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**The Voice of God in**

**Early Modern English Literature**

**and Culture, *c*. 1590-1671**

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## **Declaration**

I, Harold Chancellor, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Harold Chancellor

## Abstract

This thesis offers the first sustained study of the various ways that English-language authors represented the voice of God during the early modern period. By situating the idea of God's voice in the context of Protestant anxiety over scriptural usage, I consider how writers working across a broad range of early modern literary genres – such as prose tracts, printed sermons, lyric poems, prophecies, and epic poems – gave voice to God.

Chapter One considers Thomas Nashe's employment of the classical rhetorical technique *prosopopoeia* to give voice to Christ in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*. Chapter Two surveys how key biblical proof-texts for the voice of God were explicated in early seventeenth-century printed sermons; and Chapter Three focuses on George Herbert's rhetorical representation of God's voice in *The Temple*. Chapter Four, which surveys a range of prophecies authored at around the time of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, considers how the voice of God was often thought to be mediated by individuals ordinarily lacking in authority. Chapter Five, which attends to John Milton's dialogic treatment of the voices of God the Father and the Son of God in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, suggests that the poet's epic verse emphasises the necessity of responsiveness to God's voice.

This thesis argues that representing the voices of God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in literary forms, became much more heavily scrutinised in the post-Reformation era. I demonstrate that, over the course of the seventeenth century, new opportunities for giving God's voice within texts began to emerge in English Protestant culture, across a broad range of genres.

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**Impact Statement**

How can a mortal author give voice to God? This interdisciplinary thesis – worthwhile from the perspectives of literary, ecclesiastical, and political history – explores the solutions arrived at by English Protestant authors from around 1590 to 1671. Considering major writers such as Nashe, Herbert, and Milton, alongside a range of lesser-known preachers and prophets, this project analyses how humanist interest in rhetorical voice intersected with post-Reformation anxieties about scriptural usage.

Within an academic context, this thesis furthers scholarly understanding in a few important ways. Firstly, it contributes to historical understanding of the Reformation and its impact, demonstrating that theological debates about how the Protestant individual might encounter the voice of God came to permeate all sectors of English reformed culture. Secondly, by close-reading exemplary English Protestant texts from different literary genres, this thesis reveals how rhetorical representations of God's voice were influenced by religio-political developments: most notably, the upheavals of the Civil War period. Lastly, and most collaboratively, this project builds on recent developments in our understanding of how early modern English authors constructed voices in books. It does so by providing a thesis-length study of how the Bible, in its variant forms, became one of the most vital inspirations for rhetorical voices.

This thesis also has the potential to make an impact within the discourses of popular history and popular literary criticism. Public interest in the English Reformation is ongoing: thus, material from the thesis could be disseminated in literary newspapers, and by holding talks in schools, churches, and museums.

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**A Note on the Text**

Original spellings, italicisation, and typesetting have been retained in all quotations taken from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printed editions. Titles of early modern works have been capitalised for clarity. All quotations of more than forty words begin on a new line and have been indented. Throughout this thesis, all non-literary references to God and Christ will use the capitalised pronouns 'He' and 'Him'; whilst discussions of literary representations of God and Christ will be differentiated through the use of the lower-case pronouns 'he' and 'him'.

The default Bible translation employed in this thesis is the King James Version (1611). All quotations from scripture in Chapters Two, Three, and Four are taken from *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, ed. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), unless otherwise indicated. However, Chapter One makes use of the Geneva Bible (1560), the most popular English Protestant translation of the late sixteenth century. Here, the modern edition referred to is *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, introduced by Lloyd E. Berry (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Bibles, 2007). Chapter Five, which focuses on Milton's epic verse, requires various English translations of the Bible to be used alongside each other, given that Milton would have known and read from several. Whilst the King James Version remains my default Bible translation in Chapter Five, wherever there is reason to believe that Milton was drawing on another English translation, this will be noted in the thesis.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used:

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| *BCP* | *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) |
| *BL* | British Library, London |
| *EEBO* | *Early English Books Online* (© ProQuest LLC, 2003-2019) <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home> |
| *ELR* | *English Literary Renaissance* |
| *ES* | *English Studies* |
| *GHJ* | *George Herbert Journal* |
| *HLQ* | *Huntington Library Quarterly* |
| *JEH* | *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* |
| *MPW* | *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 Vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953-1982) |
| *MQ* | *Milton Quarterly* |
| *MS* | *Milton Studies* |
| *NQ* | *Notes and Queries* |
| *OCD* | *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012 [4th edn.]) <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568> |
| *ODNB* | *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/> |
| *OED* | *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) <https://www.oed.com/> |
| *PS* | *Prose Studies* |
| *RS* | *Renaissance Studies* |
| *SP* | *Studies in Philology* |

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## Introduction: The Voice of God
## in Early Modern English Literature
## and Culture, *c.* 1590-1671

> I am gracyus and grete, God withoutyn begynnyng,
> I am maker vnmade, all mighte es in me;
> I am lyfe and way vnto welth-wynnyng,
> I am formaste and fyrste, als I byd sall it be.
> My blyssyng o ble sall be blendyng,
> And heldand, fro harme to be hydande,
> My body in blys ay abydande,
> Vnendande, withoutyn any endyng.[1] (ll. 1-8)

These words, spoken by God the Father, introduce the first play within the fifteenth-century York Corpus Christi cycle, 'The Fall of the Angels'. God announces his primordial creative presence before the city audience – he is the 'maker vnmade' – and these declarative lines are indebted to the account of the creation in Genesis 1. Although reference to God as a 'maker' is present in the Wycliffite Bible, as in Genesis 1.1, this speech demonstrates the Tanners – the mercantile group which performed the play – adapting the idea of God's creation to reflect their trade.[2] For example, the line 'And heldand, fro harme to be hydande' employs a pun on the present participle 'hydande'. This verb can be glossed as 'protected' or 'shielded', but the verb also points to the noun 'hyde' – of significance because the tanning trade depended on animal hides.[3] This speech reveals the way that, within the York cycle, God was voiced in a manner which reflected the working life of the city community. Scripture might have provided the basis for the late medieval dramatisation of God, but to hear

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[1] 'The Fall of the Angels', in *The York Plays*, ed. Richard Beadle (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), p. 49.

[2] For evidence of the play being performed by the 'Tannours', see 'A/Y Memorandum Book, Y: E20', in *Records of Early English Drama: York,* ed. Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), p. 17.

[3] See Beadle's definition of the verb 'hyde', in *The York Plays,* p. 500.

the voice of God represented as that of a Tanner was, plainly, not too much of a stretch for the fifteenth-century citizens of York.

Representations of God and Christ were intrinsic aspects of late medieval English dramaturgy. In her seminal study of the ritual significance of the York cycle, Sarah Beckwith writes of 'an astonishingly polysemous theatre with as much as a tenth of the city involved in the production – up to twenty Christs, twelve Maries, several different "Gods", and a few Satans wandering the city giving multiple performances at several sites'.[4] The Mercers' Pageant Documents of 1433 provide further detail concerning the way that God was routinely dramatised in late medieval English theatre. Most particularly, the Mercers' itinerary takes in God's 'veserne gilted [gilded mask]', and, later on in the same account, the 'brandreth [frame] of Iren [th]at god sall sitte vppon when he sall sty [ascend] vppe to heuen'.[5] God's 'veserne gilted', according to Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, can be interpreted as 'an emblem of divine radiance: God revealed in His Godhead'.[6] Twycross and Carpenter also draw attention to a stanza from the post-Reformation Chester Banns (*c.* 1608-9), which specifically addresses the use of the gilded mask in late medieval English dramatisations of God:

> [For] then shoulde all those persones that as godes doe
> playe
> In Clowdes come downe with voyce and not be seene
> Ffor noe man can proportion that godhead I saye
> To the shape of man face nose and eyne

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[4] Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. xvi.

[5] See 'Mercers' Pageant Documents, MA: D63', in *REED: York*, ed. Johnston and Rogerson, p. 55.

[6] Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 220.

> But sethence the face gilte doth disfigure the man yat
> deme
> A Clowdye coueringe of the man. a Voyce onlye to
> heare
> And not god in shape or person to appeare…[7] (ll. 14-20)

In their commentary, Twycross and Carpenter argue that the passage cautions against 'any man [trying] to "act" or imitate God', suggesting that 'the face gilte' functions as a mechanism to '[conceal] the actor, allowing a "voice of God" to speak'.[8] Whilst the gilded mask might well have served as a 'Clowdye coueringe of the man', thereby authorising the humanly-derived divine 'Voyce', it remains a striking fact that actors were regularly allowed to impersonate God in the late medieval period. Thus, within late medieval English theatre, God was anthropomorphically represented as an elevated being.

During the late medieval period, God and Christ were also frequently voiced in mystical writing. In her *Revelations of Divine Love* (*c*. 1395), for example, Julian of Norwich writes of a dialogic encounter with the voice of Christ:

> 'Yyf thowe be payede', quod oure Lorde, 'I am payede. It es a joye and a blysse and ane endlesse lykynge to me that ever Y suffyrde passyon for the, for yyf I myght suffyr mare, I walde suffyr'.[9]

In this extract, Christ is presented as readily accessible, and delights to intercede for mankind's sinfulness. There is a lack of self-consciousness in the text about the direct approach made to Christ, who responds liberally to the speaker's

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[7] See 'Chester 1608-9', in *Records of Early English Drama: Cheshire: including Chester,* Vol. 1, ed. Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 340.

[8] See Twycross and Carpenter, *Masks and Masking,* p. 195.

[9] Julian of Norwich, 'Revelations of Divine Love (Shorter Version)', in *English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, ed. Barry A. Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 195.

entreaties. Elsewhere, in the mystical writing of Margery Kempe, there is intimate conversation undertaken with God the Father, who comforts the speaker: 'Be this tokyn, dowtyr, beleve it is God that spekyth in the, for wherso God is hevyn is, and wher that God is ther be many awngelys, and God is in the and thu art in hym'.[10] Within this extract, the verb 'beleve' attains a force. God assures the doubting speaker that he is present ('beleve it is God'), lending her – it is suggested – the authority to serve as a divine mouthpiece ('that spekyth in the'). After this, in a device that is commonplace within mystical writing, Kempe describes an erotic union with God ('God is in the and thu art in hym') – the ultimate source for which is the Song of Songs. Although late medieval mystical writing exists at some remove from the mystery play, both Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe describe their divine encounters with comparable directness.

It is the central contention of this thesis that the use of literary forms to represent the voices of God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit became much more heavily scrutinised in post-Reformation England. This has much to do with the fact that, across Protestant Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century, images of biblical personages were disfavoured in relation to the paramount authority of the biblical text. In particular, the church of the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli at Zürich, preoccupied with the dangers of idolatry, was responsible for reintroducing to the Christian West the Hebraic idea that the second commandment prohibited all images of Christ or the saints.[11] A

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[10] Margery Kempe, 'The Book of Margery Kempe', in *English Mystics of the Middle Ages*, ed. Windeatt, p. 233.

[11] For a recent account of Zwingli's seminal influence on early English Protestantism, see Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 256-7.

scepticism about visual images of God the Father, Christ, and the saints was embedded in early English Protestantism, contributing to popular anxiety about representing sacred figures on the public stage.[12] As a consequence of this, the mystery cycles were gradually suppressed by government authorities over the course of the sixteenth century, with the last recorded performances now thought to have taken place in around 1609.[13] Equally significantly, the last new representations of Christ in the Protestant drama of the early Reformation era – to say nothing of God the Father, who does not feature – are found in the Henrician propagandist John Bale's *The Temptation of Our Lord* (1538), and in Lewis Wager's play *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (1566).[14] However, dramatic representations of the Trinity did persist in the Catholic college drama of the period, which was usually written in Latin.[15] Indeed, British Catholic literary culture preserved – and subsequently developed – a

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[12] There is an extensive body of scholarship on iconoclasm and literature in early modern England. The best of these studies include: Joe Moshenska, *Iconoclasm as Child's Play* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); Shannon Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003); Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Lana Cable, *Carnal Rhetoric: Milton's Iconoclasm and the Poetics of Desire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Vol. 1, Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Ernest B. Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation: Down Went Dagon* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[13] See Paul Whitfield White, 'Theater and Religious Culture', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 133-53, esp. pp. 134-5.

[14] See John Bale, 'The Temptation of Our Lord', in *The Complete Plays of John Bale,* Vol. 2, ed. Peter Happé (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), pp. 51-63; Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (London, 1566). For an account of the close relationship between Wager and Bale, the former probably having seen Bale's work performed as a student at Oxford University, see Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 83.

[15] See Alison Shell, 'Tragedy and Religion', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy,* ed. Emma Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 44-57.

largely untroubled view of how to represent the Godhead, although this topic lies beyond the scope of this thesis.[16]

This thesis, which takes the textual representation of God's voice as its starting point, focuses on Protestant writing that dates from a later stage of the English Reformation, surveying the period from around 1590, when Thomas Nashe began issuing his prose writings, to 1671, when the poet John Milton published *Paradise Regained*. Given that no sustained critical study has attended to the various ways in which English-language authors represented the voice of God during the early modern period, this thesis fills a substantial lacuna in contemporary scholarship. It asks, in the context of Protestant anxieties about scriptural usage, how authors working across a broad range of early modern literary forms – such as prose tracts, printed sermons, lyric poems, prophecies, and epic poems – gave voice to God. Each chapter has been written with an interest in how God is represented as speaking on the printed page; in who is expected – or, indeed, able – to hear the voice of God; and whether the individual responding to God's voice will be saved. Given these theological concerns, this thesis argues that the way Protestant writers approached the topic of God's voice was influenced by soteriological debate. During the 1590s, arguably the zenith of Calvinism in early modern England, predestinarian theologians routinely posited that only the elect might hear God's voice. However, over the course of the seventeenth century, powerful critiques of predestinarian theology emerged within English Protestant culture, and authors

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[16] In addition to the article cited in the above footnote, Alison Shell is currently preparing a monograph, provisionally entitled *The Drama of the British Counter-Reformation*, which – among other topics – will focus on defining the category of British Counter-Reformation literature, and survey contemporary British Catholic representations of the Godhead.

presented far more inclusive attitudes towards the potential of the Christian to hear the voice of God and achieve salvation. This introduction will outline my approach to 'voice' and explain the way the term is used in this thesis; offer an indication of how early modern English Protestants thought about God's voice in the Bible; survey the different ways in which English Protestant individuals thought that God's voice might, in practice, be heard; and outline the methodology that will be employed in this thesis to consider the provision of God's voice within early modern English literary culture.

## 1. Approaching Voice

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to establish how the topic of 'voice' will be approached in this thesis. Literary historians have tended to invoke the idea of 'voice' with a degree of ambiguity. As Jennifer Richards points out in her useful study *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance* (2019), '[one] of the problems is the undoubtedly broad range of connotations that the term "voice" carries'.[17] Indeed, for those writing on literature in the wake of the New Critics, 'voice' has often served as a catch-all term for several concepts, including tone, style, and identity.[18] However, in recent years, literary scholars – and, in particular, those working on the medieval and early modern periods – have begun to approach the topic of 'voice' with more specificity.

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[17] Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 20.

[18] For critical studies that discuss 'voice' generally in relation to matters of tone and style, see, for example, Maria Nikolajeva, *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); Tom Conner, ed., *Dreams in French Literature: The Persistent Voice* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995); Eustace James, *Daniel Defoe's Many Voices: A Rhetorical Study of Prose Style and Literary Method* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1972). For critical texts that use 'voice' in the context of identity, see, Michael Keren, *The Citizen's Voice: Twentieth-Century Politics and Literature* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003); Janet Todd, *Gender and Literary Voice* (London: Holmes and Meier, 1980).

Along with other important works such as David Lawton's *Voice in Later Medieval English Literature* (2017) and Michelle Osherow's *Biblical Women's Voices in Early Modern England* (2009), Richards's *Voices and Books* attends more closely to the literary, linguistic, and rhetorical make-up of the 'voices' that populate the printed page.[19] Indeed, for Lawton, the idea that texts are written with intended audiences in mind, or 'publics and counterpublics', and are intended to speak to them, is fundamental to the very function of literature. As Lawton neatly puts it, 'voice is among the most productive terms we have for understanding literature… our experience of reading and writing literature is crucially bound up with questions of voice'.[20] This thesis, like many of the critical works cited above, is fundamentally interested in the various manifestations of 'voice' within early modern English texts. It is predicated on the idea that these texts are intended – sometimes quite literally, given the paramount importance of oral delivery in the period – to speak to their audiences, who must listen in.[21]

Nonetheless, it is important to clarify what this thesis does not attempt to cover. It does not aim to supply a general theory of 'voice' or 'voices' in early modern English texts. This vast topic is well beyond the scope of this thesis; it is a frontier that has already been navigated exceptionally well by Richards and others. Instead, this project engages with a somewhat narrower task – although

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[19] See Richards, *Voices and Books,* pp. 1-33; David Lawton, *Voice in Later Medieval English Literature: Public Interiorities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1-12; Michelle Osherow, *Biblical Women's Voices in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), esp. her introduction; and, from a more historical – although equally noisy – approach to print, John Gallagher, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 1-14.

[20] See Lawton, *Voice in Later Medieval English Literature,* p. 4.

[21] For the importance of oral delivery in the early modern humanist schoolroom, see Richards, *Voices and Books,* pp. 102-11.

my investigation of 'voice' is still, it might be said, an ambitious one. This thesis highlights the fact that the Reformation changed the way the word of God was heard: quite simply, God was frequently given a 'voice' in the religious and literary writing of post-Reformation England, and readers were expected to dutifully attend to the printed form of this voice.[22] To put it concisely, then, this thesis is predominantly concerned with the different kinds of 'voices' that God is given in the religious and literary texts of early modern England, and it approaches the idea of God's voice across a range of early modern genres.

At the onset, it is worth considering some key terms relating to 'voice', which are employed regularly throughout this thesis. Whenever phrases such as 'God's voice', 'the voice of God', 'Christ's voice', or 'the prophetic voice' are invoked, they are used – principally – to refer to textually constructed voices for God, which may be built up from the Bible or a range of other early modern texts, such as the Book of Common Prayer. The divine voices documented in this thesis are, sometimes, the product of scriptural citations, borrowings, and allusions. However, they can also be elaborate 'hybridised' voices that rely, certainly, on the Bible, but also on sophisticated rhetorical devices learnt in the humanist schoolroom.[23] In considering how God's voice was constructed, performed, received, and heard in early modern English texts, it is unsurprising

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[22] This is touched on by Arnold Hunt in his book, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. pp. 27-32. Hunt's study – although alive to 'voice' and the significance to preachers of 'voicing', given that sermons were delivered orally in the first instance (see this introduction, pp. 32-3) – is historiographical; this thesis seeks to build on Hunt's work from a more literary perspective.

[23] Richards's *Voices and Books* has informed my understanding of the humanist schoolroom, but I have also learnt much from the work of Peter Mack. His books *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) and *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) have given me insight into the ways that early modern authors approached the study of rhetoric, and – crucially – employed rhetorical devices flexibly within their own writings.

that the first reference point for this thesis is the Bible, which men and women in post-Reformation England were able to read in their native language. We shall now begin our attempt to define God's voice by making some important distinctions between the voice and word of God.

## 2. Defining God's Voice

As far as possible, the idea of God's voice will be distinguished from that of God's word in this thesis, although it should be stressed that the two concepts are intimately related in mainstream early modern English Protestant thought. In his study *The Book: A History of the Bible* (2001), Christopher de Hamel provides a helpful overview to understanding God's word during the early modern period:

> For almost a thousand years [the Bible] had been written in a language which many people did not easily understand [Latin], and copies of [it] had belonged mainly to churches, religious institutions and the great houses of wealthy people… Between about 1520 and 1550, it entered the households of men and women at all levels of society, in the everyday languages of the time.[24]

In particular, the eminent Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus's concern for the availability and use of vernacular scripture by the laity is often remarked upon. The case for vernacular translation, especially of the New Testament, is made in Erasmus's *Paraclesis* (1516), the preface to his Greek translation of the New Testament [*Novum Instrumentum*].[25] Erasmus is crucial to our discussion of God's word in early modern England for a further reason, given the bearing that

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[24] Christopher de Hamel, *The Book: A History of the Bible* (London: Phaidon, 2001), p. 216.
[25] See Desiderius Erasmus, 'The Paraclesis', in *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*, ed. John C. Olin (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1975 [2nd edn.]), pp. 92-106.

his understanding of God's word had on subsequent Protestant conceptions of God's voice. Peter Marshall notes Erasmus's decision, in the second edition of his New Testament in 1519, to translate 'the resounding opening to St. John's Gospel – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" – using *sermo* rather than *verbum* for the Greek *logos*'.[26] Marshall then adds that Erasmus's use of the noun *sermo* 'added connotations of communication, dialogue or conversation, which Erasmus considered more fitting'.[27] Through this linguistic alteration, Erasmus outlined a conception, influential in this period, of God's word being able to speak as a voice.[28] What follows identifies specific moments in the Bible that English Protestant commentators consistently referred to when discussing God's voice. As will become apparent, the early modern English Protestant understanding of what constituted the voice of God in the Bible was somewhat elastic, given that the voices of God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit – when speaking through the Apostles – would all have been understood as authoritative voices for God, albeit at various stages of remove from God the Father.

In an article on both the body and voice of God the Father in the Hebrew Bible, Johanna Stiebert charts the 'eschewing of divine anthropomorphism' within ancient Hebraic tradition.[29] Stiebert provides numerous examples of the way God's auditory quality is stressed in Hebrew scripture, noting 'the common

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[26] Marshall, *Heretics and Believers*, p. 35.
[27] Ibid.
[28] For more on Erasmus's belief that the Bible possessed a voice, and ought to be heard, see Hilmar M. Pabel and Mark Vessey, ed., *Holy Scripture Speaks: The Production and Reception of Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), esp. Vessey's introduction, pp. 3-26.
[29] Johanna Stiebert, 'The Body and Voice of God in the Hebrew Bible', *Journal for Religion, Film and Media,* Vol. 2 (1), 2016, pp. 23-33 (p. 27).

substitution of "the Lord" or "YHWH" with *mēmrā*, "the (divine) word"', and 'the prominence of the expression *bat qôl*, literally "daughter of a voice"' in rabbinical writing.[30] In the Old Testament, God the Father speaks directly to certain chosen individuals: as in God's castigation of Adam in Genesis 3.9 ('And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?'); Moses's encounter with God in Exodus 3.4 ('And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses'); and God's speech from 'the whirlwind' in Job 38.1-2 ('Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?'). Early modern English Protestants of all traditions inherited the Old Testament conception of God the Father speaking directly on rare occasions. Of particular note is Exodus 3, which became a favourite chapter for Jacobean ministers when preaching on God's calling (see Chapter Two, pp. 106-16).[31] Meanwhile, issues regarding bat qôl – chiefly a rabbinic term, which was invoked to signify a heavenly voice 'once removed' that proclaimed God's will – were only intermittently discussed within the mainstream English Protestant tradition.[32] According to *EEBO*, the earliest English Protestant usage of the phrase 'daughter of a voice' occurs in

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[30] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[31] The idea of God the Father speaking directly, in Exodus 3, was also a regular point of discussion in the mainstream Protestant biblical commentaries of early modern England. See, among others, Robert Abbot, *The Second Part of the Defence of the Reformed Catholicke* (London, 1607), p. 1212; Nicholas Byfield, *The Rule of Faith: or, An Exposition of the Apostles Creed* (London, 1620), p. 106; John Downame, *The Summe of Sacred Diuinitie* (London, 1620), pp. 7-8.

[32] For a helpful account of the significance of 'bat qôl' in rabbinic tradition, which I have drawn from in this thesis, see Aaron Rothkoff, 'Bat Kol', in *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* Vol. 3, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007 [2nd edn.]), p. 213. According to Rothkoff, a 'bat qôl' – in addition to its function in proclaiming God's will – would have been considered by the authors of the Talmud as 'an echo of a heavenly voice, or a divine voice "once removed"', thus promoting the status of 'bat qôl' as the lowest form of divine voice; see p. 213.

Thomas Goodwin's tract *Moses and Aaron. Ciuil and Ecclesiastical Rites, Vsed by the Ancient Hebrewes* (1625) ('Bath Kol, *Filia vocis, the daughter of a voice, or an* Eccho; *by it, is meant a* voice from heauen, declaring the will of God'), whilst subsequent Protestant discussions of bat qôl occur in the theological writings of John Stoughton, John Lightfoot, and Jeremy Taylor, among others.[33] Given this, Milton's in-depth knowledge of the term's meaning, and poetic adaptation of it, is all the more remarkable (see Chapter Five, pp. 267-8).

Other important biblical sources for the voice of God the Father need to be mentioned. Recent scholarship has pointed out the significance of the Book of Psalms in early modern English Protestant culture.[34] In a seminal contribution, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski argues that the Psalms were 'widely recognized as the compendium *par excellence* of lyric poetry', positioning the writings of the poet and courtier Sir Philip Sidney as especially 'influential' in cementing the Psalms as a poetic model.[35] During *The Defence of Poesy* (1595, but composed *c.* 1580), Sidney articulates his view of the Psalms' importance, writing 'may I not presume a little farther… and say that the holy David's Psalms are a divine poem? If I do, I shall not do it without the testimony of great learned men both ancient and modern'.[36] Even though the influence of the

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[33] See Thomas Goodwin, *Moses and Aaron. Ciuil and Ecclesiastical Rites, Vsed by the Ancient Hebrewes* (London, 1625), pp. 204-5; and also, from that same year, John Weemes, *The Christian Synagogue* (London, 1625), sig. D2r. For subsequent Protestant discussions of the term as 'the daughter of a voice', which indicates that it became a consensus that 'bat qôl' was a lower form of heavenly voice, see John Stoughton, *The Heauenly Conuersation and the Naturall Mans Condition* (London, 1640), p. 63; John Lightfoot, *The Harmony of the Foure Evangelists* (London, 1644), p. 203; Jeremy Taylor, *XXVIII Sermons* (London, 1651), p.7.

[34] See, above all, Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[35] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 39, 45.

[36] Sir Philip Sidney, 'The Defence of Poesy', in *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism,* ed. Gavin Alexander (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 7.

Psalms on early modern English Protestant poetry has become an established critical consensus, it has not been emphasised enough that the Psalms were a key source for the idea of God the Father speaking in dialogue with the believer.[37] Numerous verses from the Psalms make reference to God's direct voice, such as Psalm 2.3-4, Psalm 12.5, and Psalm 50.7 ('Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God'). It is also of note that the Father's voice is described by the author of the Psalms: Psalm 29.4, for instance, announces that 'The voice of the Lord *is* powerful; the voice of the Lord *is* full of majesty'. Additionally, various Psalms serve as supplications for the voice of God to be heard (see Psalm 35.3 'Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation'). As we shall see, the Psalms inspired several Jacobean printed sermons on God's voice speaking to assure the believer (see Chapter Two, pp. 116-26), and underpinned George Herbert's rhetorical representation of God's voice in his lyric collection *The Temple* (1633) (see Chapter Three). Beyond the Psalms, this thesis also attends to the prominence of the Song of Songs in early modern English Protestant culture. During the Civil War years, this book of the Bible – which was regularly allegorised as a dialogue between God and the soul – was adapted by young women prophets, to promote their suitability to serve as chaste interlocutors for God (see Chapter Four, pp. 218-25).[38]

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[37] In early modern England, Protestants commented regularly on the dialogic significance of the Psalms. See, among many others, John Day, *Day's Descant on Dauids Psalmes* (Oxford, 1620), p. 33; Arthur Jackson, *Annotations Upon the Five Books, Immediately Following the Historicall Part of the Old Testament* (London, 1658), p. 699; Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations Upon the Books of the Psalms* (London, 1659), pp. 379-81.

[38] In my discussion of early modern English Protestant usage of the Song of Songs, I have been influenced by Elizabeth Clarke's richly documented monograph *Politics, Religion and*

When reading the Old Testament, as we have seen, early modern English Protestants noted that on rare occasions, God the Father spoke directly. Equally significantly, early modern Protestant commentators drew on the Old Testament's prophetic books for evidence that God might speak through His chosen prophets. Alexandra Walsham draws attention to the popularity of the Old Testament prophets in late sixteenth-century Protestant discourse, writing that '[via] key passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah, Hosea, Amos, and Joel, Protestant ministers told a cheerless tale of England's dismal prospects if the current epidemic of iniquity continued unchecked'.[39] Although Walsham affords parity to various Old Testament prophets in the above account, Jeremiah's lamentations became an especially prominent reference point for late Elizabethan homiletic texts.[40] In Jeremiah 35.13, for instance, Jeremiah channels the voice of God the Father to rail against the people of Jerusalem: 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words?'. Such exhortative verses from the Bible inspired the popular religious subgenre of the Jeremiad, which achieved a somewhat paradoxical cultural centrality in late sixteenth-century England, given that the prophet Jeremiah is presented in the Bible as railing against society from its margins.[41]

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the Song of Songs in Seventeenth-Century England (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), esp. chapter 5.

[39] Alexandra Walsham, Providence in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 281.

[40] Late sixteenth-century English Protestant texts which explicate the words of Jeremiah include Daniel Tossanus, The Lamentations and Holy Mourninges of the Prophet Ieremiah (London, 1587), pp. 2-3; Henry Smith, 'The True Trial of the Spirites', in The Sermons of Master Henrie Smith (London, 1592), pp. 306, 312; John Smith, The Doctrine of Praier in Generall for All Men (London, 1595), pp. 94-106.

[41] For the cultural centrality of the late Elizabethan Jeremiad, see Walsham, Providence, chapter 6; Mary Morrissey, 'Exhortation and Sympathy in the Paul's Cross Jeremiads', ES, Vol. 98 (7), 2017, pp. 661-74; Lawrence Manley, Literature and Culture in Early Modern

As we shall see, such texts had an influence on Nashe's exhortative voice of Christ in his prose tract, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593) (see Chapter One).

The voice of God the Father is given much less frequently in the New Testament. However, early modern English Protestants displayed recurring interest in the Father's words during Christ's baptism, as recorded in Matthew 3.17 and Luke 3.22: 'And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'.[42] To cite a prominent poetic example of this tendency, Milton expands on Matthew 3.17 in Book I of *Paradise Regained*, where Jesus affirms that 'my Father's voice, / Audibly heard from heaven, pronounced me his, / Me his beloved Son, in whom alone / He was well pleased'.[43] Matthew 3.17 is also closely echoed by Herbert in his poem 'The Sacrifice', where the voice of Christ suggests that God 'dost delight to be' incarnate in him (see Chapter Three, p. 159).[44] Further to this, many noted English Protestant preachers of the early seventeenth century conducted exegeses on God's words during Christ's baptism, including Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, and Edward Philips (see Chapter Two, pp. 126-39). It

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*London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 306-12. My own contribution to scholarship on the Jeremiad's literary influence, an article entitled 'London, Repentance, and Early Modern English Literature, *c.* 1590-1600', has recently been published in *London Journal* (2020).

[42] For early modern Protestant commentaries on the text of Matthew 3.17, see, among many others, Richard Ward, *Theologicall Questions, Dogmaticall Observations, and Evangelicall Essays, Vpon the Gospel of Jesus Christ, According to St. Matthew* (London, 1640), pp. 83-4; the Scottish minister David Dickson, *A Brief Exposition of the Evangel of Jesus Christ, According to Matthew* (London, 1647), pp. 33-4; Matthew Brookes, *The Sacred and Most Mysterious History of Mans Redemption* (London, 1657), pp. 61, 106.

[43] John Milton, 'Paradise Regained', in *Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. John Carey (Harlow: Longman, 1971), p. 442.

[44] George Herbert, 'The Sacrifice', in *The English Poems of George Herbert,* ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 102.

will be shown throughout this thesis that the voice of God the Father, as heard during Christ's baptism, served as a crucial moment for judging the early modern Protestant believer's response to Christ's offer of salvation.

Early modern Protestant individuals would also have understood the reported words of Christ, in the New Testament, to be the voice of God. Throughout the sixteenth century, most Catholics and Protestants affirmed orthodox accounts of the Trinity, basing their conceptions of Christ as the Son of God on scriptural precedent.[45] Once again, the Father's declarative words to Christ in Matthew 3.17 and Luke 3.22 – 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' – were especially important. In conceptualising Christ's voice, early English reformers drew on biblical verses outlining Christ's exhortative call to His disciples, as outlined in Matthew 4.19 and Mark 1.16-18: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men'.[46] As Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie have shown, these early reformers were motivated by a fervent desire to proclaim Christ's gospel, speaking of themselves 'as brethren, as gospellers or evangelicals, or simply as true Christians'.[47] Early English Protestants gave Christ's reported words great emphasis, positioning His call for discipleship as intrinsic to the Christian faith. To cite one further example of this tendency, in

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[45] For an overview of both Catholic and Protestant Trinitarian theology during the early modern period, see Ulrich L. Lehner, 'The Trinity in the Early Modern Era (*c.* 1550-1770)', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity,* ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 240-53.

[46] Early English Protestant discussions of Christ's call for discipleship include John Frith, *Of the Preparation to the Crosse, and to Deathe* (London, 1540), sig. B1r; Thomas Becon, *An Humble Supplicacion Vnto God* (Strasbourg, 1554), sig. E1r; John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subiectes* (Strasbourg, 1559), sig. G2r.

[47] Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, 'Introduction', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism,* ed. Marshall and Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 5. On this topic, see also Marshall, *Heretics and Believers,* p. 134; Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), *passim.*

the fourth edition of *Actes and Monuments* (1583), the Protestant martyrologist John Foxe records Thomas Bilney's declaration, given to Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall in 1527, that – upon reading the text of 1 Timothy 1.15 ('Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief') – 'God's *instruction* and inward working [in the verse]… did so exhilarate my heart… that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness' [my emphasis].[48] In Bilney's statement, Christ's offer of salvation – as outlined in 1 Timothy 1.15 – is interpreted as a verbal 'instruction' from God, which has the potential to reassure the believer.

Although many early English reformers understood Christ's call for discipleship to be a central tenet of the Christian faith, it was also an early modern Protestant commonplace that Christ's words in the gospels could prove difficult to understand, as a consequence of human sin. For evidence of this, Protestant commentators drew on the fact that, throughout the gospels, Christ is presented as carefully explaining Himself to the Apostles: as in Matthew 9.13, 'But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'.[49] This idea of Christ as a patient teacher, before an inattentive audience, is frequently

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[48] John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of Matters Most Speciall and Memorable, Happenyng in the Church* (London, 1583 [4th edn.]), p. 1029. For an exemplary sixteenth-century English Protestant sermon on the idea of being 'called' by Christ, with reference to Luke 8.19-21, see Henry Smith, *The Affinitie of the Faithfull* (London, 1591), sig. C2r ('Christ calleth the godly his kinsmen, though they be neuer so poore… for when he calleth vs his *mother,* he sheweth vs the waye how to loue him like a mother').

[49] Early modern English Protestant sermons touching on the idea of Christ as a patient teacher before an inattentive audience, as outlined in Matthew 9.13, include Thomas Adams, *The Sacrifice of Thankefulnesse* (London, 1616), pp. 17-18; William Bridge, 'Evangelical Repentance', in *The Works of William Bridge* (London, 1649), pp. 226-7. Contemporary Protestant commentaries on the same subject include Dickson, *A Brief Exposition,* pp. 113-14; Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations Upon All the Books of the New Testament* (London, 1653), pp. 51-5.

echoed within early modern English literary texts. As we shall see, Christ's voice is often invoked by Herbert to render knowledge of the redemption plainer to the lyric speaker (see Chapter Three, pp. 160-8); whilst Milton's voices of the Son of God and Jesus, respectively, provide helpful glosses for the voice of God the Father across his epic verse (see Chapter Five).

Despite the fact that most mainstream Protestants, in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, believed Christ's words to be a central aspect of the scriptural voice of God, it is also the case that – for the first time in a millennium – a powerful anti-trinitarian movement emerged. In an important article, Ulrich L. Lehner flags up the importance of 'the Italian Faustus Soccini, who developed the anti-Trinitarian ideas of his uncle Laelio into a system. His basic conviction was that the existence of three persons in one nature was contradictory'.[50] Soccini, who was the intellectual progenitor of Socinianism, made this deduction about the 'three persons' through the rational interpretation of scripture, which led to pressing questions about the Personhood of Christ. As Paul C.H. Lim has recently argued, this radical theological school had a substantial impact on the intellectual life of mid-seventeenth-century England, especially as disseminated through the heterodox writings of Paul Best and John Biddle.[51] Of course, radical English commentators did not render Christ a totally subordinate figure, but came to interesting conclusions as to how Christ could be present in a Three-Personed Trinity. Thomas Hobbes, to take one particularly famous example, wrote in his Civil War treatise *Leviathan* (1651):

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[50] Lehner, 'The Trinity in the Early Modern Era', p. 245. Soccini, more usually written Sozzini, lived between 1539-1604.

[51] See Paul C.H. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. Lim's introduction, pp. 3-15.

> But a Person, (as I have shewn before, chapt. 13.) is he that is Represented, as often as hee is Represented; and therefore God, who has been Represented (that is, Personated) thrice, may properly enough be said to be three Persons; though neither the word *Person*, nor *Trinity* be ascribed to him in the Bible. St. *John* indeed (1 Epist. 5. 7.) saith, *There be three that bear witnesse in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One:* But this disagreeth not, but accordeth fitly with three Persons in the proper signification of Persons; which is, that which is Represented by another. For so God the Father, as Represented by Moses, is one Person; and as Represented by his Sonne, another Person; and as Represented by the Apostles, and by the Doctors that taught by authority from them derived, is a third Person; and yet every Person here, is the Person of one and the same God.[52]

In this extract, Hobbes points out that the words '*Person*' and '*Trinity*' do not appear in the Bible. Hobbes rejects the notion of Christ as an individual Person of the Trinity, instead positing that God was 'Represented' by various 'Persons', of whom Christ was – quite strikingly – only one. Towards the conclusion of this extract, Hobbes spells out his heterodox conclusion that God, who is 'one and the same God', is 'Represented' interchangeably by different biblical personages. This idea of Christ as merely one of God's representatives has a close parallel in Milton's epic poetry, where the word 'vicegerent' is repeatedly used to denote the Son of God in *Paradise Lost* (1667) (see Chapter Five, pp. 255-6, 272).[53] Although Christ is still unquestionably important in seventeenth-century radical Protestantism, His position is decentred. With attention to evolving theological debates about the Trinity, this thesis surveys early modern English Protestant modulations in representing Christ's voice.

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[52] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [2nd edn.]), pp. 339-40.

[53] See John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longman, 2007 [2nd edn.]), pp. 321, 543.

As has already been noted, early modern English Protestants widely believed that God the Father might speak through His chosen prophets, deriving this idea from the Old Testament's prophetic books. However, contemporaries also found inspiration for prophesying in the New Testament. Of note was the account of the Apostles receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2.4: 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance'.[54] This idea of mediating the voice of the Holy Spirit was vital to the Civil War prophet Anna Trapnel. In her tract *The Cry of a Stone* (1654), Trapnel makes specific reference to Acts 2.2 to conceptualise God's voice moving through her as a 'rushing wind' (see Chapter Four, pp. 214-16).[55] Additionally, during the Civil War period, prophets sometimes compared the 'wind' of the Holy Spirit to God's 'breath', which was thought to facilitate the delivery of non-verbal messages from God (see Chapter Four, p. 231).

Although the idea of prophesying through the Holy Spirit originates in Acts, the more radical early modern English Protestants were also drawn to Paul's writings on the democratic nature of prophesying. Various verses from Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians – such as 1 Corinthians 1.27, 'But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty' – became an inspiration for radical English Protestants seeking to emphasise

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[54] For early modern English Protestant commentaries on prophesying via the Holy Spirit, see – among many others – William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the Holy Scriptures and the Interpreters Thereof* (London, 1642), pp. 20-1; and also, from the more radical end of the Protestant spectrum, the early Quaker preacher and writer Richard Farnworth, *The Spirit of God Speaking in the Temple of God* (London, 1663), pp. 7-8.

[55] See Anna Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone,* ed. Hilary Hinds (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), p. 18.

that God's voice might come from unusual sources.[56] In this regard, Paul's writings on prophesying via the Holy Spirit acquired a heightened political significance for radical Protestant authors (see Chapter Four, pp. 228-9, 231). At this juncture, it is also worth emphasising the impact that the pejorative view of the prophet in classical literature had on early modern English prophesying. The early modern Protestant mediation of God's voice, via the Holy Spirit, was invariably set against anxieties surrounding false prophecy, which stemmed from classical and biblical precedent (see, for instance, Matthew 7.15: 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves').[57] Having outlined a selection of the biblical proof-texts that helped early modern English Protestants to define the voice of God, we now turn to the different ways that early modern Protestant individuals thought God's voice might, in practice, be heard.

## 3. Hearing God's Voice

In his seminal monograph *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (2000), Leigh Eric Schmidt documents the importance of voices within American Protestant experience. Schmidt posits that, in eighteenth-century America, those who described hearing God's voice 'spoke with some equivocation about the nature of the voices they heard'.[58] Responding to Schmidt's work, Alec Ryrie has recently argued that 'scepticism' about hearing

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[56] Using Paul's writings in this way became especially prevalent during the Civil War years: see, for example, John Lilburne, *The Grandie-Deceivers Unmasked* (London, 1649), p. 20; George Bishop, *Jesus Christ, The Same To Day, as Yesterday, in Life and Power, in Afflictions and Sufferings* (London, 1655), pp. 20-1.

[57] See Anthony Ossa-Richardson, *The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 65-73.

[58] Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 55.

external voices was also a hallmark of mainstream early modern English Protestantism.[59] Describing the numerous ways in which God was commonly expected to speak in early modern England, Ryrie notes:

> [God was] expected to [speak] through one of a small number of appropriately regulated means, and to deliver one of a small number of appropriately predictable messages. The means were (above all) preaching; reading of the Bible or improving books; conference with fellow Christians; public worship, in particular receiving the Lord's Supper; and domestic or private prayer and meditation.[60]

Echoing Schmidt's findings, Ryrie also suggests that 'distancing language is absolutely standard when English puritans speak about hearing God's voice'.[61] What follows provides a contextual apparatus for this thesis, signposting the different ways that God was regularly thought to speak to the early modern English Protestant either indirectly, or at a certain remove.

As Ryrie intimates, preaching was perhaps the most important way in which early modern English Protestants thought that God's voice could be commonly heard. In his book *The Art of Hearing*, Arnold Hunt argues that 'the importance attached to preaching is indicative of a religious culture centred not just on the word but on the spoken word in particular'.[62] In substantiating this assessment, Hunt draws on the authority given to the Pauline proof-text of Romans 10.14-17, which stresses the importance of hearing God's word preached in order to achieve salvation (see especially Romans 10.14: 'and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear

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[59] Alec Ryrie, 'Hearing God's Voice in the English and Scottish Reformations', *Reformation*, Vol. 17 (1), 2012, pp. 49-74 (p. 70).
[60] Ibid., p. 51.
[61] Ibid., p. 54.
[62] Hunt, *Art of Hearing,* p. 21.

without a preacher?').[63] For example, Edmund Grindal, during his brief tenure as Archbishop of Canterbury, affirmed the importance of preaching in a notorious letter to Queen Elizabeth, written in late 1576:

> By preaching also due obedience vnto Christian princes and magistrates is planted in the hartes of subiectes, for obedience proceedeth of conscience, conscience is grounded vppon the worde of God, the worde of God worketh his effect by preaching, so as generally where preaching faileth wanteth obedience.[64]

As this extract demonstrates, for Archbishop Grindal, it is licensed preachers who ought to take hold of 'the worde of God', which best 'worketh his effect by preaching'. The phrase 'worketh his effect' emphasises a commonplace English Protestant belief: namely, that God's word, when explicated by the preacher's lively voice, was more likely to be attended to by the Christian individual.

Whilst early modern English Protestants were united in their emphasis on the significance of God's word, and on the need for the word to be voiced in godly preaching, there were also stark differences during the period in terms of how the ministry was conceived. Hunt helpfully comments:

> On the one hand, there was the prophetic model of ministry favoured by [Thomas] Cartwright, in which the preacher wielded the full force of his authority over his flock, first casting them down by the preaching of the law, then raising them up by the preaching of the Gospel. On the other hand, there was the more routine model of ministry favoured by [John] Whitgift, in which the preacher patiently reiterated the words of scripture, week after week, in order to bring his flock to a better understanding of true doctrine.[65]

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[63] Ibid., p. 22.

[64] Grindal's famous letter on the necessity of preaching is quoted in Robert Zaller, *The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 74.

[65] Hunt, *Art of Hearing,* pp. 32-3.

This question of a unified ministry was also complicated by the fact that not all Protestant preachers were considered adequate in their office, and it was often asserted that England did not possess enough competent preachers. In that same letter to Elizabeth, Grindal somewhat hyperbolically lamented: 'how can it be thought that 3 or 4 preachers may suffice'.[66]

The reformed Church's internal regulation of the ministry was further complicated by the emergence of prophecy as a prominent force in post-Reformation English culture. Robert Zaller writes:

> Prophesying had begun in Zwinglian churches, and was brought back to England by the Marian Exiles. Derived from the Pauline injunction, 'Let the Prophets speake two, or three, and let the other[s] iudge' (1 Corinthians 14.29 [Geneva version]), it typically consisted of two or three sermons preached on a set verse before a clerical and lay audience, with ministerial responses. Prophesyings were thus public symposia offered by local clergy to an at-large congregation.[67]

Thus prophecy, in its original clerical form, functioned as a kind of interactive sermon; it was a disputation on a specific point of doctrine, held in a public place. Although prophecy was initially restricted to those within the ministry, it became extremely popular, and brought preaching into lay communities in a dynamic manner. During the late sixteenth century, Elizabeth was worried by the upsurge in interest in prophecy, and sought to suppress it: indeed, Grindal's defence of clerical prophesying in 1574 led to his removal as Archbishop of Canterbury.[68] As scholars such as Keith Thomas and Alexandra Walsham have noted, new kinds of lay prophets began to emerge during the 1580s and early

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[66] Quoted in Zaller, *Discourse of Legitimacy,* p. 74.
[67] Ibid., p. 64.
[68] Ibid., pp. 64-5.

1590s.[69] These prophets claimed that they were mediating the voice of God, and insisted that their words were – much like those of the clergy – wholly sanctioned by divine authority. William Hacket, perhaps the most famous of these late Elizabethan prophets, is reported by Richard Cosin to have said 'that God would do a greater worke by him the said *William Hacket*, then euer he did by any of all the Prophets, for the establishment of his gospell, to the confusion of Satan and Antichrist'.[70] Claims for prophetic inspiration, by figures such as Hacket, could be boldly set forth, and were in practice very difficult to disprove. Even though these late Tudor prophets derived authority by claiming to mediate God's voice, they remained largely on the fringes of early modern English society. By contrast, the numerous radical prophets of the mid-seventeenth century attained greater cultural prominence, defying clerical attempts to regulate the act of prophesying during the Civil War years (see Chapter Four).

Throughout the early modern period, as we have already noted in this introduction (see p. 20), the Bible was thought to resound as a speaking voice. Michel de Certeau writes that 'before the "modern" period, that is, until the sixteenth or seventeenth century, this writing (Holy Scripture) speaks'.[71] This notion of the Bible as a voice for God to speak through is given particular emphasis in Paul's epistles to the Romans: Romans 3.2 records that to the Jews

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[69] See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), esp. chapter 5; Walsham, *Providence,* pp. 204-18.

[70] Richard Cosin, *A Treatise Discouering the Late Designments and Courses Held for Aduancement Thereof, by William Hacket Yeoman, Edmund Coppinger, and Henry Arthington Gent.* (London, 1592), p. 51. See also Walsham's article on Hacket and Elizabethan prophesying, '"Frantick Hacket": Prophecy, Sorcery, Insanity, and the Elizabethan Puritan Movement', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 41 (1), 1998, pp. 27-66.

[71] Michel de Certeau, 'The Scriptural Economy', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 137.

'were committed the oracles of God'. Yet, as Ryrie suggests, for mainstream English Protestants, experiences of God's voice did not just arise from solitary readings of scripture but could also be prompted by fellow believers. The writings of St. Augustine provide perhaps the foremost early modern Protestant source for the idea of being prompted to read the Bible. In Book VIII of his *Confessions* (*c.* 397-8), poised before the moment of conversion, Augustine hears 'the voice of a boy or a girl… again and again it repeated the refrain "Take it and read, take it and read"'.[72] This episode became a key model for instances when English Protestants were instructed by others to read the Bible. For example, a woman whom we now only know by the initials D.M. is reported in Vavasor Powell's compendium *Spirituall Experiences, Of Sundry Beleevers* (1653) to have 'heard the Lord saying to my soule, as he did to Paul, *Trust in me, my grace is sufficient for thee*'.[73] Here, D.M. asserts that she has heard God speak through the words of 2 Corinthians 12.9: 'And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness'. This anecdote suggests that in early modern English Protestant culture, instructive Bible verses were sometimes thought to be prompted by external voices.

Another way for early modern English Protestants to hear God's voice in public was during the liturgy, where the eucharist was a focal point. Eamon Duffy promotes the centrality of the mass within late medieval English culture, writing that the 'liturgy lay at the heart of medieval religion, and the mass lay at the heart of the liturgy'.[74] During the consecration of the Host, the priest gave

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[72] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 177.
[73] Vavasor Powell, *Spirituall Experiences, Of Sundry Beleevers* (London, 1653), p. 36.
[74] See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 91.

voice to the Christ's words during the Last Supper, which are reported in each of the synoptic gospels (Matthew 26.26-8; Mark 14.22-4; Luke 22.19-22): 'For this is my body' [*Hoc est enim corpus meum*]. In the late medieval period, these words were thought to bring about the miracle of transubstantiation, which asserted Christ's real – i.e. literal – presence during the eucharist.[75] The *Lay Folk's Mass Book* provides evidence that the privileged nature of the priestly role was popularly recognised, telling of 'fyue wordes withouten drede… that no mon but a prest schulde rede'.[76] In speaking Christ's words at the Last Supper, therefore, the late medieval priest was afforded superior authority within the parish – serving as an intermediary between the congregation and God.

The priest's mediation of Christ's voice during the eucharist underwent great change in early modern England. The introduction of a revised English liturgy under the stewardship of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer – which would replace the assortment of diocesan liturgies employed until the Henrician period, such as Sarum and York – was heralded by the passing of an Act for 'Uniformity of Service and Administration of the Sacraments' in the House of Lords on 15 January 1549.[77] This new liturgy was outlined within the Book of Common Prayer. One of the most significant alterations within the 1549 Prayer Book was to the words spoken by the priest before the consecration of the Host. Where, in the late medieval liturgy, the priest's voicing of Christ was thought

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[75] For a helpful overview of Reformation-era debates over 'how literally to take the words "this is my body"', see Sophie Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 15-18.

[76] *The Lay Folk's Mass Book*, ed. Thomas Frederick Simmons (London: EETS, 1871), p. 147; as cited in Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars,* p. 110.

[77] See Marshall, *Heretics and Believers,* p. 323.

to bring about Christ's real presence in the eucharistic wafer, there is a movement, in the 1549 Prayer Book, towards the idea of memorialisation. Before the consecration, in the text of the 1549 Prayer Book, the priest asserts: 'this congregacion which is here assembled in thy name, to celebrate the commemoracion of the most glorious death of thy sonne'.[78] This sentence is important, as Brian Cummings notes in his edition, because '"commemoracion" replaces the word *sacrificium* [in the] Sarum, [and] articulates Zwingli's doctrine of Communion as a memorial re-enactment, rather than a renewed performance, of the original sacrifice of Christ'.[79] On the one hand, then, the Prayer Book can be said to have reduced the authority of the celebrant as a divine intermediary, placing stress on members of the congregation engaging in their own individual acts of 'commemoracion'. On the other hand, even after the Reformation, the celebrant was still speaking *in persona Christi*. This signifies that the eucharist remained a focal point for hearing God's word voiced in public worship.

A significant alteration made by Archbishop Cranmer within the original 1549 Prayer Book was to excise the Improperia. Derived from the Book of Lamentations, the Improperia, or Reproaches, enabled the priest to give voice to Christ during the late medieval Good Friday liturgy.[80] The liturgical directions within the Sarum Missal record that this was an occasion of high drama:

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[78] *BCP*, p. 30.

[79] Ibid., p. 701.

[80] For the centrality of the Improperia in the late medieval English Good Friday service, see Beatrice Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 166-7; Rosemond Tuve, *A Reading of George Herbert* (London: Faber & Faber, 1952), pp. 33-47.

> *The Collects being ended, the priest shall put off his chasuble, and seat himself in his own seat by the altar, with the deacon and sub-deacon. Meanwhile, two other priests of higher rank, barefoot, and vested in albs, without apparels, solemnly holding aloft between them in their arms the veiled cross, shall take up their position behind the high altar, on the right side, and chant these verses...*[81]

According to this liturgical direction, the Improperia took place whilst a '*veiled cross*' was held aloft, enabling the late medieval congregation to meditate on Christ's Passion. This need for the congregation to meditate on the cross is then emphasised by the priest as Christ is directly voiced: 'Because I led thee through the wilderness forty years, and I fed thee with manna, and brought thee into a land sufficiently good, thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour'.[82] These rhetorical lamentations offered the most sustained opportunity for the priest to stand in for Christ within the late medieval liturgy, and were intended to inspire sincere repentance within the congregation. Thus, Cranmer's suppression of the Improperia placed further stress on the authority of the priest as a divine intermediary.

There were also certain widely invoked practices through which early modern English Protestants sought to hear God's voice in private. The first to mention is prayer. Defining Protestant prayer in his book *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (2013), Alec Ryrie writes: 'Prayer was experienced before it was defined. The theory was deduced from the practice, although practice was then reshaped by theory'.[83] Ryrie's attempt to define early modern Protestant prayer through lived experience is helpful, given how much practices of prayer

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[81] *The Sarum Missal Done into English and Abridged* (London: Alban Press, 1989), p. 258.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 99.

could differ during the period. Modern scholarship has begun to pay attention to the many shades of early modern prayer within the reformed tradition, addressing factors such as: whether the supplicant prayed in private or in public; whether prayer was set (i.e., taken from the Prayer Book) or extempore; and whether sighs and groans were sufficient, or, instead, verbal eloquence was required.[84] Such debates over styles of prayer raged without resolution. As Naya Tsentourou summarises, '[early modern English culture] consistently failed to put forward a definitive model of how one should pray'.[85]

At the centre of all types of early modern Protestant prayer, however, was truth-speaking before God. In *An Exposition of the Lords Praier* (1592), the influential Cambridge Calvinist William Perkins articulates his view 'Of the circumstances of praier', writing 'For priuate praier, vsing of a voice is conuenient; yet so, as it may be done in silence. 1. the Lord gaue vs the voyce, as well as the hart to blesse him with all'.[86] For Perkins, private prayer involves the workings of the heart – a view that was frequently rehearsed by English Protestants during the period.[87] Prayer also had the advantage of being able to direct people to a given passage of scripture, through which, as we have already seen, God's word could speak as a voice. Thomas Tuke, a staunch Calvinist and

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[84] Important recent studies of early modern prayer include: Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie, ed., *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie, ed., *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[85] See Naya Tsentourou, *Milton and the Early Modern Culture of Devotion: Bodies at Prayer* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 8.

[86] William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Lords Praier* (London, 1592), p. 166.

[87] Further English Protestant discussions of prayer as involving the workings of the 'heart' include Thomas Becon, *The Catechism of Thomas Becon,* ed. John Ayres (Cambridge, 1844), p. 125; John Bradford, *Godlie Meditations Vpon the Lordes Prayer* (London, 1562)*, sig. A2r.

a great admirer of Perkins, wrote in *The Practise of the Faithfull* (1613) that 'surely hee, that with a good will can speake vnto God [in prayer], will also with a good will heare God speak vnto him [through His word]'.[88] This conception of prayer as focusing an individual's reading of the Bible brings our discussion to the related, but still distinct, practice of meditation.

Because of the work of Louis L. Martz, we tend to associate the practice of meditation with Catholicism. As Martz demonstrates, Catholics were able to draw without hesitation on medieval meditations, both in their monastic forms and in the lay alternatives which emerged in the fourteenth century.[89] Yet, this is not to say that the practice was wholly neglected within the English reformed tradition. The recent work of Ryrie and Ian Green has highlighted that Protestants did develop a meditative tradition during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, encouraged by the fact that such authorities as Augustine and St. Bernard of Clairvaux published their own divine meditations.[90] Adrian Streete also foregrounds the importance of the Protestant meditative tradition, drawing our attention to Martin Luther's 'sermon of 1519 entitled *A Meditation on Christ's Passion*', where Luther writes: 'They contemplate Christ's passion aright who view it with a terror-stricken heart and a despairing conscience'.[91] From this extract we discern that, for Luther, meditation involved the workings of the 'terror-stricken heart', which suggests that he considered it to be similar

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[88] Thomas Tuke, *The Practise of the Faithfull* (London, 1613), p. 30.

[89] See Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954), esp. Martz's introduction, pp. 5-9.

[90] See Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 108-18; Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 277-88.

[91] Luther's sermon is quoted in Adrian Streete, *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 71.

to prayer. As far as most English Protestants are concerned, however, the term 'meditation' has proven difficult to define, mostly because there was no authoritative contemporary definition of the subject. As Ryrie summarises, at one end meditation 'blurs into prayer: the frequency with which the two words are coupled together as near-synonyms is no accident', whilst '[at] the other end of the range, it can seem, as [Helen C.] White put it, that "sometimes [meditation] connotes very little more than thoughts about"'.[92] Perhaps the best way to grasp how early modern English Protestants used meditation to seek out God's voice, therefore, is to consider meditative texts in action.

An early English Protestant treatment of meditation comes from the Essex Puritan Richard Rogers. In the first of his *Seuen Treatises* (1603), Rogers delineates the different forms of 'miserie' that afflict 'mans cause', noting:

> From hence come all the dearths, famines, penurie, and pouertie, which euery where are cried out of. In his bodie, sicknesse, diseases of many kinds, aches, gripings, swellings, burstings, and other paines intolerable. In the senses, deafnes, blindnes, numnes, and such like, which should make any heart to quake and tremble to heare them but named.[93]

In giving an exhaustive list of the different kinds of afflictions which may affect the 'bodie' and the 'senses', Rogers suggests that the Protestant 'heart' ought to fear God's wrath. In this sense, Rogers's thinking on meditation – which emphasises the workings of the terrified 'heart' – is reminiscent of Luther's in his sermon *A Meditation on Christ's Passion*. Rogers continues, however, by lamenting the way that the ordinary Protestant 'heart' is, often enough, not penetrated by God's voice:

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[92] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 110.
[93] Richard Rogers, *Seuen Treatises* (London, 1603), p. 5.

> This (as vnwise) they obiect, because they are moued with nothing but that which they see with their outward eyes, the voyce of God pierceth not their hearts, although it pronounceth as well to him that escapeth al these (if any such could be found) as to him who hath bin plagued with them all, euen to one as to another without respect of persons.[94]

In this passage, Rogers decries those who 'obiect' to the need to hearken to God's voice, before emphasising, for such impious individuals, the impossibility of escaping final judgment ('[God's voice] pronounceth as well to him'). Throughout *Seuen Treatises*, Rogers employs synonyms for deep thought – such as the verbs 'meditate', 'muse', and 'consider' – to suggest that one can employ the intellect to stir the affections, and thereby hear God's voice speak out.[95] Martz has argued that early modern Catholic meditation was frequently divided into 'memory', 'understanding', and 'will'.[96] By using terms relating to the process of cognition, Rogers highlights the importance of contemplation in the Protestant meditative process.

A further aspect of Protestant meditational practice was that it was linked to writing. Ryrie notes the 'close association of meditation with reading and – less frequently – writing. It was something you did while reading, or indeed it was itself a form of reading: echoing medieval *lectio divina* and the psalms' talk of meditating on God's law'.[97] In his *A Short Treatise Against the Donatists of England* (1590), the Essex clergyman George Gifford defines meditation as 'all that is done in studying and musing when one readeth'.[98]

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., pp. 65, 237-9.

[96] See Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation,* p. xxiii.

[97] Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* p. 111.

[98] George Gifford, *A Short Treatise Against the Donatists of England, Whome We Call Brownists* (London, 1590), p. 25.

Meditating upon God's word could thus become, according to some English Protestant divines, a means to hear God's voice. Elsewhere, in his sermon *The Preachers Plea* (1604), the Devonshire minister Samuel Hieron compares the process of meditating on sermons to 'digestion'.[99] In this process of meditation, Hieron continues, '[those] things which are of present vse, are eftsoones to be layed hold vpon, and a certaine secret oath is to be made betweene God and a mans owne soule'.[100] That which is 'of present vse' in the sermon forges a 'secret oath'; thus, for Hieron, meditating upon God's word enables the forging of a verbal contract with God. Having surveyed how the idea of hearing God's voice was thought about in early modern English Protestant culture, I will now outline the methodology of this thesis, which assesses the provision of God's voice in the literary and print culture of the period.

## 4. Voicing God

Over the last few decades, there has been a blossoming of new scholarship devoted to the rhetorical construction of voices in early modern English literary texts.[101] Most recently, Richards's *Voices and Books* documents the teaching of vocal delivery (*pronuntiatio*) in the English humanist schoolroom, exploring what happens 'when we bring voice to [Renaissance texts], how vocal tone

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[99] Samuel Hieron, *The Preachers Plea: or, A Treatise in Forme of a Plain Dialogue* (London, 1604), p. 257.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Many have documented the rhetorical representation of women's voices. See Michelle O'Callaghan, 'The "Great Queen of Lightninge Flashes": The Transmission of Female-Voiced Burlesque Poetry in the Early Seventeenth Century', in *Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing,* ed. Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 99-117; Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke, ed., *'This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London: Routledge, 1992).

realizes or changes textual meaning, and how the literary writers of the past tried to represent their own and others' voices, as well as manage and exploit their readers' voices'.[102] Richards's monograph is an important contribution to the field, providing a handbook for those seeking to understand how the humanist schoolroom enabled Tudor authors to bring a range of possible voices to life. Yet, despite Richards devoting a chapter of her book to the role of human voices in the early modern English Church, and the emergence of a wider field around the construction of voices in texts, there is still more to be said about the wider religious implications of rhetorical voices.[103]

In thinking about the various ways that the voice of God was represented in early modern English Protestant culture, I have been influenced by recent scholarship on personae.[104] During a discussion of the religious implications of personae, John Parker writes:

> [We] can afford to acknowledge that the Christian religion has always had a profoundly close, if dialectical, relation to anthropomorphism; consequently that it cannot do without the concept of a mask, even where it manages to dispense with masked impersonation by means of that concept.[105]

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[102] Richards, *Voices and Books*, p. 24.

[103] See Richards, *Voices and Books,* chapter 3. Other notable exceptions include Osherow, *Biblical Women's Voices*; and Charlotte Clutterbuck, *Encounters with God in Medieval and Early Modern English Poetry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), which – although thematically close to my subject – is methodologically distinct, applying Ricoeur's theory of '[the] abyss at the heart of human experience' (p. 3) to the language of medieval and early modern English devotional poetry, rather than employing a historicised approach to issues of rhetoric and theology. For an account of literary representations of God's and Christ's voices in medieval England, see also Mary Hayes, *Divine Ventriloquism in Medieval English Literature: Power, Anxiety, Subversion* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[104] See Twycross and Carpenter, *Masks and Masking*; Jody Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 56-61. See also the discussion of Christianity's vexed relationship to 'persona' in Steven Connor, *Ventriloquism: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 78-9.

[105] John Parker, 'Persona', in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History,* ed. Brian Cummings and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 591-609 (p. 598).

With reference to post-Reformation English culture, Parker rightly points out that the relationship between Christianity and personae was paradoxical. The staging of biblical drama, as we have already noted in this introduction (see pp. 13-15), was forbidden in English Protestant circles from the late sixteenth century onwards. Yet, in support of Parker's somewhat provocative claim that Christianity 'cannot do without the concept of a mask', I will demonstrate in this thesis that rhetorical voices for God were given by early modern Protestant authors more often than has usually been thought, across a broad range of literary genres.

During the sixteenth century, English authors who possessed at least grammar school educations inherited several classical rhetorical techniques to help them construct voices in texts. Drawing on Richard Rainolde's rhetorical handbook *The Foundacion of Rhetorike* (1563), Richards summarises some of the most influential: 'ethopoeia, "a certaine Oracion made by voice, and lamentable imitacion, upon the state of any one"… eidolopoeia, when we speak in the voice of a dead person, and prosopopoeia, when we speak in the voice of any *thing*'.[106] Of these techniques, *prosopopoeia* achieved an especially elevated status as a rhetorical device during the late Elizabethan era, and was used across a number of early modern literary forms, including prose, poetic complaint, and drama.[107] Sixteenth-century English understanding of *prosopopeia* was chiefly mediated through the classical orator Quintilian's rhetorical treatise *Institutio Oratoria* [Education of an Orator] (*c.* 95 AD). The

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[106] Richards, *Voices and Books*, p. 186.

[107] Ibid. For the generic versatility of *prosopopoeia* in early modern English literary culture, see also Neil Rhodes, *Shakespeare and the Origins of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 96, 100.

*Institutio* was written with an imagined courtroom speaker in mind. In the treatise, Quintilian advocates for flexible usage of speech within court and, implicitly, for varied usage of *prosopopoeia*, which he defines in depth:

> It is in these passages particularly that good service is done by Prosopopoeiae, that is to say fictitious speeches of other persons. When an advocate speaks for a client, the bare facts produce the effect; but when we pretend that the victims themselves are speaking, the emotional effect is drawn also from the persons. The judge no longer thinks that he is listening to a lament for somebody else's troubles, but that he is hearing the feelings and the voice of the afflicted, whose silent appearance alone moves him to tears…[108] (6.1.25-6)

In this extract, Quintilian highlights the ability for 'fictitious speeches' to be uttered, and to move the courtroom audience to 'tears'. As indicated by the verb 'pretend', a distinction is drawn between the 'bare facts' required in speaking 'for a client', and the ventriloquized voice required in speaking as a client. Quintilian is chiefly interested in the 'emotional effect' that might be drawn out from an audience by a speaker employing *prosopopoeia*. Although using *prosopopoeia* to represent God's voice might appear to be an outlandish proposition, this was undertaken by Nashe in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, as this thesis will show.

*Prosopopoeia* was not the only rhetorical technique that influenced early modern English Protestant representations of God's voice. Of equal significance were the practices of *disputatio* (debate) and *declamatio* (set speech), which trained students in the construction of arguments at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Peter Mack provides the example of John Rogers, a man who,

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[108] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Vol. 3, trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 31.

while at Oxford, possessed a 'notebook [including] drafts of a pair of declamations he delivered in October 1582 on the opposing themes: "Small things grow through harmony" and "All things grow through discord"'.[109] When thinking about argumentative construction, in the grammar school as well as in the university, a standard textbook for early modern English humanists was the Latinised *Progymnasmata* of the fourth-century grammarian Aphthonius. Most influentially, Aphthonius's conception of *destructio* – which, according to Joel B. Altman, taught students to 'overthrow any argument based on probability with one of his own, based on a counter-probability'[110] – was considered an advanced argumentative technique, and was transmitted into English by the likes of Richard Rainolde. In his account of 'The destruccion' in *The Foundacion of Rhetorike*, Rainolde stresses the need for the rhetorician to attend to 'soche proposicions… as are probable in both sides, to induce probabilitie of argument, to reason therupon', before going on to 'caste doune by force' the less probable argument.[111] This notion of a speaker considering 'both sides' of the question, before confuting an argument which was judged less likely, had a substantial impact on English-language poetry of the period that represented God's voice. This thesis attends to instances in early modern Protestant culture, such as the work of Herbert and Milton, where God is voiced as a debater: speaking with evident authority to resolve a given proposition.

Contemporary scholarship has also highlighted the importance of humanist rhetoric in early modern English preaching. Mack notes that

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[109] See Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric,* p. 65.

[110] Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 46.

[111] Richard Rainolde, *A Booke Called the Foundacion of Rhetorike* (London, 1563), sig. F4v.

'Erasmus's *Ecclesiastes* (1535), which is found quite frequently in the [university] booklists, provides instruction on biblical interpretation and a comprehensive rhetoric course adapted to the needs of the preacher'.[112] In the *Ecclesiastes*, Erasmus focuses, among other rhetorical techniques, on amplification (*amplificatio*), which he defines as '[making] a thing seem bigger than it is… For the preacher, it is enough if he make the thing seem as great as it is, either greater or lesser than it appears to the multitude'.[113] Whilst Erasmus's definition of rhetorical amplification focuses, principally, on the idea of enlargement – which might imply something becoming louder – he avoids discussing the technique in terms of voice. The role of the preacher in amplifying God's word, and turning it into voice, is given emphasis within the English Protestant tradition by William Perkins's preaching manual, *The Arte of Prophecying* (1592; trans. 1607):

> And euery Prophet is partly the voyce of God, to wit, in preaching: and partlie the voyce of the people, in the acte of praying, [Jeremiah] 15.19. *If thou take away the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as it were My Mouth.* [Nehemiah] 8.6. *And Hezra blessed the Lord the great God, and all the people answered Amen.*[114]

In the first instance, it is significant that Perkins employs the noun 'Prophet' interchangeably to refer to preachers; this description is given weight by the biblical proof-text of Jeremiah 15.19 ('*as it were My Mouth*'). In the second instance, we note that Perkins refers to preachers as 'partly the voyce of God',

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[112] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 67.

[113] Erasmus, 'Ecclesiastes', in *Opera Omnia*, Vol. 5, ed. J. Le Clerc (Leiden, 1703-6 [repr. 1962]), pp. 968-9; as cited in Debora K. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 224-5.

[114] See William Perkins, 'Of the Preaching of the Word', in *The Arte of Prophecying: or, A Treatise Concerning the Sacred and Onely True Manner and Methode of Preaching*, trans. Thomas Tuke (London, 1607), p. 3.

promoting his belief that preachers attain an elevated social status in serving as conduits, or mouthpieces, for God's word, which – for Perkins, as for Erasmus – is ascribed a vocal quality. As we shall see in this thesis, Perkins's conception of the prophetic preacher, amplifying 'the voyce of God' in his sermons, proved to be an influential model for early seventeenth-century English Protestant preachers, who sought to foreground their importance as divine intermediaries.

Throughout the early modern period, prophets were also understood as vehicles for God to speak through, although it should be noted that the prophetic role was much more hotly contested.[115] In her recent study *The Reformation of Prophecy* (2018), G. Sujin Pak attends to various reformers' teachings on the priesthood of all believers, placing emphasis on the writings of Zwingli, who 'asserted the inseparable tie between the priesthood of all believers and active engagement with God's Word'.[116] In his 'Reply to Emser' (1524), Zwingli argues for a lay ability to interpret scriptural truth and discern right teachings. Zwingli stresses: 'Therefore, those who hear are God's sheep, are the church of God, and cannot err; for they follow the Word only of God, which can in no wise deceive', before re-emphasising that '[it] is theirs to judge of a shepherd (as was said above), and of doctrine'.[117] Thus, whilst Zwingli's notion of the prophet remained confined to those within the ministry, his conception of a

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[115] For the classical idea of the prophet as a vehicle for divine speech, see 'prophet', *OED, n.* The section on the etymology of 'prophet' states: '[In] Ancient Greek προφήτης was originally the spokesman or interpreter of a divinity, e.g. of Zeus, Dionysus, Apollo, or the deliverer or interpreter of an oracle, corresponding generally to classical Latin *vātēs*… The Greek word was adopted in Latin as *prophēta* chiefly in post-classical times'.

[116] See G. Sujin Pak, *The Reformation of Prophecy: Early Modern Interpretations of the Prophet & Old Testament Prophecy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 39-40.

[117] Huldrych Zwingli, 'Reply to Emser', in *Commentary on True and False Religion,* ed. Samuel M. Jackson and Clarence N. Heller (Durham, NC.: Labyrinth Press, 1981), p. 375.

discerning laity, who 'follow the Word only of God… It is theirs to judge',

opened the door to further participation from lay believers in scriptural exegesis.

To put it in another way, the Zwinglian doctrine of the priesthood of all believers

had long-lasting ramifications for early modern English Protestantism. Among

others, the Oxford scholar and minister John Rainolds, commenting on 2 Peter

1.21 in his printed sermon *The Prophecie of Obadiah* (1613), foregrounds the

suitability of prophets to speak for God:

> It sufficeth vs, that he was the *Minister* of the *Lord*, and servant
> as his name importeth, and that these *prophecies came not by the*
> *will of man, but holy men of God spake, as they were moued by*
> *the HOLY GHOST*. And for our parts, though we know not the
> earthen vessel, wherein this treasure was enclosed, yet let vs
> bring faithfull and humble hearts to the receauing and imbracing
> of the same, for he was but the messenger, the message was the
> *Lords.*[118]

In the first part of this quotation, Rainolds outlines an orthodox conception that

God the Father '*spake*' through prophets who '*were moued by the HOLY*

*GHOST*'. Where Rainolds is more distinctive, however, is in his ambiguous idea

of the prophetic role; in referring to 2 Corinthians 4.7, a Pauline verse on lay

prophesying, Rainolds's phrase 'we know not the earthen vessel' implies that

God might sometimes speak through unexpected sources. This biblical

conception of serving as a 'vessel' for God's word when prophesying became

particularly prevalent during the Civil War and Interregnum. Even though

prophecy, much like the sermon, has traditionally been conceived of as a non-

literary genre, this thesis demonstrates that the provision of God's voice in early

modern English prophetic writing rewards detailed formal analysis.

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[118] John Rainolds, *The Prophecie of Obadiah* (Oxford, 1613), p. 4.

Each of my chapters takes a different approach to exploring the way the voice of God was represented in the literary and print culture of early modern England. My first chapter considers Thomas Nashe's employment of the classical rhetorical technique *prosopopoeia* to give voice to Christ in his prose tract *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*. It situates Nashe's voice of Christ in the context of the interdenominational emphasis on hearing, and obeying, God's voice as it speaks from within the heart. Drawing on the commonplace early modern belief that unrepentant individuals possessed 'stonie' hearts, I explore the various rhetorical effects that Nashe strives for in presenting a divine voice that seeks to move its auditors, despite the implication that only certain auditors will be responsive. In particular, this chapter will focus on Nashe's construction of a voice that despairingly exhorts repentance; strikes against its audience, whilst acknowledging that debts may yet be paid off through sincere repentance; expresses infinite compassion in hyperbolic terms; and employs threats, which provocatively echo, in a last-ditch effort to provoke its audience to repent. In its concluding section, this chapter will attend to the framing of Christ's voice within the orthodox, broadly tripartite structure of *Christ's Tears*, considering the way that Christ's voice is responded to – and reflected on by Nashe's authorial persona – in the tract's later stages.

Chapter Two surveys how key biblical proof-texts for the voice of God were explicated in early seventeenth-century printed sermons, with reference to authors such as Thomas Adams, Lancelot Andrewes, and John Donne. The discussion is framed by referring to Calvinist efforts to limit the role of the divine medium to those within the ministry, whilst acknowledging that Protestantism was also a wider inspiration for lay engagement with scripture (to

be discussed in detail in Chapter Four). Exploring the homiletic treatment of Exodus 3, certain supplicatory Psalms, Christ's baptism, and Revelation, I provide an account of the different ways that Protestant preachers served as intermediaries for the voice of God. In doing so I suggest that, whilst all Protestant preachers took it as their task to help their congregations – and their readers – to hear God's voice, they took divergent stances when discussing who might be able to do so.

My third chapter focuses on George Herbert's rhetorical representation of the voice of God in his collection *The Temple*. It builds on critical discussion of the connection between Herbert and the Psalms, arguing that Herbert invokes God's voice more often than in his primary biblical source. I suggest that when Herbert voices God it is, often enough, as Christ, who points individual speakers towards salvation in *The Temple*. Charting the extensive rhetorical use of God's voice in *The Temple*, this chapter addresses: Christ's meditative voice in 'The Sacrifice'; the use of God's voice in resolving individual lyric poems; Herbert's representation of God's voice as absent; and the dialogue with God that emerges towards the end of the volume. In its conclusion, the chapter provides an account of how one of Herbert's foremost poetic imitators, namely Christopher Harvey, represented God's voice in *The Synagogue* (1640).

Chapter Four, which surveys a range of prophetic texts written at around the time of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, considers how the voice of God was often thought to be mediated by individuals ordinarily lacking in authority. In doing so, it provides a close counterpart to Chapter Two. With reference to the prophetic writings of Lady Eleanor Davies, the women prophets of the Fifth Monarchist sect, Puritan maids, uneducated men, and the Ranter

Abiezer Coppe, I explore the different rhetorical strategies through which lay Protestant authors assumed heavenly voices. Although mid-seventeenth-century English prophets sometimes represented God's voice directly, more commonly invoked models in the period included Daniel, Ezekiel, and John the Revelator. Offering a formal account of material that has principally been read for its historical significance, I argue that these complex acts of divine ventriloquism enabled English prophetic authors to promote their various political agendas.

My fifth chapter, which attends to John Milton's representation of the voice of God in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, suggests that the poet's epic verse rewards attention to dramatic address. It foregrounds Milton's heterodox conception of the Trinity, using the poet's discussion of the Son of God in *De Doctrina Christiana* (*c.* 1658-60) to highlight that the Son is hierarchically inferior to the Father in Miltonic epic. The first section of this chapter, which focuses on the dialogic relationship between God and the Son in *Paradise Lost*, argues that the Son seeks to obey divine decree. The second section, which considers Eve's transgression as a product of misinterpreting God's voice, offers a counterpoint to the opening discussion. Following this, the chapter concludes with a novel discussion of the voice of Jesus in *Paradise Regained*, with attention to the multi-gendered implications of Jesus's passive, scriptural resistance.

In offering these case studies of instances where the voice of God is represented in early modern English literature and culture, two through-lines should be signposted. Firstly, this thesis documents the different ways in which early modern English Protestant authors employed the Bible, alongside other

sacred and secular texts, to construct 'hybridised' rhetorical voices for God. By focusing on the period between Nashe and Milton, this thesis is alive to recurring debates within early modern English Protestant culture around who has the authority to 'mediate' God's voice: that is, to stand in for God and promulgate His voice in a text. A central question that emerges throughout my consideration of textual voices of God is whether Protestant authors ought to expand copiously upon scripture, or instead, faithfully copy out God's word in the manner of a scribe. It may be said, however, that the early modern English Protestants considered in this thesis do not reach a definitive answer to this question. In this thesis, I suggest that this uncertainty stems from both the large number of possible mainstream positions within the Church of England between around 1590 and 1671, and from the sheer diversity of mediatorial voices – especially those made audible by the epistemological turmoil during the Civil Wars and Interregnum.

In Chapter One of this thesis, which focuses on *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, Nashe describes his *prosopopoeia* of Christ as a 'continued Oration'.[119] This, as we shall see, provides an indication of the way that Nashe constructs Christ's voice as an uninterrupted, flowing speech, which uses scripture as its basis, but borrows liberally from other texts. Similarly, Chapter Two demonstrates that Jacobean preachers saw the need to amplify God's word, and turn it into a voice through exegesis, as fundamental to the role of the preacher. This method of citing God's word, and expanding on it to draw out further meaning, overlaps with that of Nashe in *Christ's Tears* – indeed, Nashe

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[119] Thomas Nashe, 'Christ's Tears over Jerusalem', in *The Works of Thomas Nashe,* Vol. 2, ed. R.B. McKerrow and F.P. Wilson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p. 21.

was greatly influenced by homiletic culture in composing his text. These first two chapters, which evidence an expansive authorial attitude towards God's voice, contrast with Chapter Three. As Chapter Three demonstrates, Herbert uses scripture carefully – without undue amendments – when fashioning his voices of God and Christ in *The Temple*. In this respect, the exhortation '*Copie out onely that*', spoken by one of the poet's divine voices, is instructive.[120] Yet, the fact that Herbert sometimes ends his poems on puns, and represents God's voice more extensively at the conclusion of *The Temple*, suggests that the poet is still tempted by an expansive movement away from scripture. This idea of expanding on scripture, when representing God's voice, is further evidenced in Chapter Four. This chapter shows that the radical prophets of the English Civil Wars interpreted biblical texts with striking ingenuity, and with a sense of freedom from the constraints of ordinary preacherly exegesis. Chapter Five, which focuses on Milton's epic verse, evidences the same conflict between scriptural citation and expansion. Of course, Milton ventriloquises God and Christ at an extraordinary length in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, but his epic representations are, fundamentally, based upon the authority of scripture. Thus, across this thesis, I trace a push-and-pull movement within English Protestant culture between the need to dutifully cite God's word, and the desire to transform it as an elaborate voice.

As its second major through-line, this thesis enhances our understanding of the way in which salvation was written about and theorised in early modern England, doing so by positioning the emphasis on hearing God's voice as a central – and surprisingly neglected – element of the predestinarian schema. The

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[120] Herbert, 'Jordan (II)', in *English Poems*, ed. Wilcox, p. 367.

thesis begins its survey with Nashe's *Christ's Tears*, a text that is deeply engaged with the topic of predestination. In Chapter One, Nashe's personified voice of Christ repeatedly laments that most of his audience will not hear his voice and will therefore be damned, yet Nashe's Christ also – albeit infrequently – suggests that certain audience members may indeed achieve salvation, placing the predestinarian schema under some duress. Building upon this tension, Chapter Two demonstrates that prominent early seventeenth-century English preachers such as Andrewes and Donne were also critical of predestination in their sermons. In particular, this chapter shows that Jacobean preachers came to criticise the idea of exhorting the damned to amend their ways, and instead promoted God's voice – as mediated by the inspired preacher – as speaking out to all who might encounter it.

From this more inclusive soteriological perspective, there is much overlap between Chapters Two and Three. As Chapter Three reveals, Herbert engages with soteriological themes throughout *The Temple*; indeed, the poet uses the composite lyric voices of God and Christ to inclusively call his poetic speakers towards salvation (and on certain occasions, Herbert's language is obliquely critical of predestinarian doctrine). This critique of Calvinist ideas on hearing God's voice, as Chapters Four and Five demonstrate, became even more pronounced during the English Civil Wars and their aftermath. As Chapter Four shows, numerous unlearned and marginalised speakers promoted the idea of God's voice speaking to and through them during the English Civil Wars: this is, of course, an explicit and confrontational negation of the Calvinist belief that God speaks only to His elect. Following on from this theological challenge, Chapter Five points out the bumpy soteriological texture of Milton's epic verse.

As Milton's God puts it in Book III of *Paradise Lost*: 'Some have I chosen of peculiar grace / Elect above the rest; so is my will: / The rest shall hear me call'.[121] These lines, discussed in some detail within Chapter Five, provide a window onto the other central finding of this thesis: namely, that from around 1590 to the time of Milton, Calvinist ideas of only God's elect hearing His voice are increasingly accompanied – if not supplanted – by belief that all Christians may have the opportunity to hear the voice of God. Thus, to summarise, Chapters One to Five of this thesis trace a long-standing Protestant critique of the Calvinist position that only the elect might hear God's voice.

As a final introductory point, a clarification should be made about the span of this thesis, which, as I have outlined, considers the English Protestant tradition of voicing God between Nashe and Milton. This timeframe is, of course, to some extent arbitrary. This thesis could just as easily have looked backwards to the mid-sixteenth-century author Anne Askew, who – as critics have recently argued – effectively suppressed her own voice, in writing, to let God's voice 'run forth';[122] or, were it not for the confines of both time and word-count, this thesis could have been extended to cover the post-Restoration period more extensively, where authors regularly invoked the voice of God to rail against the vanities of the age (see my conclusion, pp. 309-10). My point, here, is that textual voices for God, in texts written in English, existed both before Nashe and after Milton. Nonetheless, I would maintain that a study of literary representations of the voice of God in the period between Nashe and Milton has

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[121] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 178.

[122] See, for instance, Richards, *Voices and Books,* chapter 4. For a slightly different recent reading of Askew, which gives greater emphasis to the assertion of Askew's distinctive literary voice, rather than its suppression, see John N. King, 'How Anne Askew Read the Bible', *Reformation,* Vol. 25 (1), 2020, pp. 47-68.

certain advantages. For one thing, this timeframe enables the contrast of extended literary representations of God and Christ, as in Nashe and Milton, with more concise representations, as in Herbert and Harvey. It has been fruitful to consider the reasons why, under various political and cultural influences, authors chose to represent God's voice in such divergent ways. Moreover, working chronologically from Nashe to Milton enables this thesis to chart the pressure that was put on the belief in predestination, over the course of the seventeenth century, by authors voicing God across a range of literary and religious genres. Finally, the late poetic writings of Milton have served as an effective culmination for a project focusing both on the rhetorical voicing of God, and the hearing of God's voice. It is a critical commonplace that Milton carefully considered the question of how to use scripture to represent God's voice, and this thesis explores this contention in some depth. Beyond this, I hope to show that Milton's late poetry is acutely responsive to ongoing English Protestant concerns that are tracked throughout the thesis, such as the question of who might mediate God's voice, and the theological debate over who will hear God's voice and achieve salvation. We shall now begin, in the early 1590s, with the writings of Thomas Nashe.

## 1. Nashe's Christ and the Limits of Repentance

Gabriel Harvey, a long-time antagonist of Thomas Nashe, was critical of the latter's prose tract *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*. In his *A New Letter of Notable Contents* (1593), Harvey accuses Nashe of blaspheming Christ, writing '*Non est bonum, ludere cum Sanctis: cum Christo ludere, execrabile*' ('It is not good to trifle with holy things, but to trifle with Christ is detestable').[1] Harvey's pejorative assessment of *Christ's Tears* has its root in Nashe's decision to employ the classical rhetorical technique of *prosopopoeia* to give voice to Christ, whose 'continued Oration' constitutes the first section of the tract's tripartite effort to move its London readership to repentance (21).[2] The contention that *Christ's Tears* trifles with the voice of Christ has had a lengthy afterlife, setting the tone for a tradition of critical disparagement spanning much of the twentieth century. Among many others, C.S. Lewis contested that *Christ's Tears* was a 'thoroughly bad piece of work'; Stephen S. Hilliard described the text as 'a failed experiment in an extreme style and a new polemic mode'; and Charles Nicholl, perhaps most extravagantly of all, entitled the chapter on *Christ's Tears* within his critical biography of Nashe as 'The Crack

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[1] Gabriel Harvey, *A New Letter of Notable Contents* (London, 1593), sig. D2r. This translation is taken from Beatrice Groves, 'Laughter in the Time of Plague: A Context for the Unstable Style of Nashe's *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*', *SP*, Vol. 108 (2), 2011, pp. 238-60 (p. 242). However, Groves's translation lacks the religious connotation of *execro* ('I curse') from the root of *sacer* ('sacred'), underplaying Harvey's accusation of Nashe's blasphemy. It is also worth noting that this phrase was proverbial: see, for example, John Bridges, *A Defence of the Gouernment Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters* (London, 1587), p. 763 ('It is an old saying, Non est bonum ludere cum sanctis').

[2] Thomas Nashe, 'Christ's Tears over Jerusalem', in *The Works of Thomas Nashe,* Vol. 2, ed. R.B. McKerrow and F.P. Wilson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958). All references to *Christ's Tears* are to this edition and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text. A revised edition of Nashe's writing is currently being prepared by Oxford University Press: see <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/thethomasnasheproject/> [accessed 18 September 2019].

Up'.[3] This overwhelmingly dismissive view of the work has dissipated in recent decades, and critics have begun to take *Christ's Tears* more seriously. In this chapter, I follow a set of scholars who have considered Nashe's abrupt adoption of religious rhetoric in the tract, analysing his voice of Christ in the context of the interdenominational emphasis on hearing – and obeying – God's voice as it speaks from within the heart.[4]

The duty of the believer to hear God's voice was an interdenominational commonplace within sixteenth-century Christian thought. However, the idea was placed under particular scrutiny within Calvinist theology, which was widely assimilated in the English Protestant mainstream during the late sixteenth century.[5] During 1585, an abridged translation of the French reformer Jean Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1539) – a work which outlines

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[3] See C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 412; Stephen S. Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 91; Charles Nicholl, *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 166-80.

[4] Recent accounts of the religious rhetoric of *Christ's Tears* include: Catherine I. Cox, 'Voices of Prophecy and Prayer in Thomas Nashe's *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*', in *Renaissance Papers,* ed. T.H. Howard-Hill and Philip Rollinson (New York, NY: Camden House, 2000), pp. 51-69; Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, esp. pp. 178-86; idem., 'Laughter in the Time of Plague', pp. 238-60; Christopher A. Hill, 'Thomas Nashe's Imitation of Christ', *PS,* Vol. 28 (2), 2006, pp. 211-21; Marshall McLuhan, *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time*, ed. W.T. Gordon (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2006), pp. 242-52; Philip Schwyzer, 'Summer Fruit and Autumn Leaves: Thomas Nashe in 1593', *ELR,* Vol. 24 (3), 1994, pp. 583-619; Debora K. Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 117-23; Per Sivefors, 'Prayer and Authorship in Thomas Nashe's *Christs Teares over Jerusalem*', *English,* Vol. 65 (250), 2016, pp. 267-79.

[5] For the widespread dissemination of Calvinist theology in sixteenth-century England, see Irena Backus and Philip Benedict, ed., *Calvin and his Influence, 1509-2009* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapters 6 and 8; Andrew Pettegree, 'The Spread of Calvin's Thought', in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin,* ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 207-24; Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 230-54; Brian A. Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), which gives an account of Calvin's relationship with earlier Church reformers.

his theory of the doctrine of predestination – was printed in Edinburgh. In Book II, Chapter V of the *Institutes*, Calvin writes: 'It is not in mans power, who is subiect to the lordship of sinne, to harken to the voice of God, which thing proceedeth from naturall corruption. Therefore man shall be alwayes the first authour of his owne destruction'.[6] This demotion of 'mans power… to harken to the voice of God' is an important element of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which ascribed all agency to God in determining who would be saved – suggesting that some Christians would not be capable of hearing and obeying God's voice. As James Simpson puts it, in a helpful gloss for this fundamental aspect of Calvinist soteriology, 'God wasn't prepared to welcome everyone into heaven, and he'd made his mind up already'.[7] Despite this idea of the inability of some Christians to achieve salvation, the Calvinist emphasis on hearing God's voice – as it calls the believer to repentance – became a commonplace of the theological treatises written in English during the late 1580s and early 1590s.[8] Among others, the Essex minister George Gifford, in *A Short Treatise Against the Donatists of England*, writes: 'I graunt it is the dutie of all men, aswell priuate as other, to obey Gods voice, which calleth them out of Babylon'.[9] It will be a central contention of what follows that this exhortative

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[6] Jean Calvin, *An Abridgement of the Institution of Christian Religion*, trans. Christopher Featherstone (Edinburgh, 1585), p. 83. The first translation of Calvin's *Institutes* into English, according to *EEBO,* was by Thomas Norton: see *The Institution of Christian Religion, Wrytten in Latine by Maister Ihon Caluin, and Translated Into Englysh According to the Authors Last Edition,* trans. Norton (London, 1561).

[7] James Simpson, *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and its Reformation Opponents* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 69.

[8] See, among many others, John Lyster, *A Rule How to Bring Vp Children* (London, 1588), p. 9 ('They that refuse to heare the voyce of God in deede, and deny to keepe his appointment'); Edward Vaughan, *A Method, or Briefe Instruction; Verie Profitable and Speedy* (London, 1590), p. 34 ('They haue Trumpets, for that they warne and excite men to heare the voyce of God').

[9] Gifford, *A Short Treatise Against the Donatists of England,* p. 96.

mode of rhetoric is adapted in Nashe's idiosyncratic – and, for many recent commentators, generically unclassifiable – *Christ's Tears*.[10]

The precise nature of Nashe's religious sympathies has long been a matter of scholarly debate. Nashe's father, William Nashe, had been presented with the living of West Harling, Norfolk in 1573, and Charles Nicholl notes that Nashe 'was probably intended for holy orders, but found this regimen uncongenial'.[11] It might be said, from the limited biographical information we possess, that Nashe's relationship with the mainstream Protestantism of his day was fraught.[12] Throughout his 'Oration', Nashe's voice of Christ displays limitless compassion in exhorting his audience, the people of Jerusalem, to repent, despite the fact that – in accordance with contemporary Calvinist thinking on the mechanics of salvation – he is aware only certain members of his audience will be capable of this repentance.[13] A key biblical proof-text for Nashe's idea of impenitence comes from the Book of Exodus: in the Geneva text, Exodus 9.12 states, 'And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he

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[10] The nature of Nashe's authorial intention, in writing *Christ's Tears*, has long provoked anxiety amongst literary critics. For a reading of *Christ's Tears* as a 'satire' of 'the pretensions of Elizabethan preachers', see Hill, 'Nashe's Imitation of Christ', p. 211; for a counter-view, which rejects the idea of *Christ's Tears* as a 'blasphemous parody' by contextualising it amongst 'Calvinist passion narratives', see Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible,* pp. 117-23. Most recently, Richards has added: '*Christs Teares* may be a strange work, but what holds its two sermons together is a common concern with preachers who don't persuade, with congregants who don't listen, and with the consequences of this'; see *Voices and Books,* pp. 177-8.

[11] Charles Nicholl, 'Nashe, Thomas (*bap.* 1567, *d. c*. 1601)', *ODNB.* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19790> [accessed 29 January 2020].

[12] It is of interest, here, that Nashe was probably a retainer in the household of Archbishop John Whitgift – a man seen by many English Puritans as a chief protagonist in cases made against them – in 1592. For a discussion of this connection, which fuels the idea of Nashe's anti-puritanism, see Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: Upstart Crow to Sweet Swan, 1592-1623* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011), pp. 48-50.

[13] In employing exhortative rhetoric to rail against the cities of London and Jerusalem, *Christ's Tears* is very responsive to the late sixteenth-century religious subgenre of the Jeremiad (see my introduction, pp. 24-5). For a general discussion of the paradoxical cultural centrality of the Jeremiad in early modern England, see Walsham, *Providence,* pp. 283-95.

hearkened not vnto them, as the Lord had said vnto Moses'. Drawing on the commonplace early modern belief that unrepentant individuals possessed 'stonie' hearts, this chapter will document the various rhetorical effects that Nashe strives for, in *Christ's Tears*, by presenting a divine voice that seeks to move its auditors, despite the implication that only certain auditors will be responsive. In particular, it will focus on Nashe's construction of a voice that despairingly exhorts repentance; strikes against its audience, whilst acknowledging that debts may yet be paid off through sincere repentance; expresses infinite compassion in hyperbolic terms; and employs threats, which provocatively echo, in a last-ditch effort to provoke its audience to repent. In its concluding section, this chapter will attend to the framing of Christ's voice within the orthodox, broadly tripartite structure of *Christ's Tears*, considering the way that Christ's voice is responded to – and reflected on by Nashe's authorial persona – in the tract's later stages.

## 1.   Impersonating Christ

In the 1593 preface 'To the Reader', which was annexed to the first printed edition of *Christ's Tears*, Nashe writes: 'Many things haue I vainly sette forth whereof now it repenteth me. S. *Augustine* writ a whole booke of his Retractations. Nothing so much do I retract as that wherin soeuer I haue scandaliz'd the meanest' (12-13). Here, Nashe distances himself from his profane literary output, employing the example of Augustine's late work *Retractations* (*c.* 426-8) to suggest that his earlier writings might require going over again.[14] Nashe's adverb, 'vainly', also highlights this bias against his

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[14] For an account of Augustine's *Retractations* as undertaking 'a systematic review of all of his [previous] works and, where necessary, correcting them', see Mary Inez Bogan,

former secular writings – they are now presented as useless in purpose. *Christ's Tears* is palinodic, the noun 'palinode' being defined by the *OED* as 'Originally: an ode or song in which the author retracts a view or sentiment expressed in a former poem. Later also (more generally): a recantation, retraction, or withdrawal of a statement'.[15] The palinode was often employed during the early modern period, as it is in Nashe's *Christ's Tears*, to mark the shift from secular to religious writing. In a recent article on the subject, Alison Shell argues that the 'advantage of the palinode, from the point of view of biographical self-justification… [is that] it redefines inconstancy, shows the virtue in changing one's mind, and gives the reader privileged access to the thought processes of the person who does so'.[16] Shell's conception of the palinode as a redefinition of authorial inconstancy is of particular relevance to *Christ's Tears*: a text that is highly implicated in its author's precarious personal and financial circumstances at the time of composition, much like the rest of Nashe's published work.

Nashe wrote *Christ's Tears* in an effort to please a specific set of patrons – the aristocratic, and pious, Carey family – who offered him patronage, and shelter from the city of London, during what Philip Schwyzer describes as 'the

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'Introduction', in *The Retractations,* trans. Bogan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1968 [repr. 1999]), pp. xiii-xxi (p. xiii). For a more recent reading of the *Retractations* as 'a highly original instance of self-reception in order to control the reception of his writings by others', see Karla Pollmann, 'Alium Sub Meo Nomine: Augustine between His Own Self-Fashioning and His Later Reception', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum,* Vol. 14 (2), 2010, pp. 409-24 (p. 411).

[15] 'palinode', *OED, n.,* 1.

[16] See Alison Shell, 'William Alabaster and the Palinode', in *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Lowell Gallagher (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2012), pp. 115-31 (p. 120). See also the discussion of the palinode as a prominent feature of late sixteenth-century English lyric poetry in Patricia Berrahou Phillippy, *Love's Remedies: Recantation and Renaissance Lyric Poetry* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1995), esp. chapters 4 and 5.

plague-ridden summer of 1593'.[17] Later in the 1593 preface, Nashe declares: 'Into some spleanatiue vaines of wantonnesse heeretofore haue I foolishlie relapsed, to supply my priuate wants: of them no lesse doe I desire to be absolued then the rest, and to God & man doe I promise an vnfained conuersion' (13). In this sentence, Nashe asks for absolution in a distinctly Calvinist register, which is confirmed by his use of the adjective 'vnfained'. Regularly used within the Calvinist discourse of the late sixteenth century, this adjective was employed to convey the true repentance of a member of God's elect, and to distinguish this form of repenting from that undertaken by an insincere reprobate.[18] Thus, Nashe's original 1593 preface to *Christ's Tears* articulates a highly self-conscious desire to reform himself and his writing; this repentant paratext provides an important context for Nashe's subsequent, avowedly sincere assumption of Christ's voice.

Before assuming Christ's voice in the tract, Nashe's authorial persona offers an invocation to Christ, whom he establishes as his muse in order to signal his apparently pious intent:

> Omnipotent Sauiour, it is thy Teares I intende to write of, those affectionate Teares, which in the 23. and 24. of *Mathew* thou wepst ouer *Ierusalem* and her Temple; Be present with me (I beseech thee) personating the passion of thy loue. (15)

Nashe's phrase in the final sentence of the passage, 'personating the passion', is worthy of further comment. During the 1590s, the act of 'personating' held

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[17] See Schwyzer, 'Summer Fruit', p. 583.

[18] For contemporary English Calvinist usages of 'vnfained' in connection with sincere repentance, see, for example, Arthur Dent, *A Plaine Exposition of the Articles of Our Faith* (London, 1589), p. 3 ('it is God our heauenly fathers dooing, and therefore that we flie to him by praier, & seeke to be reconciled vnto him by true, & vnfeined repentance'); Thomas Bilson, *The Perpetual Gouernement of Christes Church* (London, 1593), p. 117 ('otherwise vpon the vnfained repentance of the partie').

specific connotations of theatrical falsity, given that the word was usually discussed in relation to theatrical impersonations of living individuals.[19] Nashe was certainly aware of the most recent developments on the London stage (see this chapter, p. 74). He had attended Cambridge with a number of the celebrated 'university wits', including Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Lodge, and Robert Greene; and, shortly before the publication of *Christ's Tears*, Nashe wrote *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (*c*. 1592), his only extant solo-authored play.[20] Nashe's theatrical idea of 'personating' Christ also flags up his employment of the classical rhetorical device *prosopopoeia*. The term *prosopopoeia* is derived from the Greek for 'mask-making': as Gavin Alexander clarifies, '[the] Greek word *prosopon* means a face or mask', and given that *poeian* was the Greek verb for 'to make', '*prosopopoeia*… means literally "making a mask"'.[21] Nashe's employment of 'personating' responds to the Greek etymology of *prosopopoeia*, which promotes a sense of disguise. As we noted in the introduction (see pp. 46-7), sixteenth-century English understanding of *prosopopeia* was chiefly derived from Quintilian's rhetorical treatise *Institutio Oratoria*, which Nashe would have certainly encountered as part of his humanist education at Cambridge during the 1580s.[22] Thus,

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[19] For the theatrical 'personating' of living individuals during the 1580s and 1590s, see Jason Scott-Warren, *Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 112-14.
[20] The case for Nashe's theatricality has been made, most extensively by Richards: see *Voices and Books,* pp. 239-51. For Richards, it is not just that Nashe held a long-standing interest in the theatre, but that his work '[emphasises] the theatricality of the page… [animates] the material book even for silent readers' (p. 239). In my ensuing reading of Christ's exhortative voice, I have been influenced by Richards's conception of Nashe's prose as inherently noisy.
[21] See Gavin Alexander, 'Prosopopoeia', in *Renaissance Figures of Speech,* ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Karin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 97-112 (pp. 99, 101).
[22] For the centrality of Quintilian within the late sixteenth-century Cambridge University rhetorical curriculum, see James J. Murphy, 'Quintilian's Influence on the Teaching of Speaking and Writing in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance', in *Oral and Written Communication: Historical Approaches,* ed. Richard Leo Enos (Newbury Park, CA: Sage

throughout *Christ's Tears*, Nashe follows Quintilian by assuming various fictitious voices: doing so, as his voice of Christ is at pains to assert, in the effort to move his audience to repentance.

## 2. Desperate Exhortations

Introducing his voice of Christ, Nashe immediately foregrounds Christ's fervent intention to move the people of Jerusalem to repentance. Nashe writes: 'The more to penetrate and inforce [repentance], let vs suppose Christ in a continued Oration thus pleading with [the people of Jerusalem]' (21). The verbs 'penetrate and inforce', employed in the first clause of this sentence, foreshadow Christ's active attempt to induce repentance from his audience. There is a close connection, here, between Nashe's fictional voice of Christ and the way in which Calvinist sermons of the 1590s commonly made use of exhortative rhetoric to urge sincere repentance from their audiences. To take one example, in the 'third Question' of his printed fast-day sermon *The Christian Exercise of Fasting* (1596), the St. Bride's, London preacher Henry Holland comments that – according to the German reformer Martin Chemnitz ('Chemnitius saith') – fasting 'is not only *testimonium poenitentiae*, a testification of our repentance, it is also *irritamentum ad poenitentiam*, a meanes to stirre vs vp vnto repentance'.[23] In this extract, 'stirre' functions as an exhortative verb, implying

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Publications, Inc., 1990), pp. 158-83: esp. p. 180, where Murphy notes that 'Gabriel Harvey's *Rhetor* (1577), based on two Cambridge lectures of 1575, ranks [Quintilian] with Cicero: "Further, let us read Cicero and Quintilian, that is, our leaders and oratorical heroes"'. See also McLuhan's 1943 PhD thesis on the classical trivium of grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric in Nashe's work, 'The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of his Time', recently republished as *The Classical Trivium,* ed. Gordon.

[23] See Henry Holland, *The Christian Exercise of Fasting, Priuate and Publike* (London, 1596), p. 19. According to Richards, one contemporary preacher that Nashe was likely 'inspired by', in composing *Christ's Tears*, was Henry 'Silver-tongu'd' Smith, as Nashe calls him in *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592); see *Voices and Books,* p. 175.

the need for active, affective change in repenting. Throughout *Christ's Tears*, Nashe puts such stirring rhetoric into Christ's mouth; doing so to meditate upon those who will – and, more frequently, who will not – be responsive to his voice.

In the first words of his 'Oration', Nashe's Christ mimics the passionate stylings of contemporary Calvinist rhetoric, despairing of his audience's prior impenitence:

> *Ierusalem*, the Daughter of my people, I am sore vexed and compassionate for thee, *Ierusalem*, the midst of the earth, the mother of vs all, in the midst of whom I haue wrought my saluation; *Ierusalem*, that for all the good seede I haue sowne in thee, affordest nothing but stones to throw at my Prophets… (21)

Within the above passage, Nashe draws on the account of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. The Geneva translation of Matthew 13.5 states that 'some [seeds] fel vpon stonie grounde, where they had not muche earth, and anone they sprong vp, because they had no depth of earth'. In the given extract, Nashe harnesses this biblical verse to imply that, despite the 'good seede' sown by Christ's words, the city only affords 'stones'. This suggests that, despite Christ's opening *apostrophe* to the people of '*Ierusalem*', his audience's repentance has – so far – not been forthcoming. It should be re-emphasised, at this juncture, that 'stone' held a specific meaning within the Christian discourse of the early modern period. Alec Ryrie argues that, above all else, early modern English Protestants feared emotional stasis – 'hardness' of heart – and sought to be moved by God to a powerful, intensely focused emotionality.[24] One word that was regularly employed to communicate this idea was 'stoniness', a term which, as I have already intimated (see this chapter, pp. 63-4), echoed the scriptural

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[24] See Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 20-6.

account of Pharaoh's 'hardened' heart in Exodus 9.12. Yet, despite Ryrie's emphasis on the ubiquity of the stony heart trope in early modern Protestant discourse, this metaphor could also be invoked in Counter-Reformation English writing. One such example is Henry Hawkins's translation of the Jesuit Etienne Luzvic's treatise *Le Coeur Devot* (1627). This text is itself an adaptation of the *Cor Jesu Amanti Sacrum*, a series of copperplate emblems engraved in around 1586 by Anton Wierix the Younger, depicting the gradual process by which the stony heart of a Christian might obtain fuller access to God (Fig. 1). Hawkins's English translation, entitled *A Devout Hart* (1634), exalts Christ for making 'little chips' into the 'stony heart' of the impenitent reader.[25] With this in mind, Christ's repeated invocation of the noun 'stone', in *Christ's Tears*, would have held immediate connotations of impenitence for Nashe's original readership.



**Fig. 1. Image from *Cor Jesu Amanti Sacrum,* engraving by Anton Wierix the Younger, *c.* 1586, © Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels; depicting Jesus sweeping dirt from an impenitent 'stony' heart. Used with permission.**

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[25] See Etienne Luzvic, *The Devout Hart,* trans. Henry Hawkins (Rouen, 1634), pp. 49, 72. A fuller account of the process by which Luzvic and Hawkins each came to adapt the Wierix emblem series is found in Agnès Guiderdoni, 'Constructing the Imaginary Desert of the Soul in Emblematic Literature', in *Solitudo: Spaces, Places, and Times of Solitude in Late Medieval and Early Modern Cultures,* ed. Karl A.E. Enenkel and Christine Göttler (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 208-41, esp. pp. 227-9. A further discussion of the ubiquity of the stony heart trope in early modern homiletics can be found in Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem,* pp. 92-3.

At many points in the 'Oration', Nashe voices Christ as despairing of Jerusalem's impenitence, and – simultaneously – as exhorting his audience to amend their sinful ways. Towards the beginning of his 'Oration', Christ foregrounds the interdenominational Christian emphasis on hearing God's voice, doing so to stress that many members of his audience have not yet done so: 'How canst thou belieue & wilt not heare? Thy prayers are friuolous vnto God, if thou deniest to heare God: He must first heare God, that will be hearde of GOD' (23). In these lines, Christ repeats the exhortative verb 'heare', doing so to emphasise that the people of Jerusalem are neglecting his entreaties. Further to this, the formulation 'Thy prayers are friuolous vnto God, if thou deniest to heare God', relies on the commonplace belief that God's voice could be sought in private prayer; Protestantism, as we have seen, can be said to have lent greater emphasis to the individual's discernment of the divine voice (see my introduction, pp. 39-44). For instance, in his much-reprinted devotional manual *The Returne of Prayers* (1636), Thomas Goodwin writes: 'So as no prayer in respect of an answer to it is in vaine; but where God hath given a heart to speake, Hee hath an eare to heare, and love to returne answer'.[26] In prayer, Goodwin argues, God speaks indirectly through the emotions, which are conveyed through the ubiquitous metaphor of the 'heart'. Goodwin implies that if we attentively listen to the 'heart' when it speaks, then God, in turn, lends 'an eare to heare' the supplicant's prayer. In *Christ's Tears*, Christ's affirmation of the importance of hearing is reminiscent of Goodwin's, especially in the mirrored phrasing of 'He must first heare God, that will be hearde of GOD'. Thus hearing, for both Nashe's fictional Christ and for the mainstream

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[26] Thomas Goodwin, *The Returne of Prayers* (London, 1636), pp. 11-12.

Protestant Goodwin, is, ideally, a reciprocal action.[27] However, in *Christ's Tears*, it is subsequently indicated by Nashe's Christ that his audience has fallen far short of this pious ideal:

> I haue hearde quietly all thy vpbraydings, reproofes, and derisions: as when thou saydst I was a drunkard, and possessed with a diuel, that I cast out diuels by the power of *Beelzebub*, the Prince of the diuels; that I blasphemed, was mad, & knew not what I spake: Nor was I any more offended with these contumelies, then when thou calledst me the son of a Carpenter. (23)

In these densely allusive lines, Nashe collates various passages of the gospels in which Christ is falsely accused by His people. The noun 'drunkard' refers to Matthew 11.19 ('The Sonne of man came eating & drinking, and they say, Beholde a glotton and a drinker of wine'); the idea of Christ being 'possessed with a diuel' recalls Matthew 12.24 ('This man casteth the deuils no otherwise out, but through Beelzebub the prince of deuils'); the notion that Christ 'blasphemed' relies on John 10.33 ('The Iewes answered him, saying, For the good worke we stone thee not, but for blasphemie'); and the suggestion that Christ 'was mad' refers to Mark 3.21 ('they thoght he had bene beside himself'). By drawing these passages of scripture together, Nashe contrasts Christ's attentive listening with the way that certain Jews have repeatedly refused to hearken to his voice, and have – instead – verbally abused him.[28]

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[27] For the importance of God and man listening to each other in the Bible, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946 [repr. 2013]), pp. 7-9, where Auerbach discusses Abraham's words to God 'Behold, here I am' (Genesis 22.1).

[28] Nashe's Christ's description of his suffering – and his attendant lamentation over the destruction of Jerusalem – directly recalls the Improperia. As discussed in the introduction (see pp. 38-9), the Improperia, derived from Lamentations, enabled the priest to give voice to Christ during the late medieval Good Friday liturgy. The connection between *Christ's Tears* and the Improperia has been noted, most recently by Groves; see *The Destruction of Jerusalem,* pp. 166-7.

In another intricately rhetorical passage, Nashe's Christ expands on these initial exhortations for his audience to 'heare' him:

> *O Ierusalem, Ierusalem, that stonest*, and astoniest thy Prophets with thy peruersnesse, that lendest stonie eares to thy Teachers, and with thyne yron breast drawest vnto thee nothing but the Adamant of GODS anger: what shall I doe to mollifie thee? The rayne mollifieth harde stones; o that the stormie tempest of my Teares might soften thy stony hart! (23)

Here, Christ employs the period's ubiquitous 'stonie' metaphor to suggest, once again, that the people of Jerusalem have not yet repented. To emphasise this, Nashe puns on the word 'stonie'; Christ's audience members literally stone their prophets, as in Matthew 23.37, and astonish Christ in their refusal to repent. The verb 'astoniest', which – in an iteration of the rhetorical device *polyptoton*[29] – chimes with different forms of the same verb, such as '*stonest*', promotes the way that the 'stonie' hearts of Christ's audience have startled both Christ and the 'Prophets'. Throughout *Christ's Tears*, Nashe's vacillation between physical and metaphorical figurations of 'stoniness' playfully exploits post-Reformation ambiguity surrounding the idea of being touched by God.[30] In the above passage, Christ repeatedly expresses his desire to 'mollifie' his audience. During the last sentence of the given extract, however, Christ laments that this desired mollifying will not be possible for all his audience. The exclamative *apostrophe*, 'o that the stormie tempest of my Teares might soften thy stony heart!', casts doubt upon the ability of Christ's mollifying tears to do so.[31]

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[29] See 'polyptoton', *OED, n.*: 'A rhetorical figure involving the repetition of a word in different cases or inflections within the same sentence'.

[30] See Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures: The Sense of Touch in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 7-8.

[31] The plaintive quality of Christ's voice, which repeatedly draws attention to his 'Teares', has an analogue in the contemporary vogue for tears-poetry, which sought to obtain sincere repentance from the reader. See, above all, Gary Kuchar, *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

As we have seen, in his 'Oration', Nashe's Christ repeatedly despairs of his audience's impenitence, with reference to their 'stonie' hearts. Nashe's witty use of the 'stonie' trope has an analogue in a contemporary sermon by Lancelot Andrewes, a preacher who was greatly admired by Nashe.[32] In the 'third sermon' within his printed collection of sermons *The Wonderfull Combate* (1592), referring to Christ's temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4.4, Andrewes writes: 'The diuell by saying, *Say vnto these stones*, seemeth to acknowledge, that hee had the force to haue done it, euen by his bare word: for euen stones are said to heare the voyce of God'.[33] In Andrewes's sermon, it is posited that Christ's voice possesses a 'force' that can penetrate 'stones' – a noun that serves, once again, as a metaphor for the unrepentant heart. By contrast, in Nashe's reformulation of the concept of stoniness, Christ's audience members are – especially in the early stages of his 'Oration' – presented as unable to 'heare' his voice. Yet, this initial framing of the audience's stoniness is further complicated as the 'Oration' progresses, where, despite the antagonistic quality of his voice, Nashe's Christ begins to emphasise the possibility of future salvation for penitent individuals.

## 3. Verbal Antagonism

In an influential reading of *Christ's Tears*, Debora K. Shuger argues that Nashe's Christ owes a rhetorical debt to Christopher Marlowe's domineering theatrical protagonist, Tamburlaine, given that Christ 'struggles… to make [his audience] relent, but in the end he turns away with [a] futile warning'.[34] One

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[32] See Nashe's appraisal of the 'incomparable gifts' of 'Doctor *Androwes*' in 'Have with You to Saffron-Walden', in *Works,* Vol. 3, ed. McKerrow and Wilson, p. 107.

[33] Lancelot Andrewes, *The Wonderfull Combate* (London, 1592), p. 29.

[34] See Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible,* p. 119.

might build upon this insight: due to the way in which his exhortations strike against his audience's 'stonie' hearts, Nashe's Christ frequently resembles a theatrical antagonist. Yet, to modify Shuger's reading, there is also the sense that Christ's verbal antagonism will induce repentance in certain audience members, who may – consequently – be able to pay back their spiritual debts. Thus, what follows in this chapter attends to the antagonistic rhetoric employed by Nashe's Christ in his 'Oration', and to the attendant suggestion that spiritual debt might be paid off by sincere repentance.

As a first example of this antagonistic presentation, Nashe's Christ rails against the people of Jerusalem in the lament, 'Were [your hearts] not harder then stone, sure ere this I had broken and brused [them], with the often beating of my exhortations vpon [them]' (23). Nashe's language in this utterance is self-consciously tactile: the alliterative verbs 'broken' and 'brused', and the gerund 'beating', communicate the way in which Christ's voice hits repeatedly against 'stone', as in the previous section of this chapter (see pp. 68-74). The phonetic quality of the above sentence is also worth remarking upon, particularly the plosive b's which begin these three words. When Christ describes his 'exhortations' as 'beating… vpon' his audience, the sound of the language mirrors the sense. In pronouncing 'b', the airflow stops in the reader's mouth, just as Christ's voice strikes against 'stone' without – in this instance – being fully absorbed. Ever alive to rhetorical effect, Nashe plays on the idea of verbal striking in the following paragraph:

> *Moyses* strooke the Rocke and water gusht out of it; I (that am
> greater then *Moyses*) haue strooken you with threates, and you
> haue not mourned. O ye heauens, be amazed at this, be afraide
> and vtterly confounded: my people haue drunke out of a Rocke
> in the Wildernesse, & euer since had rockie hearts. (23)

In this passage, Nashe's primary biblical source is the account of Moses striking a rock in Numbers 20.11: 'Then Moses lift vp his hand, and with his rod he smote the rocke twise, and the water came out abundantly: so the Congregacion, and their beasts dranke'. This scriptural verse depicts Moses as a disobedient figure, given that God had previously asked him to 'speake… vnto the rocke' in Numbers 20.8. Nashe's Christ contrasts the way that Moses errantly 'strooke the Rocke' with his own attempt to strike his audience 'with threats', and thereby induce sincere repentance. It should also be mentioned that, during the early modern period, it was commonly held that God spoke to His children, as Goodwin puts it in *The Returne of Prayers*, by placing 'impressions in their own hearts'.[35] Goodwin's noun 'impressions' implies, in quite synaesthetic fashion, that God has the ability to speak to His followers by applying pressure. Nashe dramatises this commonplace religious idea in *Christ's Tears*; instead of the people of Jerusalem being touched by Christ's voice, his words, in the above extract, strike against them without consequence.

As his 'Oration' proceeds, Nashe's Christ develops a retributive mode of rhetoric, warning that violence will befall the people of Jerusalem should they not repent of their wrongs. Christ states, in one jarring formulation, that the 'wronging' of his prophetic 'Embassadours' means that he, in turn, will soon be 'sworne to reuenge' (23-4). In this way, Nashe closely echoes the account of Christ's retributive anger against His people in Matthew 10.34: 'Thinke not that I am come to send peace into the earth: I came not to send peace, but the sworde'. Having articulated his desire for 'reuenge', Nashe's Christ employs interrelated passages of scripture as if in warning against his audience:

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[35] Goodwin, *The Returne of Prayers*, sig. A1v.

> The diuell that vseth daily to sollicite the Murtherers owne conscience for vengeaunce against himselfe, will hee spare to put the Lord in minde of his auncient decree, *A murtherer shall not lyue?* God said vnto *Caine, The voyce of thy Brother Abels blood cryeth to me out of the earth*: that is, not onely *Abels* owne blood, but the bloode of all the sonnes that were to issue from his loynes, cry vnto me out of the earth. (24)

'Conscience', a noun employed in the first clause of this passage, was a particularly significant word in the post-Reformation era. This was a period in which, across the Christian denominations, a heightened emphasis was placed on individual self-scrutiny before God.[36] Drawing on this emphasis, Nashe's Christ states that the 'diuell' can solicit 'the Murtherers owne conscience for vengeaunce against himselfe', implying that the devil has the capacity to speak to an individual's 'conscience'; but then, in response to this, supplies his own passage of scripture as if in counter-argument. Christ foregrounds Genesis 4.10, 'the voyce of thy brothers blood cryeth vnto me from the grounde'; a verse which suggests that, after his murder, Abel's voice continues to speak out in warning against Cain, much as Christ does, here, to the people of Jerusalem. Christ's warning about retribution is confirmed by his ensuing citation of Genesis 9.6, '*Whosoeuer shall shedde humaine blood, his blood shall be shed likewise*', which is swiftly followed by another biblical verse discussing vengeance, Leviticus 24.20: '*Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth*' (24). In this way, Nashe's Christ cites retributive passages of scripture as a reminder to the people of Jerusalem that, should they not repent, vengeance will be wreaked upon them.

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[36] For the prevalence of confessional practices in pre-Reformation England, see especially Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 53-63. For shifting attitudes towards penitence in the post-Reformation era, and the new emphasis upon individual self-scrutiny, see, among many others, Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 2-12; Katherine J. Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer, ed., *Penitence in the Age of Reformations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

After this urgent reminder of possible vengeance, Nashe employs the language of stones and striking to focus on Christ's hyper-awareness of those amongst his audience who will, and will not, repent:

> One *stone* of thy Temple shall not be left vppon another that shall not be throwne downe. The *stone* which thy foolish Builders refused shall be made the head *stone* of the corner. Your harts (which are Temples of *stone*) I will for-sweare for euer to dwell in. There shall be no *Dauid* any more amongst you, that with a *stone* sent out of a sling, shall strike the chiefe Champion of the *Philistines* in the for-head: And finally, you shall worship stockes and *stones*, for I will be no longer your God. O *Ierusalem, Ierusalem*, all this shall be-tide thee, because *thou stonest the Prophets, and killest them that are sent vnto thee.* (25)

In this passage, Nashe's Christ vacillates – once again – from literal to metaphorical signification. Nashe draws on the account of Christ's cleansing of the Temple, which is present in each of the four gospels (Matthew 21.12-17; Mark 11.15-19; Luke 19.44-8; and John 2.13-16). In the above extract, Nashe's first sentence makes use of a parallel verbal construction, 'throwne downe', which closely aligns it with Luke 19.44 ('they shal not leaue in thee a stone vpon a stone'). From this literalistic reference to a 'Temple' constructed from '*stone*', we move to a metaphorical signification, as Christ tropes his audience's 'harts' as 'Temples of *stone*'. In this sentence, the verb 'for-sweare' is crucial. Nashe's use of 'for-sweare' suggests that Christ has turned decisively away from certain sections of his audience, a reading confirmed by the declarative statements towards the end of the given passage: 'There shall be no *Dauid*'; 'I will be no longer your God'. Yet, despite this sense of desertion, Nashe's Christ also hints that some people, in the future at least, will be responsive to him. In particular, the sentence 'The *stone* which thy foolish Builders refused shall be made the head *stone* of the corner' is an allusion to Psalm 118.22, a verse which

Christ cites during the parable of the tenants in the vineyard in Matthew 21.42 ('Red ye neuer in the Scriptures, The stone which [the] buylders refused, the same is made the head of the corner?'). The standard early modern interpretation of this verse was that, despite being rejected by some Jews, Christ is the fulfilment of scripture ('the head *stone*'), offering salvation to those who come to heed his words.[37] Thus, drawing on this early modern reading, Nashe implies that salvation will, in fact, be possible for certain members of Christ's audience.

Throughout the 'Oration', Nashe's Christ claims repeatedly that he has come to '*gather*' the people of Jerusalem (27). This is another way in which Christ resembles an exhortative Calvinist preacher, given that contemporary homiletic theory emphasised the importance of repeating key scriptural terms during a sermon.[38] Nashe's repetition of the verb '*gather*' relies on the precedent of Matthew 23.37, in which Christ laments 'how often wolde I haue gathered thy children together, as the henne gathereth her chickens vnder her wings, and ye wolde not!' Indeed, Christ's use of '*gather*' implies that he is acutely aware of those within his 'sheepefold' who will achieve salvation; especially in the

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[37] For exegeses of Psalm 118.22, see, notably, Jean Calvin, *A Little Booke of Iohn Caluines Concernynge Offences Whereby at this Daye Diuers are Feared,* trans. Arthur Golding (London, 1567), p. 3 ('But vnto them that beleeue not, [Christ] is the stone whiche the builders refused, the stone for them to stumble at'); Lancelot Andrewes, *A Sermon Preached Before his Maiestie at White-Hall, on the 24. of March Last* (London, 1611), p. 2 ('And so we haue brought the Text, and the Time together. We know, who is the *Stone:* Christ. Who the *Builders: Caiphas* and those with him. When *refused?* In his Passion. When *made Head?* At his Resurrection'); Adams, *The Sacrifice of Thankefulnesse,* p. 10 ('The *Exaltation.* Ver. 22. The stone, which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the Corner. The Iewes refused this *Stone,* but God hath Built his Church vpon it').

[38] For a contemporary example of this homiletic strategy, note the repetition of 'iudge' and 'iudgement' in Henry Smith, *The Trumpet of the Soule, Sounding to Iudgement* (London, 1591), sig. B3r-v. In *Voices and Books,* Richards emphasises the influence that 'rousing sermons', by authors such as Smith, likely had on *Christ's Tears*, noting that one of Smith's 'sermons printed in 1593 touched on the same topic: why did the Jews not act on the warnings of the Prophets?'; see p. 176.

proleptic utterance 'I haue prayed to my Father to ioyne more Labourers and *Gatherers* with me, to reape and *gather* in his Haruest' (27), which uses the metaphor of God's 'Haruest' to propose that only some Christians will be gathered on judgment day. Extrapolating from Matthew 23.37 in what follows, Nashe's Christ emphasises that the consequences for his audience will be very severe, should they fail to be gathered in the last instance:

> Ah, woe is mee, that euer I opened my mouth to call thee, or *gather* thee, for now (by opening my mouth, and thou stopping thyne eares when I opend it) I haue opend & enwidened Hell mouth, to swallow thee and deuoure thee. (29)

In this extract, Nashe emphasises the commonplace Christian idea of Christ calling His people to repentance ('I opened my mouth to call thee, or *gather* thee… by opening my mouth') (see my introduction, pp. 26-8), but does so with a twist, as Christ's lament for his audience develops into a violent threat. Here, Nashe subverts Christ's 'call' through the image of the 'mouth', which – given that the 'call' is left unheard – transforms Christ 'opening [his] mouth' into an 'opend & enwidened Hell mouth, to swallow thee and deuoure thee'. By casting Christ's mouth as an 'enwidened Hell mouth', Nashe – once again – betrays the influence of contemporary secular drama. A comparison can be made between Christ's 'enwidened Hell mouth' and the way that a trapdoor was employed as a hell-mouth during performances of Marlowe's tragedy *Doctor Faustus* (*c.* 1589-93), another work which directly addresses the topic of predestination. Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa write that 'the risk of fire in wooden playhouses did not stop the players from using the trapdoor as a hell's mouth, with its accompanying shows of brimstone and flame'.[39] In the 1616 text of

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[39] Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 60.

*Doctor Faustus*, a stage direction stipulates that 'Hell is discovered'; and, in both the 1604 and 1616 editions, Faustus's desperate penultimate line reads 'Ugly hell gape not'.[40] From this, we infer that, at the end of early modern performances of *Faustus*, the protagonist was physically consumed by 'hell' for his failure to repent. This stage direction was quite sanctionable, given *Faustus*'s grounding in the tradition of medieval morality plays.[41] It was much more unorthodox, however, to suggest – as Nashe does – that Christ *himself* possesses a 'Hell mouth' and may 'deuoure thee'; or, at least, that Christ's mouth moves in synchronicity with the mouth of hell. Thus, in a move that could have risked accusations of blasphemy, Christ's voice is reminiscent of the early modern stage-devil, menacingly reminding his audience about the peril of impenitence.

There is a constant tension, within Christ's 'Oration', between the exhortative, often desperate nature of the rhetorical voice, and the fact that Nashe's Christ is strikingly aware that only certain members of his audience will be affected by his voice. In the proleptic 'I shall bee to thee all in all, thy riches, thy strength, thine honour, thy Patron, thy prouider' (32), a sentence which expands upon Colossians 3.11 ('Christ is all and in all things'), Christ uses the future tense to reassure his audience. However, voicing Christ once more in the manner of an antagonist, Nashe subsequently writes:

> My voyce which cryeth, *Returne, Returne; Whether wanderest thou, long strayer?* is trouble-some and hatefull vnto thee, thou canst by no meanes digest it: it is thy Aduersarie in the way,

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[40] Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus: The A- and B- Texts (1604, 1616),* ed. David M. Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 183, 188-9.

[41] See David M. Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 245-64.

> which since I haue warned thee to agree with, and thou hast refused, it shall draw & hale thee vnto iudgement, the Iudge deliuer thee to Death, his Sariant [Sergeant], the Sariant to the diuel (conuicted soules Iaylor): thence shalt thou not escape till thou hast payd the vtmost farthing. (32)

The opening line of this passage, communicating the act of straying from Christ's call, depends – once again – on the central metaphor of Christ as a 'henne' gathering His people, in Matthew 23.37.[42] As in the gospel text, Christ's voice is positioned in opposition to his audience, for whom it has become 'trouble-some and hatefull'. Nashe plays on this idea of antagonism in suggesting that the divine voice has not been properly digested ('thou canst by no meanes digest it'). Once again, this is a synaesthetic idea, as it suggests that God's voice is something that can be eaten by the believer. The Bible provides numerous examples of God's word being conceptualised as food for prophesying (see Chapter Four, pp. 240-1). Crucially, it does so in the texts of the Old Testament prophets, such as Jeremiah 15.16 ('Thy wordes were founde *by me*, and I did eat them'), which are important sources for *Christ's Tears*. In not being digested by his audience, Nashe's Christ conceptualises his voice as an 'Aduersarie'. This term is worth contextualising. On the one hand, according to the *OED*, the noun could refer to 'the Devil, Satan, regarded as the enemy of mankind. See also *old adversary*', because, in Hebrew, *satan* means 'adversary'; on the other, *satan* could also be applied to divine figures, as in

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[42] It is worth stressing the feminine resonances of Christ being represented as a 'henne'. In the 'Oration', Nashe's Christ speaks about suckling ('At my breastes, *Ierusalem,* hast thou not suckt, but bitte off my breasts' (53)), which corresponds with moments in the later portions of *Christ's Tears* in which nurturing, or, indeed, a lack of nurturing, is discussed. See Miriam's complaint that 'I bare it, I nurst it, I suckled it' (76); and Nashe's accusation, in the Jeremiad against the sins of London, that 'There is no Male of any kinde hath apparance of breastes but man, and hee, hauing them, giues no sucke with them at all' (162). Nashe's striking feminisation of Christ's voice might be compared with Milton's rendering of Jesus in *Paradise Regained* (see Chapter Five, pp. 276-92).

Numbers 22.22 (translated in the Geneva text as 'the Angel of the Lord stode in the way to be against him').[43] Moreover, throughout the latter half of the passage, Nashe's Christ adapts Matthew 5.25 ('Agre[e] with thine aduersarie quickely, whiles thou art in the way with him, lest thine aduersarie deliuer thee to the iudge, and the iudge deliuer thee to the sergeant, and thou be cast into prison'). In having Christ describe his voice as an 'Aduersarie' demanding legal payment for a debt ('payd the utmost farthing'), Nashe draws on a standard classical and Renaissance reading of Matthew 5.25, suggesting that his audience must pay their spiritual debts to avoid purgatorial suffering, or – worse – eternal confinement in hell.[44] There is also, present in Nashe's adaptation, the hint that the agonies of true repentance might serve as a Protestant substitute for Catholic notions of purgatory ('till thou hast payd the vtmost farthing'). Thus, despite the antagonistic quality of his voice, Nashe's Christ also suggests that – should they pay their spiritual debts – the people of Jerusalem may yet escape damnation.

## 4. Infinite Compassion

As Christ's 'Oration' proceeds still further, Nashe employs the rhetorical technique of *hyperbole* to construct a voice that strains to reach its audience.

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[43] See 'adversary', *OED, n.,* 2.

[44] For an excellent article documenting the variations in classical, Renaissance, and modern interpretations of Matthew 5.25-6, see Nathan Eubank, 'Prison, Penance or Purgatory: The Interpretation of Matthew 5.25-6 and Parallels', *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 64 (2), 2018, pp. 162-77. One of Eubank's key arguments is that the 'eternal damnation' gloss, widely favoured today, is an overinterpretation 'inspired by the exigencies of fourth- and fifth-century doctrinal controversy' (p. 163). Indeed, during the Renaissance, Matthew 5.25 was commonly interpreted in the more legalistic terms of creditors and debtors, with purgatorial connotations – as Nashe interprets the text in this passage of *Christ's Tears*. See also, for comparison, John Prideaux, 'Christs Counsell for Ending Law Cases', in *Eight Sermons, Preached by Iohn Prideaux* (London, 1621), p. 14 ('Agree with thine Aduersary… the word in the originall is not so largely taken, as *aduersarius* in the Latine, which may signifie any kinde of enemy: but rather as we tearme in *English* in our Law matters, the *plaintife*').

The figure of *hyperbole*, as the ensuing section of this chapter will demonstrate, was readily invoked in English literary culture during the early 1590s, and an influential definition of the term is provided in Book III of George Puttenham's rhetorical handbook, *The Art of English Poesy* (1589). Here, Puttenham writes that when 'we speak in the superlative and beyond the limits of credit, that is, by the figure which the Greeks call *hyperbole*, the Latins *dementiens* or the lying figure. I for his immoderate excess call him the Overreacher… or Loud Liar'.[45] As we shall now see, Nashe's Christ repeatedly utilises *hyperbole* to evidence his infinite, self-giving compassion for the people of Jerusalem, whether they choose to listen to him or not.

As a first example of Nashe's Christ '[speaking] in the superlative and beyond the limits of credit', we note the following extract, which emphasises Christ's sorrow for those beyond the reach of his call:

> Yet, though I haue sounded the vtmost depth of dolour, and wasted myne eye-bals well-neere to pinnes-heads with weeping (as a Barber wasteth his Ball in the water), a further depth of dolour would I sound, mine eyes more would I wast, so I might waste and wash away thy wickednesse. So long haue I wasted, so long haue I washed and embained thy filth in the cleare streames of my braine, that nowe I haue not a cleane Teare left more, to wash or embalme any sinner that comes to me. (36)

In this extract, Nashe draws on *hyperbole* in the phrase 'the vtmost depth of dolour', doing so to imply that Christ has experienced the greatest possible distress in sorrowing for his audience. However, after this statement, a

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[45] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition,* ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 276. For a useful article on hyperbole within early modern English literature, with reference to both classical and contemporary rhetorical manuals, see Goran V. Stanivukovic, '"Mounting Above the Truthe": On Hyperbole in English Renaissance Literature', *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* Vol. 43 (1), 2007, pp. 9-33.

subsequent clause contains the phrase 'a further depth of dolour', betraying Nashe's conception of *hyperbole* as a figure that is extendable. Throughout the passage, Nashe neatly complements the sense of Christ's hyperbolic dolorousness with imagery relating to 'wasted' tears, suggesting – once again – that certain members of his audience will be beyond the reach of his call. In particular, the parenthetical aside '(as a Barber wasteth his Ball in the water)' plays on the commonplace usage of 'soap balls', which were dipped in water dishes to wash customers' faces in early modern barbershops.[46] Thus, just as an early modern barber might '[waste] his Ball' by employing excessive amounts of water, Nashe presents the exaggerated – and, for some of Christ's auditors, useless – nature of Christ's tears. Towards the end of the extract, Christ's tears themselves are afforded hyperbolic qualities. In the temporal constructions 'So long haue I wasted, so long haue I washed', Nashe repeats the intensifier 'so long' to emphasise the length of time that Christ has wept for Jerusalem.

Throughout his 'Oration', Christ's use of *hyperbole* is coupled with a self-awareness about the incapacity of his voice to affect his entire audience. The following passage provides an example of this self-divided presentation:

> For discharge of my dutie, and augmentation of thine euerlasting malediction, since Teares, threates, promises, nor any thing will peirce thee, heere I make a solemne protestation, what my zeale and feruent inclination hath beene (euer since thy first propagation) to win & weane thee from sathan, and notwithstanding thou *stonedst my Prophets, and slewest them I sent vnto thee,* I still assayed to reuoke thee, & bring thee back againe to thy first image; not once, or twise, or thrise, but I cannot tell how often, I woulde haue *gathered thee, euen as a Henne gathereth her Chickins vnder her wings, but thou*

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[46] For an account of the use of 'soap balls' in early modern barber shops, see Eleanor Decamp, *Civic and Medical Worlds in Early Modern England: Performing Barbery and Surgery* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 170-1.

> *wouldest not.* Blame me not though I giue thee ouer, that hast
> gyuen mee ouer: long patience hath dulled my humour of pittie.
> No sword but wil loose his edge in long striking against stones.
> (37)

This extract begins with Christ's assertion that he speaks 'For discharge of my dutie', a phrase which – importantly – foregrounds Nashe's presentation of Christ as a preacher (see this chapter, pp. 100-1). Not only does Nashe's Christ, in the manner of an orthodox preacher, seek to do his utmost to convert his congregation ('my dutie'), he displays a very Calvinist awareness that some of his audience will be damned. In the next clause of this sentence, Christ seeks an 'augmentation of thine euerlasting malediction'. Here, the noun 'augmentation' demonstrates Nashe's invocation of *hyperbole*, as Christ seeks to enlarge the curse that his impenitent auditors will receive. Throughout the extract, there is a tension between Christ's hyperbolic rhetoric, and the fact that repentance is presented as impossible for some of his audience. For example, the force of the triplet 'Teares, threates, [and] promises' is increased by the subsequent admission that 'nor any thing will peirce thee'. Christ's exaggerated exhortations can be read as Nashe's adaptation of the way certain scriptural terms were repeatedly invoked in Calvinist sermons (see this chapter, p. 79). For example, a 1584 Jeremiad by the Puritan preacher John Stockwood takes Luke 19.41 as its text ('And when hee was come neere, hee beheld the Citie, and wept for it'), making repeated reference to Christ's weeping over Jerusalem ('and yet for all this did not Christ Jesus weepe').[47] By contrast, at the end of this passage of *Christ's Tears*, Christ laments that no amount of scriptural exposition can induce his audience's repentance. In a dark twist on Matthew

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[47] John Stockwood, *A Very Fruitfull and Necessarye Sermon of the Moste Lamemtable [sic] Destruction of Ierusalem* (London, 1584), sig. A3r-A4r.

10.34 ('Thinke not that I am come to send peace into the earth: I came not to send peace, but the sworde'), Nashe's Christ laments that his 'sword', a metaphor for his exhortative rhetorical prowess, has '[lost] his edge'.

In a disparaging assessment of Nashe's religious rhetoric in *Christ's Tears*, Hilliard suggests that 'Christ sounds too much like a distraught rhetorician'.[48] Hilliard's judgment is pejorative – as demonstrated by the phrase 'too much' – but his idea of Christ as a 'distraught rhetorician' points towards a key element of Nashe's dramatic presentation.[49] As the 'Oration' continues, Christ is voiced with increasing desperation, employing a ragged, self-destructive form of *hyperbole* in the attempt to reach the people of Jerusalem:

> So penetrating and eleuatedly haue I prayd for you, that mine eyes woulde fayne haue broke from theyr anchors to haue flowne vp to Heauen, and myne armes stretcht more then the length of my body to reach at the Starres. My heart ranne full-butt against my breast to haue broken it open, and my soule flutterd and beate with her ayrie-winges on euery side for passage. My knees crackt and the ground fledde back. Then (o *Ierusalem*) would I haue rent my body in the midst (lyke a graue) so I might haue buried thy sinnes in my bowels. (37)

This extract opens with a coupling of adjective and adverb, 'penetrating and eleuatedly', the first of which foregrounds Christ's exhortative attempt to reach his audience. The following adverb, 'eleuatedly', suggests that Christ harnesses a hyperbolic mode of rhetoric when doing so, given that according to the *OED*, during this period the word held connotations of something being 'exalted'.[50]

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[48] See Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe,* p. 119.

[49] On the self-destructive character of Nashe's Christ, see Schwyzer, 'Summer Fruit', pp. 612-16, who notes that 'Christ… seems intent on breaking up words into the smallest change possible, denying the word its capacity to signify anything beyond a particular case' (pp. 613-14). For a comparable account of Nashe's Christ as a 'self-divided orator', see Richards, *Voices and Books,* p. 179.

[50] 'elevated', *OED, adj.* (and *n.*), 1c; 5.

Indeed, throughout this passage, Nashe's Christ embodies the hyperbolic idea of 'the Overreacher', as derived from Puttenham's rhetorical handbook, in seeking to be heard by his audience. In their introductory essay to *The Art of English Poesy*, Whigham and Rebhorn note, with reference to Harry Levin's classic book on Marlowe, *The Overreacher* (1952), that: 'What Levin does not quite say… is what Puttenham's transforming of rhetorical terms into people clarifies completely: Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Doctor Faustus do not merely use hyperbole when they speak, but as "Overreachers" they themselves are essentially hyperboles in action'.[51] In view of this comment, we discern that Nashe's Christ, too, is a *hyperbole* 'in action'; one that, much like Marlowe's theatrical protagonists, experiences bodily disintegration as a consequence of his rhetorical overreaching.[52] In striving to reach his audience, Christ's body is broken: his 'eyes woulde fayne haue broke from theyr anchors'; his 'armes stretcht more then the length of my body'; his 'heart ranne full-butt… to haue broken it open'; and, to cite one more example, his 'knees crackt'. Moreover, after this visceral description of bodily rupture, which seems to evoke the idea of Christ's body being broken in the eucharist (see Mark 14.22: 'this is my bodie'), Christ employs a plaintive *apostrophe* to suggest that he desires to go still further to obtain his audience's repentance: '(o *Ierusalem*) would I haue rent my body in the midst (lyke a graue) so I might haue buried thy sinnes in my bowels'. Here, the phrase 'rent my body' prefigures Christ's Passion, implying the possibility of future salvation, whilst the idea of Jerusalem's

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[51] Whigham and Rebhorn, 'Introduction', in their edition of *The Art of English Poesy*, p. 59.
[52] For Faustus's dismemberment in the final scene of the 1616 B-text, see Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus,* ed. Bevington and Rasmussen, p. 189 ('See, here are Faustus's limbs, / All torn asunder by the hand of death').

'sinnes' being 'buried' in Christ's 'bowels' draws on the biblical idea that God's compassion is expressed through rumbling bowels.[53] Thus, whilst Nashe's use of *hyperbole*, in Christ's 'Oration', does sometimes suggest that it is an ineffectual rhetorical technique, there is also implicit the idea that Christ may go still further – in the redemption – to obtain repentance from Jerusalem.

As a final example of Nashe employing *hyperbole* when voicing Christ, we note Christ's exaggerated account of the people he has called to repentance:

> I came to call sinners to repentance, poore sinners, beggerly sinners, blinde sinners, impotent sinners, aswel as rich sinners, noble sinners, potentate sinners, to repentance. With me there is no respect of persons; the Kings blood, attainted of conspiracie against mee, is more base then the caytiues or pesants. What was *Abraham* (but that he honoured mee), I shoulde out of his loynes multiply a Monarchy? There is no cripple or lazer by the high-way side but wold haue honoured me more then the progenie of *Abraham,* if I had but bestowed the thousand part of the propitiousnes I haue bestowed on the progeny of *Abraham.* Shall a man call any crypple or Beads-man vnto him, to gyue almes to, and hee will not come at him, but contemptuously cast hys kinde profer behind hym? I haue called you (that often haue beene Beggers and Beads-men vnto me) for blessings, & humbly supplicationd you to accept of my largesse I lauisht, but you cryde, Auant, hypocrite, thy proferd ware is odious, we'le haue nothing to doe with an Innouater. (41-2)

The opening of this paragraph draws on the Christian commonplace, outlined in Luke 5.32, that Christ 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'. However, the ensuing sub-clauses refer to a range of subordinate groups that Christ is reported to have called upon in the gospels. The list of 'poore sinners, beggerly sinners, blinde sinners, impotent sinners' has a parallel

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[53] This idea is particularly emphasised within the prophetic books, which are, as we have seen, important sources for *Christ's Tears*. See, for example: Jeremiah 31.20 ('therefore my bowelles are troubled for him: I wil surely haue compassion vpon him, saith the Lord'); Hosea 11.8 ('mine heart is turned within me: my repentings are rouled together').

in Christ's instruction to the Pharisees, in Luke 14.13, that 'when thou makest a feast, call the poore, the maimed, the lame, & the blind'. Equally, Christ's parables on the two sons (Matthew 21.28-32), the prodigal son (Luke 15.11-31), and the tax collector's confession (Luke 18.9-14) inform the declaration of Nashe's Christ that he has called 'rich sinners, noble sinners, potentate sinners'. Of chief import, here, is the ubiquity of Christ's call; this is emphasised by Nashe's exaggerated list, which collates and yokes divergent passages of scripture. Having stressed the scope of Christ's call, Nashe develops this rhetoric of enlargement. We note the use of comparatives and quantifiers ('more base'; 'more then'; 'the thousand part'), whilst the suggestion that Abraham's obedience was rewarded with 'his loynes [multiplying] a Monarchy' has a source in Genesis 35.11 ('and Kings shal come out of thy loynes'). The point of this *exemplum* is that responding to Christ's call could yield unparalleled spiritual rewards for the people of Jerusalem. However, the conclusion of the extract points towards the rejection of Christ's 'largesse' – a noun that held connotations of both 'liberality' and 'generosity' during the period.[54] Thus, this passage of *Christ's Tears* suggests that some members of Christ's audience will not hear him, despite his hyperbolic use of scriptural *exempla*.[55]

In the 1594 preface to the second issue of *Christ's Tears*, Nashe responds to '[the] ploddinger sort of vnlearned Zoilists [critics] about London [who] exclaim, that [*Christ's Tears*] is a puft-vp stile, and full of prophane

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[54] 'largesse', *OED, n.,* 1.

[55] For the growing humanist scepticism towards the use of *exempla* at around the turn of the seventeenth century, which provides an important context for Nashe's rhetoric in *Christ's Tears*, see especially Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 198-237.

eloquence' (183).[56] With reference to several extracts, I have argued in this section that Nashe repeatedly invokes *hyperbole* when voicing Christ. As we have seen, it is implied that Christ's 'puft-vp' rhetoric is – on occasion – not an effective strategy in inducing repentance from his audience; yet, Christ's use of *hyperbole* also points towards the lengths that he will go to, in redeeming his followers in the Passion (see p. 88). Building on this, what follows traces Nashe's use of echoing threats in the latter stages of Christ's 'Oration'.

## 5.  Echoing Threats

Towards the end of the 'Oration', Nashe focuses on Christ's hyper-awareness of those who will, and will not, repent, doing so by employing rhetorical echo. In the first instance, Nashe draws on the commonplace Christian idea of 'stonie' hearts to present a voice that – in failing to be fully absorbed – reverberates:

> Sencelesse stones are more obedient vnto Gods voyce then you, for the stony-walls of *Iericho* (after God had summoned them by his Priestes sounding theyr Trumpets seauen times) at the 7. sounde they prostrated themselues flat. Not the third, or the fourth, or the fift sound haue you with-stoode, but fiue hundred solemne summons and sounds; No iudgement that (in your eares) I or any can sound can make you fall prostrate, or humble your selues. Still you wil lyue as runnagates and banished men from Gods iurisdiction; you had rather the diuell should gather you vp then he. (44)

Throughout this extract, Nashe plays up the interaction between 'Sencelesse stones' and the forceful sound of 'Gods voyce'. As the reference to the 'stony-walls of *Iericho*' indicates, the central biblical source for this extract is Joshua 6.20, which describes the falling of Jericho's walls at the sound of the priests'

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[56] For Nashe's 'Zoilists', see 'Zoilus', *OED*, *n.*; 'Name of a Greek critic and grammarian (4th century B.C.) famous for his severe criticism of Homer… a censorious, malignant, or envious critic'.

trumpets ('So the people shouted, when they had blowen trumpets: for when the people had heard the sounde of the trompet, they shouted with a great shoute: and the wall fel downe flat'). It is important to note that variants of the words 'sound' and 'prostrate' are used frequently throughout the given extract. Through 'prostrate' – which, intriguingly, does not appear in the Geneva translation of Joshua 6 – Nashe emphasises that the 'stones' of Jericho were sensitive to God's trumpets, given that the word held connotations of 'reverence' throughout the early modern period.[57] By contrast, the presentation of 'Gods voyce' making 'sounds' against the people of Jerusalem suggests that Christ's call is reverberating; indeed, variations of the noun 'sound' are repeated, to foreground the sincere penitence that is unavailable to portions of Christ's audience.

To extend this idea of Jerusalem's partial responsiveness, Nashe's Christ reflexively foregrounds his voice bouncing off 'stones' as an echo:

> *Ierusalem* hath hearde the voyce of God, crying out loude in her streetes and hie places vnto her, to *gather* herselfe: Her streetes and al her hie places are filled with the *ecchoes* of Gods voyce. The stones of her Turrets haue beene so mou'd with it, that they haue opened theyr eares & receiued his *eccho* into them, and that the Cryer myght knowe they attended the wordes which he spake, they (*ecchoing*) repeated them againe. The very *eccho* of the walls and the stones shall *eccho* vnto God for sharpe punishment against you… (45)

At the beginning of this extract, Christ reaffirms that the city of '*Ierusalem*' has been afforded ample opportunity to hear the 'voyce of God'. After this, however, it is suggested that the 'streetes' are 'filled with the *ecchoes* of Gods voyce', and the word '*eccho*' itself resounds across the passage, verbally and

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[57] 'prostrate', *OED, v.,* 1a.

visually. Nashe is, once again, playing with self-consciously tactile language in the suggestion that the 'stones of her Turrets' have been 'so mou'd with [Christ's voice]', that they are receiving an '*eccho*'.[58] The idea that stony 'Turrets' have been more affected than humans ('the Cryer myght knowe they attended the wordes'), even though it is critical of prior inattentiveness ('the stones shall *eccho* vnto God for sharpe punishment against you'), also contains some hope for the salvation of Christ's audience, given the New Testament construction of Christians as living stones (see 1 Peter 2.5: 'And ye as liuelie stones, be made a spiritual house, and holie Priesthode to offer vp spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Iesus Christ'). It is also worth mentioning, here, that ideas of rhetorical repetition as echo were current in 1590s English literary culture, as demonstrated in Richard Carew's essay on 'The Excellencie of the English Tongue', first circulated in 1596, and later published within the second edition of William Camden's miscellany *Remaines, Concerning Britaine* (1614). Within this essay, Carew declares: 'Adde hereunto, that whatsoeuer grace any other language carrieth in verse or Prose, in Tropes or Metaphors, in Ecchoes or Agnominations [repetitions], they maye all bee liuely and exactly represented in ours'.[59] Thus, in a prosaic articulation of Carew's definition of rhetorical echo, Nashe represents Christ's echoing voice to suggest that affected 'stones' – as a metaphor for Christ's auditors – may yet hold salvific potential.

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[58] For a seminal account of the materiality of Nashe's prose, see Reid Barbour, *Deciphering Elizabethan Fiction* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1993), chapters 3-5. Barbour argues that Nashe's prose is constituted from 'stuff', which is the 'master trope' for his writing (p. 64). For Barbour, Nashe 'stuffs' his prose because '[he] wants us to believe not just in the somatic presence of his prose, but also in its protean nature. One word can become any other, one image any other' (p. 67). For more on this topic, see also Neil Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

[59] See Richard Carew, 'The Excellencie of the English Tongue', in William Camden's *Remaines, Concerning Britaine* (London, 1614 [2nd edn.]), p. 43.

As we have seen, Nashe's employment of rhetorical echo, during the latter stages of Christ's 'Oration', emphasises that his audience's 'stonie' hearts have only been partially affected. Moreover, Nashe's use of echo acquires a threatening resonance, as scriptural verses from earlier in the text – such as Matthew 23.37 – begin to resound in stark warning:

> *O Ierusalem, Ierusalem, how often would I haue gathered thy chyldren together, as the Henne gathereth her Chickins!* the *eccho* shall replye, *But they would not. They would not.* Thou *wouldest not* indeede. And no damnation hast thou *but thou wouldst not*. I offered thee peace, *but thou wouldst not*: I offred thee to repent & be baptized, *but thou wouldst not*: I offred thee (if thou labourdst and wert loden) to ease thee, *but thou wouldst not*: I offerd thee to aske & thou shouldst haue, *but thou wouldst not*: To knocke and it should be opend, *but thou woldst* not. Great euils shalt thou endure, *for thou wouldst not*. Great euils did I say? alas, little euils, compared to the euils I must endure onely for these 4. Words, *But thou wouldst not.* (45)

The first sentence of this extract provides a direct citation of Matthew 23.37, which, as we have seen, inspires Christ's repeated reflections on gathering the people of Jerusalem as a maternal 'henne'. However, in an adaptation of this verse, the final scriptural clause – '*But they would not*' – is described by Nashe as an *'eccho'* replying to Christ. Throughout the passage, variations on *'But they would not*' are repeated, and the phrase signposts the way that Christ's salvific offers are rudely rebuffed. Nashe draws on the text of Matthew 7.7 – 'Aske, and it shalbe giuen you: seke, & ye shal finde: knocke, & it shalbe opened vnto you' – to construct Christ's inclusive call to repentance ('I offerd thee to aske… To knocke and it should be opend'). In the last sentence of the extract, Nashe's description of what Christ 'must endure onely for these 4. Words' warrants further comment. As we shall see in Chapter Two, the sermons of authors such as Playfere and Andrewes pay minute attention to individual words from

scripture, to aid the audience's understanding of a biblical text. In this section of Christ's 'Oration', however, 'these 4. Words, *But thou wouldst not*' are not carefully explicated, but instead resound bluntly as a threat. Thus, in *Christ's Tears*, Nashe mimics the way certain biblical terms are repeated in exhortative Calvinist sermons, suggesting that over-repetition can contribute to a threatening rhetorical effect.

Towards the end of Christ's 'Oration', Nashe develops his use of scripture as an echo by drawing on Matthew 23.38: '*Thy house shal be left desolate vnto thee*' (47). The word '*desolate*' is frequently repeated by Nashe's Christ, serving as a stark prophecy of the visceral destruction that will be experienced by the people of Jerusalem in the latter sections of *Christ's Tears*. No longer does Christ seek to occasion sincere repentance in his audience, but repeatedly cries out '*desolation*', which echoes visually across the printed page:

> To *desolation* (*Ierusalem*) must I leaue thee, *desolation* that taketh his watch-worde *from thou wouldst not: Desolation*, the greatest name of vengeance that is; *Desolation,* which hath as many branches of misery as Hell belonging to it; *Desolation*, the vtmost Arrow of Gods indignation. I cannot in tearmes expresse the one quarter this word *Desolation* containeth. (57)

This passage can be interpreted as an adaptation of the homiletic method employed in contemporary English Calvinist sermons. Instead of patiently explicating his scriptural term, '*desolation*', Nashe repeats the scriptural term without allowing Christ to provide much in the way of commentary.[60] Indeed,

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[60] Although '*desolation*' is invoked from Matthew 23.38, Nashe's impersonation of Christ is sanctioned by other verses of scripture. Verses in which spiritual '*desolation*' is discussed by Christ, which both make reference to Daniel 9.25-7, include: Matthew 24.15-16 ('When ye therefore shal [see] the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holie place, let him that readeth consider it'); and Mark 13.14 ('Moreouer, when ye shal [see] the abominacion of desolation').

the utterance 'I cannot in tearmes expresse' abjures any responsibility for providing a searching exegesis. Instead Nashe's Christ, exhausted in his act of rhetorical persuasion, repeats the noun '*desolation*', and its cognates, as a threat to the members of his audience who have continued – at the end of the 'Oration' – to ignore his voice: perhaps providing one final provocation to repentance. For an analogue of Nashe's use of rhetorical echo as a threat in *Christ's Tears*, we might compare this extract with the preacher John Hoskins's description of the clarifying potential of echo, as outlined in a contemporary sermon given from St. Mary's pulpit in Oxford:

> [It] is *required,* or *exacted,* and so required, if we vrge the extent of the word, as things are required by an importunate disputer in the Scholes, or a violent tormenter on the rack, Whence it seemes there shall be an account in generall; but because… [God's word] doth eccho backe againe.[61]

In this extract, Hoskins stresses the importance of carefully attending to scriptural terms when giving a sermon. Attention must be paid to 'the extent of the word', to allow the word to 'eccho backe' (see Chapter Two, pp. 117, 125). Where Hoskins believes that 'eccho' can be a clarifying force, for Nashe's Christ, echoing '*desolation*' does not serve an edifying purpose. Instead, '*desolation*' emphasises the reprobation of those who have ignored Christ's words.

## 6. Conclusion

In drawing some conclusions from these rhetorical analyses, we might return, briefly, to the vexed question of authorial purpose in *Christ's Tears.* Modern critics have interpreted the tract, variously, as a response to the deadly plague

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[61] John Hoskins, *Sermons Preached at Pauls Crosse and Else-where* (London, 1615), p. 18.

of 1593; in relation to Nashe's marginal position in the emergent Elizabethan literary marketplace; as a contribution to the popular late sixteenth-century religious sub-genre of the Jeremiad; and as an appeal to a specific set of pious patrons, the aristocratic Carey family. In its totality, recent scholarship has provided a good indication as to why Nashe might have written this idiosyncratic work when he did. However, to effectively contextualise Nashe's rhetorical voice of Christ – which, as we have seen, is presented as having an acute awareness of those who will, and will not, heed his words – it is also necessary to attend to the overall framing of Christ's voice within the orthodox, broadly tripartite structure of *Christ's Tears*. Despite Christ's anxiety that his voice is not being listened to in the 'Oration', the later sections of the tract show Christ's voice being responded to – and, in turn, reflected on by Nashe's preacherly persona – in a way that negates Christ's more radical concerns.

In the later stages of *Christ's Tears*, after 'our Sauiours collachrimate Oration' has been concluded, Nashe returns to the perspective of 'mortall men' to consider 'howe [Christ's] threats were after verified in *Ierusalems* ouer-turne' (60). During the section narrating the destruction of Jerusalem, Nashe reuses scriptural terms employed by his voice of Christ, such as '*gather*' and '*desolate*', to emphasise that Christ has correctly prophesied the suffering of his people. For example, in the starved mother Miriam's cannibalistic speech, Nashe has Miriam echo Christ's scriptural diction, to evidence Christ's acuity: 'how the *desolation* [God] hath layde on *Ierusalem* hath compelled a tender-starued Mother to kill and eate her onely sonne' (73-4).[62] The way in which

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[62] Nashe's voice of Miriam has attracted critical attention in recent years. For a reading of Miriam's 'oration over her child' in relation to William Heminges's dramatisation of the destruction of Jerusalem, entitled *The Jewes Tragedy* (*c.* 1625-6), which contains a

words from Christ's 'Oration' are repeated, in this section, also promotes the idea of Christ's prophetic words echoing across time: 'Was neuer such a *desolation* as the *desolation* of *Ierusalem*' (77).

Of course, according to the governing, tripartite structure of *Christ's Tears* – which mimics the structure of a Calvinist jeremiadic sermon in calling a congregation to repentance (in Christ's 'Oration'), pointing to prior hard-heartedness (in the narration of Jerusalem's fate), and opening up the possibility for future repentance (in the extended exhortation to London) – the destruction of Jerusalem is positioned as a cautionary example from which Christians in London might learn.[63] Once again, Nashe – speaking now in the voice of a moralising preacher – turns to Christ's concluding scriptural term, '*desolation*', to emphasise this connection: 'As great a *desolation* as *Ierusalem*, hath *London* deserued' (80). As Nashe's authorial persona rails repeatedly against London's perceived excesses in the tract's final section – presenting himself, in a memorable construction, as one of the city's preacherly 'Soule-Surgions' (80) – cognates of '*desolation*' reoccur and are meditated upon. A prominent instance of this occurs in the passage against London's insufficient charity during a plague year, where – in a direct reference to Matthew 23.38 – Nashe writes: 'No where is pitty, no where is piety, our House must needes *be left*

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cannibalistic noblewoman named Miriam, see Groves, 'Laughter in the Time of Plague', pp. 254-6; and also idem., 'Christ's Tears and Maternal Cannibalism in Early Modern London', in *Biblical Women in Early Modern Literary Culture, 1550-1700,* ed. Victoria Brownlee and Laura Gallagher (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), chapter 9.

[63] The best recent accounts of the Jeremiad's literary influence, in sixteenth century England, are also by Beatrice Groves. See Groves, '"They Repented at the Preachyng of Ionas: and Beholde, a Greater then Ionas is Here": A Looking Glass for London and England, Hosea and the Destruction of Jerusalem', in *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings, 1570-1625*, ed. Adrian Streete (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 139-55; idem., *The Destruction of Jerusalem, passim.*

*desolate vnto vs*' (106), mapping this scriptural phrase onto a contemporary concern, as the lack of charity shown by late sixteenth-century Londoners towards poorer citizens is lambasted.[64] Here, Nashe the exhortative preacher presents himself as responding to Christ's voice, even casting himself in the mould of his despairing Christ by suggesting – in a neat moment of structural patterning – that he, too, is 'weary of recapitulating theyr rogery' (153).

Despite the fact that Nashe's authorial persona – much like his voice of Christ – places great emphasis on his auditors avoiding '*desolation*', there is also an important recontextualisation, towards the end of the tract, of Christ's chastisement as a form of love:

> O what a blessed thing is it to bee chastised of the Lord. Is it not better (*o London*) that God correct thee, and loue thee, then forbeare thee, and forsake thee? He is a iust God, and must punish eyther in thys life, or in the lyfe to come. Though thou considerest onely the things before thee, yet he, being a louing fore-seeing father for thee, and knowing the intollerablenesse of the neuer quenched Fornace (which for sinne he hath prepared), will not consent to thine owne childish wishes, of winking at thee heere on earth, (where though he did spare thee, thou shouldst haue no perfect tranquillity) but with a short light punishment, acquitteth thee from the punishment eternall, & eternally incomprehensible tortorous. (167-8)

In the first instance, this passage argues that being 'chastised' by God is a blessing, which evidences God's 'loue', rather than His rejection. Even more strongly, Nashe's persona posits that this 'short light punishment' is a preferable alternative to the 'neuer quenched Fornace': the 'punishment eternall' in hell that is mentioned by Christ's voice (see this chapter, pp. 80-1, 95). All in all,

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[64] On this topic, and, in particular, the role of late sixteenth-century parish communities in reinforcing the sense that wealthy Londoner held some responsibility for the state of the poor, see Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 82-92.

the passage seems to indicate that, at the end of the tract, salvation is still achievable for the people of London, should they heed the warnings of Nashe's lengthy Jeremiad. In this way, the conclusion of *Christ's Tears* appears to have much in common with other Calvinist sermons of the period, which, typically, move from excoriating an audience to stressing their potential for salvation. The tract's conclusion can, therefore, be said to partially mitigate the uncomfortableness of Christ's discourse.

Yet, as a concluding remark, it is also worth emphasising the crucial way that *Christ's Tears* radically disrupts the conventions of the late sixteenth-century Jeremiad. In the extravagant lengths that both Nashe's Christ and his preacherly persona go to in seeking to induce repentance in their audiences, even whilst being aware that some auditors will be damned, both Nashean voices are responsive to the contemporary preacherly maxim of 'discharging duty' before a congregation.[65] However, given that Christ is God, and speaking in the manner of a preacher, the connotations of this 'discharging' are very different. In having Christ speak in the 'Oration', Nashe introduces a voice that possesses a completely authoritative, God's-eye view on which of his auditors

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[65] For more on the idea of a preacher 'discharging duty', and endeavouring to 'inflame [the affections] in order to draw the will more ardently towards God', whatever the audience's response may be, see Hunt, *Art of Hearing,* esp. pp. 89-90. Variants on the phrase 'discharging duty', which is directly employed by Nashe's Christ in his 'Oration' (see this chapter, pp. 85-6), became a shorthand for early modern preachers seeking to disclose their obligations to God, the Church, and their audiences. See, for example, William Whately, *A Bride-Bush: or, A Direction for Married Persons* (London, 1619), pp. 23-4 ('our duty is to speake the whole truth, yours to heare it willingly; and if you cannot bring your hearts unto it, yet must wee make you heare it whether you will or no'); Richard Gardiner, *A Sermon Appointed for Saint Pauls Crosse* (London, 1642), p. 30 ('[I wish to] discharge my whole conscience [about images in churches]'). Other useful recent contributions, on the topic of the preacher's duty, include: John Craig, 'Sermon Reception', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon,* ed. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 178-97; see also the scholarly output of Mary Morrissey.

will be saved and damned. In other words, through the preacherly voice of Christ – who, in scripture, is referred to by His disciples in John 16.30 as '[knowing] all things' – Nashe points towards a faultline in Calvinist homiletic discourse: namely, that the Calvinist preacher has to exhort repentance, despite his necessarily limited knowledge of who amongst his audience is predestined to salvation or damnation, in accordance with the Father's inscrutable decrees.[66] Thus, in introducing an all-knowing Christ within a more conventional jeremiadic structure, Nashe's tract foregrounds both the dramatic implications of the preacher speaking as God in a sermon, and, also, the limits of the ordinary preacher in knowing who will be saved or damned.

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[66] My use of the term 'faultline', in this sentence, overlaps with that of Alan Sinfield in his monograph *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); for Sinfield's reading of the 'faultlines' within early modern Protestant theology, see chapter 7.

## 2. The Voice of God in English Printed Sermons, *c*. 1600-1625

At a sermon preached at Whitehall on 4 March 1624, John Donne took up the text of Matthew 19.17, in which Christ instructs a rich young man: 'Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God'. In the printed edition of this sermon, however, Donne began with an instruction of his own:

> The Scriptures are Gods Voyce: The Church is his Eccho; a redoubling, a repeating of some particular syllables, and accents of the same voice. And as we harken with some earnestnesse, and some admiration at an Eccho, when perchance we doe not understand the voice that occasioned that Eccho; so doe the obedient children of God apply themselves to the Eccho of his Church, when perchance otherwise, they would lesse understand the voice of God, in his Scriptures, if that voice were not so redoubled unto them.[1]

This arresting opening picks up on the widely held contemporary belief that God spoke to His children through the Bible (see my introduction, p. 20), which is set out plainly in the phrase 'The Scriptures are Gods Voyce'. In what follows, Donne employs the Erasmian rhetorical technique of amplification (*amplificatio*) – developing his central topic with an ensuing comparison ('The Church is his Eccho') – doing so to suggest that the effective preacher allows the teachings of scripture to reverberate.[2] Donne asks for active attention from

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[1] John Donne, 'Sermon No. 11: Preached at Whitehall, March 4, 1624', in *The Sermons of John Donne,* Vol. 6, ed. Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1953), p. 223. A revised edition of Donne's sermons preached at the royal courts between 1619 and 1625, which includes this sermon on Matthew 19.17, is currently being prepared by Hugh Adlington, as Vol. 2 of the new *Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne.* See the website for Vol. 2: <https://donnesermons.web.ox.ac.uk/volume-ii-sermons-preached-jacobean-courts-1619-1625> [accessed 8 January 2020].

[2] For more on the Erasmian rhetorical device of amplification, and its dependence on such techniques as 'comparison, inference, and accumulation of synonyms and examples', see Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola*, p. 308; idem., *Elizabethan Rhetoric,* pp. 42-3.

his audience; the noun 'earnestnesse', in particular, had long connoted the eager reception of God's word by the laity.[3] Taken in its entirety, this extract evidences a self-consciousness about the preacher's role in 'redoubling' the speaking voice of scripture.[4] In this way, the opening of Donne's sermon shines a spotlight on one of the most enduringly contested debates in post-Reformation English culture: namely, the question of who might serve as an official spokesperson for God.

During the sixteenth century, it was the default position of every Christian denomination functioning by means of an ecclesiastical hierarchy to seek to limit the role of the divine medium to those within the ministry. In an influential discussion of the ministerial role within his doctrinal treatise *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Jean Calvin writes that God does not dwell 'among us by a visible presence, so as to make an audible declaration of his will to us', but instead 'for this purpose he uses the ministry of men whom he employs as his delegates… that he may himself do his work by their lips; just as an artificer makes use of an instrument the performance of his work'.[5] Calvin sought to maintain a clear distinction between the clerical and lay estates, and this aspect of his thought was widely taken up within the mainstream English Protestant tradition. For example, in his polemical tract *An Apology of the*

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[3] For comparable usages of the adjective 'earnest' in early Reformation England, see Desiderius Erasmus, *A Ryght Excellent Sermon and Full of Frute and Edificacyon of the Chylde Jesus* (London, 1536), sig. B4v ('No doubt but that he hath taught vs some great thynge… som earneste matter'); Richard Taverner, *The Most Sacred Bible, Whiche is the Holy Scripture Conteyning the Old and New Testament* (London, 1539), p. 183; Thomas Becon, *Newes Out of Heauen Both Pleasaunt [and] Ioyfull* (London, 1541), sig. H3r, H5v.

[4] For a recent overview of the importance of preaching in 'voicing the word of God' in early modern England, see Richards, *Voices and Books*, pp. 134-44.

[5] See Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 2, trans. John Allen (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1921 [repr. 2010]), p. 259.

*Church of England* (1562), John Jewel, then Bishop of Salisbury, denied that the reformed English Church allowed 'every man to be a priest, to be a teacher, and to be an interpreter of the Scriptures'.[6] The idea of a strictly regulated ministry – dearly sought by sixteenth-century reformers such as Calvin and Jewel – continued to be hotly debated in the early seventeenth century. Among others, the Puritan Edward Elton wrote, in a brief discussion of Matthew 20.16 within his treatise *The Triumph of a True Christian Described* (1623), that '*Many are called but few are chosen.* Others being called by the voice of God in the ministerie of his word, and they answer the call of God, they are effectually called'.[7] Elton's gloss on the scriptural verse, 'they answer the call… they are effectually called', betrays concern about the voice of God being appropriately ministered. Despite recurring anxiety about ministerial stability, however, it will be a central contention of this chapter that, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, English Protestant preachers found a variety of ways to emphasise their suitability to mediate God's voice.

In recent decades, there has been a flourishing of new work on the early modern English sermon, and I am indebted to twenty-first-century advances in the field that have returned attention to the sermon as both an oral event and a printed form.[8] However, it is particularly necessary to acknowledge Arnold

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[6] John Jewel, *An Apology of the Church of England*, ed. J.E. Booty (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), p. 26.

[7] Edward Elton, *The Triumph of a True Christian Described* (London, 1623), p. 614. For analogous English Protestant discussions of the importance of God's voice being appropriately ministered, see Thomas Taylor, *The Kings Bath* (London, 1620), p. 226 ('Those that despise the still voyce of God in the ministery, shall neuer see God in Christ'); Joseph Bentham, *The Saints Societie. Delivered in XIV Sermons* (London, 1636), p. 140 ('By disobedience to the voice of God in the ministery of his Word').

[8] Notable recent studies of early modern English preaching include: Rosamund Oates, *Moderate Radical: Tobie Matthew and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Jennifer Clement, 'He Being Dead, Yet Speaketh: The Preacher's Voice in Early

Hunt's ground-breaking monograph *The Art of Hearing*, which pays special attention to the idea of God's voice being mediated by the preacher. Whilst discussing the early modern theory of preaching, Hunt writes:

> Again and again, [Protestant commentators] pointed out, God had chosen to reveal himself to his people through the spoken word. At the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, 'Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice' (Exod. 19.20), while at Jesus's baptism, 'a voice came from heaven' (Luke 3.22), and again at his transfiguration, 'there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him' (Luke 9.35).[9]

By stressing the centrality of these biblical reference-points to early modern Protestant thought, Hunt emphasises the widespread belief that knowledge of God could be derived through the sound of His voice. What follows builds on this suggestion by surveying the exegetical treatment of certain scriptural touchstones discussing God's voice – such as Exodus 3, the Psalms, Christ's

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Seventeenth-Century Posthumous Sermon Collections', *RS,* Vol. 32 (5), 2018, pp. 738-54; idem., 'The Art of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century English Sermons', *ES,* Vol. 98 (7), 2017, pp. 675-88; idem., 'Dearly Beloved: Love, Rhetoric and the Seventeenth-Century English Sermon', *ES,* Vol. 97 (7), 2016, pp. 725-45; Mary Morrissey, 'Exhortation and Sympathy', pp. 661-74; idem., *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); idem., 'Scripture, Style and Persuasion in Seventeenth-Century English Theories of Preaching', *JEH,* Vol. 53 (4), 2002, pp. 686-706; Torrance Kirby and P.G. Stanwood, ed., *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion in England, 1520-1640* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ian Green, *Continuity and Change in Protestant Preaching in Early Modern England* (London: Dr Williams's Library, 2009); John Craig, 'Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers: The Soundscape of Worship in the English Parish Church, 1547-1642', in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 104-23; Jeanne Shami, *John Donne and Conformity in Crisis in the Late Jacobean Pulpit* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003); Susan Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough, ed., *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History, 1600-1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court, 1559-1625: Religion and Politics in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603-1625* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[9] See Hunt, *Art of Hearing,* p. 22, and chapter 1 of this monograph more generally.

baptism, and Revelation – in English printed sermons dating from around 1600 to 1625. In doing so, this chapter provides an account of the diverse ways – to borrow a commonplace phrase from the Devonshire preacher Richard Carpenter – that Protestant ministers foregrounded their role as 'conduit pipes' for the voice of God.[10]

## 1. Exodus 3

In the early years of the seventeenth century, the close encounter between God the Father and Moses in Exodus 3 was often discussed in English Protestant writing. In his much-reprinted treatise, *A Golden Chaine* (1591), William Perkins offers an exegesis 'Of God, and the nature of God', noting that 'The perfection of the nature of God, is his absolute constitution, by the which he is wholly complete within himselfe Exod. 3.13. *I am that I am*'.[11] For Perkins, as well as other Puritan ministers such as Thomas Cartwright, the entrance of God's voice during Exodus 3 was something that could be authoritatively interpreted as a revelation of 'the nature of God', or of 'his [divine] Essence and Being'.[12] Correspondingly, this biblical chapter was a favoured topic within the printed sermons of the Jacobean period. As we shall now see, early seventeenth-century Protestant preachers – from different corners of the reformed English

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[10] Richard Carpenter, *A Pastoral Charge* (London, 1616), sig. D5v. For further evidence of this preacherly act of self-presentation, see, among others, George Abbot, *An Exposition Vpon the Prophet Ionah. Contained in Certaine Sermons, Preached at S. Maries Church in Oxford* (London, 1600), p. 355 ('He must be but as a channell, or conduit pipe'); Thomas Hooker, *The Soules Possession of Christ* (London, 1638), p. 16 ('The use of this is for instruction, to teach us to depend and wait upon God, in the use of the Ministery. These are the Conduit-pipes of grace'); Isaac Ambrose, *Prima, the First Things, in Reference to the Middle and Last Things* (London, 1650), p. 42 ('The Pastors tongue is the Lords Conduit-pipe').
[11] William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine, or the Description of Theologie Containing the Order of the Causes of Saluation and Damnation, According to Gods Word* (London, 1591), sig. A1r-v.
[12] Thomas Cartwright, *Christian Religion* (London, 1611), sig. A2v.

Church – addressed the question not only of what God might be saying in Exodus 3, but, perhaps even more vitally, to whom He might be speaking.

John Day, an Aristotelian scholar and moderate Calvinist preacher, interpreted the text of Exodus 3.14 during a lecture given at Oriel College chapel in 1612.[13] This oration, entitled 'Of Gods Essence', was subsequently included in a printed edition of Day's university lectures, *Day's Dyall* (1614). Whilst not a sermon in the strictest of senses, 'Of Gods Essence' inhabits a comparable homiletic register, and is of significance to this chapter because of its thorough exegesis of God's direct voice. After a brief preamble, in which Day foregrounds his familiarity with several classical authorities and the Church Fathers, the central subject of Exodus 3.14 is approached:

> But I stay too long from that parcell of Scripture which I haue chosen concerning GOD, and whereof God willing at this time I purpose to intreat. It is written in the booke of Exodus, Exod. 3.14. The words are these: *And God answered Moses, I am that I am. Also he said, Thus shalt thou say vnto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me vnto you.* Which words depending wholy vpon the premisses that went before, which premisses were a kind of Dialogue betweene *God* and *Moses*, we will first seeke out the occasion of them, and that was this.[14] (25)

In this extract, Day asserts that he has chosen a 'parcell of Scripture' to 'intreat', a formulation which introduces the idea of probing in order to present the minister as an experienced exegete.[15] After citing his exegetical text, Day offers

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[13] For an informative account of Day's Oxford career, his ministry, and his Aristotelian scholarship, see Jeremy Catto, 'Day, John (1566-1628)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7369> [accessed 11 April 2019].

[14] All quotations from this lecture are taken from John Day, *Day's Dyall* (Oxford, 1614), and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

[15] The verb 'intreat', which could be used synonymously with the verb 'entreat' during the early modern period, is defined by the *OED* as 'to deal with, treat, handle (a subject, question, etc.)'; see 'entreat', *OED, v.,* 4a. Day's usage of the verb, in its transitive sense, promotes his own authority as an interpreter of scripture.

an interpretative gloss, stating that God's words form 'a kind of Dialogue betweene *God* and *Moses*'. Thus, Day informs his collegiate audience that Exodus 3.14 should not be interpreted outside its immediate biblical context, but instead considered as part of the wider 'Dialogue' of Exodus 3.

As Day sets out the contents of his lecture, he instructs that 'these words, *I am*' hold a double significance: both in being 'added' to Moses's pre-existing 'notions' of God, as developed over the course of Exodus 3, and in containing their own 'sense and meaning' (26). Day begins by considering what God's direct voice reveals to Moses:

> That which was from God himselfe was that in the 6 verse of this Chapter, God styleth himselfe in *Moses* his hearing, *The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Iacob. Abraham,* and *Isaac,* and *Iacob* three but sylly men to speake of, and yet was not God asham'd of them to be called their God as it is in the Epistle to the Hebrewes. (26-7)

Here, Day refers to 'the 6 verse of this Chapter [of Exodus]' (i.e. Exodus 3.6), in which God tells Moses that He is 'the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. By flagging up the importance of this scriptural verse, Day interprets the entrance of God's voice in the light of similar revelations afforded to other Old Testament patriarchs. A key verb employed by Day in drawing out this contextual reading is 'styleth'. As the *OED* states, 'styleth' – a verb commonly used in the early seventeenth century – implies both a self-chosen designation, and the fact that other possible terms could be used.[16] Thus, in suggesting that 'God styleth himselfe in *Moses* his hearing', Day suggests that God engages in an especially intimate relationship with Moses. Having emphasised this, Day argues that by speaking directly to Moses,

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[16] 'style', *OED*, *v.*, 1a.

God places him in a tradition of other 'sylly men' who have been elevated as prophets. In this context, the adjective 'sylly' also warrants further comment. Although the word held various different meanings in the early modern period, it was most often used in relation to 'weakness' and 'simplicity'.[17] In employing 'sylly', therefore, Day stresses the ordinariness of those, such as Moses, to whom God speaks in the Bible, in doing so, justifying the ordinariness of those called to the ministry in Jacobean England.

God's proximity to the patriarchs is considered, by Day, to be of central importance to Exodus 3. Moses's dialogic relationship to God is set up as an example to 'many of vs as now are, or shal be hereafter of the holy *Ministery*' (27). The implication of this statement is that Protestant ministers, much like Old Testament prophets, may hear the voice of God as directly expressed. In what follows, Day discusses Moses's 'illation & inference' upon God's voice (28). The noun 'illation', which was regularly employed in interdenominational seventeenth-century ministerial debates over scriptural matters, implies that Moses draws a firm conclusion from God's words.[18] Day then spells out this 'illation', stressing that '*Moses* tearmes him *The Lord…* This word Lord doth intimate to vs, that there is a mutuall consequence, or a kinde of dependance betweene God and vs' (28-9). In this 'illation', Day refers to the fact that God is termed 'the Lord' in Exodus 3.7 ('And the LORD said'). To further justify this claim, Day quotes from Book 5.16-17 of Augustine's tract *De Trinitate* [On

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[17] 'silly', *OED, adj.*, 2a; 5a.

[18] 'illation', *OED, n.,* 1. For contemporary English Protestant usages of 'illation' to connote a deduction made about scriptural matters, see, for example, Abbot, *The Second Part of the Defence of the Reformed Catholicke,* p. 8; Thomas Adams, *A Commentary or, Exposition Vpon the Diuine Second Epistle Generall, Written by the Blessed Apostle St. Peter* (London, 1633), p. 488. For an analogous Catholic usage, see James Gordon, *A Summary of Controuersies* (St. Omer, 1618), pp. 103-4.

the Trinity] (*c.* 400-17), providing his own English translation afterwards: '*Sicut non potest esse Servus,* saith [Augustine], *qui non habet Dominum, sic nec Dominus qui non habet Servum.* As he cannot be a Servant that hath not a Lord: so cannot he be a Lord that hath not a servant' (29).[19] Thus, relying on the paramount authority of Augustine, Day argues in the opening stages of his lecture that a master-servant relationship existed between God and the Old Testament patriarchs.

Having addressed the dialogic relationship between God and Moses, Day turns, in the second half of his lecture, to the precise wording of Exodus 3.14, specifying that '*first* I shall consider the addition it selfe, *secondly* the meaning of the words' (29-30). Day begins by affirming that Moses was granted an unusually extended dialogue with God ('it is more then vsually hath beene granted in like cases' (30)), before commenting on the phrase 'I am that I am':

> I know there are that suppose there is signified hereby his two
> essentiall Attributes, Eternity & Immutability, but forasmuch as
> that opinion concerneth the future tence only, and we here read
> it in the present, I will at this time intreate of these pointes only
> of being of himselfe and being vnto others: of those his other
> Attributes God willing at some other time. (31)

In addressing the 'meaning' of this key biblical proof-text for the voice of God, Day highlights the importance of the present tense 'I am', interpreting this as an indication of God 'being of himselfe and being vnto others'. Day's conception of God's self-contained divine 'being' is implicitly Aristotelian: in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle writes that 'the essence of each thing is what it is said to

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[19] For more on the theological context of this passage, and its affirmation of a master-servant relationship between God and the patriarchs, see Roland J. Teske, SJ, 'Properties of God and the Predicaments of De Trinitate 5', in *To Know God and the Soul: Essays on the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008)*,* pp. 93-112.

be *propter se* [in virtue of itself]. For being you is not being musical, since you are not by your very nature musical', before concluding that 'What, then, you are by your very nature is your essence'.[20] For Day, drawing on Aristotle – but also on the scholastic theologian Girolamo Zanchi – Exodus 3.14 reveals that God is, in 'essence', a wholly divine 'being', who prompts further 'being vnto others'.[21] This idea of God's endless 'being of himselfe' is then backed up, by the minister, with reference to corroborating verses of scripture, such as Psalm 19.2 and Ezekiel 43.13; whilst God's affording 'being vnto others' is substantiated by Acts 17.28 ('For in him we live, and move, and have our being') (33). Thus, in his university lecture 'Of Gods Essence', Day posits that preferential knowledge of God's 'being' is revealed to Moses – and, in turn, to Protestant ministers – through His voice.

Exodus 3 also attracted attention from Protestant ministers outside of the cloistered collegiate environment. The little-known preacher Thomas Bastard – a man who, according to Anthony Wood's university history *Athenae Oxonienses* (1691), had been 'forced to leave' an academic fellowship at New College, Oxford for scurrilously libelling his colleagues – held the small living of Bere Regis, Dorset from 1606 until his death in 1618.[22] During this time,

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[20] Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, trans. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 1029.

[21] For the influence of Girolamo Zanchi on Day's exegesis, we note the marginal annotation '*Zanchi de Natur Dei*' (31). For more on the way that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was frequently mediated through early modern scholastic theology, see Ulrich G. Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology,* trans. Michael J. Miller (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 301: 'for various reasons (intraconfessional disputes, polemics with the Catholics, the humanist return to the complete works of Aristotle, the methodological requirement of a First Philosophy), metaphysics was reintroduced around 1600 in Protestant institutions of higher learning'. Another useful work on Aristotle's preeminent 'authority', in university theological curricula across early modern Europe, is Paul Richard Blum, *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), esp. chapter 3.

[22] See P.J. Finkelpearl, 'Bastard, Thomas (1565/6-1618)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1656> [accessed 11 April 2019].

Bastard published a collection of his sermons, entitled *Twelue Sermons* (1615), in London. In the opening dedication to his patron, Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Bastard proclaims the importance of the ministerial role: 'I hope these flowers, to them which peruse them, shall not prooue vnfruitfull, being gathered out of that field of the Scriptures on which the Holy-ghost hath breathed' (A3v).[23] Here, Bastard employs a horticultural metaphor to promote his careful selection of scripture, whilst the idea of the 'Holy-ghost' as breathing on the selected biblical text suggests that these words, when explicated by the preacher's inspired voice, have the potential to come to life.

In the fourth sermon within *Twelue Sermons*, entitled 'The Calling of Moses', Bastard addresses a key proof-text for the voice of God the Father, Exodus 3.1-4.14, in which God speaks to Moses from the burning bush (see Exodus 3.4: 'God called vnto him out of the middest of the Bush, and said, Moses, Moses' (60)). After his *divisio*, in which he details the content of these verses, Bastard offers an exegesis of God preferentially calling the minister:

> There is no doubt but as often as God appeared to our Fathers, making himselfe manifest by some signe: so often hee stouped downe from the height of his Majesty, and (as wee may thinke) went forth from himselfe, to come nearer to them. For that which is most vnworthy of that Diuine majestie, to borrow a Body or a Face of his Creatures for a time, is yet the greatest vouchsafing: wherewith hee can vouchsafe vs, and the possiblest meanes he hath, to make vs, whiles we are here in the flesh, attentiue, and to wonder at his greatnes. The same God doth stoupe downe and bow himselfe to vs when he speaketh and calleth by his word out of the lippes and mouthes of his Prophets and Ministers: and there is no difference betweene that trembled Majesty; which spake to Moses miraculously, and to vs ordinarily. (61)

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[23] All quotations from Bastard's sermon are taken from *Twelve Sermons* (London, 1615), and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

Here, Bastard – much like Day – addresses the widely held contemporary belief that, in the Old Testament, God was closer to the patriarchs ('our Fathers'). Bastard emphasises that, whilst God sometimes revealed Himself to the patriarchs through 'Creatures' (in this context, the noun signifies any 'created thing', which includes burning bushes), God speaks to early modern Protestant individuals primarily through the 'lippes and mouthes' of preachers.[24] Bastard argues more democratically than the university theologian Day, who suggests that Old Testament patriarchs should serve as authoritative examples to early modern Protestant ministers. Instead, Bastard insists that the 'same God' who spoke to the patriarchs 'speaketh and calleth by… his Prophets and Ministers: and there is no difference betweene that trembled Majesty; which spake to Moses miraculously, and to vs ordinarily'. In this sentence, the adjective 'trembled' might occasion further comment. The word is commonly used, in the Bible, in relation to the quavering human response to God's presence: as in Psalm 114.7, 'Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob'. Additionally, we might note the forthright way in which Bastard problematises established Church hierarchies. Through the phrase 'no difference', it is argued that the same God might speak through Old Testament prophets and contemporary ministers – albeit through different mechanisms.

Throughout 'The Calling of Moses', Bastard articulates a high view of the preacher's role as an intermediary for God's voice. As an extended comment on 2 Kings 6.16, in which prophets, such as Elisha, 'doe sometimes take vpon them Gods person, and speake as God speaketh' (64), Bastard addresses the

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[24] See 'creature', *OED, n.,* 1a.

question of whom God might speak through in greater depth, doing so by comparing God's human mouthpieces with angelic messengers.[25] Bastard suggests that 'whatsoeuer God speaketh by his Angels, is of as much certayntie as if Gods owne mouth had spoken it', but 'if he leaue Angels, and chuse Shepheards and Fishermen to doe his message, the authority is no lesse then if it had beene thundred from Heauen' (64). For Bastard, whenever God speaks through mortal beings, His voice acquires a 'certayntie': whether the conduits are 'Angels' or lowly 'Shepheards and Fishermen'. In the latter phrase, the coupling of nouns relies on knowledge of the humble original professions of Apostles such as Simon Peter, as outlined in Matthew 4.19 (see Christ's punning words on the subject: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men').

As well as displaying a broad-minded conception of whom God might speak through, Bastard's sermon evidences a capacious idea of the ways in which God might speak. After his comment on 'Shepheards and Fishermen', Bastard adds that the authority is 'no lesse then if it had beene thundred from Heauen, or vttered by an hoast of Angels, or written in the Heauens, or spoken from Heauen by the mouth of the Sonne of God, from the right hand of God' (64). We note the list of different verbs – 'thundred… or vttered… or written… or spoken' – each communicating a different style of spoken or written utterance, which suggests that the idea of alternative modes of discourse for God

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[25] Early modern belief in angels as messengers for God has been emphasised in two important studies: Joad Raymond, *Milton's Angels: The Early Modern Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, ed., *Angels in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Both studies draw attention to pervasive early modern interest in angelic hierarchies, and the way in which angels could, in many different contexts, be used to describe intrinsic hierarchies within God's creation. For more on this, with reference to Protestant cultures, see Raymond, *Milton's Angels*, pp. 22-6; Philip M. Soergel, 'Luther on the Angels', in *Angels,* ed. Marshall and Walsham, pp. 69, 79.

is of paramount importance. In the above extract, Bastard affords an equality of authority to different conduits: most strikingly, the voice of 'the Sonne of God' is equated to that of the 'Fishermen'. Although there is a qualifying assertion that 'the Angels of Gods Church heere on earth' cannot be fully 'compared' with those constituted purely from divine 'substance', in 'The Calling of Moses', Bastard argues strongly that 'the Angels of Gods Church' are not 'inferiour' in terms of 'their message', or, indeed, 'their office' (64).

Having emphasised the absolute sufficiency of the preacher as a conduit for God's voice, Bastard examines the idea of God preferentially calling the minister in further depth:

> Let no man then now looke to be called out of a bush burning with fire, or by a voyce from heauen, sithence [because][26] God doth vndoubtedly call vs daily out of the mouthes of his Ministers and Preachers, and speake by them as familiarly as he did by *Moses*: and if they be Ministers to you of Grace, and Life, and the riches and glory of the Kingdome of heauen; let it not grieue you with good consciences to be Ministers to them of the perishing things of this world: neyther despise you them, because they are men, and sinners as you are: for God which deputed them, did it not for want of Angels; but in calling them, he preferreth your nature. (65)

This passage begins with an instruction not to 'looke to be called out of a bush burning with fire', an imperative which displays a characteristically reformed scepticism about miracles.[27] After this, Bastard encourages his audience not to

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[26] 'sithence', *OED, adv., conj., prep*. 1a.

[27] The classic study concerning English Protestant scepticism about miracles remains Walsham, *Providence*; see pp. 226-32, which attends to the way 'the principle that miracles had ceased' was used within anti-Catholic polemic, but also afforded Protestants a certain flexibility in their own beliefs on the subject (p. 228). For more recent contributions to this debate, see Helen L. Parish, *Monks, Miracles and Magic: Reformation Representations of the Medieval Church* (London: Routledge, 2005); Philip M. Soergel, *Miracles and the Protestant Imagination: The Evangelical Wonder Book in Reformation Germany* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

seek 'a [direct] voyce from heauen', but instead to look to the everyday calling of the minister ('God doth vndoubtedly call vs daily'). Here, an explicit link is drawn between the way that God spoke to Moses 'familiarly' – calling him by name, 'Moses, Moses', in Exodus 3.4 – and the way in which, for Bastard, contemporary ministers are just as well-suited to meet the needs of their congregations. Perhaps most remarkably, Bastard suggests that God has chosen 'Ministers' over 'Angels' – the principal conveyors of messages from God in the Bible – as His deputies, doing so out of sympathy for the essential fallibility of human 'nature'.

Thus, in the homiletic writings of Day and Bastard, we witness two different Protestant clerical models of thinking about how God might speak through the preacher. Day emphasises Moses's preferential calling in Exodus 3, offering the biblical prophet as an example from which collegiate ministers might learn. For Bastard, by contrast, there is a more pronounced stress on God speaking familiarly through the minister, and on the way in which the preacher ought to interact with their congregation to provide an inspiring exegesis. Building on these findings, what follows will trace the exegetical treatment of God's voice in early seventeenth-century printed sermons on the Psalms.

## 2. The Psalms

The Cambridge preacher Thomas Playfere established a glowing reputation for his rhetorical abilities. His university contemporary Thomas Nashe, an author, as we saw in Chapter One, much given to rhetorical extravagance, wrote in his treatise *Foure Letters Confuted* (1592) praising 'Mellifluous Playfere, one of the chief props of our aged, & auntientest, & absolutest Vniuersities present

flourishing, Where doe thy superemitent gifts shine to themselues, that the Court cannot bee acquainted with them?'.[28] As scholars have noted, Playfere appears to have been predominantly interested in the sermon as an oral occasion: indeed, despite the increasing popularity of printed sermons at the turn of the seventeenth century, Playfere consistently held back from putting his own into print.[29] A case in point is his popular sermon of practical divinity, *Hearts Delight* (1603). This sermon was first preached in 1593 from the influential reformed pulpit of St. Paul's Cross, but not issued in print for another decade, when it was eventually dedicated to 'the most victorious, vertuous, and puissant Prince, King Iames… [for whom] the heauens redouble and eccoh-backe againe the acclamations and applauses of all men' (413).[30] This is an apt dedication, given that the idea that 'the heauens' might 'redouble and eccoh-backe' is explored in more detail within the main sermon. In *Hearts Delight*, Playfere takes up the text of Psalm 37.4: 'Delight thy selfe in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart' (413). Sticking closely to the wording of his chosen biblical verse, the preacher attends to the reciprocal process through which 'Delight… in the Lord' can result in the Christian being '[given]… the desires of thy heart'. According to Playfere, as we shall now discern, an essential mechanism by which God ministers 'Delight' is through His voice, which the dutiful preacher must interpret.

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[28] Nashe, 'Foure Letters Confuted', in *Works,* Vol. 1, ed. McKerrow and Wilson, p. 314.

[29] See Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons,* pp. 44, 48; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 121-2.

[30] All quotations from Playfere's sermon are taken from 'Hearts Delight', ed. Morrissey, in *Sermons at Paul's Cross, 1521-1642,* ed. Torrance Kirby, P.G. Stanwood, Mary Morrissey, and John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

In accordance with Psalm 37.4, the first word attended to by Playfere in *Hearts Delight* is the term 'Delight' (413). Towards the end of his opening exegesis of the verb, the preacher notes:

> And therefore it is for the glorie of God, because it is for the love of god. For David is sicke no otherwise for love of the sonne of God, then God is sicke himselfe, for love of the sonne of David. *This is my beloved sonne* (saies he) *in whome I am delighted. This is my beloved sonne*: there he is in love. *In whom I am delighted*: there he is sicke for love. Which is the cause why he commandeth us also to be delighted in his love. For a double desire is love: so a double love is *delight*. (416)

In this paragraph, Playfere foregrounds the 'love' afforded to humanity by God, through the figure of Christ. Issues of reciprocity are at play: in a parallel construction, 'David is sicke… for love of the sonne of God', whilst 'God is sicke himselfe, for love of the sonne of David'. Playfere highlights God's verbal expression of 'love' by citing the words spoken from heaven during Christ's baptism and transfiguration: '*This is my beloved sonne*' (see Matthew 3.17 and Luke 3.22; Luke 9.35). However, in a striking move, the second half of this utterance is rewritten as '*in whome I am delighted*'. In her editorial note on the passage, Mary Morrissey suggests that 'Playfere's rendering intensifies the use of "delight"'.[31] In supplement to Morrisey's idea of preacherly intensification, one might note Playfere's emphasis on the fact that God utters the same phrase twice in the Bible, playing on the overwhelming sense of a God who is 'sicke for love… a double love is *delight*'.[32] Thus, in Playfere's sermon, God's spoken

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[31] See 'Hearts Delight', ed. Morrissey, p. 416.

[32] It is also worth pointing out that Playfere's notion of God being 'sicke for love' is prefigured in the Song of Songs. The Geneva translation of Song of Songs 2.5, a text which Playfere would have been familiar with, reads: 'Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples: for I am sicke of loue'.

declaration of love for His '*beloved sonne*' is established as the primary way in which '*delight*' is ministered to the Christian individual.

As *Hearts Delight* proceeds in its argument, Playfere returns to the idea of God expressing 'love' through His voice. Whilst interpreting the scriptural phrase 'and he shall give thee', Playfere asserts: 'as though the benefit were not thine, but wholly his: so he chaungeth the words, and for, Thou shalt give him, saies, *He shall give thee*' (420). Echoing his alteration of '*This is my beloved sonne*', Playfere states that God is prepared to '[change] the words': a phrase which stands in for the commonplace Christian idea of God's relationship to humanity being transformed under the New Covenant. In thinking further about what God '*shall give thee*', Playfere writes that 'this he doeth, as Augustine testifieth, Not by the love of errour, but by the errour of love' (420). Here, Playfere paraphrases a formulation from Augustine's theological treatise *De Civitate Dei* [City of God] (*c.* 426 AD), in which, when discussing Roman heresy in Book 22.6, Augustine writes that 'the best that can be said for the Romans themselves is that they believed this fable, not so much out of any love of aberration as out of an aberration of love'.[33] In *Hearts Delight*, therefore, Playfere adapts this notion by suggesting that God responds to human 'errour' with 'the errour of love'.

Having transposed the words of Augustine, in *Hearts Delight*, Playfere conceives of God's erring 'love' in explicitly rhetorical terms, asserting that 'the love of errour, is mans Rhetoricke, it is a figure, which man often useth,

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[33] Augustine, *The City of God: Books XVII-XXII*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1954 [repr. 2008]), p. 427.

*Humanum est errare*. But the errour of love, is Gods Rhetoricke, it is a figure, which God often useth, *Divinum est amare*' (420). In this extract, the idea of 'love' as an 'errour' – especially when referring to God's 'love' for humanity, as expressed through Christ – relies on contemporary understanding of 'paradox' as a rhetorical figure. In *The Art of English Poesy*, for instance, Puttenham discusses the figure of paradox as 'the Wonderer';[34] and John Florio's 1598 Italian-English dictionary conceives of the term as 'a maruellous, wonderfull and strange thinge to heare'.[35] A paradox, then – as a rhetorical figure for something unexpected, that may yet prove to be true – was commonly thought to occasion a sense of wonder at the turn of the seventeenth century. In *Hearts Delight*, therefore, God's 'love' – seen, paradoxically, as erring – is presented in admiring terms. As a final sleight of hand, Playfere constructs a scholastic rephrasing of 1 John 4.16 ('God is love') as '*Divinum est amare*', turning this biblical commonplace into a phrase that might be repeated as a maxim within the humanist schoolroom. Thus, in his deftly instructive sermon *Hearts Delight*, Playfere suggests that God might speak forth His love for humanity as an eloquent rhetorician.

Unlike Playfere, the moderate Calvinist preacher Thomas Adams thought that print was a particularly suitable vehicle for the sermon.[36] In the dedication to his patron Sir Henry Montagu, Earl of Manchester, prefixed to the second edition of his collection of sermons *The Happines of the Church* (1619),

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[34] See Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, ed. Whigham and Rebhorn, p. 311.

[35] John Florio, *Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (London, 1598), p. 257.

[36] See J. Sears McGee, 'On Misidentifying Puritans: The Case of Thomas Adams', *Albion,* Vol. 30 (3), 1998, pp. 401-18, esp. p. 401 ('Adams was certainly a busy man in the pulpit, and he did not hesitate to wend his way to the printers either').

Adams writes of his 'filiall dutie to our blessed Mother the Church, [which] hath taught me to help forward her cause, both with tongue and penne' (A2r).[37] In this formulation, we note that 'tongue and penne' are afforded an equal facility in evangelising. Recent scholarship has emphasised Adams's literary faculties: indeed, articles by David Colclough and Emma Rhatigan have drawn attention to his ample borrowings from Donne and Webster.[38] In his sermon 'Heaven Made Sure', included within *The Happines of the Church*, Adams addresses the text of Psalm 35.3: 'Say vnto my soule, I am thy saluation' (327). This verse, in which the prophet David invites God to speak up to assure him, prompts a consideration of the different ways in which the ordinary Protestant might hear God's voice. In this respect, Adams's printed sermon functions as a practical handbook for the attainment of salvation.

In the first paragraph of 'Heaven Made Sure', Adams signposts his exegesis of Psalm 35.3, writing that 'the Text may be distributed accordingly; *In salutem Dei, & certitudinem rei*: into *Saluation* and *Assurance* of it' (327). In what follows, Adams gives further indication of the sermon's structure, stating that 'The Matter is *Assurance*: the Manner how assured, *Dic anima; Say vnto my soule*' (327). It is in Adams's preaching on the 'Manner' by which one might become 'assured' by God, in the second half of this sermon, that we find his most sustained engagement with the idea of God's voice speaking to the

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[37] All quotations from 'Heaven Made Sure' are taken from *The Happines of the Church* (London, 1619 [2nd edn.]), and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

[38] See David Colclough, 'Thomas Adams and John Donne Revisited', *NQ,* Vol. 59 (1), 2012, pp. 96-100; Emma Rhatigan, 'Reading the White Devil in Thomas Adams and John Webster', in *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings, 1570-1625*, ed. Streete, pp. 176-94.

believer, and evidence of his inclusive soteriological beliefs. Adams's exegesis
of the phrase 'Say vnto my soule' begins in typically arresting fashion:

> Say: but is God a man? hath he a tongue? how doth *Dauid* desire
> him to speake? That God who made the eare, shall not he heare?
> he that made the eye, shall not he see? he that made the tongue,
> shall not he speake? He that sees without eyes, and heares
> without eares, and walkes without feete, and workes without
> hands, can speake without a tongue. (337)

In this extract, Adams addresses his readership with urgency, employing the
imperative verb 'Say', then asking: 'is God a man?'. Adams's chief biblical
source for this entreaty is Psalm 94.9, which addresses God in a state of anguish:
'He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not
see?'. Drawing playfully on the idea, prompted by this biblical verse, of an
anthropomorphic God, Adams questions whether God might possess different
body parts: moving from the 'tongue' to the 'eare', and from there to the 'eye';
then, following this, Adams questions whether God might not use these faculties
in responding to the supplicant ('shall not he speake?'). However, having
constructed this array of rhetorical questions, Adams counters his own
anthropomorphic supposition with the suggestion that 'He that sees without
eyes, and heares without eares, and walkes without feete, and workes without
hands, can speake without a tongue'.[39] Thus, moving beyond ideas of a merely
anthropomorphic God, what follows in 'Heaven Made Sure' constitutes a
practical instruction in how to best hear God 'speake'.

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[39] For a recent account of the Old Testament's presentation of an anthropomorphic God, see
Andreas Wagner, *God's Body: The Anthropomorphic God in the Old Testament,* trans. Marion
Salzmann (London: T. & T. Clark, 2019), p. 115, who argues that 'communication and action'
are intrinsic to the Old Testament's presentation of God's body. It is of note that, in the above
extract, Adams – much like John Milton (see Chapter Five, pp. 248-9) – appears to reject
overly simplistic ideas of an anthropomorphic God: for more on this topic, see John E. Parish,
'Milton and an Anthropomorphic God', *SP*, Vol. 56 (4), 1959, pp. 619-25.

As his first example of a way in which God might speak to the believer, Adams notes:

> God hath spoken to some by his owne voice. To *Adam; vocem audiuerunt*: they heard the *voyce* of God &c. To Israel. The Lord spake vnto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard *the voyce* of the words but saw no similitude: onely you heard a *voyce*. To Christ: [and] here came *a voyce* from heauen, saying: I haue both glorified it, and I will glorifie it. This *S. Peter* testifies. There came a *voyce* from the excellent glory; This is my beloued sonne, in whom I am well pleased. (337)

In the first instance, with recourse to several prominent scriptural touchstones, Adams acknowledges that God the Father sometimes speaks directly in the Bible. Adams references Genesis 3.8, where Adam and Eve hear the Father's voice after they have sinned ('And they heard the voice of the LORD God'); the burning bush episode in Exodus 3.2, in which God confronts Moses ('And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush'); the '*voyce*' from heaven that refers to Christ, during His baptism and transfiguration; and the secondary report of these words in 2 Peter 1.17 ('when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'). It is not overly surprising that Adams draws on all these examples in foregrounding the scriptural importance of God's direct voice – they were, after all, commonplaces in the post-Reformation era (see my introduction, pp. 20-6). What should not be missed, however, in determining the overall sense of the passage, is the inclusion of the word 'some'. Through this small qualifier, Adams posits that God has only spoken directly to a few biblical figures, betraying his belief that this kind of direct voicing from God is uncommon. Thus, a distinction is drawn between the direct voice of God the Father and the mediation of God's voice through preaching.

As his list proceeds, Adams offers a full account of the 'diuerse wayes' in which the supplicant might hear God's voice indirectly. The preacher moves through different kinds of mediated voice, addressing 'his workes', 'his Sonne', 'his Scriptures', and 'his Spirit' (337-8). Whilst each of these 'wayes' is equally important to Adams's central argument about plural voices for God, more emphasis is given to the preacher's extended comment on the special role of ministers in promulgating God's voice:

> GOD speaks by his Ministers, expounding and opening to vs those Scriptures. These are *Legati a latere*; dispencers of the mysteries of heauen. *Ambassadors for CHRIST: as if God did beseech you through vs, so wee pray you in Christ stead, that you would be reconciled to God.* This voice is continually sounding in our Churches, beating vpon our eares; I would it could pierce our consciences, and that our liues would eccho to it in an answerable obedience. How great should be our thankfullnesse! (339-40)

Here, Adams affirms that 'GOD speaks by his Ministers', who can adequately mediate His voice by 'expounding and opening… those Scriptures'. Through the verbs 'expounding and opening', Adams affords the clergy an active role in their exegeses. These words gain in import when considered alongside Adams's pejorative dismissal of the general ability to interpret scripture: in the preceding discussion of God speaking 'by his Scriptures', Adams declares that 'Few can read, fewer do reade, fewest of all read as they should' (339). Given this contrast, Adams affords ministers a marked superiority in their biblical interpretations. This sense of ministerial importance is expanded upon as the passage progresses. Importantly, Adams employs the Latin construction '*Legati a latere*' [legate from the side], a phrase which, according to the *OED*, held connotations of 'a confidential papal legate of the highest decree, appointed

especially for a particular mission'.[40] Adams uses this phrase – which possessed an ostensibly Catholic resonance – for Protestant ends: this is confirmed by the ensuing citation of 2 Corinthians 5.20, a verse which promotes the Pauline idea of ministers serving as 'ambassadors for Christ'. Much like the attention-grabbing Donne sermon quoted at the beginning of this chapter (see pp. 102-3), in 'Heaven Made Sure', Adams explores the commonplace Protestant idea of the preacher allowing God's voice to reverberate. To this end we note the subclause, 'This voice is continually sounding in our Churches', which plays on the idea of echoing. In the penultimate sentence of the above extract, Adams's use of the forceful words 'beating' and 'pierce' appears to channel the more exhortative modes of Calvinist rhetoric that were discussed in Chapter One. Despite this, there is an augmented sense of salvific inclusiveness in 'Heaven Made Sure', confirming that Adams stood at some remove from the stricter end of contemporary Calvinist theology, which – with reference to God's inscrutable decrees (see Chapter One, p. 62) – stressed that only some Christians would achieve salvation.[41] By using the inclusive determiner 'our', Adams suggests that the preacher also ought to bear this advice about hearing God's voice in mind.

Thus, in early seventeenth-century Protestant sermons on the Psalms, there is a sense that God's voice might speak out to assure the believer. For Playfere, preaching on Psalm 37.4, the Christian individual may be ministered

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[40] 'legate', *OED, n.*, 1b. As used after the early Reformation, 'legate a latere' usually held connotations of a special papal envoy: see, for instance, the discussion of Cardinal Reginald Pole as 'legate a latere' in Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, p. 1762.

[41] For an account of Adams as a moderate 'Calvinist episcopalian' rather than a 'Puritan', see McGee, 'Adams, Thomas (1583-1652)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/131> [accessed 10 January 2020]. See also idem., 'On Misidentifying Puritans', p. 402 ('I concur with this latter group in rejecting the inclusion of Adams among the Puritans').

'Delight' by God's direct voice, as described in the gospels during Christ's baptism. By contrast, Adams's 'Heaven Made Sure', which focuses on Psalm 35.3, presents a variety of different methods for effective spiritual hearing, with the intermediary function of the minister given heightened importance. It is with issues of soteriological assurance firmly in mind that we turn, in the next section of this chapter, to the exegetical treatment of God's voice in early seventeenth-century printed sermons on Christ's baptism.

## 3. Christ's Baptism

The entrance of God the Father's voice, during Christ's baptism, was a commonly treated subject in Jacobean sermons. The texts of Matthew 3.17 and Luke 3.22 were interpreted by preachers across the broad span of English Protestant culture, from the staunchly Puritan Edward Philips to the 'avant-garde' conformist Lancelot Andrewes.[42] The topic was also addressed by John Donne, an author with a diverse – and, today, hotly contested – theological inheritance.[43] What follows gives a representative account of the ways in which influential Protestant preachers considered this biblical episode.

Edward Philips was the popular minister of St. Saviour's, Southwark, during the early seventeenth century. A printed collection of his sermons, entitled *Certaine Godly and Learned Sermons* (1605) – which, as Hunt notes, was 'recorded in notes by a member of the audience, Henry Yelverton of Gray's

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[42] For Andrewes as the leader of 'a younger generation of "avant-garde" conformists', see Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 84.

[43] See Alison Shell and Arnold Hunt, 'Donne's Religious World', in *The Cambridge Companion to John Donne,* ed. Achsah Guibbory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 65-82.

Inn… [who] was persuaded to publish them' – treats the text of Matthew 3.17 in the course of a series of measured expostulations about the doctrine of predestination.[44] Philips's exegesis of God's direct voice, contained within 'the third testimony' of 'The Twelfth Sermon', betrays a characteristically reformed emphasis on the authority of the ear over the eye:

> There comes a voice from heauen: by the former miracles the Lord onely prouided for the witnes of the eye, but now he prouides for the eare also. Where we learne, the wonderfull wisedome and loue of God to exercise all our senses, that thereby we might be brought to a certaine perswasion of these mysteries. Among the Philosophers is a great question, whether the sence of sight or of hearing be better in it selfe. True it is, that sight in nature is more excellent, as for celeritie and quicknes, so for perspicuitie and sharpnes: but if the doubt be made of the profit of these two, then hearing excelleth; for we can see nothing but that is visible, but many more things are to be heard of, which thereby may be conueyed to the heart to iudge of: so the largenesse of hearing is greater in the profit.[45] (155-6)

In this extract, Philips suggests that this 'voice from heauen' signals a watershed moment, marking the transition from 'former miracles… for the witnes of the eye' to those 'for the eare also'.[46] Due to this, Philips endorses the oral forms of worship that are given special emphasis by Calvinist piety. In what follows, the preacher suggests that God's voice has the power to affect those who hear it, stressing that through it, 'we might be brought to a certaine perswasion of these mysteries'. We might pick up on the phrase 'a certaine perswasion', given that the role of the exhortative sermon in persuading its audience – as a recent essay

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[44] Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 354.

[45] All quotations from this sermon are taken from Edward Philips, *Certaine Godly and Learned Sermons* (London, 1605), and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

[46] Philips's affirmation of a transition from 'former miracles' of the 'eye' to those of the 'eare' evidences the 'ambiguity', as Walsham puts it, that Protestant scepticism about miracles afforded: see *Providence*, p. 232.

collection edited by Torrance Kirby and P.G. Stanwood has shown – was emphasised in sermons given from the nearby St. Paul's Cross pulpit.[47] Thus, Philips's use of the noun 'perswasion' places him firmly within the hotter Protestant milieu. Towards the end of the passage, whilst attending to the question of oral and visual miracles, Philips affords the eye 'celeritie and quicknes'. This, it becomes apparent, is a pejorative judgment – implying shallowness – given that the ear, according to Philips, possesses deeper, and more enduring capabilities for acquiring spiritual knowledge. Philips posits that the divine voice allows for 'many more things… to be heard of', and for these 'things' to be 'conueyed to the heart'. Thus, Philips suggests that God's voice, when heard, can prompt emotional revelations from his audience.

In the final part of this sermon, Philips provides an exegesis of what '[God's] voice… doth expresse' during Christ's baptism (156). For this Puritan preacher, the divine voice at Matthew 3.17 signals a moment of transition, given that 'there had bin a time when he was not the Son of God, but by personall vnion the man Christ being neuer a person by it selfe vntill it was personally vnited to the Godhead' (156). Here, Philips takes up an unorthodox doctrinal position: namely, that Christ 'was not the Son of God' before His baptism. God's voice is afforded significant emphasis in signalling that Christ is henceforth 'vnited to the Godhead'. Following this claim, Philips goes into further detail as to what the voice of God might signify:

> And this [voice] ministreth singular consolation, that when we
> consider Christ to be beloued, we may withall remember, that

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[47] See Kirby and Stanwood, 'Introduction', in their collection of critical essays *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion*, p. 3. For more on the exhortative rhetoric commonly deployed from the reformed Paul's Cross pulpit, see Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons*, pp. 51-8.

> with the same loue the Lord loueth his naturall sonne, with the
> same doth he loue vs that are adopted: so as when he beholds the
> beauty of his Sonne, in whose forehead as in a golden plate are
> written all our names, he turneth from our filthinesse, and
> embraceth vs as his owne sonne, and the Father and Sonne are
> all one in desire. The Lord graunt we may be able to comprehend
> it, and be willing to entertaine it, that this loue may constraine vs
> to loue him againe, otherwise it brings forth no effectuall fruite
> in vs. (157)

For Philips, God's voice at Matthew 3.17, which proclaims that Christ is 'beloued', serves as a reminder that God 'doth… loue vs that are adopted'. This utterance implies that not all of Philips's congregation can become 'adopted', a verb which stands in, here, for the Calvinist conception of God's chosen elect. In this sermon, Philips preaches tacitly on the doctrine of predestination, given that the noun 'filthinesse' held connotations of spiritual taint, and the verb 'turneth', as Ryrie has shown, connoted sincere repentance in the period.[48] In the last sentence of the above extract, Philips suggests that only God can 'graunt' whether members of the congregation may actually 'comprehend' His voice. Thus, in orthodox Calvinist fashion, ultimate authority is afforded to God in determining who will be saved.

The celebrated court preacher Lancelot Andrewes's exegetical treatment of Christ's baptism evidences his distance from mainstream Calvinist theology. Andrewes attached a special importance to the festival of Whitsunday, marking it with fourteen sermons delivered between 1606 and 1621.[49] On the eighth of these occasions, in 1615, Andrewes stood before King James I at Greenwich to preach on Luke 3.21-2, two verses of scripture which conclude with the

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[48] See Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 22-6.
[49] See McCullough's 'Headnote', in *Lancelot Andrewes: Selected Sermons and Lectures,* ed. Peter McCullough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 207.

intervention of God's direct voice: 'and there was a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved SONNE, in whom I am well pleased' (674).[50] In the *divisio* of this sermon – which was first printed in a posthumous collection of Andrewes's sermons, edited by John Buckeridge and William Laud – the preacher points to the significance of his chosen text:

> To looke into the Text, there is no man but at the first blush will conceive there is some great matter in hand. First, by the *opening of heaven*: for, that *opens* not, for a small purpose: Then, by the solemne presence of so great Estates at it: for, heer is the whole *Trinitie* in person. The *Sonne in the water,* the *Holy Ghost in the Dove*, the *Father in the voice*. (675)

In his *divisio*, Andrewes emphasises that 'the whole *Trinitie*' was present at Christ's baptism, doing so by separating the 'great Estates' into individual paratactic clauses within the final sentence. This stress on the equality of the three Persons substantiates Nicolas Lossky's broadly Trinitarian assessment of the theology underpinning the Whitsunday sermons.[51] Whilst Andrewes's sermon on Luke 3.21-2 begins by stressing the interdependence of the Trinity in making salvation possible, it culminates by highlighting the special role of the Father's '*voice*' in heralding this new spiritual state.

During the sermon, Andrewes employs the figure of the mouth to suggest that Christ's baptism promises salvation to all believers. In a short utterance that ascribes a spoken quality to the physical action of baptizing, the preacher suggests that 'this will command it, and fetch it out' (678). Here, as

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[50] All quotations from Andrewes's 1615 Whitsunday sermon are taken from *XCVI Sermons*, ed. John Buckeridge and William Laud (London, 1629), and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

[51] Nicolas Lossky, *Lancelot Andrewes, the Preacher (1555-1626): The Origins of the Mystical Theology of the Church of England,* trans. Andrew Louth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 208.

Sophie Read has persuasively argued, Andrewes evidences a deeply-held belief

in the capacity of language to 'perform' tenets of faith.[52] In a crucial moment,

Andrewes suggests that the voice of God possesses a sacramental function,

noting that '*Heaven* might *open*, *the Holy Ghost come downe,* the *Father be*

*pleased to say over the same words, toties quoties*, so oft, as any *Christian man's*

child, is brought to his *baptisme*' (679). Andrewes asserts that God is '*pleased*

*to say over the same words*', a formulation which suggests that the divine voice

– as heard directly by those present at Christ's baptism – is prepared to repeat

itself whenever Christians are baptized in future. This utterance, taken on its

own terms, points towards the highly sacramental nature of Andrewes's piety.[53]

What follows only strengthens this emphasis: we note the Latin phrase, '*toties*

*quoties*'. According to the online Catholic Encyclopedia, these words can be

translated as 'as often as'; a phrase which held associations with early modern

Catholic piety, given that it was employed whenever plenary indulgences were

granted to the laity by Catholic authorities.[54] In his anti-Catholic tract *Antichrist*

*the Pope of Rome* (1625), for example, the Puritan Thomas Beard rails that

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[52] See Sophie Read, 'Lancelot Andrewes's Sacramental Wordplay', *Cambridge Quarterly,* Vol. 36 (1), 2007, pp. 11-31, esp. p. 29 ('[Andrewes's] sermons strain for an extra-linguistic reality, to perform themselves in the lives of his listeners').

[53] That Andrewes held the reception of the sacraments in high esteem, and in doing so stood in opposition to the Puritanism of his historical moment, has become a scholarly consensus. For a recent account of Andrewes's sacramentalism, see Peter McCullough, '"Avant-Garde Conformity" in the 1590s', in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity, c. 1520-1662,* ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 380-94, esp. pp. 381-2, which makes some useful distinction between Andrewes and other so-called 'avant-garde conformists'. For older, but useful statements on this topic, see Nicholas Tyacke, 'Lancelot Andrewes and the Myth of Anglicanism', in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660,* ed. Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), pp. 5-33; Peter Lake, 'Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and Avant-Garde Conformity in the Court of James I', in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court,* ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 113-33.

[54] For the Latin translation of this phrase, see *Catholic Encyclopedia Online*. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13338> [accessed 11 April 2019].

'[Pope] *Boniface* the eight granted out of his bountifull liberality 2000. yeeres pardon, to euery one that should say a prayer of S. *Augustine*, printed in a Table at *Venice,* and that *toties quoties*'.[55] Given that Andrewes suggests that God might repeat the words spoken at the baptism '*toties quoties*', we discern that his exegesis of God's voice is indebted to residually Catholic forms of worship.[56]

As his sermon proceeds in its argument, Andrewes – as per his *divisio* – interprets the various signs that were present during Christ's baptism. Appropriately, given that it is the last to be mentioned in the scriptural text of Luke 3.21-2, the final sign to be scrutinised is the voice of God the Father:

> Now to the *Voice. Accedat verbum, ad elementum.* The *Dove* was but a dumb shew, and shews, what is done *to us*: The *Voice,* that speaks plainly, and declares, what is done *for us*, in our *baptisme*. The *Dove,* what the *Spirit* makes us: The *Voice*, for whom the *Father* takes us. (683)

Andrewes begins this passage by quoting the words of Augustine, when commenting on John 15.1-3, 'Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit Sacramentum', which are taken from Homily 80 of Augustine's *Homilies on the Gospel of John* (*c.* 416 AD).[57] This Latin formulation was given prominence in early modern Protestant culture by no less an authority than Martin Luther,

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[55] Thomas Beard, *Antichrist the Pope of Rome: or, the Pope of Rome is Antichrist* (London, 1625), p. 371.

[56] Despite Beard's polemical use of the phrase, and its ultimate basis in Catholicism, 'toties quoties' was also employed in routine fashion by texts within mainstream early modern English Protestant culture, indicating that it was interdenominational. Compare the Catholic convert Sir Tobie Matthew, *Of the Love of Our Only Lord and Saviour, Iesus Christ* (St. Omer, 1622), p. 569 ('Nay [Christ] is not made so for only once, but *toties quoties*; as often as he returneth'); and the godly minister Richard Capel, *Tentations their Nature, Danger, Cure. The Third Part* (London, 1636), p. 151 ('No mother I thinke to bee found, who doth britch her child for sparing and saving… for lying the very hope of the familie must up *toties quoties*').

[57] Augustine, 'Tractates in the Gospel of John 80.3', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Series 1, Vol. 7, ed. Philip Schaff (New York, NY: Cosimo Classics, 2007), p. 344.

who translated them, in his *Large Catechism* (1529), as 'when the Word is added to the element or the natural substance, it becomes a sacrament'.[58] In deploying this Augustinian reference, Andrewes again betrays an intrinsically sacramental conception of God's voice. Where the *'Dove'* is a 'dumb shew' to be interpreted in divergent ways, the '*Voice…* speaks plainly, and declares, what is done *for us*'. According to Andrewes's exegesis, God's voice – entering at Luke 3.21-2 – promises that salvation will be possible for all Christians who follow in Christ's example. There is, therefore, a pronounced anti-Calvinist sense to Andrewes's suggestion that God might readily speak out to assure.

In the final part of his 1615 Whitsunday sermon, Andrewes probes in minute detail the words that are uttered by God. The court preacher's scrupulous attention to linguistic resonance has been posited, by influential twentieth-century critics such as T. S. Eliot and Joan Webber, as one of the most distinctive elements of his style, and this remains a useful – if frequently articulated – critical judgment.[59] In a significant passage, Andrewes interprets the exact words spoken by God the Father during Christ's baptism:

> This is a new Tenour now; the old style is altered. The *Voice*, that came last from *heaven* before, ran thus; *Ego sum DOMINVS*, and that inferrs, *Tu es Servus* (that is the best, can be made of it). But heer now, it is *Tu es Filius*, and that necessarily inferrs, *Ego sum Pater*: For, *haec vox Patrem sonat,* this is a *Father's voice* to his Child. A great Change: Even, from the state of *servants* (as by *creation* and *generation* we were; and so still, under the *law*) into the state of *Sonnes*… (684)

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[58] Martin Luther, 'The Large Catechism'*,* in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000 [2nd edn.]), p. 458.

[59] See T. S. Eliot, 'Lancelot Andrewes', in *The Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot,* ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), pp. 179-88; Joan Webber, 'Celebration of Word and World in Lancelot Andrewes's Style', in *Seventeenth-Century Prose: Modern Essays in Criticism,* ed. Stanley E. Fish (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 336-52.

In the first paratactic clause, Andrewes's conception of God's voice as a 'new Tenour' is introduced. Through this phrase, Andrewes suggests that the resonance of God's voice changes during Christ's baptism. By mentioning God's Old Testament pronouncement, '*Ego sum DOMINVS*', Andrewes refers explicitly to Exodus 20.5 in the Latin Vulgate: a text which, after the Geneva version, was the biblical translation that he most readily quoted from in his sermons, despite his involvement in preparing the new King James translation.[60] The idea of the Old Testament God as a self-proclaimed '*DOMINVS*' – existing in a master-servant relationship with His children – is swiftly contrasted with the change that occurs when God speaks out during Christ's baptism. According to Andrewes, '*Ego sum DOMINVS*' becomes *'Ego sum Pater'*, and through this symmetrical construction, the transition to a parent-child relationship is signalled to the audience. In this way, Andrewes suggests that God's voice heralds the New Covenant – 'A great Change' – which will be fully achieved by Christ in the redemption. In the conclusion of the above extract, Andrewes suggests that through Christ's baptism, all believers might be adopted into 'the state of *Sonnes*'. Thus, Andrewes's unconventional exegesis stresses the importance of baptism as a sacrament that prefigures salvation.

In recent decades, it has become something of a critical commonplace to compare the sermons of Andrewes and Donne: especially given that the two preachers often addressed the same, or related, biblical verses in their exegeses.[61] When turning to the subject of Christ's baptism, however, Donne –

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[60] See *Selected Sermons,* ed. McCullough, p. lvi.
[61] For the critical tendency to compare Andrewes and Donne, see Alison Knight, 'The "Very, Very Words": (Mis)quoting Scripture in Lancelot Andrewes's and John Donne's Sermons on Job 19.23-27', *SP*, Vol. 111 (3), 2014, pp. 442-69; Peter McCullough, 'Donne and Andrewes',

in a sermon preached at the London parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-West, on Trinity Sunday 1624 – differed from Andrewes by taking up the alternative gospel text of Matthew 3.17: 'And lo, a voyce came from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Sonne, in whom I am well pleased' (132).[62] In the *divisio* of his sermon – which, as in the case of Andrewes, was only printed posthumously – Donne sets out his reasons for selecting this verse:

> In which words we have pregnant and just occasion to consider, first, the necessity of the Doctrine of the Trinity; Secondly, the way and meanes by which we are to receive our knowledge and understanding of this mystery; And thirdly, the measure of this knowledge, How much we are to know, or to inquire, in that unsearchable mystery… (133)

Much like Andrewes, Donne indicates that the entrance of God's voice during Christ's baptism is essential to understanding 'the Doctrine of the Trinity'. Yet, the language in this extract gives greater emphasis to the attainment of deeper 'knowledge and understanding' from this scriptural verse. The stress on the hard-won acquisition of knowledge, mediated in this case through God's direct voice, has been considered characteristically Donnean.[63] In the first instance, God's 'words' are 'pregnant', a metaphor suggesting that hidden meaning can be extracted from them. In what follows, Donne suggests that God's words are both 'the way and meanes' and 'the measure' of human understanding of the

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*John Donne Journal,* Vol. 22 (1), 2003, pp. 165-201; Daniel W. Doerksen, 'Preaching Pastor versus Custodian of Order: Donne, Andrewes, and the Jacobean Church', *Philological Quarterly,* Vol. 73 (4), 1994, pp. 417-29.

[62] All quotations from this sermon are taken from *The Sermons of John Donne,* Vol. 6, ed. Simpson and Potter, and references will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text. It should also be mentioned that a revised edition of Donne's parochial sermons preached at St Dunstan's-in-the-West, which includes this sermon on Matthew 3.17, is currently being prepared by Arnold Hunt, as Vol. 9 of the new Oxford edition of Donne's sermons. See the website: <https://donnesermons.web.ox.ac.uk/volume-ix-parochial-sermons-st-dunstans-west> [accessed 13 January 2020].

[63] See John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind, and Art* (London: Faber & Faber, 1981), p. 11.

Trinity. Thus, at the beginning of his sermon, Donne sets out a paradox: namely, that God's voice both enables, and circumscribes, comprehension of Trinitarian 'mystery'.

Having argued for the importance of God's voice in revealing knowledge of the Trinity, Donne uses the latter part of his *divisio* to foreground the role of the preacher as a skilled exegete. Citing the key biblical proof-text of Romans 10.14, Donne states: 'And, *how should they beleeve, except they heare?* says the Apostle. It must be *Vox, A voyce,* and *Vox de coelis, A voyce from heaven'* (134). In this utterance, the necessity of the congregation hearing God's voice – in orthodox Protestant fashion – is set out. Where Donne is more distinctive, as we have already seen in this chapter (see pp. 102-3), is in his self-consciousness about the ministerial role:

> And then lastly, it is *vox dicens, a voyce saying*, speaking, which is proper to man, for nothing speaks but man; It is Gods voyce, but presented to us in the ministry of man; And this is our way; To behold, that is, to depart from our own blindnesse, and to behold a way, that is shewed us; but shewed us in the word, and in the word of God, and in that word of God, preached by man. (134)

Here, Donne appears to endorse the broadly reformed emphasis on regulating the ministry. His linguistic register, containing phrases such as 'proper to man' and 'the ministry of man', promotes the widespread contemporary belief – held, as we have seen, by influential Puritan commentators such as Perkins and Elton – that 'Gods voyce' might only be interpreted by those possessing adequate knowledge of scripture.[64] For Donne, the preacher can certainly clarify what is left ambiguous in the Bible: we note his use of spatial language ('this is

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[64] See, for example, Elton, *The Triumph of a True Christian*, pp. 74-5.

our way'; 'to depart'), which promotes the preacher's role in drawing the congregation out from spiritual 'blindnesse'. Yet, Donne's emphasis on preacherly authority is mitigated by the inclusive plurals ('*our* own blindnesse'; 'shewed *us*') [my emphasis], which convey his belief that the preacher must work together with the congregation in achieving this outcome.

In the third part of his sermon on Christ's baptism, like other preachers of the Jacobean period, Donne conducts a specific exegesis of the words uttered by God: 'these words, *Hic est Filius, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*' (145). Donne begins, as in his *divisio*, by justifying his choice of Matthew 3.17, stressing 'But where the same voice spake the same words againe, in the Transfiguration, there all the Euangelists expresse it so, *Hic est, This is,* and not *Tu es, Thou art my beloved Son*' (146). For Donne, the near-repetition of the words spoken by God's voice at the Transfiguration ('spake the same words againe') renders Matthew 3.17 the more authoritative gospel text. Indeed, the idea of God's voice forcefully repeating itself is central to Donne's ensuing exegesis of Christ's baptism:

> But Christ is this Servant, and a Son too: And not a Son onely; for so we observe divers filiations in the Schoole; *Filiationem vestigii,* That by which all creatures, even in their very being, are the sons of God, as *Iob* cals God *Pluviae patrem, The father of the raine;* And so there are other filiations, other wayes of being sons of God. But *Hic est,* This person is, as the force of the Article expresses it, and presses it, *Ille Filius,* The Son, That Son, which no son else is, neither can any else declare how he is that which he is. (147)

In this extract, Donne interprets God's voice as proclaiming that after Christ's baptism, all Christians may become 'sons of God'. To develop this idea, Donne cites the Vulgate's translation of Job 38.28: 'qui est pluviae pater' becomes, in

a subtle alteration of the nominative *pater* to the accusative *patrem*, '*Pluviae patrem*'. With this citation, Donne emphasises that there is biblical precedent to the idea of numerous people becoming 'sons of God'. This method of drawing out repetitions in the Bible is central to the logic of Donne's sermon. At the end of the given passage, Donne's language acquires an invigorated 'force'; we note the parallel verbs – themselves a near-repetition – 'expresses' and 'presses'. Here, Donne suggests that God's voice intrudes to forge a new spiritual state for humanity. The sermon's conclusion expands on this. Donne declares, 'And so baptized, and so pursuing the contract of your Baptisme… hee shall breathe a soule into your soule, by that voyce of eternall life, *You are my beloved Sonnes, in whom I am well pleased*' (149). Like Andrewes, Donne interprets God's voice at Christ's baptism as inclusively offering a new spiritual state to His '*beloved Sonnes*'. This move separates Donne, like Andrewes, from the more orthodox Calvinists of the period such as Philips, conveying this new spiritual state through the smith-like image of the iron-wrought 'contract'.[65]

Thus, in early seventeenth-century Protestant sermons on Christ's baptism, we witness a notable shift towards preacherly assurance with respect to the believer hearing the voice of God. It should, of course, be acknowledged that when treating the doctrine of predestination, popular sermons by Puritan

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[65] Of course, Donne's sermon on Matthew 3.17 is not the only place in his writing where God is represented as a blacksmith: one might compare the usage of 'expresses', 'presses', and 'contract' with the opening line of Donne's poem 'Holy Sonnet X' ('Batter my heart'); see *The Complete Poems of John Donne,* ed. Robin Robbins (Harlow: Longman, 2008), p. 554. Relevant critical discussions of this line include Richard Wilmott, ed., *Four Metaphysical Poets: An Anthology of Poetry by Donne, Herbert, Marvell, and Vaughan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 22, who describes God as 'the blacksmith of Donne's heart'; and Colin N. Manlove, *Christian Fantasy: From 1200 to the Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), pp. 97-8, who discusses Donne's three images of God as blacksmith, besieger, and lover ('each simply asks God to do more').

ministers such as Philips suggest that not all the congregation will be able to hear God's voice. Nonetheless, exegeses of Christ's baptism by Andrewes and Donne – which reveal an emergent, and powerful critique of predestinarian theology – signal that God's voice might have soteriological ramifications for all Christians. In its final section, by way of contrast, this chapter signposts exegeses of God's voice in contemporary printed sermons on Revelation.

## 4. Revelation

On 12 January 1606, the Oxfordshire minister William Symonds entered the St. Paul's Cross pulpit to preach on Revelation 18.4-5: two verses of scripture which, in the Geneva text, describe a 'voyce from heauen' declaring 'Go out of her, my people, that ye be not partetakers in her sinnes, and that ye receiue not of her plagues. For her sinnes are come vp vnto heauen, and God hathe remembred her iniquities'. Within the printed edition of this sermon, which was issued under the title of *A Heauenly Voyce* (1606), the 'voyce from heauen' is interpreted as 'vrging a double doctrine of exhortation… first, to forsake her, euen this popish *Babylon*, and then to pursue her with iust reuenge'.[66] In the first instance, then, Symonds interprets Revelation 18.4 as an exhortation to the elect to escape from 'popish *Babylon*' – a phrase which resonated as a commonplace anti-Catholic slur in the period, given that Babylon held connotations of spiritual confusion.[67] In the second instance, the 'voyce' from

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[66] William Symonds, *A Heauenly Voyce* (London, 1606), sig. B2r-v.

[67] For an analogous usage of the slur 'popish *Babylon*', which sought to define the 'truth' of Protestant doctrine against the erroneous complexity of Catholicism, see, for example, Francis Bunny, *Truth and Falshood, or, A Comparison Betweene the Truth Now Taught in England, and the Doctrine of the Romish Church* (London, 1595), p. 78 ('As for *Kemnitius*…he hath more beaten downe the walles of that popish Babilon, than that all the papists if they ioine togither hand in hand, shall be able with all their skill and cunning to raise it vp againe'). For a general account of the way that, during the sixteenth century, Babel became a propagandistic

Revelation 18.4 is read as a militant instruction to God's elect, who must 'pursue' all Catholics with 'iust reuenge'.

Later in the same sermon, when conducting an exegesis of 'this *heauenly voyce*', Symonds exhorts his audience:

> The parties on whom this *heauenly voyce* doth vouchsafe to bestow these *holy things*, are no *deafe Adders*, but onlie such which by Gods election doe belong to God: and by the couenant which they make, and holde, and by theyr sufferings, for his sake, are knowne to do so.[68]

Here, we might pick up on Symonds's phrase '*deafe Adders*'. This phrase was derived from scriptural precedent: Psalm 58.4, most crucially, recounts that 'Their poison is euen like the poison of a serpent: like the deafe adder *that* stoppeth his eare'. The idea that 'the deafe adder' chooses not to hear the voice of God is expanded on in the rest of this biblical verse. Psalm 58.5 clarifies that '[the deafe adder] heareth not the voyce of the inchanter, thogh he be moste expert in charming', troping God as a snake charmer. According to the *OED*, the phrase 'deafe adder' was widely used in the post-Reformation era to refer to something 'regarded as deaf or wilfully unhearing'.[69] Further to this, various recent studies have signalled the more specific way that 'deafe adder' was employed, throughout the early modern period, as an insult for those thought to be wilfully inattentive to God's word.[70] However, in the above extract from

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symbol for the Church of Rome, see Janette Dillon, *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 220-1.

[68] Symonds, *A Heauenly Voyce,* sig. B2v.

[69] 'deaf adder', *OED, n.*, 1. Comparable contemporary Protestant uses of the phrase to refer to the wilfully unhearing include: Edward Topsell, *The Reward of Religion. Deliuered in Sundrie Lectures Vpon the Booke of Ruth* (London, 1596), pp. 8-9; Francis Marbury, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the 13. of Iune. 1602* (London, 1602), sig. B1v.

[70] Recent considerations of the 'deafe adder' in early modern English Protestant culture include Bloom, *Voice in Motion*, pp. 145-6; Megan Matchinske, *Writing, Gender and State in Early Modern England: Identity Formation and the Female Subject* (Cambridge: Cambridge

Symonds's printed sermon, it is particularly interesting that God is presented as possessing absolute agency over the question of who will hear Him. In the suggestion that those who 'are no *deafe Adders*… doe belong to God', Symonds suggests that the Christian individual does not possess control over whether their hearing will be stopped. Thus, Symonds's *A Heauenly Voyce* articulates the hard-line Calvinist belief that only God's chosen elect might hear His voice.

Thomas Jackson, a Canterbury prebendary known for his especially fiery brand of Protestantism, also preached regularly in London during the Jacobean period. In his popular printed sermon *The Conuerts Happines* – which was preached from St. Mary Spital during Easter 1609, before being issued in print later in the same year – Jackson addresses the text of Revelation 3.20, which he derives from the Geneva translation: 'Behold, I stand at the doore, and knocke: if any man heare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in vnto him, and will Sup [*sic*] with him, and he with me' (1).[71] At the beginning of this sermon, Jackson provides a justification for his selection of this dramatic verse:

> For which purpose I haue chosen this excellent portion of Scripture to intreate of, wherein Saint *Iohn* (by the direction of Gods holy spirit) doth Graphically describe the heauenly happinesse of a Conuert soule: First, before her conuersion, in that her Sauiour, vouchsafeth (as it were) bare headed, at the doore of her heart to intreate her Conuersion, and to stand with much patience, waiting when shee will open vnto him: Secondly, in the meanes which he vseth for her Conuersion, which are, louingly, to call vnto her, and friendly, to knocke at her doore: Lastly, in the benefits of her Conuersion, which are his perpetuall dwelling and feasting with her, *Behold, I stand at the doore and knocke.* (2-3)

Foregrounding his elevated role as a ministerial exegete, Jackson promotes his authoritative grasp of the scriptural text by employing the verb 'intreate' – a verb we have already seen in the writing of the moderate Calvinist, John Day (see pp. 107-8, 110). Jackson draws attention to how, in Revelation 3.20, 'Saint *Iohn*' speaks prophetically, voicing the 'Sauiour… (as it were) bare headed'.[72] According to Jackson, not only does the scriptural text give voice to Christ, but it also delineates the 'meanes' by which an impious individual might arrive at 'Conuersion'. In his *divisio*, Jackson focuses his attention on the stages of conversion: firstly, 'a proposition in these words; (*Behold, I stand as the doore and knocke*)'; and secondly, 'promises, in these words; (*If any man heare my voyce, and open the doore, I wil come in vnto him, and will suppe with him and he with me*)' (7-8).[73] Thus, for Jackson, the need to '*heare* [God's] *voyce, and open the doore*' is presented as the principal means to conversion, and the preacher's explication of how one might undertake this action constitutes a key element of what follows in the sermon.

Throughout *The Conuerts Happines*, the urgent need of the audience to hear the voice of Christ is of central importance. During his exegesis of the verb '*stand*', Jackson exhorts: 'Yea, if this day thou hearest the voyce of Christ, and sensibly perceiuest Christs spirit moouing thee to repentance, giue eare to that Voyce, entertaine those Motions, and at the last open vnto Christ, and let him

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[72] In this context, 'bare headed' signals the respect offered from – and the gap in authority between – the prophet to God; see 'bare-headed', *OED, adj.* and *adv.*

[73] For the importance of God's 'effectual calling' within early modern Protestant theories of conversion, see D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 1. Hindmarsh gives emphasis to the writings of the Calvinist William Perkins, particularly his treatise *A Golden Chaine*, which he describes as setting out 'God's decrees in eternity through their temporal realization in *effectual calling*, justification, sanctification, and glorification'; see p. 35 [my emphasis].

(*stand*) no longer' (21). In this passage, we notice some rhetorical devices that, as we saw in Chapter One, characterised mainstream English Calvinist thinking about repentance during the 1590s. In the first instance, there is the call, 'Yea', which seeks to ensure that the audience is attending to the minister. Following this, there is the dense, exhortative patterning of verbs – 'hearest… perceiuest… giue… entertaine… open' – each of which, whether addressing intellectual or emotional faculties, asks for rapt attention from the audience.[74] Although the need for congregational attention is repeatedly emphasised, later on in the same sermon, Jackson suggests that Christ's voice also possesses assertive qualities. Having concluded his exegesis of the verb '*stand*', Jackson considers:

> [The] infinite loue and goodnesse of Christ towards his poore Church, and the members thereof, that finding the doores of their hearts barred against him, yet doth not passe by with a soft and still voyce, as he came to *Eliah*, but doth beate and bounse at the doore, offering mercy when they refuse it, that so he may be found of them, that neuer sought him. No sooner had *Adam* and *Euah* sinned, but God commeth to seeke them out, and knocketh at the doore, *Adam, where art thou?* which was rather an Increpation then an Interogation, that *Adam* might consider, not in what place, but in what state he was now. No sooner was *Peter* fallen asleepe, but Christ knocked at his doore, and wakened him with the crowing of the Cocke: Oh what infinite mercy is this, that he should so earnestly seeke our repentance and saluation, onely for our owne good. (25)

Here, Jackson foregrounds the 'infinite loue and goodnesse of Christ', doing so with reference to the insistent quality of His voice. The phrase 'soft and still voyce' is a reference to 1 Kings 19.12, in which God speaks directly to Elijah as a 'stil and soft voyce'. Jackson contrasts this moment, in which God speaks

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[74] For the role of the sermon in provoking affective change within the auditor or reader, see the work of Clement. See especially 'The Art of Feeling', pp. 675-88; Hunt's *Art of Hearing* is also useful on this topic.

very quietly, with the much more insistent voice of Christ in Revelation 3.20. The alliterative verbs 'beate and bounse' suggest that Christ offers Himself incessantly, even to those 'that neuer sought him'.

At this critical juncture of *The Conuerts Happines*, the forcefulness of God's voice is supplemented by His knocking. In support of this point, Jackson provides two biblical instances of God's voice responding immediately. The first is a reference to God's words to Adam in Genesis 3.9, 'Where art thou?'. Jackson ascribes ultimate agency to God in the verbs 'commeth' and 'knocketh', which promote an active search. Further to this, the description of Genesis 3.9 as 'rather an Increpation' is of significance, given that 'Increpation' has its route in the Latin verb *increpare*, which can be translated as 'to make a noise at'.[75] The secondary reference, to Christ's early waking of Peter, as outlined in Matthew 26.40 ('After [Christ] came vnto the disciples, and founde them aslepe, & said to Peter, What? colde ye not watche with me one houre'), confirms this idea of the insistency of Christ's voice. Thus, in *The Conuerts Happines*, Jackson suggests that the voice of Christ, as given in Revelation 3.20, urgently seeks to aid Christians in their repenting.

Although, as we have seen, the early seventeenth century gave rise to searching critiques of Calvinist piety (see this chapter, pp. 126-39), it is still the case that hell-fire preaching took place. In 1617, John Rogers – the vicar of Chacombe in Northamptonshire – took up the text of Revelation 3.4 in a sermon preached at Needham, Norfolk.[76] A printed edition of this sermon, entitled *The*

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[75] 'increpate', *OED, v.*, 1.
[76] For an overview of Rogers's ministry, and his connections with the circle of Cambridge-educated godly ministers surrounding his uncle Richard Rogers, see Jason Yiannikkou,

*Glory and Happines of a True Christian* (1618), was issued later in the following year. Rogers's text inspired an excoriating castigation of the spiritual laxity of his audience – which was rendered even more striking by the fact that Rogers did not regularly preach to the people of Needham. During the sermon, Rogers suggests that Christ's voice – as given by the prophet in Revelation 3.3, 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee' – may intrude suddenly:

> *I will come vpon thee as a theife* [*sic*] &c. This is a heauy threatning, to say, I will come vpon thee sodenly as a theife and vnexpected vpon such as be secure and carelesse, to take vengeance vpon them. This is to rowse them vp the more. We may consider that the Lord hath many voices: for sometime he speaketh to vs by his word, at other times by his Iudgements. In this Land many are quite dead, and many are drowsie: he hath spoken vnto vs many wayes, and he hath as many, or moe waies to come vpon vs with one Iudgement or other, and all iustly for our sinnes.[77]

In this extract, the voice of Christ inspires a consideration of the 'threatning' ways in which God's voice might be heard by the audience. For fire-and-brimstone preachers such as Rogers, God's voice possesses an exhortative quality – through the active verb 'rowse', the divine voice seeks to violently stir the affections of the sinful congregation into repenting. After this, the preacher states that 'the Lord hath many voices' that He can make speak, alternating between 'his word' and 'his Iudgements'. Thus, Rogers interprets Revelation 3.3 as a suggestion that God's 'threatning' voice might intrude when a congregation – 'drowsie' in sin – least expects it.

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'Rogers, John (*c.* 1570-1632)', in *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23982> [accessed 15 January 2020].

[77] John Rogers, *The Glory and Happines of a True Christian* (London, 1618), sig. C7v.

In drawing together the findings of this section, we discern that preaching on Revelation proved particularly attractive to the hotter sorts of Protestant ministers during the Jacobean period. Verses such as Revelation 3.3-4 and Revelation 18.4 offered focal points for ministers to emphasise that only the elect might hear God's voice. In this regard, the Calvinist exhortation acquired a paradoxical quality. As the printed sermons of preachers such as Symonds, Jackson, and Rogers demonstrate, if someone was predestined not to hear God's voice, no amount of urging was thought to be effective. Whilst, as we have seen repeatedly in this chapter, the Jacobean period gave rise to more inclusive preaching on the capacity of the congregation to hear God's voice, it would also be inaccurate to suggest that the more exhortative styles of Calvinist preaching no longer took place.

## 5. Conclusion

Of the many recent advances in the study of early modern English sermons, one of the most fruitful has been the direction of scholarly attention towards different styles of Protestant preaching. Whilst the polarities of 'Puritans and Conformists' might still prove helpful in identifying the two main camps within English reformed theology, scholars have stressed that it is equally beneficial to look to the subtle distinctions embedded within individual preacherly methods.[78] This chapter has argued that sermons printed in England during the early seventeenth century paid frequent attention to the promulgation of God's voice by the preacher. That early modern Protestant ministers saw themselves as mediators of God's voice has been a critical consensus for some time: indeed,

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[78] See Hunt, *Art of Hearing,* pp. 31-42.

in what has proved to be a seminal essay, Morrissey argues that 'the words that the preacher delivers are not plain and powerful because they are the voice of God unmediated', but instead 'because they show the preacher's attempt to interpret and explain the truths contained in scripture in a way that all of his hearers can understand'.[79] Building on this contention, this chapter has attempted to fill a lacuna in the field, pointing towards the various ways in which early modern Protestant preachers used the vehicle of print to mediate God's voice for their audiences.

Throughout the Jacobean period, as we have already seen, preachers repeatedly addressed certain biblical episodes and chapters pertaining to God's voice, such as Exodus 3, supplicatory Psalms, verses on Christ's baptism, and Revelation. From this we might deduce, in the first instance, that the importance of hearing God's voice in obtaining salvation was an early modern English commonplace. However, as has been intimated, Protestant preachers thought very differently – and, of course, preached and wrote very differently – about those whom, in practice, God's voice might address. As we have seen, sermons on Exodus 3 prompted exegeses of God speaking, primarily, to ministers. By contrast, in sermons on the Psalms and Christ's baptism, there is a noticeable shift towards the anti-Calvinist idea of God speaking inclusively to assure all believers, as demonstrated in the emergent critiques of predestinarian theology by such prominent divines as Adams, Andrewes and Donne. It is also important to stress that, in sermons on Revelation, there was much exhortative preaching on God's elect – and, indeed, the elect alone – being able to hear God's voice.

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[79] Morrissey, 'Scripture, Style and Persuasion', p. 692.

As mentioned above, this aspect of Calvinist theology was inherently contradictory, given that no amount of exhortative preaching was thought to enable salvation for those predestined not to hear God's voice. In summing up these findings, therefore, we might posit that whilst all Protestant preachers took it as their task to help their congregations, and their readers, to hear God's voice, they took divergent stances when discussing who might be able to do so.

## 3. Herbert and God's Resolving Voice

George Herbert wrote in an intellectual climate in which there was intense consideration of how best to write religious poetry, to which he was highly receptive.[1] In his first year as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1610, Herbert wrote a letter to his mother articulating his intention to write sacred, and not erotic, poetry, in which he enclosed two sonnets:

> But I fear the heat of my late ague hath dried up those springs by which scholars say the Muses use to take up their habitations. However, I need not their help to reprove the vanity of those many love poems that are daily writ and consecrated to Venus, nor to bewail that so few are writ that look towards God and heaven. For my own part, my meaning, dear mother, is in these sonnets to declare my resolution to be that my poor abilities in poetry shall be all and ever consecrated to God's glory; and I beg you to receive this as one testimony.[2]

If we can move beyond the somewhat priggish reproof of 'those many love poems… consecrated to Venus' – as John Drury has noted, Herbert perhaps had Shakespeare's recently published *Sonnets* (1609) in mind – here, we encounter a sincere affirmation of the poet's decision to 'look towards God and heaven' for inspiration.[3] A question which would preoccupy Herbert for most of his adult life – as the doubts embedded within his posthumously published collection *The Temple* reveal – was how best to write this poetry 'consecrated

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[1] For an overview of longstanding debates surrounding the composition of religious poetry in early modern England, see Kuchar, *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow*, pp. 1-30. In his account, Kuchar flags up the way that the usual distinction between poet and speaker is eroded in religious verse, and that ultimate poetic agency is ascribed instead to God. For a discussion of 'the slippage between the speaker's agency and God's agency [in Herbert's poetry]', see pp. 13-16 (p. 14).

[2] This letter is contained in *The Works of George Herbert,* ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 363.

[3] For a discussion of Herbert's critical response to Shakespeare's *Sonnets,* see John Drury, *Music at Midnight: The Life and Poetry of George Herbert* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), p. 85.

to God's glory'. It is in view of such self-scrutiny that Herbert's decision to represent the voice of God within his poetry has occasioned much critical discussion. In a seminal contribution, Tessa Watt argues that the attitude to textual voices for God hardened during the early seventeenth century, writing that 'the invention of non-scriptural speeches for God or Christ was a dubious exercise for Protestants, with their emphasis on biblical authority'.[4] Taking up Watt's claim, Elizabeth Clarke has since posited that 'freely [inventing] dialogue for God' is considered by Herbert in his poetry, before adding that 'there is usually no need for Herbert to put words into the mouth of God'.[5] In my view, Clarke does not give a full account of Herbert's extensive rhetorical representation of God's voice in *The Temple*. This chapter contends that Herbert's voicing of God the Father, and Christ, is a significant way in which the poet adapts his principal biblical source of the Psalms.

One of the earliest, and most influential, commentaries on Herbert and his writing is Izaak Walton's biography *The Life of Mr. George Herbert* (1670). Walton records that the poet himself defined *The Temple* as 'a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master'.[6] This statement has given impetus to a dominant tradition, within Herbert scholarship, that reads *The Temple* as a dialogue 'betwixt God' and the lyric speaker. For instance, in the introduction to her recent Cambridge edition of Herbert's poetry, Helen Wilcox characterises the poems in *The Temple* as 'conversations with God', attending to the use of 'a

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[4] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 105.

[5] See Elizabeth Clarke, *Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 144, 156.

[6] Izaak Walton, *The Life of Mr. George Herbert* (London, 1670), p. 74.

divine voice whose intervention… resolves the writer's dilemma'.[7] It is possible

to read Herbert's poems as 'conversations with God', because Herbert designed

*The Temple* to be read as a collection of Psalms. We note Herbert's epigraph to

his collection, itself adapted from Psalm 29.9, which reads 'In his Temple doth

every man speak of his honour'.[8] The influence of the Psalms upon Herbert has

been explored by an impressive range of contemporary scholarship.[9] In the

Psalms, God's voice is invoked relatively infrequently. One such occurrence is

in Psalm 29.4 – the Psalm from which Herbert derives his epigraph – which

affirms that 'The voice of the Lord *is* powerful; the voice of the Lord *is* full of

majesty'. In what follows, I argue that Herbert represents the voice of God more

often – and in more divergent ways – than the Psalms. This poetic strategy, as I

shall also demonstrate in this chapter, conveys much about Herbert's anti-

predestinarian soteriological beliefs.

When Herbert represents God's voice it is, often enough, as Christ: the

Person of the Trinity that the poet proclaims, in 'The Odour', to be his '*Master!*'

(l. 1). Throughout *The Temple*, Herbert's various textual voices of Christ

emphasise Christ's capacity to redeem mankind: a commonplace theological

standpoint derived from the Pauline doctrine of the intercession, as outlined in

Hebrews 9.12 ('Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood

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[7] See Helen Wilcox, 'Introduction', in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. xxi, xxv.

[8] See Herbert, *English Poems*, ed. Wilcox, p. 37. All references to Herbert's poetry in this chapter are to this edition, unless otherwise indicated, and will be given parenthetically by line number in the main text.

[9] See, among various others, Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*; Clarke, *Theory and Theology*, chapter 3; Rivkah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer, 1535-1601* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985); Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics,* esp. pp. 39-45; Coburn Freer, *Music for a King: George Herbert's Style and the Metrical Psalms* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).

he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*'). In addition to voicing Christ, Herbert frequently represents the voice of God the Father. Throughout *The Temple*, the Father's voice is represented in a more authoritarian vein, and is invoked to re-emphasise the New Covenant – the 'better testament', as Paul writes in Hebrews 7.22 – that Christ makes possible. In his emphasis on Christ as necessary for salvation, Herbert's poetic treatment of God's voice also betrays the influence of Augustinian soteriology. As noted in my introduction (see p. 36), in Book VIII of the *Confessions*, Augustine hears 'the voice of a boy or a girl… again and again it repeated the refrain "Take it and read, take it and read"'.[10] Various recent critics have noted the importance of Augustinian theology to Herbert's poetry.[11] However, these critics have not brought their readings to bear on the way that Herbert, following Augustine, employs intervening divine voices to point his poetic speakers towards salvation.

It is something of a critical cliché that, in *The Temple*, Herbert dramatises 'the full range of spiritual experience'.[12] This contention has its source, once more, in the poet's adaptation of the Psalms. According to Ruth Ahnert, the Psalms were well established during the period as 'a model for how we should speak to God', expressing 'the whole gamut of human emotion', ranging from joyfulness, to 'sorrow and confusion', and even 'the desire for vengeance'.[13]

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[10] Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 177.

[11] See, for example, William H. Palkha, *Saint Augustine's Meter and George Herbert's Will* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1987); Anthony Mortimer, 'Words in the Mouth of God: Augustinian Language-Theory and the Poetics of George Herbert', in *On Poetry and Poetics*, Vol. 2, ed. Richard Waswo (Zurich: University of Zurich Press, 1985), pp. 31-43.

[12] See Wilcox, 'Introduction', in *English Poems,* p. xxii.

[13] See Ruth Ahnert, 'Introduction: The Psalms and the English Reformation', *RS*, Vol. 29 (4), 2015, pp. 493-508 (p. 494). Some helpful remarks on the 'vocality' of the Psalms are also made in Richards, *Voices and Books*, pp. 69-74.

Personal anger against a seemingly silent God is conveyed, for example, in Psalm 109.1-2, which rails 'Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me'. A great many poems in *The Temple* adopt a comparably argumentative tone towards God. Yet, Herbert's collection proceeds towards the representation of salvation, epitomised by the conclusion to its famous final lyric, 'Love (III)'; here, eucharistic participation, prompted by a voice resembling Christ's, is presented as salvific: 'So I did sit and eat' (l. 18) (see this chapter, pp. 189-90). In considering the representation of God's voice in *The Temple*, this chapter surveys: Christ's poetic monologue in 'The Sacrifice'; the use of various intervening divine voices in ending individual lyric poems; the poet's representation of God's voice as absent; and the pronounced sense of the speaker as engaged in dialogue with God, towards the end of the volume. Following this, I offer a consideration of how the voice of God was represented by one of Herbert's foremost poetic imitators: specifically, Christopher Harvey, in his much-reprinted lyric collection *The Synagogue*.

## 1. Meditating on Christ's Passion

'The Sacrifice' occupies a significant place within the structure of *The Temple*. It is both the first poem in which Christ is voiced, and the only time in which Christ narrates an entire poem. The detail of Christ's voice was at the centre of the twentieth century's most influential critical debate on 'The Sacrifice': conducted between William Empson, who read puzzling ambiguities into the poem, arguing that the 'contradictory impulses' of love and vengeance lead to the 'fusion' of a 'complete' Christ; and Rosemond Tuve, who responded to Empson's study by reading the poem's 'contradictions' as already present

within medieval literature and Catholic liturgy.[14] Subsequent commentators have since rehearsed the key positions of this debate, drawing attention to the poem's juxtaposition of divergent biblical texts, and also to its indebtedness to a predominantly Catholic heritage of hymns and devotional lyrics.[15] In an influential assessment, Louis L. Martz reads the Counter-Reformation practice of 'meditation' during the Mass – which he subdivides as a process involving 'memory', 'understanding', and 'will' (see my introduction, p. 43) – as crucial to understanding Herbert's poetic logic in 'The Sacrifice'.[16] What might be said in supplement to Martz's thesis is that, in having Christ *himself* implore the reader – 'whose eyes and minde / To worldly things are sharp, but to me blinde' (ll. 1-2) – to focus on him, a radical, self-heightening technique is employed. In other words, throughout 'The Sacrifice', Herbert's voice of Christ harnesses language associated with the believer's response to God, rather than God's self-description, in an effort to heighten the reader's meditation on the Passion.

Early on in 'The Sacrifice', Herbert's voice of Christ rotates divergent biblical passages concerning the Passion, whilst also repeatedly highlighting his own suffering.[17] During the fifth stanza of the poem, Christ laments:

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[14] See William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1949 [2nd edn.]), pp 224-33, esp. p. 228 ('The same fusion of the love of Christ and the vindictive terrors of the sacrificial idea'); as compared with Tuve's counter-argument in *George Herbert,* p. 22. See also Tuve's extended response to the Empsonian idea of 'contradictory impulses' in 'On Herbert's "Sacrifice"', *Kenyon Review,* Vol. 12 (1), 1950, pp. 51-75.

[15] For a reading of Herbert's 'studied' biblical juxtapositions in 'The Sacrifice', emphasising the Protestant inheritance, see Bloch, *Spelling the Word,* p. 65; for the poem's indebtedness to the medieval Catholic tradition, see, among others, Elsie Leach, 'Lydgate's "The Dolerous Pyte of Crystes Passioun" and Herbert's "The Sacrifice"', *NQ*, Vol. 205 (1), 1960, p. 421; and Patrick Grant, *The Transformation of Sin: Studies in Donne, Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1974), pp. 78-9.

[16] Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation,* pp. 91-2.

[17] As a poetic meditation on Christ's suffering, 'The Sacrifice' has a source in the Catholic liturgical sequence for Good Friday, the Improperia, where the priest voices Christ to induce sincere penitence from the congregation (see my introduction, pp. 38-9). For an account of

> For thirtie pence he did my death devise,
> Who at three hundred did the ointment prize,
> Not half so sweet as my sweet sacrifice:
> > Was ever grief like mine? (ll. 17-20)

In this stanza, it is useful to unravel what is implied when Herbert's Christ refers to his 'sacrifice' as 'sweet'.[18] The adjective has biblical origins: in Mark 16.1, Christ's body is embalmed in 'sweet spices', and elsewhere, in 2 Corinthians 2.15, Paul describes 'a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved'. Outside the Bible, 'sweet' also possesses a rich heritage in early Christian tradition, and in sources specifically invoked by Herbert in *The Temple*. In Book VIII of his *Confessions*, for instance, Augustine writes of the monkish 'way of life that savours of your sweetness'.[19] 'Sweet', therefore, had long held associations with the believer's delighted response to the sense of being close to God. In employing this word when giving voice to Christ, Herbert encourages the reader to meditate on the sweetness of Christ's 'sacrifice', which has salvific implications.

In the next stanza of the poem, Herbert's Christ stresses that meditation on his 'bloud' is the most important way for the reader to achieve salvation:

> Therefore my soul melts, and my hearts deare treasure
> Drops bloud (the onely beads) my words to measure:
> *O let this cup passe, if it be thy pleasure:*
> > Was ever grief like mine? (ll. 21-4)

In these lines, Herbert draws on Luke 22.44, a verse which asserts that, in Gethsemane, Christ's 'sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down

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Herbert's use of the Improperia, and indebtedness to Catholic tradition more generally, see Tuve, *George Herbert,* pp. 33-47.

[18] For a discussion of 'sweetness' as the 'functional aesthetic organizing Herbert's thought along the private and public vectors of devotion', see Christopher A. Hill, 'George Herbert's Sweet Devotion', *SP*, Vol. 107 (2), 2010, pp. 236-58 (p. 239).

[19] Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 167.

to the ground'. Significantly, Herbert adapts this biblical source, transforming Christ's 'great drops of blood' into 'the onely beads'. According to the *OED*, the noun 'beads' had long held associations with 'prayer, and connected senses' by the early seventeenth century, and was often used in a devotional context.[20] More specifically, 'beads' also refers to rosary beads, as Christ's 'bloud' is transformed by Herbert into an object which requires readerly meditation. However, in this polemical stanza, Herbert argues that rosaries are unnecessary, given his use of the qualifying adjective 'onely', which emphasises the singularity of Christ's Passion as a subject fit for meditation.[21] The adjective 'onely', used repeatedly over the course of the poem, chimes with Herbert's central refrain, 'Was ever grief like mine?'. As Drury has argued, Christ's refrain has a possible source in the work of Herbert's friend and mentor Lancelot Andrewes. In his Good Friday sermon of 1604, Andrewes makes repeated use of the Latin phrase 'non sicut' (translated by Drury as 'nothing like it'), to emphasise the Passion as a singular event.[22] Thus, Christ's 'bloud' is established by Herbert as the central – and 'onely' – appropriate subject for meditation.

Throughout 'The Sacrifice', Herbert's voice of Christ contrasts humanity's lack of comprehension with what is made possible by the Passion. The spiritual blindness of the people of Jerusalem is evidenced by the derision present in the following stanza: 'Heark how they crie aloud still, *Crucifie: / It is not fit he live a day*, they crie, / Who cannot live lesse than eternally' (ll. 97-9). Here, Herbert

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[20] See 'bead', *OED, n.*, 1a.

[21] For the contentious status of 'rosary beads' in post-Reformation England, as well as other physical objects associated with Catholic devotion, see Arthur F. Marotti, 'In Defence of Idolatry: Residual Catholic Culture and the Protestant Assault on the Sensuous in Early Modern England', in *Redrawing the Map,* ed. Gallagher, pp. 27-51, esp. p. 36.

[22] See Drury, *Music at Midnight,* pp. 66-7.

employs Acts 22.22 in direct quotation ('for it is not fit that he should live'), to evidence the condemnation of Christ by his people. This is then contrasted, in the following line, with the Christian concept of eternal life, as outlined in John 11.25: 'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live'. Comparably, in an ensuing stanza of the poem, Christ gives voice to the Jews' condemnation when electing him for crucifixion:

> Yet still they shout, and crie, and stop their eares,
> Putting my life among their sinnes and fears,
> And therefore wish *my bloud on them and theirs:*
>      Was ever grief like mine? (ll. 105-8)

In the third line, here, the phrase '*my bloud on them and theirs*' draws explicitly on Matthew 27.25 ('Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children'); yet, in the first line, Herbert's Christ emphasises that the people of Jerusalem have not heard him ('stop their eares') and have, therefore, neglected the salvific implication of his '*bloud*'. This idea of Christ's '*bloud*' as an aid to piety is evoked again in a later stanza: 'Then with a scarlet robe they me aray; / Which shews my bloud to be the onely way, / And cordiall left to repair mans decay' (ll. 157-9). In these lines, Herbert develops his use of the 'bloud' trope, by having Christ suggest that his 'bloud' is a 'cordiall'. The *OED* defines the noun 'cordiall', in its most readily employed early modern sense, as connoting 'medicines, food, or beverages: stimulating, comforting, or invigorating the heart'.[23] Herbert's use of the word conveys his linking of Christ's 'bloud' with eucharistic wine, the most prominent way in which Protestants could receive the redemption in a contemporary liturgical context.[24]

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[23] See 'cordial', *OED, n.,* 2a.

[24] Herbert wrote poetry at a time in which, because of the rise of Laudian theology during the 1620s, there was an increased demand for sacramental forms of worship: see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored,* chapters 3-5.

In a pivotal stanza, Herbert voices Christ as eager to counteract the Fall through the Passion: 'So sits the earths great curse in *Adams* fall / Upon my head: so I remove it all / From th'earth unto my brows, and bear the thrall' (ll. 165-7). Herbert's patterning of the Fall and the Passion has its origin in the Bible; for evidence of this, one might look to the reference to 'thorns' in Genesis 3.18 ('Thorns also and thistles shall [the earth] bring forth'), which foreshadows the crown of 'thorns' worn by Christ in John 19.2.[25] Herbert's representation of Christ as a willing mediator is developed in a subsequent stanza: '*O all ye who passe by, behold and see;* / Man stole the fruit, but I must climbe the tree; / The tree of life to all, but onely me' (ll. 201-3), which quotes from Lamentations 1.12 ('*Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by?'). Within the second line, Herbert's Christ conveys the way in which the Fall ('Man stole the fruit') is annulled by his Passion ('I must climbe the tree'). The idea of Christ's Passion as an immediate cancellation was, during the 1620s and 1630s, a pan-European devotional trope. It was often employed in emblem books, exemplified by the works of Daniel Cramer and Benedictus van Haeften. Cramer's *Emblemata Sacra* (Fig. 1) depicts the redemption as a scroll cancelling sin and death. The similarity between this image and the above stanza in 'The Sacrifice' suggests that both Herbert and Cramer were drawing on a religious commonplace.
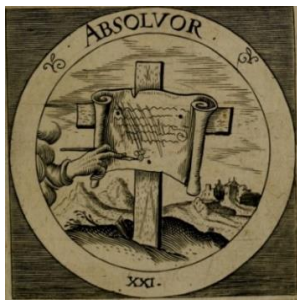


**Fig. 1. 'Absolvor' [I am absolved], taken from Daniel Cramer's *Emblemata Sacra*, 1624, © Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel. Used with permission.**

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[25] Bloch observes that, in the gospels, it is the 'soldiers' who 'crown Jesus', whereas, in 'The Sacrifice', Herbert's Christ does so himself ('so I remove it all'); see *Spelling the Word,* p. 69.

Towards the end of 'The Sacrifice', Herbert's voice of Christ narrates the moment of redemption:

> But, *O my God, my God!* why leav'st thou me,
> The sonne, in whom thou dost delight to be?
> *My God, my God—*
>          Never was grief like mine. (ll. 213-16)

Here, Herbert surrenders his poetic imitation of Christ ('*My God, my God--*'). The silence after the second '*my God*' acknowledges the final distance between the poet and his subject, also suggesting the limitations of poetry in representing Christ's voice at such a climactic moment. The chief source in the Bible, for this stanza, is Christ's words at Matthew 27.46 ('My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'), which is itself a quotation from Psalm 22.1. Herbert's poetic adaptation of this passage is significant, as the poet removes Christ's desolation – which is indicated in the first line – from the repetition in the third line. In my view, Herbert does this to present a version of Christ who is able, despite his doubts, to triumphantly achieve the redemption. A key word in substantiating this reading is the verb 'delight'. In having his Christ suggest that God delights to abide in him, Herbert transposes the articulation of God the Father's direct voice, at Christ's baptism, in Matthew 3.17 and Luke 3.22 ('This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased') (see my introduction, pp. 25-6). By conflating this passage of scripture with a verse detailing Christ's desolation, Herbert betrays his overarching conception – in 'The Sacrifice' – of Christ as a willing intercessor, and increases the pathos of the verse.

Herbert concludes 'The Sacrifice' by having Christ re-emphasise the singularity of his Passion. In the poem's final stanza, Christ announces:

> But now I die; now all is finished.
> My wo, mans weal: and now I bow my head.

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> Onely let others say, when I am dead,
>> Never was grief like mine. (ll. 249-52)

Rewriting John 19.30 in the first line of this stanza – 'It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost' – Herbert points towards the finality of the Passion. The ultimate nature of Christ's Passion is also conveyed by the change in the refrain, which becomes, much more decisively, 'Never was grief like mine'. Another revealing line, which has not been commented upon so often in recent scholarship, is 'Onely let others say, when I am dead'. This line, as with 'Sacraments might flow' in the previous stanza (l. 247), suggests that the achievement of Christ's redemption will live on through Christians in the future; and implies that Christ is not aware, here, that he will be resurrected.[26] The line is also a microcosm for the overall structure of *The Temple*, in which, after 'The Sacrifice', salvation is made possible for Herbert's lyric speakers, who strive for this exalted state within individual poems.

## 2. Endings at Rest

When God or Christ speaks directly after 'The Sacrifice', it is usually just a single word, a line, or a few lines. When employed in such a way, the divine voice normally intervenes at the end of Herbert's poems. In a discussion of Herbert's use of the rhetorical technique *metanoia* (or *correctio*), Sophie Read considers 'what happens when the correcting voice is not Herbert's, but God's? This question requires immediate qualification: it would perhaps be less

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[26] In his reading of 'Onely let others say, when I am dead, / Never was grief like mine', Empson argues for a 'double meaning': '[Christ] may wish that his own grief may never be exceeded among the humanity he pities… he may, incidentally, wish that they may *say* this, that he may be sure of recognition, and of a church that will be a sounding-board to his agony; or he may mean *mine* as a quotation from the *others*'; see *Seven Types of Ambiguity,* p. 228. What is given, here, might even amount to a 'triple' meaning, but it is most evident that – for Empson – Herbert's Christ places emphasis on humanity responding to his sacrifice.

contentious to say "when the voice is figured as coming from an external source which is, presumably, divine"'.[27] Read's analysis of the 'divine voice' in *The Temple*, which focuses on Herbert's poem 'The Collar', is particularly astute in its alertness to the 'performative' function of God's voice, arguing that it often signals both 'a recognition and a redemption' on the part of the lyric speaker.[28] What follows seeks to build on this analysis of rhetorical performativity by offering a more extensive account of the ways in which Herbert represents God's voice as intervening. Throughout *The Temple*, it may be that Christ's voice enters to redeem, or that God the Father speaks in order to assure a speaker of their salvation. This section considers Herbert's use of the divine voice in both these ways.

Herbert's short lyric 'Redemption' is informed by Pauline theology on the New Covenant. In Romans 5.8, Paul writes 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us', a passage conveying the way in which Christ's death was thought to redeem transgressions made under the Old Covenant. 'Redemption' is structured so that the voice of Christ provides the moment of redemption, relieving the speaker of their profane listlessness. At the beginning of the poem, Herbert writes: 'Having been tenant long to a rich Lord, / Not thriving, I resolved to be bold, / And make a suit unto him' (ll. 1-3). Herbert's description of '[making] a suit' to 'a rich Lord' is, ostensibly, an allegory for man's relationship to God under the Old Covenant. The speaker searches fruitlessly for spiritual fulfilment, doing so in a variety of profane locations ('cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts') (l. 11). The idea of the naïve speaker

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[27] See Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination,* p. 111.
[28] Ibid., p. 114.

coming to truth in God is, as we shall see, a commonly invoked poetic strategy in *The Temple*. There is a comparison to be made, here, with the way in which the Apostles are presented as needing careful explication of Christ's parables in the gospels (as in Matthew 13.10, where they ask: 'Why speakest thou unto them in parables?') (see my introduction, p. 27). The meaning of the Herbertian lyric is, often enough, not immediately obvious; for this reason, Louis MacNeice accurately describes *The Temple* as containing 'double-level poetry'.[29] In the concluding line of 'Redemption', Herbert introduces Christ's voice: 'Who straight, *Your suit is granted*, said, & died' (l. 14). As in the closing stanza of 'The Sacrifice', the poet rewrites John 19.30 in this brief statement ('It is finished'), which is a mirror image of Christ's final words on the cross. The replacement of the Old Covenant with the New Covenant is represented by Christ's granting of the '*suit*', which responds to the speaker's petitioning 'suit' at the start of the poem. The immediacy of the redemption is also conveyed by the linguistic patterning of 'straight' with the applicant's use of 'I straight return'd' (l. 9). Thus, in 'Redemption', Herbert briefly voices Christ to demonstrate that a new relationship with the 'Lord' is '*granted*' to the speaker.

Much like 'Redemption', Herbert's 'Even-song' employs an intervening divine voice to resolve the poem's argument. Robert B. Shaw notes that the poem demonstrates the gradual process by which the speaker moves beyond the 'stalemate' of sin and self-condemnation, and from there into an 'assurance' of redemption.[30] Shaw is right to note the poem's structural movement towards

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[29] Louis MacNeice, *Varieties of Parable* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 8.

[30] Robert B. Shaw, *The Call of God: The Theme of Vocation in the Poetry of Donne and Herbert* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1981), pp. 86-7.

'assurance', but more can be said about the way the poem invokes the voice of God the Father to bring this state about. As Ryrie has shown, throughout the early modern period, the noun 'assurance' was frequently invoked in Calvinist discourse to convey the certainty of being a member of God's chosen elect; conversely, 'security' was a term associated with the false assumption, on the part of the reprobate, of being saved.[31] In 'Even-song', the speaker's assured possession of Christ is emphasised in the second stanza: 'But I have got his sonne, and he hath none' (l. 8). This line demonstrates an urgent need for Christ, whilst also punning on the biblical idea of the 'sonne' of God, who is called the 'Sun of righteousness' and the 'light of the world' (Malachi 4.2; John 8.12). In 'Even-song', the focus on possessing Christ foregrounds the importance of the trope of enclosure, which is invoked by Herbert as the Father's voice enters:

> Yet still thou goest on,
> And now with darknesse closest wearie eyes,
> Saying to man, *It doth suffice:*
> *Henceforth repose; your work is done*. (ll. 17-20)

In this stanza, God speaks briefly to command the speaker's rest ('*Henceforth repose*'), a concept with weighty scriptural precedent. The idea of '*repose*' is invoked in Genesis 2.2 ('and he rested on the seventh day'), and, in a relevant New Testament context, in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25.21 ('Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant… enter thou into the joy of thy lord'), which suggests that Herbert's voice of God is prescribing a Sunday for the speaker. In 'Even-song', after God has spoken, the speaker's assurance of salvation is emphasised in the resolved conclusion: 'And in this love, more then in bed, I rest' (l. 32), an important reference point for which is Psalm 4.8 ('I will

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[31] Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* p. 23.

both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety'). In Herbert's poetic conclusion, therefore, the spiritual state of assurance is conveyed through the final verb 'rest', suggesting that the speaker has heeded God's instruction to '*repose*'.

Another of Herbert's poems in which God the Father speaks to assure the speaker is 'The Quidditie'. Much like 'Redemption', this short poem begins by emphasising the impoverished nature of the secular world. In its opening lines, Herbert writes: 'My God, a verse is not a crown, / No point of honour, or gay suit, / No hawk, or banquet, or renown, / Nor a good sword, nor yet a lute' (ll. 1-4). Here, the speaker lists secular ornaments frivolously, stressing their insubstantiality. By contrast, in its final stanza, 'The Quidditie' moves towards an assurance of the speaker's salvation, in which God is directly voiced:

> It is no office, art, or news,
> Nor the Exchange, or busie Hall;
> But it is that which while I use
> I am with thee, and *Most take all*. (ll. 9-12)

In the first instance, the final phrase '*Most take all*' – in being voiced by God the Father and the lyric speaker in unison – demonstrates that the speaker is completely taken by Christ's redemptive gains.[32] As Michael Clifton has also shown, '*Most take all*' is a notable allusion to the contemporary card game Primero, where the phrase 'Winner takes all' was employed by a victorious card-player.[33] Not only is this another instance of Herbert interpolating secular

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[32] It should be emphasised that the Psalms themselves contain a plurality of voices, which can sometimes be difficult to determine. For a compelling recent study of the Psalms' 'complex' vocality, and the ways in which the voices of God and the speaker occasionally combine, see Hannibal Hamlin, 'My Tongue Shall Speak: The Voices of the Psalms', *RS,* Vol. 29 (4), 2015, pp. 509-30.

[33] See Michael Clifton, 'Staking his Heart: Herbert's Use of Gambling Imagery in *The Temple*', *GHJ,* Vol. 8 (1), 1984, pp. 43-55 (p. 47).

material within his religious subject matter, but the poet's representation of God using a card-player's catchphrase to assure the speaker could have been considered deeply offensive at the time. We might also pause, in the final line of 'The Quidditie', to comment on God's use of the quantifier, '*Most*'. A comparison can be made with a contemporary of Herbert's, then Bishop of Norwich Joseph Hall, who wrote, in his printed sermon 'Heavenly Observation XIV', that 'God loueth aduerbs'.[34] By this, Hall means that God is interested, principally, in the degree of the individual's response to Him. Comparably, in 'The Quidditie', Herbert puts the phrase '*Most take all*' into God's mouth, doing so to represent the absolute nature of the lyric speaker's assurance.

In Herbert's poem 'The Quip', God the Father and the speaker are also voiced in unison to represent assurance of salvation. Once again, the poem begins by affirming the poverty of the secular world: 'The merrie world did on a day / With his train-bands [a trained company of citizen soldiery] and mates agree / To meet together, where I lay, / And all in sport to geere at me' (ll. 1-4).[35] Throughout the poem, the speaker invites God to speak up for them, doing so through the refrain 'But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me' (ll. 8, 12, 16, 20). God's voice is posited as an 'answer' to the world's temptations: rebuffing, alternately, 'Beautie', 'Money', 'Glorie', and 'Wit' (ll. 5, 9, 13, 17). Given this repetitive structure, 'The Quip' makes the didactic point that God's voice ought to be invoked – through the 'answer' of scripture – to speak out against one's detractors.[36] However, at the end of the poem, Herbert varies this formula by

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[34] Joseph Hall, *Holy Obseruations* (London, 1607), p. 23.

[35] My gloss of Herbert's noun 'train-bands' is derived from 'trainband', *OED*, *n*.

[36] The need for God's voice to speak up in defence for the Christian individual was commonly invoked within mainstream English Protestant discourse. See, for example, Sir Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney, *The Sidney Psalter: The Psalms of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney*, ed.

putting words directly into God's mouth: 'Speak not at large, say, I am thine: / And then they have their answer home' (ll. 23-4). In his monograph *Voice Terminal Echo* (1986), Jonathan Goldberg points to the 'dissolution' of voices at the end of such lines in *The Temple*.[37] In a strictly formal sense, this is, of course, correct, but the revisionary impulse behind such a reading misses the point of *why* the voices are presented as ambiguously dissolving. In poems like 'The Quip' and 'The Quidditie', Herbert combines the voices of God and the speaker to dramatise the attainment of assurance.

In the Williams Manuscript, a unique resource for considering early drafts of Herbert's poems, the title of 'Jordan (II)' is 'Invention'.[38] In classical rhetoric, as Glenn W. Most and Gian Biagio Conte note, *inventio* was the method used to '[help] the orator to find elements of persuasion'.[39] Crucially, 'invention' also became a by-word for poetic imagination during the early modern period. In his influential rhetorical handbook *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), for instance, the Cambridge schoolmaster Thomas Wilson writes that 'the findyng out of apte matter, called otherwise Inuencion, is a searchyng out of thynges true, or thynges likely, the whiche maie reasonably sette forth a matter, and make it appere probable'.[40] Thus, the working title of 'Jordan (II)' signals the way in which, within the poem, the speaker asks the question of how

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Hannibal Hamlin, Michael G. Brennan, Margaret P. Hannay, and Noel J. Kinnamon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 101, for the text of Psalm 54.10: 'Lord… pay them home, who thus against me fight'.

[37] Jonathan Goldberg, *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts* (New York, NY: Methuen, 1986), p. 120.

[38] See Helen Wilcox's note on the text in *English Poems,* ed. Wilcox, p. 365.

[39] See Glenn W. Most and Gian Biagio Conte, 'Topos', *OCD.* <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-6508> [accessed 30 October 2019].

[40] Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (London, 1553), sig. A3v.

best to write verse. Having begun the poem by raising the long-running humanist debate over elaborate and plain styles, in the last stanza, Herbert introduces an external voice to resolve the matter:

> But while I bustled, I might heare a friend
> Whisper, *How wide is all this long pretence!*
> *There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd:*
> *Copie out onely that, and save expense.* (ll. 15-18)

There are various possible readings for the entrance of this external voice. Once again, the influence of Sir Philip Sidney on Herbert is plausible. In 'Sonnet 19' of *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), Sidney's own sonnet on poetic invention, the poem is concluded by the intrusion of an undefined voice called 'Love' ('"Scholar", saith Love, "bend hitherward your wit"').[41] There is also the context of the edifying Little Gidding circle to consider. Nicholas Ferrar, who prepared the manuscript of *The Temple* for publication after Herbert's death, might be the non-specified 'friend' who is alluded to in 'Jordan (II)'.[42] Perhaps most importantly, this external voice could also belong to Christ, who is referred to as a 'friend' in Herbertian poems such as 'Sunday' (l. 4). The word '*love*' held ready connotations of Christ's Passion, and the phrase '*sweetnesse readie penn'd*' – employing a cognate of the freighted adjective 'sweet' – suggests that the speaker need only look to the Bible ('*readie penn'd*') to find evidence of Christ's redemption. In this concluding line, therefore, the intervening divine voice suggests that copying out God's '*love*' from scripture is the '*onely*' way to compose verse, rendering rhetorical 'invention' unnecessary.

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[41] Sir Philip Sidney, 'Astrophil and Stella', in *The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 160.
[42] See Joyce Ransome, 'George Herbert, Nicholas Ferrar, and the "Pious Works" of Little Gidding', *GHJ,* Vol. 31 (1), 2007, pp. 1-19, esp. p. 1.

Throughout *The Temple*, the voices of God the Father and Christ intervene, variously, to assure and to redeem: in each case, pointing towards the achievement of salvation by the lyric speaker. Yet, this kind of poem only constitutes part of the volume's overall structural design. In accordance with Herbert's primary biblical source, the Psalms, a range of spiritual states is dramatised in *The Temple*, not merely assurance of God's felt presence, or, indeed, of salvation to come. Duly, the next section of this chapter considers God's absent voice, and the way that this is represented within Herbert's lyric poetry.

## 3.  God's Absent Voice

The representation of God's voice as absent – or as silent in responding to the speaker – is a significant structural aspect of *The Temple*. In Herbert's poem 'Grace', as a first example, God's voice is not forthcoming, and the speaker yearns for direct assistance by harnessing wordless prayer.[43] In Book X of the *Confessions*, Augustine writes that 'my confession is made both silently in your sight, my God, and aloud as well, because even though my tongue utters no sound, my heart cries to you'.[44] Betraying the influence of Augustinian silent confession, in 'Grace', Herbert employs a vocative plea – 'O let thy graces' – to simulate the speaker's wordless yearning for God (l. 3). In the stanza from which this plea is taken, the poet writes:

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[43] There is an emergent body of scholarship focusing on Herbert's detailed poetic invocations of sighs and groans, and other forms of wordless prayer, to which I am indebted in this chapter. See especially Clarissa Chenovick, 'Reading, Sighing, and Tuning in George Herbert's *Temple*', *HLQ,* Vol. 82 (1), 2019, pp. 155-74; Naya Tsentourou, 'Sighs and Groans: Attending to the Passions in Early Modern Prayer', *Literature Compass*, Vol. 12 (6), 2015, pp. 262-73; Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* pp. 208-14; and Kuchar, *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow, passim.*

[44] Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 208.

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandrie improve:
O let thy graces without cease
                    Drop from above! (ll. 1-4)

Here, the speaker's diction emphasises their 'dull' heart: we note the leaden, monosyllabic sounds contained within the words 'stock', 'dead', 'doth', and 'dull'. Spiritual dullness, as Ryrie has conclusively shown, was widely feared within mainstream early modern English Protestantism, and many believed that it had to be alleviated in obtaining salvation.[45] In 'Grace', the speaker calls for God to intervene, employing the exhortative refrain 'Drop from above!' in the effort to induce God's presence. This line displays an Old Testament conception of grace as descending – it is indebted to verses of scripture such as Exodus 16.15, in which 'manna', a Christian metaphor for grace, falls from the sky to the Jews in the wilderness – and is employed to deepen the sense of the speaker's helplessness. Herbert's refrain also borrows from Isaiah 45.8, 'Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness', which provided the first words of the Advent Prose.[46] 'Grace' inverts the poetic method outlined in the previous section of this chapter, where the voices of God and Christ enter to relieve Herbert's speakers. To emphasise this sense of absence, Herbert writes: 'Sinne is still hammering my heart / Unto a hardnesse, void of love: / Let suppling grace, to crosse his art, / Drop from above' (ll. 17-20). In these lines, the speaker begs for their heart to be made '[supple]' by grace, a verb which conveyed receptiveness to divine intervention.[47] The

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[45] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 20-1.

[46] For a brief discussion of Isaiah 45.8 in the English and Latin liturgies, with reference to the text being sung in the Advent Prose, see Diane Kelsey McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 69.

[47] See 'supple', *OED, v.,* 1a, where 'supple' is defined, at the time in which Herbert wrote, as 'to make compliant or complaisant', especially in religious contexts.

speaker's heart remains 'void of love', and this 'hardnesse' is still not addressed at the poem's conclusion.

Comparably, Herbert's lyric 'Deniall' dramatises reciprocal disorder between the speaker and God. The poem is modelled on the psalm in distress at God's absence, specifically alluding to Psalm 102.2 ('Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me') and Psalm 109.24 ('My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness'). The poem demonstrates the opposite of the mutuality sought in *The Temple*, resembling an unheard prayer:

> When my devotions could not pierce
> Thy silent eares;
> Then was my heart broken, as was my verse:
> My breast was full of fears
> And disorder. (ll. 1-5)

The waywardness of the prayer ('my devotions') is communicated by the poet's language of negation ('could not pierce'; 'broken, as was my verse'), and by the irregular stanzaic form. In representing this misdirected prayer, Herbert's poetic language clusters around the idea of deflection. Later in the same poem, Herbert writes: 'My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow, / Did flie asunder' (ll. 6-7). In these lines, the adjective 'brittle' is a key term. It is used elsewhere in *The Temple* – notably in 'The Windows', where 'man' is described as 'a brittle crazie glasse' (l. 2) – to convey fallibility before God.[48] In view of this, the need for Christ's coming, in the third stanza of 'Deniall', is presented as especially urgent; Herbert writes '*Come, come, my God, O come,* / But no hearing' (ll. 14-15).

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[48] In using the adjective 'brittle' to refer specifically to human inconstancy, Herbert draws on the biblical conception, outlined in 2 Corinthians 4.7-8, of humankind as 'earthen vessels… troubled on every side'; the idea of women as 'the weaker vessel', in 1 Peter 3.7, may also be of note here.

These lines, in their groaning invocation to Christ, closely echo the climactic cry of Revelation 22.20 ('Surely I come quickly… come, Lord Jesus'); and also, more indirectly, the Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent in the Prayer Book ('Lorde rayse up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us').[49] Thus, in 'Deniall', Herbert's praying speaker articulates a desperate need for Christ's voice to intercede, but in the first half of the lyric, this is accompanied by God's silence.

Throughout *The Temple*, Herbert employs the trope of musical harmony to convey concordance with God, a strategy for which there is precedent in the Psalms.[50] By contrast, in 'Deniall', Herbert employs musical language to imply a state of disharmony with God: we note the lines 'Therefore my soul lay out of sight, / Untun'd, unstrung' (ll. 21-2). The key phrase for substantiating this reading of disharmony – 'Untun'd, unstrung', which repeats the prefix 'un' to promote a lack of musicality – suggests that the instrument of the 'soul' has been despairingly abandoned; this phrase might also be compared with Psalm 137.2 ('We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof'). For most of 'Deniall', on the evidence of the discordant lines which conclude certain stanzas (such as 'Discontented' (l. 25)), musical harmony with God is not restored. Nonetheless, eventual resolution is implied by the poem's rhyming conclusion:

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[49] *BCP*, p. 274; and see also Cummings's note on Cranmer's composition of this Collect, which was 'the only one of the Advent Collects to be translated from the familiar sequence in Sarum which all began with the word *Excita* ("raise up"), although here, too Cranmer improvised freely' (p. 764).

[50] For the musicality of the Psalms, and for the influential idea of King David as a harpist within early modern English culture, see especially Hamlin, *Psalm Culture*, pp. 226-40. Herbert's own musical abilities have been stressed by numerous critics: see Drury, *Music at Midnight,* esp. pp. 351-61; Chenovick, 'Reading, Sighing, and Tuning', pp. 160-1; Freer, *Music for a King, passim.*

> O cheer and tune my heartlesse breast,
> Deferre no time;
> That so thy favours granting my request,
> They and my minde may chime,
> And mend my ryme. (ll. 26-30)

In a resolution of the poem's extended musical metaphor, the speaker asks for God to 'cheer' and 'tune' their 'breast'; after this, there is a resolution of the rhyme scheme (the noun 'time' being, on 'request', duly complimented by 'chime' and 'ryme'). The poem does not contain the voice of God, as rhetorically expressed. Nonetheless, there is an implied sense of resolution in the harmonious rhyming of its final stanza, which hints at the voices of God and the speaker resounding in unison.

In Herbert's poems in which God's voice does not directly intervene, the speaker often actively seeks a more reciprocal relationship with God. An example of such a poem is 'Sighs and Grones'. Herbert begins this poem in a characteristically Augustinian vein: 'O do not use me / After my sinnes!' (ll. 1-2). The vocative 'O' which begins the poem provides an exclamative groan, communicating the speaker's urgent desire for God to respond.[51] Herbert's use of wordless prayer has a source in Augustine, as we have already seen (see this chapter, pp. 168-9), but also, given the palpable sense of strain, in Pauline verses such as Romans 8.22 ('we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain'). Expanding deftly on Luke 16.2 in the poem's second stanza ('give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward'), Herbert writes:

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[51] For Herbert's 'sighs and groans as musical utterances… bodily expressions of repentance', see Chenovick, 'Reading, Sighing, and Tuning', p. 158. Ryrie perceives Herbert as unusual in making a distinction between 'sighs' and 'groans', arguing that most of Herbert's Protestant contemporaries used the terms interchangeably; see *Being Protestant*, p. 212.

> O do not urge me!
> For what account can thy ill steward make?
> I have abus'd thy stock, destroy'd thy woods,
> Suckt all thy magazens: my head did ake,
> Till it found out how to consume thy goods:
> O do not scourge me! (ll. 7-12)

This stanza – which, once again, is framed by the groaning 'O' – provides an itemisation of the ways the 'steward' has 'abus'd' God, leaving the speaker, in the final line, with nowhere to hide before divine judgment ('do not scourge me!'). After this quasi-mythic account of humanity's abuse of God, the poem continues, in a more personal register, by detailing the speaker's own sense of divine separation: 'I have deserv'd that an Egyptian night / Should thicken all my powers; because my lust / Hath still sow'd fig-leaves to exclude thy light' (ll. 14-16). Here, the poetic speaker's assertion that 'I have deserv'd… an Egyptian night' adapts Exodus 10.22 ('and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days'). Yet, in these lines, there is also the sense that the speaker has excluded God deliberately – we note the active verb in the phrase 'still sow'd fig-leaves' – and desires reconciliation. In her study *Utmost Art* (1966), Mary Ellen Rickey points out that Herbert's use of 'sow'd' might refer to Genesis 3.7 ('they sewed fig leaves together'), arguing that where Adam and Eve 'merely fasten the leaves together, [the speaker] propagates them'.[52] However, one could also posit that the ambiguity arising from the early modern spelling demands the simultaneous consideration of both meanings. Thus, the opening stanzas of 'Sighs and Grones' display a penitential undercurrent, emphasising the speaker's guilt in having deliberately excluded God.

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[52] See Mary Ellen Rickey, *Utmost Art: Complexity in the Verse of George Herbert* (Lexington, KY: Kentucky University Press, 1966)*,* pp. 77-8.

As 'Sighs and Grones' proceeds in its argument, a new relationship is sought with God, as the speaker considers the way in which the gap of separation might be bridged. The speaker posits that the principal way to salvation is through Christ's redemptive 'bloud' (l. 21):

> O do not fill me
> With the turn'd viall of thy bitter wrath!
> For thou hast other vessels full of bloud,
> A part whereof my Saviour empti'd hath,
> Ev'n unto death: since he di'd for my good,
> O do not kill me! (ll. 19-24)

In this stanza, Herbert's treatment of the eucharistic 'bloud' trope evokes the apocalyptic language of Revelation 15.7 and 16.4 ('golden vials full of the wrath of God'; 'poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood'). However, as is more typical of Herbert, a poet who does not frequently invoke the language of divine judgment, this 'bloud' is transformed into something with the potential to restore: the speaker cannot help but acknowledge that '[Christ] di'd for my good'. In the final lines of 'Sighs and Grones', Herbert's treatment of Christ's 'bloud' is much more equivocal: 'Thou art both *Judge* and *Saviour*, *feast* and *rod*, / *Cordiall* and *Corrosive*: put not thy hand / Into the bitter box; but O my God, / My God, relieve me!' (ll. 27-30). Although there is still a eucharistic emphasis on Christ's 'bloud' as restorative (the oft-invoked Herbertian noun *'Cordiall'* signals this), this stanza works through dramatic opposites, suggesting that Christ can grant both damnation and salvation. Nonetheless, the speaker's closing cry of 'relieve me!' – another echo of Revelation 22.20 – is unresolved, as Christ's voice does not intervene.

When Herbert employs the voice of God or Christ directly, it is, as we have already seen in this chapter, often at the end of his lyric poems (see pp.

160-8). However, in a notable inversion of this established formula, in Herbert's 'Decay', God the Father speaks at the commencement of the poem, doing so to suggest that the divine presence was closer to humanity during the Old Testament period:

> Sweet were the dayes, when thou didst lodge with Lot,
> Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,
> Advise with Abraham, when thy power could not
> Encounter Moses strong complaints and mone:
>     Thy words were then, *Let me alone*. (ll. 1-5)

In the first line, the adjective 'sweet' communicates a proximity to God (see this chapter, p. 155), and following this, the speaker cites different Old Testament patriarchs who were each afforded close divine encounters. The voice of God the Father, which enters at the end of the stanza to exhortatively command – '*Let me alone*' – provides a direct transposition of God's words to Moses in Exodus 32.10 ('therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them'). Despite the oddness of calling this antagonistic instruction 'sweet', the directness of God's voice affirms the immediacy of access to God that was granted to the Old Testament patriarchs.[53] In 'Decay', God's voice can be conceived of as a musical echo which diminishes as the poem progresses: moving from the direct address of '*Let me alone*', to the consonance of 'great Aarons bell' (l. 10).

Remarkably, later in 'Decay', God's voice is reduced to a struggle within the lyric speaker's 'heart' (l. 12).[54] In the poem, Herbert adapts the

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[53] For a discussion of the strangeness of calling God's exhortative command 'sweet', see Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Reformation Spirituality: The Religion of George Herbert* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1985), p. 141, who argues that the Old Testament's 'localised God of holy places' could prove, for Herbert, to be an 'alien' force.

[54] The poem's 'felt sense of deterioration' has been argued for in Bloch, *Spelling the Word*, pp. 139-40. I concur with Bloch that 'Decay' is distinct from many of the other typological

commonplace Christian belief, as discussed in my introduction (see pp. 39-44), that God did not often speak directly, but spoke more commonly through the emotions:

> But now thou dost thy self immure and close
> In some one corner of a feeble heart:
> Where yet both Sinne and Satan, thy old foes,
> Do pinch and straiten thee, and use much art
>     To gain thy thirds and little part. (ll. 11-15)

Here, the speaker laments that – in contrast to the immediacy granted to the Old Testament patriarchs – God's voice only exists as a struggle within the 'feeble' Christian 'heart'. The adjective 'feeble' presents a pejorative realisation of God's voice as speaking from within, especially when compared to the buoyant short lyric 'IESU', in which Christ's voice punningly spells out '*I ease you*' to assure the speaker (l. 9). The above stanza of 'Decay' is noteworthy, as within it, Herbert seems to criticise his overarching project in *The Temple*, which seeks – as the collection's epigraph states – to articulate the struggles ongoing within the 'Temple' of the Christian heart. This reading of God's voice as gradually disappearing is substantiated by Herbert's use of 'art', 'thirds', and 'part', which are all musical terms. These words are employed to indicate that the fullness of God's voice – '*Let me alone*' – has receded, becoming separate parts, rather than a single, concordant sound. Thus, 'Decay' reads as a poetic articulation of God's singing voice in 'retreat' (l. 18).

In his jagged poem 'Longing', Herbert gives an extended meditation on the spiritual state of despair, and on the absence of God's voice. Throughout the early modern period, 'despair' conveyed the sense of being separated from

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lyrics in *The Temple*, which, as we have seen, typically represent the replacement of the Old Covenant by the New Covenant.

God.[55] In the first stanza of 'Longing', the speaker sends up numerous bodily petitions to God, in hope of an answer:

> With sick and famisht eyes,
> With doubling knees and weary bones,
> To thee my cries,
> To thee my grones,
> To thee my sighs, my ears ascend:
> No end? (ll. 1-6)

Despite the speaker's fragmented body parts ('sick and famisht eyes'; 'doubling knees and weary bones'), and silent petitions ('cries… grones… sighs'), God's voice is silent. In response to this keenly felt absence, the speaker implores:

> Bowels of pitie, heare!
> Lord of my soul, love of my minde,
> Bow down thine eare!
> Let not the winde
> Scatter my words, and in the same
> Thy name! (ll. 19-24)

By asking God to 'Bow down', Herbert's speaker articulates an Old Testament conception of downward-stooping grace, which is used – as in other lyrics in *The Temple* addressing the absence of God – to compound a sense of the speaker's helplessness. In the phrase 'Scatter my words', the speaker of 'Longing' is presented as wholly removed from that of 'IESU'. Within that poem, the speaker is in comfortable assurance of salvation, given that their fragmented words are re-spelt to reveal Christ's name. In 'Longing', however, there is the implicit threat that, without God's intervening voice, the speaker's petitioning words will remain scattered and unheard.

This section has considered poems, in *The Temple*, in which God's voice is represented as absent. Herbert's speakers grope awkwardly towards spiritual

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[55] 'despair', *OED, v.,* 1a.

resolution in many of his poems; the assurance of Christ's redemption, and of salvation to come – as demonstrated in poems in which God or Christ speaks – is only part of Herbert's poetic compass. In what follows, I argue that there is an overall sense of concordance to 'The Church' sequence. The rhetorical voice of God is more prominent in the volume's later poems, entering extended poetic dialogues with Herbert's lyric speakers.

## 4. Dialogues with God

Herbert's lyric 'The Bag' is presented as an immediate response to the previous poem in 'The Church' sequence, 'Longing'. In this poem, Herbert adapts the doctrine of Christ's intercession in Hebrews 7.25, which relates that Christ 'is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them'. Herbert takes Christ's 'ever [living]' intercession, and – in typically punning fashion – augments the way that Christ makes himself available to the lyric speaker. The title of 'The Bag' also signals the way Herbert's Christ is separated: he is transformed into a 'bag' to deliver petitions to the Father. The noun 'bag' has a rich precedent in both the Bible and liturgical tradition. In using the word, Herbert draws on Job 14.17 ('My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag') and John 13.29 ('Judas had the bag'); also present in the title is the eucharistic significance of the 'bag' as a means of straining Communion wine.[56] The poem's opening line, 'Away despair; my gracious Lord doth heare' (l.1), affirms Christ's openness to pleas of all kinds, however unformed they may be. The phrase 'Away despair' dispels the dark mood of the final stanza of 'Longing', and Herbert's use of the adjective

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[56] For more on the eucharistic significance of the noun 'bag', see Tuve, *George Herbert,* p. 129.

'gracious' foreshadows the fact that grace will dramatically intercede, later in the poem, via Christ's voice.

In 'The Bag', it is crucial that, immediately before Christ is voiced, Herbert employs the modifier 'straight' (l. 30). We have seen this term used before in Herbert's poetry – notably, in 'Redemption' ('I straight return'd' (l. 9)) – to convey the instantaneous way in which Christ's redemption makes salvation possible. Christ's voice first intervenes in the poem's penultimate stanza:

> If ye have any thing to send or write,
>     (I have no bag, but here is room)
>     Unto my fathers hands and sight
>     (Beleeve me) it shall safely come.
>     That I shall minde, what you impart;
> Look, you may put it very neare my heart. (ll. 31-6)

Christ's use of *litotes* (understatement) in the phrase 'here is room' is noteworthy.[57] Having affirmed that he will accept 'any thing' – displaying a capacious conception of what is acceptable in prayer – the following parenthesis is understated, standing in contrast to the ecstatic, baroque emphasis on the five wounds found in much early seventeenth-century Counter-Reformation writing.[58] In 'The Bag', Christ's assurance that 'any thing… shall safely come'

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[57] In my discussion of Herbert's use of *litotes* when voicing Christ, I have been influenced by Alison Shell's article 'Southwell's Influence: Imitations, Appropriations, Reactions', in *Precarious Identities: Studies in the Work of Fulke Greville and Robert Southwell,* ed. Vassiliki Markidou and Afroditi-Maria Panaghis (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 310-31. Shell argues that, in 'The Bag', Herbert critiques 'the perceived excesses of Southwellian tears-poetry' (p. 323), doing so by '[advocating] restraint… conveying the ineffability of God through understatement' (p. 325) in a manner that might – in retrospect – be considered very Anglican.

[58] See Oliver Almond, *The Vncasing of Heresie, or, The Anatomie of Protestancie* (Douai, 1623), p. 90 ('Christ rose from death with the fiue woundes, which he receiued on the Crosse'); Henry Hawkins, *Partheneia Sacra* (Rouen, 1633), p. 65 ('For the *Sun* of the *Diuinitie* therin vnited to the little poore vapour of our mortalitie hath fertilizd this beautiful *Paradice* of the *Church,* the *Deaw* watering the same, which fel from the Fiue Wounds of

has an Augustinian resonance, particularly in its implication that wordless, unformed prayers are sufficient. In the next line, the reference to 'my fathers hands and sight' reinforces the idea of Christ as an individual Person of the Trinity, but also as possessing privileged access to God the Father. Christ's proffering of the wound that has opened 'very neare my heart', inviting believers to use it ('you may'), is also worthy of further comment. Once again, it betrays Herbert's focus on Christ's redemptive blood as an emblem for the Passion. Christ's wounded 'heart' responds to the speaker's despairing 'heart' in the previous poem (l. 80); for the poet, this careful linguistic patterning emphasises the absolute efficacy of the intercession.

Herbert's voice of Christ re-emphasises his constant availability in the last stanza of 'The Bag':

> Or if hereafter any of my friends
>> Will use me in this kinde, the doore
>> Shall still be open; what he sends
>> I will present, and somewhat more,
>> Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey
> Any thing to me. Heark despair, away. (ll. 37-42)

Christ's openness, in troping himself as 'the doore', was, of course, a commonplace in scripture. For evidence of this, one might note John 10.9 ('I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved') and Matthew 7.7 ('seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you'). In the given stanza, Herbert's voice of Christ refers to Christians as 'friends': a noun that, as we have seen in this chapter (see p. 167), is frequently used in Herbert's poetry to promote a sense of intimacy between God and the speaker. In the last line,

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IESVS'); Matthew Kellison, *A Myrrhine Posie of the Bitter Dolours of Christ* (Douai, 1639), pp. 132-3 ('O my soule! looke vp, and contemplat[e] thy Sauiours fiue wounds, which in his hands, feete, and syde he receaued, to cure thee of the spirituall wounds of thy soule').

Christ's closing exhortation – 'Heark despair, away' – recalls the opening line of the poem, and, in so doing, fuses the voices of Christ and the speaker in communication of spiritual triumph.

Comparably, Herbert's poem 'Dialogue' presents God the Father as enduringly open to the speaker's petitions. Helen Wilcox has noted the influence Herbert's position as public orator at the University of Cambridge had on his sacred poetics, writing: 'The eloquence of [Herbert's] sacred oratory is its close relationship with the heart, but it does not lack rhetorical skill in choosing the language to express what lies in the heart, or to achieve its desired effects'.[59] In 'Dialogue', the Father's voice intervenes in the effort to resolve the rhetorical disputation that is inaugurated by the lyric speaker.[60] Within the poem, Herbert voices God as a master debater, capable of meeting and defeating the speaker wherever they set foot in their argument. In the poem's first stanza, the speaker declares that they have given up on all hope of salvation:

> Sweetest Saviour, if my soul
> > Were but worth the having,
> Quickly should I then controll
> > Any thought of waving.
> But when all my care and pains
> Cannot give the name of gains
> To thy wretch so full of stains;
> What delight or hope remains? (ll. 1-8)

The opening *apostrophe* of this stanza, 'Sweetest Saviour', suggests that the speaker is addressing Christ, even though the responding voice of God, as we

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[59] See Helen Wilcox, 'Herbert's "Enchanting Language": The Poetry of a Cambridge Orator', *GHJ,* Vol. 27 (1), 2003, pp. 53-66 (p. 62).

[60] For a seminal account of the disputation's centrality in humanist rhetorical teaching, with attention to the practice of referring to a speaker's argument before negating it, see Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 58-66. Richards also has some useful comments on the importance of the 'dialogue' within humanist educational practice; see *Voices and Books*, pp. 45-7.

shall see, is much more reminiscent of God the Father: promoting, once again, the interdependence of different divine voices in Herbert's poetic schema. Wilcox draws our attention to the legal language contained within this stanza, suggesting that the pun on 'waving' (and, later, verbs like 'disclaim' and 'resigne' (ll. 23-4)), present the speaker as giving up on a legal 'right' to salvation.[61] However, the final line of the above stanza – 'What delight or hope remains?' – suggests that, despite the preceding renunciation of spiritual responsibility, the speaker actually desires further debate. God's extended response to this rhetorical 'waving' is to offer eternal freedom through Christ:

> *What (childe) is the ballance thine,*
> *Thine the poise and measure?*
> *If I say, Thou shalt be mine;*
> *Finger not my treasure.*
> *What the gains in having thee*
> *Do amount to, onely he,*
> *Who for man was sold, can see;*
> *That transferr'd th'accounts to me.* (ll. 9-16)

Here, the fact that the noun '*childe*' is employed in addressing the speaker, as in the penultimate line of 'The Collar' (l. 35), betrays a paternalistic viewpoint, indicating that this is God the Father speaking. Herbert's God speaks with evident authority in response, but also with delicacy, moving from rhetorical question ('*Thine the poise and measure?*'), to direct refutation of the speaker's argument ('*Finger not my treasure*'), and from there to counterexample. The counterexample to the speaker's despondent 'waving' is, of course, the redemptive '*gains*' offered by Christ (referred to, here, in the third person: '*onely he*'), conceived of through densely patterned economic language ('*treasure*'; '*gains*'; '*amount*'; '*sold*'; '*accounts*'). Thus God, voiced by Herbert

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[61] See Wilcox's note on 'waving' in *English Poems*, ed. Wilcox, p. 408.

as an expert debater, advises the speaker to adapt their position, and not to trivialise the spiritual riches that are available through Christ.

Later in 'Dialogue', Herbert addresses contemporary controversy regarding the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Evidencing an implicit critique of orthodox Calvinist belief, 'Dialogue' argues that salvation is always possible for man, and that God never gives up on an erring individual.[62] Despite God's advertisement of Christ's redemptive '*gains*', the speaker responds by continuing to reject their right to salvation. In asserting that 'the way is none of mine' (l. 22) – and thereby seeming to renounce the interdenominational conception of the true Christian path – the speaker spurns God's offer. Yet, other terms within the third stanza betray the poet's implicit viewpoint that the speaker is adopting a false, and, indeed, untenable pose. For instance, the noun 'merit' (l. 17) was an important word within early modern Calvinist discourse. The *OED* defines 'merit', in its theological sense, as 'the quality (in actions or persons) of being entitled to reward from God'.[63] In Calvinist thought, faith itself was considered a 'reward from God', and it followed from this that only some might be saved. In Herbert's 'Dialogue', the speaker's assertion – 'I can see no merit' (l. 17) – suggests that they do not believe they deserve salvation. In response to this, however, God disagrees:

> *That is all, if that I could*
> > *Get without repining;*
> *And my clay my creature would*
> > *Follow my resigning.*
> *That as I did freely part*

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[62] For a useful summary of the doctrine of predestination, which emphasises the Calvinist belief that man was inherently corrupt and depended upon divine grace, see Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* pp. 27-32. Scholars have often argued that Herbert was intensely troubled by the doctrine: for one recent example of this line of argument, see Drury, *Music at Midnight,* p. 6.
[63] 'merit', *OED, n.*, 1a.

*With my glorie and desert,*
*Left all joyes to feel all smart----*
                    Ah! no more: thou break'st my heart. (ll. 25-32)

Once more, we discern that this voice is, initially, the voice of God the Father, as somewhat patronisingly, the speaker is referred to as '*my clay my creature*'. This phrase relies on a biblical conception of the 'clay' of creation, as outlined in Job 10.9, where Job avers that God 'hast made me as the clay'. Herbert's hybrid voice of God responds to the speaker's pose of '*resigning*' by referring, once more, to the constant availability of Christ. In the lines '*did freely part / With my glorie and desert*', the determiner '*my*' reveals that there has been a shift to the voice of Christ; whilst the adverb, '*freely*', emphasises that Christ has willingly descended to make salvation possible. By alluding to Christ's Passion ('*left all joyes to feel all smart*'), Herbert's God wins the argument. In having the speaker interrupt God's sentence ('no more'), and thereby render the concluding statement on Christ's redemption merely implicit, Herbert suggests that the poetic speaker has come – in the last instance – to accept the divine voice's affirmation of Christ's redemptive '*gains*' (l. 13). Thus, in Herbert's 'Dialogue', we witness the 'turn' to God which was commonly thought to signify true repentance throughout the period.

The poetic dialogue between God and the speaker is dealt with via different means in 'Artillerie'. Various modern critics have focused on Herbert's depiction of spiritual struggle within the work, seeking to determine the degree of agency afforded to man by God.[64] Instead, one might look at the way that

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[64] See, for example, Garret Keizer, 'George Herbert and the Tradition of Jacob', *Cithara,* Vol. 19 (1), 1978, pp. 18-26, who likens the speaker to Jacob, wrestling with God in 'a hold which is always, potentially, an embrace' (p. 23); and William Nestrick, '"Mine and Thine" in *The Temple*', in *'Too Rich to Clothe the Sunne': Essays on George Herbert,* ed. Claude J.

God's voice inaugurates a yearning for reciprocity on the part of the speaker. At the opening of the poem, Herbert's intervening voice of God reminds the solitary penitent of the route to salvation:

> As I one ev'ning sat before my cell,
> Me thoughts a starre did shoot into my lap.
> I rose, and shook my clothes, as knowing well,
> That from small fires comes oft no small mishap.
> > When suddenly I heard one say,
> > *Do as thou usest, disobey,*
> > *Expell good motions from thy breast,*
> > *Which have the face of fire, but end in rest.* (ll. 1-8)

In the opening stanza of 'Artillerie', the speaker receives a 'starre', which is a significant word in Herbert's poetry. It is used in the Latin lyric 'Lucus' – specifically, in the line '*Stellam vespere suxerim volantem*' ['I swallowed a falling (or shooting) star in the evening'] (V. 5) – and also in 'The Holy Scriptures II', in which the Bible is famously described as a 'book of starres' (l. 14).[65] Given this, the noun 'starre' can be glossed, in the context of 'Artillerie', as connoting direct inspiration from the Bible. In 'Artillerie', God speaks indirectly through the Bible, given Herbert's description of a 'starre… [shooting] into my lap', which implies that the speaker is reading the Bible. God's voice, which responds sarcastically to the speaker's dismissive phrase 'shook my clothes', encourages the speaker to instead '*Expell good motions from thy breast*'; a line which betrays the need for the speaker to direct sincere prayer ('*good motions*') towards God.[66] These '*good motions*', God then

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Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980), pp. 115-27, who treats Herbert's representation of human agency 'in achieving our good' (p. 123).

[65] For this line and translation of 'Lucus', see 'In S. Scripturas' [On Sacred Scripture], in *Works,* ed. Hutchinson, p. 411.

[66] The *locus classicus* of divine sarcasm is Genesis 3.22 ('And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever'). Herbert's representation of God's

qualifies, '*have the face of fire*'; this is an indirect reference to Revelation 1.14, in which Christ's eyes display 'a flame of fire'. In these allusive lines, therefore, the orthodox suggestion is that possession of Christ is necessary in prayer. By harnessing Christ in prayer, God concludes, the speaker may '*end in rest*'. Thus here, as elsewhere in *The Temple*, the word '*rest*' can be glossed as a by-word for assurance of salvation.

Having been sarcastically instructed by God to '*Expell good motions*', in a later stanza of 'Artillerie', the speaker is presented as reaching upwards for God in prayer: 'But I have also starres and shooters too, / Born where thy servants both artilleries use. / My tears and prayers night and day do wooe, / And work up to thee; yet thou dost refuse' (ll. 17-20). In these lines, the speaker's 'tears and prayers' are troped as military 'artilleries'.[67] Even though Herbert's speaker feels rejection ('yet thou dost refuse'), the emphasis remains, strongly, on the need for reciprocity between the speaker and God (see 'oblig'd to do thy will' (l. 21)). For contemporary Protestant understanding of the need for a mutual Covenant between God and man, one might cite the writings of the prominent Cambridge Calvinist, William Perkins. In his treatise *A Golden Chaine*, Perkins writes that 'Gods couenant… consisteth of two partes: Gods promise to man,

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sarcasm, in 'Artillerie', might be compared with the Father's derisory rhetorical question in 'Dialogue' ('*is the ballance thine, / Thine the poise and measure*? (ll. 9-10)) (see this chapter, p. 182). Given this, we discern that – in *The Temple* – sarcasm is one method employed by Herbert's voice of God to encourage sincere devotion on the part of the lyric speaker. Outside of Herbert, one might also refer to the representation of a sarcastic God the Father in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In Book V of the epic, the Son of God suggests that God 'Laughst at [the rebels'] vain designs and tumults vain' (V. 737); see *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 329. For a general study of the role of sarcasm in early modern European literature and culture, see Stephen Alan Baragona and Elizabeth Louise Rambo, ed., *Words that Tear the Flesh: Essays on Sarcasm in Medieval and Early Modern Literature and Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018).

[67] A comparable depiction of prayer as upward-reaching is found in Herbert's lyric 'Prayer (I)', where the poet describes the practice as 'Gods breath in man returning to his birth' (l. 2).

Mans promise to God'.[68] At the conclusion of 'Artillerie', Herbert – much like

Perkins – affirms that such promises to God must be kept:

> Then we are shooters both, and thou dost deigne
> To enter combate with us, and contest
> With thine own clay. But I would parley fain:
> Shunne not my arrows, and behold my breast.
> Yet if thou shunnest, I am thine:
> I must be so, if I am mine.
> There is no articling with thee:
> I am but finite, yet thine infinitely. (ll. 25-32)

In a stanza that yearns for closeness between the speaker and God, one might

note the influence of Genesis 32.30, which details Jacob's proximity to God ('I

have seen God face to face'). Herbert's speaker has taken on board God's

perverse instruction to '*Expell good motions from thy breast*' – God's sarcasm

again hinted at by the speaker's appropriately combative suggestion that 'we are

shooters both' – proclaiming 'behold my breast' to signal a receptiveness to

divine intervention. The poem ends, much like Herbert's 'Dialogue', with a

sense of resolution ('I am but finite, yet thine infinitely'). Here, as Wilcox points

out in her note on the poem, Herbert employs a 'triple pun'.[69] The speaker

cannot argue with God (the verb 'articling' serving as a synonym for 'arguing'),

nor arrange a treaty (which would be written in 'articles'), or, indeed, assign a

grammatical 'article' (as God exists 'infinitely'). Instead, Herbert represents the

speaker's immersion in 'infinite' love, implying – once again – that one cannot

argue successfully against God.

Herbert's sonnet 'Heaven' compellingly adapts the notion of the rhetorical

dialogue between God and the poetic speaker, doing so by employing God's

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[68] See Perkins, *A Golden Chaine*, sig. E6r.
[69] See Wilcox's note 31 in *English Poems,* ed. Wilcox, p. 487.

voice as a resolving echo: 'O who will show me those delights on high? *Echo. I*' (l. 1). As the only echo poem in *The Temple*, 'Heaven' is unique in its poetic form. Drury points out the poem's classical pedigree, and the fact that the echo poem underwent something of a revival during the early modern period; indeed, both Sir Philip Sidney and Herbert's eldest brother, Lord Edward of Cherbury, wrote echo poems.[70] In 'Heaven', Herbert references the Echo and Narcissus myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*c*. 8 AD), where Ovid's speaker claims to know that Echo was a 'mortal' nymph, who died of unrequited love for Narcissus, leaving behind only an echo.[71] Responding to the certainty of Echo's mortality detailed in Ovid, Herbert writes: 'Thou art mortall, all men know. *Echo. No*' (l. 2). In flatly rejecting Echo's mortality in this line, Herbert's poem moves from the classical notion of mortal death to the Christian conception of eternal life. 'Heaven' is, in other words, a poetic variation on the palinode (see Chapter One, pp. 64-5). In the next line of the poem, 'Wert thou not born among the trees and leaves? *Echo. Leaves*' (l. 3), Herbert punningly suggests that the Bible's '*Leaves*' will last forever: thereby privileging it over classical material, and suggesting that God's word will reverberate throughout history. This line also promotes the idea of God's voice being found in earthy surfaces – such as 'trees and leaves' – which might themselves produce echoes. The concordant rhyming of 'Heaven' – and the way echo wittily supplies the rhyme in each line – promotes God's voice existing for '*ever*' through scriptural revelation (l. 10), and emphasises correspondences between heaven and earth.

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[70] See Drury, *Music at Midnight,* pp. 334-6; and Rickey, *Utmost Art,* p. 33, who posits that Lord Edward Herbert's echo poem, 'Echo in a Church', was the earliest usage of 'echo' in English devotional poetry.

[71] See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. David Raeburn (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 109-16.

'Love (III)', it is often written, emphatically concludes *The Temple*. Herbert represents God's voice – troped as 'Love', in a move that echoes Sidney's 'Sonnet 19' – as that of a gracious courtier, responding to the speaker's reticence with 'You shall be he' (l. 8).[72] After this, 'Love' continues by stressing a foreknowledge of the speaker's intentions; Herbert writes, 'Love took my hand, and smiling did reply / Who made the eyes but I?' (ll. 11-12). This rhetorical question takes in the vast compass of the Genesis myth, yet also emphasises the intimacy between God the Father and the speaker by punning on 'I' ('eyes but I'). Having resolved the speaker's doubts, 'Love' concludes by pointing the speaker towards salvation, doing so in a way that is reminiscent of Christ:

> Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
> Go where it doth deserve.
> And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
> My deare, then I will serve.
> You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
> So I did sit and eat. (ll. 13-18)

In these lines, 'Love' – now, it emerges, an allegory for the voice of Christ – first alludes to the Passion ('who bore the blame?'), and then to the way in which Christians might receive Christ, in a contemporary liturgical context, through the eucharistic bread ('taste my meat'). The invitation 'taste my meat' derives principally from the setting for the eucharist in the Prayer Book, which is, in turn, derived from Jesus's words in Mark 14.22 ('Take, eat: this is my body').[73] Although there are also allusions to disparate biblical verses such as Psalm

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[72] The fact that Herbert grew up in an aristocratic environment in which courtesy was emphasised has been noted in two important critical studies: Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Marion W. Singleton, *God's Courtier: Configuring a Different Kind of Grace in Herbert's Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[73] For the setting for Communion in the 1559 Prayer Book ('Take, eate, this is my bodie, which is geven for you'), see *BCP*, p. 137.

78.25 ('Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full') and Song of Songs 2.3-4 ('I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit *was* sweet to my taste'), which both refer to heavenly banquets, the direct access granted to God through the eucharist is of paramount importance. This is especially so, given that 'Love' encourages the speaker to partake in his body whilst still able to speak, which promotes the idea of an ever-living Christ being available through the eucharist. Thus, at the end of 'Love (III)', Herbert's speaker achieves a rapturous Communion, enabled by the prompting voice of 'Love'.

## 5. Doubting God's Voice in *The Synagogue*

In recent decades, a number of critical studies have attended to the way that Herbert was imitated in the latter half of the seventeenth century.[74] The final section of this chapter reassesses the achievement of Christopher Harvey, a poet who – much like Herbert – invokes intervening divine voices within certain poems in his collection, *The Synagogue*. In the fullest existing consideration of Harvey's oeuvre, Judith Maltby uses his poetry as a lens through which to view shifting attitudes to Calvinist conformity – which came to be referred to as the 'Old Church' – during the turbulent 1640s and 1650s.[75] Although Maltby does

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[74] See Helen Wilcox, *Something Understood: The Reception and Influence of George Herbert to 1715* (Oxford D.Phil., 1984), which set out the parameters from which all assessments of Herbert's imitators have since proceeded. See also Robert H. Ray, 'Herbert's Seventeenth-Century Reputation: A Summary and New Consideration', *GHJ,* Vol. 9 (2), 1986, pp. 1-15; idem., *The Herbert Allusion Book: Allusions to George Herbert in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: Texts and Studies, 1986); Wilcox, '"Scribbling Under So Faire a Coppy": The Presence of Herbert in the Poetry of Vaughan's Contemporaries', *Scintilla,* Vol. 7 (1), 2003, pp. 185-200. For the imitation of Herbert in nonconformist literary cultures, see Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 200-9.

[75] See Judith Maltby, 'From Temple to Synagogue: "Old" Conformity in the 1640s-1650s and the Case of Christopher Harvey', in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.*

attend, at certain moments, to specific details in Harvey's writing – including, in her discussion of his poem 'Comfort in Extremity', to 'the divine voice' – Maltby's focus is chiefly historiographical.[76] What follows, like Maltby and many other critics, considers Harvey in relation to the Herbertian lyric model. I argue that *The Synagogue* can be read as an informed critique of Herbert's employment of God's voice to resolve the lyric speaker's anguish. Harvey follows Herbert by employing God's voice as a rhetorical construct, but the poems in which Harvey invokes a divine voice do not betray the same emphasis on the spiritual state of assurance. Such poems in *The Synagogue* can be said, often enough, to revert structurally towards states of doubt.

Harvey's poem 'Invitation' is indebted to Herbert's sacred poetics. It imitates the structure of short poems like 'The Quip' and 'The Quidditie', in which God's voice is invited to vouch for the speaker. In the poem's first stanza, Harvey's speaker encourages the 'Lord' to 'turn in to mee' (l. 1), before asserting that 'My heart's an homely place' (l. 2), which the experience of God's 'grace' (l. 4) might render more comfortable: we note the sense of domesticity promoted by such words as 'furnished' and 'dwelling' (ll. 5, 6).[77] Harvey's conception of the Christian 'heart' as a 'dwelling' – one might remark, here, on the close echo of Herbert's titular 'Temple' metaphor – is the extended metaphor which structures 'Invitation', and the speaker presents God's voice as the answer to sin's entrance ('I to sinne set ope the doore' (l. 9)). Harvey's

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*1560-1660,* ed. Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), pp. 88-120.

[76] Ibid., p. 112.

[77] No modern critical edition of *The Synagogue* has been published. All quotations are taken from the earliest early modern edition of Harvey's poetry, *The Synagogue, or, The Shadow of the Temple* (London, 1640), and references will be given parenthetically by line number in the main text.

speaker affords God the 'right' to intrude: the exclamative 'Oh dispossesse him, Lord' (l. 14) is reminiscent of Herbert's refrain in 'The Quip', 'But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me' (l. 8). After this, the speaker pleadingly asks God to 'say, *this heart is mine*' (l. 15), attempting to put words into God's mouth; however, Harvey's use of the imperative mood implies that God's voice has not yet intervened. The final stanza of 'Invitation' departs most obviously from the model of 'The Quip' through the speaker's unfulfilled request for God to speak:

> Now say to sinne, depart;
> And *sonne, give me thine heart*.
> Thou; that by saying *let it be*, didst make it;
> Canst, if thou wilt, by saying *give't me*, take it. (ll. 19-22)

In this stanza, the speaker implores God to resolve the conflicts instilled within their 'heart' at the beginning of the poem. The phrase '*sonne, give me thine heart*', directly transposed from Proverbs 23.26, is represented as if it were the speech of God the Father, as is '*let it be*', which nods towards Genesis 1.3 ('Let there be light'). However, the frustrated tone of the stanza implies that the speaker has not yet been reassured by God. In the poem's final line, the request, 'if thou wilt', implies that these divine voices have not yet interceded.

The following lyric in *The Synagogue*, 'Comfort in Extremitie' – which Maltby positions as a counterpart to Herbert's 'Love (III)' – is also quite similar in structure to Herbert's poem 'Dialogue'.[78] In the opening stanza, the speaker laments 'Alas! my Lord is going; / Oh my woe!' (ll. 1-2). Where, in 'Dialogue', the speaker stubbornly asserts that they have given up on God's offer of salvation, here, Harvey's speaker repeatedly calls for God to 'stay' (ll. 6, 9). In the second stanza, a voice resembling that of Christ enters to offer assurance:

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[78] See Maltby, 'From Temple to Synagogue', p. 112.

> *Cheere up thy drooping spirits;*
> *I am here.*
> *My all-sufficient merits*
> *Shall appeare*
> *Before the throne of glory*
> *In thy stead;*
> *I'le put into thy story,*
> *What I did.*
> *List up thine eyes, sad soule, and see*
> *Thy Saviour here. Loe, I am he.* (ll. 11-20)

In this stanza, Harvey's Christ intervenes to resolve the speaker's anxiety about divine presence. Harvey's poetic diction in voicing Christ converges around the idea of availability – of note here are such seemingly insignificant words as '*here*', '*appeare*', and '*put*'. The phrase '*all-sufficient merits*' also warrants further comment. As we have already seen, the noun 'merit' was a significant term within early modern Calvinist discourse, conveying the idea that no-one deserved salvation except through Christ's 'merit' (see this chapter, pp. 183-4). By prefixing '*merits*' with the qualifier '*all-sufficient*', Harvey – in a contention which echoes Herbert's orthodox theological beliefs – suggests that Christ alone is necessary in obtaining salvation. However, in the final stanza of 'Comfort in Extremitie', Harvey adapts Herbert's dialogic lyric structure by intermixing human and divine voices; this is an important way in which, as Maltby posits, the poem can also be said to mimic Herbert's 'Love (III)'. In the final four lines, the speaker stresses their unworthiness before God through self-abnegating nouns ('sinfulnesse'; 'loathsomnesse' (ll. 22, 24)), before Harvey's voice of Christ responds – in another consciously Herbertian touch – by reminding them of his Passion ('*I'le take / Thy sinnes on me*' (ll. 25-6)). Thus, the poem, in which Christ is afforded the last word ('*now I take thee*' (l. 30)), echoes Herbert by representing the state of assurance in its conclusion.

In his poem 'Inmates', Harvey plays on the interdenominational notion of the dialogue within the Christian heart (see my introduction, pp. 39-44). At the opening of the poem, Harvey writes: 'A House I had (a heart I mean) so wide / And full of spatious roomes on every side' (ll. 1-2). Where Herbert's poems such as 'The Bag' emphasise Christ's constant availability, here, Harvey's speaker suggests that the 'heart' has room to host several competing voices. In 'Inmates', these inhabitants will struggle for dominance within the 'House' of the 'heart', which – as the title suggests – is represented as a prison. Within the second stanza, the first of these voices to be introduced is the figure of '*Corruption*' (l. 10), who 'each houre… brought forth [others]' (l. 13). The speaker itemises the torment caused by these various 'Inmates' at some length, before offering a solution: 'At last I learnt, there was no way but one, / A friend must doe it for me' (ll. 43-4). In these lines, Harvey employs conspicuously Herbertian terminology, both in the edifying idea of spiritual learning ('At last I learnt'), and in the suggestion that a 'friend must doe it'. The noun 'friend', as we have repeatedly seen, is used throughout Herbert's *The Temple* to connote Christ. The remainder of this stanza of 'Inmates' confirms that Christ is the 'friend' referred to: we note, most particularly, the lines 'His heart was pierc'd, out of his side there ran / Sinnes corrasives, restoratives for man' (ll. 48-9). This couplet echoes Herbert's eucharistic focus by suggesting that Christ's blood is restorative. Having long foregrounded the entrance of Christ's voice, when it does – eventually – speak in 'Inmates', it is represented by Harvey as merely a single word: 'Bountie said, *Come*' (l. 53) [my emphasis]. However, in a telling modification of Herbert's poetic method, this voice does not herald the resolution of the poem. The next stanza articulates further doubt: 'But yet, alas!

/ We are not parted. She is where she was' (ll. 57-8). Thus, at some remove from poems in *The Temple* which – to invoke Read's useful term – 'perform' the process by which assurance is obtained by the speaker, in 'Inmates', Harvey performs the workings of doubt.[79] Harvey is particularly alert to the repetitive nature of this process; at the poem's conclusion, he writes 'O speak the word, and make these inmates flee' (l. 104), suggesting that the intrusion of the divine voice might only provide temporary relief.

Harvey constructs a comparable structural movement towards doubt in his short lyric, 'The Losse'. The poem begins in a state of assurance: 'The match is made between my love and me: / And therefore glad and merry now I'le be' (ll. 1-2). In these lines, Harvey adapts the love lyric for sacred purposes, given that the phrase 'my love and me' refers to the speaker's relationship with God.[80] Once again, Harvey's dominant poetic model is Herbert. At the *volta* of 'The Losse', the speaker claims that they have heard a voice: 'I knew the voyce, my Lords' (l. 9). This line seems to evidence an uncharacteristic certainty about hearing God's voice. However, this certainty swiftly lapses into doubt, as in the following line: 'I lookt and spied each where, and lowdly cry'd / My *deare*; but none reply'd' (l. 10). As noted in my introduction (see pp. 31-2), Ryrie has recently written on the uncertainty about hearing God's voice that was common within early modern English Protestantism, noting that 'such distancing language is absolutely standard when English Puritans write about hearing the

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[79] See Read, *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination*, p. 114.

[80] In this regard, Harvey can be said, much like Herbert, to display an interest in the conventions of sacred parody. For more on Herbert's adaptation of secular concerns for sacred purposes, see Helen Wilcox and Richard Todd, ed., *George Herbert: Sacred and Profane* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995).

voice of God'.[81] Thus, Harvey's hesitancy, in 'The Losse' and other poems in *The Synagogue*, distinguishes his work from Herbert's, given that *The Temple* displays a greater sense of assurance about the speaker hearing God's voice.

## 6. Conclusion

In summing up, we might return to the idea of *The Temple* as a collection of 'spiritual Conflicts' between God and the poetic speaker, as outlined in Walton's early biography of Herbert.[82] This famous statement has some overlap with a prominent modern reading of Herbert's poetic oeuvre. Various formalist critics have argued that Herbert's lyric poetry enacts a structural movement towards resolution. Seamus Heaney and Helen Vendler point, in their respective studies of Herbert, towards '[Herbert's] dialectic of thesis, antithesis, synthesis', and to the poet's 'theoretical experiments in mutuality'.[83] These readings communicate an important truth about Herbert's poetry, which as we have seen, can certainly be said to be preoccupied with formal issues of 'synthesis' and 'mutuality'. However, in neglecting to address the religious contexts which underpin Herbert's poetry, Heaney and Vendler do not go far enough in unravelling this tit-for-tat dynamic.

This chapter has argued that in *The Temple*, Herbert's 'spiritual Conflicts' are often resolved through the employment of a rhetorical voice of God, which can take the form of God the Father, Christ, or indeed a hybrid combination of these two voices. When God's voice speaks out in *The Temple*,

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[81] Ryrie, 'Hearing God's Voice', p. 54.

[82] Walton, *The Life of Mr. George Herbert,* p. 74.

[83] See Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry: Oxford Lectures* (London: Faber & Faber, 1995), pp. 16-17; Helen Vendler, *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 30.

for the most part, it echoes scripture very closely. In this respect, the closing instruction given by the possibly divine voice in 'Jordan (II)' – '*Copie out onely that*' (l. 18) – can be read as an informing principle of Herbert's sacred poetics. The subtle deviations that the poet does make from scripture, when representing God's voice – as in Christ's affirmation of God's outspoken 'delight' in his redemption during 'The Sacrifice' (l. 206) – betray much about the poet's theological stance, which departs from hard-line Calvinist belief in predestination through the implication that all Christians might have the opportunity to hear God's voice. This assurance about the poetic speaker hearing the voice of God seems to have been understood, by one of Herbert's imitators, Christopher Harvey, as a defining characteristic of his verse. Whilst modern scholars have often considered Harvey to be a slavish imitator of Herbert, Harvey's collection *The Synagogue* might, instead, be reconsidered as an engaged critique of Herbert's oeuvre, where the intervention of the rhetorical voice of God is much more problematised. In Harvey's much-maligned verse, there is a hesitancy in presenting God's voice as intervening. Indeed, despite the entrance of various divine voices, poems such as 'Invitation', 'Inmates', and 'The Losse' loop back into states of spiritual anguish, from which the Herbertian lyric seems much keener to escape.

## 4.  Heavenly Voices in English Prophetic Writing, *c*. 1630-1660

In his treatise *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes comments on the prevalence of sectarian authors assuming prophetic voices during the Civil War period:

> A man that hath practised to speak by drawing in of his breath, (which kind of men in antient time were called *Ventriloqui,*) and so make the weaknesse of his voice seem to proceed, not from the weak impulsion of the organs of Speech, but from distance of place, is able to make very many men beleeve it is a voice from Heaven, whatsoever he please to tell them.[1]

In this passage, Hobbes's scepticism about prophesying is readily apparent: his loaded phrase, 'make very many men beleeve', confers doubt on the authenticity of such ventriloquized '[voices] from Heaven'. Whilst, as Hobbes suggests, there were an unusual number of prophets around during the Civil War years, prophesying was not an entirely new development. Alexandra Walsham, among others, has pointed to the emergent of lay prophecy as a prominent force in late Elizabethan culture (see my introduction, pp. 34-5).[2] Nonetheless, in articulating his displeasure about prophesying, Hobbes is alert to the striking multivocality which characterises the numerous prophetic texts authored at around the time of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum. For Hobbes, the prophet can 'make the weaknesse of his voice seem to proceed… from distance of place', a formulation which suggests he understands vocal displacement to be central to this art of divine mimicry. Surveying a range of prophecies authored during the mid-seventeenth century, this chapter poses a question

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[1] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck, p. 304.

[2] See Walsham, '"Frantick Hacket"', pp. 27-66; idem*.,* '"Out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings": Prophecy, Puritanism, and Childhood in Elizabethan Suffolk', *The Church and Childhood*, ed. Diane Wood, *Studies in Church History,* Vol. 31 (1), 1994, pp. 285-99. For a general account of revived interest in prophecy during the sixteenth century, with attention to continental reformers, see Pak, *Reformation of Prophecy*.

prompted by the Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of 'the word in language [being] half someone else's': namely, whose voice actually speaks in early modern prophetic texts?[3] In this chapter, taking my cue from both Hobbes and Bakhtin, I explore the rhetorical strategies through which lay prophetic authors assumed heavenly voices to promote their various political agendas. In doing so, I argue that the mid-seventeenth-century English prophet is – often enough – mediating the voice of an existing biblical prophet: commonly invoked models during this period include Daniel, Ezekiel, and John the Revelator. In this body of writing, it is rarely the case that God's voice is represented directly, for as we shall discern, multiple layers of scriptural mediation tend to be at work.

Seventeenth-century radical religion has been the subject of much scholarly literature in recent decades. An important precursor to this upsurge is the work of Geoffrey F. Nuttall, which charted the different ways in which the Holy Spirit was often thought to be channelled in seventeenth-century English culture.[4] Nuttall drew attention to congregational inflections in Puritan faith and experience, and his scholarship remains a staging-post in its suggestion that early modern Protestant experience was by no means uniform. Further to this, Christopher Hill's seminal study *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972) gave many of the sectarian figures considered within this chapter a high profile, and this book – although sometimes argued with today for its largely dichotomous separation of radical and mainstream Protestant religious cultures – is another

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[3] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 293-4.

[4] Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946); idem., *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957).

crucial reference point which this chapter builds on.[5] In recent decades, scholarship has mapped the intellectual terrain of women prophets;[6] the historical contexts pertaining to child prophecy;[7] and the fact that lower-class men also became prophets in greater numbers during the Civil War years.[8] What follows builds on this predominantly historicist body of scholarship from a more formal perspective. This chapter focuses – with specific reference to the prophetic writings of Lady Eleanor Davies, the women prophets of the Fifth Monarchist sect, Puritan maids, uneducated men, and the Ranter Abiezer Coppe – on the malleable idea of the early modern prophet as a 'vessel' for God's voice.[9] It presents figures at the margins of the mainstream English reformed

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[5] Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1972 [repr. 1991]). Hill's work has been powerfully critiqued by Nicholas McDowell, who argues in *The English Radical Imagination: Culture, Religion, and Revolution, 1630-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003) that the radicals of the mid-seventeenth century were far more engaged with the 'intellectual culture of the educated elite' than Hill might have liked to admit; see pp. 1-5.

[6] The best existing accounts of mid-seventeenth-century women prophets include: Elizabeth Bouldin, *Women Prophets and Radical Protestantism in the British Atlantic World, 1640-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Teresa Feroli, *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2006); Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997); Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); Esther S. Cope, *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never Soe Mad a Ladie* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

[7] Recent studies of child prophecy in early modern England – which I have used in this chapter – include: Anna French, *Children of Wrath: Possession, Prophecy and the Young in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Susan Hardman Moore, '"Such Perfecting of Praise Out of the Mouth of a Babe": Sarah Wight as Child Prophet', *The Church and Childhood*, ed. Diane Wood, *Studies in Church History,* Vol. 31 (1), 1994, pp. 313-24; Nigel Smith, 'A Child Prophet: Martha Hatfield as *The Wise Virgin*', in *Children and their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie*, ed. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 79-93.

[8] See David R. Como, *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), esp. chapters 15-16; McDowell, *The English Radical Imagination*; Ariel Hessayon, *'Gold Tried in the Fire': The Prophet TheaurauJohn Tany and the English Revolution* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[9] The idea of the prophet as a 'vessel' for God's voice was commonplace in mid-seventeenth-century England. For early English Protestant treatments of this pervasive construction, see

Church making the case, in strikingly different ways, that biblical precedent might be adapted by anyone, irrespective of their gender, age, or social degree.

## 1. Lady Eleanor Davies and Maternal Revelation

During the seventeenth century, the English Church refused to recognise women as priests or preachers. This was nothing new: women had been barred from becoming priests since the beginnings of Christianity, although women deacons and women's ministry had been permitted by the early Church.[10] The early modern prohibition of women becoming members of the ministry was justified by the Bible: in 1 Corinthians 14.34, Paul writes 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law'. As a means of getting round this injunction, at around the time of the Civil Wars, England witnessed an upsurge in women who took to prophesying. Crucially, this mode of divine oratory was not forbidden to women by scripture: Exodus 15.20 provides the example of 'Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, [who] took a timbrel in her hand'. Even though mid-seventeenth-century English women could prophesy on biblical authority, their ability to do so was only begrudgingly acknowledged. It was commonly held, as in the prominent nonconformist minister William Greenhill's 'exposition' on certain chapters of Ezekiel (1649), that women were 'false prophetesses', a characterisation which was informed by the primordial description of Eve's seduction by the devil's wiles in Genesis

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Robert Horne, *Life and Death. Foure Sermons* (London, 1613), p. 26 ('This is not to make our bodie a vessell for God'); Roger Ley, *The Bruising of the Serpents Head. A Sermon Preached at Pauls Crosse September 9. 1621* (London, 1622), p. 39 ('For as the soule is Gods vessell').

[10] For a recent account of women's leadership in the early Christian Church, see Susan E. Hylen, *A Modest Apostle: Thecla and the History of Women in the Early Church* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), chapter 2.

3.[11] The idea of 'false prophetesses', which gained much traction as a term of abuse during the 1640s, was also derived from classical precedent, and the way in which Sibylline prophecies came under scrutiny for their purported inaccuracies.[12] The various pejorative cultural perceptions of seventeenth-century women prophets should, however, be separated from the radical content of their prophecies. In important studies, both Diane Watt and Phyllis Mack have drawn attention to the importance of the Virgin Mary as a prophetic model for Lady Eleanor Davies.[13] What might be said to supplement existing work is that, in suggesting that ordinary mothers might serve as prophetic vessels, Davies feminises her inspired voice, which is a composite of the voices of different biblical prophets. This was a radical undertaking in a society where the concept of God as a patriarch was normative.

Davies was an aristocrat, her first husband being the eminent courtier Sir John Davies, her second Sir Archibald Douglas, a man who dubiously claimed to be a descendent of King James I.[14] Davies's elevated social status gave her access to a level of education habitually reserved for elite men, which took in Greek and Latin, some classical literature and the Church Fathers, as well as contemporary English thinkers who wrote on the heretical Christian doctrine of universal salvation, such as John Goodwin and the Digger Gerrard

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[11] William Greenhill, *An Exposition Continued Upon the Sixt, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Chapters of the Prophet Ezekiel* (London, 1649), p. 555.
[12] For an overview of the 'sibyl' in antiquity, see Jessica L. Malay, *Prophecy and Sibylline Imagery in the Renaissance: Shakespeare's Sibyls* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 4-31.
[13] See especially Watt, *Secretaries of God*, pp. 148-55; Mack, *Visionary Women*, p. 92. More recent considerations of Davies, which are alert to her radical political beliefs, include Rachel Rode Schaefer, 'Animating the Machinery: Prophecy and Lady Eleanor Davies', *PS,* Vol. 38 (2), 2016, pp. 121-36; Katharine Gillespie, *Women Writing the English Republic, 1625-1681* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), chapter 1.
[14] Diane Watt, 'Davies [*née* Touchet; *other married name* Douglas], Lady Eleanor (1590-1652)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7233> [accessed 2 September 2019].

Winstanley.[15] Aristocratic privilege lent Davies an independence that facilitated the writing and publishing of almost seventy pamphlets between 1625 and 1652, the year of her death; this is an unprecedented output for a mid-seventeenth-century Englishwoman. In respect to women prophets, the idea of authorship is a difficult one, but one which is important to unpack before proceeding. Davies's solo authorship of her work distinguishes her from many other women prophets of the period – such as Anna Trapnel, Sarah Wight, and Martha Hatfield – whose oral prophecies were often transcribed by men before publication. For these other prophets, the question of prophetic voice is even more vexed, as their mediation of scripture is, in turn, mediated by a male hand. Davies, by contrast, can be considered an author in a more modern sense, given that she oversaw the publishing of her writings herself. Esther S. Cope writes that '[Davies's] aristocratic birth and attitudes remained an important part of her prophetic identity, and she published her prophecies herself rather than through the mediation of a clergyman or some other man'.[16] Thus Davies, more so than other women prophets of the mid-seventeenth century, possessed unusual authority over the form in which her audience encountered her writings.

Davies claimed that her first prophetic experience occurred at her family residence of Englefield Manor on 28 July 1625 – shortly after Charles became King of Britain. According to the tract *Her Appeal to the High Court* (1641), which was published shortly before the outbreak of Civil War, on this date Davies was 'awakened *by a voyce from HEAEVN* [*sic*]', which '[uttered] these

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[15] For an overview of Davies's education and formation as a prophet, see Cope, *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 10-13.

[16] See Esther S. Cope, 'Introduction', in *Prophetic Writings of Lady Eleanor Davies*, ed. Esther S. Cope (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xiv.

words. "There is Ninteene yeares and a halfe to the day of *Judgement,* and you as the meek Virgin'" (80-1).[17] Throughout her career, Davies identified this instructive '*voyce*' as belonging to the Old Testament prophet Daniel, who she thought had conferred prophetic identity upon her as a reincarnated 'meek Virgin'.[18] Davies's lifelong identification with Daniel is a prominent instance of the seventeenth-century prophet mediating the voice of a biblical prophet, instead of God's direct voice. As Rachel Rode Schaefer notes, Davies's mediation of Daniel is perhaps motivated by the anti-monarchical nature of Daniel's prophesying, which, in Daniel 5, '[critically compares] Belshazzar to [his father] Nebuchadnezzar'.[19] For example, in Davies's late tract *Her Appeal from the Court to the Camp* (1649), which was written around the time of Charles's trial, Davies takes Daniel 12.10 as her key-note text ('Many shall be purified, and made white, and tryed' (245)). Davies employs Daniel's prediction of trouble for Israel, in Daniel 12.11, to refer to the turbulent contemporary political situation: 'And from the time the *Daily* [sacrifice] shal be taken away; and the abomination that maketh desolate set up' (248). The initial revelatory experience at Englefield – in which Daniel's voice was purportedly heard – inspired much of Davies's subsequent writing: notably her first printed tract, *A Warning to the Dragon* (1625), which was presented to Charles by hand. In the 'Generall Epistle' of that work, Davies asserts that God 'powreth out his Spirit upon his handmaidens' (2). This reference to 'handmaidens' draws on the fact

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[17] Lady Eleanor Davies, 'Her Appeal to the High Court', in *Prophetic Writings*. All references to Davies's prophetic writing are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

[18] For an account of Davies's lifelong identification with the prophet Daniel, and belief that she heard Daniel's voice at Englefield Manor, see Cope, 'Introduction', p. xii ('[Davies] was consistent in her account of the circumstances in which she had heard him speak').

[19] See Schaefer, 'Animating the Machinery', p. 134.

that, in the Bible, Mary refers to herself as the 'handmaid of the Lord' in Luke 1.38. However, Davies's use of the pluralised noun 'handmaidens' affirms that she considers all inspired women – and not just Mary – to be suitable vessels for the voice of God.

Although Davies was active as a prophet during the 1620s and 1630s, she did not issue prophecies with any regularity until the 1640s, the decade when Civil War began.[20] In Davies's prophetic tract *Her Blessing* (1644), dedicated to 'HER BELOVED *DAUGHTER*, The Right HONORABLE *LUCY*, COUNTESSE OF Huntingdon' (115), the prophet uses her authority to attack Charles's wife, the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria, whom she considered responsible for the outbreak of Civil War in Britain. In *Her Blessing*, drawing on the vision of 'another beast, a second, like to a bear' in Daniel 7.5, Davies tropes the queen as a 'She-Beare' who has caused 'Three devided KINGDOMS rent in peices [*sic*]' (118). Given the claims of Stuart absolutism, and the commonplace early modern belief in the king as God's vicegerent, Davies's sense that Henrietta Maria wields unwarrantable maternal power is highly charged. Referring again to the queen, Davies proclaims in the next paragraph:

> *Her MOTTO the Mother not of the* Living *Child,* but of Divissions *and* Massacres, *where* inclusive the ador'd *Sacrament* called the *MASSE*: Thus uttered Her Voice, *Let it bee neither Thine*, nor *Mine, but devide it: destroy it utterly, &c.* (118)

In this provocative statement, Davies alludes to the Old Testament story of the Judgment of King Solomon in 1 Kings 3.16-28, during which, in verse 3.26, the

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[20] For Davies's prophetic flowering during the 1640s – due, in part, to the fact that she was consigned to Bedlam in 1636 and could not publish for the remainder of the 1630s – see Esther S. Cope, '"Dame Eleanor Davies Never Soe Mad a Ladie?"', *HLQ*, Vol. 50 (2), 1987, pp. 133-44.

true mother cries 'give her the living child, and in no wise slay it', whilst the false mother responds, 'Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide *it*'. Following ancient Hebraic tradition, 1 Kings was popularly ascribed to the prophet Jeremiah during the early modern period.[21] Thus, Davies channels the voice of a biblical prophet considered to be railing against societal injustice – and from the margins (see my introduction, pp. 24-5) – in support of her denigration of Henrietta Maria's maternal power. By suggesting that Henrietta Maria is not the '*Mother*' of the 'Living *Child*', and by representing the voice of the queen as that of the false mother in 1 Kings 3.26 ('Thus uttered Her Voice, *Let it bee neither Thine,* nor *Mine*'), Davies attacks the queen's agency as a means of legitimising the more doubtful elements in her own.

Later in the same tract, Davies refers to 'Mother and Daughter' – specifically to the queen and her mother, Marie de Medici – before renouncing Henrietta Maria's offspring: the queen is troped as 'the nursing mother of *DRAGONS*' (121). In the latter phrase, Davies adapts the direct voicing of God in Isaiah 49.23 – 'And Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers' – and infuses it with the apocalyptic rhetoric of Revelation 12.3 ('great red dragon'); once more, Davies does this to denigrate the queen's authority as the mother of Charles's heir. In *Her Blessing*, layered prophetic voices from scripture are employed to support a radical political design. There is a sense that, in challenging Henrietta Maria's superior maternal authority, biblical precedent must be relied on to authorise Davies's anti-royalist polemic.

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[21] For the popular attribution of 1 Kings to the prophet Jeremiah during the early modern period, see Hermann Spieckermann, 'Former Prophets: The Deuteronomistic History', in *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible,* ed. Leo G. Purdue (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 337-52.

In the address 'To the Reader' attached to her late tract *The Restitution of Prophecy* (1651), Davies employs maternal language to promote the difficulty of issuing prophetic texts:

> This *Babe*, object to their scorn, for speaking the *truth*, informing of things future, notwithstanding thus difficult to be *fathered* or *licensed.* That *incission* to the *quick*, hath under gone; without their *Benediction*, in these plain *Swathe-bands*, though commended unto thy hands. (344)

This extract, which employs the language of religious ritualism to play with notions of birth and circumcision, offers a concise summary of Davies's significance as a prophet. Her numerous tracts, which problematise male assistance in composition ('difficult to be *fathered*'), were almost never officially sanctioned by the English government ('or *licensed*'). Nonetheless, they were illicitly published ('without their *Benediction*'), and Davies's self-conception as a maternal vessel for God's voice is a landmark in the tradition of seventeenth-century English prophetic writing.[22] The fact that Davies began writing during the mid-1620s means she serves as an important precursor to other women prophets writing during the Civil War period, although there is no evidence that Davies was widely read by her many successors. Davies's unusually privileged position within seventeenth-century English society

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[22] Although she was born around one hundred years after Davies's death, a comparison can be drawn between Davies and the Devonshire millenarian Joanna Southcott (1750-1814). Like Davies, Southcott conceived of herself as a maternal vessel for God's voice: claiming whilst on her deathbed, drawing on Revelation 12.5, that she would give birth to 'a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron'; see Jane Shaw, 'Joanna Southcott and Mabel Barltrop', in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field,* ed. Yvonne Sherwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 45-59 (p. 45). It is also of note that, in her prophetic tract *The Answer of the Lord to the Powers of Darkness* (1802), Southcott affirms that the voice of Christ spoke to her directly of the exceptional faith of women: 'How I answer thee of women: they followed Me to My Cross, and stood weeping to see Me crucified; they were the first at my sepulchre to see My resurrection: now I will not refuse women'; see Joanna Southcott, *The Answer of the Lord,* repr. in Alice Seymour, *The Express,* Part 1, Vol. 2 (London: Simpkin and Co., 1909), p. 231.

renders her a useful comparison with the women prophets of the revolutionary Fifth Monarchist sect, the most notable of whom were Mary Cary and Anna Trapnel.

## 2. The Fifth Monarchy Women

Any consideration of Cary and Trapnel as prophets must first refer to the millenarian Fifth Monarchist sect, from which they emerged in the early 1650s. Fifth Monarchism, one of the many radical Protestant sects that arose during the Civil War years, was inspired by – and derived its name from – Daniel's vision of the falls of four corrupt empires. These corrupt empires were interpreted by Fifth Monarchists as Babylon, Assyria, Greece, and Rome (extending, it was thought, to the early modern Catholic Church).[23] Fifth Monarchists believed that these kingdoms would imminently be succeeded by the fifth and everlasting monarchy – beginning with the Last Judgement, and culminating in the establishment of the New Jerusalem – presided over by King Jesus. The group, spearheaded by exhortative preachers such as Christopher Feake, John Simpson, and John Rogers, converged around the congregation of All-Hallows the Great in Thames Street, London. The movement fostered an environment in which disenfranchised social groups – particularly women, from across the class spectrum – felt able to prophesy. Fifth Monarchist women could not prophesy as leaders of their Church, as stipulated by Pauline interdict, but instead, as vessels for God's voice. In her prophetic writing, Mary Cary invokes various scriptural voices with deliberate ambiguity, making it difficult to discern whose

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[23] This overview of Fifth Monarchist beliefs is derived from Bernard S. Capp's seminal study, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), pp. 19-35.

voice is speaking in her polemical attacks upon such authorities as King Charles and the Catholic Church. Trapnel's prophecies, by contrast, demonstrate a much more direct engagement with God's voice speaking through the Bible.

Cary was an important figure within the Fifth Monarchist movement, so much so that Jane Baston has argued she was 'instrumental in initiating the Fifth Monarchist programme'.[24] In the address 'To the Reader' in her most influential prophetic tract, *The Little Horns Doom & Downfall* (1651), Cary writes: 'I am a very weake, and unworthy instrument, and have not done this worke by any strength of my owne' (A7r).[25] In the first clause of this sentence, Cary draws on pejorative notions of feminine weakness to foreground her suitability to prophesy, although it should be mentioned that it was exemplary for both men and women to refer to themselves as 'weak' in a religious context.[26] Cary affords God ultimate agency in her prophesying ('not… by any strength of my owne'), and employs the noun 'instrument' to emphasise her supposed vacuity. In *The Little Horns Doom*, Cary invokes the voice of Daniel to justify an account of the imminent arrival of the New Jerusalem; David Loewenstein has argued that Cary's identification with Daniel stems from the fact that Fifth Monarchists regularly interpreted the 'little horn' of Daniel 7.8 – belonging to the most terrible of the four great beasts within Daniel's prophecy – as directly applicable

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[24] See Jane Baston, 'History, Prophecy, and Interpretation: Mary Cary and Fifth Monarchism', *PS,* Vol. 21 (3), 1998, pp. 1-18 (p. 2). The most detailed recent accounts of Cary are Paula McQuade, *Catechisms and Women's Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), chapter 6; and Katharine Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women Writers and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 215-61, which examines issues of toleration and preaching in relation to the 'public sphere' in seventeenth-century England.
[25] Mary Cary, *The Little Horns Doom & Downfall* (London, 1651). All references to Cary's writing are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.
[26] See Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 3.

to the monarchy of the late King Charles.[27] In the epigraph of *The Little Horns Doom*, Cary cites Daniel 7.27 as her exegetical text: 'And the Kingdom, and Dominion, and the greatnesse of the Kingdome under the whole heaven, shall be given unto the people of the Saints of the most High' (1). By invoking this verse from Daniel, Cary – much like Davies – harnesses the voice of another biblical prophet, rather than God directly, drawn by Daniel's resistance to tyrannical forms of governance. Within the main tract, Cary extends Daniel's conception of God's encroaching 'Dominion' by mapping this verse onto a contemporary reference, considering the way in which Charles lost land during the Civil War skirmishes of the previous decade. For example, Cary writes that 'he lost City after City, and Towne after Towne, and County after County, untill he came to have *dominion* over none at all; but his *dominion* was wholly taken away, and consumed and destroyed unto the end' (40) [my emphasis]. In this sentence, the employment of the noun 'dominion' – which is repeated throughout the tract – emphasises that Daniel's defiant voice has conferred authority upon Cary's anti-royalist polemic.

In the supplementary tract annexed to *The Little Horns Doom*, entitled *A New and More Exact Mappe* (1651), Cary adapts scriptural precedent to foreground her own multivocal prophesying. In one notable instance, referring to Revelation 11.15 ('there were great voices in heaven'), Cary suggests that the contemporary English prophet might mediate an array of heavenly voices:

> They were voyces; it was not only the single voice of one, but
> they are voices; it is the voice of many in heaven, many among
> the Saints: And they are not the whimsicall notions of unsound

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[27] See David Loewenstein, 'Scriptural Exegesis, Female Prophecy, and Radical Politics in Mary Cary', *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* Vol. 46 (1), 2006, pp. 133-53, esp. pp. 137-9.

and rotten men, but they are voices in heaven, voyces of reall Saints […] Being great voices, argues first, that they are not some poore weak suppositions, or may be's [*sic*]: Nor secondly, are they some weake faint sayings; but they are great, that is, effectuall, convincing, and unquestionable speakings: such as shall be heard, and be received, and be beleeved among the Saints… (95)

Following Revelation 11.15, plural 'voyces' from heaven are referred to. Cary suggests not only that one might hear the voice of God directly ('not only the single voice of one'), but also the myriad voices of other subordinate 'Saints'. As the argument of the passage progresses, the prophet seeks to combat scepticism about the validity of hearing voices, stating that despite 'the whimsicall notions of unsound and rotten men' these voices are 'of *reall* Saints' [my emphasis].[28] Most intriguingly, in the last sentence of the given passage, Cary asserts that the uncertain provenance of these heavenly voices does not qualify their authority: 'they are great, that is, effectuall, convincing, and unquestionable speakings'. Of note, here, is the adjective 'effectuall': this noun, according to the *OED*, connoted a 'prayer' that was 'earnest, urgent' throughout the early modern period.[29] Thus, Cary suggests that ambiguous heavenly voices, as mediated by the prophet, might communicate urgent messages from God.

In what follows in *A New and More Exact Mappe*, Cary gives further detail as to the radical purpose of these heard 'voyces':

[They] shall be spoken with such authority of Scripture, and such demonstration of the spirit, and power going along with them; and these great voyces shall have a double effect: first, they shall minister joy and gladnesse to the Saints; and secondly they shall minister terrour to the Popish party, for it speakes and works their ruine, and third woe that comes upon them. (95-6)

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[28] For early modern English Protestant scepticism about hearing divine voices, see Ryrie, 'Hearing God's Voice', pp. 49-74.

[29] 'effectual', *OED,* adj., 3a.

In this extract, Cary begins by stressing that these heavenly 'voyces' may occasion 'a double effect'. The adjective 'double' foregrounds the layered quality of the 'voyces', suggesting not only that they are ambiguous, but that they might elicit more than one response when heard. Towards the end of the passage, Cary spells out the possible effects of these plural 'voyces' to her reader. In the first instance, they 'minister joy… to the Saints' – the noun 'Saints' being a reference to the Fifth Monarchist milieu in which Cary mixed, given that Fifth Monarchists used the word to refer to those who were numbered among God's chosen elect.[30] In the second instance, they 'minister terrour to the Popish party'. The prominent strain of anti-popery seems to work against Cary's idea of saints being aurally accessible to mortals, which extends the Catholic practice of praying to saints.[31] Despite Cary's millenarian Protestantism, then, which strikes out against contemporary Catholicism, she is reliant on established conventions of Catholic devotion in thinking about diverse heavenly voices being mediated. In this context, Cary's repetition of the verb 'minister' is also worth commenting upon. Psalm 103.21 refers to the hosts of God as 'ministers': a resonance which Cary picks up on by ascribing an authority to these heavenly 'voyces' which they would not ordinarily have been granted within contemporary English Protestantism.

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[30] See, for example, William Aspinwall, *A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy, or Kingdome, that Shortly is to Come into the World* (London, 1653), p. 4 ('Now the Saints who shall exercise and mannage this supremacy of power, in the first rise of this fifth Monarchy').

[31] For an overview of the Catholic practice of praying to saints, see Virginia Reinburg, 'Praying to Saints in the Late Middle Ages', in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography,* ed. Sandro Sticca (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), pp. 269-82. For an account of how saints were flexibly used, by early modern Catholics, as 'tropes [and] discursive tools', see also Simon Ditchfield, 'Thinking with Saints: Sanctity and Society in the Early Modern World', *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 35 (3), 2009, pp. 552-84 (p. 554).

The Fifth Monarchist prophet Anna Trapnel came to public prominence a few years later, in January 1654, largely because she underwent a trance at Whitehall, the centre of Oliver Cromwell's government. In *The Cry of a Stone*, one of two published accounts of that ecstatic experience, the tract's anonymous 'relator' intimates that 'anything that pretends to be a witness, a voice, or a message from God to this nation, shall not be held unworthy the hearing and consideration of any, because it is administered by a simple and unlikely hand' (2).[32] This statement indicates that Trapnel was considered a suitable vessel for '[messages] from God', despite her apparent lack of education. The fact that *The Cry of a Stone* was authored by a 'relator', and not by Trapnel herself, demonstrates that Trapnel did not initially possess the authority to prophesy in print on her own, a fact which distinguishes her from both Cary and Davies. That said, given the decidedly public context in which her prophesying took place, it would have been – in practical terms – rather difficult for Trapnel to write whilst mediating God's voice. Despite this, it is now thought that Trapnel could read and write herself.[33]

At the opening of *The Cry of a Stone*, the tract's anonymous 'relator' transcribes Trapnel's purportedly autobiographical account of her prophetic awakening:

> From this time, for a whole year after, the Lord made use of me for the refreshing of afflicted and tempted ones, inwardly and outwardly. And when that time was ended; I being in my Chamber, desired of the Lord to tell me whether I had done that which of and from himself. Reply was, thou shalt approve thy

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[32] Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone,* ed. Hinds. All references to *The Cry of a Stone* are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.
[33] For a biographical account of Trapnel as 'a literate woman of middle rank', see Stevie Davies, 'Trapnel, Anna' (*fl.* 1642-1660), *ODNB.* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/38075> [accessed 3 September 2019].

heart to God, and in that thou hast been faithful in a little [Matthew 25.21, 23], I will make thee an Instrument of much more; for particular souls shall not only have benefit by thee, but the universality of saints shall have discoveries of God through thee. (6)

Close attention to this passage reveals much about Trapnel's conception of herself as a chosen vessel for God's voice.[34] The opening sentence contains the noun 'refreshing', suggesting that Trapnel views her prophetic voice as a remedy for 'afflicted and tempted ones'. This is because the word 'refreshing' held relevant biblical connotations: in Acts 3.19, for instance, it is written that 'the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord'. As we read further, Trapnel attests to a direct encounter with God's voice. Having asked for spiritual guidance in prayer, Trapnel writes of a 'Reply' from God, which is given via hybridised verses from scripture. After the direct citation of Matthew 25.21 ('thou hast been faithful' also appears in the King James version), Trapnel suggests that God conferred prophetic status upon her instantly, calling her 'an Instrument of much more' – a phrase without direct parallel in her biblical source. As we shall discern, the noun 'Instrument' is of significance to Trapnel's extended mediation of God's voice in *The Cry of a Stone*.

In the account of her prophetic 'speaking at Whitehall', Trapnel describes herself as 'one that heard only the voice of God sounding forth unto me' (16). In this description, the prophet marks herself out as a chosen vessel

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[34] The detail of Trapnel's prophetic voice has been the subject of a number of scholarly works: see especially Susan Wiseman, 'Unsilent Instruments and the Devil's Cushions: Authority in Seventeenth-Century Women's Prophetic Discourse', in *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts,* ed. Isobel Armstrong (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 176-96, who argues that Trapnel's texts 'comment on politico/spiritual issues from a multiple subject position – trance voice/God/Trapnel' (p. 189); and Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), chapter 5, which considers 'the discourses that enabled [Trapnel] to speak with the voice of authority' (p. 151), and 'the role of the mystical marriage in Trapnel's prophetic writing' (p. 152).

('one that heard') and suggests – with uncommon directness, given the qualifier used – that '*only* the voice of God' resounds through her [my emphasis]. In this extract, the verb 'sounding' neatly complements Trapnel's musical conception of herself as a prophetic 'Instrument'. Elsewhere in the tract, Trapnel presents herself as filled by God's voice: 'but now that thou hast taken her up into thy mount [Exodus 24.12; 2 Peter 1.18], who can keep in the rushing wind [Acts 2.2]?' (18). In this rhetorical question, Trapnel conceptualises God's voice through the metaphor of a 'rushing wind', developing the idea of divine breath being passed through a prophetic 'Instrument'. Importantly, the phrase 'rushing wind' evokes scriptural precedent: in Acts 2.1-4, as we noted in the introduction (see p. 30), the Holy Spirit is described as 'a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind'. In transposing this phrase without substantial alteration, Trapnel directly models herself on the Apostles receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost: drawing on the fact that, in traditional Christian teaching, God's Spirit is often said to be expressed through 'breath' or 'wind', guiding believers in the manner of a voice.[35] In this regard, an important biblical context is Ephesians 4.4, which dictates that '*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling', ascribing a vocal quality to the Spirit as a guiding force. Throughout *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel explores the figurative possibilities of her prophetic self as an empty 'Instrument' being guided by the Holy Spirit. This is demonstrated by the way she employs synonyms that foreground her vacuity. In one instance, Trapnel asks – in a

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[35] For an overview of the Holy Spirit in the Bible, which attends to the importance of 'breath' or 'wind' in delineating the concept, see W.R.F. Browning, 'Holy Spirit', in *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [2nd edn.]). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199543984.001.0001/acref-9780199543984-e-891> [accessed 27 February 2020].

question that is rhetorically addressed to God – 'oh what is the carcass, the vessel? They are nothing, but when these are gone, then where am I, but there where I am made perfect in thy selfe' (48). As Nigel Smith has shown, notions of spiritual 'perfection' were commonplace across mid-seventeenth-century sectarian writing.[36] In *The Cry of a Stone*, Trapnel emphasises not only that God's voice – manifesting itself as the Holy Spirit – might inhabit her vacuous body, but that in doing so, it may 'perfect' it.

Because of the interest generated by Trapnel's prophecy at Whitehall, two more of her tracts were published in 1654. The first was a compendium of her earlier prophecies, called *A Legacy for Saints*; the second was a narrative of a trip to Cornwall that resulted in her incarceration, entitled *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea.* In the latter tract's prefatory address 'To the Reader', Trapnel – this time the solo author of the work – aligns her prophetic voice with 'that approved *Hannah* in 1. *Sam.* 1.' (A2v), doing so because Hannah is unfairly accused by Eli of being drunk in 1 Samuel 1.14 ('And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee').[37] In the *Report*, God's voice is directly encountered by Trapnel whilst praying. Having prayed for God's presence in the journey to Cornwall, Trapnel gives God's direct response:

> And much perswasion was given in to my heart, by the secret whisperings of the Spirit. And the Scripture-sayings I had that night, were these: The first was *Josh.* 1.9. *The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* And again, I had that saying, *Where canst thou flee from my presence, or where canst thou go from my Spirit?* Psal. 139.7. (1)

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[36] Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, pp. 8-10.

[37] Anna Trapnel, *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea* (London, 1654). All references to *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea* are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

The pluralised noun in the first sentence – 'whisperings' – refers to the Bible, given that God's voice speaks to the prophet Elijah as a 'still small voice' in 1 Kings 19.12 (see Chapter Two, p. 143). As Trapnel describes her 'secret' encounter with God's voice, we find that it speaks to her through passages of scripture – or, as she puts it, 'Scripture-sayings'. Alec Ryrie has shown that it was a relative commonplace for early modern Protestants to recount passages of scripture whilst in prayer, noting that 'the Yorkshire gentlewoman Alice Thornton vividly recalled how, aged four, the words of Psalm 147.4 – "he counteth the starres and calleth them all by theire names" – had sparked "the first dawning of God's Spirit in my heart"'.[38] In view of this context, in Trapnel's *Report*, God's voice speaks both directly and indirectly, given that the hybridised divine voice speaks through divergent passages of scripture.

Having embarked on her journey to Cornwall, Trapnel records lodging with a friend – 'Captain Langdon' – and taking a 'walk in the Garden… [where] my heart was melted as I was thus under divine speakings' (11-12). The phrase 'divine speakings' is worth unpacking. It is particularly interesting in the way that it is pluralised, suggesting that Trapnel has – much like Cary – heard various kinds of divine voice, or, indeed, the same voice on different occasions. In what follows, Trapnel records another close encounter with 'the Lord' whilst praying, in which the quality of these 'divine speakings' is delineated:

> Then the Lord said, *Thou must suffer many wayes*: then I said, *Lord, balance me with thy word*: the Lord said, *What word wouldst thou have?* I said, *What thou pleasest*: then the Lord said, *Thou shalt have the same word as I gave to my servant Abraham; I told him when he went he knew not whither, that I would be his shield and exceeding great reward*, Gen. 15.1. (12)

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[38] See Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* p. 164.

In this passage, Trapnel claims that God has responded to her entreaties directly ('the Lord said'), but that he has again done so, once again, through interlinked passages of scripture. The phrase '*Thou must suffer many wayes*' is derived from Acts 9.16 ('he must suffer for my name's sake'), although the scriptural reference is not provided in the tract; the passage concludes with a reference to Genesis 15.1, which is cited. Thus, the hybrid, scriptural quality of God's voice – as suggested by Trapnel's suggestive phrase 'divine speakings' – is of paramount importance.

Fifth Monarchism faded from prominence as the 1650s progressed. Of the influential Trapnel, we only know that she entered another lengthy and highly publicised trance in 1657, issuing the tract *A Voice for the King* (1658) in its wake. Unlike Davies, who possessed long-standing prophetic authority because of her elevated social status, Fifth Monarchist prophets chiefly flourished in the early years of the Interregnum. Duly, the next section of this chapter considers persistent interest in children as vessels for the voice of God during the Civil War years.

## 3. Puritan Maids

Throughout the early modern period, it was widely held that children had the potential to serve as vessels for God's voice. This belief had its root in scripture, specifically in Psalm 8.2, which asserts: 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger'. Through prophesying, young people were able to attain an authority which was not conventionally within their grasp. As Anna French has most recently shown, child prophets could '[derive]

spiritual authority through perceptions of their innocence and their perceived closeness to God'.[39] The most common type of child prophet recorded during the Civil Wars pertains to a specific seventeenth-century social stereotype, that of the adolescent Puritan maid. In the extant tracts recording adolescent prophecy published between 1640 and 1660, there exists a tension between the temporary authority afforded to the maid, and the ordinary authority of the minister – often enough, the author of the tract – which resumes after the prophetic experience is concluded. As we shall now see, the pre-marital chastity of these young women was often thought to render them suitable to serve as prophetic vessels. Correspondingly, I will show that adolescent prophets hybridise scripture to foreground issues of sexual purity, mediating such biblical books as the Song of Songs and Revelation to present themselves as willingly chaste brides of Christ, and – on certain occasions – give the Church a voice.

In 1641, an anonymous tract was printed in London, entitled *The Wonderfull Works of God.* The tract, published shortly before the full outbreak of Civil War in August of the following year, is significant in that it inaugurates mid-seventeenth-century English interest in the young woman as a vessel for God's voice. As Alexandra Walsham notes, this interest was prefigured in the sixteenth-century bestselling 'tale of a country maid of Melwing who was briefly resurrected from the dead in January 1580 to give a penitential address'.[40] The opening of *The Wonderfull Works* follows three young women of different social status who are attending a wedding. The narrative turns on the declaration of 'the death of two of the Maids before mentioned, namely the

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[39] French, *Children of Wrath,* p. 107.
[40] Walsham, *Providence,* p. 213.

Daughter of the Gentleman, and the sister of the Bride-groome, who dyed both in one afternoone' (A3r).[41] It is at this point that the prophetic voice is first encountered. The dead sister of the Bridegroom reawakens, asserting 'I am sent as a Messenger unto you, and within five dayes I shall returne againe to the place I came from' (A3r). The use of 'Messenger' in this sentence confirms the maid's status as a prophetic vessel. This is because the noun is reminiscent of John the Baptist, whose coming would have been read by Protestants as prefigured in Malachi 3.1 ('Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me'), and, also, of angels: two biblical models that early modern prophets could draw on.

*The Wonderfull Works* is conventional enough in having the maid signal that 'the end of the world is at hand', given that prophecies of the last days were common throughout the period, and even more so at times of political unrest (A3v). More distinctive is the maid's imperative command: 'let us now with pure hearts prepare to meet the heavenly Bridegroome; that with him we may enter into his everlasting Kingdome, where we shall enjoy eternall life' (A3v). In this utterance, the maid channels Revelation 21.9 ('I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife') in exhorting her audience to present themselves as brides of Christ – projecting virginity as an idealised state towards the reader. The maid – having been afforded a brief chance by the tract's narrator to speak with divine authority – 'never after stirred, but dyed', and it is implicit that ordinary social hierarchies must return (A4v). Yet the maid's prophecy, given her death, would have attained a special authority in the period, due to the authoritative status of

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[41] See *The Wonderfull Works of God. Declared by a Strange Prophecie of a Maid, that Lately Lived Neere Worsop in Nottinghamshire* (London, 1641). All references are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

last words. Alison Shell, addressing the body of scholarship on the 'dying speech', suggests that 'downplayed within these accounts, though not in the texts themselves, is a sense that God is being addressed by those about to die – is, indeed, the most prominent addressee of all'.[42] Thus, in being both inspired by God and addressed to God, *The Wonderfull Works* would have been taken seriously by contemporaries as an exhortation to penitence.

Six years later, the nonconformist preacher Henry Jessey published an influential tract in London, entitled *The Exceeding Riches of Grace* (1647). The tract was well received, going through six separate editions during the Civil War period, the last issued in 1658. *The Exceeding Riches* documents the prophetic experience of a young woman named Sarah Wight. In assessing Jessey's account of Wight's prophecy, Susan Hardman Moore argues that it 'is tempting, perhaps, to deny Sarah a voice and see her only through Jessey […] but though Jessey has his own priorities in the narrative, Sarah's voice speaks too'.[43] Whilst Moore is right to affirm that Wight's 'voice speaks', we should, at the same time, avoid underestimating the extent that Jessey mediates our reading of Wight's prophecy. Supplementary material from Jessey is present as a gloss on Wight's prophetic voice from the start; he denigrates her as 'an empty nothing creature' in the tract's title, and, citing 2 Corinthians 4.7, as an 'Earthen vessel' in his prefatory letter 'To the Christian Reader' (A3r).[44] For Jessey, therefore, we infer that it is Wight's gender and subordinate social status that have

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[42] See Alison Shell, *Shakespeare and Religion* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010), p. 129.

[43] Moore, '"Such Perfecting of Praise"', p. 316.

[44] See Henry Jessey, *The Exceeding Riches of Grace Advanced by the Spirit of Grace, in an Empty Nothing Creature, viz. Mris Sarah Wight* (London, 1647). All references to *The Exceeding Riches of Grace* are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

rendered her suitable to serve as a divine 'vessel' – even while this needs apologising for.

Despite Jessey's disparaging overtures, within her prophecy, Wight assertively mediates scriptural precedent in presenting herself as Christ's bride; doing so, notably, by adapting the erotic register of the Song of Songs:

> My beloved is mine, and I am my beloveds. As an Appletree is among the Trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. What a pleasant thing is an Appletree, among the Trees of the wood? (31)

The first sentence of this passage directly mirrors the syntax of Song of Songs 6.3 ('I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine'), although Wight affords herself more agency by placing 'My beloved is mine' in the first clause, promoting her own desire to come closer to God. The second sentence is transposed almost directly from verse 2.3 of the same Book in the Bible ('As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so *is* my beloved among the sons'). Moreover, the final question in the passage – Wight's own creative interpolation – draws on the sensual register of Song of Songs 2 in further praise of Christ the 'beloved'. In suggesting that Christ is her 'beloved', Wight plays up to notions of celibacy for Christ's sake: one might even perceive her as a kind of Protestant nun, given the way that the Song of Songs has usually been read as allegorising Christ's relationship to the Church.[45] Indeed, later in the same text, Wight hybridises Song of Songs 2.4-5 to reinforce the idea of her sexual purity:

> When shee was wish'd to drinke: [Miss] *Sarah* answered; *I have wines well refined, no dregs are in it. Its pure*; *that's the purity of Christ. He gives me not cups full; but he hath me into his wine-cellar, and fils me with flaggons*. (57)

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[45] For an overview of the history of this allegorical interpretation, see Clarke, *Politics, Religion and the Song of Songs*, chapter 5; esp. pp. 169-72.

Here, Wight adapts the erotic dialogue of her biblical source to highlight her celibacy on Christ's behalf. In the biblical text, mutual understanding between the speaker and the beloved is communicated through the eroticised language of food and drink: as in Song of Songs 2.5, where the speaker urges 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I *am* sick of love'.[46] By contrast, in *The Exceeding Riches*, Wight emphasises her resistance of worldly temptation in dedicating herself to Christ ('*Its pure; that's the purity of Christ*'), given that the sensualised language of *'flaggons'* is much less prominent here. Thus, in *The Exceeding Riches*, Wight manipulates erotic voices from scripture to proclaim her avowedly chaste vocation.

Following the case of Wight, the next recorded instance of a young girl prophesying in seventeenth-century England was that of Martha Hatfield. In 1653, Hatfield became a celebrity in Puritan London on the back of a tract published by her uncle, James Fisher, the vicar and pastor of an Independent congregation in Sheffield, where Hatfield also resided. It is significant that Fisher mixed in similar nonconformist clerical circles to Henry Jessey, drawing his tract recording Hatfield's prophetic experience – entitled *The Wise Virgin* – into closer orbit with Jessey's *The Exceeding Riches*.[47] The title draws attention to Hatfield's youth – she is 'a childe of eleven years of age' – and even more

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[46] For Wight's eroticised use of food imagery from the Song of Songs, see Diane Purkiss, 'Producing the Voice, Consuming the Body: Women Prophets of the Seventeenth Century', in *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740,* ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992), pp. 139-58, esp. p. 147. As I argue above, diverging from Purkiss's seminal account, a chief purpose of Wight's manipulation of such biblical imagery is to emphasise her chastity before Christ.

[47] For the connection between Fisher and Jessey, see Stephen Wright, 'Jessey [Jacie], Henry (1601-1663)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14804> [accessed 3 September 2019].

obviously, to her virginity.[48] In the prefatory matter to *The Wise Virgin*, Fisher compounds this attested purity with reference to his niece's physical infirmity; like Wight, she is referred to as one of God's 'nothing creatures' (B4r). 'Nothing creature' is a particularly significant – and frequently employed – phrase within mid-seventeenth-century English prophetic writing. *EEBO* suggests that it was first used by the Puritan preacher Thomas Case in his contemporary sermon *The Quarrell of the Covenant* (1643), during which Case castigates 'poor nothing-creature vanity'.[49] Where Case's usage communicates a generalised sense of worthlessness before God, the phrase rapidly acquired a pejorative, sometimes gendered significance as the 1640s progressed. One often finds variants of 'nothing creature' in accounts of socially marginal prophets; it is typically employed by clergymen as a means of belittling the prophet's intellectual capacity, and of simultaneously suggesting that their ability to mediate God's voice arose from their emptiness.[50] 'Nothing creature' is used by Fisher to present Hatfield as unlearned. This is confirmed by the way that Fisher, much like Henry Jessey, glosses Hatfield's prophecy with his own scriptural references throughout. Thus, as in the case of Wight, it is important to recognise that Hatfield's inspired voice is mediated by the pen of a clergyman.

Despite Fisher's framing of *The Wise Virgin*, Hatfield does display some assertiveness in delineating her prophetic voice. Drawing on the Pauline exhortation, in Ephesians 5.27, that a godly marriage should be conducted

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[48] James Fisher, *The Wise Virgin, or, A Wonderfull Narration of the Hand of God, Wherein his Severity and Goodnesse Hath Appeared in Afflicting a Childe of Eleven Years of Age* (London, 1653). All references to *The Wise Virgin* are to this edition, and will be given parenthetically by page number in the main text.

[49] Thomas Case, *The Quarrell of the Covenant* (London, 1643), p. 71.

[50] See, for example, Jessey, *The Exceeding Riches of Grace*, p. 32; Fisher, *The Wise Virgin*, sig. B4r; Trapnel, *Report and Plea*, pp. 35, 38.

according to the example of Christ's relationship to the Church ('he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing'), Hatfield exhorts: 'Oh, wash us, and cleanse us, that neither spot, nor stain be upon us; wash us clean in the bloud of *Christ*, that we may become new Virgins, pure Virgins' (49). In this utterance, Hatfield echoes the King James translation of Paul's suggestion that a marital union should be without 'spot', and suggests – in a notable adaptation – that the 'bloud of *Christ*' has enabled her, and others like her, to 'become new Virgins, pure Virgins'. Elsewhere, Hatfield exhorts that we may 'labour to be married to Jesus Christ, and that is better then all the marriages in the world', referring to the frequently employed verse, Revelation 21.9 (58). In voicing her response to Christ, Hatfield – much like Wight before her – gives the Church a voice, something which, outside the Song of Songs as allegorically interpreted, is hard to come by.

During the Civil War period, the experiences of prophetic maids are typically recorded by members of the adult, all-male clergy. In reading these tracts we must be alert, on the one hand, to the way these adolescents are presented by clergymen, and, on the other, to what they are expressing in their use of scripture. Clergymen tended to exoticise prophetic young women in these tracts, presenting them as both medical and spiritual outliers. This presentation relied on the belief that the child's spiritual life was malleable: as Moore puts it, prone to 'spectacular intrusions of supernatural power, divine or diabolical'.[51] Yet, the way these adolescents are presented contrasts with their assertiveness in adapting scriptural precedent, doing so to give Christ's bride a voice.

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[51] See Moore, '"Such Perfecting of Praise"', p. 323.

## 4. Uneducated Men as Mouthpieces

In the third part of his heresiography *Gangraena* (1646), Thomas Edwards provides insight into mid-seventeenth-century class prejudice concerning uneducated men mediating God's voice in the manner of an official preacher. Edwards records that on 25 October 1646, 'as M. *Skinner* was preaching in his Church, [Lieutenant John Webb] started up and with a loud voice publiquely interrupted him', calling him 'Popish Priest, tub-preacher, bidding him often to come downe out of his tub, saying, he taught lyes to the people'.[52] This anecdote employs the pejorative noun 'tub-preacher', a term which entered the English lexicon with great force during the Civil War period. A 'tub-preacher' is defined by the *OED* as one 'who preaches from a "tub" (applied contemptuously or jocularly to a pulpit, esp. of a nonconformist preacher); a dissenting preacher or minister'; and its first recorded usage, according to the *OED*, was in 1643, indicating that it was a linguistic development occasioned by the upheavals of the 1640s (Fig. 1).[53] Lieutenant Webb's suggestion that Mr. Skinner might teach 'lyes to the people' communicates a widely held contemporary belief: namely, that only members of the orthodox clergy ought to give voice to God's word in a sermon.[54] Those accused of being 'tub-preachers' tended not to be attached to

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[52] Thomas Edwards, *The Third Part of Gangraena: or, A New and Higher Discovery of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and Insolent Proceedings of the Sectaries of These Times* (London, 1646), p. 251. See also idem., *The First and Second Part of Gangraena: or, A Catalogue and Discovery of Many of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies and Pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time* (London, 1646), sig. B1r, in which Edwards laments 'all sorts of illiterate mechanick Preachers, yea of Women and Boy Preachers… spreading their [exegetical] errours more then before'.

[53] 'tub-preacher', *OED, n.,* 1.

[54] For analogous contemporary discussions of the need for educated clergymen to minister God's voice, see Obadiah Sedgwick, *The Doubting Beleever* (London, 1641), p. 342 ('through disregard to the voice of God in the Ministery'); Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel-Worship: or, The Right Manner of Sanctifying the Name of God in Generall* (London, 1647), p. 172 ('the truth is, we should listen as much to the voice of God in the Ministery of his Word, as if so be

a parish church. This is significant because congregational independency had strong links with religious radicalism during the Civil Wars. One man who particularly disliked religious radicals, alarmed by their new-found prominence at the turn of the 1640s, was the London water-poet John Taylor. In his polemical tract *The Discovery of a Swarme of Seperatists* (1641), for instance, Taylor attacks the upstart prophet James Hunt, suggesting that 'if he has any Spirit it is the Spirit of error, rather then the Spirit of truth'.[55] Rather than promoting 'the Spirit of error', as we shall now see, Civil War prophets from the lower social classes frequently channelled scriptural prophetic voices to argue for the enfranchisement of the working man.
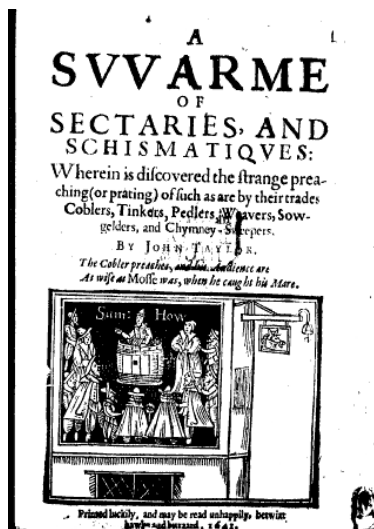


**Fig. 1. Demonising 'tub-preachers'. Woodcut taken from the title-page to John Taylor's *A Swarme of Sectaries, c.* 1642, copy from BL, Thomason / 28:F.158[1]. Used with permission.**

Ian O'Neill writes that the prophet James Hunt '[had been] preaching and prophesying since about 1636, but he first came to prominence on 7 May 1640 when the court of high commission… ordered that he should be committed to

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that the Lord should spake out of the clouds to us'); Edward Marbury, *A Commentarie, or Exposition Upon the Prophecie of Habakkuk* (London, 1650), p. 140 ('For the spirit speaketh to the Churches… we shall never die of the wormes for receiving that testimony of our Ministry, if we deal faithfully, that say of our preaching; *The voice of God and not of man*').
[55] See John Taylor, *The Discovery of a Swarme of Seperatists, or, A Leathersellers Sermon* (London, 1641), sig. A4r.

Bridewell' for preaching on a stone at Paul's Churchyard.[56] Hunt's entry into public life displayed the confrontational streak that would characterise his prophetic oeuvre. In the title of his first printed tract, *The Sermon and Prophecie of Mr. James Hunt of the County of Kent* (1641), Hunt conflates the traditionally separate homiletic modes of preaching and prophecy, doing so to suggest they are of equal stature. Hunt's chief model for his elevation of the prophet is Paul. In the tract's opening, he writes 'St. *Paul* said unto *Timothy* in the 2. Epist. Chap. 2. vers. 5. Study to shew thy selfe approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth'.[57] This verse is taken from the writings of Paul, although Hunt does not cite it correctly: the verse is, in fact, derived from 2 Timothy 2.15 in contemporary bibles. Nonetheless, this authentically Pauline verse, with its reference to the 'workman that needeth not to be ashamed', appeals to Hunt in its promotion of the 'workman'.[58] Throughout *The Sermon and Prophecie*, Hunt makes use of Pauline theology to substantiate his elevation of the prophetic role. Following Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.29-31, Hunt writes that 'the Apostle speakes unto the Church, saying; Let the Prophet speake two or three, and let the other judge, for yee all may Prophecy one by one, that all may learne, and all may bee comforted'.[59] In combining two separate biblical verses within one prophetic utterance, prophet Hunt emphasises the incipiently democratic nature of

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[56] Ian O'Neill, 'Hunt, James [*called* Prophet Hunt] (*bap.* 1591?, *d.* 1649x66), *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/74524> [accessed 3 September 2019].

[57] James Hunt, *The Sermon and Prophecie of Mr. James Hunt of the County of Kent* (London, 1641), sig. A1v.

[58] This emphasis on social enfranchisement within Civil War literature has appealed to Marxist historians of the mid-seventeenth century, most notably Christopher Hill. See Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 14-15 ('Literally anything seemed possible; not only were the values of the old hierarchical society called in question but also the new values, the protestant ethic itself').

[59] See Hunt, *The Sermon and Prophecie*, sig. A2v.

prophecy according to Paul in 1 Corinthians: namely that through prophecy, all men might serve as divine intermediaries, regardless of their social status.

In his tract of the following year, *The Marriage of the Lambe* (1642), prophet Hunt presents himself as trenchantly opposed to the clerical establishment. Where Pauline theology had proven intrinsic to his polemical defence of the common man's capacity to prophesy in 1641, in *The Marriage of the Lambe*, Hunt draws on the apocalyptic rhetoric of Revelation to make a similar point. In this tract, Hunt's exegetical proof-text is Revelation 21.6, which is cited in full at the beginning: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, I will give to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely'.[60] This citation aligns Hunt with the prophet of Revelation, and his apocalyptic rhetoric demonstrates a desire for the wholesale overturn of ecclesiastical order:

> So by the sound of the Trumpet, which is by the powerfull preaching of the Word of God in the doctrine of the New Testament, which is the lively and justifying faith, shall sound so powerfully against all false doctrine and false worship, which belongeth to the Devill and his Kingdome of darknesse, that the spirituall buildings of *Babylon* shall fall downe to the ground.[61]

In the opening phrase 'sound of the Trumpet', Hunt draws on Revelation 4.1, which describes '[God's] voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me'. The 'Trumpet' is one of the most significant metaphors that conceptualises God's voice within the Bible: in 1 Thessalonians 4.16, for example, Paul writes of the 'trump of God'. The trumpet metaphor had an enduring influence on early modern English Protestant culture; throughout the

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[60] James Hunt, *The Sermon and Prophesie of James Hunt: Concerning the Marriage of the Lambe* (London, 1642), sig. A2r.

[61] Ibid., sig. A3v.

period, we find English evangelicals stressing the need to become 'trumpets' for God's voice. In his polemical treatise *A Mysterye of Inyquyte Contayned* (1545), for instance, the early Church reformer John Bale calls Martin Luther 'the verye trompet of this latter age of Christes Churche'.[62] In Hunt's prophecy, the Protestant idea of man being a 'trumpet' for God's voice attains a militaristic significance, given that the tract was published around the time that Civil War broke out. Hunt's 'sound of the Trumpet', as the next clause in the passage indicates, stands as a synecdoche for 'powerfull preaching', which is placed in direct opposition to 'false doctrine and false worship' – a coupling which is used as a catch-all for the orthodox confessional beliefs that Hunt wishes to overturn. Thus, employing the prophet of Revelation as a model, Hunt suggests that God's voice might be passed through him as a call to ecclesiastical reform.

Another influential lower-class prophet of the Civil War period was George Foster. As Nigel Smith has noted, nothing whatsoever is known about Foster's personal life.[63] Foster's prophecies, which provide the extent of our understanding of him, betray a deep disappointment with the actions of Cromwell, who he thought had betrayed those who had contributed to the parliamentary effort during the conflicts of the 1640s. In his first printed tract *The Pouring Forth of the Seventh and Last Viall* (1650), Foster, much like the prophet Hunt, makes use of the trumpet trope to signal his desire for ecclesiastical reform. Foster writes, citing Isaiah 58.1 directly: 'Therefore rejoyce and sing for joy of heart, for behold I come, even I thy king o Sion,

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[62] John Bale, *A Mysterye of Inyquyte Contayned Within the Heretycall Genealogye of Ponce Pantolabus, is Here Both Dysclosed & Confuted by Iohan Bale* (Geneva, 1545), p. 14.
[63] Nigel Smith, 'Foster, George (*fl.* 1650)', *ODNB.* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/40442> [accessed 3 September 2019].

shout, shout and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and say my God raignes, even thy holy King of Sion'.[64] In this passage of Isaiah, God tells believers to lift up their voices 'like a trumpet'. By employing this verse directly, Foster suggests that God's voice, via Isaiah, is being passed through him as a rallying cry. Later in the same tract, Foster reuses the trumpet trope, this time doing so with apocalyptic fervour:

> [Which] mystery wil be opened now the seven last trumpets sound, and the last Vial is now a pouring forth, which mystery is only God appearing to *All in all;* and I the God, even the eternal King, taking my power my self, as to make all become subject to me, and not to formes, and so to make my self known that I dwel in men, and so wil preach in men, and wil cause other preaching which hath been in my offence to cease…[65]

This passage begins by referring to the seven trumpets that are sounded between Revelation 8-11, which prefigure the Second Coming of Christ. After this, Foster combines urgent millennialism with an incipient democratism. Referring to 1 Corinthians 15.28 ('God may be all in all'), Foster emphasises how God might be known to 'dwel' in 'all' men, inspiring the consideration of 'God appearing to *All in all*'. Particularly significant is the way that Foster extends prophetic authority to 'cause other preaching'. By suggesting that 'other preaching' might be occasioned by his radical prophecy, Foster argues for the displacement of the orthodox clergy in regulating who might speak for God.

The uneducated Thomas Tany also saw himself as an adequate mouthpiece for God's voice, writing in his prophetic tract *Theous-ori Apokolipikal* (1651) of his belief in 'the divine breath of God, or it may properly

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[64] George Foster, *The Pouring Forth of the Seventh and Last Viall Upon All Flesh and Fleshlines* (London, 1650), p. 10.

[65] Ibid., p. 37.

be said (if radically understood) the life of God, in the humane body'.[66] As his biographer Ariel Hessayon notes, Tany fervently believed that 'his authority rested with his master, the one who sent him, God'.[67] Like other prophets of the Civil War period, Tany reworks biblical verses in calling for urgent social change. In his tract *My Edict Royal* (1655), for example, Tany writes that 'the Lord commanded me to come down, saying, *GO SLAY THE REBELS AGAINST ME;* for they have broken their Covenants, and stand with their swords in their hands, saying we will break all our Covenants with the Lord'.[68] In this extract, Tany channels the exhortative violence of Jeremiah 50.21 ('Go up against the land of Merathaim, *even* against it') and repeats the freighted noun 'Covenants', referring openly to the contract forged between God and His people in the Old Testament, as outlined in Deuteronomy 7.9 ('the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations'). Here, Tany employs 'Covenant' to fit a flagrantly contemporary reference, suggesting that the parliamentarians have broken their promises to the working man. This radical hybridisation of scripture is attempted with great sophistication in the prophetic writings of the Ranter Abiezer Coppe. This chapter will conclude with an extended assessment of Coppe's various rhetorical stratagems in presenting himself as a divine medium.

## 5. Abiezer Coppe's Radical Ventriloquism

During the late 1640s, Abiezer Coppe emerged as one of the most prominent figures to be associated with the Ranters: a group of radical Protestants who

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[66] Thomas Tany, *Theous-ori Apokolipikal: or, Gods Light Declared in Mysteries* (London, 1651), p. 3.

[67] Hessayon, *TheaurauJohn Tany,* p. 172.

[68] Thomas Tany, *My Edict Royal* (London, 1655), pp. 13-14.

have been influentially described by the Marxist historian A. L. Morton as 'the extreme left wing of the sects' for their theological and political beliefs.[69] In a reaction against J. C. Davis's provocative claim that there was 'no Ranter movement, no Ranter sect, no Ranter theology', recent scholarship has attempted to document the Ranter milieu.[70] There is now a consensus that the Ranters congregated around the charismatic figures of Jacob Bauthumely, Laurence Clarkson, Coppe, and Joseph Salmon, and attracted large crowds through flamboyant public preaching.[71] Much of the difficulty in determining what the Ranters believed arises because of the pejorative way in which they were viewed by their contemporaries. The more prominent government-issued tracts berating the Ranters, such as *The Ranters Ranting* (1650) (Fig. 2), emphasise the group's blasphemous opinions, asserting that the Ranters 'curse' and make 'grand errours' in their use of scripture.[72] In a recent reappraisal of Coppe and the Ranters, Ariel Hessayon summarises that 'literary experts have gradually shown one way out of the impasse reached in the Ranter debate by focusing on typography, genre, imagery, mimicry, parody, vocabulary, and modes of address'.[73] What follows will add to the growing body of scholarship

[69] See A. L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters: Religious Radicalism in the English Revolution* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), pp. 70-1. For a comparable, Marxist-inflected account of Ranter writing as 'a revolt against the imposition of Puritan middle-class standards', see Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down,* pp. 202-10.

[70] J. C. Davis, *Fear, Myth and History: The Ranters and the Historians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 124.

[71] See Ariel Hessayon, 'Abiezer Coppe and the Ranters', in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 346-74; idem., 'The Making of Abiezer Coppe', *JEH,* Vol. 62 (1), 2011, pp. 38-58.

[72] *The Ranters Ranting* (London, 1650), p. 6.

[73] Hessayon, 'Abiezer Coppe and the Ranters', p. 351. For important discussions of Coppe's literary qualities, see Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, pp. 55-64; Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 174-93; Clement Hawes, *Mania and Literary Style: The Rhetoric of Enthusiasm from the Ranters to Christopher Smart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.

circumventing the stereotype of the Ranters as an eccentric and wilfully licentious group, doing so by arguing that, in his writing, Coppe ventriloquises various divine voices to conduct a sustained anti-authoritarian polemic.



**Fig. 2. Title-page to *The Ranters Ranting,* printed by Bernard Alsop, 1650, copy from BL, Thomason / E.618[E]. Used with permission.**

The most vital feature of Coppe's biography, for our purposes here, is that he underwent a profound conversion during his twenty-eighth year. Coppe recounts this in his tract *A Fiery Flying Roll* (1649), writing in the preface that he 'lay trembling, sweating, and smoaking (for the space of half an houre)' before the presence of God (73-4).[74] This conversion was the instigation of Coppe's prophetic calling. The seeds of Coppe's political radicalism are present in his earliest published work, a short preface to I.F.'s *John the Divine's Divinity* (1648). In the second paragraph of this preface, Coppe declares:

> I know (by wofull experience) that *the Truth as it is in Jesus* hath been *spet on, buffeted, railed on, incarcerated, intullianated, pen'd up, and imprisoned.* But *truth* being *strength* hath made *the gates of brasse,* and *bars of iron flie* and is now at *liberty*; and utters her voice in the *streets*, which voice is rending the heavens… (35)

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77-101; Noam Flinker, *The Song of Songs in English Renaissance Literature: Kisses of their Mouths* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 120-39; McDowell, *The English Radical Imagination,* pp. 89-136.

[74] Abiezer Coppe, 'A Fiery Flying Roll', in *A Collection of Ranter Writings: Spiritual Liberty and Sexual Freedom in the English Revolution,* ed. Nigel Smith (London: Pluto Press, 2014). All quotations from Coppe are taken from Smith's recently revised edition of Ranter writings, and references will be given parenthetically by page number within the main text.

In the first sentence, Coppe presents a list of active verbs, which refer to the various ways that Christ – who stands as a synecdoche for '*Truth*' – is abused by His people in the gospels. By including the parenthetical aside '(by wofull experience)', Coppe suggests that Christ's '*Truth*' has also been neglected in a contemporary English context. The second sentence moves on from this lament, suggesting that Christ's '*truth*' is now at '*liberty*': the latter being a noun which, according to the *OED*, held associations of 'freedom from […] bondage or [the] dominating influence of sin' during the mid-seventeenth century.[75] To evidence this renewed '*liberty*', Coppe announces that Christ's '*truth*… utters her voice in the *streets*'. In this phrase, Coppe references Proverbs 1.20 and 8.3 ('Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets'; 'She crieth at the gates') to conflate Christ's voice with that of a feminine personification. Furthermore, the idea of Christ's voice resounding in the '*streets*', to be heard by people of any social standing, betrays the anti-elitist strain within Coppe's prophetic writing, and promotes his belief that Christian '*Truth*' has been liberated by contemporary social upheavals. Later on in the same preface, Coppe suggests that he '[knows] the *Authour*' – a clear reference to God – intimately, presenting himself to the reader as an empty vessel that might aid their engagement with God ('*Stranger!* use him, me, and these as thou pleasest') (35). Thus, Coppe's preface to *John the Divine's Divinity* proclaims that biblical '*Truth*' can be mediated by all believers, irrespective of their social standing.

In Epistle I of his first major tract, *Some Sweet Sips, of Some Spirituall Wine* (1649), Coppe reaffirms his fervently anti-elitist conception of the prophetic role:

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[75] 'liberty', *OED, n.,* 1a.

> Heer's something (according to the wisdom given to us) written unto you, in all these ensuing Epistles. In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are *Unlearned*, and unstable, wrest: as they doe also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. (41)

The tone of this opening paragraph is highly ironic. Coppe derides the viewpoint of influential commentators such as Edwards and Taylor, that the '*Unlearned*' might make errors in their interpretations of scripture (see this chapter, pp. 226-7). As his argument progresses in Epistle I, Coppe avers that scripture may be wrested to suit his radical purpose. He writes, 'Here is Scripture language throughout these lines: yet Book, Chapter, and Verse seldome quoted' (41). Coppe implies that his prophetic 'language' is saturated with biblical learning, but rejects the scholarly convention of providing 'Book, Chapter, and Verse' before interpreting scripture. This rebuttal of contemporary educational practice, Coppe then continues, possesses a higher form of authorisation:

> The *Father* would have it so; and I partly know his design in it; And heare him secretly whispering in me the reason thereof. Which I must (yet) burie in silence, till—Here is a reede shaken with the winde, and the voice of one crying in the wildernesse, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, &c. (41)

In this extract, Coppe gives the felt experience of God's voice as the 'reason' for his flaunting of educational convention. The divine voice is heard, at first, 'secretly whispering in me' – Coppe stresses that it has been '[buried] in silence'. But then, after a typographical pause, God's voice bursts out loudly in a coupling of scriptural verses: the first clause is an adaptation of Christ's words to John in Matthew 11.7 ('What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?'); the second an (almost) direct citation from Isaiah 40.3 ('The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD'), which is used in the gospels to herald the coming of John the Baptist.

Coppe's contention in the opening of *Some Sweet Sips* is that God's voice, initially manifesting itself only hesitantly, is beginning to make itself rudely known inside the text.

In Epistle II of *Some Sweet Sips*, Coppe transforms his opening defence of unlearned prophesying into an attack on the orthodox clergy. In Chapter IV of this Epistle, the scriptural text that Coppe interprets to serve this polemical purpose is Jeremiah 12.10, a verse in which Jeremiah gives God's voice directly: 'Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness'. The anti-clericalism of Jeremiah 12.10 is taken up by Coppe in his analogous suggestion that contemporary English clergymen are instruments of oppression: Chapter IV begins, 'But many *Pastors* have destroyed my Vineyard, *Jer.12.* Thus my *Fathers* Vineyard goes to wrack, while it is let out to Husbandmen' (47). Later in the Chapter, Coppe expands this attack on the clergy:

> Well, to return to my last Theame--Many *Pastors* have destroyed my Vineyard,--*Pastors!* Thus saith the Lord, I will recover my Vineyard out of the hands of all *Husbandmen*, and be *Pastor* my Self, and my people shall know no Arch-Bishop, Bishop, &c. but my Self. (49)

Here, Coppe returns to his exegetical key-text of Jeremiah 12.10, but uses it to make a far-reaching point. For Coppe, '*Pastor*', 'Arch-Bishop', and 'Bishop' are of no use, merely the 'Self' will suffice. At this point in *Some Sweet Sips*, Coppe voices God directly by extending scripture into an unmistakeably contemporary reference. The radical suggestion is that Coppe, and other prophets like him, may approach God alone, without the need for clerical or episcopal mediation. Accordingly, the conclusion of Chapter IV demonstrates the anti-episcopalianism which was common amongst the hotter sorts of

Protestants during the Civil War years. After castigating '*Bishops, Priests, Pastors, Teachers, Elders*', Coppe specifically attacks the '*Sword* of the *Lord Generall*' (49), an allusion to Thomas Fairfax, the Parliamentary commander-in-chief during the Civil War, who is troped as a '*Sword*' in recognition of his martial abilities. Coppe, emboldened by his prophetic authority, is not afraid to attack Puritan figureheads such as Cromwell and Fairfax. Nonetheless, the prophet offers a swift reminder of his key-text text '*Jer.12*' in conclusion (49); Coppe is well-aware that this radical sentiment could be labelled seditious, and that it needed to be authorised by scriptural precedent.

In an important assessment, Nicholas McDowell reads Coppe's writing through the lens of his extensive grammar school and university education, arguing for 'the polemical and satirical focus of Coppe's address to the "Scholars of Oxford"', which disrupts humanist educational conventions.[76] McDowell is persuasive in his analysis, but does not fully explore the implications of Coppe's parodic verve in relation to prophecy, which was the central mode of his writing. In Epistle III of *Some Sweet Sips*, Coppe raises questions of what it might mean to interpret biblical precedent, doing so by privileging the unlearned prophet as a vessel, and by concurrently diminishing the lofty endeavours of humanist scholarship. Coppe begins the second chapter of Epistle III by satirising the idea of scripture being difficult to interpret, as espoused by figures such as Edwards and Taylor:

> And it is neither Paradox, Hetrodox [*sic*], Riddle, or ridiculous
> to good Schollars, who know the *Lord in deed*, (though perhaps
> they know never a letter in the Book) to affirm that God can
> speak, & gloriously preach to some through Carols, Anthems,
> Organs; yea, all things else, &c. Through Fishers, Publicans,

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[76] McDowell, *The English Radical Imagination,* p. 99.

> Tanners, Tent-makers, Leathern-aprons, as well as through University men, - Long-gowns, Cloakes, or Cassocks; O *Strange*! (53)

In this amusing extract, Coppe argues that 'good Schollars' do not possess privileged access to God's word, but that God might 'speak, & gloriously preach' just as easily through members of the working class. By directly juxtaposing such groups as 'Fishers, Publicans, Tanners' with 'University men', Coppe stokes the class tensions that remained live throughout the Civil War period. Coppe satirises scholarly attempts at interpreting scripture ('Paradox, Hetrodox, Riddle'), which are presented as superfluous. In addition, Coppe's praise of God speaking through music is noteworthy ('Carols, Anthems, Organs'), given the iconoclastic destruction of church organs which occurred during the Civil War years.[77] Departing from orthodox Puritan hostility towards Church music, Coppe suggests that music offers a universal voice for God to speak through.

*Some Sweet Sips* makes the point repeatedly that one need not possess a scholarly education to interpret scripture as a prophet. This is seen, later in Epistle III, through Coppe's reference to the working-class background of Saint Peter. Coppe instructs the reader: 'be set to the *University* [of the universall Assembly] and entred into *Christs* Church', and 'when you once come to know that you are *there*, you will heare no Mechanick Preach; (no, not a *Peter*, if he be a Fisher-man) but the learned Apostle' (54). Here, Coppe ironises the fact that one will not hear a 'Mechanick Preach' – borrowing the pejorative

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[77] See the parliamentary bill, *Two Ordinances of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament, For the Speedy Demolishing of All Organs, Images and All Manner of Superstitious Monuments in All Cathedrall Parish-Churches and Chappels* (London, 1644); and Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, pp. 166-7.

terminology of the heresiographer Edwards and his ilk – in the '*University*' or in the Church, but that Saint Peter, the founder of the modern-day Christian Church, was himself originally a 'Fisher-man'. Thus, in his tract *Some Sweet Sips*, Coppe skewers the intellectual prejudice of his day by referring to scripture as a greater authority for the working man's ability to prophesy.

Later in 1649, Coppe published his most notorious prophetic tract, *A Fiery Flying Roll.* In the title-page, Coppe writes that the tract is 'A Word from the Lord to all the Great Ones of the Earth, whom this may concerne: Being the last WARNING PIECE at the dreadfull day of JUDGEMENT' (72). In calling the *Roll* a 'Word from the Lord', Coppe presents himself as a vessel for God's voice. The preface of the *Roll* contains the aforementioned account of Coppe's prophetic awakening; he writes that 'the roll of a book' was 'thrust into my mouth; and I eat it up, and filled my bowels with it, (*Eze. 2.8 &c.* cha. 3.1, 2, 3.)' (75). The idea of eating and digesting God's word in order to be filled with God's voice is an interestingly somatic one, which Coppe exploits.[78] The Bible provides numerous examples of God's word being conceptualised as food for prophesying (see Chapter One, p. 82), especially in the prophetic texts, such as Jeremiah 15.16, and Ezekiel 2.8 and 3.1-3, the verses which Coppe invokes here. Biblical prophets often argue for the need to eat, and then to speak, God's word. In the preface of the *Roll*, Coppe playfully literalises this idea, describing the full process of digesting God's word. Necessary to understanding Coppe's

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[78] For an overview of the way early modern practices of reading 'were so frequently likened to the metabolic processes of digestion', see Michael C. Schoenfeldt, 'Reading Bodies', in *Reading, Society, and Politics in Early Modern England,* ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 215-43 (p. 215). Another useful contribution on the link between reading and digesting, in early modern England, is Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), chapter 2.

punning is the fact that another meaning of the noun 'roll' – bread roll – was current at the time.[79] Coppe's suggestion that words can be eaten like bread would also have held eucharistic connotations, which the prophet roundly subverts. Coppe mentions the papery taste of eating the Bible ('it was bitter as worm-wood', which refers to Revelation 10.10), the unpleasant consequences of the meal for his stomach ('broiling, and burning'), which leads, somewhat violently, to the word being 'brought… forth in this forme' (75). Thus, provocatively, Coppe suggests that scripture has been ejected from his body, perhaps even excreted or vomited, in the form of this prophetic text. Not only is this a humorous denigration of partaking in Christ's body during the eucharist, but also a suggestion that the prophetic role requires the entire body to fulfil it.

In the flamboyant preface to the *Roll*, Coppe casts himself as a latter-day Ezekiel. This rhetorical strategy has been noted by Nigel Smith, who writes that 'in the two *Fiery Flying Rolls*, Coppe appropriates Ezekiel's identity, rhetoric, and gestures'.[80] Smith's emphasis on Ezekiel as a model for Coppe is evidenced by the apocalyptic opening of Chapter I, which cites Ezekiel 21.27 directly ('Thus saith the Lord, *I inform you, that I overturn, overturn, overturn*') (78). This verse, an instance of God's voice speaking directly to Ezekiel, provides the key-note exegetical text for the tract, which – much like *Some Sweet Sips* – endorses the wholesale '*overturn*' of established reformed Church hierarchies. Coppe then adds that 'the Bishops, *Charles*, and the Lords, have

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[79] 'roll', *OED, n.1,* 6b.

[80] See Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed,* p. 55. For an account of Ezekiel's 'apocalyptic style', and 'overriding concern… to explain a disaster that is national and thereby collective', see Paul M. Joyce, 'Ezekiel', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible,* ed. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, Jonathan Roberts, and Christopher Rowland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 64-76 (p. 65).

had their turn, overturn, so your turn shall be next' (78). In this sentence, Coppe lists episcopal, royal, and parliamentarian authorities, only to renounce each of them. The conclusion of Coppe's opening paragraph, in Chapter I of the *Roll*, also follows Ezekiel in its opposition to ecclesiastical hierarchy: '(ye surviving great ones, by what Name or Title soever dignified or distinguished) who ever you are, that oppose me, the Eternall God, who am UNIVERSALL Love, and whose service is perfect freedom, and pure Libertinisme' (78). The above quotation seems to paraphrase, albeit at several removes, the notion of a God 'to serue whom, is to raigne', which came from a set of meditations dubiously ascribed to Augustine by Catholic contemporaries.[81] Coppe pours scorn on personages with 'Name or Title', such as the Bishops and the Lords, who he places in opposition to 'the Eternall God'. In a daring move, and one that deviates from his spurious patristic source, Coppe represents God as a religious radical, operating in the 'service' of 'Libertinisme'. According to the *OED*, a 'libertine', during the 1640s, was an individual opposed to the thinking of the mainstream English Church.[82] Coppe's presentation of 'Eternall God' as a 'libertine' is, therefore, an open declaration of God's political radicalism.

In what follows in the *Roll*, Coppe gives a sidelong glance towards 'sword levelling, or digging-levelling' (79). Here, the prophet alludes to the Levellers and the Diggers, two radical Protestant sects that were strongly associated with the Ranter milieu at the turn of the 1640s. Thomas N. Corns has

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[81] See *A Heavenly Treasure of Confortable Meditations and Prayers Written by S. Augustin, Bishop of Hyppon,* trans. Antony Batt (St. Omer, 1624), p. 118 ('O God, to knowe whom, is to liue, to serue whom, is to raigne, to praise whom, is the soules ioy and saluation').

[82] 'libertinism', *OED, n.,* 1; 'The views or practices of libertines; free-thinking in religion; antinomianism'.

positioned Levellerism as the most significant popular movement of the Civil War period.[83] The Levellers were preoccupied with the question of whether the Bible sanctified the existing system of land ownership and government, or instead advocated measures to bring about radical change.[84] Their radical vision of common land ownership had an influence on Coppe's extraordinary ventriloquizing of God's direct voice in the *Roll*:

> And now thus saith the Lord: Though you can as little endure the word LEVELLING, as could the late slaine or dead *Charles* (your forerunner, who is gone before you—) and had as live heare the Devill named, as heare of the Levellers (Men-Levellers) which is, and who (indeed) are but shadowes of most terrible, yet great and glorious good things to come. (79)

As we have seen, Coppe publicly identified God with the 'libertine' cause. Here, he cements this daring identification by placing an explicitly radical speech into God's mouth. In the given passage, it is swiftly apparent that God's voice is promoting the cause of the vanquished Levellers, employing a capitalised 'LEVELLING' as if to threaten any royalist reading. The radicalism of Coppe's voice of God is confirmed by the open reference to 'the late slaine or dead *Charles*', which presents God as revelling in the death of the monarch. Towards the end of the given extract, the noun 'Levellers' is equated with the 'Devill': a formulation which places the 'Levellers' in an antagonistic relationship with contemporary royalists. After this, Coppe's God puns menacingly on the idea of rhetorical 'LEVELLING':

> I the eternall God, the Lord of Hosts, who am that mighty Leveller, am comming (yea even at the doores) to Levell in good

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[83] For the rise and fall of the Leveller movement, see Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue,* pp. 129-36.

[84] See the overview of Leveller political beliefs in Andrew Bradstock, 'Digging, Levelling, and Ranting: The Bible and the Civil War Sects', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*, ed. Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith, and Rachel Willie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 397-411, esp. p. 398.

earnest, to Levell to some purpose, to Levell with a witnesse, to Levell the Hills with the Valleyes, and to lay the Mountaines low. (79)

This dramatic invocation of God's direct voice draws on the levelling force of Isaiah 40.4 as its primary prophetic model ('Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low'). Having previously invoked God's voice to endorse the Leveller movement, in this extract, Coppe's God audaciously tropes himself as 'that mighty Leveller' who intends to 'Levell' everything around him. Due to the way in which high ('Hills') and low ('Valleyes') topographical features are regularised, the passage espouses a Leveller-esque desire for the more equitable distribution of land. Thus, in *A Fiery Flying Roll*, Coppe's voice of God plays on the idea of rhetorical levelling by advocating the erasure of all social hierarchy.

## 6. Conclusion

In summing up these diverse findings, we might return to Bakhtin's description of 'heteroglossia', which – much like the Hobbes statement with which we began the chapter – provides useful stimulus for thinking about the mechanics of mid-seventeenth-century English prophecy:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language… but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own.[85]

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[85] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 293-4.

Following Bakhtin, I have argued in this chapter that the mid-seventeenth-century English prophet 'appropriates' the words of existing biblical authorities – ranging from God the Father, to various Old Testament prophets, to the author of the Song of Songs – and 'populates' these words with their own 'intentions'. One might ask, in conclusion, why this is the case. As Elaine Hobby has argued, socially marginal prophets from across the social spectrum often use their polemical tracts as spaces for 'self-assertion'.[86] In this sense, citing or adapting the voice of a biblical author can afford the seventeenth-century English prophet an additional layer of authority when prophesying. However, what also underwrites the texts under consideration is the palpable sense that – to borrow Coppe's pertinent phrasing – purportedly '*Unlearned*' individuals may, in the conditions afforded by such an 'unstable' religious climate, now 'wrest' scripture to suit their own political purposes. In the cases of Davies and Cary, diverse prophetic voices are manipulated to authorise attacks on public figureheads such as King Charles and Queen Henrietta Maria. More frequently, however, scripture is hybridised to define the prophetic identity as in opposition to the clerical establishment, which is presented as an agent of spiritual oppression. Thus, at around the time of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, employing layered biblical voices within prophetic texts became a widespread strategy for political engagement.

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[86] See Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1649-1688* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 28.

## 5. Obeying God's Voice in Milton's Verse

In a passage within his prose tract *An Apology for Smectymnuus* (1642), the relatively young John Milton gives a pejorative assessment of the college drama that he witnessed as a student at Cambridge:

> [In] the Colleges so many of the young Divines, and those in next aptitude to Divinity have bin seene so oft upon the Stage writhing and unboning their Clergie limmes to all the antick and dishonest gestures of Trinculo's, Buffons, and Bawds; prostituting the shame of that ministery which either they had, or were nigh having, to the eyes of Courtiers and Court-Ladies, with their Groomes and *Madamoisellaes*.[1]

Picking up on the commonplace Protestant idea that religion and drama were uneasy bedfellows, Milton suggests that performing 'upon the Stage' is an unsuitable pastime for those with ministerial aspirations. As Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns have pointed out, this grubby dismissal of college drama is intrinsic to Milton's presentation of 'his honorable university career', during which he remained aloof from the frivolous activities of his contemporaries.[2] Despite this act of self-fashioning, it is a central contention of this chapter that Milton's epic writing rewards attention to dramatic address. That Milton's verse is indebted to elite forms of drama is rapidly becoming a critical consensus: as the introduction to a recent essay collection has emphasised, Milton held a preference for the 'challenges to tyranny' articulated in the plays of Euripides.[3]

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[1] John Milton, 'An Apology Against a Pamphlet', in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton,* Vol. 1, ed. Don M. Wolfe (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 887. All references to Milton's prose writings in this chapter will be to the Yale edition (henceforth *MPW*), completed with Wolfe as general editor, except for *De Doctrina Christiana,* which will refer to the more recent Oxford edition by John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington.

[2] Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 147.

[3] See Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard, 'Preface', in *Milton, Drama, and Greek Texts,* ed. Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 1-9 (p. 8).

What follows builds on this productive line of scholarly inquiry by considering the intensely dramatic ways, in both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, that different Miltonic characters hear, and respond to, God's voice.

Before turning to the way that Milton represents the voice of God in his epic poetry, it is essential to note that the poet held a very unusual conception of the Trinity. A prevailing consensus amongst Miltonists of today is that the poet, by the end of his life at the very least, had adopted 'Arian' views on the nature of the Son of God.[4] During the second half of the seventeenth century, Arianism, according to Martin Dzelzainis, meant '[rejecting] the orthodox account of the Trinity as comprised of three distinct Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – who are nevertheless equally divine and in one essence'; although this concept should be distinguished from Socinianism, another early modern form of anti-trinitarianism (see my introduction, pp. 28-9), in affirming that 'the Son had pre-existed the Incarnation'.[5] Whilst this is a helpful definition in comprehending what early modern Arianism was in general terms, it is essential to look at what Milton actually wrote about the Trinity, in order to check his belief on the matter. On the evidence of the poet's prized systematic theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, we discern that late in life, Milton came to deny the co-essential divinity of Christ. In Book I, Chapter V of that work, entitled 'Of the Son of God', Milton writes: 'God imparted to

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[4] For this scholarly consensus, see John P. Rumrich, 'Milton's Arianism: Why It Matters', in *Milton and Heresy,* ed. Stephen B. Dobranski and John P. Rumrich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 75-92; Michael Bauman, *Milton's Arianism* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1987), *passim*. See also William Empson, *Milton's God* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965 [rev. edn]), p. 278 ('[*Paradise Lost*] makes the Son and the Father about as unidentical as a terrier and a camel; but the poet did not have to be already an Arian—he might decide afterwards that what his imagination had produced amounted to being an Arian').

[5] See Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton and Antitrinitarianism', in *Milton and Toleration*, ed. Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 171-85 (p. 171).

the Son as much divine nature as he wished – more than that, as much divine substance too, provided that substance is not taken to mean the whole essence'.[6] According to Milton, then, the Son shares some of the Father's 'substance' – he is, in other words, only partially divine – and does not partake in 'the whole essence'. Milton's views on the Son's partial 'divine substance' would have been widely regarded as heretical. As we shall now discern, Milton's heterodox views on the Trinity are transformed within his mature epic verse.

In his epic poetry, Milton represents God the Father's voice as the highest form of authority, whilst the Son of God serves as his hierarchical inferior.[7] Milton's dramatic employment of God's voice is derived principally from scriptural precedent. In Book I, Chapter II of *De Doctrina*, entitled 'On God', in a passage on how 'mortals' ought to 'contemplate' God, Milton writes:

> It is therefore better to contemplate God and mentally imagine him not anthropopathically [by the attribution of human emotions], that is, as mortals do, who never stop inventing nicer definitions of God, but as scripture does, that is, in the way he offers himself for contemplation; and we should consider that he would have said of himself, or wanted written down, nothing that he did not want us to ponder about him.[8]

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[6] See Milton, 'Of the Son of God', translated in *The Complete Works of John Milton, Volume VIII: De Doctrina Christiana,* Vol. 1, ed. John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 136-7.

[7] The body of literary scholarship on Milton's heterodox poetic representation of the Trinity is vast. Important recent studies of the Son's hierarchical inferiority, in *Paradise Lost,* include: Albert C. Labriola, 'The Son as an Angel in *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton in the Age of Fish: Essays on Authorship, Text, and Terrorism,* ed. Michael Lieb and Albert C. Labriola (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006), pp. 105-18; Michael Lieb, *Theological Milton: Deity, Discourse and Heresy in the Miltonic Canon* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006), pp. 261-79; Bauman, *Milton's Arianism.* For the controversial counter-argument that Milton was not, in fact, an anti-trinitarian, but instead maintained a conception of the Son and Father's 'matchless oneness', see Russell M. Hillier, *Milton's Messiah: The Son of God in the Works of John Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. pp. 29-30.

[8] See Milton, 'On God', in *De Doctrina,* Vol. 1, ed. Hale and Cullington, p. 29. For my gloss of 'anthropopathically', see 'anthropopathical', *OED*, *adj.*

Taking my cue from this passage of *De Doctrina*, I argue in what follows that, across his epic poetry, Milton is interested in the different ways that characters respond to the paramount authority of God's voice. In this respect, I am indebted to Calista McRae's contention that 'the vocatives of *Paradise Lost* invite us to focus on the act of direct, unreciprocated attention to an interlocutor', although I aim to provide a fuller account of the verbal interactions between God and his addressees in Milton's verse.[9] Accordingly, the first section of this chapter, which focuses on the dialogic relationship between God the Father and the Son in *Paradise Lost*, argues that the Son seeks to obey divine decree. In the second section, I consider Eve's disobedience of God's 'sole command' (VII. 47) in the later books of the epic, which Eve does not hear directly.[10] After this, the chapter offers a discussion of the voice of Jesus in *Paradise Regained*, with attention to the multi-gendered implications of Jesus's passive, scriptural resistance. Thus, I argue that Milton displays sustained poetic interest in the idea of obedience to God's voice: whether heard directly, via another, or through scripture.

## 1.   Obeying Divine Decree

Milton gives voice to God and the Son in dialogue, for the first time, in Book III of *Paradise Lost*. Although the idea of the extended heavenly dialogue is

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[9] See Calista McRae, 'Direct Address in *Paradise Lost*', *MS,* Vol. 56 (1), ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2015), pp. 17-43 (p. 17). Questions of voicing and rhetorical address in Milton's epic poetry have been surprisingly neglected: for a notable exception, see John K. Hale, *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapter 7, which gives a survey of how 'Milton [uses] the word *voice* in his poem, along with *voices* and *vocal,* and also *word, words, language, tongue* and so on' (p. 132).

[10] All references to Milton's epic poetry are taken from *Paradise Lost,* ed. Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longman, 2007 [2nd edn.]), and from *Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. John Carey (Harlow: Longman, 1971). References to both book and line number will be given parenthetically within the main text.

sanctioned by scripture – in Genesis 1.26, significantly, God declares 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness', perhaps implying a conversation with the pre-incarnational Word through the use of plural pronouns [my emphasis][11] – the Bible does not actually present the Father and the Son as conducting extended conversations. That Milton evidences some trepidation about doing exactly this has been noted in contemporary criticism: the exordium of Book III, 'Hail holy light, offspring of heaven first-born, / Or of the eternal co-eternal beam / May I express thee unblamed?' (III. 1-3), seems to couch Milton's radical anti-trinitarian views in a construction that appeals to the more orthodox idea of Trinitarian unity ('eternal co-eternal').[12] God's opening address to the Son, however, makes it swiftly apparent that the Father possesses superior knowledge of events: 'Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage / Transports our adversary' (III. 80-1). This address, which begins with a direct reference to John 3.16 ('only begotten Son'), functions as a rhetorical question: implying that God, in his omniscience, has correctly foreseen the progress of the 'adversary' towards Eden, whilst the Son's attention requires directing through the imperative construction, 'seest thou'. In the central moment of his

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[11] For the importance of Genesis 1.26 as evidence that divine councils took place before creation, see C.A. Patrides, 'Milton on the Trinity: The Use of Antecedents', in *Bright Essence: Studies in Milton's Theology,* ed. William B. Hunter, C.A. Patrides, and Jack H. Adamson (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1971), pp. 3-13, esp. p. 11. For readings of Milton's heavenly dialogues as 'transformations' of the celestial council tradition in classical epic, see, among others, Michael Lieb, *The Sinews of Ulysses: Form and Convention in Milton's Works* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1989); Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), chapter 5, esp. p. 115.

[12] For Milton's turning of Arianism and Trinitarianism into 'apparent equivalents… which turn out to be opposites' in the exordium of Book III, see Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 75. For a counterview, which suggests that 'in invocations alternatives were usual, implying prudence in covering distinct possibilities', see Fowler's note on the Book III exordium in *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler*,* p. 166.

opening speech, Milton's God informs the Son of 'the sole command, / Sole pledge of his obedience' (III. 94-5), which Adam and Eve, 'authors to themselves' (III. 122), will transgress. Of note, in these lines, is the absolute acuity of God's prophesying. Milton expands on the account of God's prohibition in Genesis 2.17 ('for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'), doing so, as C.S. Lewis has pointed out, through the Augustinian sense that the Fall was a lapse from 'obedience'.[13]

Where most of God's opening speech affords the Son exclusive knowledge of future events, it is the concluding lines which set the tone for the Son's response: 'man therefore shall find grace, / The other none: in mercy and justice both, / Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel, / But mercy first and last shall brightest shine' (III. 131-4). In the last of these lines, the phrase 'mercy first and last' gives God's offer a prophetic resonance, given that 'first and last' is used repeatedly in the prophetic books to refer to God's eternal nature (see, for example, Isaiah 44.6, 'Thus saith the LORD… I *am* the first, and I *am* the last'; Revelation 1.11, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last'). Yet, despite Milton's prophetic phrasing in the above extract, God's governing theological concept is 'grace'; it is this word that the Son picks up on in his immediate reply:

> O Father, gracious was that word which closed
> Thy sovereign sentence, that man should find grace;
> For which both heaven and earth shall high extol
> Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
> Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
> Encompassed shall resound thee ever blessed.

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[13] See C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942 [repr. 1969]), pp. 66-72. For a more recent reading of Milton's Augustinian Fall, see also William Poole, *Milton and the Idea of the Fall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 149-52.

> For should man finally be lost, should man
> Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son
> Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
> With his own folly? That be from thee far,
> That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
> Of all things made, and judgest only right. (III. 144-55)

In these lines, the Son mimics the linguistic register employed by God in his preceding speech. The second clause in the first line, 'gracious was that word which closed', refers both to God's employment of the noun 'grace', and also to the overarching structure of God's opening speech, which – having initially concentrated on 'man… [transgressing] the sole command' (III. 93-4) – concludes with the offer of divine 'grace'. In the above speech, the Son responds to God's assertion that 'man… shall find grace' (III. 131) with a near-repetition – 'man should find grace' – as if to emphasise an instruction that must be swiftly acted upon. Following this, the Son offers a rhapsodical exaltation of God's benevolence. In the phrase 'shall resound thee ever blessed', Milton uses the verb 'resound' to play on the Son providing an echo of the Father's voice.[14] Throughout his response, the Son contrives to exonerate the Father from accusations of unfairness. Indeed, to emphasise the graciousness of God, the Son poses a rhetorical question of his own – 'should man finally be lost… joined / With his own folly?' – before answering this question with an affirmation: God 'judgest only right'. In this way, the Son's first speech in *Paradise Lost* can be

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[14] For analogous contemporary uses of 'resound' to promote the idea of letting God's word joyously reverberate, see, among many others, John Mayer, *Many Commentaries in One* (London, 1653 [2nd edn.]), p. 168 ('but as the Eccho resound thy own word *Shalom,* for my purpose now is to speak with thy master mouth to mouth'); John Trapp, *A Commentary or Exposition Upon These Following Books of Holy Scripture* (London, 1660), p. 41 ('O that these things might resound from all Pulpits!'); Thomas Elborow, *The Reasonableness of Our Christian Service* (London, 1678 [2nd edn.]), p. 29 ('The Heavens declare it, *Psal.* 19.1… the Angels chant it, *Luk.* 2.14. Seraphims resound it, *Isa.* 6.3').

understood as an attempt to explain the 'goodness' of God's gracious offer (III. 158; 165).[15]

Having decreed that 'man… shall find grace', Milton's God turns, in his next address to the Son, to the means through which grace might be obtained:

> Some I have chosen of peculiar grace
> Elect above the rest; so is my will:
> The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
> Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
> The incensèd Deity, while offered grace
> Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
> What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
> To pray, repent and bring obedience due.
> To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
> Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,
> Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut. (III. 183-93)

In an important contribution, Stephen M. Fallon has addressed 'the anomaly of placing in an Arminian setting the apparently Calvinist lines "Some I have chosen of peculiar grace"', suggesting that Milton held a conception of 'a [Calvinist] super-elect' – of which he believed he was a member – within a broadly Arminian framework.[16] This is a persuasive argument, but despite the qualification about 'peculiar grace', it might be added that God's 'Arminian' speech on the mechanisms of grace expends much energy emphasising the ubiquity of the divine call, and the means through which the ordinary believer might come closer to God. According to Milton's God, all believers are 'offered grace', and God's voice reflexively describes itself as seeking to 'soften stony

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[15] For a seminal discussion of God's offer of 'universal grace' in Book III of *Paradise Lost,* and an advocation of Milton's Arminianism, see Dennis R. Danielson, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 82-91.

[16] See Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton's Peculiar Grace: Self-Representation and Authority* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 201, 187, and chapter 7 of this monograph more generally.

hearts / To pray, repent and bring obedience due'. In this way, Milton echoes an interdenominational commonplace within the religious writing of the period, namely that 'stony hearts' might be brought to sincere repentance by hearing God's voice (see Chapter One). Yet as God stipulates afterwards, this penitential process alone cannot counteract 'man disobeying' (III. 203), asking the heavenly host: 'Which of ye will be mortal to redeem' (III. 214). To this request, the Son then breaks the silence: 'on me let Death wreak all his rage; / Under his gloomy power I shall not long / Lie vanquished' (III. 241-3). Here, the Son's fervent desire to fulfil God's request is evidenced by the employment of martial rhetoric. Verbs such as 'wreak', 'vanquished', and 'subdue' (III. 250) portray the Son's assault on 'Death' – after the Atonement – in strikingly military terms.

In one of the most notorious and frequently discussed episodes in *Paradise Lost*, the archangel Raphael recounts God's begetting of the Son.[17] As outlined in *De Doctrina*, Milton believed that '[the Son] does not exist from himself, who did not beget but was begotten, is not the first cause but an effect; therefore he is not supreme God'.[18] This heterodox belief is deployed by the poet, in Book V of the epic, as the principal reason for the schism in heaven:

> Hear all ye angels, progeny of light,
> Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers,
> Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.
> This day I have begot whom I declare
> My only Son, and on this holy hill

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[17] For discussion of the way that Milton represents contemporary religio-political issues within this episode, see in particular: David Loewenstein, *Treacherous Faith: The Specter of Heresy in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 321-3; Erin Murphy, '*Paradise Lost* and the Politics of "Begetting"', *MQ,* Vol. 45 (1), 2011, pp. 25-49; David Mikics, 'The Begetting of the Son: Curiosity, Politics, and Trial in *Paradise Lost*', *Literary Imagination,* Vol. 10 (3), 2008, pp. 274-91.

[18] Milton, 'Of the Son of God', in *De Doctrina,* Vol. 1, ed. Hale and Cullington, p. 203.

> Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
> At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
> And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
> All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord:
> Under his great vicegerent reign abide
> United as one individual soul
> For ever happy: him who disobeys
> Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
> Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
> Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
> Ordained without redemption, without end. (V. 600-15)

Given that Books V and VI of *Paradise Lost* are thought to have been written between 1661 and 1665, it is plausible that God's 'decree' mimics prescriptions for religious conformity, such as the 1662 'Act for Uniformity of Publick Prayers'.[19] This royal proclamation sought to impose a conformist consensus on King Charles II's subjects, and heralded the enforced repossession by parishes across Britain of a revised Book of Common Prayer, which had been jettisoned during the upheavals of the Civil War period.[20] Indeed, God's speech frequently alludes to the 1662 Prayer Book and associated biblical verses. Introducing the Son for the first time, Milton's God declares that he will serve 'At my right hand; your head I him appoint'. By employing the phrase 'right hand', Milton echoes the liturgical language of the Nicene Creed, 'And sitteth on the right hand of the Father'.[21] This line, in turn, drew on the biblical conception of Christ being placed at God's right hand (see Acts 2.33, 'being by the right hand of God exalted'; Hebrews 10.12, 'sat down on the right hand of God'), doing so to signal the Son's placement below God as his foremost representative. The idea

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[19] For the later composition date of Book V, see John T. Shawcross, *With Mortal Voice: The Creation of Paradise Lost* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), pp. 174-5.
[20] For an account of the seismic cultural impact of the 1662 Prayer Book, which I have drawn from in this paragraph, see Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England and Wales, 1658-1667* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 175-8.
[21] *BCP,* p. 392.

of the Son's subordinate representation of God is also prompted by the noun 'vicegerent', which was commonly applied by contemporaries to kings or priests as God's representatives (see Chapter Four, p. 205).[22] An attendant aspect of the Son's begetting is the subjugation of other angels; Milton's God stipulates that 'to him shall bow / All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord'. These lines echo the proclamatory text of Philippians 2.10 ('at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow'), the source for a controversial phrase within the 1662 Prayer Book which prescribed that, during Communion, the supplicant must 'make [their] humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon [their] knees'.[23] Thus, at various moments in God's 'decree', Milton closely echoes Restoration-era prescriptions for religious conformity.

Later in Book V, having foreseen Satan's desire 'to dislodge, and leave / Unworshipped, unobeyed the throne supreme' (V. 669-70), God commands the Son: 'Let us advise, and to this hazard draw / With speed what force is left' (V. 729-30). The Son's obedient response to the Father's call to arms, in his first speech after the elevation, warrants quoting in full:

> Mighty Father, thou thy foes
> Justly hast in derision, and secure
> Laughst at their vain designs and tumults vain,
> Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
> Illústrates, when they see all regal power
> Giv'n me to quell their pride, and in event
> Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
> Thy rebels, or be found the worst in heav'n. (V. 735-42)

As in Book III, when responding to the Father's authoritative voice, the Son closely echoes divine decree. God's martial rhetoric is imitated, most evidently

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[22] See 'vicegerent', *OED, n.* and *adj.,* 2a.

[23] *BCP,* p. 399.

in the repetition of the noun 'foes', which responds to God's use of the word ('such a foe' (V. 724)). Furthermore, the Son's suggestion that God ridicules 'their vain designs' emphasises the Father's omniscience in having correctly foreseen the angelic rebellion. Crucially, in denouncing the 'vain designs and tumults vain' of the 'rebels', the Son mimics the derisive linguistic register of Civil War pamphlets attacking congregational separatists.[24] For instance, in his anti-separatist tract *The Anatomy of the Separatists* (1642), John Taylor decries the 'tumult and distraction' caused by different groups of separatists to 'the true Protestant religion'.[25] Comparably, by employing the noun 'tumult', Milton's Son of God suggests the rebels are a hindrance to the conformity prescribed by God. After this, Milton foregrounds the biblical idea of the Son as God's principal representative: the enjambed phrase 'all regal power / Giv'n me',

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[24] Milton's own viewpoint, on the issue of congregational separatism during the English Civil Wars, is complex. For an overview, see Loewenstein, *Treacherous Faith,* p. 273, who draws on Milton's description of a 'unanimous multitude of good Protestants' in *The Reason of Church-Government* (1641) as evidence of the poet's belief that 'religious truth may be one and many'. The literature on Milton's creative response to the fissures of the English Civil War years is, of course, extensive. Exemplary contributions on this topic include: Walter S.H. Lim, *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2006); Loewenstein, *Treacherous Faith,* chapters 7-8; idem., *Representing Revolution in Milton and his Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric, and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapters 3 and 10; Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue,* chapter 8; Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. p. 7 ('[Milton's] enormous influence upon succeeding generations is related to the skill with which he dismantled and then reassembled the literary past under the pressure of his experience and understanding of the English Revolution').

[25] See John Taylor, *The Anatomy of the Separatists, Alias, Brownists* (London, 1642), sig. A2v. For an example of a government tract attacking parliamentarians for 'imploying seditious Preachers… licencing seditious Pamphlets, and by raising and countenancing Tumults', see *An Orderly and Plaine Narration of the Beginnings and Causes of this Warre* (Bristol, 1644), p. 23. For readings of the way 'anyone *perceived* as a Dissenter could be stigmatized as "seditious", "tumultuous", and "turbulent"' by the time of the Restoration, see Loewenstein, *Treacherous Faith,* p. 307; Richard L. Greaves, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660-1663* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 60 ('the government's position throughout the 1660s was set… [Seditious preachers] were not messengers of Christian peace but trumpets of war and incendiaries to rebellion').

implying that the Son derives all 'power' from God, has an evident source in Matthew 28.18 ('All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth'). The final two lines of the Son's speech betray a witty acknowledgement of his dependent position beneath the Father. The adjective 'dextrous', which is defined by the *OED* as 'situated on the right side or right hand; right, as opposed to left', derives from the Latin noun *dextra* for 'right hand'.[26] Through this word, Milton neatly puns on the idea of the Son as God's most obedient servant, standing at his 'right hand'.

Book VI of *Paradise Lost* provides Raphael's account of the war in heaven. The first extended speech in the Book is given by God, whose address to the angel Abdiel also serves as a wider rallying cry to the congregated host:

> Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought
> The better fight, who single hast maintained
> Against revolted multitudes the cause
> Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
> And for the testimony of truth hast borne
> Universal reproach, far worse to bear
> Than violence: for this was all thy care
> To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
> Judged thee perverse: the easier conquest now
> Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
> Back on thy foes more glorious to return
> Than scorned thou didst depart, and to subdue
> By force, who reason for their law refuse,
> Right reason for their law, and for their king
> Messiah, who by right of merit reigns. (VI. 29-43)

Here, Milton suggests that in seeking to promote conformity in heaven, God demands the suppression of nonconformist belief. God's conception of 'truth, in word' could have recalled – for a contemporary reader – heated Civil War

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[26] 'dextrous', *OED, adj.,* 1.

debates addressing the correct method of interpreting scripture.[27] As we noted in the previous chapter, a commonly levied accusation against the religious radicals of the 1640s was that they interpreted God's word with 'the Spirit of error, rather then the Spirit of truth' (see p. 227).[28] At the centre of God's exhortation to his angels is the suggestion that 'truth, in word' – scriptural truth, that is, as correctly interpreted – can be a means of suppressing the rebel forces. In this vein, the final four lines of the given extract deserve further scrutiny. God repeats the verb 'subdue', which recalls the Son's speech in Book V ('dextrous to subdue' (V. 741)), and the idea of suppressing radical religious groups. After this, God's final lines, with their scornful denunciation of those 'who reason for their law refuse', seem to articulate Milton's own fervently held belief in the need for the rational interpretation of scripture.[29]

God's next oration, long after the war in heaven has commenced, is spoken directly to 'his anointed Son' (VI. 676), to whom he explains the reason

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[27] The contentious, and highly political, nature of mid-seventeenth-century scriptural interpretation has garnered sustained scholarly attention in recent years. Important recent studies of English Civil War exegesis include: Kevin Killeen, *The Political Bible in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Scott Mandelbrote, '"The Doors Shall Fly Open": Chronology and Biblical Interpretation in England, *c.* 1630-*c.* 1730', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700,* ed. Killeen, Smith, and Willie, pp. 176-95; Bradstock, 'Digging, Levelling, and Ranting', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible,* pp. 397-411. Contributions that are alert to the political nature of early Reformation exegesis include Simpson, *Burning to Read*; David Curtis Steinmetz, ed., *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

[28] See Taylor, *Swarme of Seperatists*, sig. A4r. Other instances of the phrase 'spirit of error' being used to attack radical scriptural interpretation include, amongst numerous others, Arthur Jackson, *A Help for the Understanding of the Holy Scripture* (London, 1643), p. 545 ('it might not be overborn or trodden under foot by any possessed with a spirit of errour and profanenesse'); Richard Allen, *An Antidote Against Heresy: or A Preservative for Protestants Against the Poyson of Papists, Anabaptists, Arrians, Arminians* (London, 1648), p. 65 ('and spirit of *Errour,* hath prevailed so far in the Church, as we see at this day').

[29] See Milton, 'A Treatise of Civil Power', in *MPW,* Vol. 7, ed. Robert W. Ayres, p. 245 ('What I argue, shall be drawn from the scripture only; and therin [*sic*] from true fundamental principles of the gospel; to all knowing Christians undeniable').

for the war's protracted duration: 'I suspend [the rebels'] doom; / Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last / Endless, and no solution will be found: / War wearied hath performed what war can do' (VI. 692-5). A useful context for these lines is Milton's own argument regarding the importance of religious toleration in *A Treatise of Civil Power* (1659), which states that 'nothing can with more conscience, more equitie, nothing more protestantly can be permitted then a free and lawful debate at all times by writing, conference, or disputation of what opinion soever, disputable by scripture'.[30] Nonetheless, the second half of God's speech introduces the Son as the intervening 'solution' to 'perpetual' war:

> Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;
> For thee I have ordained it, and thus far
> Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
> Of ending this great war, since none but thou
> Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
> Immense I have transfused, that all may know
> In heaven and hell thy power above compare,
> And this perverse commotion governed thus,
> To manifest thee worthiest to be heir
> Of all things, to be heir and to be king
> By sacred unction, thy deservèd right. (VI. 699-709)

This extract has been interpreted by William B. Hunter, and more recently by Russell M. Hillier, as evidence that the war in heaven provides a 'temporal allegory', which 'parallels the Paschal *triduum*, the three days of Passion Week that culminate in Jesus's resurrection'.[31] There is more to say, however, about

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[30] Ibid., p. 251.

[31] Quotation taken from Hillier, *Milton's Messiah,* p. 95. For Hunter's analysis of 'the three days of battle… [which] suggests the period during which Christ was under the power of death', see 'The War in Heaven: The Exaltation of the Son', in *Bright Essence,* ed. Hunter, Patrides, and Adamson, pp. 115-30 (p. 128). For further discussion of Book VI's structure, see Stella P. Revard, *War in Heaven: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).

the unorthodox way that God grants martial victory to the Son in Book VI of Milton's epic. Of particular note is the verb 'transfused', which was employed throughout the seventeenth century to convey the transmission of something, often in medical contexts.[32] God stipulates that the Son cannot 'end' the heavenly war on his own terms, but is instead a receptacle for the transfusion of 'virtue and grace', akin to a minister or a prophet. In addition to stressing the Son's absolute dependence on him, Milton's God again draws on the language of Civil War pamphlets addressing the question of effective government. The noun 'commotion', for instance, was regularly employed in the polemical writings of the 1640s and 1650s to highlight the volatile religio-political climate.[33] The way in which, according to God, the Son might govern the rebels should also be emphasised. God proclaims that the Son possesses the right 'to be heir and to be king', a phrase which alludes, quite brazenly, to the Restoration of the English monarchy in 1660.

At the conclusion of the war in heaven, Milton voices the Son's desire to vanquish the rebels. Responding to God's exhortation to 'Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out' (VI. 715), the Son immediately articulates his obedient intention:

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[32] 'transfuse', *OED, v.,* 3a.

[33] Contemporary usages of 'commotion' to refer to political instability include John Saltmarsh's sermon on Mark 13.8, 'Nation Against Nation', in *Holy Discoveries and Flames* (London, 1640), p. 223 ('Lord, what combustion! What commotion is here! *Nation against Nation, and Kingdome against Kingdome*'); and William Prynne, *The Fourth Part of the Soveraigne Power of Parliaments and Kingdomes* (London, 1643), p. 27 ('who infect others in these times of Commotion and Civill Warres'). It is also significant that Milton employed the term in his early Civil War tract *Of Reformation* (1641), to refer to the stirrings of revolutionary sentiment. See Milton, 'Of Reformation', in *MPW,* Vol. 1, ed. Wolfe, p. 592 ('What more banefull to *Monarchy* then a Popular Commotion, for the dissolution of *Monarchy* slides aptest into *Democracy*; and what stirs the Englishmen, as our wisest writers have observ'd, sooner to rebellion, then violent, and heavy hands upon their goods and purses?').

> O Father, O supreme of heavenly thrones,
> First, highest, holiest, best, thou always seekst
> To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
> As is most just; this I my glory account,
> My exaltation, and my whole delight,
> That thou in me well pleased, declar'st thy will
> Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
> Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume,
> And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
> Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
> For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st:
> But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
> Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
> Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
> Armed with thy might, rid heaven of these rebelled,
> To their prepared ill mansion driven down
> To chains of darkness, and the undying worm,
> That from thy just obedience could revolt,
> Whom to obey is happiness entire. (VI. 723-41)

This speech begins with another affirmation of the hierarchical, yet reciprocal, relationship between God the Father and the Son. Milton's Son of God asserts that, having been glorified by the Father, he will seek to repay him. There is an echo, in the sixth line of this speech, of the words spoken by God during Christ's baptism, as recorded in Matthew 3.17 and Luke 3.22 – 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'. Once again, emphasis is placed by Milton on the heterodox idea of the Son as an elevated divine agent, rather than as a full Person of the Trinity. To this end, we note the line 'Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume', which promotes the Son's 'power' – conceived of, here, in distinctly monarchical terms – being given by God.[34] Where the first half of this speech functions as an exaltation of God's absolute 'power', what follows returns to

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[34] The idea of God possessing, and lending His people, a 'sceptre' or a 'rod' is affirmed in scripture, particularly in the Psalms. See especially Psalm 2.9 ('Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron'); Psalm 45.6 ('the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre'); Psalm 110.2 ('The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion'). Also of note, here, is the Book of Revelation: see Revelation 2.27, 'And he shall rule them with a rod of iron'.

the recurring motif of suppression. Ideas of religious fragmentation inform Milton's poetic language: the phrase 'ill mansion', for instance, offers a sinister refashioning of John 14.2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions', foregrounding the reprobation of the rebels. The idea of the Son denouncing errant Church representatives is also prompted by a specific phrase in the next line, 'undying worm'. As Alastair Fowler notes, Milton may be drawing on a note in the Geneva Bible attached to Isaiah 66.24 ('for their worme shal not dye'), which interprets the word 'worme' as 'a continual torment of conscience, which shal euer gnawe them'.[35] Thus, the Son's response betrays his desire to suppress the Father's errant representatives.

Within the first narrative arc of *Paradise Lost*, Milton dramatises the Son's obedience to God's direct voice. In a heterodox move, the Son is presented as an entirely separate entity to God – at various crucial moments, as God's 'right hand' agent (V. 606) – seeking to enforce divine decree. Building on this contention, what follows in this chapter offers a contrast, focusing on Eve's disobedience to the Father's voice in the later books of the epic.

## 2. Transgressing the Command

In the second half of *Paradise Lost*, Milton represents Eve's disobedience to God's voice. The centrality of this theme is foregrounded by Milton's narrator at the opening of Book VII, who references 'that sole command, / So easily obeyed amid the choice / Of all tastes else to please their appetite, / Though wandering' (VII. 47-50). Here, Milton suggests that God's 'sole command' is a simple instruction – we note the adverb 'easily' – but the poet then qualifies this

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[35] See Fowler's note on Book VI, line 739, in *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 375.

with reference to 'all tastes else': appetitive choices that might be the cause of further 'wandering'.[36] In drawing out this contrast between God's 'sole command' and the errancy of the human 'appetite', it is useful to note the biblical connotations of 'wandering'. The text of Job 1.7 records Satan's self-avowed 'going to and fro in the earth… walking up and down in it'.[37] Given that Milton employs the narrator's voice to establish a contrast between God's 'sole command' and satanic 'wandering', it is significant that only Adam – referred to intimately by God as the 'First man, of men innumerable ordained' (VIII. 297) – is made directly aware of God's prescription. This speech, recounted by Adam in Book VIII of the epic, requires quoting in full:

> This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
> To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
> Of every tree that in the garden grows
> Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth.
> But of the tree whose operation brings
> Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
> The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
> Amid the garden by the tree of life,
> Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
> And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
> The day thou eatst thereof, my sole command
> Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die;
> From that day mortal, and this happy state
> Shalt loose, expelled from hence into a world
> Of woe and sorrow. (VIII. 319-33)

Having suggested that Adam has been 'ordained', a verb which represents Adam as a minister, the opening of God's speech further reinforces the need for

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[36] For a stimulating essay collection exploring the creative significance of 'wandering' in Milton's work and thought, see Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz, ed., *With Wandering Steps: Generative Ambiguity in Milton's Poetics* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2016).

[37] For the link between Satan and the figure of the nightwalker in early modern English literary culture, see Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London: Verso Books, 2015), pp. 50-1.

holy work. The verbal coupling of 'till and keep' draws on Genesis 2.15 – 'And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it'[38] – whilst later in the same speech, this idea of prescribed godly work is contrasted with a biblical exhortation to indulge in the appetitive: 'Eat freely with glad heart' refers to Genesis 2.16, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat'. As we have already noted in our discussion of Book III, the 'sole command' itself, which is figured as a 'pledge of thy obedience', sees Milton adapting the account of God's prohibition in Genesis 2.17 through the Augustinian suggestion that the 'tree' is a 'pledge' of obedience (see this chapter, p. 251). Thus Milton, adapting Genesis 2.15-17 in the light of Augustine's theory of the Fall as a test, foregrounds a tension in God's 'sole command' between faithful labouring and appetitive enjoyment.

It is of central dramatic importance, in *Paradise Lost*, that Eve does not hear of God's 'sole command' directly. God informs Adam of his intention to create Eve – 'Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self' (VIII. 450). This line depends on God's declaration 'I will make him an help meet for him' in Genesis 2.18, but as Adam recalls, God is then 'heard no more' (VIII. 452); God's direct voice is absent from the remainder of Book VIII. When discussing the creation of Eve, Adam informs Raphael that 'on she came, / Led by her heavenly maker, though unseen, / And guided by his voice, nor uninformed / Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites' (VIII. 484-7). Of note is the fact that Eve is only afforded a partial encounter with God. Although Eve is 'Led by her heavenly maker', and

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[38] That God ordered man to 'till and keep', in Genesis 2.15, is also affirmed by the Geneva text: 'Then the Lord God toke the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, that he might dresse it, and kepe it', to which there is a marginal note, stipulating that 'God wolde not haue man ydle, thogh as yet there was no nede to labour'. As we have seen, Milton would have known – and worked from – more than one English Bible translation, so this correspondence is noteworthy.

therefore presented by Milton, at this point in the epic, as an obedient character, God remains 'unseen' to her. The use of this verb contrasts with the much fuller 'Presence divine' granted to Adam earlier in the same Book (VIII. 314), promoting the unsatisfactoriness of experiencing just God's voice. It is also useful to spell out precisely what, according to Adam, Eve hears from God in Book VIII. In the first instance, we note the self-cancelling double-negative in 'nor uninformed'. This phrase fosters a sense of ambiguity, given that the reader is not provided with God's commands to Eve. Secondly, the reference to 'nuptial sanctity and marriage rites' implies that God, in his reported address to Eve, has chiefly focused on marital issues. It is as if Eve has received an entirely different set of instructions from God, which have focused solely on the domestic sphere.[39] That Eve has not directly heard God's 'sole command' is also prompted in Book IX. In her first speech after having been created, Eve appears to display an awareness of God's prescription for holy labour ('the work under our labour grows, / Luxurious by restraint' (IX. 208-9)), but following this, Milton introduces a hint of uncertainty: Eve asks Adam to 'advise / Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present, / Let us divide our labours' (IX. 212-14). Milton's representation of Eve having 'first thoughts' promotes a sense of naivety, foregrounding the fact that Eve was not present for God's instruction to 'reason not contemptibly' when mastering Eden (VIII. 374).

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[39] For perhaps the fullest consideration of domesticity in *Paradise Lost*, see Elizabeth Liebert, 'Domestic Adam', *MS,* Vol. 53 (1), ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2012), pp. 41-67. Central to Liebert's argument is that '[Adam and Eve] enact the compromise advocated by domestic conduct literature, Adam choosing titles that mitigate his superiority, Eve those that demonstrate her voluntary submission. This pattern changes… after the Fall'; see pp. 56-7. For a broader study of the way domesticity was readily politicised during the mid-seventeenth century, see Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter 6.

During the pivotal temptation scene in Book IX, Eve misinterprets God's 'sole command' under the influence of Satan's beguiling rhetoric. Upon first encountering Eve, Satan employs deceptive flattery: 'Easy to me it is to tell thee all / What thou commandst, and right thou shouldst be obeyed' (IX. 569-70). Satan's rhetorical perversion, in these lines, is in positing that Eve might, much like God the Father, authoritatively command for herself, and possess the attendant right to 'be obeyed'. In this way, Satan shifts emphasis away from obeying God's voice, suggesting that Eve might, instead, become a law unto herself. This idea takes root in Eve's thought, and her speech begins to echo Satan's emphasis on human self-sufficiency:

> Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
> Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
> The credit of whose virtue rest with thee,
> Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.
> But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;
> God so commanded, and left that command
> Sole daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
> Law to our selves, our reason is our law. (IX. 647-54)

Here, Eve echoes Satan's deceptive rhetoric by transforming the clarity of God's 'sole command' into 'that command / Sole daughter of his voice'. Milton inverts the word order of the 'sole command' as 'that command / Sole'; this suggests that Eve's understanding of the 'sole command' has been diminished, and that she has been seduced by Satan's positioning of her self-importance. Further to this, the phrase 'Sole daughter of his voice' points towards Milton's awareness of the Hebraic conception of bat qôl (see my introduction, pp. 21-2), given that the phrase 'daughter of a voice' (Hebrew בַּת קוֹל; translated as 'daughter of a voice') was invoked, in rabbinic tradition, to convey the idea of a heavenly voice 'once removed' that proclaimed God's will. Thus, Eve's

erroneous suggestion that God spoke to Adam via a 'daughter of his voice', rather than directly, promotes her misrepresentation of God's command.[40]

Having prompted Eve to undermine the authority of God's 'sole command', Satan moves to further confuse her understanding. Satan asks: 'Hath God then said that of the fruit / Of all these garden trees ye shall not eat, / Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?' (IX. 656-8). These lines signal an appeal to Eve's vanity, playing on information that she has received from Adam concerning the need for the rational mastery of Eden (IX. 243). Eve's response to Satan, once again, evidences a misinterpretation of the 'sole command':

> Of the fruit
> Of each tree in the garden we may eat,
> But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
> The garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat
> Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (IX. 659-63)

Following Satan's lead, Eve disregards God's command by placing undue emphasis on appetitive enjoyment. She appears to be unaware of the emphasis placed by God on the limitation of pleasure – 'shun to taste, / And shun the bitter consequence' (VIII. 327-8) – and is tempted by 'the fruit of this fair tree'. That the 'fruit' is now desired by Eve is revealed by Milton's use of the adjective 'fair' for the tree. This word is not employed in God's 'sole command' when the 'tree' is described (VIII. 323), nor is it used by Adam during his counselling session in Book IX; it is, in fact, invoked by Satan when describing Eve ('She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods' (IX. 489)).[41] Eve's imitative use of 'fair'

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[40] For an account of how 'Eve [uses] a term which is manifestly an understatement of God's express and spoken will' to indicate the Fall's imminence, see William B. Hunter, *The Descent of Urania: Studies in Milton, 1946-1988* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1988), p. 23.

[41] That Milton's Fall is engendered, in part, through a corruption of divine language and, more particularly, through Satan's promotion of improper 'naming' is an established critical

aligns her with Satan, suggesting that she is now chiefly motivated by her appetite. Importantly, in the final lines of the above speech, Milton represents Eve's incorrect citation of God's prohibition. The 'sole command', following Genesis 2.15-17, had placed paramount emphasis on limiting the appetite – as Eve continues to in this speech ('Ye shall not eat') – but God's foreboding statement on mortal death, and the dire significance of expulsion from Eden ('this happy state / Shalt loose' (VIII. 331-2)), is wholly omitted. In this way, Eve falls through a form of Chinese whispers: her misrepresentation of God's command prompted by the fact that it is Satan's voice – rather than God's, which is, of course, referred to merely as a 'daughter of his voice' (IX. 653) – that she directly hears and responds to.

In his final rhetorical manoeuvre in Book IX, Satan exploits Eve's growing uncertainty by subverting her understanding of God's decree. Satan's oration, which Milton's narrator prefixes with a comparison to 'when of old some orator renowned / In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence / Flourished' (IX. 670-2), plays on contemporary anxiety about rhetorical dissimulation, as Eve's anxiety about the consequences of mortal death is eradicated.[42] Towards

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contention. See, above all, John Leonard, *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), *passim.* For some recent studies that consider different aspects of 'fallen' language in *Paradise Lost,* see also Leonard, 'Self-Contradicting Puns in *Paradise Lost*', in *A New Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas N. Corns (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), pp. 436-54; Liam D. Haydon, 'Ambiguous Words: Post-Lapsarian Language in *Paradise Lost*', *RS,* Vol. 30 (2), 2016, pp. 174-91; Kristen Poole, 'Naming, *Paradise Lost*, and the Gendered Discourse of Perfect Language Schemes', *ELR,* Vol. 38 (3), 2008, pp. 535-60.

[42] The close association between rhetorical persuasion and lying was an early modern English commonplace. For an extensive recent study of this, which examines a number of classical and early modern treatises, handbooks, and debates about rhetoric and its moral value, see Andrew Hadfield, *Lying in Early Modern English Culture: From the Oath of Supremacy to the Oath of Allegiance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), chapter 4. Further studies of this theme include Ingo Berensmeyer and Andrew Hadfield, ed., *Mendacity in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016); David Colclough, '*Parrhesia*: The

the beginning of this speech, Satan apostrophises: 'Queen of this universe, do not believe / Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die: / How should ye? By the fruit? It gives you life / To knowledge' (IX. 684-7). These lines appeal, once more, to Eve's burgeoning pride, before addressing her fear of 'Those rigid threats of death'. Satan suggests, in a reversal of God's warning ('From that day mortal' (VIII. 331)), not only that Eve 'shall not die', but that 'the fruit… gives you life'. Where God had directly informed Adam that '[he] this happy state / Shalt loose' (VIII. 331-2) – a phrase implying a sudden removal of paradisal status – Satan misinforms Eve that her own 'knowledge' might be enhanced by tasting the 'fruit'. In what follows, Satan refutes the idea of obedience to God's 'sole command':

> Look on me,
> Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
> And life more perfect have attained than fate
> Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
> Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
> Is open? Or will God incense his ire
> For such a petty trespass, and not praise
> Rather such dauntless virtue, whom the pain
> Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,
> Deterred not from achieving what might lead
> To happier life, knowledge of good and evil;
> Of good, how just? Of evil, if what is evil
> Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
> God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
> Not just, not God; nor feared then, nor obeyed:
> Your fear itself of death removes the fear. (IX. 687-702)

This extract, which opens with an exhortation to 'Look on [Satan]' as proof that the fruit possesses miraculous properties, seeks to overturn the paramount authority of God's 'sole command'. As John Leonard points out, this provides

Rhetoric of Free Speech in Early Modern England', *Rhetorica*, Vol. 17 (2), 1999, pp. 177-212, esp. pp. 189-96.

the only moment, in the entirety of *Paradise Lost*, where Satan speaks of God by name, arguing that this evidences an attempt to 'cancel out' God's name.[43] It is plausible that a cancelling strategy is taking place here, but this speech might also be interpreted in terms of Satan's desire to deny the necessity of obedience to God's voice. Satan denigrates the 'sole command' as a 'petty trespass', doing so to suggest that the 'command' is not worth heeding. After this, Satan speaks in 'praise' of 'dauntless virtue' – a phrase that recalls Eve's plea to Adam to let her withstand temptation alone ('what is faith, love, virtue unassayed' (IX. 335)) – suggesting that 'dauntless virtue' might lead to 'death' being 'denounced'.[44] Thus, playing on Eve's emergent desire for sensual forms of knowledge, Satan denies the prescribed need to obey God's voice.

After Eve's transgression, Milton represents the changing relationship between God the Father and humankind.[45] The narrator, at the opening of Book X, provides a proleptic indication that the tenor of God's voice is to change: 'For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered / The high injunction not to taste that fruit, / Whoever tempted; which they not obeying, / Incurred' (X. 12-15). Despite the ample space given, in *Paradise Lost*, to Satan's glozing perversions of God's 'sole command', Milton's narrator affirms that 'they knew [it]', and that a penalty has been 'Incurred'. According to the *OED*, the verb

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[43] See Leonard, *Naming in Paradise,* p. 201.

[44] It is, of course, a critical commonplace that both Eve and Satan echo Milton's own declaration, in his Civil War tract on press freedom *Areopagitica* (London, 1644), that he could not 'praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed'. See Milton, 'Areopagitica', in *MPW,* Vol. 2, ed. Ernest Sirluck, p. 515.

[45] In my analysis of the way God's voice becomes more fearsome in the later books of *Paradise Lost*, I am indebted to Stanley E. Fish's seminal argument that the poem leads the reader – as it does Adam and Eve – into a recognition of their own fallen state. See Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967 [repr. 1997]).

'incur' held legal connotations in the seventeenth century, and was readily employed to communicate the idea of '[rendering] oneself liable to (damage)'.[46] In Book X, God conceives of the Fall in legal terms: in his first speech, '[mankind's] free will' is troped as an 'even scale', which Eve's transgression has left 'inclining' (X. 46-7). Milton's employment of the balance scales trope also has a scriptural background, given that it is often employed in the Bible to convey God's decisive judgment, as in Proverbs 16.11 ('A just weight and balance *are* the Lord's: all the weights of the bag *are* his work'). The idea of judgment informs God's direct address to the Son, which concludes this speech:

> But whom send I to judge them? Who but thee
> Vicegerent Son, to thee I have transferred
> All judgment, whether in heaven, or earth, or hell.
> Easy it may be seen that I intend
> Mercy colleágue with justice, sending thee
> Man's friend, his mediator, his designed
> Both ransom and redeemer voluntary,
> And destined man himself to judge man fallen. (X. 55-62)

Having begun the speech with an open address to the 'Assembled angels' (X. 34), at this moment, the Father's voice is directed towards the 'Vicegerent Son'. The noun 'Vicegerent', as we have already seen, was regularly employed to denote a mortal representative of God in seventeenth-century England (see pp. 205, 255-6). Where the Son, in Book V of the epic, is described by God in monarchical terms ('his great vicegerent reign' (V. 609)), here, the 'Vicegerent Son' is afforded the ability to serve in 'judgment', suggesting that – much like God – he possesses legal responsibilities. In the final four lines of this speech, Milton employs an Augustinian register to signal that the Son's 'judgment' is to be coupled with 'Mercy'. In particular, the phrase 'Man's friend, his

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[46] 'incur', *OED, v.*, 2.

mediator', betrays an awareness of Augustine's influential conception, as outlined in his *Confessions*, of Christ as 'the mediator between God and men'.[47]

During the judgment scene in Book X, Milton suggests that the Son adopts the voice of God the Father. In doing so, Milton transforms his own theological belief, outlined in *De Doctrina*, that '[the] name of God is bestowed on judges', such as the Son, who 'take the place of God when they administer judgements'.[48] Drawing on Genesis 3.8-10, Milton dramatises Adam's shame in being directly confronted by 'the voice of God' (X. 97):

> Where art thou Adam, wont with joy to meet
> My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,
> Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
> Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought;
> Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
> Absents thee, or what chance details? Come forth. (X. 103-8)

Commenting on these lines, Fowler has suggested that Milton extrapolates from Genesis 3.9 by '[elaborating] God's pretence of ignorance to give Adam a chance to be candid'.[49] This is plausible, but it might be added that in voicing God the Father, the Son closely resembles an earthly minister in calling Adam to 'Come forth' for confession. Adam's evasiveness in confessing the transgression demonstrates the augmented degree of separation between him and God: 'I heard thee in the garden, and of thy voice / Afraid, being naked, hid myself' (X. 116-17). In these lines, Milton closely follows Genesis 3.10, which gives hearing '[God's] voice in the garden' as the reason for Adam's absence. The Son's response to Adam promotes the fear now being provoked by the divine voice: 'My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared, / But still

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[47] See Augustine, *Confessions,* p. 152.

[48] Milton, 'Of the Son of God', in *De Doctrina,* Vol. 1, ed. Hale and Cullington, p. 170.

[49] See Fowler's note on Book X, lines 102-8, in *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 545.

rejoiced, how is it now become / So dreadful to thee?' (X. 119-21). Milton contrasts the familiar way that God spoke to Adam before the Fall with the 'dreadful' voice that now resounds. It is equally significant that postlapsarian Adam possesses reduced access to God's voice. Later in Book X, Adam laments: 'Oh voice once heard / Delightfully, *Increase and multiply*, / Now death to hear!' (X. 729-31). In these lines, Adam desires the intrusion of God's voice – we note the elegiac past tense of 'once heard / Delightfully' – and '*Increase and multiply*' emerges, as if a mis-remembered fragment, from God's direct command to Adam during his creation ('Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth') (VII. 531). Adam's conception of God's voice has also changed. By suggesting that 'his dreadful voice no more / Would thunder in my ears' (X. 779-80), he echoes Satan in his pejorative conception of God as a 'thunderer' (II. 28).

In Book XI, the Son intercedes so that the gap between humankind and God may be bridged. In his opening speech, the Son petitions the Father: 'See Father, what first fruits on earth are sprung / From thy implanted grace in man, these sighs / And prayers, which in this golden censer, mixed / With incense, I thy priest before thee bring' (XI. 22-5). This address begins with the imperative construction 'See Father', providing a rare instance of the Son seeking to direct the Father's gaze. Throughout the above extract, once again, Milton voices the Son in the manner of an earthly priest, implying that God becomes a congregant in attending to the Son's words. The idea of a 'golden censer, mixed / With incense' was a scriptural commonplace, adapted from Revelation 5.8 ('the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints').

However, Milton's suggestion that the Son is a 'priest' who brings a 'golden censer, mixed / With incense' has a High-Church – and even Catholic – resonance in its invocation of opulent ceremony.[50] Thus, in having the Son petition the Father with reference to a hallmark of Catholic ceremony, Milton – no friend of either high-churchmanship or Catholicism – foregrounds a hotly contested area of contemporary worship, to imply that the Son of God has more right than any human priest to wield a censer. As with the Son's previous advocacy that God might display 'Mercy colleágue with justice' in dealing with the transgressors (X. 59), this speech, in Book XI, also betrays an Augustinian inflection in its suggestion that wordless 'sighs / And prayers' are acceptable forms of penitence.[51] In his response, God sanctions the Son's request: 'All thy request for man, accepted Son, / Obtain, all thy request was my decree: / But longer in that Paradise to dwell, / The law I gave to nature him forbids' (XI. 46-9). Here, the Father's benevolence in mitigating human suffering is tempered by the fact that 'The law' – a synecdoche for God's 'sole command' – must stand firm, necessitating the expulsion from Eden.

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[50] The polemical significance of incense in early modern English religious culture has garnered critical interest in recent years. See in particular David Robertson, 'Incensed Over Incense: Incense and Community in Seventeenth-Century Literature', in *Writing and Religion in England, 1558-1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory,* ed. Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 389-409; Holly Crawford Pickett, 'The Idolatrous Nose: Incense on the Early Modern Stage', in *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performance of Religion on the Renaissance Stage,* ed. Jane Hwang Degenhart and Elizabeth Williamson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 19-38. Pickett summarises that '[t]he two "papist" uses of incense that Reformers found most objectionable were the censing of images and the censing of the altar during [Catholic Mass]' (p. 22), but also that the use of incense in English Protestant worship increased at the time of the 'so-called "beauty of holiness" movement, most associated with Archbishop Laud' (p. 23). For a historical overview of debates about incense in early modern England, with particular reference to the increased usage of incense in churches during the Laudian period, see also Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 19-20.

[51] See Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 208-9.

Despite all this, the harshness of God's banishment of Adam and Eve is tempered, within Milton's epic schema, by the promise of typological fulfilment.[52] Later in Book XI, God instructs the archangel Michael: 'Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal / To Adam what shall come in future days, / As I shall thee enlighten, intermix / My cov'nant in the woman's seed renewed' (XI. 113-16). Here, Milton's phrase 'cov'nant in the woman's seed' points towards the Covenants undertaken between humankind and God: in the first instance, Old Testament blood sacrifice; and in the second instance, the New Covenant offered by Jesus's Atonement. After God is voiced for the last time in *Paradise Lost*, Adam laments God's postlapsarian inaccessibility, doing so by attesting to the absence of God's direct voice: 'here I could frequent, / With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed / Presence divine… among these pines his voice' (XI. 317-21). This sense of God's absent voice prefigures *Paradise Regained*, in which – as I shall now argue – Milton's exemplary Jesus is responsive to scriptural precedent, rather than to the direct voice of God the Father.

## 3. Jesus's Passive Resistance

Where the Son responds obediently to the Father's direct commands in *Paradise Lost*, in Milton's brief epic *Paradise Regained*, the dialogic interaction between these two Persons of the Trinity is differently rendered. In *Paradise Regained*, Milton's focus is on the Son in his human incarnation as Jesus: the narrator

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[52] For Milton's apocalyptic treatment of history, see David Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History: Historical Vision, Iconoclasm, and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 111-26. Central to Loewenstein's account, as he outlines in his introduction, is that Milton's representation of 'historical process' is 'more ambivalent than that of other [contemporary] apocalyptic writers'; see p. 9.

describes the subject matter as 'one *man's* firm obedience fully tried' (I. 4, my emphasis). It is of central importance that Milton's humanised Jesus is separated from the Father and is not directly addressed by his voice.[53] Throughout the brief epic, Milton expands on the accounts of Jesus's temptation in the wilderness within the synoptic gospels of Matthew and Luke. In both of these accounts, Jesus is presented as refuting Satan's temptations with reference to the authority of Hebraic law: as in Luke 4.12, 'It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God', which is in itself a citation of Deuteronomy 6.16 ('Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God'). It is, of course, a critical commonplace that Milton's Jesus deploys his extensive knowledge of scriptural tradition to counter Satan's various temptations. The tradition of scholarship which conceives of *Paradise Regained* as a 'hermeneutic combat' goes back to the work of Mary Ann Radzinowicz, and Jameela Lares – in her more recent monograph *Milton and the Preaching Arts* (2001) – considers Milton's Jesus in light of the seventeenth-century 'controversial tradition [of scriptural interpretation]'.[54] What follows builds on this body of scholarship by focusing on the complex, multi-gendered resonances of the rhetorical debates between Jesus and Satan.[55] Whilst Bonnie Lander Johnson has recently argued, quite

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[53] In my assessment of Milton's humanised Jesus in *Paradise Regained,* I am indebted to Labriola's essay 'The Son as an Angel', in *Milton in the Age of Fish,* ed. Lieb and Labriola pp. 105-18, which posits that Milton's Son 'is thrice begotten literally, not metaphorically: first as divine, second and angelic, and third as human'; see p. 105.

[54] See Mary Ann Radzinowicz, '*Paradise Regained* as Hermeneutic Combat', *University of Hartford Studies in Literature*, Vol. 16 (1), 1984, pp. 99-107; Jameela Lares, *Milton and the Preaching Arts* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2001), pp. 171-212.

[55] For an overview of Milton's complex treatment of gendered subjects, see Catherine Gimelli Martin, ed., *Milton and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Although Martin's collection possesses many strengths, it does not provide a historicised essay on gender in *Paradise Regained.* Other recent assessments of Milton's representation of gendered subjects, which recognise that gender – and gender conflict – provided a site for the poet to work through many of his most pressing aesthetic, political, and theological preoccupations, include Shannon Miller, *Engendering the Fall: John Milton and Seventeenth-Century Women*

plausibly, that Milton conducts a 're-gendering' of chastity as a masculine virtue in *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634),[56] in the brief epic of 1671, I argue that Satan's hyper-masculine, vainglorious rhetoric is pitted against that of Jesus, who – through his more laconic, scriptural discourse – practices passive resistance, and stoic virtue, in a way that was advocated for both women and men during the period.[57]

In Book I of *Paradise Regained*, God the Father directly informs the archangel Gabriel of the temptations that Jesus will soon encounter in the wilderness. God declares his intention to 'expose [Jesus] / To Satan, let him tempt and now assay / His utmost subtlety, because he boasts / And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng / Of his apostasy' (I. 142-6). In these lines, Milton foregrounds Satan's decidedly macho brand of masculinity: the poet's employment of the verbs 'assay', 'boasts', and 'vaunts' betray the hold that the figure of the male Romance hero had on his imagination, given that 'assay' is repeatedly used by Edmund Spenser in the first edition of *The Faerie Queene*

*Writers* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Mary Beth Rose, *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), chapter 4; Catherine Maxwell, *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne: Bearing Blindness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

[56] See Bonnie Lander Johnson, *Chastity in Early Stuart Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 145, and chapter 5 of this monograph more generally.

[57] The importance of stoicism in early modern European intellectual thought is a critical commonplace. For an appraisal of the importance of stoicism in the early modern England, see Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 124 ('One philosophy that was to appeal to early modern Europe was Stoicism… The Stoics taught that reason, an understanding of divine nature, might free men from passions that enslaved them'). Important critical readings of Milton's use of Stoic thought, with particular reference to *Paradise Regained,* include: Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of Paradise Regained* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1966); Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1977); Andrew Shifflet, *Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. chapter 5.

(1590) to connote an attempt.[58] The assertive masculinity of Satan is worth emphasising, especially since Milton's God reminds the reader of Mary's role in fashioning Jesus within the same speech: 'He now shall know I can produce a man / Of female seed, far abler to resist / All his solicitations' (I. 150-2). By having God describe Jesus as 'Of female seed', Milton draws an explicit link between Jesus's exemplarity, and that of his mother Mary. To further cement this association, later in Book I, the protagonist recalls his mother's advice whilst in meditation ('These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving' (I. 227)). Milton's representation of Jesus's closeness to Mary is striking, given that most early modern English Protestant poets found it difficult to give voice to Mary at any great length.[59] As Arthur F. Marotti notes, the image of Mary as '[an] idealized woman, a mother who was seen as an endless source of love and compassion, an image of perfect piety and holiness, [was] hard to replace in the lives of English Christians [after the Reformation]', leading to the 'displacement of some of her qualities onto other figures' as a partial solution,

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[58] See Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* ed. Thomas P. Roche Jr. (London: Penguin, 1978 [repr. 1987]), pp. 125, 135, 186. For a recent study of the influence that Spenser had on Milton's epic poetry, and, in particular, on his heroic representations of the Son and Jesus, see Christopher Bond, *Spenser, Milton, and the Redemption of the Epic Hero* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2011), pp. 169-207.

[59] The scholarship on the way that Marian qualities were negated, echoed, and transformed, in the literature of early modern England, is extensive. For Mary's oblique presence in the Protestant drama of the period, see especially Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins, ed., *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). Other useful recent contributions on the idea of Marian displacement include: Lilla Grindlay, *Queen of Heaven: The Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin in Early Modern English Writing* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018), p. 11 ('My main emphasis is therefore on how the image of the Queen of Heaven is overtly deployed in polemical and devotional writing and how it is related to apostasy and conversion'); Ruben Espinosa, *Masculinity and Marian Efficacy in Shakespeare's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 26 ('the manifestation of this [Marian] influence was [often] contained in a masculine father'); Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 131: who argues that the Protestant emphasis on the salvific Christ betrays the wish 'that Jesus had no mother, that the queen were a man, that sovereigns of the heaven and earth could reproduce themselves without the recourse to women'.

for English Protestants, to this Marian absence.[60] To build on Marotti's argument, in *Paradise Regained*, it is as if the Catholic notion of a heroically chaste Mary repairing Eve's transgression is incorporated into Milton's typological representation of Jesus as an anti-Eve figure, who demonstrates a passive form of rhetorical resistance.

Elsewhere in God's opening address to Gabriel, Milton stresses: 'By humiliation and strong sufferance; / [Jesus's] weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength / And all the world' (I. 160-2). These lines draw on the Pauline commonplace, outlined in 1 Corinthians 1.27, that 'God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty', but Milton's promotion of Jesus's 'weakness' standing in opposition to Satan's 'strength' suggests that Jesus does not have recourse to, or choose to deploy, physical strength. Milton's construction of the alternative, inward set of virtues aspired to by Jesus is also heralded by the angelic chorus that echoes God's words: 'Victory and triumph to the Son of God / Now ent'ring his great duel, not of arms, / But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles' (I. 173-5). These lines move from serenading Jesus's divinely foretold 'triumph' to specifying how this 'triumph' will be achieved: not with 'arms', but through 'wisdom'. As we shall see, the noun 'wisdom' is of great importance to Milton's representation of Jesus's resistance. In the first instance, it is significant that, within the classical tradition, 'wisdom' is often gendered as a feminine virtue. A famous example of this is the goddess Athena, who serves in *The Odyssey*, among other ancient texts, as a representation of the concept of *mētis*, which Robert Parker translates

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[60] See Arthur F. Marotti, 'Foreword', in *Marian Moments,* ed. Buccola and Hopkins, pp. xvi-xvii.

as 'cunning intelligence'.[61] Here, Milton is also drawing on the biblical idea of *sapientia*, a Latin term which, according to the *OED*, referred to wisdom and understanding 'as an attribute of God… [commonly] applied to the Word or Second Person of the Trinity'.[62] The fact that Jesus is to 'vanquish' Satan with 'wisdom' – a virtue accessible to both men and women – rather than militaristic 'arms', emphasises the contrast between Jesus and Satan, and also foreshadows Jesus's stoical rejection of the physical passions and violent contestation.

In his first effort to tempt Jesus, Satan implores: 'if thou be the Son of God, command / That out of these hard stones be made thee bread; / So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve / With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste' (I. 342-5). Milton's principal source for this dialogue is the account of the first temptation in Luke 4.3 ('If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread'). These lines introduce an important structural aspect of *Paradise Regained*: namely, that Satan has frequent recourse to appetitive concerns in seeking to tempt Jesus, as he tempted Eve. However, Jesus's response provides a stark rebuttal:

> Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
> (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
> Man lives not by bread only, but each word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God; who fed
> Our fathers here with manna; in the mount
> Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank,
> And forty days Elijah without food
> Wandered this barren waste, the same I now:
> Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
> Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art? (I. 347-56)

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[61] See Robert Parker, 'Athena', *OCD*. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-911> [accessed 6 September 2019].

[62] See 'sapience', *OED, n.,* 1b.

This speech provides the first example, in the brief epic, of the stoical rhetorical corrective Jesus offers to Satan. Having listened to Satan's privileging of 'food' in its most literal sense, Jesus counters with a rhetorical question – 'Think'st thou such force in bread?' – before patiently providing a series of scriptural examples that refer to spiritual, rather than appetitive, sustenance. In the first instance, Milton draws on Luke 4.4, which records Jesus's citation of Deuteronomy 8.3 when responding to Satan: 'It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God', doing so without substantial poetic alteration. After this, Jesus's phrase 'Moses was forty days' refers to Exodus 24.18 ('Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights'), and the line 'And forty days Elijah without food' alludes to 1 Kings 19.8 ('went… forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God'). Milton's Jesus employs these examples to signal that his current situation has multiple scriptural precursors, and that for this reason, he should not 'distrust' God. Indeed, given the sustained emphasis on endurance within these biblical citations, Lewalski has aligned Milton's Jesus with 'the endurance and self-conquest of the Stoic moral hero', with the qualification that 'trust in God' replaces 'Stoic self-sufficiency'.[63] One might add that here, Milton represents the Jesus of *Paradise Regained* as a stoical corrective to Eve; as we noted in our preceding discussion of *Paradise Lost* (see this chapter, pp. 269-70), Milton's Eve is seduced by Satan's appetitive suggestion that 'the fruit… gives you life' (*PL*, IX. 686), whilst his Jesus, by contrast, renounces the appetitive significance of 'bread'.[64]

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[63] See Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic,* p. 246.

[64] See also John Carey's note on the verb 'distrust' (I. 355): '[Milton] presents Eve's temptation… as one of the same kind, thus preserving the traditional equation between those temptations Christ withstood and those to which Adam and Eve succumbed'; in *Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. Carey, pp. 444-5.

Despite Jesus's attempt to alert his auditor to the sustenance derived from 'each word / Proceeding from the mouth of God' (I. 349-50), Satan is completely unresponsive to this corrective. Jesus's parting rhetorical question – 'Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?' (I. 356) – which simultaneously reminds Satan that he is being confronted by the Messiah ('who I am'), and of his own desperate condition ('who thou art?'), is ignored, as Satan launches into a self-absorbed account of his own 'liberty to round this globe of earth, / Or range in the air' (I. 365-6). During this speech, Satan undermines Jesus's argument about the supremacy of God's word: instead, positing his own ability to offer 'advice by presages and signs, / And answers, oracles, portents and dreams, / Whereby they may direct their future life' (I. 394-6). Here, Milton's reference to the 'oracles' suggests that the 'advice' offered by Satan will be false, given the widely-held early modern conception of the 'oracles' having ceased with the coming of Christ.[65] The noun 'oracle', according to the *OED*, could also be applied in the period to someone who '[expounded]… the will of God', suggesting that Satan is misleadingly ascribing a divine quality to his voice.[66] The idea of Satan's 'oracling' is also picked up by Milton's Jesus in his response, which concludes with the rejoinder:

> No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
> The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased,
> And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
> Shalt be inquired at Delphos or elsewhere,
> At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
> God hath now sent his living oracle
> Into the world, to teach his final will,
> And sends his spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
> In pious hearts, an inward oracle
> To all truth requisite for men to know. (I. 455-64)

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[65] See Ossa-Richardson, *The Pagan Oracles*, p. 82.
[66] See 'oracle', *OED, n.,* 5.

David Loewenstein has linked the spiritual inwardness consistently advocated by Milton's Jesus to the discourses of contemporary radical Quakerism, noting a remark by Milton's Quaker friend Isaac Penington that 'which we sought without, was to be found within… there was the Kingdom'.[67] Whilst the radical religious context is undoubtedly central to understanding the above extract, we should also pay closer attention to the gendered implications of Satan's 'oracling' being muted by Jesus. In the first instance, the description of 'oracling' as 'pomp and sacrifice' gives Satan's public speechifying a militaristic resonance, given that, according to the *OED*, the noun 'pomp' held connotations of 'ostentatious, specious, or boastful show' during the seventeenth century. Perhaps more importantly, the coupling of 'pompe, and circumstance' – which Milton's 'pomp and sacrifice' partially echoes – was first used in a militaristic sense in William Shakespeare's *Othello* (*c.* 1603-4) ('Pride, pompe, and circumstance of glorious warre').[68] Given the masculine connotations of warfare, Milton presents Satan as a macho figure, before suggesting, once again, that Jesus is immune to his rhetorical temptations ('shall find thee mute'). At this moment of *Paradise Regained*, Jesus's voice is suggestively close to that of the Lady in Milton's *Maske*: we note, in comparison, the Lady's dismissal of Comus's strident rhetorical ostentation, 'Fool do not boast, / Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind / With all thy charms' (ll. 662-4).[69] In the second half of the given speech, Milton betrays his heterodox theological beliefs by suggesting that Jesus is wholly dependent on God for his agency: he is 'sent' by God and intends to 'teach his final will';

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[67] Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution,* p. 258.
[68] See 'pomp', *OED, n.1*, 1a; 'pomp and circumstance'.
[69] See Milton, 'A Maske', in *Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. Carey, p. 209.

evidencing a submissiveness that could be thought to be in keeping with contemporary notions of 'feminine submission' within marriage.[70] Jesus, demonstrating the 'wisdom' heralded earlier by the chorus of angels (I. 175), posits that his teaching will enable the 'spirit of truth' – a phrase, as we noted in Chapter Four, that referred to the ability to correctly interpret scripture (see p. 227) – to 'dwell' within all those who hear him.

In Book II, when Satan returns to tempt Jesus for the second time, Milton reaffirms that the debate between these characters occurs in a gendered context. Discussing the means by which Jesus might next be tried, Satan declares that 'with manlier objects we must try / His constancy, with such as have more show / Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise; / Rocks whereon greatest men have oftest wrecked' (II. 225-8). In the first line, Milton's phrase 'manlier objects' stresses the overly masculine nature of Satan's forthcoming temptation, and, also, emphasises Jesus's manhood – given that Satan assumes that such prizes might sway him. Yet, following this, the noun 'constancy' – which is opposed to Satan's 'manlier objects' – may also lend Jesus's resistance a feminine quality, given that the idea of women being 'constant' was emphasised in the discourses of early modern conduct literature. In England, it was a commonplace idea that women struggled to be 'constant' within relationships, due to inflamed passions, as John Downame argues in his *Lectures Vpon the Foure First Chapters of the Prophecie of Hosea* (1608): 'all loue and benefits cannot restraine an inconstant woman, who is naturally addicted to lust and

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[70] For more on the idea that 'feminine submission', within marriage, could be considered a virtue in early modern England, see Jessica C. Murphy, *Virtuous Necessity: Conduct Literature and the Making of the Virtuous Woman in Early Modern England* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), chapter 2; esp. pp. 43-4.

vncleannesse'.[71] Thus, Milton's usage of the noun 'constancy', in relation to

Jesus's resistance, is reminiscent of such prominently gendered debates.

At the end of Book II, having failed once again to tempt Jesus with

reference to his appetite, Satan tries out a new approach: 'if thou hearken to me,

/ Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand; / They whom I favour thrive in wealth

amain, / While virtue, valour, wisdom sit in want' (II. 428-31). Jesus's response,

which Milton prefixes with the stoical adverb 'patiently' (II. 432), begins by

stressing that 'wealth without these three [other virtues] is impotent' (II. 433).

Of note, in this line, is Milton's use of the word 'impotent', which then – as now

– held connotations of male sexual incapacity.[72] Through this ostensibly

masculine adjective, Milton suggests that Satan possesses an unfulfilled

conception of what might constitute worldly 'riches'. An extract towards the

conclusion of Jesus's response provides a fuller corrective:

> Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
> Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;
> Which every wise and virtuous man attains:
> And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
> Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
> Subject himself to anarchy within,
> Or lawless passions in him which he serves. (II. 466-72)

As Loewenstein has shown, the radical Quaker notion that the kingdom of Jesus

would come 'by his inward and invisible Power' informs Milton's poetic

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[71] John Downame, *Lectures Vpon the Foure First Chapters of the Prophecie of Hosea* (London, 1608), p. 299. For further contemporary examples of the idea that women struggled to be 'constant' within relationships, see Leonardus Lessius, *A Consultation What Faith and Religion is Best to Be Imbraced,* trans. John Wilson (St. Omer, 1618), p. 142 ('who is he that shall find a constant Woman?'); Thomas Blount, *The Academie of Eloquence. Containing a Compleat English Rhetorique* (London, 1654), p. 115 ('No Weather-cock under heaven is so variable as an inconstant woman'). For recent critical studies of the association of women with the virtue of constancy, see Murphy, *Virtuous Necessity,* pp. 41-3; idem., 'Feminine Virtue's Network of Influence in Early Modern England', *SP,* Vol. 109 (3), 2012, pp. 258-78.
[72] See 'impotent', *OED, adj.* and *n.*, 2b.

language, especially in the way that this speech moves from 'a crown, / Golden in show' (II. 459-60) towards the more inward idea of '[ruling] / Passions, desires, and fears'.[73] However, I would like to draw attention to the multi-gendered connotations of 'lawless passions', which have not been commented upon so often. As Kevin Sharpe notes, '[countless] courtesy manuals in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England prescribed abstinence or marriage for young men and especially young women who were believed to be physiologically more prone to lust and less able to regulate their passions'.[74] In mid-seventeenth-century English writing, Milton's phrase 'lawless passions' was repeatedly invoked as a synonym for sexual licentiousness. Reference can be made to John Trapp's *A Commentary or Exposition upon the XII Minor Prophets* (1654), where – in a discussion of Hosea 3.1 – this same phrase is applied to the 'crawling lusts, and lawlesse passions' of an adulteress.[75] In this way, Jesus's climactic speech in Book II draws on the commonplace early modern idea that the physical 'passions' ought to be regulated, doing so to foreground his own exemplary resistance to appetitive temptation.

In Book III, it becomes apparent that Satan is resistant to Jesus's redefinition of kingship as '[reigning] within'. Jesus's spiritual corrective is undermined, as Satan proposes: 'Should kings and nations from thy mouth

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[73] Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*, p. 258.

[74] Kevin Sharpe, 'Virtues, Passions and Politics in Early Modern England', *History of Political Thought,* Vol. 32 (5), 2011, pp. 773-98 (p. 793). For more on the commonplace idea that, more so than men, early modern women were 'in thrall to their passions', see Alexandra Shepard, 'Gender, the Body and Sexuality', in *A Social History of England, 1500-1750,* ed. Keith Wrightson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 330-51 (p. 334); Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London: Routledge, 2002 [rev. edn]), pp. 65-73.

[75] See John Trapp, *A Commentary or Exposition Upon the XII Minor Prophets* (London, 1654), p. 48; as compared with a treatise by the Catholic friar, John Cross, *Philothea's Pilgrimage to Perfection* (Bruges, 1668), pp. 106-7 ('Our will… is weak in resisting sensual allurements, & ready to comply with every disorderly suggestion of lawlesse passions').

consult, / Thy counsel would be as the oracle / Urim and Thummim' (III. 12-14). The first line of this extract gives praise to worldly kingship, before the succeeding lines construct Jesus as an 'oracle' that might lend 'counsel' to secular rulers. Given Satan's high estimation of both secular kingship and the pagan oracles – two subjects which Jesus dispenses with in previous books of the poem – we discern that Milton's antagonist has refused, once again, to harken to Jesus's corrective voice. From this position, Satan commences his next temptation, which focuses on the military pursuit of 'fame and glory' (III. 25). Throughout Book III, Jesus fervently rejects the idea that war might be an appropriate method of obtaining 'true glory and renown' (III. 60). In an extract from Jesus's first rejoinder, Milton writes that 'if there be in glory aught of good, / It may by means far different be attained / Without ambition, war, or violence; / By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent, / By patience, temperance' (III. 88-92). Here, in a direct echo of 2 Peter 1.6 ('And [add] to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience'), Milton voices Jesus to reject the hyper-masculine triad of 'ambition, war, [and] violence', and to present 'wisdom… patience, temperance' as an alternative set of virtues to aspire to. As we have seen, 'wisdom' was sometimes allegorised as a feminine virtue during the period (see this chapter, pp. 280-1), although it was certainly encouraged in both men and women; and the nouns 'patience' and 'temperance' can be said, according to the *OED*, to advocate an 'endurance of pain' and 'self-restraint and moderation': in each case promoting a retreat from violence.[76] There is also a vital link to be drawn, here, between Jesus's 'patience, temperance', and what Andrew Shifflet calls a logic of 'rigorous Stoic indifference', which promoted

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[76] 'patience', *OED, n.1*, 1a; 'temperance', *OED, n.*, 1a.

bodily indifference to the passions as a means to accessing the higher faculty of reason.[77]

At the beginning of his final speech in Book III, as a response to Satan's extended valorisation of worldly conquest ('To render thee the Parthian at dispose; / Choose which thou wilt by conquest or by league' (III. 369-70)), Milton's Jesus offers his fullest statement on the futility of military endeavour:

> Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
> And fragile arms, much instrument of war
> Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
> Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
> Vented much policy, and projects deep
> Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
> Plausible to the world, to me worth naught. (III. 387-93)

This extract commences with an impassioned denunciation of warfare: as John Carey has noted, Milton's 'ostentation vain of fleshly arm, / And fragile arms' closely echoes Spenser in Book III of *The Faerie Queene* ('So feeble is the power of fleshly arme'); and Jesus diminishes Satan's lengthy exaltation of military conquest with the measured phrase 'to nothing brought'.[78] This idea of collapsing Satan's hyper-masculine, rhetorical 'ostentation' is also present in Jesus's second comment: after the accusation that Satan has 'Vented much policy, and projects deep', Jesus reduces Satan's expansive style with the monosyllabic 'to me worth naught'. In this way, Milton's voice of Jesus is responsive to the idea of rhetorical modesty – employing a laconic mode of

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[77] See Shifflet, *Stoicism, Politics, and Literature,* p. 147. In his study, Shifflet suggests that – although Milton's Jesus adopts rhetorical poses that align him with Stoic thought throughout *Paradise Regained* – Jesus eventually departs from stoicism in promising to act at the poem's conclusion; for Shifflet, Jesus has not lost the 'righteous, angry militarism' (p. 130) of the Son in *Paradise Lost*. Given Jesus's final rejection of stoicism in Book IV ('The Stoic last in philosophic pride, / By him called virtue' (IV. 300-1), it might be summarised that, in the end, Milton subsumes stoicism within his governing Christian framework.

[78] See Carey's note on Book III., line 387, in *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, p. 487.

discourse that would have been thought appropriate for both women and wise men – to cancel out Satan's ostentatious rhetorical display;[79] and, as has become a commonplace in scholarship on *Paradise Regained*, to critique epic tradition and its emphasis on warfare.[80]

Milton begins Book IV with the voice of the narrator, who draws a telling contrast between Jesus and Eve. Discussing Satan's reflection upon his rhetorical failure, Milton writes: 'The tempter stood… Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope, / So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric, / That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve, / So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve' (IV. 2-6). In these lines, Milton draws a comparison between Eve's susceptibility ('won so much') and Jesus's resistance ('So little here') to Satan's 'persuasive rhetoric'. This comparison introduces a recurring theme in Book IV: namely, that unlike Eve, Milton's Jesus remains in possession of his intellectual liberty in withstanding satanic temptation. In his response to being presented with a vision of 'great and glorious Rome' (IV. 45), Jesus asserts: 'Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show / Of luxury, though called magnificence, / More than of arms before, allure mine eye, / Much less my mind' (IV. 110-13). This rebuttal emphasises that, unlike Eve in Book X of

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[79] For the contrasting rhetorical strategies of 'masculine' *sprezzatura* and 'feminine' modesty, see Patricia Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 16-35.

[80] The scholarship on Milton's refashioning of epic heroism is extensive. The best of these studies include: David Quint, *Inside Paradise Lost: Reading the Designs of Milton's Epic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); idem., *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Bond, *Redemption of the Epic Hero*, esp. chapter 10; John M. Steadman, *Milton and the Paradoxes of Renaissance Heroism* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987); idem., *Milton and the Renaissance Hero* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic.*

*Paradise Lost* – who is seduced by Satan's appeal to 'your eyes… [which] shall perfectly be then / Opened and cleared' (*PL*, IX. 707-9) – Jesus's resistant 'eye' is not taken in by illusory grandeur. Milton's typological construction of Jesus as an anti-Eve figure recurs in Jesus's next speech, which denounces Satan's blasphemous request for 'worship' (IV. 167):

> Thou shalt worship
> The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
> And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
> To worship thee accursed, now more accursed
> For this attempt bolder than that on Eve,
> And more blasphemous? which expect to rue. (IV. 176-81)

Here, Milton adheres strictly to the wording of Luke 4.8 in the King James text ('Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve'), but suffixes this citation with reference to Satan's 'attempt… on Eve'. Thus, Milton asks the reader to contrast the linguistic registers of Eve and Jesus: in *Paradise Lost*, as we have seen, Eve adopts Satan's expansive rhetorical style, whilst the consistently sparse, scriptural rhetoric of Milton's Jesus stresses the necessity of an obedient relationship to God.

Commenting on Milton's prose, Gina Hausknecht observes that gender emerges 'where Milton's most closely held principles are at stake'.[81] In *Paradise Regained*, Milton represents the struggle of gender on a closely linguistic level, as Satan's hyper-masculine, rhetorical 'ostentation' (III. 387) is pitted against Jesus's multi-gendered, stoical rhetorical corrective. At various moments in the brief epic, Milton's Jesus betrays feminine qualities: for example, it is possible to detect Marian overtones in Jesus's correction of Eve's

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[81] Gina Hausknecht, 'The Gender of Civic Virtue', in *Milton and Gender,* ed. Martin, pp. 19-33 (p. 32).

sin (see pp. 279-80); and Jesus's resistance to Satan's decidedly macho swagger might be compared with a 'constant' woman resisting seduction, as epitomised by the Lady in Milton's *Maske* (see pp. 284, 287). Yet, over and above these observations, throughout *Paradise Regained*, Milton voices Jesus as manifesting a stoical sense of passive virtue that would – importantly – have been encouraged in men and women during the period.

## 4. Conclusion

Milton, it has long been noted, understood the writing of Christian epic to be the culmination of his poetic vocation. Recent scholarship has emphasised the influence that classical and neoclassical forms of verse drama had on Milton's epic design: in his recent book *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost* (2017), William Poole observes that the poet's mid-1630s tour of Italy inspired him to 'set about writing ideas for tragedies [i.e. verse dramas]… including on the Fall of Man, and out of these grew some of the verse of *Paradise Lost*'.[82] In this chapter, I have argued that both *Paradise Lost* and the brief epic *Paradise Regained* reward attention to dramatic address. Specifically, I have focused on the central place that the voice of God the Father holds within Milton's epic schema, and on the divergent ways in which characters respond to God's authoritative decree. As we have seen, when addressing the idea of obedience to God's voice, Milton draws linguistic parallels between different characters. Both the Son in *Paradise Lost* and Jesus in *Paradise Regained* closely imitate the language of divine instruction. This instruction is given, in *Paradise Lost*,

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[82] William Poole, *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 48.

through God's direct voice, whilst in the brief epic, Milton's voice of Jesus adheres principally to the written teachings of scriptural tradition. By contrast, Satan – and Eve, under Satan's rhetorical influence – can be seen to undermine divine decree through acts of misinterpretation.

In conclusion, by arguing for Milton's sustained poetic interest in responsiveness to God's voice, we are brought to the heart of one of the most enduring debates in Milton scholarship. Whether the poet can be said to be 'of the Devil's party without knowing it', as William Blake famously put it, or is instead sympathetic to the cause of God and the angels, is a question first formulated many centuries ago in a public debate between John Dryden and Joseph Addison;[83] and one that, as demonstrated by the lively tradition of reader response criticism given impetus by Stanley E. Fish's *Surprised by Sin* (1967), has not yet gone away.[84] Whilst one may, or may not, agree with Fish that Milton requires his readers to assess *Paradise Lost*'s 'moral structure and our involvement in it',[85] I would like to posit that Milton asks his readers, much like his characters, to assess their own responsiveness to God's voice across his epic verse. An underpinning, corrective impulse is present across the span of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, as Milton's readers – in the image of Milton's exemplary Jesus – are encouraged to assess their own engagement with scriptural tradition, in the absence of God's direct voice.

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[83] See Joseph Addison, *Criticism on Milton's Paradise Lost from The Spectator. 31 December 1711-3 May 1712,* ed. Edward Arber (London: Southgate, 1868), p. 44.

[84] For Fish's assessment of the legacy of *Surprised by Sin*, see Fish, '*Surprised by Sin* at Fifty', *MQ,* Vol. 52 (4), 2018, pp. 349-53. For recent staging posts in Miltonic reader response criticism, see John Leonard, *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667-1970,* Vols. 1 and 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); David Ainsworth, *Milton and the Spiritual Reader: Reading and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[85] Fish, '*Surprised by Sin* at Fifty', p. 352.

**Conclusion: Voicing the Word**

In recent decades, there has been much scholarly interest in the various ways that scripture was used in early modern England. A staging post in the debate remains Christopher Hill's late collection of essays, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (1993), which memorably contends that the early modern Bible was 'a huge bran-tub from which anything might be drawn': highlighting the perceived importance of scripture to all walks of early modern life.[1] Whilst Hill's work has, at times, been critiqued for its somewhat broad-brush approach, *The English Bible* gave impetus to a new generation of scholars seeking to assess, with greater specificity, how pliable scripture could be in early modern English culture.[2] Among others, Kevin Killeen has studied 'the way scriptural kings were used in the political language of the seventeenth century'; Femke Molekamp has attended to the role of the vernacular English Bible 'in the development of [early modern] female interpretative and literary agency'; and Victoria Brownlee has considered 'how the Bible was read and applied to individual and national circumstances… [mapping] the connection between these readings and various forms of writing'.[3] All this is to say, somewhat appropriately, that scholarly work on usage of the early modern English Bible has been in remarkably good voice as of late.

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[1] Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), p. 5.

[2] For a measured review of *The English Bible*, which points out both the strengths and weaknesses of Hill's ambitious approach, see Julia Griffin, 'The Sacred Text', *Essays in Criticism,* Vol. 45 (1), 1995, pp. 57-63.

[3] See Killeen, *Political Bible,* p. 3; Femke Molekamp, *Women and the Bible in Early Modern England: Religious Reading and Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 1; Victoria Brownlee, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England, 1558-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 2.

This thesis has sought to contribute to this scholarly vogue in a highly specific manner, by attending to the rhetorical representation of the voices of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit within early modern English Protestant culture, from around 1590 to 1671. As we have seen, it was an early modern commonplace that the Bible was thought to resound as a speaking voice (see my introduction, p. 20). In this respect, any encounter with scripture was, in the broadest of senses, an encounter with the voice of God. Nonetheless, by focusing their attention on specific sections of the Bible in which the idea of God's voice is particularly emphasised – such as the prophetic books, the Psalms, the Song of Songs, hotspots for considering the voice of God the Father, and Christ's reported words in the gospels – early modern English Protestant authors were able to construct different sorts of textual voices for God.

As this thesis shows, when God's voice was represented in early modern English Protestant texts, it often possessed striking rhetorical, theological, and political qualities. This conclusion will comment on some of the most important issues bound up with this process of giving voice to God: namely, recurring early modern Protestant anxieties about mediating God's voice; and the shifting soteriological debate underpinning the idea of hearing God's voice. After this, I will offer an indication of how future scholars might expand on these findings, pointing towards the way that God's voice was addressed by Counter-Reformation English authors, and in Protestant texts of the Restoration era.

## 1. Mediation Anxieties

A key finding of this thesis is that there was much self-consciousness, in early modern English Protestant culture, about the process of standing in for God and

giving His voice in a text. This is, perhaps, not the greatest of surprises: it has long been recognised that Protestantism was an inspiration for wider lay engagement with scripture, especially in England, where early reformers gave their lives for the 'Englishing' of the Bible.[4] However, what has not been remarked on as often is that the process of harnessing God's word, and speaking as God in texts, prompted a variety of metaphors relating to the divine intermediary. In the early Reformation, for instance, those speaking on God's behalf in print, such as Martin Luther, could be referred to as 'trumpets' of God, in communication of their evangelical fervour when promulgating God's word (see Chapter Four, pp. 229-30).[5] This thesis also shows that, in the later stages of the English Reformation, the idea of giving God's voice in texts engendered a diverse range of metaphors for divine mediation, which were influenced by generic constraints.

As we have seen, in his 1593 prose tract *Christ's Tears*, Nashe refers to his assumption of Christ's voice as an act of 'personating the passion'.[6] The verb 'personating' signals Nashe's employment of the rhetorical technique *prosopopoeia*, and also foregrounds the author's theatrical invocation of Christ's voice (see Chapter One, pp. 66-8). Much ink has been spilled over the question of authorial purpose in *Christ's Tears*, especially over whether Nashe's tract houses sincere religious purpose in asking the people of London for repentance.[7] In my view, Nashe's description of his voice of Christ as an

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[4] See Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 17.

[5] See Bale, *A Mysterye of Inyquyte Contayned*, p. 14.

[6] Nashe, 'Christ's Tears', in *Works,* Vol. 2, ed. McKerrow and Wilson, p. 15.

[7] See, for example, Hill, 'Thomas Nashe's Imitation of Christ', pp. 211-21.

impersonation resolves this debate. In harnessing scripture to give voice to Christ, Nashe is concerned with both dramatic and rhetorical effect. This is even more striking when we consider the 1590s context in which Nashe wrote: in this decade, no mainstream English dramatist attempted to represent God's voice directly. Perhaps the closest analogue occurs in William Shakespeare's history play *King Henry IV, Part II* (*c.* 1597-99), in which Lancaster describes the Archbishop as 'the'imagin'd voice of God himself, / The very opener and intelligencer / Between the grace, the sanctities of heaven, / And our dull workings' (4.2.19-22).[8] In his drama, Shakespeare does not actually present an 'imagin'd voice of God' – this was, of course, strictly forbidden – but instead refers to the commonplace Protestant conception of the minister as an 'opener' of God's voice. By way of comparison, Nashe's undertaking, in giving voice to an intensely dramatic Christ, is audacious, given that this was not attempted within other English literary texts of the 1590s.

This thesis has also demonstrated that early modern English Protestant preachers and prophets employed strikingly different terminology when conceptualising the role of the divine intermediary. As we have seen, the Protestant minister Richard Carpenter uses the phrase 'conduit pipes' to describe the central role of the preacher in promulgating God's word (see Chapter Two, p. 106).[9] It is worth pointing out that the noun 'conduit', which is defined by the *OED* in its figurative sense as connoting 'the channel or medium

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[8] See William Shakespeare, 'King Henry IV, Part 2', ed. A.R. Humphreys, in *The Complete Works,* ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011), p. 415.

[9] See Carpenter, *A Pastoral Charge,* sig. D5v; Abbot, *Prophet Ionah,* p. 355; Hooker, *The Soules Possession,* p. 16; Ambrose, *Prima, the First Things*, p. 42.

by which anything (e.g. knowledge, influence, wealth, etc.) is conveyed', became a favourite term for early modern individuals seeking to emphasise the secure delivery of something; and was often invoked in a preacherly context.[10] The idea of the preacher as a 'conduit' for God's voice was an early modern commonplace; the etymology of the word reveals much about the Protestant conception of the preacher as an authoritative source for exegesis. This thesis has shown that such diverse preachers as Thomas Bastard, Thomas Adams, and John Day sought to emphasise their own importance as divine intermediaries in their printed sermons. Perhaps the most intriguing example of this rhetorical strategy, however, is John Donne, who demonstrates a self-consciousness about the ministerial role in several of his sermons.

The early modern idea of the preacher as an authoritative source for God's voice can be directly juxtaposed with the way that the prophetic function was conceptualised. As we have seen, the most common way that early modern English prophets thought about channelling God's voice was by troping themselves, or being troped, as divine vessels (see Chapter Four, p. 200).[11] Discussing the noun 'vessel' in its figurative sense, the *OED* states that it connoted 'a person regarded as having the containing capacity or function of a vessel'.[12] Following the *OED*, we discern that where the noun 'conduit' held connotations of something passing securely through, the noun 'vessel' implied containment. This semantic distinction betrays much about the adaptability of the prophetic role in early modern England. Put another way, where a preacherly

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[10] 'conduit', *OED, n.,* 4.

[11] See, among others, Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone,* p. 48; Jessey, *The Exceeding Riches of Grace,* sig. A3r.

[12] 'vessel', *OED, n.,* 3.

'conduit' had to remain constant in facilitating the secure passage of God's voice, a prophetic 'vessel' could contain different – and often deliberately ambiguous – scriptural voices. This thesis has shown that, at around the time of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, the idea of the prophet as a 'vessel' for God's voice proved to be especially malleable: prophets, it was then argued, could come from such marginal social groups as women, children, and uneducated men. As evidenced by the contrasting rhetorical strategies of preachers and prophets, there was great anxiety over the question of who might speak for God in early modern England.

It is also necessary to comment on the language employed by early modern English poets when considering their role as divine intermediaries. Although they used different poetic forms when representing God's voice, both Herbert and Milton conceived of themselves as inspired by God. As we have seen, the young Herbert – when informing his mother of his poetic intentions, in a famous letter of 1610 – rejected erotic poetry 'consecrated to Venus' in favour of sacred verse 'consecrated to God's glory' (see Chapter Three, p. 149).[13] This letter, according to Herbert's most recent biographer John Drury, can be positioned as the inauguration of the poet's lifelong 'vocation' to write 'for God… and for Magdalen [Herbert]'.[14] Yet, Herbert's decision to write this poetry 'consecrated to God's glory' was fraught with doubt. Even though God is voiced extensively in *The Temple*, much space is given to the deeply felt experience of God's voice as absent.

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[13] See Herbert, *The Works of George Herbert,* ed. Hutchinson, p. 363.
[14] Drury, *Music at Midnight,* p. 87.

In this respect, Herbert can be compared with Milton. It is a critical commonplace that Milton understood his poetry, from early in his career, to be driven by a powerful Christian vocation. Discussing Milton's early *Maske*, Cedric C. Brown writes of 'the vocational drive of the poet' and Milton's pastorly idea of 'the special role of poetry… to instruct and inspire minds'.[15] Evidence of Milton's idea that poetic art should be 'pastorly' is also found in his early essay *The Reason of Church-Government*, where he writes that '*Sophocles* and *Euripides* raigne shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a Nation, [and] the Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral Drama in the Song of *Salomon*'.[16] Although Milton's epic writing displays undoubted confidence in representing God's voice at such length, moments of authorial trepidation – such as the narrator's direct address to God, 'May I express thee unblamed?' (*PL*, III. 3) – should not go unaccounted for.[17] Although Herbert and Milton make high claims for themselves as poetic mediators of God's voice, they are also self-conscious about the extent of their divine inspiration.

Drawing on an observation of Michel de Montaigne in his *Essaies* (1580), that 'Nostre contestation est verbale' ('Our quarrel is verbal'), Brian Cummings describes the Reformation as 'a reformation in and of words, a linguistic, literary, and textual revolution'.[18] This thesis has shown that this Reformation-era self-consciousness about language extended to the various

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[15] Cedric C. Brown, 'Milton's Ludlow Masque', in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton,* ed. Dennis R. Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 25-38 (pp. 34, 36). For a fuller account of Milton's Christian vocation, see also John Spencer Hill, *John Milton, Poet, Priest and Prophet: A Study of Divine Vocation in Milton's Poetry and Prose* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1979).

[16] Milton, 'The Reason of Church-Government', in *MPW,* Vol. 1, ed. Wolfe, p. 815.

[17] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 166.

[18] Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 15.

metaphors employed when God's voice was mediated by English Protestant authors. By attending to the language surrounding the contested process of giving voice to God in print, we encounter some prominent faultlines in English Protestant culture, such as: whether God's voice should be mediated by the authorised preacherly 'conduit' or the marginalised prophetic 'vessel'; whether God's voice ought to be personated in dramatic texts; and whether the poet, who might be driven by a sense of Christian vocation, held a special role as a divine intermediary. Thus, in early modern England, verbal representations of God's voice occasioned an illuminating set of mediatorial metaphors. Much about the literary, religious, and social make-up of early modern English Protestant culture can be gleaned by considering these metaphors in comparison.

## 2.  Soteriological Debate

The second key finding of this thesis is that early modern English Protestant anxiety about God's voice was not limited to the question of who might best mediate it. This thesis has also shown that there was much debate, undertaken both in early modern English literature and in wider English culture, over who might be able to hear – and respond to – God's voice. By tracing literary engagement with God's voice during a later stage of the English Reformation, we have seen that – from Nashe's Christ lamenting that part of his audience 'deniest to heare God' in 1593, to Milton's God declaring that 'The rest shall hear me call' in 1667 (*PL*, III. 185) – the idea of the believer needing to 'hear' God's voice in obtaining salvation remained a wider religious commonplace.[19]

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[19] Nashe, 'Christ's Tears', in *Works,* Vol. 2, ed. McKerrow and Wilson, p. 23; Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 178.

What follows will point out that, even though this Reformation-era emphasis on attending to God's voice remained something of a constant, the period's evolving soteriological debate greatly influenced the textual provision of God's voice.

In a famous passage in *The World Turned Upside Down*, Christopher Hill argues that the Civil War period precipitated the collapse of a Calvinist consensus in early modern England. Hill writes: 'We are all so much Arminians now that it requires a great imaginative effort to think oneself back into the pre-revolutionary society in which Calvinism dominated'.[20] Hill's argument, although perhaps overly schematising in the way that it rigidly separates the emergence of Arminianism from 'the pre-revolutionary society in which Calvinist dominated', is worth engaging with at this juncture; particularly since this thesis has demonstrated that the Calvinist notion of only the elect proving able to hear God's voice came under increasing scrutiny as the seventeenth century progressed.

The 1590s, it has often been argued, was the decade in which Calvinism cast the longest shadow in early modern England. Building on the work of R.T. Kendall, Nicholas Tyacke argues that, during the 1590s, 'English Calvinist teaching was itself becoming more extreme, in line with continental religious developments'.[21] By referring to late sixteenth-century English Calvinism as 'extreme', Tyacke flags up the fervour with which some Calvinist divines treated the predestinarian schema. As we see in Chapter One, an important tenet

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[20] Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down,* p. 343.
[21] Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 4.

of mainstream Calvinist teaching on predestination – which has not often been commented upon in contemporary scholarship – was that only members of God's elect were considered able to effectively 'hear' the voice of God and obtain salvation, no matter how often a reprobate might have been exposed to God's voice. A further example of this line of thought is found in Roger Cotton's Calvinist treatise *A Direction to the Waters of Lyfe* (1590). Drawing on the account of 'another beast… which had two hornes like the Lambe' in the Geneva text of Revelation 13.10, Cotton writes:

> The voyce of God sayth, that whosoeuer he be that beleeueth in Christ his sonne shall be sure to haue pardon of his sinnes through the shedding of his moste precious bloud but the voyce of this counterfeit lambe sayth, that whosoeuer he be that will beleeue hym, hee shall be sure to haue pardon for his sinnes through the bloud of the leaden bulles, whiche for his monie hee will send hym.[22]

This quotation reveals the way that, in late sixteenth-century English Calvinist discourse, only members of God's elect were considered capable of responding to 'The voyce of God', whilst other believers were thought to be beyond the reach of God's call – in this case, responding to the 'voyce' of 'this counterfeit lambe', which refers to the Church of Rome. As I argue in Chapter One, Nashe's voice of Christ, in possessing a completely authoritative, God's-eye view on who will be saved and damned, goes well beyond such typical Calvinist sermons in thinking through both the implications of speaking as God, and of being unresponsive to God's call (see Chapter One, pp. 96-101). Thus, the idea that only the elect might hear God's voice began to be scrutinised during the 1590s, arguably the high point of Calvinist influence in early modern England.

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[22] See Roger Cotton, *A Direction to the Waters of Lyfe* (London, 1590), p. 46.

This thesis has also shown that, during the early decades of the seventeenth century, the critique of Calvinist soteriology – and, most particularly, of the staunchly Calvinist emphasis that only the elect might hear God's voice – became much more entrenched. Of course, this is not to say that there was no promulgation of hard-line Calvinist belief during the Jacobean period: as Chapter Two demonstrates, the hotter sorts of English Protestant preachers found ample evidence that only the elect might hear God's voice in the Book of Revelation (see pp. 139-46).[23] However, when preaching on key biblical proof-texts relating to the voice of God, such as Christ's baptism and the Psalms, preachers such as Thomas Adams, Lancelot Andrewes, and John Donne evidence an important shift towards the idea of all Christians hearing God's voice, or at least towards God providing a fair opportunity for the individual to listen.[24] This important finding from Chapter Two – that ideas of salvific inclusiveness were becoming much more commonplace in Jacobean England – is corroborated in Chapter Three. Here, we observe that Herbert's collection *The Temple* – which was mostly written during the 1620s and early 1630s – demonstrates greater 'assurance' about the lyric speaker obtaining salvation, which is prompted by the rhetorical voice of God. In *The Art of Hearing*, responding to staging posts in the scholarship about predestination, such as Hill and Tyacke, Arnold Hunt comments: 'the reason why [predestination], for all its difficulty and complexity, it is a subject worth wrestling with – arises from the challenge of explaining how a doctrine that now

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[23] See Symonds, *A Heauenly Voyce,* sig. B2v; Jackson, *The Conuerts Happines,* p. 25; Rogers, *The Glory and Happines of a True Christian,* sig. C7v.

[24] See Adams, *The Happines of the Church,* p. 327; Andrewes, *XCVI Sermons,* ed. Buckeridge and Laud, p. 684; Donne, *Sermons,* Vol. 6, ed. Simpson and Potter, p. 147.

matters so little could once have mattered so much'.[25] This thesis posits that, just as the doctrine of predestination itself was hotly contested in the early seventeenth century, so too was the broadly interdenominational emphasis on hearing God's voice, given that early modern English Protestants differed markedly when discussing both who was capable of hearing it, and the specific mechanisms through which God might make it possible for the individual to respond.

In tracing the period's evolving soteriological debate, both Chapter Four and Chapter Five of this thesis demonstrate that the idea of hearing God's voice underwent a radical reformulation in mid-seventeenth-century England. Where Herbert betrays quite an inclusive conception of the ability of the ordinary Christian to hear God's voice – albeit whilst recognising that there are instances in which the voice of God may not be heard (see Chapter Three, pp. 168-78) – the numerous radical prophets of the Civil War period more conspicuously democratise the concept. As we have seen, numerous sectarian prophets from marginal social groups, such as James Hunt and Anna Trapnel, emphasise that God's voice might be passed through the ordinary Christian, who is then able to promulgate it for others to hear.[26] Perhaps most strikingly, in his prophetic tract *A Fiery Flying Roll*, the Ranter Abiezer Coppe voices God as 'that mighty Leveller', drawing on the Levellers' radical vision of common ownership to imply that God might speak to and through anyone, without qualification.[27] This radical idea of God speaking directly to all believers, which flowered during the

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[25] Hunt, *Art of Hearing,* p. 389.

[26] See Hunt, *The Sermon and Prophecie*, sig. A1v; Trapnel, *The Cry of a Stone,* ed. Hinds, p. 16.

[27] Coppe, 'A Fiery Flying Roll', in *A Collection of Ranter Writings,* ed. Smith, p. 79.

Civil War and Interregnum, can be said to have impacted upon the epic poetry of John Milton. As we have seen, God's speech on the workings of grace in *Paradise Lost* – 'Some have I chosen of peculiar grace / Elect above the rest; so is my will / The rest shall hear me call' (III. 183-5) – is explicitly Arminian in emphasising that the divine 'call' might be heard by anyone; despite also, as Fallon puts it, placing some limitations by advocating for a Calvinist 'supra-elect'.[28] This emphasis on God speaking to all believers is similarly echoed in Milton's *Paradise Regained*, where Jesus's patient exegesis of scriptural precedent is presented as an example to the Miltonic reader.

Thus, Hill's somewhat sweeping argument that we are all 'Arminians now', and that 'it requires a great imaginative effort to think oneself back into the pre-revolutionary society in which Calvinism dominated', does point towards a broad shift in the intellectual life of early modern England. This thesis has overseen a roughly eighty-year timespan, from around 1590 to 1671, in which Calvinist thinking about the mechanics of salvation was put under increasing duress. Most particularly, this thesis has contributed to the longstanding debate about the decline of Calvinism in the later stages of the English Reformation, by suggesting that there is a movement, in both the imaginative literature and the religious writings of the period, away from the hard-line Calvinist idea that only God's chosen elect might hear His voice, whatever the circumstances. As we have seen, by the middle decades of the seventeenth century, the idea that all Protestant believers might have the chance to hear and engage with God's voice became far more commonplace.

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[28] See Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. Fowler, p. 178; Fallon, *Milton's Peculiar Grace,* p. 201.

### 3. Pointing Forwards

This thesis has shown that, over the course of the seventeenth century, the process of using scripture to give voice to God, in English Protestant writing, became much less strictly regulated. However, Milton's extended voicings of God and the Son in his epic poetry need not serve as an end point. Although such undertakings lie beyond the scope of this thesis, future scholars might also survey the provision of God's voice in early modern English Catholic writing, and in Protestant texts of the Restoration era.

An obvious place to start, in considering early modern Catholic representations of the voice of God which were written in English, would be the writings of Robert Southwell. Indeed, if this thesis were to be developed into a monograph, Southwell's poetry – and devotional writings more generally – would provide a useful contrast with Nashe's *Christ's Tears*. The Jesuit poet also composed in English during the 1590s, and – even more pertinently – represents Christ's voice as an aid to penitence within his short lyric, 'The Burning Babe', which was circulated in manuscript.[29] Despite Anne R. Sweeney's description of the Babe's voice as 'enigmatic', it might instead be argued – with Nancy Pollard Brown's idea of the Southwellian poetic voice as 'an extension of his ministry' in mind – that Southwell's Babe clearly articulates

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[29] For a brief discussion of Southwell's 'biblical ventriloquisations', see Anne R. Sweeney, *Robert Southwell: Snow in Arcadia: Redrawing the English Lyric Landscape, 1586-95* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 44. Sweeney, commenting on the youthful Southwell's Ignatian spiritual diary, writes: 'Nothing illustrates this sense of a special voice better perhaps than one of his entries, written as the words of the ultimate head of the Society, Christ – perhaps the first and most signal of Southwell's biblical ventriloquisations. He never repeats this Christly ventriloquising in his short English poetry, apart from Nativity baby-noises and the words spoken by the enigmatic Burning Babe, although he does in his prose-poem or sermon, *Marie Magdalens Funeral Teares*' (p. 44).

the extreme suffering to be experienced by the adult Christ.[30] We note the fifth stanza of the poem:

> My faultlesse breast the furnace is,
> > The fuell wounding thornes:
> Love is the fire, and sighs the smoake,
> > The ashes, shame and scornes…[31] (ll. 17-20)

In this stanza, Southwell begins with the Babe referring to his 'faultlesse breast' – a phrase that simultaneously emphasises the ideal purity of the Christ child, and the necessity of the purifying sacrament of Penance in helping the ordinary believer to follow Christ's example. After this, Southwell's poetic diction in voicing Christ is resoundingly biblical: the idea of the 'fuell' for the Babe's 'furnace' being 'wounding thornes' transposes John 19.2, which references the 'crown of thorns' worn by the adult Christ; whilst the suggestion that the fire's 'ashes' are 'shame and scornes' alludes to the mockery received by Christ, when set before Pilate and Herod, in verses such as Luke 23.10-11. All in all, this stanza from 'The Burning Babe' – much like each of the other stanzas ascribed to the Babe within the poem – parodies the Petrarchan image of the lover's heart as aflame, doing so by suffusing the extended metaphor of the burning heart with detailed scriptural allusions.[32] In this way, we discern that – whilst 'The

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[30] See Nancy Pollard Brown, 'Southwell, Robert [St. Robert Southwell] (1561-1595)', *ODNB.* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26064> [accessed 5 May 2020]. For further readings of Southwell's poetry as an extension of his Jesuit ministry, see Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., *Robert Southwell and the Mission of Literature, 1561-1595: Writing Reconciliation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 145, who notes that Southwell saw himself as 'singled out from all my family and kindred' in his vocation; Frank W. Brownlow, *Robert Southwell* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996), *passim.*

[31] See Robert Southwell, S.J., 'The Burning Babe', in *The Poems of Robert Southwell, S.J.,* ed. Nancy Pollard Brown and James H. McDonald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967 [repr. 2012]), pp. 15-16.

[32] For Southwell's belief that poetry could work effectively alongside scripture in inspiring divine revelation, see the prefatory text to *Saint Peter's Complaint* (1595)*,* 'The Authour to His Loving Cosen', in *Poems,* ed. Pollard Brown and McDonald, p. 2 ('But the vanity of men, cannot counterpoyse the authority of God… delivering many partes of Scripture in verse').

Burning Babe' might prove a helpful point of contrast for my reading of Nashe's *Christ's Tears* – due to a shared interest in the conventions of sacred parody, a more extended comparison between the poetic representations of God's voice in Herbert and Southwell could be undertaken in a future study.

Returning to the governing Protestant focus of this thesis, according to *EEBO*, numerous English Protestant sermons and devotional writings dating from between 1671 and 1685 refer to the necessity of hearing, and obeying, God's voice.[33] As a case in point, in the boldly titled *Englands Vanity: or The Voice of God Against the Monstrous Sin of Pride, in Dress and Apparel* (1683), the pseudonymous 'Compassionate conformist' invokes God's voice to rail against the vanities of Restoration attire. We might note the following extract, which is addressed 'To both City and Countrey':

> And [God] assure[s] you, some of them have *cried aloud,* (Ezech.) and *spared not, yea have lift up their voice like a Trumpet,* and have not fear'd very roundly to shew the provocations of the Age: And the words that *They have spoken shall Judg* [sic] *us at the last day.* Instead of many, I will instance but in two (and those indeed *instar omnium*) the very worth and undaunted witnesses of God, against all the cursed debaucheries, that with such brazen fac'd impudence, to spread and reign every where in the midst of us.[34]

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[33] See, as a brief initial sample, Josiah Coale, *The Books and Divers Epistles of the Faithful Servant of the Lord Josiah Coale* (London, 1671), p. 5 ('as you hearken to, and obey the Voice of the Lord, the Angel of his presence you will see leading you in the way in which he will have you to walk; and beware of him, and obey his voice'); William Bayly, *A Call and Visitation from the Lord God of Heaven and Earth Unto Christendom* (London, 1673), p. 22 ('I have seen a Dreadful Day that is hastening upon you… hearken to the Voice of God, the Trumpet that is now sounding, and be awakened'); Matthew Killiray, *Ten Sermons, Preached by that Eminent Divine Matthew Killiray* (London, 1675), p. 9 ('[God] is often knocking at the Doors of our hearts, and calling us to repentance, but if notwithstanding all this we will fully persist in evil, and refuse to hearken to the voice of God… then it will be just with God, to leave us to our selves, and let us perish in our own doings').

[34] *Englands Vanity: or The Voice of God Against the Monstrous Sin of Pride, in Dress and Apparel* (London, 1683), pp. 38-9.

Here, the 'Compassionate conformist' invokes Isaiah 58.1, in which God tells believers to '*lift up their voice like a Trumpet*', doing so to suggest that some godly contemporaries have spoken out against 'the provocations of the Age'. After this, the passage draws on Christ's words in John 12.48 ('*They have spoken shall Judg*'), doing so to imply that such criticism will resound in the ears of the majority on judgment day. This extract hybridises scripture to construct a judgmental voice of God, which speaks out against the 'cursed debaucheries' of the Restoration. In this way, a future study might assess the influence of Restoration developments, in both the court and in the reformed English Church, upon the textual promulgation of God's voice.

Another way that scholars might expand upon the findings of this thesis would be by attending to the representation of God's voice in English Quaker writing. Perhaps the fullest treatment of Quaker prophecy is found in Phyllis Mack's study *Visionary Women* (1992), which explores the 'language and behaviour of visionary women, Quaker and non-Quaker', between around 1650 and 1700.[35] Whilst Mack's scholarship is useful in drawing attention to the significance of gender for Quaker prophets, and to the way that Quaker spirituality was itself conditioned by gender, more could be said about the specifics of Quaker religious experience. Many Quaker prophets of the Restoration era, such as Milton's close friend Isaac Penington, urge the importance of hearing God's voice in obtaining salvation: 'For *Adam* neglected to hear the *Voice of God,* and *Cain* neglected to hear the *Voice of God*, and the

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[35] See Mack, *Visionary Women,* p. 5. A more recent study of the kinds of language employed in seventeenth-century Quaker prophecy is found in Judith Roads, 'Quaker Prophetic Language in the Seventeenth Century: A Cross-Disciplinary Case Study', *Religions,* Vol. 9 (8), pp. 1-24.

*Jews* they neglected to hear the *Voice of God*, and you neglect to hear his *Voice*'.[36] A striking feature of this excerpt from Penington's treatise *Some Principles* (1672) is that the scriptural emphasis on neglecting 'the *Voice of God*' is turned, in the final clause, into an accusation directed towards the reader. In this regard, a formal analysis might be undertaken on the soteriological implications of God's voice in Quaker prophetic writing.

Thus, it would be of critical interest to establish how the broader narrative traced in this thesis – that of an increased Protestant boldness in giving voice to God, over the course of the seventeenth century – develops during the English Restoration. It is the hope of the author that this thesis will prove to be a stimulus for future investigations into the ways that the Bible was hybridised in early modern England.

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[36] See Isaac Penington, *Some Principles of the Elect People of God in Scorn Called Quakers* (London, 1671), p. 24. See also William Penn, *Quakerism, A New Nick-Name for Old Christianity* (London, 1672), pp. 183-4 ('then the Immediate Voice of God, when he pointed so clearly at him, *This is my beloved Son*… what could be more demonstrable on God's part'); and Edward Burrough, *The Memorable Works of a Son of Thunder and Consolation* (London, 1672), p. 72 ('Therefore take heed to the measure of God, that by it you may hear the Voyce of God, and see his powerful Presence; for by that which is manifested of God in man, God speaks, moves, and acts, and is known unto man').

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