethics, which, in the opinion of these thinkers, inevitably lead to the individualism that plagues our current culture. Most famous among these broad stroke meta-narratives of the Puritans is that of sociologist Max Weber. In Weber there is a sense that 'inner worldly asceticism' led to the individualism found later in Western society mentioned above.[1] A more contemporary philosopher, Charles Taylor, in his book *A Secular Age* consistently comes back to a Protestant, and at times explicitly Puritan, explanation of individualism in spirituality.[2] In one sense, it is hard to deny the claims of these historical narratives given by Weber, Taylor and others. There seems to be at least a strong precedent for tracing the changes in broader historical and theological modernity to these sixteenth and seventeenth-century thinkers. However, as I will show in this chapter, this is not the full story. The moral and spiritual life promulgated by the Puritans utilised the

[1] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons (trans.), 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2001).
[2] See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 80, 129, 165, 230, 266.

same ancient, patristic and medieval traditions that contemporary sociologists, philosophers and theologians are attempting to revive;[3] that is, a tradition of classical ethics that emphasises the right ordering of the emotions of an individual person in the development of virtue that extends to, and is drawn from, those within a political and ecclesial community.

For the sixteenth and seventeenth-century English Puritans, the classical virtues, emotions and communities played a significant role in a person's moral development. Learning to develop virtue and to grow in holiness was a process of learning to control the emotions and use them for motivating good actions, a process that was learned by political and ecclesial relations. In this chapter we will look at how the Puritans proposed that one should control and discipline these emotions so that virtues could be developed. We will do this in three stages. First, we will show that the Puritans were *eudaimonistic* with regard to the goal of the moral life; that is, the reason that they disciplined their emotions and pursued virtue was for the sake of happiness. Second, we will consider the relationship between the emotions and reason in developing and habituating virtues. Here we will analyse what the virtues are and how they relate to the emotions. The third stage will show how it was that virtues were to be developed for the Puritans, and it is here that we will specifically look at the Puritans' thought on friendship. Throughout we will examine continuities between the Puritan authors investigated in this chapter and their *eudaimonistic* predecessors, specifically Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas.

A secondary, but no less important, purpose of this chapter is to show that the broad-stroke image of the Puritans painted by those in other disciplines, some examples of which are given above, do not take into account the fact that the Puritans drew heavily from those thinkers who came before them. Not only are these Puritans not the sole impetus of the problems of individualism and ethics, but some of the contemporary theological and philosophical issues that are being addressed through the works of patristic and medieval thinkers are addressed in the Puritans, making them an important and overlooked resource

[3] See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1984); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990); Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

for contemporary Christian ethics. The thinkers addressed below followed in this moral and theological tradition, but made distinctively Protestant amendments.

Happiness: emotion or end?

We must begin our discussion of the relationship between emotions and ethics by looking at the underpinning anthropological assumptions that these thinkers held. University-educated Puritans were well versed in ancient Greek and Roman thought. They were not only reading plenty of Aristotle and Cicero, among others, but were also very familiar with scholastic theology. The Puritans' ethical foundations developed within the tradition of the above secular and Christian moral frameworks.

One of the essential aspects of Puritan ethics is that moral and emotional development is teleological; that is, all motivation for actions and emotions is directed towards an end. This will be addressed in more detail later in the chapter, but it was generally agreed that the end that all humankind seeks is happiness. In other words, the Puritans were *eudaimonistic*. However, where Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas used the word 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία, *beatitudo*) to represent the end (τέλος, *finis*) of action and human life, Puritans used a variety of terms, including 'peaceable disposition' or 'rest'.[4] However, the teleological and *eudaimonistic* underpinning remains consistent. Though different terms are being used to signify the *telos*, the same conceptual *eudaimonistic* framework is being utilised. Happiness is akin to the perfection of our being, a perfection that represents an exceptionally ontologically rich concept that involves the whole of a person, both body and soul. In happiness we act and feel like humans are supposed to act and feel in accordance with God's created intention for humanity. It is important to emphasise that this happiness is a disposition that involves the

[4] The semantic range of the εὐδαιμονία and *beatitudo* is much larger than the English word 'happiness', where the root is drawn from the Middle English *hap*, which means something more along the lines of 'luck' or 'fortune'. Sixteenth and seventeenth-century references to the *Nicomachean Ethics* translate *eudaimonia* as 'happiness', but, as will be shown in this chapter, what is meant by this word in this context is something much more substantial and stable. That said, the term 'happiness' will be used throughout this chapter to refer to the specifically identified *telos* by the Puritans generally, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

possession of virtues. Later in this chapter, we will discuss the virtues' relationship to happiness and the emotions.[5]

Two key examples of *eudaimonism* in earlier Puritan thought are Robert Bolton, who explicitly argues in *A Discourse about the State of True Happinesse* for a teleological structure of action and comfort that ends in 'matchlesse happinesse'.[6] Along with Bolton, William Perkins in his commentary on the Beatitudes, *A Godly and Learned Exposition*, also identifies happiness as the end and adds 'that true happinesse before God, is ever injoyed, yea concerned many times, with the crosse in this world'.[7]

This *eudaimonistic* emphasis persists throughout the seventeenth century. George Webbe in *The Practice of Quietnes* writes that the 'nature of quietness' is a 'peaceable disposition'.[8] Webbe's definition of peace (peaceable disposition) involves the whole of a person both inward in the heart and head, as well as outward in manner.[9] Peace involves virtues such as fortitude[10] as well as mastery over the passions.[11] John Owen relates happiness to 'communion' with God. From eternity, God lay

---

[5] For an account of some of the differences between Aristotle and Aquinas on the passions, see Eleonore Stump, 'The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions' in Sarah Coakley (ed.), *Faith, Rationality, and the Passions* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

[6] Robert Bolton, *A Discourse about the State of True Happinesse Deliuered in Certaine Sermons in Oxford, and at Pauls Crosse* (London: Edmund Weauer, 1611: STC 3228), 1–2, 21, 52, 148. For the use of the term 'happiness' in the sixteenth century, see also Richard Rogers, *The Practice of Christianitie. Or, An Epitome of Seuen Treatises Penned and Published in the Yeere 1603. by That Reuerend and Faithfull Pastor, Mr. R.R. Late Preacher of Wethersfield in Essex, Tending to That Ende* (London: Thomas Man, 1618: STC 21221), 35, 39, 55.

[7] William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition of Christs Sermon in the Mount: Preached in Cambridge by That Reuerend and Iudicious Diuine M. William Perkins. Published at the Request of His Exequutors by Th. Pierson Preacher of Gods Word. Whereunto Is Adioyned a Twofold Table: One, of Speciall Points Here Handled; the Other, of Choise Places of Scripture Here Quoted* (Cambridge University, 1608: STC 19722), 7, 10.

[8] George Webbe, *The Practice of Quietnes Directing a Christian How to Live Quietly in This Troublesome World* (London: John Saywell, 1657: Wing W1199), 7.

[9] *Ibid*., 7–8.

[10] *Ibid*., 10.

[11] *Ibid*., 19. Webbe also cites Augustine as associating quietness with spiritual virtues/gifts (*ibid*., 2).

'in his own bosom a design for our happiness'.[12] Communion is 'the mutual communication of such good things as wherein the Persons holding that Communion are *delighted*, bottomed upon some Union between them'.[13] The complete communion 'with [God] herein, holds some Analogie with his Love in this; for it is a Love also of *rest* and *Delight*'. Owen, referring to Romans 1, writes that 'all of these [philosophers] became fools' when they are deemed to be happy, because they are not with Christ.[14] Importantly, however, Owen is not disagreeing with the ancients' view that wisdom and prudence are necessary for happiness, simply taking it a step further by stating that the wisdom required for happiness is only found in Christ.

For Richard Baxter, the *eudaimonistic* conception of happiness as the *telos* is notably more Augustinian, describing it as 'rest'.[15] In his *The Saints Everlasting Rest*, the beginning of Part III concerns happiness, and how those without Christ do not and will not have it.[16] Rest contains 'a sweet and constant Action of all the Powers of the Soul and Body in the fruition of God'. Baxter calls rest:

> the [estate] of a Christian, (though Perfection consists in Action as the Philosopher thinks) to note both active and passive fruition, wherein a Christians blessedness lies, and the established continuance of both. Our Title will be perfect, and perfectly cleared; our selves, and so our capacity, perfected; our possession and security for its perpetuity, perfect; our Redemption from God, perfect; our motion or Action in and upon him, perfect: And therefore our fruition of him, and consequently our happiness will then be Perfect.[17]

---

[12] John Owen, *Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Each Person Distinctly: In Love, Grace, and Consolation. Or The Saints Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Unfolded* (London: William Marshall, 1700: Wing O779), 40.
[13] *Ibid*., 5, emphasis added.
[14] *Ibid*., 150.
[15] See, for example, Augustine, *Confessions*, Henry Chadwick (trans.) (Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.1.1, 4.12.18. See also Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms*, John E. Rotelle (ed.), Maria Boulding (trans.), 6 vols (Brooklyn: New City Press, 2000).
[16] For a recent look at Baxter with regard to community and ethics, see James Calvin Davis, 'Pardoning Puritanism: Community, Character, and Forgiveness in the Work of Richard Baxter', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 29(2) (2001): 283–306.
[17] Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest, or, A Treatise of the Blessed State of the Saints in Their Enjoyment of God in Glory* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1688: Wing B1395), 5.

In this description of rest, we see the fundamental attributes of classical *eudaimonism*. Rest is the end and perfection of motion, which includes 'moral perfection'.[18] The saint's rest in question here is the most happy estate of a Christian, having obtained the end of his or her course. Or 'it is the perfected endless fruition of God by the *perfected* Saints according to the measure of their *Capacity*, to which their souls arrive at Death: and both soul and body most fully after the Resurrection and final judgement'.[19] Our natural capacities grow (e.g. passions, emotions) and so does our enjoyment of happiness.[20] As the unsaved lose God, 'so they lose all those spiritual delightful Affections and Actions, by which the Blessed do feed on God'.[21] Seventeenth-century Puritans were quick to affirm that true ultimate happiness is only possessed in the next life.[22] It should be noted for the sake of clarity that the Puritans' *eudaimonism* should not be confused with utilitarianism. Pleasure and joy are a result of happiness and not happiness itself, as was the case for contemporaries of the Puritans such as John Locke.

So, with regard to ethics and the passions, happiness itself for the Puritans was not conceived of in emotional categories, though it did involve the emotions. The motivation for striving to bring about and developing our emotions, and to have the right kinds of emotions at the right times, is to obtain happiness. We can now progress to look at the emotions and passions specifically and how they relate to *eudaimonism*, virtue and reason.

Emotions, reason and the development of virtue

This chapter is concerned with moral and emotional development. The word 'development' assumes some kind of movement. In the previous

---

[18] *Ibid*., 271–2, 19.

[19] *Ibid*., 5, emphasis added. 'The Rest containeth the highest Degree of Saints personal *perfection*, both Soul and Body' (18). It seems, though, from this quotation that Baxter would disagree that this perfected state of the saint is something that is natural to, or at least a capacity of, the creature.

[20] *Ibid*., 24.

[21] *Ibid*., 274.

[22] *Ibid*., 553, 2, 406, 407. Baxter cites Aristotle and other Greek philosophers as figuring out the afterlife by reason (144). For more on happiness as the supernatural end, see Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory, or, A Summ of Practical Theologie and Cases of Conscience Directing Christians How to Use Their Knowledge and Faith, How to Improve All Helps and Means, and to Perform All Duties, How to Overcome Temptations, and to Escape or Mortifie Every Sin?: in Four Parts* (London: Nevill Simmons, 1673: Wing B1219), 10, 17, 18, 54, 81.

section we looked at *what* the Puritans believed that humankind develops towards: namely, the happiness that is found in God in the next life. We will now look at *how* the Puritans thought that this development, or movement, was to take place. We start by looking at how the Puritans conceived of the soul; this will put us in a position to discuss the development of the mean states known as virtues.

The Puritans adopted from ancient and medieval thought the concept of a tripartite soul.[23] The first part of the soul is the nutritive soul, which represents the lower part of being and includes nutrition and reproduction. This part of the soul is shared with plants and animals. The second part of the soul is the sensitive part, which is related to the senses and appetites. The sensitive soul is what motivates local movement towards ends. These ends can manifest in moving an agent towards or away from a particular 'object' and are shared with animals. The third part of the soul is rational and is unique to humans. It is with the relationship between these latter two parts of the soul that we are mostly concerned in this chapter. Reason, or thought, requires movement from the sensitive soul,[24] but there needs to be agreement between these two parts as to the end that is identified and moved towards. In terms of moral development, reason is emphasised because it is a uniquely human attribute. As a result of this, reason takes priority over the other two parts of the soul. There will be times when the sensitive and rational souls are in disagreement.

According to classical eudaimonists, the Puritans included, the passions — the second part of the soul — need to be ordered by the rational part of the soul. In order to possess virtue, one must appropriately balance this relationship between the passions and reason so that there is no discrepancy between the two parts with regard to good ends. In contrast to the virtuous person, the merely 'continent' person experiences a struggle between the sensitive and rational soul, in which the rational soul wins out. Finally, the 'incontinent' person experiences the same struggle, but the passions win out over reason.

---

[23] I show this in more detail in Nathaniel A. Warne, 'Metaphysics, Emotions and the Flourishing Life' in Douglas James Davies and Nathaniel A. Warne (eds), *Emotions and Religious Dynamics* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 75–94.

[24] There are some discrepancies among Puritans as to the exact relationship between the parts of the soul and their particular purposes, one example being disagreement between William Fenner and Edward Reynolds. For more specifics as to these differences, see *ibid*., 92–3.

We should not be led to believe that these parts of the soul are absolutely distinct with no overlap; rather, they are porous. The rational part of the soul is not simply cognition and the sensitive soul exclusively sensation. The sensations share in reason and at times have their own cognitions.[25] One of the more forthright proponents of this view of the cognitions of the sensitive soul was the preacher and Bishop of Norwich, Edward Reynolds.[26] Reynolds argues in *A Treatise of the Passions*, citing Aristotle explicitly, that the sensitive soul is in a sense reasonable, but is still obedient to the dictates of the understanding.

We are finally getting to the ground level of moral and emotional development for the Puritans. As seen above, in order for one to possess virtue, the passions must be controlled by reason, but how is this to be done? The Puritans again typically give a very Aristotelian answer to this question; that is, the passions need to be moderated.[27] To moderate the passions, and thus to possess virtue, is to find the mean between two extremes. For example, the mean between cowardice and rashness is courage; the mean between wastefulness and miserliness is generosity, and so on. There are some virtues that are action-related and others that are emotions-related, but the same medial principle applies to both.

Aristotle never gave an exhaustive account of all the potential moral virtues,[28] and to my knowledge nor did the Puritans. The work of a Christian, with God's help, is to try and achieve the mean state between conflicting passions.[29] This is a difficult task, first because, as Aristotle admits, there are a number of ways that one can go wrong and only

---

[25] For a very clear and lengthy analysis of the cognitive aspect of the soul and its relation to the rational soul in Aristotle, see Kristján Kristjánsson, *Aristotle, Emotions, and Education* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 20–25.

[26] See Edward Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man with the Severall Dignities and Corruptions Thereunto Belonging* (London: Robert Bostock and George Badger, 1650: Wing R1295), 2–4, 18, 38–9, 403–4, 445.

[27] For an interesting discussion of moderation in Reformation England, see Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7–29.

[28] Kristjánsson, *Aristotle, Emotions, and Education*, 15.

[29] Not all Puritans held this view, William Fenner being the most notable as he moved furthest away from a strictly Aristotelian position. See William Fenner, *A Treatise of the Affections, Or, The Soules Pulse Wherby a Christian May Know Whether He Be Living or Dying: Together with a Lively Description of Their Nature, Signes, and Symptomes, as Also Directing Men to the Right Use and Ordering of Them* (London: I. Rothwell, 1642: Wing F707), 92–3, 142, 147. See also Warne, 'Metaphysics, Emotions and the Flourishing Life', 101–3.

one way that someone can be good.[30] Second, with any given emotion, each person has a predisposition to one extreme (vice) or another. One must first discover to what vice one is more easily swayed and then counter this with the opposite emotion.[31] Moral development comes from practice.

This practice of moderation is central to the development of virtue. The idea is continually to practise and habituate oneself to the rightly moderated disposition. To use our example above, when someone has habituated a mean state between rashness and cowardice, then they possess the virtue of courage. It takes time, education and community to learn to reason about right actions and emotions, and to control the emotions rightly according to reason. It is foolish to try and ignore one's emotions, but prudent to harness them, and it takes Christ's help to harness and guide the process.[32]

Friendship and community in emotional development

Thus far, we have seen that all people seek happiness, and that happiness for the Puritans was found in its most complete and perfect form in the vision of God in the next life. We have also seen that, for the Puritans, moral development was a process of possessing virtue that is done by having the right interactions between the sensitive and rational parts of the soul. It is virtue that helps direct our lives and actions towards God and godly living. I will address briefly below in the discussion of earthly friendship how happiness can be experienced in this life as foretaste of that happiness that is to come in the next life.

This third aspect of moral and emotional development was securely grounded in the conviction that community is essential for this process to take place. We will begin to look at how this is the case. In focusing in on the community's role in the development of its members, we will simultaneously be drawing our gaze back to the connection between emotions and ethics. We have already seen that ethics and the emotions are inextricably tied together, in that the passions are essential for the pursuit of virtue. In referring to virtues, we are also referring to

---

[30] Aristotle, 'The Nicomachean Ethics' in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, revised by J.O. Urmson Ross, vol. 2 (Princeton University Press, 1984), 1106b29–35.

[31] See Webbe, *The Practice of Quietnes*, 28–9.

[32] See Fenner, *A Treatise of the Affections*, 4–5, 7; Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 17–20.

habituated mean states that involve emotion. We will now show the importance of friendship in Puritan moral development. We will do this first by looking at the relationship of virtue and friendship with God, and will then move on to show the importance of earthly friendship in the community.

Friendship with God

Friendship with God is an exceptionally important – arguably the most important – means of moral development. We will begin by looking at Aquinas and his agreements and disagreements with Aristotle's thought, as well as his emphasis on charity in order to shape our discussion of the importance of friendship with God for the Puritans. Puritans generally adopt from the scholastics, and specifically from Aquinas, the doctrine that true virtue only comes when one is in friendship with God. Aquinas saw being in right relationship with God through Christ as necessary in order to break beyond natural, rational and moral constraints so as to truly flourish and be all that we as humans are meant and created to be. It is God's very being to be happy and he shares this with us through friendship.[33] This relationship is necessary for happiness because friendship and well-wishing require communication. Since there is a communication between God and humankind, in which God has communicated his happiness to us, 'some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication'. Along with this new ability to cultivate virtues, charity brings with it 'communication' with the divine, 'wherefore it is evident that charity is the friendship of man and God'.[34] God's nature is the foundation of this friendship. As Aquinas points out, the fact that God is love is shown by the love the Triune divine persons share in the one simple divine nature.[35] However, there is still a problem as to the differences and similarities between earthly friendship and friendship with the Divine, and here Aquinas parts ways with Aristotle in order to make genuine friendship between God and humankind possible.

---

[33] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Fathers of English Dominican Province (trans.) (Notre Dame: Ava Maria Press, 1948), I–II 3.2 (hereinafter *ST*).
[34] *Ibid*., II–II 23.1. For a more in-depth look at 'communication' with the divine, see J. Bobik, 'Aquinas on Communicatio, the Foundation of Friendship and Caritas', *Modern Schoolman*, 65 (1986): 1–19.
[35] Paul Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 122.

Aristotle's theory of friendship has very strict parameters over what kinds of relationships can be considered true friendship, which would seemingly prevent a human being from having friendship with God. In particular, Aristotle asserts the impossibility of true friendship between two unequal persons. Aquinas broadly agrees concerning human friendships of unequals,[36] but he also makes a fascinating departure from Aristotle in his discussion of *caritas* and friendship with God.[37]

It is charity that makes friendships between such supreme unequals possible; *caritas* extends to all regardless of status. It is in this love that we are able to be friends with God, who is clearly not equal with his creation. The friendship of charity, grounded on a 'fellowship of happiness', is essentially in God as the First Principle, 'whence it flows to all who are capable of happiness'.[38] To Aristotle, friendship between unequal parties is impossible, because he has in mind friendly relations between two persons where the good of friendship resides in some restricted way, rather than 'friendly relations with another in whom the aforesaid good resides in totality'.[39] This unequal friendship works because we become friends with the good itself.

For Aquinas, 'charity signifies not only the love of God, but also a certain friendship with Him; which implies, besides love, a certain mutual love, together with mutual communion'.[40] The invitation to partake in God's loving activity 'provides the dynamic sharing in virtue, so necessary to friendship'.[41] Equality with God comes by his invitation. It is a gift, indeed a grace, which makes friendship possible without the distance from God ever being reduced.[42]

As important as charity is, friendship of charity is based on the fellowship of the gifts of grace. As for Augustine, grace enables, and then charity achieves friendship with God by the mediation of the Holy

---

[36] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics'*, C.J. Litzinger (trans.) (Notre Dame: Dumb Ox Books, 1993).

[37] For more on the medieval break with Aristotle on friendship, see Daniel Schwartz, *Aquinas on Friendship* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 43–5; Aquinas, *ST*, II–II 26.

[38] Aquinas, *ST*, II–II 26.1.

[39] *Ibid*., II–II 26.3.

[40] *Ibid*., I–II 65.5; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, viii.2.

[41] Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 88.

[42] William W. Young, *The Politics of Praise: Naming God and Friendship in Aquinas and Derrida* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 8.

Spirit.[43] For Aquinas, there are two kinds of grace. The first kind of grace, among other things, heals corrupted human nature and is related to infused virtues. Believers do not need further help from this kind of grace. The initial infusion of the theological virtues through the Holy Spirit is sufficient.[44] The second kind of grace helps towards righteous acts. This grace enables us to abide in good to the end of life.[45] '*Caritas* and *amicitia* [friendship] are both oriented outward, to the other.'[46] The logic here is: God loves all people, the Christian loves God, and thus the Christian will love all people for the sake of God.[47]

This broad picture of friendship with God allows a more specific consideration of the Puritans. Baxter and Owen's own understanding of friendship with God is remarkably like that of Aquinas. Baxter, for example, makes an analogy between the pain we feel when a friend is absent and our relationship with God. A close relationship with God is a necessary aspect of genuine faith. We see in Baxter's writing a high view of earthly friendship as well as the importance of being in the presence of God as friend.[48] Baxter also remarks that contemplation is like talking to an old friend or countryman. Enjoyment of parents and of friends is a 'sweet' pleasure; how much more will it be to be in a perpetual love with God?[49] It is also important for Baxter that we as friends on this earth communicate and worship our divine friend in heaven, and in the midst of this make new friends through conversion.[50] Conversion is not only a person joining a new community of earthly friends, but that new convert beginning their own friendship with God.

Owen's writing on friendship also mirrors Aquinas closely. Owen distinguishes between love of *beneplaciti* ('good pleasure and destination') and *amicitiæ* ('friendship and approbation'), which are both particularly assigned to the person of the Father, 'in an eminent manner'. It is through the person of the Son that the Father shows his *beneplaciti* and *amicitiæ*, and we are able to dwell in the Father through *beneplaciti* and

---

[43] Summers, *Friendship*, 89; Porter, *Nature*, 379.
[44] It is by the infused virtue of charity that the other theological (faith, hope) and cardinal virtues (temperance, justice, courage, prudence) are able to be cultivated.
[45] Aquinas, *ST*, I–II 109.9, 10.
[46] Summers, *Friendship*, 90.
[47] Aquinas, *ST*, II–II 23.1; Young, *Politics of Praise*, 110–11.
[48] Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 562–3.
[49] *Ibid*., 605, 750.
[50] *Ibid*., 752. For more on being friends with God, see 273, 405; and for God calling us friend, see 586.

amicitiæ by the Holy Spirit.[51] Sinning is grieving the Holy Spirit and thus grieving 'a tender and loving friend'.[52] It is also through friendship with Jesus, who calls us friend, that we have the ability to be obedient.[53] We can see above in both Aquinas and in Owen an emphasis on the Trinity in friendship with God.

There are other Puritans who emphasise a deep and intimate friendship with God, though it works itself out in different ways. For Richard Rogers, it is through meditation that one finds that one is friends with God and thus happy.[54] Even Joseph Hall, with his generally negative view of earthly friendship, emphasises that God remains our friend even when we do not deserve that friendship, and that God will treat his friends better than his enemies.[55]

Friendship with God is an important aspect of Puritans' moral and emotional development. In order for true virtue to be achieved, communion with God in friendship must be established. We can see a chain of events of sorts. In order for one to gain control over the emotions by the use of reason and thus possess virtue, one must first have communion with God, which only comes through having this friendship. This is, however, not the end of the story with regard to moral development and friendship in Puritans' thought; our earthly friends and communities play important roles as well.[56]

Friendship and community

Friends were not just for security; they were also valued and enjoyed. Puritans valued being in contact with fellow Christians and visiting

---

[51] Owen, *Of Communion*, 23–4. For more on friendship with God, see 25, 239.
[52] *Ibid*., 202.
[53] *Ibid*., 159.
[54] Rogers, *Practice of Christianitie*, 36, 67.
[55] Joseph Hall, *Meditations and Vowes, Diuine and Morall. Seruing for Direction in Christian and Ciuill Practise. Deuided into Two Bookes. By Ios. Hall* (London: Iohn Porter, 1605: STC 12679.5), 23, 28–9.
[56] Aelred of Rievaulx (1109–67) addressed this problem of unequal friends by following Cicero in claiming that reciprocity is essential to true friendship, but charity demands that we extend benevolence even to those untrustworthy enemies we cannot entrust our secrets to. Aelred agrees with Aquinas that charity should extend to all, but that is not the same thing as saying that friendship should extend to all. See Aelred of Rievaulx, *On Spiritual Friendship*, Marsha L. Dutton (ed.), Lawrence C. Braceland (trans.) (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 2010).

friends.[57] Friends would gather either singly or in groups and contributed much to spiritual progress and theological writing.[58] Like Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas before them, the Puritans thought that spiritual assistance meant aiding each other in attaining the ideal state. In some cases, this simply meant persuading the unconverted towards life with Christ and thus beginning them on their quest towards full human development. In other cases, spiritual assistance meant helping those who were already members of the household of faith to overcome struggles and achieve happiness.[59] Either way, Puritan authors were generally happy with addressing their readers as friends.[60] One of the features of Protestantism was an emphasis on theological conversation amongst friends, a feature that formed generations of ministers. The community of friends was also how people found their identity,[61] and thus the Puritans strove to see transformation in their families, churches and societies.[62] In what is typically known as the practice of 'conference', people from all different ages, vocations and levels of maturity were encouraged to engage each other in spiritual conversation; pastors with pastors, pastors with their congregations, and between people in their own families.[63]

Richard Rogers, writing at the turn of the seventeenth century, spoke highly of community and friendship for the Christian life and became

---

[57] Even though Puritans are for the most part quite comfortable with the overall positive conception of friendship shown above, they do at times have reservations. Within the scope of this chapter, this is a secondary issue. Joseph Hall seems to be the most suspicious of the Puritans. See Hall, *Meditations and Vowes*, 27, 31, 132, 141–2, 159, 166–7, 185, 187–8. For more on Puritans' suspicions of friendship that are not as extreme as Hall, see Rogers, *Practice of Christianitie*, 95; Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 153, 428, 555.

[58] M.M. Knappen, 'The Puritan Character as Seen in the Diaries' in *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries* (Gloucester: American Society of Church History, 1966), 15.

[59] *Ibid*., 4.

[60] Among many others, Richard Baxter seems to address both his Christian and non-Christian readers as friends. Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 597, 627, 772. It was common practice for two thinkers from different denominations and divergent traditions to address each other as friends. For example, Luther and Erasmus in their letters to each other would address the other as 'friend'.

[61] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 390–91.

[62] Francis J. Bremer, *Puritanism* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 61.

[63] For more on the Puritan practice of conference, see Joanne J. Jung, *Godly Conversation: Rediscovering the Puritan Practice of Conference* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011).

influential in encouraging others to organise covenanted groups.[64] In his diary he often wrote about how important friendship was to him, describing his friend Ezekiel Culverwell as a help to him and to his studies. He credited his friends with renewing his desire to study and with helping him write his book *Seven Treatises*.[65] He wrote 'great hope we have by our private company amounge our neighbors to woorck as well more conscience in their whole course as knowledge'. He added how 'sweet conference I have had this time, especially with Newman and mr. Culverwel', whom he counted as wonderful mercies.[66] Rogers highly valued his time with his congregation and friends both in the church and outside of it.

One of the most helpful aspects of good friendship, and a particular interest for this chapter, is that friends can make one aware of one's own sin – sin that one would not have been able to spot on one's own. The 18 August 1587 entry in Rogers' diary describes how friends have helped him realise his sin, realisations that did not come from his personal study, for example, by helping him to see that he cared too much for possessions. As well as pointing out his sin, friends also helped him to prevent sin. Rogers noted in his diaries that the community of Christ is to delight in others in things that are good.[67] Regular meetings were something that he earnestly emphasised.[68]

The rest of this chapter will build on the prior discussions of happiness, virtue and the soul to look at the place that friendship and community played in educating and developing people with regard to the emotions and to ethics. We will do this by first looking at the overall positive aspects that the Puritans derived from a theology of friendship and will then move on to show the relationship between community and the development of virtue. We start by looking at the importance of moral exemplars in Puritan thought.

The community was helpful for the development of virtue towards happiness, but the central role that friends and community played for

---

[64] Bremer, *Puritanism*, 67.
[65] Knappen, *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries*, 58–61, 99.
[66] *Ibid.*, 61, 63.
[67] *Ibid.*, 56–7, 73, 90.
[68] Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 271.

the Puritans is that of moral exemplars. For Aristotle, good examples are pivotal for moral education. 'Emulation' for Aristotle is the 'pain' of

> seeing the presence, in persons whose nature is like our own, of good things that are highly valued and are possible for ourselves to acquire; but . . . we have not got them ourselves.[69]

This definition might lead one to believe that emulation is negative, resembling something like envy, especially as emulation has an aspect of pain involved with it. Emulation, however, is 'a good feeling felt by good people', while envy is 'a bad feeling felt by bad people'.[70] Emulation gives us the desire to secure good things, while envy gives us the desire to stop our neighbour from enjoying them. The person who wants to emulate someone is motivated to improve 'so that they may in the end deserve the goods they desire'.[71] The good student of ethics for Aristotle is not one who learns only by moral rules or precepts, but who learns *the that* and *the because* of moral action and living well by observing the prudent and wise person and emulating them.[72] The person of practical wisdom (φρόνιμος) is the measure of what is fine and pleasant. For Aristotle, practical wisdom, or prudence, is the intellectual virtue that serves the moral virtues by helping the moral virtues find right and suitable means to their ends. The person of practical wisdom, the exemplar, models the life of prudence in their everyday life and actions.

For the Puritans, naturally, Christ himself was the primary moral exemplar. William Perkins' use of Christ as a moral exemplar functions in much the same way as Aristotle's prudent person. He is not just a redeemer; he shows us the 'paterne of all good duties, to which wee ought to conforme ourselves'.[73] Citing 2 Corinthians 11:1, Perkins wrote: 'Christ must be *followed* in the *practise* of every good duty that

---

[69] Aristotle, 'Rhetoric' in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, Jonathan Barnes (ed.), W. Rhys Roberts (trans.), vol. 2 (Princeton University Press, 1984), 1388a29–32.
[70] *Ibid*., 1388a34.
[71] Kristjánsson, *Aristotle, Emotions, and Education*, 105.
[72] *Ibid*., 99–113; Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 1999).
[73] William Perkins, *A Declaration of the True Maner of Knowing Christ Crucified* (Uniuersitie of Cambridge, 1615: STC 19687), 25.

may concerne us without exception simply and absolutely.'[74] There are similar themes found in Baxter as well.[75]

We can see that Christ played the role of moral exemplar for some Puritan thinkers, but this is not the main emphasis of this chapter with regard to the community's role in moral and emotional development. We are more interested here in how those within the community become exemplars and how friends become helps to achieving virtue.

This theme of friends pointing each other towards the good, and thus towards God himself, continues in Roger's published writing. 'Friendly meetings', he wrote, 'should be used for gaining one another towards God.'[76] In having 'conversation in the world among men', we 'practice' virtues, like faithfulness and uprightness, and this practice helps us to perform 'the duties which we know, shall both set our selves about them with more roundnes, and (as farre as they can be discerned) shall cause them to shew more beautie to others, and raise more admiration in them'.[77] Relationships in this life prepare us for the next by habituating virtues and making them practices that lead us to everlasting happiness with God in heaven.

Edward Reynolds and Richard Baxter, like Rogers, saw friendship as a help to move us towards heaven and to God. In Baxter's view, it is a pity that some Christians do not meet together and talk about heaven and future rest. Being in community helps people move towards heaven by talking and thinking about it together.[78] If we love our friends, we will talk with them about heaven and help them pursue their eternal rest.[79] Friends should weep for lost friends and care about their moral and spiritual development enough to tell them about Christ.[80] Reynolds, commenting on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, added to this that community points us towards heaven and holy living because of shame and accountability. Reynolds called shame the fear of just disgrace from parents, rulers, counsellors and friends. 'We are apt to be ashamed with our friends, because their opinion wee value, and with our Enemies,

---

[74] *Ibid*., 26. Christ as an example is also seen in Perkins, *Godly and Learned Exposition*, 6; Hall also writes, 'I will honour good examples, but I will live by good precepts'. Hall, *Meditations and Vowes*, 185. For more on Christ as example in Baxter, see Baxter, *Christian Directory*, 91.
[75] Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 60–61.
[76] Rogers, *Practice of Christianitie*, 132, 152.
[77] *Ibid*., 153.
[78] Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 643, 640.
[79] *Ibid*., 491–3.
[80] *Ibid*., 286, 395.

because theirs we feare; with our friends because they are grieved; with our Enemies because they are delighted with that which shames us'. We fear the opinions of the virtuous because 'their presence aweth us from liberty of sinning, and maketh us blush if they deprehend us in it, because Examples have proportionable Authority over the heart of man, as Lawes have, which wee doe not trespasse without feare'.[81]

Though there are the negative aspects of community that help towards habituation and happiness addressed above, community also positively and pleasurably contributes to earthly happiness. People are most happy, for Baxter, if they have a heavenly father and 'heavenly Associates'. These associates are the 'companions who will watch over thy ways; who will strengthen thee when thou art weak who will chear thee when though art drooping, and comfort thee with the same comforts, wherewith he hath been so often comforted himself, 2 Corinthians 1.4'. If you travel with this person on the way to heaven, 'he will be directing and quickening thee'. Moreover, 'if thou be angry, [a friend] is meek, considering the meekness of his heavenly Pattern; or if he fall out with thee, he is soon reconciled, when he remebereth that in Heaven you must be everlasting friends: This is the Christian of the right stamp'. These friends are rare, but what great societies we should have if we had friends like this![82] Baxter also noted that it is important to ask more experienced friends for help in uncertainties: 'Another help to this Heavenly Life, is, to be much in serious discourse of it, especially with those that can speak from their hearts, and are seasoned themselves with an heavenly Nature.'[83]

Good friends of this kind unite themselves to each other and to God, and have the return of the most amount of delight. Reynolds wrote that there is nothing more delightful than the real union of two minds: 'If we mark it in all matter of Pleasure and ioy, the more the union is, the more is the Delight.' The union is the highest degree of fruition and pleasure that can be.[84]

Reynolds discussed a 'natural' or 'habitual' love that is subordinate to the 'greater, our love for God'. Habitual love first carries with it right respect, meaning that 'we love a friend for himself, and not indirect

[81] Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul*, 301–2; Aristotle, 'Rhetoric', Book 2, Chapter 6.
[82] Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 606–7; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 391.
[83] Baxter, *Saints Everlasting Rest*, 643, 640.
[84] Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul*, 210.

ends, onely upon our own benefit'. True love is a 'benevolent affection' and a 'willing good unto another for his own sake'.[85] This love must also be serene and not muddled with prejudice. The third aspect of habitual love is to love particular people in ways appropriate to their relationship with the lover. Though 'we must love all men as ourselves', this is not a love of 'equality, but a fidelity and sincerity'. Reynolds, citing St Paul, writes that the greatest degree of our love should be for those in the church and our families, 'not excluding others, but preferring them'.[86] Aristotle's view was that proximity is an essential aspect of friendship. If friends do not have converse for long periods of time, then that friendship begins to diminish.[87] Reynolds disagreed with this because he wanted to make room for friendship in the universal church. In this view, the exercise of love can be seen in both absence and presence. Reynolds knitted people together within the 'mystery of the communion of the Church of Earth, both with in it self, in all dispersed members of it, and with Christ the Head, and that other part of it which triumpheth in heaven'.[88]

Drawing on Aristotle's three types of friendship (friends of utility, pleasure and good character), Joseph Hall wrote that 'nothing in the world unites mens harts so firmly, as the bond of faith: for whereas there are three grounds of friendship, vertue, pleasure, profit, and by all confessions, that is the surest which is upon vertue, it must needs follow, that what is grounded on the best, & most heavenly vertue, must be the fastest; which as it unites man to God so inseparably'.[89]

Conclusion

The English Puritans are a rich and untapped resource for contemporary issues in Christian ethics, and could offer something distinctive to systematic and philosophical dialogue in ethics. Aristotle and Thomas

---

[85] *Ibid.*, 91. Reynolds cites Aristotle as a source for this point: Aristotle, 'Rhetoric', Book 4, Chapter 4.
[86] Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul*, 92.
[87] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157b10–11.
[88] Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul,* 96. All of these forms of love and friendship Reynolds calls 'amor amicitiae'. He does end this section on love discussing the negative form of self-love, 'amor concupisentie'. This kind of self-love is more like selfishness than the self-love proposed by Aristotle and Augustine. *Ibid.*, 93–4.
[89] Hall, *Meditations and Vowes*, 168–9. Hall prefers fewer, but good friends: *ibid.*, 24, 189.

Aquinas, understandably so, have been the figureheads of recent revivals in virtue ethics, but the above discussion of the emotions, moral development and friendship shows, at least in this respect, that the English Puritans have a family resemblance with ancient and medieval moral theorists, but within a distinctive Protestant context. As shown above, much of the same emphasis found in the ancient, patristic and medieval theology was present here, thus allowing for significant overlap in moral and political discussions today between Catholic and Protestant churches. Though there may be significant disagreements over particular doctrines, the overarching moral framework is much the same, making ecumenical dialogue possible. Along with the above, however, the Puritans are not simply reproductions of the tradition; they had their own concerns related to their own time and circumstance.[90]

Moral and emotional development is a community-oriented endeavour that is deeply ingrained in the Puritan ethos. This returns us to our discussion of misreadings of Puritan spiritual practices in contemporary meta-narratives discussed briefly above. For the Puritans, the virtues and, by extension, the emotions were an important aspect of the spiritual and moral development that leads people to happiness. It has also become clear that for them, the emotions, which we might think of as very personal and individual, had strong communal leanings and roots. Managing emotions and reason to habituate virtues could not be achieved without the help of community and of God himself. This emphasis on friendship, virtue, and a teleological and *eudaimonistic* perspective on morality shows that these Puritans thought hard about how the emotions fit within the wider spiritual and moral life. The Puritans show us that with regard to the moral and emotional development, they are closer to those who have come before them than those early modern and modern innovators that came after.

[90] One point where the Puritan discussion of virtue is distinctive is an emphasis on the workplace specifically in the doctrine of calling or vocation. According to Lee Hardy, this is a place where Catholics had to adopt Protestant perspectives. Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 44.

9

Puritan Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Piety

Willem J. op 't Hof

The subject of this chapter is the overlap between the traditions which the English-speaking world called Puritanism and those which Continental Protestants called Pietism. The connection is a close one, so much so that F. Ernest Stoeffler has written of 'Pietistic Puritanism'.[1] In their efforts to purify the ecclesiastical and social domains, the Puritans prioritised piety, whatever their reasons for that priority may have been. Indeed, while their views of the church could vary greatly, it was their encouragement of piety which united them.[2] The term 'Pietistic Puritanism' also offers a precise description of the practice of seventeenth-century Dutch translators and readers, who were all but exclusively interested in the piety of Puritan authors rather than in those authors' opinions of church matters.[3]

It is widely known that both English and Scottish Puritanism[4] were of enormous importance in the emergence and development of a great

---

[1] F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 24–108.
[2] For Alec Ryrie, these commonalities in piety are a reason that we should speak not in terms of (ecclesiologically defined) Puritans, but more generally of Protestants: Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2013).
[3] W.J. op 't Hof, 'De internationale invloed van het puritanisme' in W. van 't Spijker *et al.*, *Het puritanisme: Geschiedenis, theologie en invloed* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2001), 373–4.
[4] John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). For Scottish Puritanism, see David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism 1590–1638* (Oxford University Press, 2000); John Coffey, 'The Problem of "Scottish Puritanism", 1590–1638' in Elizabethanne Boran and Crawford Gribben (eds), *Enforcing Reformation in Ireland and Scotland, 1550–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 66–90; Margo Todd, 'The Problem of Scotland's Puritans' in Coffey and Lim (eds), *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 174–88.

many national manifestations of Pietism on the European continent and beyond.[5] This is most especially true of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. Specifically, Puritan influence on Dutch promoters of piety fostered the following practices: the application of the sermon as the key element of preaching; the practice of distinguishing, within the sermon application, between numerous different groups of hearers according to their spiritual condition and standing; the identifying of lists of sins, intended to promote self-examination; spiritual biographies, including autobiographies; spiritual journals; the experience of times of spiritual abandonment; the application of practical and exacting rules to promote sanctification; household worship; an optimistic eschatology; programmes of reform; Sabbatarianism in conviction and enforcement; personal and collective covenanting; and the rejection of liturgical formularies and the festival days of the church calendar.[6] This international spread of Puritan views and practices was due above all to four factors: 1) the waves of religious immigration to and emigration from England; 2) the interconnectedness of European academics; 3) international trade, including that in books; and 4) the intensive translation activity of the age.[7]

The critical conduit for the influence of the emotional facets of Puritanism upon Dutch Pietism was the translation of published Puritan works. The known personal contacts between Puritans and Dutch Reformed promoters of piety do not reveal any affective influence. Even if they did, these would be of limited use, being restricted in scope to individuals. Conversely, the translations reached a staggering number of Dutch readers and hearers – the latter not to be forgotten as a category of audience, since in the seventeenth century books were widely read aloud to groups. These groups varied in composition from a single family or a gathering of friends and acquaintances to a conventicle.[8] The material read consisted not only of sermons or adapted sermons but

---

[5] Op 't Hof, 'De internationale invloed van het puritanisme', 271–384; Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 518–26; Coffey and Lim (eds), *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 109–88.

[6] Op 't Hof, 'De internationale invloed van het puritanisme', 273–339.

[7] W.J. op 't Hof, *Het gereformeerd Piëtisme* (Houten: Den Hertog, 2005), 73–5.

[8] Joeroen Blaak, *Geletterde levens: Dagelijks lezen en schrijven in de vroegmoderne tijd in Nederland 1624–1770* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 93, 154–5, 276, 281–5, 289; W.J. op 't Hof, 'De religieuze leescultuur in het Nederlands gereformeerd piëtisme tijdens de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis*, 9 (2006): 44–53, at 47–8, 52. Although most of the data given in this literature refer to the eighteenth century, there is no reason to assume that

also of devotional works. Together, these two categories formed the substantial majority of Puritan books translated, with sermon material in first place ahead of devotionalia.

Pietas,[9] the dedicated online bibliography for this subject area, now makes it possible to assemble numerical data regarding Dutch translations of Puritan works. The number of distinct editions of seventeenth-century translations is around 770.[10] Since the average print run of an edition in this genre was approximately 1,500 copies, a simple multiplication indicates that there were more than a million copies of works in this genre circulating.[11] Moreover, given the frequent reprints, we can discount the possibility of unsold stockpiles of any great size.[12] We may assume that many devotees of pietistic literature must have owned numerous translations, sometimes in the dozens, of Puritan works.[13] Yet many of those million books would have gone individually to different owners. Add to this the fact that books were regularly read aloud and it is fair to guess that the total number of readers and hearers exceeded the number of copies.

Unlike many aspects of the Dutch translation effort of Puritan works that have been extensively and thoroughly described in studies in recent decades,[14] the topic of this chapter has never received particular

---

matters would have been different in the previous century, save perhaps for the extent of the phenomenon.

[9] Conceived and maintained by Frans W. Huisman, MA, guest researcher at the Study Center for Protestant Book Culture at VU University Amsterdam. *Pietas* can be found at www.pietasonline.nl (date accessed 8 October 2015).

[10] Cf. F.W. Huisman, 'Pietas Online!: Pietas als schatkamer van gereformeerde vroomheidsliteratuur', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 35 (2011): 1–22, at 15.

[11] W.J. op 't Hof, 'Unique Information on a Seventeenth-Century Printing House in Arnhem: The Dedication by the Arnhem Printer Jacob van Biesen (d. 1677) in the 1669 Edition of *Fonteyne des levens* by Arthur Hildersham (1563–1632) and its Implications for the History of Books', *Quærendo: A Journal Devoted to Manuscripts and Printed Books*, 43 (2013): 214–37, at 230–31, 237.

[12] F.A. van Lieburg, 'Piëtistische lectuur in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 13 (1989): 73–87, at 75–7.

[13] For instance, the Haarlem merchant Mattheus du Bois had 23 translations of Puritan works in his possession: W.J. op 't Hof, 'De boedelinventaris van Mattheüs du Bois (?–1695): Het boekenbezit van een stichtelijk auteur te Haarlem in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 37 (2013): 156–79, at 168.

[14] For practical reasons, this overview does not draw on journal articles: J. van der Haar, *From Abbadie to Young: A Bibliography of English, Most Puritian Works, Translated i/t Dutch Language* [title *sic*] (Veenendaal: Kool, 1980); Cornelis W. Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the Mind: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Anglo-Dutch Translation with a Checklist of Books Translated from English into Dutch, 1600–1700*

attention, with a sole recent exception.[15] Only fleetingly in the literature are there remarks about the emotional aspects of the content of Puritan works translated into Dutch. This chapter is intended to help fill that lacuna – but cannot do so entirely. Given the practicalities, the present contribution can only hope to be a first foray into the research field in question.

Below, the concepts 'Dutch Reformed Pietism' and 'Further Reformation' will first be further explored before we consider the role of affect and emotion in Dutch translations, taking as our material first the work of the three Puritan authors who had the greatest number of book editions in Dutch and second the comments made by their translators in prefaces and dedications. Finally, before the conclusion, we shall look at the place held by Puritan affections and emotions in Dutch Reformed Pietism as a whole.

Dutch Reformed Pietism (1588–1700)

It was not long after the taking of Brielle in 1572 set in motion the Reformation in the Netherlands that a tendency to consider piety, in the broadest sense of the word, became apparent. The tendency, which became ever more pronounced as the seventeenth century progressed, is commonly labelled 'Dutch Reformed Pietism', in uniformity with

---

(Leiden: Brill, 1983); Jacob Baltus Huibert Alblas, *Johannes Boekholt (1656–1693): The First Dutch Publisher of John Bunyan and Other English Authors* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1987); W.J op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands, 1598–1622* (Rotterdam: Lindenberg, 1987); W.J. op 't Hof, 'Piety in the Wake of Trade: The North Sea as an Intermediary of Reformed Piety up to 1700' in Juliette Roding and Lex Heerma van Voss (eds), *The North Sea and Culture (1550–1800): Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Leiden 21–22 April 1995* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996), 248–65; H. van 't Veld, *Beminde broeder die ik vand op 's werelts pelgrims wegen: Jan Luyken (1649–1712) als illustrator en medereiziger van John Bunyan (1628–1688)* (Utrecht: De Banier, 2000); W.J. op 't Hof and F.W. Huisman, 'Vertalingen van werken van afgevaardigden' in *De Synode van Westminster 1643–1649* (Houten: Den Hertog, 2002), 195–202; W.J. op 't Hof *et al*. (eds), *De praktijk der godzaligheid: Studies over* De practycke ofte oeffeninghe der godtzaligheydt *(1620) van Lewis Bayly* (Amstelveen: Eon Pers, 2009); W.J. op 't Hof and F.W. Huisman (eds), *Nederlandse liefde voor Christopher Love (1618–1651): Studies over het vertaalde werk van een presbyteriaanse puritein* (Amstelveen: Eon Pers, 2013).

[15] L.J. van Valen, '"Het leven met God", het Schotse puritanisme en zijn receptie in de "Verenigde Provinciën" in de zeventiende eeuw', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 36 (2012): 2–114.

sister movements in other Reformed countries.[16] From 1588 onwards, books of a pietistic character came out steadily in Dutch year after year. That same year saw the initial publication of the subsequently much reprinted and influential Dutch translations of the wholeheartedly pietistic works of Jean Taffin (1528–1602).[17] During the 1590s, Dutch Pietist publication was dominated by translations of French works, a natural consequence of the large-scale immigration of French-speaking religious refugees from the Spanish Netherlands in those years.[18] Translations from the English Puritans first appeared in 1598 and swiftly came to dominate the market. Only in 1615 did original Dutch Pietist works shunt the English authors from their prime position.[19] The reason for this was that a large proportion of the translators came from Dutch-Flemish refugee churches in England and that the Puritan works were, in Pietist terms, more mature than their own spiritual environment could produce. By 1615, however, Dutch Reformed Pietism had matured to the point that it became and remained the lead contributor of original works. The fact that this shift in predominance took until 1615 to occur indicates that Dutch Reformed Pietism owes its origins largely to foreign impulses.

The Further Reformation

Within the larger movement of Dutch Reformed Pietism, we may from 1608 onwards distinguish a more coherent project: the Further Reformation,[20] whose adherents turned the Pietist desire for godliness into a programmatic agenda. Without minimizing the inner-life aspect

---

[16] C. Graafland *et al.*, 'Nadere Reformatie: opnieuw een poging tot begripsbepaling', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 19 (1995): 105–84, at 111–13, 119–22.

[17] W.J. op 't Hof, 'TAFFIN, JEAN' in J. van den Berg *et al.* (eds), *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme*, vol. 4 (Kampen: Kok, 1998), 412–14; James A. De Jong, 'Introduction' in Jean Taffin, *The Marks of God's Children*, Peter Y. De Jong (trans.) and James A. De Jong (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 11–21.

[18] J.G.C.A. Briels, *Zuidnederlanders in de Republiek 1572–1630. Een demografische en cultuurhistorische studie* (Sint-Niklaas: Danthe, 1985).

[19] Op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands*, 613–19.

[20] Joel R. Beeke, *Assurance of Faith. Calvin, English Puritanism, and the Dutch Second Reformation* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 383–413; Graafland *et al.*, 'Nadere Reformatie: opnieuw een poging tot begripsbepaling', 113–18, 123–78; Fred A. van Lieburg, 'From Pure Church to Pious Culture: The Further Reformation in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic' in W. Fred Graham (ed.),

of Pietism, they converted its words and its grievances into deeds, not only by developing elaborate programmes that spelled out which aspects of the church, politics, society and the family must be reformed and in what ways, but also by submitting these programmes to the relevant ecclesiastical, political and social bodies as concrete reform proposals. Besides reform programmes, other key points of the Further Reformation were church discipline, theocracy and Sabbatarianism. The beginning of the movement was heralded in 1608 by a twofold action. It was the year of publication of *Philopatris* by Willem Teellinck (1579–1629),[21] the Father of the Further Reformation, in which he presented the programme of reform in general terms for the first time. In the same year, Teellinck began to offer specific reform plans to the presbytery of the island of Schouwen-Duiveland and to the States of Zeeland. In particular, Teellinck and his fellow minister of the same presbytery, Godefridus Udemans (1581/2–1649),[22] began to urge Lord's Day observance. The presbytery declared its support for all of these efforts. Although the borders between Reformed Pietism and the Further Reformation were sometimes in flux, it was particularly the Further Reformation that characterised Reformed piety in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

If there is one historical phenomenon in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century above all others that is inextricably linked with Puritanism, then it is the Further Reformation. In all likelihood, the Dutch term itself, *nadere reformatie*, was originally a calque on the English Puritan concept of 'further reformation'. This has to do with

---

Later Calvinism: International Perspectives (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publications, 1994), 409–29.

[21] Joel R. Beeke, 'Introduction' in Willem Teellinck, *The Path of True Godliness*, Annemie Godbehere (trans.) and Joel R. Beeke (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 11–29; W.J. op 't Hof, *Willem Teellinck: Leven, geschriften en invloed* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 2008); W.J. op 't Hof, *De theologische opvattingen van Willem Teellinck* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 2011); W.J. op 't Hof, 'The Eventful Sojourn of Willem Teellinck (1579–1629) at Banbury in 1605', *Journal for the History of Reformed Pietism*, 1 (2015): 5–34.

[22] P.J. Meertens, 'Godefridus Cornelisz Udemans', *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 28 (1936): 65–106; W. Fieret, *Udemans: Facetten van zijn leven en werk* (Houten: Den Hertog, 1985); K. Exalto, 'Godefridus Udemans (1581/2–1649)' in T. Brienen *et al*., *De Nadere Reformatie en het Gereformeerd Piëtisme* (The Hague: Boekencentrum, 1989), 87–121; Joel R. Beeke, 'Introduction' in Godefridus Udemans, *The Practice of True Faith, Hope and Love*, Annemie Godbehere (trans.) and Joel R. Beeke (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 1–17.

Figure 9.1 William Teellinck: author's collection

Teellinck's owing his conversion, humanly speaking, to a day of prayer in anticipation of the Millenary Petition that he attended during his 1603–6 stay in England. The event itself, a typical example of Puritan reform programmes, left an abiding impression on him. Its effect was to make him the first Dutchman to publish an all-embracing programme of concrete reforms to church, society and government: *Noodwendigh vertoogh aengaende den tegenwoordighen bedroefden staet van Gods volck* [*A Needful Expostulation Concerning the Present Distressed State of God's People*] (1627). Finally, it is telling that – according to the witness of the Reformed Pietist preacher Guiljelmus Saldenus (1627–94)[23] – the Utrecht theology professor Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676)[24] had theology students study English as a major part of their academic diet. Voetius, the central figure of the Further Reformation, regarded Puritan Pietism as so important that the theological study programme he developed for Utrecht theology students was one-third dedicated to the mother tongue of the Puritans, representing more time than the students spent on the original languages of the Bible![25]

Puritan emotions in translation

The Dutch translation effort for Puritan books encompassed about 400 separate works by some 140 Puritan authors, which came out in approximately 770 individual editions.[26] Clearly, only a selection of the material can be considered in this chapter. It has therefore been decided to concentrate here upon the three authors whose books achieved the greatest number of Dutch editions and upon the translators' preliminary remarks on, and dedications of, the material they chose to present to Dutch readers. Although the literature has never before (with one minor exception) examined the present subject of emotion, relevant information can be gleaned from various sources. A few Puritans will now be considered in the chronological order of their translation into Dutch.

---

[23] G. van den End, *Guiljelmus Saldenus (1627–1694): Een praktisch en irenisch theoloog uit de Nadere Reformatie* (Leiden: J.J. Groen en Zoon, 1991).

[24] A.C. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1897–1915); J. van Oort *et al*., *De onbekende Voetius: Voordrachten wetenschappelijk symposium Utrecht 3 maart 1989* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1989); Andreas J. Beck, *Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676): Sein Theologieverständnis und seine Gotteslehre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2007).

[25] Van den End, *Guiljelmus Saldenus*, 218.

[26] Cf. Huisman, 'Pietas Online!', 9.

William Perkins

The greatest number of Dutch editions published in the genre was of works by William Perkins (1558–1602). In total, no fewer than 103 Dutch editions of his work came out, including a three-volume folio edition of his complete works (1659–63). His views on the proper purpose of affections and emotions also recurred in one way or another in almost all later Dutch translated Puritan works. His theology emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit in the inner life.[27] Concomitantly, he pays a great deal of attention to the emotional life. But he goes much further by stating that feeling, in the sense of an outworking of belief upon the emotions, is indispensable and even that those emotions that are worked by the Spirit are the hallmark of genuine Christianity. As one would expect, feelings are very evident in Perkins' portrayal of the characteristics of true faith and in his pastoral record. Importantly, this is no crude emotionalism. For Perkins, the felt lack of any saving grace – that is, the experience of being grieved by such a lack – is itself grace. The perfection to which a Christian attains in this life consists not in perfect feeling, but in the proper sentience and admission of one's imperfections.

Affection and emotion are also key elements in Perkins' analysis of the process of conversion. Nine times in his oeuvre he describes the entire schematics of conversion, and even more frequently the stages of that process. His structured descriptions of conversion are marked by the dichotomy of law and gospel, with the law serving as preparation to the gospel, and feelings are central to his discussions of both dispensations. As part of the law's work, a convicted conscience brings about five agitations in the heart: shame, affliction, fear, despair and dismay. Perkins speaks of the fear of being cast away and of a holy despair in which the convert confesses that hell is his just reward. More than once, he describes the outworkings of these emotions on the physical frame, with all their symptoms. His emphasis is that dolour for sin, if it is genuine, will be felt constantly. He adds the warning that one must guard against truly excessive emotion, for that will drag one down to an unholy despair.

Under the gospel, the feelings that rise in the believer are the awareness of God's mercy, a spiritual joy and a sense of the sweetness of his grace. Perkins even uses the word 'enjoy': faith causes enjoyment, both

---

[27] The following is derived from Op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands*, 320–88, especially 356–7.

Figure 9.2 William Perkins: from Jan Jacobus van Baarsel, *William Perkins* ('s-Gravenhage: H.P. de Swart & Zoon, 1912)

of Christ and of his benefits. This enjoyment is experienced within a communion with Christ. Once in his writings, in an exposition of Revelation 1:10, he mentions ecstasy of the senses, which he describes as an exceptional operation of the Holy Spirit.

While Perkins made much of emotion as a hallmark of true belief, he also, pastor that he was, put the significance of feelings into due proportion. First, he pointed out that reprobates, too, can have a sense

of spiritual realities. They can be aware of their sins and seized by fear at their discovery. What distinguishes them from the elect, however, is that their fear concentrates upon God's vengeance. Likewise, reprobates can taste the heavenly gifts, yet tasting the delicacies at a banquet is a different matter than being nourished and satisfied by a meal.

Second, Perkins warned that there is great variation in the pitch of feeling experienced among the saved. For example, the intensity of their saving distress will vary. One believer will undergo far more hell-pains than the next; there are even some who are converted without feeling affliction in all its intensity.

A third caution offered by Perkins is that the proper place of feelings is to be determined with reference to faith. The promise of the gospel is in the first instance to be apprehended by believing, with feeling and experience arising only as secondary matters thereto. Compared with faith, emotion takes second place. In this connection, Perkins notes at one point that emotion is of lesser necessity to salvation, and at another point expresses the conviction that an awareness of God's love is not required in order to be saved.

The paradoxical nature of Perkins' estimation of emotion becomes clear when he addresses those moments in the spiritual life in which all feelings run dry. While he does describe these episodes as 'hardness' or 'deadness of heart', he qualifies this emphatically by remarking that in the life of God's children, this is a *felt* hardness of heart.

Lewis Bayly

Despite the ecclesiological views commonly linked to Puritanism, Lewis Bayly (d. 1631) was episcopalian by conviction and indeed a Welsh bishop himself. However, his piety manual *The Practise of Pietie* (1612) reveals him to be a Puritan with similar views to those of Perkins. The 51 Dutch editions of this book give Bayly the second place in our considerations in quantitative terms. No Dutch translation of any other Puritan work equals this book in terms of the number of editions.[28]

---

[28] F.W. Huisman, 'De bibliografie van *De practycke*' in Op 't Hof *et al*. (eds), *De praktijk der godzaligheid*, 107–69; W.J. op 't Hof, 'Lusthof des Gemoets *in Comparison and Competition with* De Practycke ofte oeffeninghe der godtzaligheydt: *Vredestad and Reformed Piety in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture*' in August den Hollander *et al*. (eds), *Religious Minorities and Cultural Diversity in the Dutch Republic: Studies Presented to Piet Visser on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 133–49.

Figure 9.3 1620 Dutch edition of Lewis Bayly, *The Practise of Pietie*, frontispiece: University Library of Amsterdam

Bayly's work exudes mysticism in its direct addresses to God, its meditations, its monologues and the dialogue between the soul and Christ at the book's end. The content and tone likewise testify to the hidden inner life with God of believers removed in spirit from the worldly scene.[29] The author connects communion with God with seeing and beholding God, and addresses of God in terms – such as 'O my sweet Saviour' – redolent of Bernard of Clairvaux.[30]

[29] Op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands*, 176.
[30] A. Baars, 'Theologische overwegingen bij inhoud, karakter en achtergronden van *De practycke*' in Op 't Hof *et al*. (eds), *De praktijk der godzaligheid*, 100.

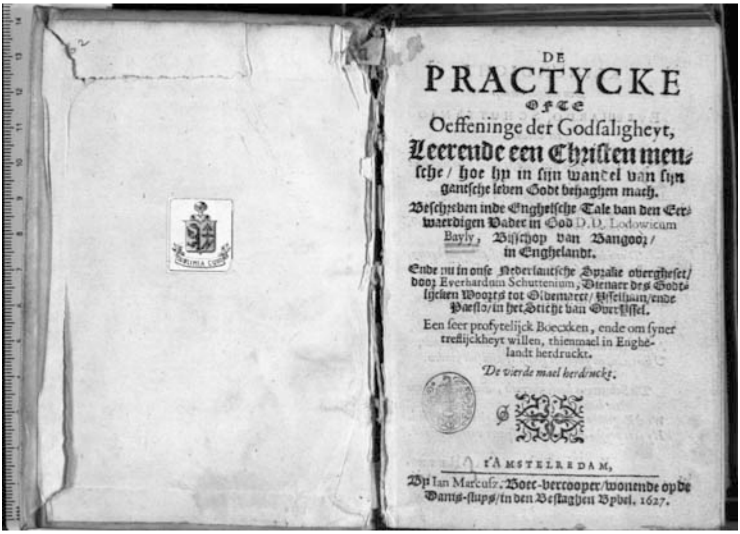


Figure 9.4 1620 Dutch edition of Lewis Bayly, *The Practise of Pietie,* title page: University Library of Amsterdam

While the dogmatic framework of law and gospel is not explicitly mentioned by Bayly, the affections and emotions play a similar role as they did for Perkins. Bayly states that both the repentant and the unconverted know fear. For the unconverted, fear serves to make the practice of piety a grievous matter, which is inimical to godliness. For the converted, repentance of past sins consists of three matters: 1) an inward view of and knowledge of one's sins, and a feeling of grief; 2) lamentation of one's miserable state; and 3) a humble and personal confession of sin. Unusually, Bayly insists that in making this confession, one acknowledges oneself to be deserving of eternal death. When exploring how to prepare for the Lord's Supper, he observes that true believers know a fear that they might approach the table unworthily, and he advises them, bearing in mind their own unworthiness, to seek solitude and to prostrate themselves before God as guilty sinners to receive their sentence. He also urges them to beat their hands upon their breasts and to water their cheeks with tears in order to confess their sins and to crave forgiveness.

On the other hand, Bayly calls holy communion the most joyful of festivals and states that spiritual joy is a fruit of that sacrament. At times, he describes faith as the hope of eternal life, and depicts the latter as

eternal joy. Accordingly, he regards heaven as the seat of joy, whose fullness will consist in the enjoyment of God. At the very culmination of his work, he calls heaven 'joyful paradise'. And yet, like Perkins, he would not exaggerate the role of feeling. True faith, he warned, often has the least emotion attached to it and is plagued by the greatest doubts. An emotionless faith may even be stronger than an emotion-laden faith.

William Cowper

With 32 Dutch-language editions of his works, the Scots bishop William Cowper (1568–1619) takes the third place in this section. Among these 32 were four editions of his complete works. Like Bayly, his episcopal status has not stopped him being claimed by Puritanism.[31] His view of the affections and emotions is again very similar to that of Perkins.[32] The pronouncedly affective nature of Cowper's profound sensibility of sin is evident when he writes that it is most fitting for the saints on earth to be always grieving. On this issue, he spends time examining the utterances and bodily responses that arise from inner stirrings. For instance, he teaches that a broken spirit during repentance will be accompanied by weeping eyes,[33] a pale face and a groaning voice. He does warn seriously against producing contrived emotions in this regard.

For Cowper, the highest pitch of eternal life to which the believer attains this side of the grave is joy. While considering the Christian's enjoyment of God, he resonates a theme voiced centuries earlier by Bernard of Clairvaux: that the joy of heavenly communion is only fleetingly known in this life.

At times Cowper appears to set the emotions above faith. In discussing spiritual joy, he identifies two distinct forms: 1) a joy proceeding from faith; and 2) a joy proceeding from the emotions. In another place, the excellence of emotion above faith is emphasised even more clearly when he argues that the troubled conscience that languishes in spiritual abandonment cannot be set at peace by the preached Word, but only by the witness of the Spirit. Yet, paradoxically, he mitigates this high view of emotion by insisting on its relative nature. Faith is at its strongest when feelings are at their weakest. The Spirit of grace is still present when one

[31] Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 24; Todd, 'The Problem of Scotland's Puritans', 177, 182.
[32] The following is derived from Op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands*, 214–36, especially 227–30.
[33] Cowper was such a moving preacher that his congregations were reduced to tears: Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 100.

feels spiritually abandoned, even if he is not sensed, so a lack of feeling cannot and must not be one's universal measure.

There is one subject on which Cowper differs sharply from Perkins: the Scotsman shows strong evidence of a mystical inclination.[34] A clear example of this is found in *A Most Comfortable and Christian Dialogue, Betweene the Lord and the Soule* (1610). This dialogue, which gives voice to the author's own spiritual experience, is characterised by an affective spiritual intimacy, by a spiritual sweetness and by its monologues. Likewise, in *The Anatomie of a Christian Man* (1611), Cowper makes abundant use of mystical bridal terminology. According to him, the third and highest step of salvation in this life is the joy that springs from beholding and spiritually embracing the Saviour. Elsewhere, he calls this 'inner contemplation', or describes it as ascending Mount Pisgah with Moses to view the heavenly Canaan. Here, God comes seeking the soul without using external means, and lets himself be seen in his grace and beauty and be felt in the sweetness of his love. At these moments, the soul is raptured from the body, and freed from the earth and earthly things to enjoy intimate communion with the Lord.

Affective impact on translators and readers

Four Dutch translators testified that their translation or reading of a particular English work had proved deeply moving. One of these is anonymous: the translator of the 1686 Dutch edition of *The Sound Beleever* (1645) by Thomas Shepard (1605–49). Its preface states the following as the first reason for having translated the book:

> We had heard some godly souls testify that the Lord had caused this little book to be a blessed instrument in His hand, to touch them, convict them and convert them; others, who had already felt the work of God upon their hearts, that it had discovered more fully to them the condition of their souls and had given them a hand in leading them to a surer state, a higher stage, of sanctification.[35]

---

[34] By 'mystical', I mean that which has to do with the personal experience of union with God in Christ, and fellowship with Father and Son through the Holy Spirit.

[35] 'We hoorden sommige Godvrugtige Zielen getuygen, dat de Heere dat Boekske, een gezegend werktuyg in zijn hand hadde doen zijn, om haar aan te raken, te Overtuygen, en tot hem over te trecken; Andere die reets het werk Gods op haar herte gevoelden, dat het haar verder had ontdekt de gestalte van hare Ziele, en de

More fulsome testimony to similar effect comes from three known authors.

Josua Sand

The Dutch preacher Josua Sand had spent time in England after his academic study of theology.[36] He had been inspired during that visit to begin translating and would go on to render 16 Puritan works into his native language. One of them was *A Fountain Sealed* (1637) by Richard Sibbes (1577–1635), which appeared in Dutch in 1651 under the title *Een Verzegelde Fonteyn*. In his dedication to the council of Schoonhoven, the town in which he ministered, he made the following personal declaration:

> And not only so, but [the reader] may also hereby in particular be reassured in his mind and conscience that that peace has been wrought in him also, by the Holy Ghost, to his inexpressible comfort; just as I can truly testify that the same has been happening in me during my translation of this little tractate. I know what effects it had upon my own soul to my consolation and greater assurance of God's love toward me, and consequently also of my salvation and adoption as a child of God.[37]

The work is an exposition on Ephesians 4:20. A quarter of the text is devoted to the Holy Spirit's sealing of the believer.

This was not the first Puritan work Sand had translated that discussed the emotions. In 1623, he had translated a work by John Denison (1569/70–1629), *A Three-fold Resolution Necessarie to Saluation* (1608), which dwells on the vanity of earth, the terrors of hell and the

---

hand geleent om hun tot een bevestiger staat, en hoger trap, in de Heyligmakinge te leyden.' Thomas Shepard, *De gezonde gelovige* (Amsterdam: Johannes Boekholt, 1686), *6v–*7r.

[36] W.J. op 't Hof, 'Sand (Sanderus), Josua' in Van den Berg *et al*. (eds), *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme*, vol. 4, 378a–379a.

[37] 'Ende dat niet alleen, maer sal oock sonderlinge daer door in sijn gemoet en conscientie konnen verzekert worden, dat dien vrede oock in hem gewrogt is door den H. Geest tot sijnen onuytsprekelijcken troost; gelijck ick oock metter waerheydt getuygen kan, dat mijn in het oversetten van dit Tractaetjen, oock het zelve gebeurt. Ick weet wat werckingen dat'et gehadt heeft op mijne eygen ziele tot mijner vertroostinge, en meerder verzekeringe van Godts liefde t' mywaerts, ende dienvolgens oock van mijne zalicheyt ende aenneminge tot een van Gods Kinderen.' Richard Sibbes, *Een verzegelde fonteyn* (Schoonhoven: Leendert van Heck, 1651), (a v)r.–v.

blessedness of heaven. This translation was reprinted at least six times. Also, in 1636, Sand had translated a work by John Downame (1571–1652), *A Guide to Godlynesse or a Treatise of a Christian Life* (1622), in which heavenly joy is described.

Nicolaus Arnoldus

The preacher and later Franeker Professor Nicolaus Arnoldus (1618–80) translated *A Worthy Communicant* (1636) by Jeremiah Dyke (1584–1639).[38] The translation was published in 1655. There was sufficient call for a second edition the following year, with the third edition following in 1669. In addition, a reworking of Arnoldus' translation by the Amsterdam sick-visitor Hendrik Uilenbroek was published six times.[39] In his preface, Arnoldus writes:

> Read it attentively, just read it through, and you shall find in it swords that pierce your soul and that shall penetrate your heart and make it bleed, but also conversely milk, honey, wine and oil, balm of Gilead for your wounded soul and conscience. I confess that in reading and translating this book, I was frequently so delighted that I was as it were beside myself.[40]

The great impression that Dyke's aforementioned work made on Arnoldus was doubtless what motivated him to translate into Dutch part of Dyke's *Divers Select Sermons on Severall Texts* (1640). The translation appeared in 1664, followed six years later by a reprint.

Jacobus Koelman

Jacobus Koelman (1631–95) was a man thoroughly stamped by Puritanism.[41] Even as a student, he translated a number of Puritan

---

[38] G.P. van Itterzon, 'Arnoldi, Nicolaus' in D. Nauta *et al*. (eds), *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme*, vol. 2 (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1993), 37a–38a.

[39] L.F. Groenendijk, 'De "Christelyke Gezangen" van Hendrik Uilenbroek: Enige notities . . . ', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 1 (1977): 28–31.

[40] 'Leest het met aandacht, maar leest het deur, ende ghy sult daar in vinden, Sweerden die door uwe Ziele dringhen, die u herte sullen doen Bloeden, maar oock in 't teghendeel, Melck, Honigh, Wijn, ende Olie, Balsem Gileads, voor uwen verwonden Ziele ende Conscientie. 'Ick bekenne dat ick in 't leesen van dit Boeck, ende Oversetten van dien dickwils ben vermaeckt gheweest, als of ick uyt my selven gheruckt ware.' Jeremiah Dyke, *Een waerdigh communicant* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Someren, 1669), 2r.

[41] A.F. Krul, *Jacobus Koelman* (Sneek: Campen, 1901); W.J. op 't Hof, 'De Nederlandse vertalers van Loves oeuvre' in Op 't Hof and Huisman (eds),

writings into Dutch. He made a total of 31 works accessible to Dutch readers over his lifetime. A remarkable shift in orientation, however, is noticeable during his life. Up until 1669, Koelman concentrated almost exclusively on the writings of English Puritans, but from that year onwards he focused predominantly on Scots Covenanters. It was under the influence of the Covenanters that, from 1673 onwards, he refused to incorporate liturgical forms into his services or to celebrate ecclesiastical festival days. For him, these became such essential matters of principle that he accepted being banned from his parish of Sluis for the sake of them in 1675. The banning was a political decision, but the church bodies followed the lead set by the magistrates. After his expulsion from his living, he was never again allowed into a pulpit. He redeemed his time with writing and by holding conventicles throughout the Dutch Republic.

Koelman went into print not only as a translator but even more prolifically as an author. He wrote 43 original works, including the second most important manifesto of the Further Reformation: *De pointen van nodige reformatie* [*The Points of Needful Reformation*] (1678). If Teellinck was the Father of the Further Reformation and Voetius was its pivotal figure, then Koelman was the most important of the movement's later champions.

Koelman's principled opposition to formularies and the church calendar brought him into confrontation not only with political and ecclesiastical ruling bodies but also with a powerful section of the congregation in Sluis, creating many negative consequences for him. At the moment the controversy broke, Koelman was translating 100 letters by the Scots Covenanter Samuel Rutherford (d. 1661), which were printed at the end of 1673 and were later twice reprinted. In the book's dedication to his Sluis congregation, dated 5 October 1673, he outlines the impression that the letters made on him in his trials:

> Now it has so happened to me, through God's good hand over me, that I, being occupied at the same time with the translation of these excellent letters of Samuel Rutherford, have been especially strengthened and fortified through the consideration, chewing-over, and application of that within it which I found applicable to my situation, so that I have been able to bear joyfully the manifold

---

Nederlandse liefde voor Christopher Love, 237–68; M. Eugene Osterhaven, 'Introduction' in Jacobus Koelman, *The Duty of Parents*, John Vriend (trans.) and M. Eugene Osterhaven (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 13–15.

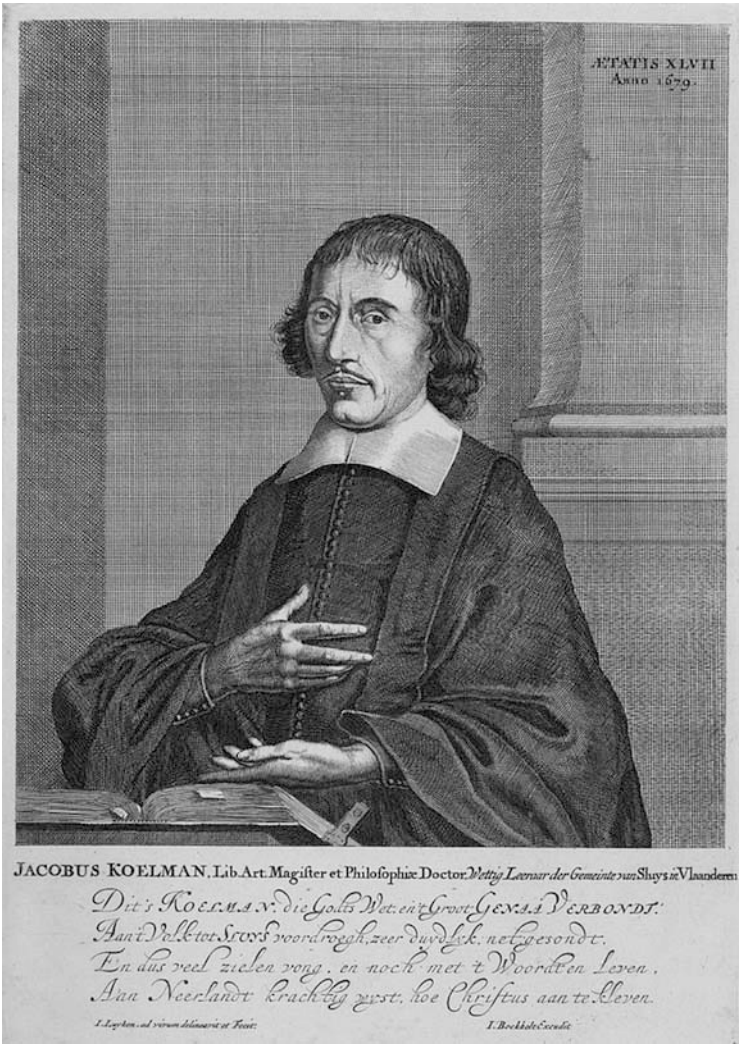


Figure 9.5 Jacobus Koelman: author's collection

calumniations, bold lies and vile reproaches that have been cast at me by all manner of people, and to rejoice in tribulation. Although I will confess that I have not been insensible of the bitter lash of evil and hell-fired tongues . . . nevertheless, I can thus say, to the praise of the Lord and to the commendation of the cross taken up for His sake,

> that in that very time the Word of Promise and of the Covenant of Grace gave me the most savour and sweetness, and also that these letters did by God's blessing extend sweet aid to me, enabling me to keep God's cause standing determinedly, joyfully, and without fear or faintheartedness; so that I, having tasted in a great and bitter event the especially refreshing, encouraging and bolstering power of the utterances contained in those heavenly letters, can now recommend them to you with the more entrance, assuredness and credibility.[42]

Just before this passage, Koelman had described two central characteristics of Rutherford's emotionally laden letters: 1) a high spring tide of spiritual joy and consolation that make the cross of Christ more to be desired than a crown; 2) a sense of emptiness due to the incompleteness of everything on earth, causing a fevered spiritual yearning.

Koelman translated a second collection of 100 Rutherford letters, published in 1679, followed by the final 162 letters in 1687. Both of these later translations were likewise dedicated to the congregation at Sluis.

Others of Koelman's translations indicate that his predilection for the letters of Rutherford was due to their ability to speak to the heart.[43] His translation of *Heavens Glory, Hells Terror* (1653) by Christopher

---

[42] 'Nu is het my gebeurt, door de goede handt Gods over my, dat ik ten zelven tijde bezig zijnde met de Vertaling van deze uytnemende Brieven van *Samuel Rhetorfort,* zonderlingh ben gesterckt en gehardt geworden, door de overdencking, herkauwing, en toepassing van 't geen ick in dezelve recht na mijn gelegentheyt vondt; zoo dat ick de menigerley lasteringen, stoute leugenen, en vileyne smadingen, die my van allerley soorten van Menschen wierden nageworpen, hebbe met vreugde kunnen dragen, en roemen in de verdrukking. Hoewel ick bekennen wil, dat ick niet ongevoelig ben geweest van de bittere Geessel der snoode en van de hel-aangestekene Tongen . . . Maar des niet tegenstaande, zoo kan ick tot Lof des Heeren, en tot aanprijzing van 't Kruys, dat om zijnent wil wort opgenomen, zeggen, dat even in die tijdt 't Woort der Belofte en des Genaden-Verbondts, my de meeste smaack en zoetigheyt heeft gegeven, en oock deze *Brieven* my door Gods Zegen tot een zoet behulp hebben verstreckt, om kloeckelijck, vrolijck, en zonder verschricking ofte kleynmoedigheyt de Zaacke Gods staande te houden. Zoo dat ick, hebbende in een groot en bitter voor-val gesmaackt de zonderlinge opweckende, moedt-gevende, en ondersteunende kracht der Redenen, in die Hemelsche Brieven opgesloten, nu met te meerder ingangh, verzekertheydt en geloofwaardigheyt dezelve U-L. kan recommandeeren.' Samuel Rutherford, *De brieven* (Vlissingen: Abraham van Laren, 1673), 3*6r.–3*7r.

[43] J.K. Cameron, 'The Piety of Samuel Rutherford (c. 1621–1661): A Neglected Future of Seventeenth-Century Scottish Calvinism', *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History*, 65 (1985): 153–9.

Love (1618–51) had appeared in 1659. He published Joseph Symonds' (d. 1652) *The Case and Cure of a Deserted Soule* (1639) in a partial translation in 1660 and in a fuller version in 1687. In 1678, he produced a translation of Thomas Hooker's (1586–1647) *The Soules Humiliation* (1637), but made it clear that he differed from Hooker on one important point: Koelman believed that approving the justness of one's own damnation ought not be taken to be an essential part of humiliation in the way of salvation.[44]

Koelman's first publication after the first volume of Rutherford's letters was a translation of a manuscript, never published in English, by an exiled Scots Covenanter in the Netherlands, Robert McWard (d. 1681), regarding the office of the preacher and the duties of his hearers. Presaging the powerful use of language in the whole work and its affectively crafted content, it begins with McWard's pronouncement that many preachers are not shaking sinners out of their soul-slumber by suspending them above the pits of hell and that they are not comforting tormented souls aright by sending them to Jesus. Ministers of the gospel ought to know for themselves the terrors of hell and the sweetness of communion with God in Christ.[45] Demand prompted a second edition in 1680.

In 1676, Koelman produced his translation – later twice reprinted – of John Brown (1610–79), another Scots Covenanter who had fled to the Netherlands, who had personally consigned to Koelman the two manuscripts used in his translation. After being published in Dutch, these works became available as English books in 1677 and 1694, respectively, entitled *Christ the Way, and the Truth, and the Life* and *Christ in Believers the Hope of Glory*. The text of the latter book, remarkably, was not taken from Brown's original manuscript, but was a translation back into English from Koelman's Dutch version.[46] Both of these works are characterised by what the translator states in his preface to the first of them to be the aim of pious churchgoers, namely that they will not

---

[44] Thomas Hooker, *Ziels-vernedering, en heylzame wanhoop* (Amsterdam: Johanna Wasteliers, 1678), 2*7r.–3*12v. Cf. Sargent Bush, *The Writings of Thomas Hooker: Spiritual Adventure in Two Worlds* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 204–23.

[45] Robert McWard, *De wekker der leeraren* (Vlissingen: Abraham van Laren, 1674), 3, 8–10.

[46] John Brown, *Christ in Believers the Hope of Glory* (Edinburgh: John Reid, 1694: Wing B5027), A4r.–v.

remain suspended in their doubts, despondencies and feelings of impotence, but will be enabled to learn joyfully to draw the water of grace from the fountain of salvation.[47]

In 1678, Koelman published a Dutch bundled edition of two works by Francis Rous (1579–1659): *The Mystical Marriage: or Experimental Discourses of the Heavenly Marriage Between the Soule and Her Saviour* (1635) and *The Heavenly Academie* (1638).[48] The first of these works describes the communion between Christ and the individual believer in bridal-mystical terms derived from the Song of Solomon. The second argues for the necessity of an experimental theology, one taught by God to the inner person. Koelman had personally translated only the second of these treatises. The first translation, which had been previously published in 1656, was the work of preacher Petrus Heringa (1620–83),[49] who undertook it at the behest of Georgius Hornius (1620–70),[50] Professor of History at Leiden, who had personal contacts in England after having travelled there. One of these English acquaintances had sent Hornius the original, together with a request to translate it or have it translated.

Koelman's translation of *The Common Principles of Christian Religion* (1659) by Hugh Binning (1627–53) was also published in 1678 and was reprinted in 1685. The translator's deep concern for the proper rendering of this text is evident from his dedication of the work to students of theology. He wrote:

> so that you may by means of it (if it please the Lord to bless it to your hearts) be introduced even to the divine verities and may taste and prove the power and sweetness of them.[51]

---

[47] John Brown, *Christus de wegh, de waarheidt, ende het leven* (Rotterdam: Henricus Goddaeus, 1676), *3r.

[48] Johannes van den Berg, 'The English Puritan Francis Rous and the Influence of His Works in the Netherlands' in Johannes van den Berg, *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents: Essays on Early Modern Protestantism and the Protestant Enlightenment*, Jan de Bruijn *et al*. (eds) (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 25–42.

[49] J.P. de Bie and J. Loosjes, *Biographisch woordenboek van protestantsche godgeleerden in Nederland*, vol. 3 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, n.d.), 725.

[50] D. Nauta, 'Hornius (Horn), Georgius' in Nauta *et al*. (eds), *Biografisch lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme*, II, 261b–263a.

[51] 'Op dat gij lieden door middel van't selve (soo het de Heere gelieft aen u lieder herten te segenen) mocht ingeleid worden in de godlijke waerheden selfs, en

Finally, Koelman's translation of Binning's *The Sinner's Sanctuary* (1670) was published posthumously in 1695. This is what he had to say on the book:

> I have read notably many English books, both those already translated and those not translated, but I must confess to have found in these three little books something remarkable that I have never noticed so [much as here], namely a wonderful simplicity of style [combined] with the most useful spiritual matter [and] with a heavenly penetration into the reader's mind; he is at the heart before you think it or know it.[52]

The works of the authors and translators whom we have considered so far amount to a total of 99 Dutch translations published in 276 editions. If we add to this the number of works of Puritans not mentioned heretofore whom Schwanda recognises as being reflective of the contemplative-mystical persuasion, the figures are 155 translations and 374 editions.[53] If we add to these authors such as Richard Baker (d. 1645), Paul Baynes (d. 1617), Jeremiah Burroughs (d. 1646), Nicholas Byfield (1579–1622), John Dod (d. 1645), Daniel Dyke (d. 1614), Thomas Gataker (1574–1654), Henry Greenwood (d. 1593), John Hayward (d. 1627), Arthur Hildersham (1563–1623), Robert Linaker, Nehemiah Rogers (1593–1660), Richard Rogers (1550/51–1618), Henry Smith, Samuel Smith (1584–1665), Thomas Taylor (1576–1633) and William Whately (1583–1639), who arguably also belong to that same category, the totals rise to almost 240 translations and around 525 editions.

---

smaecken en proeven de kracht en soetigheid der selve.' Hugh Binning, *Ettelijcke gronden van de christelijcke religie* (Rotterdam: Pieter van Veen, 1678), *10r.

[52] 'Ik hebbe al merkelijk veel Engelsche boekken gelesen, soo die al vertaalt, als die niet vertaalt zijn, maar ik moet belijden, dat ik in de drie boekjens iets sonderlings gevonden hebbe, dat ik nergens soo gewaar ben geworden, namelijk een wonderbaare een voudigheid van stijl met de nuttigste geestelijke stoffen met een heimelijke indringinge in het gemoed des Lesers; hy is aan het hert, eer gy het denct of weet.' Hugh Binning, *Des zondaars heyligdom* (Utrecht: widow of Willem Clerck, 1695), 2*4r.

[53] Isaac Ambrose, Thomas Goodwin, Richard Baxter, John Owen, Joseph Hall, John Preston and Robert Bolton: Schwanda, *Soul Recreation*, 22; Thomas Watson: Tom Schwanda, 'Sweetenesse in Communion with God: The Contemplative – Mystical Piety of Thomas Watson', *Journal for the History of Reformed Pietism*, 1(2) (Fall 2015): 34–63.

The place of Puritan affective impact within seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed Pietism and the Further Reformation

The Puritans' discussions of feelings and emotions were not new to Dutch piety. The extremely popular Dutch translation of Taffin's work on the marks of God's children had contained the same elements, that book being a development of themes found in the theology of Theodore Beza (1519–1605).[54] There are also significant influences from patristic piety and late medieval devotion and mysticism, woven tacitly into the Dutch tradition.[55] Yet it was chiefly thanks to the Puritan influences that feelings became a central component of Dutch piety. This can be traced in the writings of Teellinck, the key promoter of Pietism in the first three decades of the seventeenth century. His theological convictions closely reflected those of Perkins, including the matter of the feelings and the stages of the conversion process. The Dutchman followed some of the other Puritans in going beyond Perkins in his exploration of mysticism. His *Sleutel der Devotie* [*Key to Devotion*] (1624), *Soliloquium* [*Soliloquy*] (1628) and *Het Nieuwe Jerusalem* [*The New Jerusalem*] (1632) are mystical works influenced by Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas à Kempis (d. 1471).[56]

Besides considering Teellinck, Arie de Reuver, in his study of Dutch Reformed spirituality,[57] pays attention to Theodorus à Brakel (1608–69),[58] Saldenus, Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711)[59] and Herman Witsius (163–1708).[60] To make our picture more representative of the whole, we may add to this list Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–66),[61]

---

[54] Op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands*, 38–82, especially 44–6.
[55] Op 't Hof, *Engelse piëtistische geschriften in het Nederlands*, 599–601.
[56] Op 't Hof, *De theologische opvattingen van Willem Teellinck*, 65–9, 96–100, 212–16, 224–5.
[57] Arie de Reuver, *Sweet Communion: Trajectories of Spirituality from the Middle Ages through the Further Reformation*, James A. De Jong (trans.) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).
[58] A. Ros, *Theodorus à Brakel 1608–1669: 'Een voorbeeld van allertederste godsvrucht'* (Barneveld: Gebr. Koster, 2000).
[59] Frans Johannes Los, *Wilhelmus à Brakel* (Leiden: G. Los, 1892).
[60] J. van Genderen, *Herman Witsius: Bijdrage tot de kennis der gereformeerde theologie* (The Hague: Guido de Brès, 1953).
[61] J.W. Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeeck as Polemicus* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1975).

Jodocus van Lodensteyn (1620–77),[62] Franciscus Ridderus (1620–83),[63] Simon Oomius (1630–1706)[64] and Koelman.

While Teellinck was intensely focused upon Puritanism his whole life long, Thomas à Kempis was also an important figure to him and, through him, to the whole movement for Further Reformation.[65] We see this in Voetius, who was strongly influenced by Teellinck,[66] although it is also true that the entire history of piety is reflected in his oeuvre. Voetius paid major attention to the emotional side of piety. His academic manual on the practice of piety contains two chapters directly related to it: one on tears and laughter and the other on sensations of spiritual abandonment. While Puritanism forms part of the background to the first of those chapters, Puritan writings are the major source of the second.[67] His disputation on experiences of spiritual abandonment was published in Dutch in 1644. The great majority of this work's quotations and references relate to Puritans.

In fact, the publication of Voetius' above-mentioned disputation had been an initiative of his student and subsequent colleague, Hoornbeeck, who had appended to that disputation a work on the same topic that was five times as long as Voetius' contribution. In line with Voetius, Hoornbeeck had enriched his work by placing at its end a Dutch translation of the relevant chapter of *De Conscientia et eius Iure* [*Of Conscience and its Law*] (1631) by the Puritan William Ames (1576–1633). Nevertheless, in the actual text of his work, he drew on Puritans far less than his former master had done.

---

[62] J.C. Trimp, *Jodocus van Lodensteyn: Predikant en dichter* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1987); Carl J. Schroeder, *In Quest of Pentecost: Jodocus van Lodenstein and the Dutch Second Reformation* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001).

[63] Gijsbert Schaap, *Franciscus Ridderus (1620–1683): Een onderzoek naar zijn theologie, bronnen en plaats in de Nadere Reformatie* (Gouda: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis, 2008).

[64] Frank van der Pol, 'Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen', *Church History*, 71 (2002): 16–62; Gregory D. Schuringa, 'Embracing Leer and Leven: The Theology of Simon Oomius in the Context of *Nadere Reformatie* Orthodoxy' (PhD dissertation, Calvin Theological Seminary, 2003).

[65] So were many Protestants in England: Maximilian von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the* Imitatio Christi*, 1425–1650: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011).

[66] Op 't Hof, 'Gisbertus Voetius en de gebroeders Willem en Eeuwout Teellinck'.

[67] Gisbertus Voetius, *Τα ἀσκητικα sive exercitia pietatis* (Gorinchem: Paulus Vink, 1664), 222–86, 524–60.

Simon Oomius' piety also had a strongly emotional dimension. His brief 1661 treatise on tears of contrition was, like Hoornbeeck's work, only lightly influenced by the Puritans, but another short work published three years earlier, on the theme of spiritual contentment, had incorporated material from the works of Gataker and Burroughs.[68] To this work, Oomius had appended his revision of a treatise by Jeremiah Dyke on the glorious condition of being a child of God. Furthermore, in 1660, he revised and published a Dutch translation of Dyke's *The Mischiefe and Miserie of Scandals, Both Taken and Given* (1631). In the same year, he published a short book on the theme of guiding the thoughts. To it he had added a little work on experiences of spiritual abandonment, based on several Puritan works, especially those of Robert Bolton (1572–1631) and Symonds. In the preface that he had written – also in 1660 – for the Dutch translation of Isaac Ambrose's *Prima Media & Ultima* [*First, Middle and Last Things*], he informs the reader of three things that were significant to the book: 1) he had been planning for a while to distil an outline of practical theology from the works of Puritans and other devotional authors; 2) he had translated Bolton's *Instructions for a Right Comforting Afflicted Consciences* (1631);[69] and 3) he was greatly occupied in preparing a sampler of Downame's works. He also borrowed much from Puritan works in the last book that he prepared for publication, a tract on the office of the preacher, dated 1696.

Traces of Puritan influence can be seen in some of the other abovementioned theologians. Theodorus à Brakel was the greatest mystic and ascetic of them: his two major works, *Het Geestelijck Leven* [*The Spiritual Life*] (1649) and *De Trappen des Geestelijcken Levens* [*The Stages of the Spiritual Life*] (1670), are imbued with a Clairvauxesque contemplative devotion, in which ecstasies assume a greater role than they did for Bernard himself and whose essence is spiritual joy. Van Lodensteyn was a scarcely less significant mystical theologian, although he did not match Brakel's asceticism. Like Brakel, his affective influences were more medieval than Puritan, in his case drawing especially on Johannes Tauler's (d. 1361) doctrine of abnegation. Saldenus' piety also had a mystic bent, typified by a sensitivity to joy and occasionally contemplative in nature, but in his case showing the evident influence of Puritanism. Witsius, too, was mystically inclined and was especially influenced by Rous. By contrast, Theodorus à Brakel's son Wilhelmus, the author of

[68] W.J. op 't Hof, 'Simon Oomius en het piëtistisch Puritanisme', *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, 26 (2002): 89–98.
[69] This translation must have been incorporated into Oomius' book on thoughts.

the Netherlands' most popular lay dogmatic work, was much more restrained in his mysticism than his father. Ridderus, too, eschewed mysticism, summarising Teellinck's teachings in a quarto edition of more than 1,000 pages, and broadly following Teellinck and Perkins' teachings on affective piety.

Conclusion

The dominance of affective piety in Dutch translations of Puritan works – featuring in possibly as many at 525 out of 770 editions – is matched by its influence on Dutch theologians. Two of the 11 key Dutch promoters of piety – Teellinck and Koelman – were influenced almost exclusively by Puritanism, while four more of them – Voetius, Ridderus, Saldenus and Oomius – were significantly influenced by Puritan authors (whether or not via Teellinck), and a further two – Hoornbeeck and Witsius – followed in the Puritans' footsteps much less closely but still unmistakably. In Koelman, an orientation towards the piety of the Scots Covenanters is detectable.[70] Rutherford's epistolary oeuvre lent itself outstandingly well to our topic of emotion. It was to gain increasingly in popularity in the Netherlands during the eighteenth century. Only two of the aforementioned 11 Pietists cannot be reckoned as belonging to the Further Reformation movement: Theodorus à Brakel and Ridderus. That consideration amply proves the Puritan origin and content of the movement.

As regards the content of the influence, five themes are conspicuous: an interest in the relationship of faith to feelings; the notion that the feeling, or felt lack, of a spiritual quality is the hallmark of genuineness; the process of repentance; feelings of spiritual abandonment; and contemplative mysticism. The first three were absorbed into the work of most of the Dutch promoters of piety. It is evident that Voetius, Hoornbeeck and Oomius took the matter of how to deal with feelings of spiritual abandonment as being of major importance. As the cases of Voetius and Oomius demonstrate, this is less true for expressions of emotion such as tearfulness. The influence that Rous brought to bear upon Koelman and Witsius is an indication that mysticism made its presence

[70] For this piety, see Louise Anderson Yeoman, 'Heart-Work: Emotion, Empowerment and Authority in Covenanting Times' (PhD dissertation, University of St Andrews, 1999).

felt only in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Koelman's criticism of Hooker shows that influence need not always imply a slavish imitation.

Of the above five themes, three can also be found in pre-Reformation devotional writings. The *sola fide* preoccupation of the Protestant Reformation made it urgent to resolve the conundrum of how faith relates to feelings. This was an issue that the Puritans examined. And it appears that the description of the process of repentance, including the schematisation of the relationship between law and gospel, is a distinctly Puritan phenomenon.

Both the themes of the translations and their demonstrable emotional outworkings upon translators and readers demonstrate that as the seventeenth century wore on, feelings and emotions assumed an increasingly substantial place in Dutch Reformed piety. It is significant that all the known outworkings date from the latter half of the seventeenth century. Already evident in the first half of the century, the theme of affections and emotions underwent considerable reinforcement in the latter half. While this trend will not be unrelated to the general current of the age, it is nevertheless highly striking that it perfectly fits with the fact that Puritan translations reached their zenith in absolute terms around 1650.[71] As the number of translations waned, so Dutch theologians began to make this theme their own. It also, slowly, began to make its way into popular pious practice: it is only in the eighteenth century that we begin to hear of Dutch congregations bursting into tears at the affective preaching of their ministers, as Cowper's Scottish hearers had done 100 years before. It is perhaps only then, with Dutch Reformed Pietism in full spate, that we can see the full outworking of the influence of Puritan emotions in the Netherlands.

[71] Van Lieburg, 'Piëtistische lectuur in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw', 76.

Index