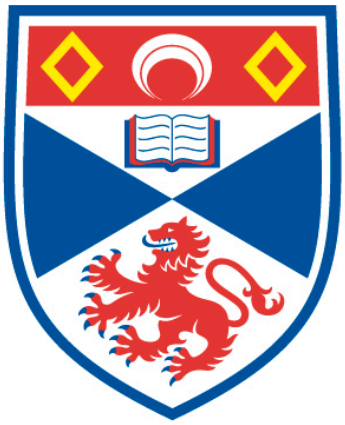
A PASTOR-THEOLOGIAN IN SEARCH OF A FAITH WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION: THE THEOLOGICAL GENEALOGY OF ANDREW FULLER AND HIS CRITIQUE OF IT

David Rathel

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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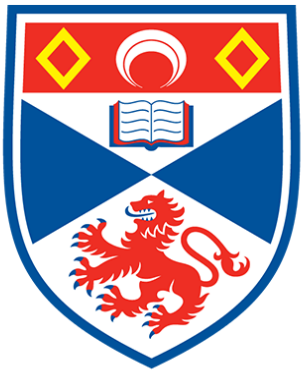

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David Rathel

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Abstract

The eighteenth-century Particular Baptist minister Andrew Fuller lived a consequential life. He assisted in forming the Baptist Missionary Society, the first modern Protestant missions society. His published theological tracts, particularly his works on soteriology, left an indelible mark on Baptist and even evangelical life.

Fuller remains most famous for rebutting a form of Calvinism described as hyper-Calvinism or false Calvinism in the relevant literature. This theological tradition sought to maximize divine grace by minimizing human participation in salvation's reception. To downplay human action, hyper-Calvinist ministers denied both the legitimacy of free offers of the Gospel and a universal duty to respond to the Gospel.

Despite Fuller's significance, existing scholarly accounts of his life present deficient readings of the hyper-Calvinist theology that he rejected. They either fail to explore the primary source material closely, or they rely on incorrect assumptions about hyper-Calvinism's development. This fact has led to incomplete portrayals of Fuller's biography. Contemporary scholars are unable to discern accurately the concerns that animated Fuller, the particular ministers that he sought to engage, and even the sources on which he relied.

In this thesis, I provide a more nuanced reading of the hyper-Calvinism relevant to Fuller's setting to contextualize his response to that theology. I present hyper-Calvinism as a diverse movement—more diverse than the current literature portrays. Though hyper-Calvinist theologians shared the goal of diminishing human agency, they disagreed on approach; some preferred to present salvation as occurring pre-temporally in the covenantal arrangements of God while others chose to emphasize a human inability to believe the Gospel. I argue that this reading of hyper-Calvinism provides new insight into Fuller's writings; in particular, it reveals that Fuller relied on the works of John Gill and publications composed by participants in the modern question debate more than scholars have realized.

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Acknowledgments

I wish first to express the deepest of thanks to the people who made this thesis possible—my family. My grandparents instilled in me a love for the local church by serving as faithful members of Leonia Baptist Church, a congregation in Florida that proved influential in my personal and spiritual development. From the examples set by "Papa" and "Maw," I learned the values of hard work and respect for others. My parents receive my undying appreciation and respect. They made significant financial sacrifices to support my pursuit of a doctoral degree at an international university, and they offered tremendous encouragement throughout my time in Scotland. Without them, I could not have completed this work. I also appreciate my brother, Steven Rathel, and his wife Megan for the inspiration they provided and their excellent senses of humor.

My wife, April, has proven to be truly "more valuable than precious jewels." During my time as a student, she worked to provide for our family, encouraged me when I was discouraged, and served as an excellent mother to our daughter Sophia—all while being far from home and enduring the stresses that the spouse of a PhD student must endure. The journey on which God has called us has sometimes proven difficult; we have not always had security or ease. She has walked this road with grace and faith. I also thank April's parents, Buster and Mary Lynn, for their support.

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Mentors in the academy made significant contributions to my research. My first theology professor was my father, Dr. Mark Rathel at the Baptist College of Florida. I thank him for introducing me to this wonderful discipline. My opinion is biased, but I believe that he does an excellent job as a lecturer. Dr. John S. Hammett and Dr. Nathan A. Finn formed me into the student that I am today through their teaching ministries at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Their willingness to give advice and critique has made me a better researcher and writer. My supervisor at St Andrews, Rev. Dr. Stephen R. Holmes, combines the mind of a brilliant academic with a sincere interest in local church ministry. His ability to join the work of a scholar with the heart of a pastor drew me to him over four years ago. I am grateful for his willingness to supervise my project at St Andrews and for the time and attention he has given to me. His comments have been most helpful.

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Theological Seminary procured important journal articles for me. Staff at the National Library of Scotland, the British Library, the London School of Theology, the Bodleian Libraries, and the University of St Andrews Library also provided help.

Several scholars and theologians encouraged me while I conducted my work. I am appreciative of their investment in me. Prof. David Bebbington, a consummate gentleman, took the time to read a chapter of my thesis and assisted me while searching for jobs. Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary afforded me the opportunity to create new sessions at the Evangelical Theological Seminary and, much like Prof. Bebbington, helped my project by supplying words of support. Dr. Chris Chun at Gateway Seminary and Dr. Peter Beck at Charleston Southern University also granted assistance. Dr. Chun gave advice on life at a British University; Dr. Beck gave me copies of papers that he has written on Fuller. Dr. Tim Baylor read a chapter of my thesis and provided helpful feedback. Dr. Peter Morden issued insightful comments on an early draft of my research on John Gill. Prof. Mark Elliott read a chapter of my research (not related to my thesis) and made useful comments. Numerous seminary students and doctoral candidates studying in the States met with me to discuss Andrew Fuller, John Gill, and eighteenth-century Baptist life during my trips back home. I am thankful for their attention to my work and their remarks.

Prior to coming to St Andrews, I served for six years as a minister at Fork Baptist Church in Scottsburg, Virginia. I first developed an interest in Fuller while working there; I became impressed by Fuller's ability to wed theological work with earnest devotion to a local congregation. In the spirit of Fuller's labors, I dedicate this thesis to all of the congregations that I have been privileged to serve, and I also offer mention of St Andrews Baptist Church and the Carinish Church of Scotland, two beautiful congregations that served our family well during our time in Scotland.

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Thesis Introduction

Andrew Fuller and the Need for Fresh Research into His Theological Context

The eighteenth-century minister Andrew Fuller lived a consequential life. Alongside colleagues such as William Carey, he formed the Baptist Missionary Society, the first modern Protestant missions agency.[1] The apologetic tracts that he composed in defense of the Christian faith saw him interact with some of his era's most significant thinkers, most notably Thomas Paine and Joseph Priestly.[2] His theological contributions, particularly his work in the field of soteriology, left an indelible mark on evangelical life. David Bebbington judged Fuller's *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* "the classic statement of eighteenth-century Evangelical Calvinism."[3]

Fuller's many achievements make his life fertile ground for research, and scholars have rightly turned their attention to the Kettering-based minister. To cite but a few noteworthy examples from the recent "renaissance in Andrew Fuller studies," the British historian Peter Morden, today's foremost interpreter of Fuller, authored both a survey of Fuller's theology and a critical biography of Fuller's life.[4] In a PhD thesis completed at the University of St Andrews, Chris Chun considered Fuller's reliance on the North American theologian Jonathan Edwards.[5] Paul Brewster and Keith Grant have both composed books that surveyed Fuller's ministry as a pastor-theologian.[6] The founding of The Andrew Fuller Center at the

1. For analysis, see Peter J. Morden, "Andrew Fuller and the Baptist Missionary Society," *Baptist Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2005): 134–157; E. F. Clipsham, "Andrew Fuller and the Baptist Mission," *Foundations* 10, no. 1 (1967): 4–18; James M. Renihan, "Out from Hyper-Calvinism: Andrew Fuller and the Promotion of Missions," *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 1, no. 1 (2004): 45–65; Doyle L. Young, "The Place of Andrew Fuller in the Developing Modern Missions Movement" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981); idem., "Andrew Fuller and the Modern Missions Movement," *Baptist History and Heritag*e 17, no. 4 (1982): 17–27.

2. For Fuller's work as an apologist, see Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *'At the Pure Fountain of Thy Word:' Andrew Fuller as an Apologist* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004); idem., "Andrew Fuller and the Defense of Trinitarian Communities," *American Baptist Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2013): 258–278.

3. David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1993), 64–65.

4. Peter J. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003); idem., *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2015). Nathan A. Finn wrote of a "modern renaissance in Andrew Fuller studies" and helpfully documented recent secondary works devoted to Fuller in Nathan A. Finn, "The Renaissance in Andrew Fuller Studies: A Bibliographic Essay," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 17, no. 2 (2013): 44–61.

5. Chun's thesis later received publication as Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

6. Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010); idem., "'The Utterance of a Full Heart:' The Pastoral Wisdom of Andrew Fuller," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 17, no. 1 (2013): 16–26; Keith S. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013); idem., "Plain, Evangelical, and Affectionate: The Preaching of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," *Crux* 48, no. 1 (2012): 12–22.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the recent announcement that De Gruyter will publish a critical edition of Fuller's works can only add to the rising interest in Fuller.

Most researchers of Fuller focus on one aspect of his life—his conflict with a hardened form of Calvinism that was prevalent among Particular Baptists during his lifetime. This focus on Fuller's soteriology is rightly placed; discussions over the nature of saving faith became Fuller's chief theological concern. Fuller's other significant accomplishments, from his support of international missions work to his apologetic writings, all originated in some way from the soteriological beliefs that he developed in the midst of controversy.

Historians have labeled the form of Calvinism that Fuller opposed with a variety of titles, from high Calvinism to hyper-Calvinism.[7] At times, Fuller used the denominator false Calvinism.[8] Such descriptors intend to convey that this theology marked a departure from the convictions championed by other, more mainstream thinkers. These terms also carry a negative connotation; phrases such as "hyper" or "false" not-so-subtly imply that this departure proved unhelpful.

This particular form of Calvinism receives little attention in the academic literature. Considerations of hyper-Calvinism's key tenets only briefly appear in biographical surveys of Fuller or in introductory surveys of the Baptist tradition. No comprehensive account of the theological movement presently exists.

This neglect is perhaps understandable. With Fuller's active pastoral career and personal connections to important missionaries, he serves as a more exciting figure for study than his more staid theological opponents. Indeed, Fuller's life easily lends itself to the writing of a biography. Interested writers can find in Fuller a minster who exemplifies many attributes that evangelicals hold dear. Fuller worked with his colleagues to take the Christian *evangel* from his home base in Northamptonshire to the furthest reaches of the then British Empire, and he did so with such an indefatigable spirit that even his critics praised his sincerity.[9]

Still, an insufficient understanding of the theological context in which Fuller ministered carries consequences. Scholars who do not attend to the form of Calvinism that Fuller

7. British interpreters tend to prefer the term high Calvinism while American readers of Fuller frequently use the term hyper-Calvinism. See, for example, how Morden and Chun contrast the terms hyper-Calvinism and high Calvinism. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World,* 12; Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards,* 32–33.

8. E.g., Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, ed. Joseph Belcher (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 1:2, 65.

9. The case of William Button demonstrates this fact. Button wrote a pamphlet against the evangelistic Calvinism that Fuller promoted in *Gospel Worthy,* but he also agreed to publish the second edition of Fuller's *Gospel Worthy* and even contributed to the fledgling Baptist Missionary Society. See Jeff Straub, "William Button: Fuller's Publisher" (paper presented at Andrew Fuller and His Friends Conference at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 21 September 2012), np.

opposed run the risk of treating Fuller's sparring partners unfairly by misunderstanding their convictions. Fuller devoted much time to assessing the positions of his opponents. Contemporary researchers should follow his approach.

Inattention to the theology that Fuller labeled as false-Calvinism has unfortunately led to problems appearing in the relevant historical accounts. Influential secondary works present the convictions of the so-called hyper-Calvinists inadequately. They do so either by describing the theological positions of alleged hyper-Calvinist ministers incorrectly or by interpreting those ministers through a pre-defined—and largely unhelpful—interpretive lens.[10]

To cite but a few examples, well-known surveys of Baptist history often label certain ministers as hyper-Calvinists and identify an alleged commitment to supralapsarianism as the cause of this hyper-Calvinism.[11] The authors of these surveys contend that this particular understanding of the divine decrees caused these ministers not to offer the Gospel message to all people and not to call all people to respond to the Gospel. They entitle this strict understanding of Gospel preaching hyper-Calvinism. With the designator hyper, they intend to convey that by refusing to preach the Gospel message freely to all people, the exponents of this theology went beyond norms for the Reformed tradition.

There are significant problems with this explanation. Credible theologians have held to supralapsarianism while retaining a healthy view of mission and evangelism. Supralapsarianism does not necessarily require a minimization of open Gospel preaching; other theological commitments must typically accompany the position before it can lead to the "non-application, non-invitation scheme" of hyper-Calvinism.[12]

In addition, many of the ministers who receive the designator hyper-Calvinist in these surveys did not hold to supralapsarianism. As will become clear later in this thesis, John Gill

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[10] I outline in the body of this chapter significant and relevant surveys of hyper-Calvinism but readers should also consider the following publications: R. J. Sheehan, "The Presentation of the Gospel Amongst 'Hyper-Calvinists," *Foundations* 8 (1982): 28–39; idem, "The Presentation of the Gospel Amongst 'Hyper-Calvinists:' A Critique," *Foundations* 9 (1982): 42–46; Paul Helm, "Hyper-Calvinism," (paper presented at Andrew Fuller and His Controversies Conference at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 27 September 2013); Robert Oliver, "Historical Survey of English Hyper-Calvinism," *Foundations* 7 (1981): 8–18. Many of the concerns that I raise about the publications that I mention in the body of this introduction also apply to these works.

11. E.g., Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1907), 239–241; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Baptist Union, 1947), 134–135; H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1987), 177–178. For more information, see the second chapter of this thesis.

12. The Baptist historian Joseph Ivimey famously used this language to describe the hyper-Calvinist rejection of both free Gospel offers and the duty that all people have to receive the Gospel. Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists* (London: Isaac Taylor Hinton and Holdsworth, 1830), 4:272.

and John Brine, two prolific writers associated with hyper-Calvinism, were largely ambivalent about the logical ordering of the divine decrees but ultimately favored the infralapsarian model.

Similar historical errors appear in E. F. Clipsham's significant analysis of Andrew Fuller's life and work.[13] Clipsham lists several characteristics of the form of Calvinism that Fuller sought to refute and then documents Fuller's constructive theological proposals. His research is impressive for its breadth, and his work remains helpful. However, aspects of hyper-Calvinist theology that Clipsham rightly identifies as departures from the broader tradition—eternal justification, for example—received support from some but not all committed hyper-Calvinist ministers. Several noteworthy hyper-Calvinist thinkers came to their conclusions in ways that Clipsham did not identify. Hyper-Calvinism existed as a more complex movement than he portrays.

Peter Toon's *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity* remains the most impressive consideration of hyper-Calvinism to this point. Like Clipshman's publications, Toon's work possesses many positive features. Toon explores a wide range of sources and presents his research in the form of a narrative, providing a compelling survey of nonconformist soteriology during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Unhelpfully, Toon weds his research to a Calvin-against-the-Calvinists interpretive framework and understands most departures from the perceived original theology of Calvin as unhelpful digressions.[14] He displays a particular suspicion toward federal theology, a methodology popular among theologians in Fuller's era. Advocates of federal theology attempt to interpret God's works through the framework of covenantal relations. Throughout his book, Toon frequently voices his concern that this manner of interpreting the divine economy does not appear in Calvin's writings.

Toon's misgivings about federal theology causes him to describe significant thinkers incorrectly. For example, his reading of Joseph Hussey, a Cambridge pastor who was the progenitor of the hyper-Calvinist movement, relies on the assumption that Hussey was a federal theologian who strongly advocated for supralapsarianism. Hussey, however, used the term supralapsarian differently from its common usage; with the word he referred not to the

13. Clipsham has produced several important articles on Fuller, but see in particular E. F. Clipsham, "Andrew Fuller and Fullerism: A Study in Evangelical Calvinism," *Baptist Quarterly* 20, no. 6 (1964): 99–114.

14. Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689–1765* (London: Olive Tree, 1967; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 11–30, 116–117. For more information on federal theology, debates over the development of the Reformed tradition, and critical analysis of Toon's book, see the second chapter of this thesis.

logical ordering of the divine decrees but his eccentric ideas about the *historia salutis*.[15] In addition, though Hussey was a federal theologian, he creatively restructured the received federal theology of his day to suit his desired ends. He was not an exponent of traditional federal theology. Toon misses these nuances due to his bias against federal theology; he simply notes Hussey's reliance on some aspects of federal theology and then incorrectly concludes that federal theology in and of itself assisted Hussey in developing hyper-Calvinism.

Left unaddressed in all current historical investigations of hyper-Calvinism is a trio of ministers who played a significant role in the rise of hyper-Calvinism. Lewis Wayman, John Brine, and John Johnson authored tracts related to the modern question controversy, a theological dispute over hyper-Calvinism's legitimacy that began in 1737. These three ministers advanced an influential form of hyper-Calvinism during this dispute, and their writings profoundly shaped the context in which Andrew Fuller ministered. Rather surprisingly, their publications have received little attention from contemporary scholars—with some scholars even admitting their inability to access the documents.[16] Analyzing these texts will prove vital in arriving at a credible definition of hyper-Calvinism.

These inadequate interpretations of hyper-Calvinism's history have led, perhaps unsurprisingly, to divergent opinions over what exactly constitutes hyper-Calvinism. Jonathan White contends that the movement's chief tenet is "the denial of the duty of unregenerate man to believe the gospel for salvation based on man's original lack of ability to believe the gospel for salvation."[17] With this language, White refers to a belief promoted amongst some eighteenth-century theologians that claimed that because prelapsarian Adam could not believe the Gospel, contemporary, fallen humans likewise have no such ability. The conclusion drawn from this (admittedly unconventional) belief about Adam is that because of this human inability, open calls to respond to the Gospel are ineffectual and ill-advised. Other historians propose broader definitions. In his description of hyper-Calvinism, Michael Haykin cites beliefs about the timing of justification, the nature of the atonement, and the innovations hyper-Calvinists made to the *pactum salutis*.[18] Often, heated debates occur over

15. For more information, see the first chapter of this thesis.

16. E.g., Anthony R. Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival among English Particular Baptists* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2017), 117. For more information, see the third chapter of this thesis.

17. Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 50. For more information about claims regarding Adam's perceived inability to believe the Gospel, see chapter four of this thesis.

18. Michael A. G. Haykin, "Remembering Baptist Heroes: The Example of John Gill," in *Ministry By His*

what precisely constitutes legitimate Gospel offers or duty faith.[19]

The lack of definitional clarity creates confusion over who might qualify as a hyper-Calvinist. Debate particularly surrounds John Gill, an eighteenth-century minister who possessed an approach to evangelism that Charles Haddon Spurgeon once claimed was not "largely useful."[20] Peter Naylor attempts to demonstrate Gill's hyper-Calvinist credentials by quoting passages from Gill's systematic theology and published sermons that appear to minimize open Gospel offers.[21] Interestingly, Thomas Nettles cites some of the same passages to argue the opposite, that Gill was a faithful exponent of the evangelical tradition.[22] The fact that these thinkers can disagree so strongly over the same texts illustrates just how much confusion exists over how to define hyper-Calvinism.

The present state of research into the theology that Fuller once labeled "false Calvinism" is therefore dire. Scholars often rely on inaccurate or incomplete readings of the primary sources and display no agreement over exactly how the people they label hyper-Calvinists arrived at their theological conclusions. The ambiguity created by this environment leads to competing and even contradictory definitions of hyper-Calvinism as well as disagreements over who was and was not a hyper-Calvinist.

Contemporary scholarship needs a careful analysis of hyper-Calvinist ministers. Rather than neglecting a close reading of their works, this analysis should give their largely forgotten writings careful attention. Instead of assessing those ministers according to an *a priori* definition of hyper-Calvinism or a predisposition against federal theology, this analysis should seek—as much as possible—to consider those minsters within their original contexts. It would desire to determine what they claimed to believe about soteriology, Gospel proclamations, and saving faith.

Such an analysis would prove valuable to research into Andrew Fuller. In *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* and other published works, Fuller did not respond to a generic form of hyper-Calvinism. He engaged with some writers in the hyper-Calvinist tradition more than others; he chose his targets deliberately. A historical overview of the development of hyper-Calvinism can illuminate with whom Fuller was and was not concerned. It can divulge

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Grace and For His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles, ed. by Thomas K. Ascol and Nathan A. Finn (Cape Coral: Founders Press, 2011), 7–37.

19. Consider the rhetoric found in George M. Ella, *Law and Gospel in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Durham: Go Publications, 1996).

20. C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work* (Bellingham: Logos, 2009), 39.

21. Peter Naylor, *Picking Up a Pin for the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Grace Publications, 1992), 145–191.

22. Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*, rev. ed. (Cape Coral: Founders, 2006), 21–54.

specifically which forms of hyper-Calvinism Fuller attacked. Such information does not presently appear in existing accounts of Fuller's life.[23]

Also, by situating Fuller in his historical context, scholars can offer new insight into his thought. Fuller was an accomplished pastor-theologian. Though he was not a trained academic, he was an impressive autodidact and a careful reader. He made use of his extensive reading and his pastoral sensibilities to provide innovative proposals in the area of soteriology.[24] He desired not merely to respond to hyper-Calvinist beliefs; he sought to advance an alternative theological vision that could captivate his audience. This vision was pastoral in tone; it focused on issues relevant to personal experience as it sought to assure congregants troubled by hyper-Calvinist dogmas. Delineating the theology with which Fuller disagreed will help researchers understand his substantial theological work.

Admittedly, critics have considered Fullerism to some degree. The influential Baptist theologian James. P. Boyce famously rejected Fuller's understanding of the atonement.[25] More recently, George Ella critiqued Fuller for introducing a new form of legalism into Christian theology.[26] While these criticisms may or may not have merit, the fact remains that few of Fuller's readers have worked to contextualize his proposals. They have not outlined in a detailed manner the setting in which Fuller offered his theological innovations.

In addition, most researchers who have explored Fuller's constructive theological work have focused on his doctrine of the atonement.[27] Such projects have merit. Fuller's interactions with Daniel Taylor, for example, led him to develop his understanding of the atonement over the course of several years. The maturation of Fuller's atonement theology does deserve scrutiny—especially given the influence that Fuller's views have had on later Baptist theologians.

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23. For more information, see the overview of contemporary Fuller scholarship that I provide in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

24. For Fuller as an avid reader, see Michael A. G. Haykin, "'A Great Thirst for Reading:' Andrew Fuller the Theological Reader," *Eusebeia* 9 (2008): 5–25.

25. James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Hanford: den Dulk Foundation, 1887), 338.

26. E.g., Ella, *Law and Gospel.*

27. For investigations into Fuller's views on the atonement, see the various opinions espoused in Michael A. G. Haykin, "Particular Redemption in the Writings of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," in *The Gospel in the World: International Baptist Studies,* ed. David Bebbington (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 107–128; David L. Allen, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 477–500; Bart D. Box, "The Atonement in the Thought of Andrew Fuller" (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009); Stephen R. Holmes, "Ransomed, Healed, Restored, Forgiven: Evangelical Accounts of the Atonement," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement,* ed. Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 267–292; Jeremy Pittsley, "Christ's Absolute Determination to Save: Andrew Fuller and Particular Redemption," *Eusebeia* 9 (2008) 135–166; David Bebbington, "British Baptist Crucicentrism Since the Late Eighteenth Century: Part One," *Baptist Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2011), 223–237.

Nevertheless, scholars have done little work exploring other aspects of Fuller's thought, most notably his constructive proposals about Gospel preaching and the nature of human faith. These proposals are most relevant to his confrontation with hyper-Calvinism. A close reading of the hyper-Calvinist setting in which Fuller ministered will therefore reveal neglected aspects of his writings.

Toward a More Nuanced Reading of Hyper-Calvinism and Andrew Fuller

The hyper-Calvinists most relevant to Fuller were predominantly nonconformists—either Baptists or Congregationalists—and originated primarily from Northamptonshire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These similarities in terms of denominational affiliation and geography have relevance. During this time in Northamptonshire, many nonconformists imbibed the teachings of the contra-Puritans—minsters such as Tobias Crisp, Richard Davis, and John Eaton who sought to promote a gospel of "free grace" to counter the perceived legalism found in Puritanism.[28]

The history of the Reformed tradition features several instances in which theologians or ministers have argued that Reformed soteriology entails a minimization of free Gospel offers. The Scottish theologian James Durham wrote against objections to the Gospel offer in the seventeenth century. Participants in the Marrow Controversy of the eighteenth-century debated a similar theme.[29] Certain Reformed churches in the United States continue to reject free Gospel offers to the non-elect.[30] The hyper-Calvinism of Fuller's time remains but one example of this broader pattern, but it emerged from a distinctive context—contra-Puritanism. In differing ways, the hyper-Calvinists of Northamptonshire built atop the theological foundation laid by the contra-Puritans to construct their proposals.[31]

Contra-Puritan theology sought to reframe Protestant soteriology by de-emphasizing human participation in the reception of salvation. By making this move, contra-Puritans

28. The term contra-Puritan originates from T. D. Bozeman, "The Glory of the 'Third Time:' John Eaton as a Contra-Puritan," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46, no. 4 (1996): 638–654. For information on contra-Puritan theology and the use of the phrase "free grace," see the first chapter of this thesis.

29. See Donald MacLean, *James Durham (1622–1658): and the Gospel Offer in its Seventeenth-Century Context* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); William VanDoodewaard, *The Marrow Controversy and the Seceder Tradition: Atonement, Saving Faith, and the Gospel Offer in Scotland (1718–1799)* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011).

30. Consider Protestant Reformed Church, for example. See the discussion outlined in Raymond A. Blacketer, "The Three Points in Most Parts Reformed: A Reexamination of the So-Called Well-Meant Offer of Salvation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 35, no. 1 (2000): 37–65; R. Scott Clark, "Janus, the Well-Meant Offer of the Gospel, and Westminster Theology," in *The Pattern of Sound Doctrine: Systematic Theology at the Westminster Seminaries,* ed. David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2004), 149–179.

31. I hope to author a detailed comparison between Northamptonshire hyper-Calvinism and other theological traditions that have denied Gospel offers and duty faith at some point in the future.

believed they could highlight in greater detail the effectual nature of divine grace. Hyper-Calvinist ministers took this impulse further. They concluded that if salvation is a work of God in which humans can have no involvement, then both universal offers to receive Christ and the notion that all people must respond positively to Christ are illegitimate. Calling for people to respond to Christ and stating that all people must accept Christ might imply that salvation hinges on human action. To the hyper-Calvinists in Northamptonshire, such an implication could only distort the message of free and unmerited grace.

Despite their unity around this conviction, hyper-Calvinist thinkers advanced their theology in differing ways. Joseph Hussey and John Gill, two early hyper-Calvinist minsters, relied on creative reformulations of the *pactum salutis,* the covenant of redemption, to present salvation as occurring pre-temporally in the covenantal arrangements of God. Their proposals rendered salvation impervious to any human action. In their accounts, justification, adoption in Christ, and union with Christ all occurred in eternity. Human faith, therefore, does not procure salvation. Faith serves merely as the means by which the elect become aware of their status as eternally justified people.

A noticeable change in hyper-Calvinist theology occurred in 1737, the year in which the Rothwell minister Matthias Maurice composed a tract against hyper-Calvinism entitled *The Modern Question Modestly Answer'd.* To respond to Maurice, hyper-Calvinist leaders who followed Hussey and Gill largely abandoned any focus on God's eternal works and argued instead for an innate human incapacity to comprehend the Gospel. Ministers such as Lewis Wayman, John Brine, and John Johnson contended that barring any special revelation, the non-elect cannot apprehend the Gospel's truths. The Spirit must unilaterally work in the human soul and compel an individual to possess saving faith. Given humanity's need for a dramatic spiritual experience, universal offers of the Gospel and broad calls to possess saving faith are superfluous. Only the elect will receive the Spirit, and so only the elect can receive true Gospel calls.

The hyper-Calvinism of Fuller's day therefore emerged within a particular historical context, the contra-Puritanism prevalent in Northamptonshire, and sought a specific end, namely, to portray salvation as entirely a work of God and not dependent on any human action. Leaders within that tradition offered various theories on how best to achieve this aim. The movement was surprisingly diverse, but it coalesced around a desire to minimize human agency in accounts of salvation.

Given this desire, terms like hyper-Calvinist or even false Calvinist have legitimacy. While theologians in the Reformed tradition have wished to magnify divine grace, the

mainstream exponents of that tradition have not sought to do so by abandoning human participation in salvation's reception. The hyper-Calvinists rejected this norm. To use the designator "hyper" to denote them as going beyond the broader Reformed tradition is appropriate.[32]

Contemporary explorations of Andrew Fuller have not sufficiently addressed the nuance found in the hyper-Calvinist tradition. As noted, surveys of Fuller rarely engage with hyper-Calvinist authors directly. For this reason, they often give the false impression that hyper-Calvinism was a monolithic movement in terms of its theological convictions.

Fuller was aware of the complexities present in hyper-Calvinism. He spent his youth in a congregation that was committed to hyper-Calvinist ideology. He then served as a minister in Kettering, the hometown of the influential hyper-Calvinist theologians John Gill and John Brine. His attachment to these locations afforded him exposure to a range of hyper-Calvinist writers. In *Gospel Worthy,* he quoted from such figures as Joseph Hussey, John Gill, Lewis Wayman, John Johnson, and John Brine. He also cited several critics of hyper-Calvinism, most notably Mathias Maurice and Abraham Taylor.

Documenting the development of hyper-Calvinism will allow historians to contextualize Fuller and his theological proposals. Locating Fuller in his historical context produces fresh discoveries and corrects inaccuracies present in modern scholarship. Contrary to the current consensus, Fuller did not seek primarily to refute Joseph Hussey or John Gill with his *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation.* He wrote against the version of hyper-Calvinism that appeared after the release of Maurice's *Modern Question* tract. As such, Fuller focused his attention on humanity's perceived inability to comprehend the Gospel rather than the Hussey and Gill scheme of justification in eternity.

In his attacks on this specific form of hyper-Calvinism, Fuller relied on sources that historians have heretofore failed to appreciate. He employed arguments for Gospel offers and duty faith that Matthias Maurice and Abraham Taylor originally proffered. He even cited works by the hyper-Calvinist John Gill. Gill did not write about a human inability to believe the Gospel; he focused his attention on salvation as a pre-temporal act of God. Knowing this fact, Fuller cited Gill to great rhetorical effect. He demonstrated that a respected hyper-Calvinist leader did not subscribe to a central claim advanced by hyper-Calvinists following the modern question debate. In this way, Fuller exploited differences in the hyper-Calvinist

32. The term Calvinist is not necessarily synonymous with the term Reformed, but I use the term hyper-Calvinist throughout this thesis because of its frequent usage in the secondary literature and because the term adequately conveys that certain theologians departed from the broader tradition.

movement to his advantage.

Fuller's frequent dependence on these sources calls into question the current narrative that portrays Fuller as indebted to the writings of Jonathan Edwards when he crafted his case against hyper-Calvinism in *Gospel Worhty*. Fuller certainly respected Edwards and cited him often in his many publications. Scholars such as Chris Chun have rightly recognized this fact.[33] However, Fuller's *Gospel Worthy* appears more reliant on tracts by Maurice, Taylor, and even Gill than on Edwards' writings. In *Gospel Worthy,* Fuller made use of Edwards as an authoritative figure that he could cite, but he discovered the conceptual categories for his argument in writings by Maurice, Taylor, and Gill.

With this thesis, then, I survey the historical development of eighteenth-century hyper-Calvinism in Northamptonshire and demonstrate how such a survey contextualizes Andrew Fuller's theology and illuminates his proposals about the human response to the Gospel. I contend that existing accounts of hyper-Calvinism are deficient because they do not adequately document the diversity found in the movement. In response, I offer a new interpretation of hyper-Calvinism, one that accounts for its complexity. Appreciating the nuances present in hyper-Calvinism provides new insight into Fuller's writings. Such an appreciation allows scholars to discern more accurately the concepts that animated Fuller, the persons that he sought to refute, and the sources on which he relied. In particular, Fuller wrote in opposition to the form of hyper-Calvinism that appeared after the modern question debate, and he relied on writers such as Abraham Taylor, Matthias Maurice, and even John Gill to make his case.

I devote my attention to the issue of human faith—specifically, I explore what role personal faith plays in salvation's reception. Several writers have pointed to the doctrine of the atonement as a critical feature of hyper-Calvinism.[34] While Hussey, Gill, and other hyper-Calvinists at times held to an eccentric understanding of particular redemption, they devoted their attention to the issue of human faith.[35] Fuller likewise considered the topic of faith at great length. He did include in his *Gospel Worthy* a section on particular redemption, but he spent the majority of the tract outlining the nature of human faith. He opened *Gospel Worthy*

33. Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards.*

34. E.g., see the survey of Gill's doctrine of the atonement found in Allen, *Extent of the Atonement,* 469–473. Allen correctly notes that Gill and some hyper-Calvinists held to an understanding of particular redemption that hindered open Gospel preaching. I only argue here that Gill's theology of faith—particularly his views on eternal justification—determined his stance on Gospel offers and duty faith more than his beliefs about the atonement.

35. Fuller later offered a brief critique of the atonement theology promoted by Gill and his colleagues in a letter to John Ryland. See Fuller, *Complete Works*, 2:712.

with an extended definition of his understanding of human faith.

Fuller developed his proposals about faith while participating in the life of two churches that were at one time decidedly hyper-Calvinistic—his congregation at Soham and then later his church at Kettering. His work emerged out of these ministry contexts, and he wrote for those ministry contexts. For this reason, I have entitled my thesis "A Pastor-Theologian in Search of a Faith Worthy of All Acceptation: The Theological Genealogy of Andrew Fuller and His Critique of It."

Chapter One

Joseph Hussey: A Searcher for 'Free Grace' and Salvation in Eternity

Introduction

The works of Joseph Hussey serve as a profitable starting point for an examination of the hyper-Calvinism espoused by many Northamptonshire nonconformists during the eighteenth century.[1] Though Hussey ministered primarily in Cambridge and not in Northamptonshire, his arguments for hyper-Calvinism emerged from and eventually shaped nonconformist life in the Northamptonshire region in a profound manner. Put simply, it is difficult to interpret the soteriological convictions of many Northamptonshire ministers without probing the theological foundations laid by Hussey.

Despite Hussey's significance as one who holds "a strategic position in the creation of hyper-Calvinism," he has not received much attention from contemporary researchers.[2] No comprehensive account of his theology presently exists. While his name occasionally appears in historical surveys of the Reformed and Baptist traditions, such works rarely describe his convictions in detail. They often briefly outline some of his beliefs but leave important features of his thought unexplored.

This inattention to Hussey originates partly from the fact that the original manuscript for the 1706 publication *The Glory of Christ Unveiled,* Hussey's 918-page tome on hyper-Calvinism, is not easily accessible. Its original publishers released it in limited quantities.[3] A subsequent 1844 reprinting of the work, what one editor at the time labeled a "very rare, valuable and expensive" volume, underwent major revision by a Rev. James Babb prior to its release. Babb admitted that he took "some liberties" with Hussey's wording. While Babb simplified the sentence structure and abridged lengthy sections, he also completely rewrote Hussey's statements regarding Christology and the Trinity because he found Hussey's remarks on those matters "most perplexing."[4] Hussey's beliefs about those doctrines, however, played an important role in his argument for hyper-Calvinism. The changes that

1. Portions of this chapter appear in David Mark Rathel, "John Gill and the History of Redemption as Mere Shadow: Exploring Gill's Doctrine of the Covenant of Redemption." *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 4 (2017): 377–400. This material appears by permission of Brill, the publisher.

2. Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689–1765* (London: Olive Tree, 1967; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 70. See also idem., "Joseph Hussey: Architect of Hyper-Calvinism," *Free Grace Record* 4, no. 5 (1967): 221–232.

3. Hussey once remarked that his *Christ Unveiled* sold less than 500 copies after its release. Joseph Hussey, *God's Operations of Grace: But Not Offers of His Grace* (London: J. and D. Bridge, 1707), 1.

4. Joseph Hussey, *The Glory of Christ and His Church,* ed. James Babb (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1844), 2.

Babb brought to Hussey's manuscript have therefore prevented readers from appreciating the nuances found in Hussey's thought.

The fact that Baptist historians are the ones who express most interest in Northamptonshire hyper-Calvinism also likely contributes to the general neglect of Hussey. Baptists wish to explore hyper-Calvinism because of the prominent role that that theology played in Particular Baptist life. Still, Baptist scholars, focusing primarily on the development of their own tradition, at best only briefly consider a non-Baptist such as Hussey.[5] This decision, though perhaps understandable, carries consequences. Hussey's influence over some Baptists was great, and one can understand their convictions only by first considering his.

At present, Peter Toon offers the most detailed examination of Hussey's life and writings. Nevertheless, Toon's *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity* devotes only fifteen pages to explicating Hussey's theology.[6] A separate journal article about Hussey, one that Toon released after the completion of his book, features much of the same content found in *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism.*[7]

Toon deserves commendation for much of his research, but insufficient attention to the entirety of Hussey's corpus coupled with poor interpretive decisions allow for inaccuracies to appear in his project. Toon constructs his analysis of Hussey primarily on Hussey's *God's Operations of Grace But No Offers of His Grace* and not his more substantial *Glory of Christ Unveiled*. The often-neglected *Glory of Christ Unveiled* presents the theological foundations for Hussey's hyper-Calvinist position; *God's Operations of Grace* in many ways represents Hussey's desire to promote his hyper-Calvinist beliefs at a more popular level.[8]

In addition, Toon interprets Hussey's writings from a decidedly Calvin against the Calvinists perspective; that is, he views many of the theological developments within the Reformed tradition that occurred after the death of Calvin as departures from the allegedly

5. E.g., H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), 174. As I will reveal in the following chapters, McBeth's treatment of noted hyper-Calvinists like John Gill and John Brine is incomplete due to insufficient attention he gives to the work of Hussey. For another example, consider that Cross does not even mention Hussey in his survey of hyper-Calvinism. Anthony R. Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival among Enlightenment Particular Baptists* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2017), 1–27.

6. Though Hussey's name appears in several places in Toon's work, one finds consideration of Hussey's soteriology on only fifteen pages. Toon, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism,* 70–85.

7. Peter Toon, "The Growth of Supralapsarian Christology," *Evangelical Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1967): 23–29.

8. Hussey wrote *God's Operations* for ministers in part to provide a distillation of his more expansive *Christ Unveiled.* An anonymous editor who promoted a republication of *God's Operations* noted Hussey's almost singular focus on ministry practice in his advert for the work. See Anonymous, *Advertisement for God's Operations of Grace But No Offers of Grace* (London: G. Terry, J. Matthews, and S. Jordan, 1791).

more balanced theology originally propounded by the Genevan reformer.[9] While debates over the trajectory of Reformed theology can prove contentious, it is important here to note only that Toon's understanding of this issue unhelpfully shapes his analysis of Hussey. In an attempt to reject the federal theology that became prominent within the Reformed movement after Calvin's death, Toon devotes his attention to features of Hussey's thought that do not necessarily lead to the hyper-Calvinist position—such as Hussey's ordering of the divine decrees—and leaves more profitable avenues of research —such as Hussey's understanding of salvation in eternity—inadequately unexplored.[10] This approach leaves Toon's readers with an incomplete picture as to what precisely led to Hussey's hyper-Calvinist beliefs.

Given the current neglect of Hussey and the confusion that presently surrounds his theology, a substantial analysis of his soteriology will prove useful. Such an analysis will offer contemporary readers a new understanding of an important but forgotten figure. It will also provide fresh insight into the theological convictions of later proponents of hyper-Calvinism, most notably such Baptist leaders as John Skepp and John Gill. In many ways, these Northamptonshire Baptists simply refined the doctrinal commitments that they received from Hussey. Indeed, a correct interpretation of Hussey's theology will allow for the construction of a new interpretation of the Baptist espousal of hyper-Calvinism because present research has not adequately taken into account Hussey's influence.

I offer such an analysis of Hussey in this chapter. I contend that although Hussey began his ministry committed to the teachings of Richard Baxter, a sincere desire for assurance of salvation led him to imbibe concepts advanced by Tobias Crisp, Baxter's theological opponent. Innovating on Crisp's already controversial theology, Hussey presented salvation as occurring completely within eternity, that is, within the covenantal arrangements of God. His doctrine of eternal salvation, what he entitled free-grace theology, posited that the elect possess an eternal union with a pre-incarnate Christ. This union provides them with justification prior to any exercise of faith on their part.

Hussey proffered his theology with the intention of minimizing human agency in the reception of salvation. He believed that his approach would relieve spiritual anxiety by maximizing divine grace. His conclusions led him to reject both the sincere offer of the Gospel and the conviction that all people must respond to the Gospel message positively.

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9. Toon, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism,* 11–30. The literature on the relationship between Calvin and later developments in the Reformed tradition is vast. For an introduction to this debate from a perspective at odds with Toon's, consider Richard Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 51–70.

10. Toon, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism,* 70–85.

Ironically, this restricted understanding of evangelism would create tremendous spiritual anxiety for subsequent ministers who imbibed his convictions.

Joseph Hussey and the Search for Assurance of Salvation

Hussey was born in 1660 in Fordingbridge in Hampshire. He received his early education at the influential academy for dissenters led by Charles Norton in Newton Green. After serving for a short time as a domestic chaplain, he became an ordained minister in 1688. He pastored in Hitchin before moving to Cambridge to lead what was then entitled the Hog Hill Church. It was in Cambridge that he created controversy by espousing his hyper-Calvinist views.[11]

Hussey's early life offered no indication that he would later aggressively promote hyper-Calvinism. His *The Gospel Feast Opened* (1692), a lengthy reflection on the parable of the Great Banquet found in Luke 14:12–24, contained a substantial examination of God's "invitation to sinners in the preaching of the Gospel."[12] In that work, Hussey informed his readers that Gospel preaching carries with it "an open invitation" to respond positively to God and features "gracious calls that are public."[13] He even exulted in the universal scope of the Gospel's message and looked expectantly to the advance of the missionary cause when he wrote, "The hour is coming in which there shall be no speech or language where their voice, the voice of them that will be called to preach glad tidings, shall not come."[14]

Significantly, Hussey further argued in the *Gospel Feast* that all people have a duty to respond positively to the Gospel message. Citing Christ's command that his disciples preach the Gospel to all nations, he warned that the invitation to receive the Gospel is a "commanding invitation," one that carries divine authority.[15] Any rejection of the Gospel is therefore equivalent to rejecting Christ himself, the very sovereign who commissioned Gospel preaching. Hussey implored his readers that if Christ commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel "must not you receive it, and embrace it?"[16]

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11. The church Hussey pastored now possesses the name Emmanuel United Reformed Church. One can find an image of Hussey in a stained-glass window in the congregation's current meeting place. For a survey of Hussey's life, see A. G. Matthews, *Diary of a Cambridge Minister* (Cambridge: printed by author, 1937); Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches* (London: printed by author, 1814): 4:418–422.

12. Joseph Hussey, *The Gospel-Feast Opened* (London: J. Astwood for John Salusbury, 1692), 324. Hussey's other works from this period also do not reveal any espousal of hyper-Calvinism. One can find a full publication list for Hussey in Wilson, *The History,* 418–422. In addition to the publications listed in Wilson's work, one of Hussey's personal letters to a friend survives to the present day; it appears in Timothy Rogers, *A Discourse Concerning Trouble of Mind and the Disease of Melancholy* (London: Thomas Parkurst, 1691), xxxviii–xl.

13. Hussey, *Gospel Feast*, 333.

14. Ibid., 337.

15. Ibid., 331.

16. Ibid., 332.

A strong commitment to Reformed soteriology featured prominently in the *Gospel Feast* but not at the expense of human responsibility. Hussey wrote passionately about unconditional election and an effectual call to grace.[17] Still, he explained that in the reception of salvation, "'Tis His grace but 'tis our work and duty. He draws but we must run."[18] He concluded a section on Gospel invitations with the warning, "Whenever he calls using the Day of Grace, while the Spirit breaths and blows upon us, we must come, least we quench the Spirit, and provoke him to blow out our light, that the things of our peace shall be ever hid from us."[19]

The first published announcement that Hussey departed from these beliefs appeared in his *Glory of Christ Unveiled,* a work that he ostensibly intended as an answer to *The Saints Treasury* by a Northampton minister named John Hunt.[20] In truth, *Glory of Christ Unveiled* served to declare Hussey's conversion to hyper-Calvinism and offer an account of his newfound theology. Positioning his piece as if it were an answer to Hunt's *Saints Treasury* was in many a shrewd rhetorical move. Hunt's *Saints Treasury* advanced the very beliefs that Hussey had now come to reject; the content and tone of Hunt's work were strikingly similar to Hussey's earlier piece, *Gospel Feast.* Both Hussey's *Gospel Feast* and Hunt's *Saints Treasury*, for example, offered an extended meditation on a penitent person's coming to Christ and on Christ's free Gospel offer. As Hussey noted, Hunt even employed some the same illustrations in *Saints Treasury* that Hussey included earlier in *Gospel Feast.*[21] Most important to Hussey was the fact that one of Hunt's other publications, a short essay entitled *A Question Briefly Handled*, rejected a call to present human agents as completely passive in

17. Impassioned statements about unconditional election and effectual calling permeate the work. E.g., Ibid., 38, 45, 340.

18. Ibid., 381.

19. Ibid., 387.

20. See John Hunt, *The Saints' Treasury: A Discourse Concerning the Glory and Excellency of the Person of Christ* (London: R. Saneway, 1704). Careful readers will note the contrast that Hussey drew with Hunt's work when they compare the full title of his publication with the full title of Hunt's publication. The full title of Hussey's treatise was Joseph Hussey, *The Glory of Christ Unveiled: The Excellency of Christ Vindicated* (London: J. and D. Bridge, 1706). Contemporary researchers have largely neglected Hunt, but his ministry at Castle Hill in Northampton has on occasion received attention because Anne Dutton, a significant eighteenth-century hymn writer and poet, was once a member of his congregation. See D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 298; Anne Dutton, *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton: Eighteenth-Century, British-Baptist, Woman Theologian*, ed. JoAnn Ford Watson (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2006), xv, xi–xiii.

21. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 312–313, 906–908. The font in *Christ Unveiled* is challenging to read and the print is faded. Throughout this thesis, I have consulted Hussey's original text, but to allow contemporary readers easier access to Hussey, I cite a new, edited version of Hussey's work compiled by Marc Jacobsson. Jacobsson has accurately reproduced Hussey's wording. Unless stated otherwise, this and all subsequent references to Hussey's *Christ Unveiled* refer to the Jacobsson edition. See Joseph Hussey, *The Glory of Christ Unveiled,* ed. Marc Jacobsson (unpublished manuscript, n.d.).

the reception of salvation—the very aim that Hussey's hyper-Calvinism now sought to achieve.[22] From Hussey's perspective, then, Hunt's writings offered the perfect vehicle by which he could renounce his earlier beliefs and promote his new hyper-Calvinist system.[23]

Serving as a repudiation of his earlier theology, Hussey filled *Glory of Christ Unveiled* with much autobiographical detail. He recounted that in his youth he was deeply influenced by Richard Baxter. He bemoaned that Baxter's writings left him with no assurance of salvation and only the fear that he had committed the unpardonable sin. Seeking spiritual comfort, he attended multiple religious services but concluded that most ministers "were all agreed to turn me into an anvil, and smite every blow upon me." He credited a reading of Stephen Charnock's *Discourse of God's Being the Author of Reconciliation* with converting him, turning him "in a moment" to the Lord and even putting him on the path to hyper-Calvinism. Though Hussey granted that Charnock's work did not feature the hyper-Calvinist system that he now advocated, he did believe that the Spirit used Charnock's writing to reveal to him the concept of the *pactum salutis*, the theological foundation on which he built much of his hyper-Calvinist theology.[24]

Hussey claimed that this direct revelation given to him by the Spirit was the source of his theology, but he in fact constructed many of his beliefs on proposals advanced not by Charnock but by the seventeenth-century controversialist Tobias Crisp. Much like Hussey, Crisp believed that a legalism prevalent in the preaching of his day prevented him from receiving assurance of salvation. He highlighted the use of the law as a means to persuade penitent sinners to turn to Christ and certain constructions of federal theology that framed the

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22. Hunt entitled this essay *A Question Briefly Handled, Concerning What State or Condition the Soul is in, in the very Act of Coming unto Christ*. It circulated with his treatise on baptism. See John Hunt, *Infants' Faith and Right to Baptism* (London: R. Saneway, 1682), 105–156. Though Hunt's essay did not directly respond to hyper-Calvinism—interestingly, it combatted a corrupt form of Arminianism—Hussey rightly noticed that many of Hunt's statements also rebutted hyper-Calvinism. Hussey later interacted with Hunt's essay in Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 235ff. Interestingly, a nineteenth-century edition of *Congregational Magazine* implies that Hunt then responded to Hussey's attacks when it records that Hunt was "warmly engaged in the supralapsarian controversy of those days, against the writings of Mr. Hussey of Cambridge." Anonymous, "Historical Account of the Ancient Congregational Church, Assembled at the Castle Hill Meeting House, Northampton," *Congregational Magazine* (March, 1830): 114. I have found no record of such a response, and from what I can discern Hunt never publicly interacted with Hussey's writings. Even the substantial historical records of Hunt's former church list no such response to Hussey. See Thomas Arnold and J. J. Cooper, *The History of the Church of Doddridge* (Kettering: Northamptonshire Printing, 1895), 56–57.

23. Nuttall proposes additional reasons for why Hussey might have possessed such animus toward Hunt. He notes that Hunt's congregation participated in debates about the ministries of Richard Davis and Tobias Crisp, two ministers Hussey respected. He also suggests that Hunt was at one time a member of Hussey's congregation in Cambridge. While I have surveyed Hussey's church book from that time and can confirm that a John Hunt was once a member there, no firm evidence exists to demonstrate that this Hunt is the one with whom Hussey later dialogued. See Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and the Modern Question: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 1 (1965): 101–123.

24. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 113ff.

reception of salvation as the fulfilling of such conditions as repentance and faith as the chief theological culprits behind this legalism. He responded to this perceived legalism by fashioning a new soteriological system that deliberately minimized human agency. He determined that if he could remove from his theology the obligation to perform such actions as faith and repentance, then he could offer a message that would highlight the freeness grace and provide assurance.

Hussey's *Glory of Christ Unveiled* displays the passion of a new convert to Crisp's scheme. Taunting his former spiritual hero Richard Baxter, he brazenly labeled himself an antinomian, even though Baxter had once derisively applied that term to Crisp.[25] He declared the so-called antinomian Gospel as the only true Gospel and went so far as to say that not only was he not a Christian prior to the time that he adopted Crispian views but that any theologian who proclaimed a message not comporting with the so-called antinomian message was a false teacher and heretic.[26]

Hussey filled his pamphlet with insults toward any minister who might propound a different message. In his judgment, the preachers of his day only preached legalistic sermons that caused anxiety in the hearts of their hearers.[27] Such rhetoric likely accounts for why Geoffrey F. Nuttall once stated in regard to Hussey's texts, "I can think of no other divine of his time with so swashbuckling a style or such positive delight in overkill."[28]

Hussey's willingness to accept Crisp's theology and attack Crisp's critics surely shocked his contemporaries. Earlier in his career, he traveled from Cambridge to Kettering to rebut the itinerant minister Richard Davis in part for supposedly promoting the errors of Tobias Crisp.[29] Indeed, Matthias Maurice, the pastor who succeeded Davis at Rothwell, labeled

25. Baxter labeled Crisp "the most eminent Ring-leader" of the "sect of the Antinomians" in Richard Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness* (London: Nevil Simons and Jonah, 1676), 21. Indeed, the 1690 republication of Crisp's sermons led Baxter to start a renewed crusade against what he perceived as the antinomian threat, and Baxter mentioned Crisp by name on the title page of his most important contra-antinomian tract. See Richard Baxter, *The Scripture Gospel Defended, and Christ, Grace and Free Justification Vindicated* (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1690). For a brief survey of Baxter's interactions with Crisp's theology, see Hans Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy* (Vancouver: Regent, 2004), 61–65. See also Tim Cooper, *Fear and Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2001).

26. E.g., Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* preface, 287–294.

27. E.g, ibid., 385–390.

28. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Cambridge Nonconformity 1660–1710: From Holcroft to Hussey," *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* 1, no. 9 (1977): 251.

29. Little secondary literature on Richard Davis exists, but consider David Sercombe, "Richard Davis (1658–1714): A Study of a Late 17th Century Pastor and Itinerant Evangelist, a Precursor of Calvinistic Methodism" (ThM thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2006). Sercombe's work offers a helpful introduction to Davis' life but unfortunately does not sufficiently document Davis' indebtedness to Crisp. See also the Stephen Pickles, *Richard Davis and the Revival of Religion in Northamptonshire* (Kent: James Bourne Society, 2015).

Hussey "the original [origin] of all Mr. Davis' reproaches, and of all the opposition made to his evangelical doctrine," primarily because of Hussey's concern that Davis promoted Crisp's convictions.[30] Hussey's subsequent acceptance of Crisp's thought and later willingness to retract his condemnation of Davis demonstrated just how much his theology had changed.[31] Given the great extent to which Hussey allowed Crisp's writings to reorient his beliefs, a brief excursus that surveys relevant aspects of Crisp's theology will prove useful.

Tobias Crisp: The Foundation for Hussey's Theology

Crisp propounded his theology during the early seventeenth century, a time in which several Protestant ministers expressed a "sheer bone-weariness with the notional and disciplinary grind" that they believed "lay at the heart of the Puritan practice of piety." Often labeled contra-Puritans or doctrinal antinomians, these ministers sought "fundamentally to redraft" Puritan theology to recover an emphasis on grace—an emphasis that they claimed the early Protestant reformer Martin Luther exhibited but that the English Puritans of the seventeenth century lost.[32]

Chief among their concerns was the perception that Puritan theology employed the practice of using external evidences to determine one's spiritual state. They feared that seeking to assess one's condition before God based on the good works that one performs would only cause anxiety and hinder assurance of salvation. They could also reject the

30. Matthias Maurice, *Monuments of Mercy* (London: Richard Hett, 1729) 119.

31. The Northamptonshire debate over Richard Davis led to the breakup of the so-called "happy union" between Congregationalists and Presbyterians. For surveys of this controversy that highlight the role that Crisp played, see D. Patrick Ramsey, "Meet Me in the Middle: Herman Witsius and the English Dissenters," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 19 (2008): 143–164; C. G. Bolam et al., *The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), 93–112; Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism* (Swengel: Reiner, 1973), 85–106. For Davis' own account of the controversy, Richard Davis, *Truth and Innocency* (London: Nath. and Robert Ponder, 1692). For Hussey's later retraction of his condemnation of Davis, see Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 313; Alexander Gordon, ed., *Freedom After Ejection: A Review (1690–1692) of Presbyterian and Congregational Nonconformity in England and Wales* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1917), 289.

32. T. D. Bozeman, "The Glory of the 'Third Time:' John Eaton as a Contra-Puritan," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46, no. 4 (1996): 641. Bozeman prefers the term contra-Puritan to describe this theological tradition. I follow his lead here, but most contemporary scholars use the term doctrinal antinomian. For modern usage of the term doctrinal antinomianism, see Gert van den Brink, "Calvin, Witsius (1636–1708), and the English Antinomians," *Church History and Religious Culture* 91, no. 1–2 (2011): 230. Often scholars distinguish between doctrinal antinomianism—a term referring to this particular movement's unique set of concerns and doctrinal convictions—and practical antinomianism, a reference to the practice of lawlessness. The theologians who receive the descriptor doctrinal antinomian did not necessarily live profligate lifestyles; one should not by default consider them practical antinomians. In this case, the label antinomian originates from their critics, most notably Richard Baxter, who feared that tenets of their soteriology might lead to unrighteous living. Interestingly, despite the fact that the descriptor antinomianism might therefore not be entirely just, its usage persists and appears frequently in the academic literature. Pederson justifies its use by writing, "As with 'Puritan,' the term [i.e., doctrinal antinomianism] has strong historical connotations, and in the absence of a better term, it is as good as any to distinguish" this movement. Randall J. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603–1689* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 213.

Puritan use of the law to compel penitent sinners to trust in Christ as well as versions of covenant theology that framed the reception of salvation as the fulfilling of such conditions as faith and repentance. Their fear was that a strong focus on the law or on the need to fulfill covenantal conditions would minimize grace.[33]

Some diversity did exist among the contra-Puritans. John Eaton, the movement's first notable exponent, emphasized the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness and promoted a crude form of the Lutheran distinction between law and Gospel.[34] John Saltmarsh, a chaplain in the New Model Army, went further. He sought to emphasize divine grace by minimizing human agency in the reception of salvation. He contended that the elect do not have to exercise faith to receive salvation, and he placed justification before faith in the *ordo salutis* to demonstrate this point. In his scheme, divine grace unilaterally unites a sinner with Christ and provides justification apart from any human activity. Human action can, therefore, play no role in salvation other than receiving from the Spirit an inner testimony that one's sins have been forgiven. Saltmarsh hoped that this strong focus on divine action would provide assurance of salvation and prevent legalism.[35]

Tobias Crisp, a minister for a time in Wiltshire, likely encountered Eaton's works through his publisher.[36] He soon became the most significant proponent of the contra-Puritan cause. His published works, a series of sermons compiled after his death, reveal the convictions of

33. For excellent surveys of the contra-Puritan movement, see David R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David Parnham, "Motions of Law and Grace: The Puritan in the Antinomian," *Westminster Journal of Theology* 70 (2008): 73–104. Developing a comprehensive list of the concerns and proposals of the contra-Puritan tradition is difficult; however, a helpful summary does exist in Barry H. Howson, *Erroneous and Schismatical Opinions: The Question of Orthodoxy regarding the Theology of Hanserd Knollys* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 103–114.

34. For Eaton's work on justification and the law-Gospel distinction, see John Eaton, *The Honey-Combe of Free Justification* (London: R.B., 1642), 22-23, 85–87. For an overview of Eaton's theology, see Bozeman, "Glory of the Lord," 638–654.

35. Saltmarsh presented his objections to the theology of his day in John Saltmarsh, *Free-Grace: or, the Flowings of Christ's Blood Freely to Sinners* (London: Gilves Calvert, 1646). One can find a more mature understanding of his constructive theological proposals in idem., *Sparkles of Glory* (London: Gilves Culvert, 1648). See also David Parnham, "John Saltmarsh and the Mystery of Redemption," *Harvard Theological Review* 104, no. 3 (2011): 265–298; Leo F. Solt, "John Saltmarsh: New Model Army Chaplain," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 2, no. 1 (1951): 69–80.

36. For biographies of Crisp's life, see Christopher Hill, *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986), 2:141–161; Peter Toon, "Tobias Crisp, D.D. (1600-1643)," *Free Grace Record* 4, no. 3 (1966): 122–130. At present, no significant overview of Crisp's theology exists. I attempt no comprehensive examination of his theology here and focus only on aspects of his thought that have relevance for Hussey. The two most substantial surveys of Crisp's thought are David Parnham, "The Humbling of 'High Presumption:' Tobias Crisp Dismantles the Puritan Ordo Salutis," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56, no. 1 (2005): 50–74; idem., "The Covenantal Quietism of Tobias Crisp," *Church History* 75, no. 3 (2006): 511–543. Also worthy of consideration is William K. B. Stoever, *'A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven:' Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletow: Wesleyan: 1978).

the contra-Puritan movement in their most refined form. As Nicholas McDowell has explained, Crisp established the "doctrine of free grace" originally championed by John Eaton and John Saltmarsh on a "respectable intellectual basis."[37]

Sharing many of Saltmarsh's opinions, Crisp proposed dramatic alterations to Puritan covenant theology to minimize human agency in the reception of salvation. Conceptually, his project relied on a reworking of covenant theology's use of the *pactum salutis* (covenant of redemption). In more conventional accounts of covenant theology, the *pactum salutis* refers to a pre-temporal compact between the Father and Son in which the Son agreed to serve as the surety of the elect in order to provide for their redemption. This covenant stands in relation to other covenants. Typically, the *pactum salutis* resides "in the cradle of the federal theology of the Reformed tradition" between a "covenant of works [*foedus operum*] between God and man in the pre-fall state, and then subsequently a covenant of grace [*foedus gratiae*] between God and the elect but fallen sinner."[38]

The relationship between the *pactum salutis* and the *foedus gratiae* has significance. Whilst the *pactum salutis* typically describes an agreement between the Father and the Son, the *foedus gratiae* refers to a covenant between humanity and God that has both conditional and unconditional characteristics. The *foedus gratiae* is unconditional because by it God "freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation."[39] It is conditional because humanity must receive this offer through divinely enabled faith in Christ.[40]

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37. See Nicholas McDowell, "The Beauty of Holiness and the Poetics of Antinomianism: Richard Crashaw, John Saltmarsh and the Language of Religious Radicalism in the 1640s," in *Varieties of Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context,* eds. Ariel Hessayon and David Finnegan (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 43.

38 J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 15.

39. This line is, of course, taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith's statement on the covenant of grace in WCF 7.3

40. The use of the term conditional in regard to the covenant of grace can cause confusion. While most theologians in the tradition used the term conditional to describe the covenant of grace, some theologians did avoid such language. They did so often out of a desire to avoid the neo-nomian position of Richard Baxter. They preferred instead to speak of the covenant of grace as offering promises to the elect and then presented faith as the instrument the elect employ to receive such promises. Lachman rightly notes that a considerable part of the disagreement between these positions was "largely verbal" and that there was often "no significant doctrinal difference." See David C. Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1988), 37. I employ the term conditional here merely to express the fact that according to traditional accounts of covenant theology at least some divinely-enabled action must occur on the part of the elect before the full benefits of salvation receive their actualization. This claim was the one that the many contra-Puritans denied. See the importance the Westminster Confession places on faith as a condition in the reception of salvation in WCF 7.3 For helpful introductions to the covenant of grace, see John von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 53–86; idem., "Covenant and Assurance in Early English Puritanism," *Church History* 34, no. 2 (1965): 195–203; Richard L. Greaves, "The Origins and Development of English Covenant Thought," *Historian* 31, no. 1 (1968): 21–35; Lachman, *Marrow* Controversy, 36–54; Michael Horton, "Thomas Goodwin and the Puritan Doctrine of Assurance: Continuity and Discontinuity in the Reformed Tradition, 1600–1680" (PhD thesis, Coventry University, 1998), 122–139.

While the exponents of covenant theology present the conditional nature of the *foedus gratiae* in differing ways, Crisp received notoriety because he sought to remove any notion of conditionality from the covenant. For Crisp, the *foedus gratiae* actually became the *pactum salutis*; the two became synonymous. The Father entered into a covenant of grace only with Christ—not humanity—because only Christ could fulfill its conditions.[41] In such a covenant, Christ agreed to serve as a substitute for God's people and to perform all the conditions that the more traditional formulations of the *foedus gratiae* expected the elect to perform. This approach made Christ, not the believer, "the subject of spiritual activity" because in it is "such a strong substitution of Christ and the believer that, in the end, Christ is the sole actor."[42] John Saltmarsh perhaps best succinctly described such a position when he wrote, "Christ hath believed perfectly, he hath repented perfectly, he hath sorrowed for sin perfectly, he hath obeyed perfectly, he hath mortified sin perfectly, and all is ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."[43]

To this reformulation of covenant theology, Crisp added the conviction that God justifies the elect prior to their personal faith in Christ. For him, justification has its origins in the eternal plan of God but finds its actualization in the elect at the moment of their conception. To account for such a position, Crisp offered a sophisticated distinction between Christ's acceptance of the obligation to die for the sins of the elect in the *pactum salutis*, the execution of the plan of redemption in time and space through Christ's death, and the application of the benefits of Christ's death to the elect in the womb.[44]

Crisp's understanding of justification coupled with his repudiation of any conditionality in the *foedus gratiae* meant that in his understanding the elect procure salvation through "a passive receiving," one that he claimed occurs "without hands."[45] In Crisp's scheme, human faith serves merely as a "pipe-conduit" through which the Spirit reveals to the elect that they have already been justified in Christ.[46] The reception of justification therefore does not hinge on the condition that the elect must exercise faith in Christ. They are already justified. Faith

41. Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted: The Complete Works of Tobias Crisp*, ed. John Gill (London: John Bennett, 1832), 1:85ff. Crisp was likely the first person in England to argue for such an understanding of the covenant of grace. See J. I. Packer, *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 250.

42. Van den Brink, "Calvin, Witsius, and the English Antinomians," 232–233.

43. Saltmarsh, *Free Grace,* 100.

44. See in particular Crisp, *Christ Exalted,* 1:339–366.

45. Crisp, *Christ Exalted,* 1:106. E.g., Crisp wrote, "Ye may easily perceive, beloved, what I drive at in all this discourse, namely, to strip the creature stark naked, leave it shiftless, and unable any way to help itself, that all the help that it receives may appear to be of the free grace of God, merely, without its concurrence in it." Ibid., 1:320-321.

46. Ibid., 2:107–108, 224, 281.

only serves to awaken the elect to their justified status and provide them assurance of salvation.

As one might expect, the publication of these views engendered tremendous controversy. Richard Baxter, for example, led an influential movement against Crisp by charging that Crisp taught eternal justification and promoted unrighteous living. Baxter became so passionate that he devoted much of his life to refuting Crisp's proposals.

Some contemporary historians have more sympathy for Crisp than Baxter did. Removed from the polemical context of the seventeenth century, they present Crisp as undeserving of the inflammatory charges raised against him.[47] Of these new defenders of Crisp, Randall Pederson offers the most substantive arguments. He contends that although Crisp employed provocative rhetoric in his sermons, his actual theology "could be taken to be orthodox."[48] Pederson's arguments merit brief consideration; determining whether Crisp departed from the accepted norms of his day will assist in interpreting Hussey's theology.

Addressing Crisp's covenant theology, Pederson concludes that the Crispian approach was "consistent with the Reformed orthodoxy" and "did not depart from its overall consensus." As evidence of this fact, he appeals to the writings of John Bunyan. Much like Crisp, Bunyan came close to shifting the *foedus gratiae* into the conceptual territory occupied by the *pactum salutis*. Pederson concludes that because such a move occurred in the writings of such a prominent figure as Bunyan, Crisp's "emphasis on the unconditional nature of the covenant" was not unusual.[49]

Bunyan's writings feature similarities but also dissimilarities with Crisp's published works, however. As Pederson claims, Bunyan did closely connect the *foedus gratiae* with the *pactum salutis*.[50] Indeed, Robert McKelvey has argued that Bunyan likely did so because

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47. For a work that demonstrates how the polemical context unhelpfully shaped the debate over contra-Puritanism, see Tim Cooper, "The Antinomians Redeemed: Removing Some of the 'Radical' from Mid-Seventeenth-Century English Religion," *The Journal of Religious History* 24, no. 3 (2000): 247–262.

48. Randall J. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity,* 238. The son of Tobias Crisp, Samuel Crisp, authored a defense of his father in Samuel Crisp, *Christ Exalted and Dr. Crisp Vindicated* (London: published by author, 1698). I examine Pederson's work here because it is more recent and because Pederson appears to draw some of his arguments from the writings of Samuel Crisp. Aside from Pederson, other modern researchers who have also sought to defend Crisp merit brief mention. Christopher Hill provides a lengthy defense of Crisp. However, Hill's work features some historical errors. Pederson serves as a more profitable dialogue partner. Hill, *Collected Essays,* 2:141–184. For less comprehensive defenses of Crisp, consider C. Fitzsimons Allison, *The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter* (Vancouver: Regent, 1966), 172; Mark W. Karlberg, "Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant," *Westminster Theological Journal* 43, no. 1 (1980): 1–57; David H. J. Gay, *Four 'Antinomians' Tried and Vindicated* (Bedford: Brachus, 2013).

49. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity,* 247–248. For the relevant research on Bunyan's covenant theology, see Richard L. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 103–115; Robert J. McKelvey, *Histories that Mansoul and Her Wars Anatomize: The Drama of Redemption in John Bunyan's Holy War* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 44–72.

50. See John Bunyan, *Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded* (London: Will Marshall, 1701), 81-152

Crisp's writings directly influenced him.[51] Yet, unlike Crisp, Bunyan did not reject conditionality in the reception of salvation. While Bunyan minimized the importance of the *foedus gratiae*, this move did not necessarily obligate him to reject all conditional language. The Reformed tradition features many notable theologians who espoused the form of covenant theology that Bunyan favored while also retaining a sense of conditionality.[52] Bunyan's covenant theology might have taken a similar shape as Crisp's, but it still presented the reception of salvation as contingent on the fulfillment of the condition of faith in Christ.[53] This notion was the very one that Crisp sought to expel from his soteriology.

Pederson simply fails to address Bunyan's remarks on conditionality, and for this reason he does not draw an adequate comparison between Bunyan and Crisp. Crisp's theology was unusual for its day not primarily because it minimized the *foedus gratiae* but because it employed such a construction to deny conditionality in the reception of salvation. Without sufficiently probing this fact, Pederson does not convincingly tie Crisp's theology with Bunyan's.

Regarding Crisp's doctrine of justification, Pederson does helpfully reveal that although Crisp held to justification before faith, he did not espouse eternal justification as Richard Baxter often alleged.[54] A distinction exists between eternal justification—a position sometimes entitled justification in eternity—and justification from eternity. The former claims that justification is "complete at the moment God ordains the justification of the elect in eternity." The latter, while certainly recognizing that God "ordains the salvation of a certain number of individuals eternally," contends that the act of eternal justification is incomplete until justification receives its actualization in the lives of the elect at a moment in

51. McKelvey, *Histories that Mansoul*, 65.

52. Fesko rightly notes that the broader tradition features both three-fold and two-fold covenant proposals. Three-fold covenant proposals feature a covenant of redemption, a covenant of works, and a covenant of grace; two-fold proposals feature a covenant of works and then place the covenant of redemption and covenant of grace closely together. Fesko, *Covenant of Redemption,* 72. Neither approach necessarily requires its proponents to deny the legitimacy of conditional language when describing the reception of salvation. I have found the two-fold covenant structure present in the works of such theologians as Thomas Boston, Benjamin Keach, A. A. Hodge, and Samuel Petto to name but a few. I have not discovered in the writings of these theologians the same renouncement of conditional language that is found in Crisp's writings. To be sure, Boston could express great hesitation over the use of conditional language because his context was shaped by the Marrow Controversy. E.g., See Thomas Boston, *The Whole Works of Thomas Boston*, ed. Samuel M'Millan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1850), 8:398. Still, Boston did not deny faith as a condition in the reception of salvation.

53. Bunyan, *Doctrine of the Law and Grace,* 73ff. See also Richard L. Greaves, "John Bunyan and Covenant Thought in the Seventeenth Century," *Church History* 36, no. 2 (1967): 151–169; Richard A. Muller, "Covenant and Conscience in English Reformed Theology: Three Variations on a 17th Century Theme," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42, no. 2 (1980): 308–334.

54. Pederson, *Unity and Diversity,* 248–252. For more on Crisp's rejection of eternal justification, consider Carl R. Trueman, "John Owen on Justification," in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint (Fearn: Mentor, 2007), 90-93.

human history."[55] Crisp argued that while justification originated in the eternal plan of God, it only occurred when the elect are conceived. His approach therefore made justification prior to faith in the *ordo salutis*, but it prevented justification from occurring completely in eternity.[56]

Though Pederson delineates Crisp's doctrine of justification correctly, he incorrectly claims that several of Crisp's more noteworthy contemporaries shared this perspective. Pederson writes that "in spite of accusations," Crisp's placement of justification before faith "did not breach the greater consensus that could be found in Pemble, Twisse, Eyre, Owen, and Goodwin."[57] With these names, Pederson refers to important figures in the development of covenant theology: William Pemble, William Twisse, John Eyre, John Owen, and John Goodwin. His contention is that because these theologians also placed justification before faith, any opposition to Crisp must remain misguided.

Unfortunately, Pederson does not outline the theological positions of Crisp's contemporaries accurately. Thomas Goodwin did not hold to eternal justification or even justification before faith.[58] While debate continues over Owen's precise understanding of justification, a charitable reading of his works reveals that he too did not hold to eternal justification or justification before faith.[59] William Twisse, the Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, and William Pemble did, however, believe not only that justification precedes faith but they also promoted the concept of eternal justification.[60] Their convictions were therefore closer to Crisp's but they did not correspond to them exactly. Significantly, the

55. Oliver D. Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 44–45. For a historical survey of this distinction between eternal justification and justification from eternity, see Robert J. McKelvey, "'That Error and Pillar of Antinomianism:' Eternal Justification," in *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism,* ed. Michael A.G. Haykin and Mark Jones (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 223–262.

56. C.f. Kendall who inaccurately concludes that Crisp taught eternal justification. R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 186–188. Crisp was emphatic, though, that justification could not occur in eternity and "must needs be in time" because "before a man is in being, there cannot be a personal application of the grace of God unto him; God cannot apply his grace to nothing." Crisp, *Christ Exalted*, 1:355.

57. Pederson, *Unity and Diversity,* 252.

58. For relevant passages in Goodwin's writings, see Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1863), 6:405, 8:135, 8:405. My reading of Goodwin relies on the following works: Mark Jones, *Why Heaven Kissed Earth: The Christology of the Puritan Reformed Orthodox Theologian,* 1600–1680 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 232–238; Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 133–141. C.f., Carl R. Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: Owen's Trinitarian Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 28.

59. For a survey of the various opinions on this matter, see Matthew W. Mason, "John Owen's Doctrine of Union with Christ in Relation to his Contributions to Seventeenth Century Debates Concerning Eternal Justification," *Ecclesia Reformanda* 1 (2009): 46–69.

60. For a survey of Twisse and Pemble, see Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn,* 71–88.

understanding of justification that Twisse and Pemble advocated generated tremendous controversy. The Westminster Assembly eventually codified a rejection of it in the Westminster Confession of Faith.[61] For these reasons, Pederson is inaccurate when he claims that Crisp's doctrine of justification represents the "greater consensus" of seventeenth-century Puritan theology.

Crisp's works did receive censure at the Westminster Assembly. Throughout the Assembly's proceedings, several divines expressed concerns about Crisp's theological beliefs, and the House of Commons in an appeal to the Assembly explicitly stated that Crisp's publications contained false teaching. The House of Commons took particular issue with Crisp's understanding of the timing of justification. After careful examination, attendees at the Assembly recommend the burning of all of Crisp's published works.[62]

The Assembly also codified a rejection of Crispian theology in its confessional statement. The Westminster Confession of Faith frames the *foedus gratiae* in a conditional manner; it states that the covenant requires faith in Christ on the part of human agents so "that they may be saved."[63] This move placed Crisp's soteriology out of bounds of the Westminster Confession's definition of Reformed orthodoxy.

Pederson attempts to minimize these events by arguing that Crisp was not "formally charged with heresy" at the Westminster Assembly. He argues that any complaints that might have arisen against Crisp at the Assembly emerged not because of Crisp's theological positions but because of Crisp's strong stance against legalism.[64] This claim, however, remains at odds with statements recorded in the Assembly's official minutes. The Assembly explicitly rejected Crisp's theology—not just the rhetorical flourishes found in his sermons.

Despite Pederson's arguments to the contrary, Tobias Crisp did promote a theology that represented a marked departure from mainstream Reformed thought. Crisp modified the *foedus gratiae* and the timing of justification in an attempt to remove human agency from the

61. The WCF explicitly rejects the idea that justification occurs in eternity or at the cross event. See WCF 11.4. See also the helpful Chad van Dixhoorn, "The Strange Silence of Prolocutor Twisse: Predestination and Politics in the Westminster Assembly's Debate Over Justification," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 40, no. 2 (2009): 395–418. Interestingly, despite the differences between Crisp and Twisse on the timing of justification, Packer believes that it is possible that Crisp developed his understanding of justification due to Twisse's influence. Packer, *Redemption and Restoration of Man,* 250.

62. For relevant references to Crisp in the Westminster proceedings, consider Chad Van Dixhoorn, ed., *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643–1652*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2:451, 3:750, 5:22–23. For background material on the recommendation to burn Crisp's sermons, see David Steers, "Arminianism amongst Protestant Dissenters in England and Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," in *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe*, ed. Th. Marius van Leeuwen et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2009), 164–166.

63. See WCF 7.3.

64. Pederson, *Unity and Diversity,* 251–252.

reception of salvation. He did so because he believed that these moves would highlight divine grace and provide a sense of assurance of salvation.

Though Crisp's theological innovations received censure from prominent figures, Joseph Hussey incorporated them into his quest for assurance of salvation—a quest that would lead him to his hyper-Calvinist conclusions. Throughout *Glory of Christ Unveiled,* Hussey acknowledged his indebtedness to Crispism. Like Crisp, he constructed the *foedus gratiae* as the *pactum salutis* and advocated for a rejection of conditional language in salvation's reception. Following Crisp's logic, he argued that this approach would make salvation not contingent on "our faith, repentance, obedience and qualifications on earth;" instead, God's "everlasting love" meant that Christ fulfilled all necessary conditions in the place of the elect. With such a covenant theology, he explained, the elect could enjoy "one covenant" with Christ in which they receive "faith, repentance, holiness, and every grace."[65] Hussey also made use of the Crisp's rhetoric that presented faith as a "pipe-conduit" through which the elect become aware of their status as justified people.[66]

While this language reveals Hussey's strong approval of Crisp, he was willing to alter Crisp's approach by adding several new features. To Crisp's innovations to covenant theology, Hussey added a doctrine that he entitled the Glory-Man. To Crisp's belief in justification before faith, Hussey incorporated his convictions about salvation in eternity. These changes meant that while Hussey's theology relied significantly on Crisp's theological framework, it also departed from Crisp's thought in significant ways. Importantly, each of the modifications Hussey brought to Crispism represented not only moves toward hyper-Calvinism, they also constituted radical reconstructions of broader Reformed tradition.[67] As such, they merit careful consideration. I will explore first Hussey's statements regarding the Glory-Man, and I will then explain how his belief in the Glory-Man contributed to his views on salvation in eternity.

The Doctrine of the Glory-Man

The concept of the Glory-Man was in Hussey's mind the most consequential innovation that he brought to Crispism. He believed the doctrine of the Glory-Man was "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began."[68] Hussey used the term Glory-Man and various

65. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 74, 77.

66. E.g., ibid., 216, 288.

67. Crisp never advocated the hyper-Calvinist position—although his theology could logically result in a position resembling hyper-Calvinism. The innovations that Hussey brought to Crispism helped him arrive at his hyper-Calvinist conclusions.

68. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 67.

equivalents such as Wisdom-Image and Christ-Man to refer to his conviction that human nature subsisted in the second member of the Trinity before the creation of the world.

Covenant theology was the means Hussey employed to explain how such a human subsistence might occur. He argued that in the *pactum salutis* when the Son agreed to become mediator for the elect, he acquired a human nature to supplement the divine nature that he already possessed. Hussey wrote that in the covenant "the man [i.e., the human nature] existed not in his open flesh, but subsisted…secretly in the Second Person by God's covenant...so the whole Mediator was in every thing considered and reputed of the Father as God-man."[69]

This possession of a "Mediatorial Creature-Existence" prior to incarnation allowed the Son to serve as the ideal peacemaker between humanity and God. Hussey explained that by having both a human and a divine nature in the "covenant settlements" of God, the Son could operate as a "Middle Person between God and all the elect."[70] Indeed, Hussey deemed the Son worthy of the descriptor Glory-*Man* for this very reason—the Son was the divine redeemer in whom human nature subsisted.

Typical constructions of the *pactum salutis* did not posit the Son taking on human nature in this manner, a fact that Hussey admitted. References to the Son serving as a mediator or a Savior in traditional accounts of covenant theology often operated on the basis of prolepsis; covenant theologians anticipated that the Son would take on human flesh and provide atonement at the appropriate moment in human history. For this reason, mainstream advocates of the *pactum salutis* such as Thomas Goodwin could write of the Son serving as mediator and redeemer prior to his incarnation and cross work without intending to imply that salvation somehow reached its completion before those events.[71] Hussey, however, openly broke with this approach and argued that the "Wisdom-Son" of God was "brought forth early into the Human Nature by covenant." In his judgment, the Son's assumption of human nature occurred "before his flesh appearance" on earth.[72]

Interestingly, although most covenant theologians did not promote a belief similar to Hussey's Glory-Man scheme, some notable Anglican and Nonconformist ministers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did offer theories that resembled it. Hussey often boasted in his writings that the Glory-Man doctrine was his own, a concept that he received

69. Ibid., 69–70.

70. Ibid.

71. See, for example, Goodwin's remarks in his exposition of the first chapter of Ephesians in Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861), 1:72–74.

72. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 71.

directly from the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, he clearly operated in a historical context that shaped his thinking.

Probing this historical context proves important. Hussey wrote little about the metaphysics of his Glory-Man proposal. Although he argued passionately that the Son possessed what he described as an eternal human nature and often characterized this nature as not fleshly, he offered no extended description of what a non-fleshly human nature might be or how such a nature might subsist in the Son's person. He simply drew ambiguous contrasts between the Son's physical incarnation on earth, what he entitled the fleshly subsistence, with the "covenantal subsistence" of human nature that occurred in the *pactum salutis.*[73] Briefly exploring the theologians who likely shaped Hussey's idea of the Glory-Man can therefore provide needed clarity.

In the seventeenth century, the Cambridge Platonist Henry Moore argued for the pre-existence of all souls and, in attempt to reconcile Neo-Platonism with traditional Christian dogma, contended that Christ's human soul existed before the incarnation.[74] In his *Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, More appealed to Old Testament Christophanies such as Melchizedek and to New Testament texts that portray Christ as coming "down from heaven" to make his case. More, for example, interpreted Philippians 2, a passage in which Christ is said to empty himself and take on the form of a man, as referring not to God "becoming man" but only to "the pre-existence and descent of the soul of the messiah from heaven into an earthly body."[75]

The Anglican Bishop Edward Fowler, an associate of Moore's and a graduate of the University of Cambridge, transmitted Moore's theology to a more popular audience in the eighteenth century.[76] In the polemical works *A Discourse on the Descent of the Man-Christ Jesus from Heaven* and *Reflections Upon the Examination of the Discourse on the Descent of the Man-Christ Jesus*, Fowler made little mention of More's belief in the pre-existence of all souls but did champion the idea of Christ's early possession of a human soul. His

73. E.g., Ibid., 175.

74. For a brief biography of More and a survey of relevant aspects of his thought, consider Matthew Cosby, "The Cambridge Platonists and the Pre-History of the English Enlightenment" (PhD diss., The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016), 157–288. For an introduction to More's views on the pre-existence of all souls, see Jasper Reid, *The Metaphysics of Henry More* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012,) 349–381. Also, through a careful analysis of More's poetry—primarily his *Psychozoia*—and later writings, Alexander convincingly demonstrates More's reliance on Marsilio Ficino, a noted Italian humanist scholar and interpreter of Plato. This reliance has relevance for More's remarks about the eternal existence of all souls. See Jacob Alexander, "Henry More's 'A Platonick Song of the Soul': A Critical Study" (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1988).

75. Henry More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (London: J. Flesher, 1660), 21–24.

76. Fowler is perhaps best known today for his debate with the Protestant dissenter John Bunyan. See John Bunyan, *A Defence of the Doctrine of Justification By Faith in Jesus Christ* (London: Francis Smith, 1673).

argumentation was less sophisticated than Moore's; it did not rely as heavily on references to potential theological precursors such as Origen or direct appeals to Neo-Platonic thought.[77] Still, Fowler quoted from More frequently and cited the same biblical texts that More favored.

Hussey's writings appear to rely partly on the works of More and Fowler, and it is conceivable that he encountered their works during his pastoral career in Cambridge.[78] Hussey used the same biblical texts in his defense of Glory-Man Christology that More and Fowler cited in their descriptions of the pre-existent soul of Christ, most notably Philippians 2 and Colossians 1.[79] Hussey also employed the same terminology and phrasing found in More's published tracts. Like More, he used the language of subsistence to describe human nature's existence in the person of the Son.[80]

Perhaps most revealing is the fact that Hussey's reading of Colossians 1 appears heavily indebted to More's Neo-Platonism, particularly More's interpretation of Philo. In Hussey's exposition of Colossians 1, he argued that the Son's divine nature brought about creation "efficiently;" that is, the Son's divine nature brought all created works into being. The Son's pre-existent human nature, by contrast, brought about creation "exemplariously;" this nature served as the "Examplar-draft" or "pattern of all things" that God created. In this way, the Son was archetypal, "the chief and first draft of all other things that God designed to make."[81] The same concepts appear in More's analysis of Philo that provided in his *Explanation.*[82]

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77. In his extensive survey of the Cambridge Platonists, the former Principal of St Mary's College John Tulloch remarked that Fowler was "much more of a pamphleteer and a politician than a thinker of any sort. He had but slight hold of the principles of the Cambridge theology, and has sketched them… from a superficial and somewhat confused point of view." John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), 2:439.

78. The Scottish theologian Robert Fleming also outlined a perspective similar to the one championed by More and Fowler. I have not outlined Fleming's work here because I believe the English context more relevant to Hussey. Still, my reading of Fleming's work leads me to conclude that it closely follows Fowler's appropriation of More. See Robert Fleming, *Christology,* abridged by Alexander Cleeve (Edinburgh: Alexander Cleeve, 1795), 323–337.

79. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 48–55. Unlike More and to a certain extent Fowler, Hussey developed no comprehensive account of Christian theology, particularly after his shift to hyper-Calvinism. As such, he did not express the full ramifications of his indebtedness to Cambridge Platonism; he did not, for example, outline how the Cambridge Platonists might have shaped his eschatology.

80. More often used this language in his *Apology,* a text that can prove difficult to access. The work was published once and only circulated as part of More's *A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity.* However, transcriptions of the relevant passages do appear in Edward Fowler, *Reflections Upon the ate Examination of the Discourse of the Descent of the Man-Christ Jesus From Heaven* (London: W. Downing, 1706), 19–23.

81. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 74–75. Detailing what this archetypal relationship to creation entailed, Hussey explained that all human vocations and positions such as shepherd, king, husband, and father originated from the Son's human nature in the sense that the Son's humanity served as the "divine pattern and exemplar" for these roles. For more information, see ibid., 174–176.

82. More, *An Explanation,* 12. For a brief examination of More's use of Philo, see Sarah Hutton, "Platonism and the Trinity: Anne Conway, Henry More and Christoph Sand," in *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Martin Mulsow and Jan

While More and Fowler were important for Hussey, their writings alone do not account for the breadth of his Glory-Man framework. Neither More nor Fowler substantially connected the pre-existing soul of Christ to the *pactum salutis*. It would be the well-known hymn writer Isaac Watts who would do so, and for this reason Watts too serves as a possible source for Hussey's theology.

Watts openly admitted a reliance on More and Fowler.[83] Watts championed their doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of Christ and entitled their position the indwelling scheme in such works as *The Arian Invited to the Orthodox Faith* and *The Glory of Christ as God-Man*. Although Watts did not publish his mature views on this subject until later in his life, the frequency with which the concept appeared in his writings and the strong passion with which he advocated it led one Watts scholar to declare—perhaps with some exaggeration—that it was the hymn writer's "favorite doctrine."[84]

In Watts' estimate, although the indwelling scheme received robust defenses from More and Fowler, it could arrive at theological maturity only in the framework of covenant theology. He located the doctrine within the framework of the *pactum salutis* and appealed to Thomas Goodwin's covenant theology to support this move.[85] While Watts admitted that Goodwin did not hold that Christ took on a human soul in the covenant, he did believe that Goodwin's remarks about the Son proleptically serving as a savior provided a basis on which one could argue for such a position.[86]

Watts advanced the so-called indwelling scheme because he believed that it would end debates between Arians, Socinians, and traditionalists, debates that had become heated during his era due to the Salter's Hall controversy. He was also convinced that the indwelling

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Rohls (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 214–215.

83. Mentions of and quotations from More and Fowler appear regularly in Watts' writings on the Trinity. For an overview of Watts' indebtedness to these men, see J. Van Den Berg, "The Idea of the Pre-Existence of the Soul of Christ: An Argument in the Controversy Between Arian and Orthodox in the Eighteenth Century," in *Tradition and Re-Interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literatures: Essays in Honor of Jürgen C. H. Lebram*, ed. J.W. an Henten, H. J. De Jonge, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 284–295. Unfortunately, few scholars have devoted time to exploring Watts' promotion of the indwelling scheme. Many researchers instead appear to focus only on the important but perhaps unfounded allegation that Watts turned to unitarianism later in his life. E.g., Scott Aniol, "Was Isaac Watts Unitarian?: Athanasian Trinitarianism and the Boundary of Christian Fellowship," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 22 (2017): 91–103.

84. R. W. Wilkinson, "Peculiar Ground: The Theology of Isaac Watts" (M.Litt. thesis, The University of Durham, 1981), 177. Despite Watts's interest in the indwelling scheme, the doctrine likely never shaped the theology of his hymns. See Erik Routley, "The Hymns of Philip Doddridge," in *Philip Doddridge, 1702–51: His Contribution to English Religion,* edited by Geoffrey F. Nuttall (London: Independent Press, 1951), 67–68.

85. For Watts on the *pactum salutis*, see Isaac Watts, *The Works of the Rev. Isaac Watts* (Leeds: Edward Baines, 1813), 6:449– 455. Goodwin's name appears throughout Watts' writings on the Trinity. Watts even included an appendix to his *The Glory of Christ as God-Man* that featured carefully selected passages from Goodwin's writings. Ibid., 6:649–660.

86. E.g., Ibid., 6:303, 641–642. For a brief analysis of Watts' reliance on Goodwin, see Toon, "The Growth of Supralapsarian Christology," 24–26.

scheme made the most sense of the biblical texts, arriving at this conclusion likely because of his desire to wed traditional theological commitments with a perceived rational account of the Christian religion.[87]

Some evidence reveals that Joseph Hussey possessed familiarity with Watts' writings. On only one occasion did Hussey admit a possible human source of inspiration for his belief in the Glory-Man—he cited the Puritan theologian Thomas Goodwin.[88] Interestingly, the interpretation that Hussey offered of Goodwin repeated Watts' earlier reading of Goodwin. Also, much like Watts, Hussey passionately argued that a belief in the Son's pre-existent human nature would end all conflict between Socinians and traditionalists.[89] Perhaps most important, however, is the fact that while Hussey never mentioned Watts by name, Watts often quoted Hussey with approval and noted the similarities between their respective theologies. In his most complete work on the Trinity, Watts described Hussey as a "learned author" whose Glory-Man position came close to his own indwelling scheme. Watts even listed Hussey's *Glory of Christ Unveiled* in his tract's bibliography. Tellingly, in a footnote Watts admitted that while Hussey possessed great learning, he "had some odd and peculiar sentiments," a statement perhaps alluding to Hussey's hyper-Calvinism.[90]

Interpreting Hussey in the light of More, Fowler, and Watts provides insight into what he likely meant with the term Glory-Man. The writings of More and Fowler reveal the theological context in which the Glory-Man proposal originated, one shaped by the influence of Neo-Platonic thought. The works of Watts prove useful because they give a possible source for Hussey's appeal to the *pactum salutis.* In particular, they reveal that while Hussey did not explicitly outline what he meant by a non-flesh human nature eternally subsisting in the Son, he likely followed Watts and conceived of the Son taking on a human soul in the covenant of redemption.

If Hussey indeed relied on the Cambridge Neo-Platonists and Watts, his distinctive contribution to the doctrine of the Son's pre-existent human nature—aside from this unique descriptor Glory-Man—was his willingness to relate the concept to epistemology and

87. For a survey of Watts' views on revelation and reason, see Graham Beynon, "Isaac Watts: Reason, Passion, and the Revival of Religion" (PhD thesis, The University of Saint Andrews, 2012), 23–90.

88. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 4. As was his custom, Hussey went on to attack Goodwin, claiming that Goodwin was an Arminian because he did not espouse hyper-Calvinism. Ibid., 295. Also, in an attempt to defend the Glory-Man doctrine as his own creation, Hussey later claimed (with false bravado) in a subsequent work that Goodwin had no influence on the development of his thought. Hussey, *God's Operations of Grace*, i–ii.

89. One should notice the remarks present in the lengthy subtitle to Hussey's *Christ Unveiled*; Hussey stated that he desired for his work to rebut the triumph of Socinianism. See Hussey, *Glory of Christ,* 85–86.

90. Watts, *Works,* 6:635, 647.

soteriology. No other theologian allowed the affirmation of the pre-existent soul of Christ to shape their thought so deeply.

Concerning the Glory-Man's relation to epistemology, Hussey argued that the key advantage afforded by his proposal was that it provided a Christological basis for all theology. The trouble with earlier theologians, he contended, was that they often wrote about God's communicable attributes in the abstract; they did not first take into account the redemptive work brought by the God-Man. For these reasons, Hussey hoped that by presenting the Glory-Man as the proper starting point for theology he would ensure that doctrinal reflection always began with a Christological and redemptive outlook. He exclaimed, "I am satisfied God hath no where revealed his Being or Perfections, or Person to us out of Christ."[91]

The Glory-Man concept also profoundly shaped Hussey's soteriology. In particular, it allowed him to develop and refine concepts already present in Tobias Crisp's account of salvation. As will become clear, inserting his notion of the Glory-Man into the Crispian covenantal framework would provide him a potent way to go beyond Crisp in reducing human agency in the reception of salvation.

Salvation in Eternity

Hussey greatly appreciated Crisp's work, but he saw room in the Crispian system in which human agency could still possibly reside—time. Crisp presented justification as happening before faith at the moment the elect are conceived. Hussey feared that this approach, despite its radical nature, did not sufficiently portray salvation as a sole work of God. Inattentive readers of Crisp might conclude that human agency still played some role in salvation's procurement.

To prevent confusion, he reworked the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* to present salvation as occurring in eternity. Traditional covenant theologians used the term *pactum salutis* to refer only to a pre-temporal compact in which the Father and Son agreed on the outworking of salvation in human history. Hussey sought to go further. His theology moved the divine economy into the *pactum salutis*—making the covenant between Father and Son synonymous with salvation itself. Only this approach, Hussey contended, could preserve the message of free grace; only this so-called eternal salvation doctrine could completely sever salvation from any perceived dependence on human action.

91. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 59.

Despite his frequent references to eternal salvation or salvation in eternity, Hussey never explicitly defined what he meant by the term eternal in the context of his soteriology. Nevertheless, a survey of his works reveals that by locating salvation within the *pactum salutis,* he intended to portray salvation as happening before creation. As Stephen R. Holmes has explained, "The *pactum salutis* is eternal in that it is pre-temporal, but it is not eternal in the sense that it belongs to the perfect life of God. It is very clearly the beginning of the works of God—the beginning of the great work of redemption."[92] Hussey followed this same understanding of the *pactum salutis.* Although the point often remained implied more than stated in his works, with the phrase eternal salvation he intended to convey salvation as a unilateral divine action that occurred before creation.

To arrive at this position, Hussey sought to untether salvation from the *historia salutis.* He noted that in the *pactum salutis,* the Son promised to provide atonement at a future time. Hussey assumed that the surety provided by this promise was so secure that the Father could consider the atonement as having already taken place.[93] The full benefits of Christ's atonement were therefore available in eternity before Christ's actual death and resurrection. To this assumption, Hussey added his Tobias Crisp-inspired rejection of conditions. Framing salvation in an unconditional manner allowed him to argue that salvation's actualization did not wait for the elect to complete such duties as faith in Christ or repentance for sins. Salvation could occur at the time of God's free choice. These two convictions taken together made it possible for Hussey to dislocate the occurrence of salvation from any chronological reference point; neither Christ's cross work nor any actions taken by the elect could influence it.

Hussey supplemented these moves with his doctrine of the Glory-Man. In his theology, the Son not only fulfilled all of the covenantal conditions on behalf of the elect as Crisp had argued. Hussey advanced that the Son's willingness to assume pre-existent human nature allowed him also to enter into an eternal union with God's people. Commenting on the statement in John 15:9 in which Jesus stated "as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you," Hussey remarked that just as "the mediator was predestined of the Father" so also the church, Christ's bride, was "ordained in the Son of God."[94]

Outlining what this eternal union entailed, Hussey explained that through the Spirit the

92. Stephen R. Holmes, "Classical Trinitarianism and Eternal Functional Subordination: Some Historical and Dogmatic Reflections," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 35, no. 1 (2017): 96–98.

93. This point often remained implicit in Hussey's theology. John Gill would develop it later.

94. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 100.

Son took the elect "in union with himself in the Covenant Man [i.e., the Glory-Man.]" This union was so effectual that through it "Christ and the church were both mystically one person in God's covenant." Indeed, only the language of marriage could illustrate the relationship's profundity. The eternal union served as a "marriage-covenant" in which the Son consented to accept his bride the church and "have her joined unto himself in the love-union by his own Man-Covenant."[95]

Through this eternal union with Christ, the elect could receive nearly all salvation's benefits—even before their birth. For Hussey, union with Christ, justification, and adoption find their actualization not after a person excercises faith in Christ or at the time of a person's conception but in eternity through this pre-temporal union. He illustrated this point by explaining that "whilst the Thames run under London Bridge, it argues there was the same river above the bridge as before it; so in salvation, if the forgiveness of sins and eternal glory is a rich and full stream of grace...it argues that this very stream lay eternally in Christ, above faith, and not before it."[96]

Framing salvation in this manner led Hussey to deny the Protestant conviction of justification by faith alone. He attacked theologians who maintained the "darling notion that the Elect of God have nothing granted to them, nor settled on them, till they believe."[97] Rejecting the "open violence" that these interpreters offered to the Word, he boldly proclaimed that "the blessings of the Gospel lay hold of a person in this union before a person can lay hold of the blessings."[98]

To buttress his position, Hussey featured exegetical arguments in *Glory of Christ Unveiled.* In his reading, Paul's statement in 2 Tim. 1:9 that God "saved us...according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" referred to the occurrence of salvation in eternity.[99] The phrasing found in Eph. 1:3–4, that God "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ," demonstrated in his judgment the same point.[100] Even texts often cited in defense of justification by faith received Hussey's attention. His interpretation of Rom. 5:1, "therefore being justified by faith," posited

95. Ibid., 100–102. Hussey never explicitly outlined how the elect might enter into a union with the Glory-Man before their birth; the assumption that I make is that he relied on a belief in the pre-existence of all human souls. By building on More's arguments for the pre-existence of all souls, he could have concluded that the souls of the elect became united with the Glory-Man in the *pactum salutis*. Toon believes that Hussey's follower Samuel Stockell made this point explicit, and this fact gives credence to my supposition. See Peter Toon, "Samuel Stockell: His Influence on Strict Baptist Thought," *Free Grace Record* 4, no. 6 (1967): 263–270.

96. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 103.

97 Ibid., 295.

98. Ibid., 332.

99. Ibid., 296.

100. Ibid., 176.

that Paul referred only to the existential awareness that comes from assurance of salvation and not to a need to place faith in Christ in order to receive justification.[101]

While Crisp's earlier willingness to locate justification before faith had generated controversy, Hussey had the temerity to go further than Crisp by contending not only that justification precedes faith but that it occurs completely in eternity. Despite potential opposition, Hussey remained steadfast in his convictions and did what he could to put potential opponents on the defensive. He boldly labeled the justification by faith alone position "rank Arminianism" because of its willingness to "suspend all election-purposes of grace towards me till I believe."[102] Elsewhere, he condemned theologians and even well-known Protestant confessional statements for their understanding of faith—accusing them of robbing "God of the Glory of his doing a thing in Eternity" by bringing salvation "down by limitation to time."[103]

A desire to find assurance of salvation motivated these remarks. Disturbed by the angst that he at one time experienced concerning the state of his own soul, Hussey lashed out at ministers who might disagree with him by labeling them "soul murderers," "antichrists," and legalists.[104] He believed that only by taking the radical step of placing the economy of salvation into eternity could he find the freedom that he craved; only then could he ensure that salvation in no way depended on any action on his part.

Hussey was so committed to salvation in eternity that the concept became a central organizing point in his theology. He repurposed the terms supralapsarianism and sublapsarianism to this end. Supralapsarianism for him meant not necessarily the logical ordering of the divine decrees but rather salvation as the "over-fall way," that is, the complete occurrence of salvation in eternity before the fall of Adam. The term sublapsarianism for him referred to the realization that the elect receive of their justified status while on the earth.[105]

Throughout his *Glory of Christ Unveiled*, Hussey divided his soteriology into these two categories—the occurrence of salvation in eternity and then the passive recognition of salvation's effectual nature in time. This dichotomy allowed him to highlight his willingness to shift the divine economy into eternity; with the dichotomy he could display his negation of the *historia salutis* and clearly delineate salvation as occurring before creation.

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101. Ibid., 407.
102. Ibid., 295.
103. Ibid., 299. Hussey directly attacked the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Savoy Declaration, and “old Puritan sermons” for arguing that justification cannot occur until the elect place faith in Christ. See Ibid., 334.
104. E.g., ibid., 13, 69, 144.
105. Ibid., 73–74, 106–107,

To illustrate Hussey's intentions, one can consider Emil Brunner's critique of Karl Barth's statements about the “being of Christ in the beginning with God.” In his analysis of Barth, Brunner once remarked,

> If the eternal pre-existence of the God-Man were a fact, then the Incarnation would no longer be an *Event* at all; no longer would it be the great miracle of Christmas. In the New Testament the new element is the fact that the eternal Son of God *became* Man, and that henceforth through His Resurrection and Ascension, in Him humanity has *received* a share in the heavenly glory; yet in this view of Barth's all this is now anticipated, as it were, down out of the sphere of history, and set within the pre-temporal sphere, in the pre-existence of the Logos. The result of this new truth would be extraordinary; fortunately he does not attempt to deduce them.[106]

On this particular point, Brunner misinterpreted Barth. Whatever Barth might have meant when he referred to the "being of Christ in the beginning with God" in his exposition of election, Barth did not intend to convey that the Son possessed both human and divine natures before the creation of the world.[107] Nevertheless, Brunner was right to worry about the implications that a focus on the pre-existent God-Man might bring. He noted that by pushing the divine economy into eternity, one could render the outworking of salvation in history of little consequence.

Brunner went on to argue that no theory of the pre-existent God-Man was ever "formulated by any theologian."[108] However, Hussey advanced just such a position, albeit differently from the way that Brunner claimed that Barth attempted. Hussey promoted his Glory-Man theory with the purpose of minimizing the historical outworking of redemption in the exact manner that Brunner feared.

Just as Brunner intimated, salvation in Hussey's estimate occurs entirely within the covenantal arrangements of God. The *historia salutis* becomes—to borrow a phrase from Prof. John Webster—a "mere shadow" of what has already occurred in eternity.[109] The crucifixion of Christ represents not a decisive historical event that procures salvation; it merely reveals in time what God has already deemed true in a pre-temporal covenant.

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106. Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics Volume 1*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), 347. One can find a similar reading of Barth in G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* (London: Paternoster, 1956), 250.

107. For relevant passages in Barth’s work, consider Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* vol. II.2, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley, et al. (London: T & T Clark, 2014), 104–109. For a list of credible interpretations of Barth not in agreement with the one advocated by Brunner, consider Edwin Chr. Van Driel, *Incarnation Anyway: Arguments for Supralapsarian Christology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 83–128.

108. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 347.

109. John Webster, “’It was the Will of the Lord to Bruise Him:’ Soteriology and the Doctrine of God,” in *God of Salvation: Soteriology in Theological Perspective,* ed. Ivor Davidson and Murray Rae (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 29.

Similarly, human faith entails not a coming to Christ to receive salvation's benefits; God has already applied the blessings of salvation to the elect through an eternal union. Faith serves only as the means by which the elect become aware of their status as eternally justified people.

Surprisingly, the full significance of Hussey's desire to shift salvation into eternity escapes modern interpreters. Peter Toon mistakenly believes that Hussey used the terms supralapsarianism and sublapsarianism with their traditional meanings and not the creative reinterpretation that he provided them. This misreading leads Toon to conclude that a supralapsarian ordering of the divine decrees directed Hussey to his hyper-Calvinist conclusions, despite the fact that some passages in Hussey's writings suggest that he preferred a sublapsarian (or infralapsarian) understanding of the decretal order.[110] Most important, Toon's misreading causes him to give little attention to Hussey's remarks about eternal union with Christ and eternal justification, even though those ideas were central to Hussey's understanding of salvation. While Toon correctly identifies Hussey as a promoter of hyper-Calvinism, his survey of Hussey's theology remains incomplete.[111]

Geoffrey F. Nuttall, normally a very reliable historian, commits the same mistake. In his survey of Calvinism's influence on the free church tradition, he briefly mentions Hussey's *God's Operations of Grace* but leaves Hussey's more theologically substantial *Glory of Christ Unveiled* unaddressed. He then concludes that Hussey serves as the originator of "a supralapsarian Calvinism which took election and predestination so seriously as to prohibit evangelical preaching as useless, and indeed arrogant, human interference with the sovereignty and mystery of God's grace."[112] While Nuttall is correct to claim that Hussey would deem any attempt to interfere with sovereign grace as arrogant, he is incorrect when he describes the reasons behind Hussey's concern. Hussey arrived at his conclusions not from an inordinate focus on the doctrine of election or a particular understanding of the divine decrees

110. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 287.

111. E.g., Toon, "The Growth of a Supralapsarian Christology," 25; idem, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, 75–83. In the latter work, Toon briefly mentions Hussey's desire to present salvation in an "over-fall way" but does not offer sufficient explanation of Hussey's position and incorrectly states that Hussey's views on justification and union with Christ were the same as Crisp's. A strong suspicion against covenant theology shapes Toon's reading of Hussey.

112. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Calvinism in Free Church History," *Baptist Quarterly* 22, no. 8 (1968): 422. Toon and Nuttall are not the only historians who make this incorrect appeal to supralapsarianism. Though they are perhaps the most noteworthy readers of Hussey who have done so, they are not alone. Wilson in the nineteenth century credited a supralapsarian understanding of the divine decrees with causing Hussey's hyper-Calvinism in Wilson, *The History*, 419, 422. Roger Hayden in the twentieth century appears to suggest the same when he attempts to link Hussey's theology to the understanding of predestination propounded by Theodore Beza. See Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among eighteenth-century Baptist ministers trained at Bristol Academy, 1690–1791* (Oxford: Baptist Historical Society, 2006), 188–189.

but rather from his doctrine of eternal salvation. This doctrine escapes Nuttall's attention.

The work of influential Baptist historian Thomas J. Nettles represents a different failure to grasp Hussey's strong focus on eternal salvation. Nettles argues that a particular understanding of "the spiritual powers of Adam in the unfallen state and the relation of those powers to the law" was the basis on which Hussey and other hyper-Calvinists formulated their theology.[113] With this language, he refers to a belief famously promoted by the Baptist minister John Brine that claimed that because in the *foedus operum* (covenant of works) Adam possessed no clear obligation to believe in the message of the Gospel, non-elect people at the present time similarly possess no such obligation. Nettles defines this particular understanding of the *foedus operum* as the "most pivotal theological idea" of the hyper-Calvinism advanced by Hussey. Jonathan White, a former student of Nettles, has gone further and identified this concept as the one defining feature of Northamptonshire hyper-Calvinism.[114]

Interestingly, Hussey never actually promoted Brine's view. Nettles appears to have read subsequent developments in the hyper-Calvinist tradition back into Hussey's works. While Hussey did on occasion refer to Adam not being a "spiritual being," he did so only to compare Adam's prelapsarian communion with the Father to the deeper communion that the Glory-Man enjoyed with the Father in eternity.[115] Throughout all of his published works, Hussey never argued that Adam possessed an inability to believe the Gospel. Nettles is simply incorrect when he devotes his explanations of Hussey's theology to the notion of Adamic inability, and his inordinate attention to Adamic inability leads him to neglect Hussey's remarks about eternal salvation. As will become clear, Hussey arrived at hyper-Calvinism through his strong focus on eternal salvation—not a crude understanding of the *foedus operum.*

These incorrect portrayals of Hussey's thought are not trivial. The writings of Toon and Nuttall have exercised tremendous influence over research into the Particular Baptist tradition and even over historical surveys of evangelical theology. As such, the many historians who have relied on their works have not understood Hussey's radical desire to present salvation as occurring in eternity or the manner in which this desire shaped the construction of his hyper-

113. Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life,* rev. ed. (Cape Coral: Founders, 2006), 45.

114. See Tom J. Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation,* ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 152–153; Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 50.

115. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 210–211.

Calvinism. Nettles' writings have similarly enjoyed great influence, especially among Baptist readers. Given the popularity of these inadequate approaches, analyzing Hussey's doctrine of eternal salvation in relation to his understanding of Christian conversion and Gospel preaching becomes essential.

Hussey's New Narrative of Conversion

To accommodate his promotion of salvation in eternity, Hussey offered a new understanding of Christian conversion. He did so to ensure consistency within his thought; he wanted to make certain that no doctrine that he espoused might contradict with salvation as the "over-fall way." In *Glory of Christ Unveiled,* he reworked doctrines ranging from the fall of Adam to the nature of human faith to accommodate this purpose.

Attending to the doctrine of original sin, Hussey recognized that he had to answer how the elect might possess eternal justification in Christ whilst simultaneously inheriting the consequences for Adam's fall. He affirmed that Adam was the federal head of all people and that in Adam even the elect received a "corrupt nature near of kin to the devil."[116] However, he also argued that because the elect were in an eternal union with Christ, their fellowship with Christ did not end with Adam's fall. The eternal union between Christ and the elect was able to transcend any consequences that might have emerged from a relation to Adam. So, while the elect might appear sinful and under divine condemnation, through their secret and mystical union with Christ they can nevertheless experience God as redeemer and not judge.[117]

In this account, the fall did not separate the elect from God; it only introduced "obstacles" and "impediments" into their relationship with him.[118] The most significant of these impediments was a "stoppage of communication." Due to Adam's fall, the elect lost awareness of God's love "communicatively," that is, they no longer possessed knowledge of their eternal standing in Christ. Christ, therefore, offered his atonement not to "purchase the Father's love, but to purchase the communications of it, to reopen all the loving expressions of that grace."[119]

The Spirit plays a leading role in reopening this communication—primarily by transferring information.[120] The elect possess no epistemic access to eternal salvation in

116. Ibid., 313.
117. Ibid., 286–289. See also Ibid., 108.
118. E.g., Ibid., 287, 294.
119. Ibid., 108.
120. Hussey briefly suggested that the Spirit agreed to perform this ministry of revelation in the *pactum salutis*. This position would mean that the Spirit first agreed in the *pactum salutis* to minister to the elect and

"Christ mystical," so the Spirit discloses to them their eternal standing in Christ whilst they are in time. In this way, the Spirit functions like a bridge that connects salvation in eternity with an awareness of that salvation in human history. Hussey described the Spirit as coming "upon the whole man" to reveal "how the Father had viewed the elect in and by Jesus Christ before the Foundation of the world."[121]

The Spirit provides this revelation unilaterally, apart from any human action. To illustrate the Spirit's work, Hussey closely followed the published sermons of Tobias Crisp. Crisp had earlier described faith as operating like a pipe-conduit. For Crisp, faith can entail no human action; the term faith simply explains how the elect become aware of their standing in Christ. His pipe-conduit illustration worked to highlight the elect's passivity—just as a pipe transfers a substance from one location to another, so faith transfers awareness of justification from the Spirit to the human consciousness. The elect exercise no agency throughout this process and remain like empty vessels that only receive the knowledge that the Spirit provides.[122] Appropriating this Crispian understanding of faith, Hussey similarly portrayed human faith as the Spirit granting to the elect a conscious realization of their eternal salvation. This realization can provide them assurance of salvation and remove any communicative blockages between them and God.[123]

With this rhetoric, Hussey revealed the full ramifications of his denial of justification by faith. Faith in his system represents not what it does in traditional Protestant accounts, namely a grace-enabled activity that the elect must undertake to actualize salvation's benefits. Rather, faith becomes the recognition that salvation has occurred in eternity. A person who "exercises" faith trusts not primarily in Christ's atoning work but rather rests in the promise of justification revealed by the Spirit.

For example, when Hussey assailed John Hunt, his disputant in *Glory of Christ Unveiled*, he raised particular objections to Hunt's claim that the elect are under condemnation before they have faith in Christ. Using Crispian langue, Hussey worried that Hunt's framing unhelpfully placed conditions on salvation's reception.[124] Hussey argued the elect simply

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then carried out the obligations of such an agreement in human history. Hussey's remarks on this matter were cryptic and often not fully formed. Still, traditional accounts of the *pactum salutis* only presented the Father and Son as parties to the *pactum salutis.* By suggesting the Spirit also served as a full and participating member in the *pactum salutis*, Hussey departed from traditional covenant theology. Later, John Gill would in a more sophisticated way argue for the Spirit's full inclusion in the *pactum salutis*. See Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 213, 293; see the subsequent chapter in this thesis for information on Gill.

121. Ibid., 216

122. E.g., Crisp, *Christ Exalted*, 2:108, 244–245, 281.

123. E.g., Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 144–145, 150, 167, 216, 295.

124. Ibid., 226–228.

receive from the Spirit a "motion faith" that assures them that they are "holy and beautiful in Christ" notwithstanding Adam's fall.[125] The elect need only then to relinquish any sense of guilt or obligation and—in his words—go to Christ "under defilement."[126] That is, they must enjoy the full benefits of salvation despite any sense of guilt or shame they might feel.

Queen Esther's entrance into the court of King Ahasuerus can demonstrate this kind of faith. Esther boldly stepped into Ahasuerus' chamber with one object in her sight—the King's golden scepter which would grant her permission to approach him. Hussey proposed that the elect should like Esther discard their false feelings of guilt and receive comfort from the "Object-Christ," the Glory-Man who has granted access to God by providing eternal salvation.[127]

Of course, by reinterpreting faith in the manner that he did, Hussey had to address the potential objection that there are Scriptural texts such as Romans 5:1 that appear to link justification and faith closely together. He provided a ready answer to this concern by separating justification into two categories—eternal justification and transient justification. With the term eternal justification, he referred to his conviction that justification occurs in eternity through a union with the Glory-Man. He considered this form of justification to be actual justification; it was in eternity that God actually declared the elect righteous in Christ. With the term transient justification, Hussey signified the existential awareness of justification wrought by the Spirit. He believed transient justification occurs in time when the elect receive from the Spirit the knowledge that they apprehended salvation's benefits in eternity.[128] In this way, he made transient justification synonymous with the results of faith.

This distinction served Hussey well because it allowed him to allege that any Scriptural texts that connect justification and faith refer only to transient justification and not to eternal justification. Faith can have nothing to do with actual or eternal justification because this form of justification does not hinge on human response. It occurs solely within eternity through union with the Glory-Man.

Hussey's Rejection of Gospel Offers and Duty Faith

Hussey spoke passionately about how his soteriology informed his understanding of Gospel proclamation. Ministers, he contended, should only preach the indicatives of the Hussey Gospel—that is, the message that Christ secured salvation in eternity—and avoid offering

125. Ibid., 176.
126. Ibid., 256.
127. Ibid., 180.
128. Ibid., 407–408.

any imperatives to their hearers. By doing so, they might display the fact that salvation does not involve gaining an interest in Christ but involves receiving an awareness of eternal salvation.[129]

This particular framing of the Christian Gospel led Hussey to deny the validity of Gospel offers. For him, Gospel offers occur when ministers pronounce that the benefits of the Gospel message are available to all people. Rejecting such offers as "gibberish," Hussey explained that only the Spirit—not human ministers—can legitimately make a Gospel offer.[130] As ministers do not know who might or might not possess eternal salvation, any offers that they make are insincere. The Spirit, however, knows the identity of the elect and can testify to them that they are eternally in Christ. The Spirit's testimony can then—in a manner of speaking—offer the Gospel to the elect by providing them with transient justification.

In addition to promoting insincerity, Hussey feared that universal offers of the Gospel might imply that "creature-acts" must occur before salvation can reach its completion.[131] Sermons that feature universal Gospel offers might lead some hearers to conclude that they must undertake an action to receive the Gospel's benefits. Hussey could countenance no such suggestion. He warned his readers that "the Lord will not hang his own Effectual Grace upon thy sorry efforts."[132]

Hussey remained so committed to the rejection of Gospel offers that he entitled the second publication that he composed after that position. His *God's Operations of Grace But Not Offers of Grace* built on the statements about eternal salvation and the revelatory work of the Spirit found in his *Glory of Christ Unveiled.* He included in the work contrasts between the Spirit's effectual operations on the hearts of the elect and the allegedly insincere and unhelpful Gospel offers made by human ministers. Throughout the publication, Hussey passionately exhorted ministers to avoid even the pretense of a Gospel offer lest they dangerously take on a role that only the Spirit can fill**.**

To his readers who might express surprise over his rejection of Gospel offers, Hussey alleged that the earliest leaders in the church employed the same ministry philosophy that he now promoted. He argued that the apostles carefully discerned the people on whom the Spirit might be operating. To only those persons—persons that Hussey labeled "sensible sinners"—the apostles at best made a "short hint" of a Gospel offer. They did not "exhort as men now-

129. For an extended treatment of this issue in Hussey's corpus, see Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 321-324
130. Ibid., 292. For similar statements, consider ibid. 91, 292; idem., *God's Operations,*12–13, 301.
131. Hussey, *God's Operations,* 216.
132. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 393. See also ibid., 308.

a-days do it," with open and passionate calls to trust in Christ for salvation.[133]

Hussey supported his denial of Gospel offers with the further claim that ministers should not call all people to respond to the Gospel positively. If offers of the Gospel are illegitimate because they might imply the necessity of a creaturely action, then sermons that instruct people that they must accept the Gospel must certainly remain prohibited.

Only the elect, awakened by the Spirit, can come to Christ. They do so by realizing the blessings that he has procured for them in eternity. Outside this type of coming, human agents have no ability or duty to come to Christ; in fact, any talk of a need to come to Christ becomes irreverent. Hussey explained, "To talk of an Immediate and Dutiful Obligation to believe, before any Direct and Marked Communication of the Life and Grace of the Object to be believed into…is to plead for a 'profane' coming to Christ."[134]

Hussey implored that ministers should shape their homiletical strategies in line with this denial of duty faith. Ministers, he ordered, should not entreat their hearers to come to Christ but should instead encourage them to attend only to the means of grace—practices such as Bible reading and church attendance.[135] The Spirit can then use these means to reveal to the elect the benefits that they possess eternally in Christ. The non-elect who are not the recipients of the Spirit's work might also benefit from the means of grace. By understanding Scripture better and attending the worship of the church, they can enact a program of personal moral reform and become better citizens for the broader society.[136]

To buttress this point, Hussey created a distinction between two forms of repentance—natural repentance and spiritual repentance. He contended that ministers should take care to call the non-elect to enact only natural repentance, repentance in keeping with the "natural conscience." This repentance would require a change in external behavior according to the dictates of the natural law. It might also call for a "believing into the testimony of Jesus Christ," though Hussey was quick to clarify that such belief would entail mere mental assent to the truthfulness of the Gospel and not a "believing into the person of Jesus."[137]

Should some members of a minister's audience be among the elect and give testimony to the "pre-operation" of the Spirit in their lives, a minster may then offer to such persons calls to enact spiritual repentance.[138] Spiritual repentance would entail careful attention to the

133. Hussey, *God's Operations,* 395.
134. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 238–239.
135. Hussey, *God's Operations*, 372.
136. Ibid., 333.
137. Ibid., 392–394.
138. Hussey offered no clear indicators that might reveal when the Spirit was at work on the elect; apparently, he considered the results of the Spirit's operation would be evident.

message of eternal salvation. From a careful study of eternal salvation, the Spirit could provide an awareness of eternal union with Christ and transient justification to the elect.

Hussey hoped this clear distinction between natural and spiritual repentance might help ministers comprehend "what we exhort men to" lest the "Free-Grace Doctrine should be ever pluck'd down and all knock'd o' the Head by Free-Will-Application."[139] His interpretation of the biblical text—especially his reading of the apostolic preaching found in Acts—made heavy use of this differentiation between two forms of repentance. For him, universal calls to repent and trust in Christ as found in the Bible can only refer to natural repentance. He deemed it inconceivable that the early Christians might have ever issued universal calls to spiritual repentance.[140]

To summarize Hussey's position, then, ministers may only preach the truth of eternal salvation to their hearers. They cannot offer imperatives in their explanations of the Gospel; in particular, they cannot insinuate that the Gospel message might be available for all of their hearers or that all the members of their audience have a duty to respond to the Gospel. Ministers may, however, point their hearers to the means of grace in the hopes that the Spirit will make a revelation to some of them.

Members of a minister's audience will experience the operation of the Spirit as they attend to the means of grace. The Spirit will reveal to them their eternal union with Christ, and this information will provide them with transient justification. The non-elect, by contrast, can have little hope. They lack any engagement from the Spirit and are therefore only responsible for natural repentance.

Ironically, this understanding of evangelism could create the same introspective tendencies that Hussey sought to avoid when he first rejected Baxterianism and imbibed the writings of Tobias Crisp. Jonathan Hoglund has correctly recognized that the form of theology that Hussey promoted makes a "prior union with Christ the warrant for saving faith."[141] Only the elect can have confidence in their relationship with Christ because only they possess an eternal union with the Glory-Man. They arrive at this confidence from the Spirit's internal call and not from the external call of the Gospel message itself; it is the operation of the Spirit in their lives that gives them the warrant necessary to claim their standing in Christ. Hussey's theology, therefore, focuses heavily on a work of grace in a

139. Ibid., 393.

140. Ibid., 333–334.

141. Jonathan Hoglund, *Called By Triune Grace: Divine Rhetoric and the Effectual Call* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2016), 68–69. Hoglund addresses the theology of John Gill when making this statement, but his remark applies to Hussey's approach as well.

person's inner life and can easily result in the sort of rigorous self-examination that he claimed to find in his opponents' writings.

Seemingly undeterred by this fact, Hussey aggressively promoted his no-offer theology—even adjusting his reading of Scripture to accommodate it. While in his earlier years he had been an open proponent of Gospel offers, he was now willing to expend great effort to discover biblical support to safeguard his hyper-Calvinist theology. In his reading, Jonah's call for the people of Nineveh to repent involved natural but not spiritual repentance because surely Jonah would not have made a universal call for all citizens of Nineveh to turn to God in faith.[142] The Spirit's willingness in Acts 16:6 to forbid Paul and his companions from entering into Asia revealed that at times the Spirit "puts the Gospel under a restraint" lest the "waters of grace run vast."[143] The story of Abraham and Ishmael meant that believers might pray that unbelievers receive material blessings, but that narrative never implied that believers could pray for unbelievers to receive spiritual blessings. Unaware of who is eternally in Christ and who is not, believers must remain circumspect as they pray their unbelieving acquaintances—even if those acquaintances are their own children.[144]

Conclusion and Reflections on Hussey's Influence

Joseph Hussey began his ministry as an open proponent of Gospel offers. His quest for assurance led him to the theology of Tobias Crisp, a theologian who received censure for promoting theological positions outside Reformed orthodoxy. Undeterred by Crisp's critics, Hussey embarked on a mission to develop further Crisp's proposals. He sought to minimize human agency in the reception of salvation, believing that by doing so he could highlight divine grace and provide personal assurance.

In his later writings, Hussey accepted Crisp's rejection of conditions in the reception of salvation but added to this concern the doctrine of the Glory-Man, Hussey's belief in the pre-temporal existence of a human soul in the second person of the Trinity. The concept of the Glory-Man allowed him to posit the existence of an eternal union between the elect and Christ. In this construction, Christ no longer simply fulfilled all conditions on behalf of the elect as he did in Crisp's theology; Christ also united himself with the elect in eternity and provided them with almost all of salvation's benefits.

Hussey also made use of Crisp's presentation of faith as a pipe-conduit. For Crisp,

142. Hussey, *God's Operations,*114.
143. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 326.
144. Hussey, *God's Operations*, 288–289.

personal faith merely described how the Spirit might reveal to the elect their status as justified people. Hussey appropriated this rhetoric to explain how the Spirit might divulge to the elect their status as eternally justified people. In so doing, he openly rejected the Protestant conviction of justification by faith.

Not hesitant to take his theological convictions to their logical conclusions, Hussey passionately contended that eternal salvation requires the rejection of Gospel offers and the responsibility all people have to respond positively to the Gospel. He sought to preserve human passivity in the reception of salvation at all costs—even if those costs included a circumscribed understanding of evangelism.

These proposals did not receive wide acceptance during Hussey's lifetime. While Hussey drew some passionate followers such as William Bentley and Samuel Stockell, his overall influence was limited.[145] When the Congregationalist minister John Beart offered a significant rebuttal to *Glory of Christ Unveiled* in a 1707 publication entitled *A Vindication of the Law and the Everlasting Gospe*l, no tracts written to counter Beart appeared.[146]

Summarizing the legacy of Hussey's published works, two nineteenth-century historians judged that Hussey's writing "is unprofitable reading and makes us sad for the grievous loss of time and toil which might have been better employed."[147] Hussey's congregation in Cambridge might have agreed with this sentiment. His theological convictions and temperament created disputes within his church, and he eventually departed to pastor a congregation near Petticoat Lane in London until his death in 1726.

Hussey might have little significance today if it were not for one of his former congregants. John Skepp, a man Hussey identified once as departing from his Cambridge fellowship to join the "Anabaptists," assimilated many of Hussey's teachings.[148] Skepp

145. Bentley pastored the London church that Hussey once led. He composed a defense of Hussey's theology and an account of Hussey's last words in William Bentley, *The Lord the Helper of His People* (London: John Oswald, 1733). Stockell attended Hussey's church for a time and wrote an impassioned apology for Hussey's doctrine of the Glory-Man. Samuel Stockell, *The Redeemer's Glory Unveiled* (London: J.H. 1733).

146 See the helpful reprint that combined all of Beart's remarks about Hussey into one folio. John Beart, *A Vindication of the Eternal Law, and Everlasting Gospel* (London: R. Tookey, 1707). Interestingly, Beart offers a more accurate reading of Hussey's theology than many contemporary historians do. He notes Hussey's strong belief in eternal justification as well as Hussey's reliance on what Beart entitles the antinomian tradition, that is, the theological tradition associated with Tobias Crisp. Beart even provides a substantial rebuttal of Hussey's Glory-Man position, contrasting Hussey's remarks on Christology with those originally made by Thomas Goodwin. Beart played a role in the debates over Richard Davis' stance on Crispism; these discussions likely prepared him to engage well with Hussey's theology. For history of Beart's involvement in this exchange, see references to Beart in Matthias Maurice, *Monuments*, 78–99.

147. Arnold and Copper, *The Church of Doddridge,* 57.

148. This remark appears in the Matthews abridgment of Hussey's church book. See Matthews, *Diary of a Cambridge Minister*, 12. I have consulted Hussey's original church book now held at County Record Office for Cambridgeshire and confirmed this statement's authenticity.

eventually authored *Divine Energy*, a tract that sought to develop in more detail Hussey's remarks about the Spirit's operations on the elect.[149] Eventually, Skepp would exercise a profound influence on John Gill, of the most significant Baptist theologians of his era. Gill worked to transmit Hussey's theology to a wider audience, and he added to it new sophistication and depth.

149. See John Skepp, *Divine Energy* (London: Joseph Marshall, 1722).

Chapter Two

John Gill: A Sophisticated Proponent of Hyper-Calvinism

Introduction

For Baptists, John Gill has great historical significance.[1] He pastored a church meeting at Goat Yard, Horsleydown, in Southwark, and this meeting later became the Metropolitan Tabernacle famously led by Charles Spurgeon. Gill was the first Baptist to write a commentary on every book of the Bible and the first Baptist to compose a comprehensive systematic theology. Both his pastoral work and extensive writing ministry allowed him to exercise considerable influence among Particular Baptists during the eighteenth century.[2]

Though recognizing Gill's importance, historians disagree over the nature of his theology. Some consider him a hyper-Calvinist who did not offer the Gospel freely and who denied duty-faith.[3] Others defend him from this charge and present him as a model evangelical pastor.[4] The debate over Gill's theological identity has appeared in Baptist history texts and in journals devoted to studying Baptist theology.[5] Providing an answer to the questions raised

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1. This chapter serves as an adaptation of research that originally appeared in the following articles: David Mark Rathel, "Was John Gill a Hyper-Calvinist?: Determining Gill's Theological Identity," *Baptist Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2017): 47–59; idem., "John Gill and the History of Redemption as Mere Shadow: Exploring Gill's Doctrine of the Covenant of Redemption," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 4 (2017): 377–400; idem., "John Gill and the Charge of Hyper-Calvinism: Assessing Contemporary Arguments in Defense of John Gill's Soteriology." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*: forthcoming. This material appears by permission from the publishers.

2. For a brief introduction to Gill's ministry and influence, consider Timothy George, "John Gill," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition,* eds. Timothy George and David Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 11–33. Regarding Gill as a prolific writer, Langley determined that Gill was a "most prolific author" and that "something from his pen was published each year from 1724 to 1740 without fail." Arthur Swainson Langley, "Baptist Ministers in England about 1750 A.D.," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 6, no. 2 (1918): 139.

3. Consider these representative works from contemporary authors: R. E. Seymour, "John Gill: Baptist Theologian, 1697–1771" (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 1954), 55–56; O. C. Robison, "The Legacy of John Gill," *The Baptist Quarterly* 24 (1971–1972): 122; Curt D. Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill" (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 1983), 9, 38; Peter Toon, "Hyper Calvinism," *New Dictionary of Theology*, 271, 324–325; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 456–458.

4. The most significant of these are Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*, rev. ed. (Cape Coral: Founders, 2006), 21–54; idem., "John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill* (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 131–170; George M. Ella, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Durham: Go Publications, 1995); idem., *Law and Gospel in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Durham: Go Publications, 1996); idem., "John Gill and the Charge of Hyper-Calvinism," *Baptist Quarterl*y 36, no. 4 (1995): 160–177; George, "John Gill," 12–33; Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 134, 223–226.

5. The most important work yet published on Gill illustrates this disagreement; it contains articles by respected Gill interpreters who argue for both readings. See Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Debates over Gill's theology have appeared in *Baptist Quarterly.* See Ella, "John Gill and the Charge of Hyper-Calvinism"; Rathel, "Was John Gill a Hyper-Calvinist?."

in this debate will prove useful in considerations of Andrew Fuller given the tremendous influence Gill enjoyed over Particular Baptist life.

Much of the present disagreement over Gill originates from the fact that historians have rarely interacted with Gill's positions directly. Often arguments that portray him as a hyper-Calvinist rely on guilt by association, incorrect claims about his theological convictions, or preconceived understandings of what constitutes genuine Calvinism.[6] Historians that defend Gill from the charge of hyper-Calvinism fare little better. As I will demonstrate, they regularly fail to interpret Gill's soteriology accurately.

Beyond this debate over Gill's theological identity, modern scholarship displays confusion over how to locate Gill in his historical context. Many credible historians and theologians have rightly recognized that Reformed scholasticism and federal theology shaped Gill's thought.[7] However, few researchers have probed in detail Gill's strong appreciation for the contra-Puritan theology championed by Tobias Crisp.[8] In addition, no comprehensive comparison between the theologies of John Gill and Joseph Hussey presently exist—an

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6. I support this claim in detail throughout this chapter. Consider, however, the following brief examples. Though offering an interesting account of the development of hyper-Calvinism, Peter Toon associates Gill with hyper-Calvinism primarily because of Gill's relationships with hyper-Calvinist leaders, not his theology. Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689–1765* (London: Olive Tree, 1967; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 96–100. Many surveys of Baptist history connect Gill with hyper-Calvinism due to an alleged supralapsarianism. E.g., J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History* (London: Elliot Stock, 1868), 477; Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1907), 239–241; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Baptist Union, 1947), 134–135; H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1987), 177–178. This assessment is not correct; Gill actually rejected supralapsarian. See John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity,* 2 vols. (New ed.; London: Tegg & Company, 1839), 1:261–265; idem., *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts,* 3 vols. (London: George Keith, 1778), 2:73. Curt Daniel, author of the most extensive research on Gill thus far, correctly interprets much of Gill's thought, but he determines that Gill was a hyper-Calvinist in part because of a contrast that Daniel draws between Gill and Calvin. Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill," x, 1–40. Not all researchers have found Daniel's approach convincing. As will become clear in this chapter, Daniel's work does feature some inaccuracies. For criticisms of Daniel's research, see Hong-Gyu Park, "Grace and Nature in John Gill (1697–1771)" (PhD diss., The University of Aberdeen, 2001), 286–287; Richard A. Muller, "John Gill and the Reformed Tradition: A Study in the Reception of Protestant Orthodoxy in the Eighteenth-Century" in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation,* ed. Michael A.G. Haykin (New York: Brill, 1997), 52.

7. E.g., Richard A. Muller, *The Divine Essence and Attributes*, vol. 3 of *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 150; idem., "John Gill and the Reformed Tradition," 51–68. See also Willem J. van Asselt, *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, trans. Albert Gootjes (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 179–180.

8. Some researchers do explain that Gill possessed an interest in Tobias Crisp and contra-Puritanism, but they do not explore in detail exactly how the contra-Puritan movement might have shaped his theology. Consider Peter Naylor, *Picking Up a Pin for the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Grace Publications, 1992), 150–164; Daniel, "John Gill and Calvinistic Antinomianism," 171–190. Richard Muller offers a survey of Gill's doctrine of the *pactum salutis* that attempts to take into account Gill's reliance on contra-Puritanism. His research remains very beneficial, but it leaves much unexplored—likely because it was some of the first in the modern period to analyze Gill. See Richard A. Muller, "The Spirit and the Covenant: John Gill's Critique of the *Pactum Salutis,*" *Foundations* 24, no. 1 (1981): 4–14.

unfortunate fact given the frequent debates over Gill's relation to the hyper-Calvinism.[9]

These inadequacies do not necessarily emerge from poor ability on the part of modern Gill interpreters. Rather, these issues likely arise because Gill has received little attention. Considerations of his theology often appear in broad introductions to Baptist history, and the nuance present in Gill's extensive writings requires more careful examination than it often receives in these surveys. There has been a reticence to devote too much scholarly attention to Gill—perhaps due to the allegation that he was a hyper-Calvinist.[10] While this trend appears to be changing and new research devoted to Gill is starting to appear, for years Gill's works did not receive the attention that a theologian of his stature would typically enjoy.[11] This overall neglect of Gill has led to few detailed explorations of his theology, creating a situation in which confusion and misinterpretation can abound.

Regardless of the reasons, the deficiencies found in present-day Gill research are regrettable. Gill played a leading role in refining and propagating Hussey's hyper-Calvinist message in a Baptist context. Researchers have not always appreciated the fact that Gill accomplished this feat or, if they have, have not always outlined the precise manner in which he did so. This failure has led to misunderstandings not only in contemporary perceptions of Gill but also in interpretations of eighteenth-century Baptist history.[12]

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9. Nettles only briefly contrasts Gill with Hussey; Timothy George makes use of Nettles' comparison in his Gill research. However, Nettles' reading of Hussey remains problematic—as the previous chapter demonstrated. I will survey this issue in more detail in the body of this chapter. See Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, 45; George, "John Gill," 29.

10. The first significant examination of Gill's thought was R. E. Seymour's 1954 dissertation at The University of Edinburgh. See Seymour, "John Gill." Until this time, though Gill's name appeared with frequency in surveys of Baptist history, much of his theology remained untouched. A journal article on Gill did appear in an early edition of *Baptist Quarterly*, but it only briefly examined Gill's confession of faith. See Seymour J. Price, "Dr. John Gill's Confession of 1729," *Baptist Quarterly* 4 (1929): 366–371. Timothy George has written, "Despite these accomplishments [that is, his pastoral ministry and prolific pen], it has not fallen the lot of Gill to be remembered by future generations…when he is mentioned in standard denominational histories, he is invariably caricatured as the bogeyman of hyper-Calvinism." George, "John Gill," 12.

11. In addition to the aforementioned works, consider these recent publications: Steven Tshombe Godet, "The Trinitarian Theology of John Gill (1697–1771): Context, Sources, and Controversy" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015); Matthew David Haste, "Marriage in the Life and Theology of John Gill, Samuel Stennett, and Andrew Fuller" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015); Aaron Jason Timmons, "The Cause of Christ and Truth: Arguments for the Deity of Christ in the Anti-Socinian Writings of John Gill, Dan Taylor, and Andrew Fuller" (ThM thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); Ian J. Shaw, "'The Only Certain Rule of Faith and Practice:' The Interpretation of Scripture among English High Calvinists, c. 1780s–1850," in *Dissent and the Bible in Britain, c. 1650–1950*, ed. Scott Mandelbrote and Michael Ledger-Lomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 133–141. Interestingly, Gill has also appeared in recent discussions about Christology. See Samuel Joseph Roy Newton, "The Spirit of Sonship in the Johannine Corpus" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 60–99; Robert Lucas Stamps, "John Gill's Reformed Dyothelitism," *Reformed Theological Review* 74, no. 2 (2015): 77–93.

12. One notable exception worthy of mention is a recent essay from Haykin that correctly outlines several features of Gill's soteriology. See Michael A. G. Haykin, "Remembering Baptist Heroes: The Example of John Gill," in *Ministry By His Grace and For His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles*, ed. by Thomas K. Ascol and Nathan A. Finn (Cape Coral: Founders Press, 2011), 7–37. However, Haykin does not

I offer in this chapter a fresh reading of Gill and believe that it provides a more accurate portrayal of his convictions. I contend **t**hat Gill's soteriology features a marked reliance on the tradition established by Joseph Hussey, displaying the same radical innovations to the *pactum salutis* and the timing of salvation that Hussey envisioned—often even depending on the same terminology that Hussey employed. Gill's unique contribution to the Hussey tradition was his ability to draw from his extensive knowledge of Reformed scholasticism to add organization and structure to Hussey's convictions. Contemporary scholars should, therefore, view Gill as an appropriator and refiner of Hussey's hyper-Calvinism.

This new interpretation of Gill locates him correctly in his historical context, one that was profoundly shaped by contra-Puritanism and Hussey-inspired hyper-Calvinism. As such, it will not only contribute to research into John Gill and eighteenth-century Particular Baptist history, but it will also aid explorations into the historical situation in which Fuller developed his reaction to hyper-Calvinism.

I begin the chapter by describing how Gill developed his thought, documenting his favor for contra-Puritanism and Joseph Hussey's brand of hyper-Calvinism. I then outline relevant aspects of his soteriology, demonstrating the refinements that he brought to the work of Joseph Hussey. I conclude by revealing how the interpretation of Gill that I offer can aid present research.

Gill's Historical Context: Contra-Puritanism and Hyper-Calvinism

Gill had his first experience with church life in eighteenth-century Northamptonshire, a region that witnessed great controversy over contra-Puritanism. In Kettering, the town in which he spent his formative years, a noteworthy debate occurred over Richard Davis' alleged acceptance of Crispism. Davis had performed much of his church ministry in Rothwell, a village just five miles outside Kettering.[13]

Davis exercised considerable influence over Gill's early life. Gill's parents removed him from the local grammar school when he was young, and he was likely "personally educated by Richard Davis in his house."[14] In the forward to a collection of Davis' hymns, Gill reflected, "I had the honour in my youth, of knowing the worthy author of the following

consider Gill in light of Hussey—the undertaking I attempt in this chapter.

13. See the background information provided in the previous chapter.

14. Stephen Pickles, *Richard Davis and the Revival in Northamptonshire* (Kent: James Bourne Society, 215), 216. See also Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and the Modern Question: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 1 (1965): 106, 116. Gill remained attached to Richard Davis' legacy. In a 1730 sermon on justification, he quoted Davis' remarks about justification before faith with approval. Gill, "The Doctrine of Justification," in *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 3:168.

hymns…His memory has always been precious to me, partly on account of his great regard, both for my education, for which he was heartily concerned, and also for my spiritual and eternal welfare."[15]

Gill's publications do reveal a mind attached to the contra-Puritan tradition associated with Crisp and Davis. To great controversy, he republished the sermons of Tobias Crisp in 1755. The care with which he edited Crisp's homilies remains impressive. Randall Pederson considers Gill's edition the definitive version of Crisp's works, and he labels the accompanying biography of Crisp that Gill composed one of the most substantial accounts of Crisp's life.[16]

With this republication of Crisp's sermons, Gill intended to promote Crispism and defend Crisp from his critics. In his preface, he explained that he found Crisp's theology conducive to "the relief of distressed minds and consciences burdened with a sense of sin."[17] He provided extensive marginal notes that accompanied Crisp's homilies that sought to clarify Crisp's remarks or contextualize Crisp's more provocative statements; however, he never disavowed or minimized the more controversial aspects of Crisp's system.

The degree to which Gill sympathized with Crispism and the broader contra-Puritan movement becomes apparent in a series of exchanges he held with Abraham Taylor, a nonconformist minister who at one time served in Deptford. In a public address delivered at the Lime Street Lectures, Taylor made a passing comment against the doctrine of eternal union with Christ and the theologians who promoted it.[18] Though Taylor did not mention any particular theologians by name, Gill took Taylor's remarks as a personal attack on the thinkers he respected. In an angry letter entitled *God's Everlasting Love for the Elect,* Gill hypothesized that Taylor was speaking about such figures as John Eaton, John Saltmarsh, and Tobias Crisp, men whose writings he claimed to have "carefully perused."[19] After briefly—and correctly—admitting that not all of those theologians held to eternal justification, Gill then offered a lengthy defense of the doctrines of eternal union with Christ and eternal justification, contending that only those doctrines could adequately preserve salvation as an

15. John Gill, preface to *Hymns Composed on Several Subjects,* by Richard Davis, (London: J. Ward, 1748), iii.

16. Randall J. Pederson, *Unity and Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603–1689* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 216, 232. See Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted: The Complete Works of Tobias Crisp*, ed. John Gill (London: John Bennett, 1832),

17. Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted*, 2:iv.

18. The Lime Street Lectures were a series of addresses offered in defense of Calvinism funded by the merchant William Coward. See Taylor's remarks in a record of the lectures: Assorted Ministers, *A Defense of Some Important Doctrines of The Gospel* (Glasgow: William Smith, 1773), 45.

19. John Gill, "The Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love to His Elect," in *Sermons and Tracts,* 3:187.

act of divine grace.

This sensitivity to any perceived slight against the leaders of the contra-Puritan movement persisted throughout Gill's life. He continued to engage Taylor, even after Taylor refrained from responding to Gill's harsh rhetoric. When Taylor warned in a later publication about the dangers of hyper-Calvinism in *An Address to Young Students in Divinity,* Gill replied with *The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation.* Interestingly, Taylor's primary target in this *Address* was not Gill but Joseph Hussey and his follower Lewis Wayman. In Gill's response to Taylor, however, Gill briefly referenced Wayman and hyper-Calvinism, but he focused his attention yet again on debates over contra-Puritanism. He repeated his defenses of eternal union with Christ and eternal justification.[20]

The reticence Gill displayed in this instance to engage directly with Taylor's remarks about hyper-Calvinism do not mean that Gill was not sympathetic to the hyper-Calvinist position. He once publicly rejoiced in the fact that his former mentor Richard Davis near the end of his life ceased to use the term Gospel offers and began to follow the ministry style set by Hussey. Gill wrote, "I can affirm, upon good and sufficient testimony, that Mr Davis, before his death, changed his mind on this matter [of Gospel offers], and disused the phrase, as being too bold and free for a minister of Christ to make use of."[21]

Still, Gill likely received familiarity with hyper-Calvinism during Gill's youth. Matthias Maurice, the minister who followed Richard Davis at Rothwell, documented the presence of Hussey's theology in and around the Northamptonshire region during the time Gill would have lived there.[22] Also, as a minister in training, Gill served for two years as an assistant to John Davis, a pastor at Higham Ferrers near Kettering. Davis eventually became the pastor of a Baptist fellowship that split from Hussey's congregation in Cambridge, and Nuttall has documented that Gill stayed in close contact with those Cambridge Baptists even after Hussey's death.[23]

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20. For an overview of this facet of Gill's engagement with Taylor, see Alan P. F. Sell, *Hinterland Theology: A Stimulus to Theological Construction* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 57–61. For the relevant primary texts, Abraham Taylor, *An Address to Young Students in Divinity* (London: John Oswald, 1739); Gill, "The Necessity of Good Works Unto Salvation," in *Sermons and Tracts,* 2:181–196. Ivimey accounted the Gill–Taylor debate in a manner sympathetic to Gill in Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1823) 3:202–204.

21. John Gill, preface to *Hymns Composed on Several Subjects*, by Richard Davis (London: J. Ward, 1748).

22. Matthias Maurice, *Monuments of Mercy* (London: Richard Hett, 1729), 75–109, 119.

23. For details of Gill's relationship with Davis, see John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill* (London: John Bennett, 1838), 9. For the Gill and Davis connections to Hussey's former congregation in Cambridge see Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and the Modern Question," 116; idem., *Studies in English Dissent* (Oswestry: Quinta, 2002), 184–185. The Baptist fellowship Davis pastored in Cambridge became the St Andrews Street Baptist Church.

John Skepp provides an even clearer link between Gill and hyper-Calvinism. Skepp left Hussey's Cambridge congregation due to his Baptist convictions, and he eventually ministered to a Particular Baptist church in Cripplegate, London. While in London, Skepp formed a close relationship with Gill. He preached at Gill's ordination service when Gill arrived in London to become minister at Horsleydown. Upon Skepp's death, Gill purchased from his estate an extensive collection of Hebrew texts and commentaries.[24]

Skepp composed only one publication during his life, a tract entitled *Divine Energy.* He used this work to argue for a crude but impassioned rendering of Hussey's theology. Eschewing Hussey's more sophisticated remarks about covenant theology and eternal justification, Skepp focused on a single issue—the use of "moral suasion" in Gospel preaching. He attacked the use of "reasonings and arguments" in Gospel presentations and derided Gospel offers as "criminal."[25] Only the Spirit, he explained, could bring about conversion by unilaterally revealing salvation to the hearts of the elect. Gill later expressed his support for Skepp by composing a recommendatory preface for *Divine Energy*.[26]

Gill's time in Northamptonshire and his close relationship to Skepp perhaps made his exposure to Hussey's writings inevitable, and his publications certainly reveal an intimate knowledge of Hussey's works. In a 1736 sermon he gave to commemorate the Great Storm of 1703, Gill quoted a homily that Hussey delivered in 1704 soon after the storm's occurrence. In that sermon, Gill cited Hussey as a "late valuable writer."[27] He referenced Hussey's homily later in his Old Testament commentary.[28]

Gill also defended Hussey in his published tracts. In 1736, he authored a pamphlet entitled *Truth Defended.* He intended this tract to rebut attacks on eternal justification made by Job Burt, but he devoted much of his attention to Burt's attempts to discredit Tobias Crisp and Joseph Hussey.[29] Gill remarked that both Crisp and Hussey were "men of great piety and

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24. For remarks on the Gill and Skepp relationship, see Rippon, *Brief Memoir,* 12–13, 57. See also Peter Toon, "John Skepp and John Gill," *Free Grace Record* 4, no. 7 (1967): 317–328. Interestingly, Oliver notes that John Skepp as well as John Noble preached Gill's ordination service. He connects both men with the hyper-Calvinist tradition. Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1771–1892* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2006), 10.

25. John Skepp, *Divine Energy*, 3rd ed. (London: James Upton, 1815), 59.

26. John Gill, preface to *Divine Energy*, by John Skepp, 3rd ed. (London: James Upton, 1815), xii–xv.

27. Gill, "Sermon XII: Christ the Saviour from the Tempest," in *Sermons and Tracts*, 1:186–187. Interestingly, Gill's sermon to commemorate the storm of 1703 echoed the rhetoric found in the sermon Hussey preached in 1703 soon after the storm's occurrence. See the text of Hussey's original sermon in Joseph Hussey, *A Warning From the Winds* (London: William and Joseph Marshall, 1704).

28. John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament* (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810), 4:172.

29. Burt's work originally appeared as Anonymous, *Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme Impartially Examined by the Word of God* (London: J. Wilson, 1736). Though this pamphlet was originally an anonymous publication, I have confirmed that Burt composed it. See James Kennedy, W. A. Smith, and A. F. Johnson, *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1929),

learning, of long standing and much usefulness in the church of Christ." Adding a personal insult, he further claimed that the names of Crisp and Hussey "will be dear and precious to the saints" when Burt and his pamphlet "will be remembered no more."[30]

Summarizing the context in which Gill developed his convictions, Peter Toon concluded that "the High Calvinism of Richard Davis, hardened by controversy with Baxterianism and Arminianism, modified through the assimilation of Crispian doctrines, and severely conditioned by the influence of Hussey's 'no offers of grace' theology, was the theological environment in which Gill was nurtured."[31] These theological currents left an indelible impression on Gill's thought. Their influence appeared often in his writings.

Gill's Covenant Theology

Gill's covenant theology evidences the influence of the conra-Puritan tradition. He admitted that most theologians made the covenant of grace (*foedus gratiae*) and covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*) "distinct covenants" and explained their position by writing, "The covenant of redemption, they say, was made with Christ in eternity; the covenant of grace with the elect, or with believers, in time." Like the contra-Purtians, however, he deemed this approach "very wrongly said" and propounded that a covenant "cannot be made between God and man; for what can man restipulate with God, which is in his power to do or give to him, and which God has not a prior right unto?" While he acknowledged that God might condescend to make specific promises to certain individuals, such promises for Gill did not "formally constitute a covenant."[32]

Eschewing a more traditional approach to covenant theology, Gill followed the contra-Puritan impulse of shifting the *foedus gratiae* into the conceptual territory normally occupied by the *pactum salutis*. This move made the *pactum salutis* in effect the *foedus gratiae*; the Father entered into the covenant with Christ—not with humanity—because only Christ could fulfill its conditions. Gill explained, "Christ's work of redemption, atonement, and satisfaction for sin…is the only condition of the covenant; and that lies on the Mediator and

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5:307.

30. Gill, "Truth Defended" in *Sermons and Tracts*, 2:81.

31. Toon, *Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism,* 99.

32. John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, New ed. (London: Tegg & Company, 1839), 1:309–311. Gill's position on God's inability to covenant with creatures differs from that of many theologians from his era. While influential figures such as Turretin argued that it would be technically impossible for God to make a covenant with humanity, they also espoused that God "commandeers the concept" of covenant to describe a relationship with his creatures. Gill rejected this notion entirely and argued instead that any talk of a covenant between humanity and God, even when used for illustrative purposes, remains impossible. See J. Mark Beach, *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 82.

surety of the covenant, and not on the persons for whose sake it is made." Passionately restating this claim to ensure clarity, he wrote that "the blessings of the covenant are not supped on any conditions to be performed [by the elect]; they do not wait for any, but take place without them."[33]

Both Crisp and Hussey made use of this same understanding of the divine covenants to highlight divine grace, but their theologies went in divergent directions. Crisp contended that the removal of conditions in the reception of salvation would locate the occurrence of justification before human faith but still in time. Hussey desired to go further. Coupling a denial of conditions with innovative proposals about the *pactum salutis*, he argued for salvation in eternity.

Gill possessed an awareness of these differences between Crisp and Hussey. In his debate with Abraham Taylor, he correctly noted that despite the claims of some critics, Crisp did not hold to eternal justification.[34] Gill, therefore, knew that the covenant theology favored by the contra-Puritans did not necessitate a belief in eternal salvation.

Nevertheless, in his published tracts and systematic theology, he chose to follow Hussey over Crisp. Like Hussey, Gill deliberately employed a covenant theology that denied the legitimacy of conditions in order to present salvation as occurring in eternity. As will become clear, he espoused eternal salvation with the same vigor that Hussey displayed in his writings.

Gill and Salvation in Eternity

Rejecting any notion of conditionality in the covenant, Gill foresaw that if like Hussey he removed any notion of temporality, he could display human passivity with even more clarity. Following Hussey, he desired to move "the entire economy of salvation up into eternity" where it could be rendered "impervious to the will of the creature."[35]

A strong insistence on eternal salvation appears in several of Gill's works but remains especially prominent in his systematic theology, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity.* Gill drew a bifurcation in the first volume of *Complete Body* between God's internal acts and external acts. God's internal acts "were done in eternity" and receive the descriptor "immanent" because they are "in God, and remain and abide in him." Divine external acts, by

33. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:357. For more information, consider both Ascol and Oliver who rightly connect Gill's covenant theology with the contra-Puritan tradition. See Thomas Kennedy Ascol, "The Doctrine of Grace: A Critical Analysis of Federalism in the Theologies of John Gill and Andrew Fuller" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989), 259–261; Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists,* 7–8. See also my analysis of the secondary literature on Gill's covenant theology in Rathel, "John Gill and the History of Redemption," 395–398.

34. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 3:186–187.

35. Muller, "Spirit and the Covenant," 12.

contrast, occur in time. Such acts are "visible to us, or known by us" and encompass such works as creation, providence, and redemption.[36]

Gill placed significant aspects of his soteriology under the category of God's internal or immanent acts rather than the category of God's external acts. He located the doctrine of the divine decrees in this heading. Even more significant, he described the doctrines of justification, union with Christ, and adoption with Christ also as internal and immanent divine acts.

He explained this move by arguing that in his system, election creates an eternal union between the elect and God. He contended that just as election "flows from the love of God" eternally, so "there must of course be an union to Him so early." Eternal union is, therefore, an "eternal immanent act in God" in which there is "the going forth of his heart in love to them [i.e., the elect], thereby uniting them to himself."[37]

This union is possible because election creates for the elect an eternal "being in Christ, a kind of subsistence in him." This being is not an actual being, an *esse actu*, but a representative being, an *esse representativum*. Through this representation, the elect "are capable of having grants of grace made to them in Christ." Gill cited texts such as 2 Tim 1:9 and Eph 1:3 to support his position. He noted that these verses claim the elect are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and that before the world began" and contended that the reception of these spiritual blessings requires an eternal union between the elect and Christ.[38] Eternal adoption in Christ and eternal justification are two such blessings the elect receive through this union.

The *pactum salutis* accounts for how the elect receive these spiritual gifts within eternity. No longer tied to an understating of covenant theology that required a human response, Gill asserted that in the pre-temporal agreement between Father and Son, the Son's promise to serve as surety for the elect was so secure that the Father applied the benefits of the atonement to the elect through their eternal union with Christ. This application, though it occurred before Christ's actual death on the cross, was effectual in bringing the benefits of Christ's death to the elect.

Gill's description of the covenant of redemption expressed this idea without reservation.

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36. Gill, *Complete Body*, 1:246.

37. Ibid., 1:284–5. See also Gill's explanation of the connection between unconditional election and eternal justification in one of his earliest works, a sermon on Acts 13:39 published under the title "The Doctrine of Justification" in Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:167–185.

38. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:286. See Gill's remarks about this doctrine in his other works. Consider Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 2:88; 3:168.

He wrote:

> The sum and substance of the everlasting covenant made with Christ, is the salvation and eternal happiness of the chosen ones; all the blessings and grants of grace to them are secured in that eternal compact; for they were blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and had grace given them in him before the world was.[39]

For Gill, the *pactum salutis* simply ceased to perform its more traditional role of serving as an explanatory tool that describes the manner in which the Father and Son agreed on the outworking of salvation in human history. Instead, the covenantal agreement is where salvation occurs.

Strong similarities between Gill's beliefs and Hussey's are therefore apparent. Both used a covenant theology that minimized conditionality to reject any need for a human response to the Gospel. Both understood unconditional election as creating a representative for the elect that could pre-temporally receive the blessings of salvation. Both contended that the surety provided in the *pactum salutis* was so secure that God could confer salvation's blessings to the elect within his covenantal arrangements.

The eccentric nature of these doctrinal commitments and their complex character leave little room for the implausible claim that Gill developed them independently from Hussey. Indeed, significant evidence reveals that Gill borrowed from Hussey extensively.

In his explanation for eternal salvation, Gill made use of the same Scriptural arguments that Hussey employed. Hussey cited 2 Tim 1:9, Eph 1:3, and John 17 to claim that the elect receive salvation in eternity. Gill did the same. He often referenced 2 Tim 1:9 in relation to eternal union with Christ.[40] He expounded Ephesians 1:3 in his defense of eternal justification.[41] He used John 17 as a key proof text for justification before faith.[42]

Gill also replicated Hussey's terminology. Hussey proposed that eternal union with Christ was multifaceted; he described this union with such phrases as a conjugal union, election-union, representative union, and mystical union.[43] While these terms were largely synonymous, Hussey used them to illustrate the breadth that he believed union with Christ entailed. Gill was more concise in his descriptions of eternal union, but he used Hussey's wording. He included a section in his systematic theology dedicated to explicating the

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39. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:311. Italics Added

40. E.g., Ibid., 1:21, 68. 116, 120, 296; Gill, Sermons and Tracts, 2:98, 412-13; 3:89, 168, 175, 204. For an example of Hussey's use of this verse, see Joseph Hussey, *The Glory of Christ Unveiled,* ed. Marc Jacobsson (unpublished manuscript, n.d.).295.

41. E.g., Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:272, 286, 294. 355, 448. See Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 298.

42. E.g., Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 2:100; 3:211. See Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 304.

43. For Hussey's terminology, see Hussey, *Christ Unveiled*, 288–302.

meaning of the words election-union, representative union, and conjugal union.[44]

When Gill addressed the difficult problem of how the elect can exist as fallen in Adam and yet justified eternally in Christ, he reached for Hussey's explanation. He did not mention Hussey by name, but he closely followed Hussey by positing that the elect simultaneously stand in two distinct covenant heads—Adam and Christ. For both Gill and Hussey, the elect experience effects from Adam's fall. Nevertheless, they remain joined to Christ from eternity. Christ's effectual work in the *pactum salutis* ensures that "they are loved with an everlasting love, chosen in him before the world was, and always viewed and accounted righteous in him, and so secured from everlasting wrath and damnation."[45]

Perhaps even Gill's framing of God's acts as internal and external had its origins in Hussey. Hussey located the occurrence of salvation in eternity and appropriated the term supralapsarianism to indicate this move. Supralapsarianism for him became a descriptor that denoted a clear break between salvation's actualization in eternity and salvation's manifestation in the *historia salutis*. Gill desired to express this same distinction in his theology, and he purposed the categories of divine internal and external acts to do so. For him, God's internal acts pertained to eternal salvation; God's external acts designated the revelation of salvation in time. In this way, both Hussey and Gill creatively reused known theological terms to suit the same rhetorical purpose—to convey a sharp divide between salvation in eternity and salvation's manifestation in time.[46]

In only one area in his soteriology did Gill depart significantly from Hussey—the concept of the Glory-Man. He warned that "some, of late, have put a new sense on these words [John 1:1-3]...and interpret them, of the creation of the human soul of Christ in eternity; which, they say, was then made, and taken up into union with God."[47] Calling this notion "absurd," Gill provided a lengthy rebuttal in both his systematic theology and biblical commentaries. His desire to uphold a traditional perspective on Christ's person remained so strong that Alan P.

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44. See Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:285–288; idem., *Sermons and Tracts*, 2:94–98; 3:196–198. Hussey had other categories for union that did not appear in Gill; for example, he mentioned such forms of union as constitutive union, apprehending union, and regenerative union.

45. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:229. See also idem., *Sermons and Tracts,* 3:178–180. Compare Gill's wording with Hussey's remarks in Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 286–289, 313.

46. Context reveals that with the terms immanent, internal, and eternal Gill intended not to refer to the divine life—the immanent Trinity—but rather to salvation occurring pre-temporally within the covenantal arrangements of God. Immediately preceding his section on God's internal acts, he offered a separate discussion about the divine life. When he addressed God's internal acts, however, he quickly transitioned to a robust account of the *pactum salutis*. For Gill, then, framing salvation as an internal and eternal act of God meant locating the occurrence of salvation not in the immanent Trinity but in the covenant of redemption—just as Hussey had argued.

47. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:223–228. Consider also ibid., 1:362, 539.

F. Sell remarked that "Gill was determined to rule out the pre-existarian claim that the human soul of Jesus existed eternally."[48]

Church life in the Horsleydown congregation during Gill's pastorate reveals how seriously Gill took this matter. In 1768, Gill amended the church's confession of faith to reject pre-existarian Christology.[49] This change probably occurred in response to statements made by John Allen, the pastor of Petticoat Lane Church in London. Allen advocated Hussey's pre-existarian Christology. Gill publicly challenged Allen's understanding of Christ, and perhaps he adjusted his church's confession of faith during that confrontation. Gill also led his church to enact discipline on a member who denied Christ's eternal Sonship—likely because that member also advocated pre-existarian Christology.[50]

Hussey used his espousal of pre-existarian Christology—what he called the Glory-Man—to buttress his argument for eternal salvation. The Glory-Man provided him an explanatory tool for how the elect might join with Christ in eternity. He envisioned the souls of the elect uniting with the pre-existent human soul of Christ to form an intimate union. Through this union, the elect could receive salvation's benefits—justification, adoption, and union with Christ.[51]

Interestingly, Gill arrived at the same theological position as Hussey while rejecting pre-existarian Christology and the eternal existence of all human souls.[52] Proposing an alternative to Hussey's Glory-Man, he offered the argument that unconditional election creates a representative being for the elect, an *esse representativum*. Through this representation, the elect enter a union with Christ and receive salvation's blessings. Gill's scheme avoided some of the Christological problems raised by Hussey's, but it arrived at the same conclusion—the elect commune with Christ and enjoy salvation prior to their earthly existence. In matters related to soteriology, therefore, no functional difference existed between Gill's approach and Hussey's.

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48. Alan P. F. Sell, "Nonconformists and the Person of Christ," in *T & T Clark Companion to Nonconformity,* ed., Robert Pope (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark: 2013), 168–169.

49. See Seymour, "John Gill," 89, 315–318. The confession of faith used at Gill's church underwent significant revisions. Different versions of it exist; some report the 1729 text while others—such as the text used by Seymour—include the 1768 addition. For a brief history of the confession's development, see Price, "Dr. John Gill's Confession of 1729," 366–371; B. R. White, "John Gill in London, 1719–1729: A Biographical Fragment," *Baptist Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1967): 72–91.

50. See the background information supplied in Robert W. Oliver, "The Emergence of a Strict and Particular Baptist Community among the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1770–1850" (PhD thesis, CNAA/London Bible College, 1986), 186.

51. See the preceding chapter for a description of Hussey's understanding.

52. For Gill on the eternal existence of human souls, see Gill, *Complete Body*, 1:390.

Gill and the Disclosure of Salvation in Time

With his presentation of salvation as an eternal act of God, Gill recognized that he had to address the question of how the elect become aware of their justified status in time. To provide an answer, he appealed yet again to the covenant of redemption.

He made the atypical move of presenting the Holy Spirit as a full partner in the *pactum salutis*.[53] Traditional formulations of this covenant envision only an agreement between the Father and Son. Cocceius, for example, had a role for the Spirit in the economy of salvation but did not present the Spirit as a participating member in the covenant's forming.[54] His approach represents the norm for covenant theology.[55]

Prior to Gill, only David Dickson, Thomas Goodwin, and Joseph Hussey made the Spirit a covenanting partner in the *pactum salutis*.[56] Hussey did so to accommodate his belief in salvation in eternity. He argued that in the covenant, the Spirit agreed to reveal to the elect at the appropriate moment after their birth that they had been united with Christ from eternity.[57]

In what cannot be a coincidence, Gill's formulation of the covenant matched Hussey's exactly. The Father proposed the covenant's creation and its conditions to the Son. These conditions included the expectation that the Son would become incarnate and die for the sins of the elect. The Son accepted these conditions, and the surety provided by his acceptance

53. Muller considers the inclusion of the Spirit in the covenant of redemption was one of Gill's most significant and original contributions. See Muller, "Spirit and Covenant," 4–5.

54. See Willem J. Van Asselt, *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius, 1603–1669* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 234–235.

55. Contemporary theologians often attack the *pactum salutis* for positing a covenant only between Father and Son; they accuse it of being not sufficiently Trinitarian. To cite but one example, Letham calls the covenant of redemption "sub-Trinitarian" in Robert Letham, "John Owen's Doctrine of the Trinity in its Catholic Context," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology,* eds. Kelly Kapic and Mark Jones (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 196; idem., *The Westminster Assembly: Reading its Theology in Historical Context* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2009), 235–237; idem., *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 52–53. Other writers have sought to defend a traditional understanding of the *pactum salutis* as sufficiently trinitarian. E.g., Scott R. Swain, "Covenant of Redemption," in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, eds. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 114–116; J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Fearn: Mentor, 2016); idem., *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 61–68.

56. For work on Dickson and Goodwin, see Joohyun Kim, "The Holy Spirit in David Dickson's Doctrine of the *Pactum Salutis*," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 7, no. 2 (2015): 112–126; Jones, *Why Heaven Kissed Earth,* 139–144. One might possibly read Edwards and Owen as similarly making the Spirit a fully participating member of the *pactum salutis*. However, when Edwards placed great stress on the Spirit's involvement in the covenant but did not make the Spirit a party to the covenant. See Jonathan Edwards, Misc. 1062, "Economy of the Trinity and Covenant of Redemption," in *The Words of Jonathan Edwards: The "Miscellanies" (Entry Nos. 833–1152),* vol. 20, ed., Amy Plantinga Pauw (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 442ff. While Carl Trueman has argued that Owen made the Spirit an active participant in the covenant of redemption, his reading appears incorrect. See Laurence R. O'Donnell III, "The Holy *Spirit's* Role in John Owen's 'Covenant of the Mediator' Formulation: A Case Study in Reformed Orthodox Formulations of the *Pactum Salutis,*" *Puritan Reformed Journal* 4, no. 1 (2012): 91–115.

57. Unlike Hussey, Dickson and Goodwin did not include the Spirit as a covenanting member in the *pactum salutis* because of a commitment to eternal justification.

allowed the Father to provide for the elect eternal justification, eternal adoption, and eternal union with Christ. Whilst salvation therefore occurred completely in eternity, Hussey and Gill included the Holy Spirit as a participant in the covenant so that something akin to a bridge might exist between eternal salvation and the temporal existence of the elect on earth. Gill wrote that the Spirit agreed to bear "witness to" and "make application of" salvation to the elect in time.[58]

With the phrase "application of" salvation, Gill did not refer to the Spirit helping the elect take an action to receive salvation. His theological system rejected such a concept. The Spirit's "witness to salvation" simply entailed the Spirit testifying to the elect of their eternal standing in Christ. This witness provided them with existential awareness of their salvation.

To ensure that no possible confusion could exist over this matter, Gill reinterpreted the classic distinction between active justification and passive justification. Active justification, or justification *in foro Dei* (in the court of God), he considered "strictly and properly justification." He made this form of justification synonymous with eternal justification, justification as an immanent and eternal act of God. Gill described passive justification, or justification *in foro conscientiæ* (in the court of conscience), as justification "declarative to and upon the conscience of the believer."[59] Passive justification for Gill involved the elect receiving the knowledge that God saved them in eternity.

In this scheme, active justification precedes conversion and regeneration in the *ordo salutis*. It also precedes faith. God justifies the elect from eternity even though they have not yet placed their faith in Christ. Gill wrote, "Faith adds nothing to the *esse*, only to the *bene esse* of justification; it is no part of, nor any ingredient in it; it is a complete act in the eternal mind of God, without the being or consideration of faith."[60] Admitting that some biblical texts appear to place faith prior to justification in the *ordo salutis*, he explained, "What scriptures may be thought to speak of faith, as a prerequisite to justification, cannot be understood as speaking of it as a prerequisite to the being of justification; for faith has no causal influence upon it, it adds nothing to its being, it is no ingredient in it, it is not the cause nor matter of it."[61]

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58. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:352. For brief analysis of Gill's inclusion of the Spirit into the *pactum salutis,* see Byunghoon Woo, "The *Pactum Salutis* in the Theologies of Witsius, Owen, Dickson, Goodwin, and Cocceius" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2015), 81–82.

59. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:150. C.f. Daniel who correctly quotes many of Gill's statements about justification but then minimizes Gill's emphasis on eternal justification by misreading Gill's remarks in the tract *Truth Defended.* Daniel, *Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill,* 185, 295, 302, 312.

60. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:293.

61. Ibid., 1:298.

Only in relation to passive justification, the *bene esse* of one's justification, can faith have relevance. Biblical texts such as Romans 5 that connect faith and justification "can only be understood as speaking of faith as a prerequisite to the knowledge and comfort of it."[62] Faith in Christ is therefore only necessary to obtain the assurance that one is justified; it is not necessary for one's actual justification.

While presenting justification in such a manner was controversial, Gill personally saw great value in it. He believed that it preserved sovereign grace by completely divorcing justification from human effort. The elect do not exercise faith to receive justification; God declares them justified through their eternal union with Christ. Gill remarked, "Justification is an act of God's grace towards us, *is wholly without us*, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimation, accounting and constituting us righteous."[63]

Gill even delighted in the fact that his position upended a more traditional understanding of justification by faith. He used harsh language to describe the traditional Protestant position, fearing that it would lead to the synergistic forms of salvation that he so often combatted. In a defense of eternal justification and eternal union presented to Abraham Taylor, he registered his disagreement with theologians who espoused the traditional perspective and questioned why they would hold to such a position. He wrote,

> It is generally said that they [the elect] are not united to Christ until they believe, and that the bond of union is the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith on ours. I am ready to think that these phrases are taken up by divines, one from another, without a thorough consideration of them…Why must this union be pieced up with faith on our part? This smells so prodigious rank of self, that one may justly suspect that something rotten and nauseous lies at the bottom of it.[64]

He followed this statement with a lengthy argument that sought to overturn arguments for justification by faith alone.[65]

Textual similarities reveal that Gill drew these conclusions mainly from Hussey. Hussey's search for assurance of salvation led him to prioritize an encounter with the Spirit that could reveal to him his standing before God. Gill continued this focus on the Spirit. Like Hussey, he presented the Spirit as providing the elect with an existential awareness of their standing in Christ.

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62. Ibid.

63. This statement appears in *The Doctrine of Justification.* See Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 3:167. Italics added.

64. This statement appears in Gill's tract entitled *The Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love to His Elect.* See Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:198.

65. Ibid., 3:198–203. Gill also provided an argument against justification by faith in his systematic theology. See Gill, *Complete Body*, 1:292–294.

Also like Hussey, Gill rejected any understanding of faith that might imply human action. He emulated Hussey's repudiation of justification by faith and presented faith as the mere passive acknowledgment of God's prior work. For both Gill and Hussey, any human action—even the non-meritorious exercise of faith—denied free grace and hinted at Arminianism.

Even Gill's description of active and passive justification appears at least inspired by Hussey. Hussey used a distinction between what he labeled eternal justification and transient justification to signify the difference between justification's actual occurrence in eternity and the elect receiving knowledge of that justification in time. He then asserted that Biblical texts such as Romans 5 that associate faith and justification closely together speak only of transient justification, not actual justification. Gill used this same argument—and even the same Biblical text—in his account of active and passive justification. The only original feature in Gill's remarks when compared to Hussey's was his use of the terms active and passive in the place of Hussey's use of the words eternal and transient.

Gill's Rejection of Gospel Offers and Duty Faith

Gill continued to follow Hussey into a denial of Gospel offers and duty faith. Rejecting Gospel offers, he emphasized two distinct Gospel callings instead. An external call, which he described as the ministry of the word, goes out to all who have access to special revelation. It presents the Gospel message. On its own, however, this call is incapable of granting salvation. For salvation to occur, a person must receive an internal call, a drawing from the Holy Spirit. Such a calling goes to the elect only, often though not always in conjunction with the ministry of the word.[66]

While the terms internal calling and external calling were not unique to Gill, his theology of eternal justification shaped his understanding of these two callings. It allowed him to deny Gospel offers. The internal call goes only "to such who have a work of grace already begun in them."[67] With this statement, Gill referred to the fact that the elect, even before the internal calling of the Spirit, are the recipients of such spiritual blessings as eternal justification. The internal call, therefore, assists them in realizing their justified status by leading them to place their faith in Christ, thereby granting them passive justification. It also directs them to attend to the means of grace so that they might grow in sanctification.

Those who receive only the external call, by contrast, have no sure hope of salvation.

66. Gill mused that it would be possible for the elect to receive an effectual internal call to salvation without also receiving an external call. For his statements on this issue as well as his most thorough treatment of the internal and external calls, see Gill, *Complete Body,* 2:121–127.

67. Ibid., 2:122.

They receive information about the Gospel as revealed in the ministry of the word but, lacking any internal call of the Gospel, do not know whether they have been eternally justified. They gain no assurance from the external call.[68]

Most important, the internal call, given as it is to those who are already justified, carries with it an obligation "not only to the means of grace, but to partake of the blessings of grace." By contrast, the external call lacks such an obligation. Given to sinners in a "state of nature and unregeneracy," it is not

> a call to them to regenerate and convert themselves, of which there is no instance; and which is the pure work of the Spirit of God: nor to make their peace with God, which they cannot make by any thing they can do; and which is only made by the blood of Christ: nor to get an interest in Christ, which is not got, but given: nor to the exercise of evangelical grace, which they have not, and therefore can never exercise: nor to any spiritual vital acts, which they are incapable of, being natural men and dead in trespasses and sins.[69]

This distinction between callings is vital; it demonstrates Gill's denial of duty faith.

The external call only obliges its recipients to perform the "natural duties of religion; to a natural faith." These duties include such activities as giving mental assent to the truths of the Gospel; the avoidance of sin, which Gill stated "even the light of nature dictates;" and prayers of gratitude. It also obliges its recipients to "the outward means of grace, and to make use of them." Describing these outward means of grace, Gill explained that they involved a duty "to read the holy scriptures, which have been the means of the conversion of some; to hear the word, and wait on the ministry of it, which may be blessed unto them, for the effectual calling of them." He further explained that, by attending to the means of grace, recipients of the external call receive an understanding of the Gospel and then the "the whole" will be left "to the Spirit of God, to make application of it as he shall think fit."[70]

In short, the external call directs its recipients to moral reform and religious activities so that they might potentially later receive an internal call. It does not explicitly issue a command to exercise faith in Christ; it only calls recipients to receive the ministry of the word so that they "might wait on the ministry of it." As they wait, God may make application of the external call—that is, God may provide an internal call of the Gospel—as "he shall

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68. This is the logical outflow of Gill's position, and though he did not develop it explicitly in his systematic theology, he did state it in *The Cause of God and Truth.* He addressed there the nature of conditional statements in preaching, that is, statements such as, "If you will repent, you will receive forgiveness." In relation to the external call, he wrote, "I utterly deny that there is any promise of pardon made to the non-elect at all, not on any condition whatever." This fact means that no hope of assurance can emerge from the external call in and of itself. See John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, New ed. (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1838), 39.

69. Gill, *Complete Body,* 2:122.

70. Ibid., 2:122–123.

think fit."

One might wonder what value the external call has if it does not oblige its recipients to come to faith in Christ. Gill answered this question by using Hussey's argument that the external call might carry some positive benefits. He stated that by it, many

> become more civilised, and more moral in their conversation, are reformed, as to their outward manners; and through a speculative knowledge of the gospel, escape the grosser pollutions of the world; and others are brought by it to a temporary faith, to believe for a while, to embrace the gospel notionally, to submit to the ordinances of it, make a profession of religion, by which means they become serviceable to support the interest of it.[71]

Therefore, though it "comports with the wisdom of God that there should be such an outward call of many who are not internally called," the external call can at least create a notional faith, and this faith can benefit individuals and even the broader society.[72]

While Gill's position on these matters seems sufficiently clear, two additional aspects of his thought merit brief attention because they further reveal his reliance on Hussey. When discussing the doctrine of repentance, he incorporated Hussey's division between two forms of repentance. Gill wrote that legal repentance involves only outward moral reform. Using an illustration that Hussey supplied, he explained that the citizens of Nineveh during the ministry of Jonah exemplified this type of repentance.[73] Although they temporarily modified their behavior, they experienced no lasting spiritual change, and they eventually suffered divine judgment. By contrast, he believed that evangelical repentance operates by divine grace. It is given only to the elect, and it assists them as they turn from sin and toward God.[74]

Gill made use of this distinction because it allowed him to account for Scripture passages that appear to call all people to repent and turn to God with saving faith. Given his denial of Gospel offers and duty faith, he could not recognize such universal calls to repentance, so he frequently claimed in his polemical writings and even in his biblical commentaries that broad calls to repentance were merely calls for individual or corporate moral reform, not calls pertaining to personal salvation.[75]

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71. Ibid., 2:124.

72. Ibid.

73. Hussey distinguished between natural and spiritual repentance to highlight the difference between the duty to perform outward moral reform and the special duty given to the elect to avoid sin. See Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 334.

74. For Gill's distinction between legal and evangelical repentance, see Gill, *Complete Body*, 2:368–371. See also *The Doctrines of God's Everlasting Love to the Elect* in idem., *Sermons and Tracts,* 3:226–227. One should not confuse Gill's usage of these terms with that found in the work of John Calvin or James B. Torrance. See Andrew Torrance, "John Calvin and James B. Torrance's Evangelical Vision of Repentance," *Participatio* 3 (2014): 126–147.

75. See, for example, Gill, *Cause of God and Truth*, 64, 66, 287, 294; idem., *Exposition of the Old*

To preserve consistency with his convictions, then, he claimed that those who receive an external call have an obligation only to legal repentance, not to evangelical repentance.[76] They have no obligation to repent and trust Christ in a saving way; they must only modify their behavior and await an internal call. Only when they receive the internal call that assures them that they are one of the elect are they responsible for evangelical repentance.

Gill also accepted Hussey's contrast between sensible sinners and non-elect sinners. He defined sensible sinners as elect people who have experienced regeneration but who have yet to receive full assurance. They are aware of their sinfulness due to divine grace, and they are actively seeking a sense of passive justification to receive assurance. Sinners who are not among the elect, by contrast, are not the recipients of any spiritual blessings from God. They are therefore not fully aware of their need for justification because God has not revealed to them their sinful condition.

Gill stated that while he knew of "no exhortations to dead sinners [that is, the non-elect], to return and live" in Scripture, he acknowledged that pastors should "encourage and exhort sensible sinners to believe in Christ."[77] This statement merits attention because with it Gill maintained his conviction that offering the Gospel is inappropriate. He recommended here only that pastors exhort sensible sinners to trust in Christ. He did not instruct them to offer salvation to sensible sinners.

Even more important though is the fact that with this statement Gill also revealed that he was not comfortable exhorting listeners to respond positively to the Gospel if he deemed them not elect. Careful readers will note that he claimed that he knew of no exhortations to trust the Gospel going out to uninterested or dead sinners and stated that one should provide Gospel exhortations only to sensible sinners.

Such a position often made Gill unwilling to recognize universal exhortations to trust the Gospel, even when he found such exhortations in Scripture. Throughout his body of works and even in his sermons, he frequently interpreted universal calls to salvation as calls given only to sensible sinners and not calls given to all people.[78] This fact demonstrates just how

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Testament, 6:91.

76. Gill stated this explicitly in Gill, *Cause of God and Truth,* 307.

77. Gill, *Cause of God and Truth,* 317. Gill's usage of the term sensible sinners carries with it different connotations than that of such Puritans as John Bunyan. C.f., John Bunyan, *A Discourse Upon the Pharisee and Publican.* (London: Blackie and Son, 1873), 187, 237. Gill's rhetoric on this point matched Hussey's intended meaning. Hussey, *Christ Unveiled,* 238–239.

78. See, for example, Gill, *Cause of God and Truth,* 38, 294, 317; idem., *Complete Body,* 1:127, 531. Gill used the phrase sensible sinners 49 times in his New Testament commentaries and 80 times in his Old Testament commentaries. In many of these occurrences, he used the phrase to qualify what appear to be universal calls to respond to the Gospel. For example, when commenting on the apostolic preaching in Acts, he often stated that apostolic calls to receive salvation were given only to sensible sinners and not to all people.

chastened a view of evangelism he possessed.

Gill in His Historical Context

Like Hussey, Gill desired to remove human participation from the act of salvation. He promoted a theological system in which justification occurs as an immanent and eternal act of God. This system led him to reject the more traditional understanding of justification by faith. For Gill, faith only allows one to become aware of one's justified status; it is not a condition for the reception of actual justification. In his ministry philosophy, he denied universal offers of the Gospel and the legitimacy of duty faith. He formulated his convictions about sensible sinners, external and internal calls of the Gospel, and evangelical and legal repentance in light of this rejection of both Gospel offers and duty faith.

In Gill's understanding of evangelism, therefore, a minister makes a proclamation of the Gospel, an external call. Those who are already justified receive an internal call as they hear the Gospel proclaimed, and this internal call reveals to them that they need passive justification. Such people are sensible sinners. A minister can exhort these sensible sinners to trust in Christ to receive passive justification but cannot offer them salvation. In contrast, the non-elect receive an external call to the Gospel and are obligated to perform only legal repentance—outward moral reform—and attend to the means of grace in the hopes that they might later receive an inward call to salvation. In Gill's approach, a minister can neither offer such people the Gospel nor exhort them to trust in the Gospel. Such persons have no duty to believe the Gospel's message.

With this set of beliefs, Gill retained the theological commitments he received as a young man in Northamptonshire. He evidenced sympathy for Tobias Crisp and other contra-Puritans and was willing to defend them in his polemical tracts. He also followed Hussey by using foundations laid in Crisp's theology to advance salvation in eternity and a hardened form of hyper-Calvinism.

Gill's willingness to maintain these convictions amid the shifting cultural landscape that he occupied makes his theology stand in stark contrast to the theology offered by many of his contemporaries.[79] During his lifetime, he witnessed the birth of the Evangelical Revival, a renewal movement within the broader Christian tradition that emphasized experimental religion. With the term experimental religion, evangelicals referred to a heartfelt piety that

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E.g., John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809), 2:168.

79. For more information on Gill and his cultural context see David Mark Rathel "Baptist Theology in the Age of Enlightenment: Contextualizing the Soteriological Proposals of John Gill and Andrew Fuller" in *Baptists, Gospel and Culture*, ed. William L. Pitts (Macon: Mercer University Press, forthcoming).

prioritized personal conversion and assurance of salvation.[80] Evangelicalism's rise in popularity led pastors and theologians from several theological traditions to address its concerns.

While Gill possessed an awareness of the Evangelical Revival, in his published sermons and tracts he did not address it substantively.[81] He did not adjust his ministry philosophy to accommodate the Revival, nor did he openly rebut Evangelical ministers. He simply continued to promote the Northamptonshire theology with which he was familiar. His singular focus on preserving the theological tradition that he received during his youth gives his writings the impression that a Revival was not occurring in his midst.

Beyond the Evangelical Revival, other cultural changes occurred during Gill's time. Most notably, he lived during a time of philosophical upheaval commonly referred to as the Age of Enlightenment. Much like the coming of Evangelicalism, the Enlightenment brought about dramatic changes to Britain's religious life. While these changes were doubtlessly numerous, two are particularly relevant to Gill studies.

David Bebbington connects the advent of Evangelicalism directly to the Enlightenment by arguing that the latter helped to generate the former. He contends that proposals that emerged from Enlightenment philosophers provided Evangelicals with a religious epistemology conducive to their search for personal assurance. The new sense of assurance provided partly by Enlightenment epistemology proved vital in creating the passionate activism that defined the Evangelical movement.[82] Bebbington's thesis has significant detractors, but a minimal claim that leading Evangelical theologians such as Wesley and Edwards at times engaged with Enlightenment-era thought when constructing their theology remains sound.[83]

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80. For a moving account of the evangelical search for experimental religion, see Catherine A. Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). Although Brekus concentrates on the North American context, the transatlantic nature of the Evangelical movement gives her work broad relevance.

81. Gill certainly knew of the ministries of the Evangelical leaders John Wesley and George Whitefield. According to a biography of Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, Gill occasionally dined and worshiped with the two men when in Countess' company. Anonymous, *The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon* (London: William Edward Painter, 1840), 162.

82. David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1993), 1-17; 20–74. Consider also D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Spirit of Early Evangelicalism: True Religion in a Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 44–68. I use the term Enlightenment throughout this section of the chapter because it often appears in the secondary literature—including Bebbington's. I grant, however, that the term remains problematic. It likely does not capture the diversity present within the various philosophies that fall under its designation. In addition, the term Age of Enlightenment displays prejudice to forms of thought that preceded it by implying they were somehow dark and unenlightened.

83. For a critique of Bebbington's point, consider Garry J. Williams, "Was Evangelicalism Created by the Enlightenment?," *Tyndale Bulletin* 53, no. 2 (2002): 283–312. Consider also the very helpful John Coffey,

Beyond influencing some evangelical thinkers, the Enlightenment's rise also contributed to the displacement of the scholastic approach to theology that featured prominently in the writings of Protestant and Catholic theologians in previous centuries. Willem J. van Asselt has concluded in his survey of Reformed scholasticism that the scholastic method began to wane in popularity as many eighteenth-century thinkers prioritized reason over revelation. He cites the time of 1700–1790 as a time of "increasing pressure" on the "scholastic form of theology."[84]

Gill took a conservative direction when responding to these developments. Unlike some Evangelical theologians from his era, he avoided engagement with Enlightenment leaders who wrote in the fields of philosophy, theology, or ethics.[85] He concentrated almost exclusively on Reformed writers from earlier periods and apparently gave little concern to interfacing with his cultural context.

Even the form that his theology took harkened back to an earlier era. Gill opened his systematic theology bemoaning the fact that recent cultural shifts made orderly accounts of the Christian religion no longer desirable. He explained that he sought a systematized description of Christian doctrine to counter these trends.[86] In his writing style, he emulated scholastic thinkers from previous generations, a move that led Richard Muller to declare Gill the eighteenth century's most erudite preserver of seventeenth-century Reformed scholasticism.[87]

The defensive posture with which Gill wrote contributed to his promotion of hyper-Calvinism—a fact that several scholars have noticed. After researching eighteenth-century Particular Baptists in London, Murdina Macdonald concluded that Gill's "exaggerated Calvinism" emerged partly from the fact that the religious and cultural changes that occurred around him pushed him into a "rigorous posture."[88] Olin Robison expressed a similar

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"Puritanism, Evangelicalism, and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition," in *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, eds. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Academic, 2008), 252–277. In terms of evangelical leaders who engaged with Enlightenment thinkers, I have in mind the examples Bebbington cites—namely, Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley. Edwards, for example drew heavily from Locke, though the manner in which he did remains debated. For various interpretive options regarding Edwards' appropriation of Locke, see Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 84–109. See also Paul Helm, "Jonathan Edwards, John Locke, and the Religious Affections," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 6, no. 1 (2016): 3–15; Terrence Erdt, "Sense of the Heart," in *The Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*, ed. Harry Stout (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 525–528.

84. Asselt, *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism,* 167–193.

85. See the analysis of Gill provided in Alan P. F. Sell, *Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity, 1689–1920* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2004), 55–58, 96.

86. Gill, *Complete Body*, 1:vii–xxx.

87. Muller, *Divine Essence and Attributes*, 150.

88. Murdina D. MacDonald, "London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions Within a Dissenting Community Under Toleration" (D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1983), iv.

sentiment, claiming that Gill deemed much of eighteenth-century thought as "a direct attack on the sovereignty of God."[89]

While these assessments are correct, the authors who make them do not directly tie Gill to the Crisp and Hussey traditions that influenced him. These authors refer only to an "exaggerated Calvinism" without outlining in detail the convictions that comprised it. Interpreting Gill in light of his Northamptonshire context, however, reveals the precise way that he responded to his shifting culture. He took the controversial proposals advanced by the contra-Puritans and Joseph Hussey and sought to give them credibility by wedding them to a sophisticated—though increasingly rejected— form of Protestant scholasticism. With this move, he could preserve both the Northamptonshire theology he had appreciated since his youth as well as the scholastic method that he deemed more profitable than contemporary alternatives. Such a move allowed him to uphold not just specific doctrinal commitments but also a particular way of approaching the theological task. He was a preserver of both content and form.

Gill's willingness to write as a scholastic theologian makes him the most sophisticated member of the Contra-Puritan and hyper-Calvinist movements. Contra-Puritan writers such as Crisp composed no comprehensive systematic theologies and left instead only a series of disconnected sermons and short theological tracts. Joseph Hussey wrote lengthy tomes, but his writing style was often erratic, disorganized, and repetitive. Gill's familiarity with and appreciation for the scholastic method and his willingness to use that method to delineate his convictions in careful detail made him hyper-Calvinism's most potent exponent.

Gill at times even used his knowledge of earlier Protestant scholastic writers to defend his soteriology from its critics. His remarks in this area were often contradictory. At times he claimed that he boldly went beyond theologians of previous generations and championed a new and radical theology that could display the free grace of God with greater potency.[90] Most often, however, he attempted to present his conclusions as noncontroversial and as standing in continuity with statements made other Protestant scholastic thinkers. He often alluded to the works of Johannes Maccovius, Wilhelmus á Brakel, and Hermann Witsius, for example, to justify his use of the categories of active and passive justification.[91]

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89. Olin Robison, "The Particular Baptists in England, 1760–1820" (D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1963), 34–36.

90. In a polemical work, for example, Gill asserted that he desired to go "a step higher" than many previous exponents of the justification before faith position. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 3:166.

91. Maccovius, Brakel, and Witsius used the distinction between active and passive justification in slightly different ways; however, none of them advocated for eternal justification as Gill did. Indeed, Brakel placed his description of active and passive justification in a section devoted explicitly to rejecting justification

Of course, the theologians that Gill cited did not intend what Gill meant with the terms active and passive justification. Gill used the categories of thought and rhetoric found in Protestant scholastic writers to suit his purposes; he repurposed their language to describe his unique hyper-Calvinist theology. This tactic proved so sophisticated that some of Gill's readers—both eighteenth-century and contemporary—have naively accepted Gill's remarks and concluded that he never departed the broader Reformed consensus.[92]

Interestingly, Gill deployed his scholastic form of hyper-Calvinism in a context marked by the Evangelical Revival's emphasis on assurance of salvation. Contra-Puritanism originated out of a desire for assurance of salvation; ministers such as Saltmarsh and Crisp feared that the Puritanism of their day offered little solace for troubled consciences. Hussey later imbibed Crisp's teachings and developed his version of hyper-Calvinism out of his own quest for assurance. Although Gill did not interact directly with the promoters of the Evangelical Revival, juxtaposing his theology with tenets of the admittedly broad evangelical movement produces interesting results.

Hussey prioritized a direct revelation of the Spirit that informed the elect of their eternal standing in Christ. He advanced this position in a bid to provide assurance. By rejecting any need for human response and replacing it with a unilateral work of the Spirit, he believed that he could frame salvation as an event about which the elect might have certainty. For him, salvation consisted not in the meeting of certain conditions or the deep emotional introspection found in some Puritan literature; instead, it consisted in receiving a trustworthy claim from the Spirit that God had redeemed one's person in eternity.

Gill's statements about the Spirit's operation exhibit Hussey's influence. He devoted sections of his systematic theology to describing how the Spirit makes the manifestation of justification, adoption, and union with Christ to the elect in time. Commenting on assurance, he argued that faith "rises to a full assurance" so that "a man knows with certainty, that he is and shall be justified." Such certainty is possible because although the Spirit's disclosures are "various and different," the act of justification itself is "in God" and therefore "perfect and complete."[93]

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from eternity. For Brakel, see Wilhelmus á Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (Ligonier: Reformation Trust Publishing, 1993), 2:376–381. For Maccovius, Johannes Maccovius, *Loci Communes Theologici* (Amsterdam, 1658), 602–603, 608; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007): 3:583. For Witsius, see Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, trans. William Crookshank (London: Tegg & Son, 1837), 1:213–214. See also John V. Fesko, "Reformed Orthodoxy on Imputation: Active and Passive Justification," *Perichoresis* 14, no. 3 (2016): 61–80.

92. E.g., Hong-Gyu Park, "Grace and Nature in John Gill (1697–1771)" (PhD diss., The University of Aberdeen, 2001), 30–74, 286–287.

93. Gill, *Complete Body,* 2:91.

Gill's theology was, therefore, first cognitive and then emotive. The Spirit makes a revelation of information—eternal salvation—to the elect. This revelation then creates the emotional response of gratitude and a commitment to sanctification.

Evangelicalism, emerging from the heart-felt pietism present in Puritanism—and, in Bebbington's estimate, Enlightenment-era concepts of knowledge and personal experience—understood assurance of faith differently.[94] To be sure, evangelical revivalists and theologians could speak of faith as involving both mental assent to certain doctrinal truths and emotional trust in the person of Christ and his work.[95] Still, they envisioned a narrative of conversion in which persons through a process of introspection experience sorrow for sin and then eventually place faith in Christ as a mediator. This procedure involved more human involvement than Gill's scheme of merely passively receiving a truth revealed from God. It entailed a certain amount of earnestness. The existence of personal journals and spiritual diaries during the height of the Evangelical Revival attests to this fact.[96]

Ironically, although Gill visualized himself as a preserver of an older and healthier theological tradition, the tradition that he preserved was not the Puritanism for which he could at times express a certain degree of fondness. The conversion narrative found in the evangelical movement possessed more similarities to earlier Puritanism than did the contra-Puritanism to which Gill steadfastly clung.

In a further irony, although Gill prized assurance of salvation due to his imbibing of Hussey's concerns, the strong emphasis on human passivity found in the hyper-Calvinist tradition would eventually give rise the very introspection that Hussey sought to avoid—a point that John Brine, a steadfast follower of Gill, would reveal clearly in his writings.[97]

Contribution to Modern Gill Scholarship

Despite the clarity with which Gill offered his convictions, several contemporary researchers fail to interpret Gill's convictions accurately. Some are even reticent to label him a hyper-Calvinist.[98] Interpreting Gill in the manner set forward in this chapter contributes to modern

94. For information on evangelicalism's relation to Puritan spirituality, consider Coffey, "Puritanism, Evangelicalism, and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition," 252–277. See also Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 45–68.

95. E.g., Oliver Crisp, "Faith and Experience," in *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology,* ed. Gerald McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 68–80.

96. See the detailed accounts provided in Bruce D. Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2005; idem., *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition: Between the Conversions of Wesley and Wilberforce* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

97. See the subsequent chapter on the modern question controversy for my examination of Brine.

98 I select in this chapter three examples of works that minimize Gill's hyper-Calvinism because they

scholarship by offering a more precise examination of this theology.

Gill and the Charge of Supralapsarianism

Baptist historians have typically left Gill's beliefs about eternal salvation unexplored and have focused instead on his alleged espousal of a supralapsarianism. H. C. Vedder warned that Gill's systematic theology advocated a "rigid supralapsarian type of Calvinism."[99] The Baptist historian A. C. Underwood made hyper-Calvinism synonymous with supralapsarianism in his *A History of the English Baptists*. Underwood populated his description of Gill's theology not with quotations from Gill's works but rather his personal views about supralapsarianism, concluding that a system that "taught that God decreed the salvation of some and passed by others" made "God the author of evil" and left a "paralysing effect upon the preacher."[100] H. Leon McBeth condemned Gill as a hyper-Calvinist in his influential *The Baptist Heritage*. Citing a "representative sample of Gill's teaching," he quoted from Gill's remarks about unconditional election and the ordering of the divine decrees but left untouched Gill's statements about eternal justification.[101]

represent influential published research on Gill. However, other research projects that have not yet received publication do merit brief mention. Clive Jarvis provides a defense of Gill in his doctoral thesis on Particular Baptist life in Northamptonshire, and his analysis of Gill's contribution relies heavily on the work of George Ella. By critiquing Ella's convictions in this article, I can also interact with many of the claims made by Jarvis. See Clive Jarvis, "Growth in English Baptist Churches: With Special Reference to the Northamptonshire Particular Baptist Association (1770–1830)" (PhD diss., The University of Glasgow, 2001), 53–60; idem., "The Myth of Hyper-Calvinism?," in *Recycling the Past or Researching History?: Studies in Baptist Historiography and Myths*, ed. Philip E. Thompson and Anthony R. Cross (Studies in Baptist History and Thought, Volume 11; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005), 231–263. Hong-Gyu Park offers hearty praise of Gill in an unpublished doctoral thesis, but he focuses his research on such matters as Gill's doctrine of revelation. He does not consider Gill's soteriology or Gill's understanding of evangelism at length; it is therefore difficult to consider his thesis a defense of Gill against the charge of hyper-Calvinism. See Park, "Grace and Nature," 30–74, 286–287. For my interaction with Park's thesis, see David Mark Rathel, "John Gill and the History of Redemption," 23–25. Jonathan White analyzes Gill's rather complex relationship with hyper-Calvinism in a doctoral dissertation. Regrettably, White employs an unnecessarily limited definition of hyper-Calvinism. He defines it as "the denial of the duty of unregenerate man to believe the gospel for salvation based on man's original lack of ability to believe the gospel for salvation." See Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 50. White's willingness to presuppose this definition when approaching Gill is unhelpful. Adamic inability was at best tangential to Gill's theological system; yet, Gill did passionately argue against Gospel offers and duty faith.

99. Vedder, *Short History,* 240. Interestingly, Vedder appears to hint that an alleged supralapsarianism on the part of Gill led to a belief that the elect are in a "constant state of sanctification." Gill did not claim this, and supralapsarianism would not require it. Perhaps Vedder here attempted to allude to Gill's belief in eternal justification.

100. Underwood, *History of English Baptists*, 134. I have retained Underwood's British spelling in this quote. Oliver alleges that Underwood's incorrect understanding of hyper-Calvinism emerged from a bias that Underwood had against Reformed soteriology. Robert W. Oliver, "John Gill," in *The British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910,* ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 161.

101. McBeth, *Baptist Heritage,* 177–178. Garrett draws conclusions similar to McBeth's; he too makes hyper-Calvinism synonymous with supralapsarianism. Interestingly, Garrett also acknowledges that Gill believed in eternal salvation, but he does not interact in detail with this aspect of Gill's thought. James Leo Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2009), 97–100.

Gill's writings disclose the problems with this interpretation; they reveal that he did not firmly hold to supralapsarianism.[102] In 1736, Job Burt composed a tract that associated supralapsarianism with eternal justification; Burt charged that these doctrines encouraged antinomianism. Gill responded in the same year with a pamphlet entitled *Truth Defended*, noting that his commitment to eternal justification led him to embrace sublapsarianism rather than supralapsarianism. He claimed, “For my own part, I must confess, I never considered justification from eternity, any other than a sublapsarian doctrine.” He wrote that because justification “supposes a fall,” the recipients of justification “cannot be considered otherwise than as sinners, fallen creatures; and therefore [eternal justification] is a sublapsarian, and not a supralapsarian doctrine."[103] This hearty defense of sublapsarianism led Gill's biographer and successor in the ministry John Rippon to designate him a sublapsarian theologian.[104]

Thirty-three years after his argument against supralapsarianism in *Truth Defended*, Gill addressed the ordering of the divine decrees again in his systematic theology—the work so often referenced by modern historians. He advocated a moderate position and contended that the difference between supralapsarianism and sublapsarianism "is not so great as may be thought at first sight; for both agree in the main and material things in the doctrine of election.” He confessed that “for my own part, I think both [positions] may be taken in" and explained that such an approach remains possible should one conceive that

> in the decree of the end, the ultimate end, the glory of God, for which he does all things, men might be considered in the divine mind as creable, not yet created and fallen; and that in the decree of the means, which, among other things, takes in the mediation of Christ, redemption by him, and the sanctification of the Spirit; they might be considered as created, fallen, and sinful.[105]

Gill envisioned the decree of the end as the *telos* for which God created the world—namely, his own glory. He used the decree of the means to describe the plan of salvation, the manner by which God might bring glory to himself. It could encompass such elements as the decision to create humanity, to permit humanity’s fall, and to provide Christ’s redemptive work for the elect.

Gill’s proposal argued that from the perspective of the plan of salvation—the decree of the means—God considered humanity as fallen. This claim could preserve the doctrine of eternal justification by explaining how God can consider the elect as sinners in need of

102. For contemporary defenses of Gill against the charge that he held to supralapsarianism, consider Ella, *John Gill and Cause of God and Truth,* 159–162; Nettles, *By His Grace*, 37–39.

103. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, 2:73–79.

104. Rippon, *A Brief Memoir,* 48–51.

105. Gill, *Complete Body,* 1:265.

justification before their existence. However, from the perspective of the goal for which God created the world—the decree of the end—God considered all of humanity as not fallen.

Gill quickly stated that by bifurcating these two decrees he did not suppose "separate acts and decrees in God, and any priority and posteriority in them; which in God are but one and together." The nuance in his scheme existed only because "our finite minds are obliged to consider them [the decrees] one after another, not being able to take them in together and at once."[106] Gill's mature position, therefore, did not neatly fall into either the supralapsarian or sublapsarian camps. He recognized the similarities between the two positions and attempted to construct a middle path.

Despite the creativity behind his approach, Gill held his opinion on the ordering of divine decrees loosely. He warned in his exchange with Job Burt and his systematic theology that "the Contra-Remonstrants were not all of a mind concerning the object of predestination, but did not think it worth their while to divide upon that account."[107] He also appealed to the former Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, William Twisse, to show the doctrine's relative unimportance. Concerning Twisse, Gill reflected, "Dr. Twiss [Twisse], who was as great a supralapsarian as perhaps ever was, and carried things as high as any man ever did, and as closely studied the point, and as well understood it, and perhaps better than any one did, and yet he confesses that it was only *apex logicus*, a point in logic."[108]

The indifference that Gill displayed toward questions about the decretal order underscores that a particular understanding of the divine decrees did not play a significant role in his theology. Richard Muller has rightly concluded "the crucial doctrine" on which Gill's soteriology turned was not "the doctrine of the decrees in and of itself" but rather the innovations that he brought to "the eternal covenant or *pactum salutis*."[109] Gill's doctrine of salvation resulted in hyper-Calvinism because he followed Hussey and framed salvation as happening in eternity, in God's covenantal arrangements—not because he held to a specific order to the divine decrees.

Nevertheless, interest in Gill's work on the divine decrees continues in more recent works. In his examination of Baptist theology, the respected theologian Stephen R. Holmes highlights that the manner in which Gill distinguished between divine internal acts and

106. Ibid., 1:264–265.

107. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 2:66. Gill repeated this claim again in idem., *Complete Body*, 1:264.

108. Gill, *Complete Body*, 1:264–265. See also idem., *Sermons and Tracts,* 2:66.

109. Muller, "The Spirit and the Covenant," 12. Roberts also notes that Gill was overall indifferent to matters related to the ordering of the decrees and formed his hyper-Calvinism based on his belief in eternal salvation. R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change: London Calvinistic Baptists and the Evangelical Revival, 1760–1820* (Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, 1989), 40–41.

external acts stands as unusual in the tradition. He offers two interpretive options. Noting Gill's association with hyper-Calvinism, Holmes proposes, "It could be argued that tying the doctrine of the decrees more closely to the doctrine of God represents a strand of that [hyper-Calvinist] tradition that seeks to heighten the eternal distinction between the elect and reprobate, insisting on a lasting difference that precedes their coming to father." Alternatively, Holmes suggests a more "charitable" reading that understands Gill as "facing up to the question posed most acutely by Barth, concerning the relation of the divine decrees to the perfection of the divine life."[110]

Holmes' desire to examine an often-neglected theologian like Gill merits commendation, but his interpretation remains too constrained. Holmes focuses solely on Gill's description of the divine decrees as internal acts of God and does not address Gill's willingness to make justification, adoption, and union with Christ internal divine acts. While he is right to suggest that Gill's separation between internal and external acts pertains to Gill's hyper-Calvinism, he does not explain that Gill arrived at his judgment through a Hussey-inspired focus on eternal salvation.

Thomas Nettles

Nettles' research on Gill centers around two key publications. In *By His Grace and For His Glory,* a work that features his first significant published work on Gill, Nettles rightly acknowledges that Gill did not believe in the free offer of the Gospel.[111] However, he does claim that Gill "affirmed that it was the duty of all men to repent of sin and the duty of all who heard the Gospel to believe it."[112] He contends that this fact frees Gill from the charge of hyper-Calvinism.

In claiming that Gill did not deny duty faith, Nettles does not sufficiently explore Gill's soteriology. Though he surveys some aspects of Gill's thought—Gill's ordering of the divine decrees, understanding of sanctification, and pastoral ministry practices—he fails to probe Gill's desire to frame salvation as an eternal act of God that requires minimal human participation. He does not address the doctrine of eternal justification in a significant manner even though it was a key component of Gill's theological project.

This neglect causes Nettles to misrepresent Gill on the matter of duty faith. For example, Nettles cites a passage from Gill's *Cause of God and Truth* that he admits *prima facie* appears to deny duty faith. Gill wrote, "God does not require all men to believe in Christ;

110. Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 72.
111. Nettles, *By His Grace,* 27–28, 47–48.
112. Ibid., 42.

where he does it is according to the revelation he makes of them."[113] Nettles tries to soften the implications of this statement by arguing that Gill intended only "to highlight man's responsibility for that which is available to him."[114] Per Nettles, Gill wrote merely about those who have no access to the Gospel. He argued that such people are responsible only for what they receive through general revelation.

Though Gill indeed addressed this particular topic in this passage, Nettles leaves unaddressed the next sentence in Gill's work. There Gill wrote, "Those who only have the outward ministry of the word, unattended with the special illuminations of the Spirit of God, are obliged to believe no further than the external revelation they enjoy, reaches."[115] Put simply, Gill indeed stated that people only have a responsibility for the revelation that they receive. Those who receive no access to the Gospel are accountable just for the general revelation that they have, but those who receive the external Gospel call are obligated only to perform legal repentance and not trust in Christ for salvation. Gill made this point even more explicit in the following sentences in which he contrasted the mere legal obligations attending the external call with the salvific obligations attending the internal call. Nettles' argument, then, takes Gill out of context. It does so because Nettles has not sufficiently explored Gill's work on the external and internal callings as well as the soteriological convictions that undergird them.

In a subsequent publication, Nettles attempts to associate Gill with those who participated in the Evangelical Revival. A lack of adequate attention to Gill's soteriology also appears here, however, when Nettles implies several times that Gill held to the traditional understanding of justification by faith rather than the more eccentric position of eternal justification. This fact is troubling given Gill's repeated protestations against justification by faith.[116]

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113. Ibid. This quotation originally appears in Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth,* 307.

114. Nettles, *By His Grace*, 42–43.

115. Surprisingly, Nettles quotes this sentence but does not address it. See Ibid., 42–44. For another author's criticism of Nettles' analysis of Gill's remarks, consider Oliver, "The Emergence of a Strict and Particular Baptist Community," A1-A3; idem., review of *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*, by Thomas J. Nettles, *Banner of Truth* 284 (1987): 30–32.

116. Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening," 136–137. Here Nettles praises Gill for defending the doctrine of justification by faith, but the form of justification Gill emphasized in *The Law Established by the Gospel,* the sermon that Nettles cites, was eternal justification. Indeed, *The Law Established* is one of the strongest sermons on eternal justification in the Gill corpus. See Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 1:200–216. In addition, when comparing Gill to John Wesley, Nettles connects Gill's understanding of justification with that of George Whitefield. See Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awakening," 137n, 163. While Whitefield, like Gill, would have rejected some of Wesley's convictions, Nettles makes no mention of the more unusual aspects of Gill's theology of justification. Whitefield would have brokered no agreement with those. Gilbert Tennent, an occasional critic of Whitefield, once correctly noted Whitefield's rejection of eternal

Most interesting is the fact that in this later publication Nettles nuances his earlier defense of Gill. He admits, "There is a central point, however, in which he [Gill] appears to hold the [h]yper-Calvinist view [regarding duty faith]." He offers as evidence a quote from Gill's sermon entitled *Faith in God and His Word* in which Gill claimed, "Man never had in his power to have or to exercise [faith in Christ], no, not even in the state of innocence." Nettles then admits, "*Theoretically*, Gill held that the non-elect were not obligated to evangelical obedience, because the necessity of such obedience did not exist in unfallen humanity as deposited in Adam."[117]

Surprisingly, despite this admission, Nettles remains cautious about labeling Gill a hyper-Calvinist, and he does not retract his earlier claim that Gill affirmed duty faith. He even continues to praise Gill, arguing that Gill's works exhibit "the central concerns and zeal of the Great Awakening."[118]

Nettles does so because he alleges that Gill was only *theoretically* a hyper-Calvinist. He argues that in Gill's scheme "while many [people] exhibit…only a legal repentance and a historical faith, and the non-elect may not be theoretically obligated to the 'faith of God's elect,' ministers of the Gospel preach repentance and faith in a Gospel way."[119] Nettles's argument reduces down to the contention that, even though Gill denied all people must respond to the Gospel, at the practical level he still preached the Gospel, and this fact means that his hyper-Calvinism was merely hypothetical.

This argument is unpersuasive. As noted, Gill's commentaries and sermons reveal that his soteriological convictions often caused him to interpret Scripture in such a way that he minimized universal calls to respond to the Gospel. He held his principles at more than just a theoretical level; they regularly affected his preaching and exposition of Scripture.

The differences between Gill's ministry and that of the evangelists of the Evangelical Revival, those to whom Nettles wishes to compare Gill, are stark. Gill constructed a ministry philosophy that emphasized encouraging only sensible sinners to respond to the Gospel and often eschewed giving Gospel exhortations to all people. The evangelists of the Evangelical

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justification. See Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Founder* (New Haven: Yale, 2014), 196–197.

117. Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awaking," 153. Italics added. Proponents of the no-offer position—men such as John Brine—claimed that prelapsarian Adam had a no ability to believe the Gospel. Gill's position on this matter was rather complex, but there is no doubt that he did at times affirm Adamic inability. See Gill, *Cause of God and Truth,* 307. Andrew Fuller offered helpful analysis of Gill's rather contradictory statements concerning Adamic inability in Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller,* ed. Joseph Belcher. (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 2:421.

118. Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awaking," 170.

119. Ibid., 154.

Revival did not.

With Nettles, then, readers find a contradictory portrayal of Gill. While throughout his works Nettles maintains that Gill denied Gospel offers, in one publication he claims that Gill did not deny that all people must respond to the Gospel. In another, without retracting this claim, he admits that Gill likely held to the hyper-Calvinist tenet of denying duty faith. He deems this point irrelevant, though, and incorrectly believes that it did not shape Gill's ministry. Nettles could have avoided these errors by more completely examining how deeply Gill's soteriology formed his thought and practice.

Timothy George

Of all of Gill's defenders, the respected Baptist theologian Timothy George offers the most interesting arguments, yet he is also the most restrained in his praise of Gill. While he does not label Gill a hyper-Calvinist, he holds this conclusion tentatively, and in several places admits that Gill's theology possessed unhelpful tendencies.[120]

He especially criticizes the dangers posed by Gill's doctrine of eternal justification. He writes that with eternal justification Gill stressed the "priority of justification over faith," that "the doctrine was a stumbling block to many who could not square it with the necessity of conversion as a personal experience of grace," and that it was a "perilous teaching, insofar as it encouraged sinners to think of themselves as actually justified regardless of their personal response to Christ and the Gospel." The Second London Confession, a document that drew heavily from the Westminster Confession of Faith, explicitly rejected eternal justification, and George remarks, "Happily, on this controversial issue most Particular Baptists followed the fathers of the Second London Confession rather than John Gill."[121]

George's willingness to address Gill's statements on eternal justification is commendable. Unfortunately, he fails to explore how Gill's stance on eternal justification shaped his understanding of duty faith and evangelism. George does not address the concept of duty faith in Gill's thought, a disappointing omission in an otherwise excellent essay. He also neglects Gill's statements on such matters as evangelical repentance and sensible sinners, convictions that originated primarily from Gill's doctrine of eternal justification.

George's writing gives the impression that Gill proclaimed the Gospel clearly with no

120. George writes that the presentation of Gill as a hyper-Calvinist is "a hasty judgment that *may* need to be reconsidered." Italics added. He further explains that, though he does not count Gill as a hyper-Calvinist in the vein of Hussey or Brine, "We cannot quite exonerate Gill of all responsibility in the fostering of an atmosphere in which the forthright promulgation of the missionary mandate of the church was seen to be a threat to, rather than an extension of, the gospel of grace." George, "John Gill," 28–29.

121. Ibid., 26–27.

constraint; however, by not connecting Gill's doctrine of enteral justification to its implications for evangelism, such a portrayal is not entirely accurate. In one place, George quotes from an ordination sermon that he claims demonstrates Gill's healthy evangelistic ministry. During the sermon, Gill charged a ministry candidate,

> Souls sensible to sin and danger, and who are crying out, What shall we do to be saved? you are to observe, and point out Christ the tree of life to them; and say…Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, Acts 16:31. Your work is to lead men, under a sense of sin and guilt, to the blood of Christ, shed for many for the remission of sin, and in this name you are to preach the forgiveness to them.[122]

Such a quote, however, does not demonstrate what George desires. One should note to whom Gill instructs the young ministry candidate to direct his evangelistic appeals—to "souls *sensible* to sin and danger." Here one finds Gill's doctrine of sensible sinners on full display.

George points to additional passages in which Gill warned young ministers that if they did not preach Christ, the blood of their listeners would be on their hands. He further cites from Gill's *The Cause of God and Truth* in which Gill stated that ministers are to "preach the gospel of salvation to all men, and declare, that whosoever believes shall be saved: for this they are commissioned to do."[123]

While one can express gratitude for Gill's willingness to call ministers to preach the Gospel, when assessing such quotations one must remember Robert Oliver's helpful remarks on Gill's preaching. Oliver explains that a

> cause of confusion arises from the popular view that hyper-Calvinists are never concerned for the salvation of sinners…Gill was one [who possessed such a concern] and examples can be produced of him expressing a concern for such and pressing those who *were awakened* to turn and seek salvation. His hyper-Calvinism appears in the absence of direct exhortations and appeals to the unconverted to turn from their sin in repentance and cast themselves upon Christ.[124]

Oliver rightly explains that the preaching of the Gospel is not the issue in the debate over Gill's hyper-Calvinism; hyper-Calvinists such as Joseph Hussey and John Skepp both preached the Gospel. Instead, the issue is how one understands Gospel offers and duty faith

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122. Ibid., 28. This quote appears in Gill's Sermon *The Doctrine of the Cherubim Opened and Explained.* See Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 2:36–37. George perhaps misses the full context of Gill's statement because he draws the quote from a secondary source, Robinson's *Baptist Quarterly* article. See George, "John Gill," 28n. For Robinson's article, see Robinson, "Legacy of John Gill," 111–125.

123. George, "John Gill," 28. The original quote appears in Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth,* 303.

124. Oliver, "John Gill," 161–162. I have added italics to this quote to highlight the people for whom Gill expressed concern—those who "were awakened," that is, those who were sensible sinners. Robinson assesses Gill's understanding of evangelism in a manner similar to Oliver. See Robison, "Legacy of John Gill," 117–119.

as well as the accompanying doctrines of sensible sinners and evangelical repentance. Considering this fact, merely pointing Gill's charge to preach the Gospel is not sufficient.

In fact, one must receive Gill's call to "preach the gospel of salvation to all men, and declare, that whosoever believes shall be saved" within its proper context. This statement appears in a work that contains some of the strongest statements against the legitimacy of Gospel offers and duty faith in Gill's corpus. In the very sentence from which George drew this quote, Gill denied Gospel offers by writing that the Gospel minister "ought not to offer and tender salvation to any." Even more troubling, in the sentences immediately preceding it, Gill denied duty faith when he wrote, "None are bound to believe in Christ, but such to whom a revelation of him is made and according to the revelation is the faith they are obliged to." He explained that people who "have only an external revelation of him by the ministry of the word"—that is, people who hear the Gospel preached through the external call but do not receive an internal call of the Spirit—are required to believe "no more than is included in that revelation, as that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, who died and rose again, and is the Saviour of sinners &c., but not that he died for them, or that he is their Saviour."[125]

One can likely account for George's misreading of Gill by noting that, for his statements on Gill's convictions on evangelism, he relies heavily on the work of Thomas Nettles.[126] As demonstrated, Nettles does not address Gill's doctrine of eternal justification in a significant manner, and this fact leads him to misinterpret Gill's convictions about evangelism. Though George does explore Gill's doctrine of eternal justification and rightly sees its dangers, when he assesses Gill's evangelistic practice he relies on a source that does not do so, and incorporation of the Nettles material gives George's presentation of Gill an unbalanced feel. George is right on Gill's understanding of eternal justification, but he is wrong in assuming that eternal justification had no relevance for Gill's understating of Gospel proclamation.

George's strong reliance on Nettles becomes especially evident in the several instances in which he uses Nettles to assert that Gill held to different convictions than Joseph Hussey, a man whom George considers a genuine hyper-Calvinist. Nettles' chief argument for distancing Gill from Hussey is his contention that Gill did not consistently maintain that prelapsarian Adam possessed an inability to believe the Gospel, a conviction that he claims Hussey steadfastly maintained.[127] Nettles identifies this understanding of Adamic inability as

125. Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth,* 303.

126. While George cites Nettles several times, he cites him twice in reference to Gill's relationship with hyper-Calvinism. Both citations carry great weight in his argument. See George, "John Gill," 28n, 29n.

127. See Nettles, "John Gill and the Evangelical Awaking," 153. For George, see George, "John Gill," 28n, 29n.

one of hyper-Calvinism's key features. Nettles and George appear to assume that if Gill did not hold to an important hyper-Calvinist tenet often associated with Hussey that Gill might remain free from the charge of hyper-Calvinism.

This comparison with Hussey has little relevance, however, because Hussey never explicitly argued for Adam's incapacity to believe the Gospel.[128] That teaching arrived later in the hyper-Calvinist controversy, primarily around the time the Modern Question debate. Hussey's hyper-Calvinism originated instead from a commitment to eternal salvation—the same commitment that powered Gill's hyper-Calvinism.

George Ella

George Ella is perhaps the most passionate of Gill's defenders. Interestingly, though Ella expresses great displeasure with those who label Gill a hyper-Calvinist, in his most recent work he does not deny the fact that Gill rejected Gospel offers and duty faith. Ella therefore helps to confirm—and does not disprove—that Gill held to such convictions. In addition, Ella holds opinions similar to Gill's, and he presents Gill as a model for contemporary pastors to emulate, hoping that they too will reject Gospel offers and duty faith.[129] The question raised by Ella's work then becomes that of normativity—is the no-offer, no-duty faith position normative, or does it represent a departure from traditional Reformed soteriology and deserve a descriptor such as hyper-Calvinism? The latter is correct, and throughout his works Ella does not convincingly demonstrate the contrary.

Conclusion

Gill significantly modified traditional accounts of soteriology. This fact becomes apparent when one receives his work within its proper historical context. The contra-Puritanism and Hussey-inspired theology that he received during his youth allowed him to develop a sophisticated version of hyper-Calvinism. This theology diminished human agency to the point that it denied universal offers of the Gospel and the obligation of all people to respond positively to the Gospel.

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128. For information on how Hussey did not hold to Adamic inability, consider my assessment of Nettles' engagement with Hussey in chapter one.

129. George M. Ella, *The Free Offer and The Call of the Gospel* (Durham: Go Publications, 2001), 51–53, 62, 66-67. Ella in one place calls those who espouse the Gospel offer position "highly liberal." See ibid., 23, 66. Compare Ella's manner of defending Gill in these more recent works with the approach he took in his earlier pieces. See, for example, Ella, "John Gill and the Charge of Hyper-Calvinism," 160–170; idem., *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth* (Durham: Go Publications, 1995); idem, *John Gill and Justification from Eternity: A Tercentenary Appreciation (1697–1997)* (Durham: Go Publications, 1998). While Ella's earlier research is marked by a different tone than his more recent writings, his earlier pieces do still unfortunately suffer from a failure to interpret Gill's statements on eternal justification, sensible sinners, and the external call of the Gospel correctly.

Interpreting Gill in the manner that I propose will allow future research into this important Baptist theologian to proceed in a more accurate direction. It will also allow greater understanding of the historical context in which Andrew Fuller offered his rebuttals of hyper-Calvinism.

Chapter Three

The Modern Question Debate: A Turning Point in Hyper-Calvinism

Introduction

Hussey and Gill were not the only theologians to advocate hyper-Calvinism during the mid-eighteenth century. Lewis Wyman, John Brine, and John Johnson championed the hyper-Calvinist message in a variety of locations—from Norwich to London to Liverpool. As will become clear, these ministers openly expressed appreciation for Hussey and Gill, but they developed the hyper-Calvinist tradition further by taking it in a new and seemingly unexpected direction.

Objections to hyper-Calvinism also began to appear. Opponents of the theology composed tracts that sought to rebut this rigid form of Calvinism and return churches to open Gospel preaching. The heated exchange that ensued became known as the modern question debate after a pamphlet entitled *The Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* by the Rothwell minister Mathias Maurice. Maurice asked his readers whether "the eternal God does by his Word make it the duty of poor unconverted sinners who hear the Gospel preached or published to believe in Jesus Christ?"[1] Following the release of Maurice's work, numerous polemical pieces for and against hyper-Calvinism soon appeared, with hyper-Calvinism's opponents answering the question in the affirmative and hyper-Calvinism's proponents answering it in the negative.

Regrettably, few scholars have surveyed the surprisingly complex publications that emerged during this time. Advocates for hyper-Calvinism who participated in the modern question debate receive little attention today—at best cursory mentions in broader surveys of Baptist history.[2] The figures who attacked hyper-Calvinism fare little better. Though Geoffrey Nuttall has labeled their opposition to hyper-Calvinism "a turning point" in the history of English dissent, no research devoted exclusively to these ministers exists apart from Nuttall's brief journal article.[3]

The fact that several primary sources related to the debate are difficult to access likely contributes to this neglect. Maurice's sequel to *Modern Question*, *The Modern Question*

1. Matthias Maurice, *A Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* (London: James Buckland, 1737), 3.

2. E.g., the so-called Johnsonian Baptists—a group of hyper-Calvinist ministers known to Fuller—receive only minor mention in surveys of Baptist history. See A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Baptist Union, 1947), 135; Raymond Brown, *English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 86.

3. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and the Modern Question: A Turning-Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 1 (1965): 101–123.

Affirm'd and Prov'd, is available in only a few archives.[4] As far as I am aware, researchers have yet to digitize it and make it available online. Abraham Taylor's contribution to the modern question debate, a tract entitled *The Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith,* similarly remains hard to access.[5] Nuttall once called it a "rare piece" and listed numerous historians who expressed difficulty in finding it.[6] Though Taylor's tract exercised considerable influence over Andrew Fuller, its inaccessibility has led many contemporary scholars who research Fuller not to examine it.[7]

The writings of the hyper-Calvinist John Johnson can prove especially challenging to procure. Johnson's movement, the so-called Johnsonian Baptists, lost momentum soon after his death.[8] Very few scholars have given his writings attention, and Johnson's works are not available in a digital format or in most historical archives.[9]

This thesis will serve as the first modern investigation of these works, but the fact that these writings have remained largely forgotten is lamentable.[10] The modern question debate set the trajectory for hyper-Calvinist soteriology for the remainder of the century. Indeed, it was in the context set by this dispute that Andrew Fuller developed his understanding of hyper-Calvinism and, eventually, his rebuttal of that theology. To understand Fuller and his colleagues rightly, historians must first explore the important but oft-forgotten leaders who discussed the nature and validity of hyper-Calvinism during the modern question debate.

I offer such an exploration in this chapter, giving attention to ministers and theologians who composed what were during their lifetimes influential works. I consider hyper-Calvinism's advocates and detractors, investigating how the theology developed as it faced supporters who wished to improve it and opponents who sought to show its weaknesses.

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4. Matthias Maurice, *The Modern Question Affirm'd and Prov'd* (London: James Buckland, 1739).

5. Abraham Taylor, *The Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith* (London: James Brackstone, 1742).

6. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and the Modern Question," 102.

7. E.g., Cross notes that he was unable to access a copy of Taylor's work as he conducted research for Anthony R. Cross, *Useful Learning: Neglected Means of Grace in the Reception of the Evangelical Revival among English Particular Baptists* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2017), 117. Taylor's publication does not receive mention alongside other modern question tracts in Roger Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelical Calvinism among Eighteenth-Century Baptist Ministers Trained at Bristol Academy, 1690-1791* (Milton: Baptist Historical Society 2006), 186–187; Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689–1765* (London: Olive Tree, 1967; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 131–139.

8. For information on the Johnsonian Baptists, see Kenneth Hipper, "The Johnsonian Baptists of Norwich," *Baptist Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1999): 19–32; Robert Dawbarn, "The 'Johnsonian Baptists,'" *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1912): 54–61.

9. E.g., Johnson's texts are not available in Dr. Williams's Library, a research library that possesses an extensive collection of writings from nonconformists.

10. I wish to express gratitude to several archivists at the Dr. Williams's Library and the Liverpool City Council Archives (the only source for writings by John Johnson) who helped make my search for these documents a success.

This survey reveals that hyper-Calvinism morphed as it moved away from the proposals offered by Hussey and Gill. To address objections raised during the modern question debate, hyper-Calvinist theologians broadened their tradition by arguing that prelapsarian Adam had no ability or obligation to accept the Gospel. From this point, they asserted that contemporary audiences likewise have no capacity or duty to accept the Gospel. Only the elect, the recipients of a special work from the Spirit, have such a capacity. The rise of this appeal to Adamic inability coincided with a de-emphasis on eternal salvation. In the end, hyper-Calvinism became a more theologically diverse movement; it no longer relied just on claims about salvation in eternity. Hyper-Calvinism's central concern remained, however. Hyper-Calvinists continued to argue passionately for a passive understanding of human faith that delegitimized Gospel offers and duty faith.

I begin by introducing the people and central issues relevant to the modern question debate. I then demonstrate that the modern question debate brought about a de-emphasis on eternal salvation and that hyper-Calvinists responded to this change by appealing to prelapsarian Adam's perceived spiritual inabilities. I conclude by revealing that a desire to preserve divine grave by minimizing human agency lay behind hyper-Calvinist remarks about Adam.

The Framing of the Modern Question Debate

Matthias Maurice

Northamptonshire continued to grapple with debates over Contra-Puritanism long after the deaths of Tobias Crisp and Richard Davis. In 1729, the Rothwell minister Matthias Maurice released *Monuments of Mercy*, a history of the Rothwell Congregation church. Maurice ostensibly authored *Monuments* to honor several former pastors of his congregation, but his ultimate goal was to defend Richard Davis, his immediate predecessor in the ministry. Edmund Calamy had earlier alleged in *Nonconformist's Memorial* that Davis possessed "odd notions and dividing principles" and gave "no small disturbance to the ministers and congregations around him."[11] With this remark, Calamy likely referred to the censure that Davis received at Kettering for promoting contra-Puritanism. In Maurice's lengthy *Monuments*, he presented Davis as a faithful pastor who maintained healthy theological commitments. Maurice asserted that Davis' theology was not controversial at all; Davis'

11. For these remarks as well as a brief history of Calamy's claims about Davis, see the editorial notes in Edmund Calamy, *The Nonconformist's Memorial,* ed. Samuel Palmer (London: Alexander Hogg, 1778), 223–224.

opponents simply failed to see how it highlighted divine grace.[12] The fact that Maurice felt the need to respond so forcefully to Calamy reveals just how impassioned discussions about Contra-Puritanism remained in Northamptonshire.

Hyper-Calvinism also became a topic of debate in the region. Maurice's 1737 publication *A Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* was the first work to address hyper-Calvinist theology directly. Although Maurice appreciated elements of contra-Puritanism, he refused to countenance the ministers in his area who opposed Gospel offers and duty faith. His work launched tremendous controversy first in Northamptonshire and then beyond.[13]

Maurice's attack on hyper-Calvinism was significant primarily for what it lacked—it avoided any consideration of salvation in eternity, the central tenet of the Hussey and Gill system. Nowhere in *Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* or in his subsequent *Modern Question Affirmed and Proved* did Maurice consider eternal justification or its attending theological commitments like eternal union with Christ and eternal adoption in Christ.

Maurice did not explain his reticence to address salvation's timing, but his hesitation might have originated from his fondness for Richard Davis. In his defense of Davis' ministry at Rothwell, Maurice went to great lengths to legitimize Davis' claim that justification precedes faith.[14] Davis did not hold to full salvation in eternity as Hussey did, but he argued for justification before faith in a manner similar to Tobias Crisp. Hussey later used Crisp's proposals as the foundation on which he built his arguments for eternal salvation and no Gospel offers. Maurice may have wished to avoid criticizing Hussey's soteriology too harshly lest he besmirch the Crispian underpinnings on which it stood.

The fact that Maurice could express praise for Hussey gives credence to this theory. In the first chapter to his subsequent address on hyper-Calvinism, the *Modern Question Affirm'd*, Maurice declared that "Hussey is very full of the truth as we assert it."[15] He then provided quotes from Hussey's *Glory of Christ Unveiled* that he claimed demonstrated that Hussey did not deny Gospel offers but instead issued open calls to evangelism. While his reading of Hussey was dramatically incorrect—Hussey, after all, wrote *Christ Unveiled* specifically to deny Gospel offers—the fact that Maurice wished to identify with Hussey and even reconstruct Hussey as a promoter of open Gospel preaching shows the respect that he had for him. For Maurice, Hussey was not an outlier with radical views on soteriology. He

12. Matthias Maurice, *Monuments of Mercy* (London: Richard Hett, 1729), 59–119.

13. In simultaneously defending Davis and attacking hyper-Calvinism, Maurice revealed that he did not think that Davis denied Gospel offers and duty faith as Gill once alleged.

14. Maurice, *Monuments of Mercy*, 69–119.

15. Maurice, *Modern Question Affirm'd and Prov'd,* 1–17.

was a respected theologian with whom he sought to identify.

Likely for this reason, Maurice focused his comments about hyper-Calvinism not on eternal salvation but the obligations that attend the Gospel call. He asked whether God required "unconverted sinners who hear the Gospel preached or published to believe in Jesus."[16] He employed a simple Biblicism that considered but one question: were there or were there not instances in the Scripture in which God called sinners to possess faith in Christ? Since he believed the answer to that question was yes, he concluded that hyper-Calvinism must be false.

This argument was straightforward and avoided many of the complexities raised by Hussey and Gill. Maurice supported it with clear exegetical work. He contested, "Any person wisely, who lays aside all affection of singularity, and sincerely and unfeignedly makes the Bible the Rule of his faith, must say, that God does by his Word plainly and plentifully make it the duty of unconverted sinners, who hear the Gospel, to believe in Christ."[17]

His approach involved surveying texts from both Testaments to demonstrate the universal duty all people have to relate to God. He cited the Apostolic preaching recorded in Acts to reveal that calls to faith and repentance appear to have a universal scope. He even relied on direct appeals to the Biblical text when he considered potential objections to his argument. Near the conclusion of the work, he noted that his opponents might cite their understandings of human depravity or particular redemption to argue for hyper-Calvinism. He largely refused to address these issues and responded only with a series of Biblical quotations that he believed portrayed open Gospel calls.

While Maurice's reasoning had potency because of his frequent appeals to Scripture, his method would prove even more significant. In a single move, he recast the conversation surrounding hyper-Calvinism. No longer focused on matters such as the timing of salvation, the role of conditions in covenant theology, or the differences between active and passive justification, assessments of hyper-Calvinism now only had to consider one important point—did the Bible claim that sinners have a duty to respond to the Gospel message?

Earlier advocates of hyper-Calvinism had indeed addressed this question of human obligation, but they had never done so in the abstract. They preceded their statements against the universal duty to believe the Gospel with lengthy expositions about salvation in eternity. Maurice changed this conversation. He stripped it of the soteriological underpinnings that had motivated it up to this point. In his estimate, a study of relevant biblical texts about the nature

16. Maurice, *Modern Question Answer'd*, 3.
17. Ibid., 4.

of the Gospel's call would prove sufficient to settle the dispute.

Maurice's singular emphasis on the human responsibility to respond to the Gospel becomes apparent in a caveat found in the introduction to his *Modern Question Answer'd.* There he explained that he did not seek to consider "what power or what inclination unconverted sinners have to obey any part of the law of God; but only what according to their law is their duty."[18] In other words, he avoided speculation over exactly how God might call the unconverted to have saving faith; he only wished to demonstrate that God indeed issued such a call. *Modern Question Answer'd* did not provide a constructive proposal that sought to explain the interactions between God and man. It attempted only to confirm that faith in Christ remained a universal human obligation.

The fact that *Modern Question Answer'd* arrived as the first significant answer to hyper-Calvinism gave it the ability to exercise tremendous influence over all later discussions. Subsequent writers who wrote for or against hyper-Calvinism had to inhabit the stage set by Maurice's pamphlet. They all concerned themselves primarily with answering his question about a universal human obligation to respond to the Gospel—and they all adopted the rhetoric and assumptions that he employed.

Lewis Wayman

Lewis Wayman provided the first hyper-Calvinist response to *Modern Question Affirm'd* when in 1738 he released *A Further Enquiry After the Truth*. Wayman emerged from Northamptonshire—the same Rothwell congregation as Maurice—and shared Maurice's affection for Richard Davis. He departed from Maurice on the question of hyper-Calvinism, however. He imbibed the teachings of Hussey and Gill and included in his *Further Enquiry* frequent references to their writings. Indeed, Wayman sought to answer Maurice precisely because he felt Maurice was too disrespectful of Hussey.[19]

Despite Wayman's appreciation for Hussey and Gill, he entered the hyper-Calvinist debate by accepting the conditions set by Maurice. Surprisingly, he evaded the topic of salvation in eternity. Wayman wrote that the modern question was not about theological points such as "the attributes or perfections of God" or the nature of "adoption, justification or sanctification" but rather "the duty of unregenerate men."[20] He then set out to demonstrate through both exegetical arguments and theological reasoning that God does not require all

18. Ibid., 1.

19. Lewis Wayman, *A Further Enquiry after Truth* (London: J. and J. Marshall, 1738), v, 99, 107–108. Robert Oliver documents Hussey's influence over Wayman. See Robert Oliver, "Historical Survey of English Hyper-Calvinism," *Foundations* 7 (1981): 10.

20. Wayman, *Further Enquiry*, vi.

unregenerate persons to exercise faith in Christ. Wayman would continue this trend again later when he answered his critics in 1739's *A Defence of the Further Enquiry After Truth.*[21]

This strategy departed from how Hussey and Gill presented their convictions. Those hyper-Calvinist leaders would have agreed with Wayman that unregenerate people have no responsibility to accept the Gospel call, but they would have immediately followed such an assertion with comments about salvation in eternity. Their rejection of a universal duty to believe the Gospel stemmed directly from their commitment to eternal salvation. Wayman, in contrast, jettisoned any firm link between hyper-Calvinism and the sophisticated soteriological proposals that helped create it. He did not object to salvation in eternity, but he refrained from referencing that doctrine in polemical debates over hyper-Calvinism.

Abraham Taylor

Other contestants in the modern question debate similarly accepted the framing found in Maurice's writing, including the influential Abraham Taylor. Taylor served as a tutor at a dissenting academy in Deptford that was supported by the King's Head Society, and he also delivered addresses for the Lime Street lecture series. He quickly rose to fame due to his involvement in heated debates over deism and Arminianism—Alan P. F. Sell once labeled him a "volatile theological meteor"—but his work on hyper-Calvinism remains his most historically significant contribution.[22]

Taylor's first serious attack on hyper-Calvinism emerged in 1739 when he published *An Address to Young Students in Divinity,* a lecture that he originally delivered to his academy pupils. Though he stated in the work's introduction that he would not explicitly name his intended opponents, he clearly saw Joseph Hussey as his chief target. He remarked that around thirty years before the release of his lecture, a book that featured "a great deal of rambling learning" from a "confused head" emerged. This book led uncritical readers to advocate for a so-called "operation-doctrine" in opposition to an "offer-doctrine." Such rhetoric led the people who imbibed the book's teachings to deny "that Christ is to be offered to sinners" and to oppose "all application being made to the consciences of sinners."[23] With these remarks, Taylor almost certainly referenced Hussey. Hussey's *Christ Unveiled* appeared nearly thirty years before Taylor's *An Address to Young Students*, and a sharp

21. E.g., Lewis Wayman, *A Defence of the Further Enquiry after Truth* (London: J. Marshall, 1739), iii–iv. Wayman intended this release primarily to rebut Taylor's *An Address to Young Student*s, but he supplemented it with brief objections to Maurice's second attack on hyper-Calvinism, *The Modern Question Affirm'd*.

22. For Sell's biography of Taylor and his analysis of Taylor's theological contributions, see Alan P. F. Sell, *Hinterland Theology: A Stimulus to Theological Construction* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 41–70.

23. Abraham Taylor, *An Address to Young Students in Divinity* (London: John Oswald, 1739), 14–15.

distinction between God's operations of the Spirit and offers of the Gospel featured prominently in Hussey's text.

Taylor proved a perceptive reader of Hussey. Interacting closely with Hussey's comments, he explained that Hussey and his followers possessed a covenant theology that intended "to exclude works from being the purchasing conditions of salvation." He then went on to offer a substantial survey of Hussey's understanding of legal repentance verses evangelical repentance. He even addressed Hussey's claim that ministers should not preach the law to drive sinners to forgiveness lest they become "soul murderers."[24]

Taylor gave special attention to Hussey's remarks on eternal salvation. Throughout his address, he warned against the "paradoxes of antinomianism" that might "weaken men's obligations to duty and holiness." Taylor's use of the pejorative term antinomian demonstrates his desire to connect Hussey's theology with the controversial figures from which it emerged—namely, the Contra-Puritan Tobias Crisp. Nevertheless, Taylor was aware that Hussey and his followers went beyond positions taken by Crisp. He explained that in the name of pursuing free grace, Hussey not only advanced justification prior to faith but also made "God's decree and his execution the same thing." That is, they removed a distinction between God's intention to save in eternity and salvation's actual occurrence in time.[25]

The vehemence with which Taylor lodged objections to eternal justification led John Gill to reply with *The Necessity of Good Works to Salvation.*[26] Although Taylor had not mentioned Gill by name in his writing, Gill apparently found Taylor's rejection of eternal salvation so concerning that he felt compelled to reply. In his response, Gill focused solely on the issue of justification before faith and carefully avoided questions about the nature of the Gospel call.

Gill perhaps did so because he wished to center the conversation around his chief theological commitment—his strongly held belief in salvation in eternity. He likely did not desire to enter directly into the burgeoning fight over the modern question.[27] For Gill, the focal point should remain the timing of salvation. Considerations of a human response to the

24. Ibid., 13, 21, 33.

25. Ibid., attached introduction and advertisement.

26. John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (London: George Keith, 1773), 2:181–195. For a survey of the exchanges between Gill and Taylor, consider the material cited in the previous chapter. See also Cross, *Useful Learning*, 116–118.

27. Interestingly, Rippon once hypothesized that even though Gill did not participate in the modern question debate directly, he did closely follow it. Rippon believed that the discussions the modern question debate created caused Gill to change his understanding of human depravity. The evidence that Ryland gives is inconclusive, but his claim is interesting. See John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of John Gill* (London: John Bennett, 1838), 43–48.

Gospel should only proceed after first examining this crucial point.[28]

Interestingly, Taylor deemphasized his objections to eternal salvation after Maurice's *Modern Question Answer'd* rose in popularity. He entitled what would become his most significant work on hyper-Calvinism *The Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith* in an attempt to pay homage to Maurice's publication. With this 1742 release, Taylor followed Maurice by eschewing eternal salvation and focusing on only one issue. He wrote, "The question is: whether repentance unto life and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to salvation are the duties of sinners?"[29] Taylor then used a fictional debate between four ministers to answer this question in the affirmative. The change in direction that Taylor took reveals just how influential Maurice's *Modern Question Answer'd* had become.

John Brine

John Brine answered Taylor just one year after the publication of *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith*. The title of Brine's rebuttal, *A Refutation of Arminian Principles,* might give the impression that Brine wished to condemn all who opposed hyper-Calvinism as Arminians. Brine, however, did not intend such a broad generalization. He wrongly believed that Taylor adopted Arminian sentiments when Taylor made unclear remarks about unconditional election in his *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith*. Brine wrote primarily to challenge Taylor on this particular point, but he included a broader defense of hyper-Calvinism to make his full position known.[30]

Despite the passion with which Brine held his hyper-Calvinism, he could often demonstrate a concern for Christian unity. His *Refutation* opened with a narrative in which he bemoaned a split that occurred between supporters and opponents of hyper-Calvinism in the Northamptonshire village of Brigstock. In his account of this split, though the inhabitants of this village at one time exhibited sincere Christian love for one another, a controversy over hyper-Calvinism needlessly "caused a dissension among those serious Christians."[31] His desire for unity appeared again in his second tract on hyper-Calvinism, *Motives to Love and Unity Among Calvinists.* As the title to this 1753 publication implies, Brine's stated goal was to heal the divisions that emerged between what he saw as two different understandings of

28. Contrast my claim that Gill did not involve himself directly in the modern question controversy with Shaw who incorrectly states that Gill responded to Matthias Maurice. Gill composed no such rebuttal to Maurice. Shaw also incorrectly identifies Brine as a respondent to Maurice; however, Brine directed his modern question pamphlets to Abraham Taylor. See Ian J. Shaw, *High Calvinists in Action: Calvinism and the City—Manchester and London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 19.

29. Taylor, *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith*, 9.

30. John Brine, *A Refutation of Arminian Principles* (London: A. Ward, 1743), 12–17. For Taylor's remarks that generated Brine's concern about Arminianism, see Taylor*, Modern Question*, 9–28.

31. Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* 3.

the Reformed tradition—hyper-Calvinism and the Calvinism that maintained duty faith.[32]

Of course, in Brine's comments about Christian unity, the hyper-Calvinists were never the instigators of serious conflict. Instead, they experienced unwarranted attacks from their adversaries. His frequent assertions that his critics were needlessly harsh helped him in debates. Such claims allowed him to frame all objections to hyper-Calvinism as offensive attacks on Christian unity.

Still, despite the advantages that calls for unity might have brought to his position, Brine's pleas for Christian charity merit recognition. Such rhetoric was not typical in printed discussions about hyper-Calvinism during this time. He appeared to issue them with sincerity.

Brine was well placed to serve as one of hyper-Calvinism's chief advocates. He grew up in the Northamptonshire town of Kettering and attended the Little Meeting, the same congregation in which Gill participated. He experienced Christian conversion under Gill's preaching and eventually entered into pastoral ministry. As a minister, Brine moved to London to serve the Cripplegate church once led by the noted hyper-Calvinist minster John Skepp.[33]

This background allowed Brine to develop affection for significant players in hyper-Calvinism's development. He remained a close friend to Gill throughout his life; indeed, Gill delivered the funeral address for Anne, Brine's first wife, and then later spoke at Brine's own funeral service.[34] Brine also displayed devotion to the controversial figures who preceded him. In his *Remarks Upon a Pamphlet Entitled Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme,* he defended Tobias Crisp and Joseph Hussey from attacks lodged by an anonymous critic. Remarking on Hussey, Brine declared that the now deceased minister should receive

32. John Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity among Calvinists who Differ in Some Points* (London: John Ward, 1753).

33. For a succinct biography of Brine, see Barry H. Howson, *Erroneous and Schismatical Opinions: The Question of Orthodoxy Regarding the Theology of Hanserd Knollys* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 168–169.

34. For a description of the close friendship between Brine and Gill, see Nuttall, "Modern Question," 117–118. For the text of the funeral sermon delivered for Anne Brine, see John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 1:427–443. Gill later republished the sermon he preached at John Brine's funeral under the title "The Free Grace of God Exalted in the Character of the Apostle Paul." See ibid., 1:579–591; Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses* (London: printed by author, 1808), 2:576. Other events also reveal the closeness between Brine and Gill. The two men jointly signed a recommendatory preface to an English translation of Witsius' work on covenant theology. See Herman Witsius. *The Oeconomy of the Covenants Between God and Man,* trans. by William Crookshank (Dublin: R. Stewart, 1774). In addition, Brine took over Gill's lectureship at Great Eastcheap. For information on this transition of the lectureship, see Arthur Swainson Langley, "Baptist Ministers in England about 1750 A. D.," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 6, no. 2 (1918): 139; W. T. Whitley, "Baptist Meetings in the City of London," *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* 5, no. 2 (1916): 81.

respect for his "great learning, extensive knowledge and zeal for truth."[35] The followers of Crisp, Hussey, and Gill in turn honored Brine later. Walter Wilson, writing from his vantage point in the early nineteenth century, remarked that Brine's publications were no longer sought after except "by the admirers of Gill, and of the Crispian school."[36]

Likely due to his relationship with Gill, Brine's theology closely followed what his fellow London-based minister outlined. In a 1734 funeral sermon entitled *The Covenant of Grace Open'd*, he delineated a version of covenant theology that emulated Gill's. He asserted that the covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*) and the covenant of grace (*foedus gratiae*) were synonymous.[37] He argued that this fact meant that the Father entered into a covenant with Christ—not with the elect. The elect did not directly partake in the covenantal agreement and were, therefore, not required to fulfill the condition of faith before they could receive salvation.

Brine then claimed that this rejection of conditionality allowed salvation to occur pre-temporally, within God's covenantal arrangements. Concerning the covenant, he wrote,

> Though Christ had not actually accomplished the work of redemption, yet having restipulated and agreed with the Father to perform it in the appointed time; all the blessings of the new covenant were communicated to the elect of God, as much as if it had been really completed, but with a view to the future satisfaction of Christ, promised in this covenant.[38]

Brine presented the blessings that the elect receive from this covenant are eternal union with Christ along with eternal adoption in Christ and eternal justification.

Brine passionately defended the doctrine of eternal salvation across numerous publications. In his 1732 tract *A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification,* he asserted that justification "is an immanent act, not without, but in God…it therefore must be eternal."[39] He then condemned the justification by faith position for making faith a work necessary in salvation's reception. Brine countered the traditional Protestant understanding of faith by arguing, "This is the concern which faith has in our justification: it beholds and views it, but doth not give being to it, or impute the righteousness of Christ to us, that is God's act without us; and therefore justification by faith, is only the comfortable knowledge

35. John Brine, *Remarks Upon a Pamphlet Entitled Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme* (London: Aaron Ward, 1736), 17.

36. Wilson, *History of Dissenting Churches,* 2:578.

37. John Brine, *The Covenant of Grace Open'd* (London: Aaron Ward, 1734), 7, 16–17. See also Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* 6–17.

38. Ibid., 24.

39. John Brine, *A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification* (London: A. Ward, 1732), 34.

or perception of that gracious privilege."[40] In his assessment, then, faith can only bring about what Gill once termed passive justification, a personal awareness of one's salvation. Faith cannot influence actual or eternal justification.

Salvation in eternity allowed Brine to deny Gospel offers and duty faith. In a homily on 2 Timothy 1:9, a verse to which Hussey and Gill often appealed, Brine contended that God could issue Gospel calls only to persons who have experienced eternal salvation. For Brine, the general preaching of the Gospel does not constitute a summons to receive salvation; instead, it serves as an appeal for the elect to realize the spiritual blessings that God had given them in eternity. Since non-elect persons cannot obtain these blessings, Brine believed that God does not provide them with sincere Gospel calls or an obligation to respond to the Gospel.[41]

Brine's soteriological commitments clearly accorded with Gill's, and he admitted his indebtedness to Gill throughout his published tracts and sermons. In his defense of eternal justification, for example, Brine began by instructing his readers, "This great doctrine has been fully stated, and strongly defended, by Mr. Gill, and others before him; whose arguments ought to be considered, and answers even to them, if anything is done to purpose in this controversy."[42] Elsewhere, in his explanation of the divine decrees, he made use of Gill's writings to describe how infralapsarianism cohered with eternal justification.[43]

The particular manner in which Brine presented his construction of eternal salvation further reveals his allegiance to Gill. When Brine addressed how the elect might receive spiritual blessings from God before their temporal existence, he followed Gill over Hussey. To explain salvation in eternity, Hussey had postulated the existence of the Glory-Man, a term that he used to describe a pre-incarnate union of the Son of God with a human soul. Gill later disparaged this idea and countered that God provides the elect with eternal benefits solely through the act of unconditional election. Brine preferred Gill's interpretation rather than Hussey's. He devoted several pages to repudiating the Glory-Man concept and then

40. Ibid., 12.

41. John Brine, *The Causes of Salvation and Vocation Considered* (London: Dan. Nottage, 1752), 37–38. Brine at times could buttress his arguments against Gospel offers and duty faith by appealing to particular redemption. See his response to Isaac Watts' *The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind,* for example. There, Brine used Tobias Crisp's understanding of particular redemption to promote a limited understanding of Gospel preaching. The terminology Brine employed in that work—sensible sinners, for example—originated from Gill. See John Brine, *The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ Asserted* (London: Aaron Ward, 1743).

42. Brine, *Defence of the Eternal Justification,* 5.

43. Brine, *Remarks on a Pamphlet,* 8–9. Contra Beck who argues that Brine was a staunch supralapsarian. See Peter Beck, "John Brine, 1703–1765" (Paper presented at the Andrew Fuller Center of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 6 May 2017), 9–11.

supplied an alternative proposal that relied heavily on Gill's work.[44]

Brine defended Gill's understanding of eternal salvation over the course of his life; however, the rise of the modern question debate marked a change in the way he wrote about hyper-Calvinism. He abstained from addressing salvation in eternity when he interacted with modern question combatants. In both *Refutation of Arminian Principles* and *Motives to Love and Unity,* Brine concentrated solely on answering Maurice's question about human responsibility before God. Like Lewis Wayman before him, he accepted the terms of debate as set by Maurice.

This fact meant that Brine, the most notable exponent of Gill's theology, offered a two-track strategy when describing hyper-Calvinism. In many of his sermons and publications, he served as a careful preserver of Gill's understanding of eternal salvation. When he defended hyper-Calvinism from its critics, however, he concentrated only on explaining why God does not command every person to trust in Christ for salvation. He offered these explanations without any significant references to salvation in eternity.

This tactic would prove consequential for hyper-Calvinism's evolution. It forced Brine to construct creative proposals to answer Maurice's question about the broad obligations of the Gospel. Faced with this task, Brine proved to be an innovative thinker. As will become clear, he departed from merely copying Gill's positions and began to supplement Gill's work with a new understanding of humanity's responsibilities before God. His statements on the need for a warrant for salvation, for example, would prove especially influential for later theologians such as Fuller who engaged with hyper-Calvinism.

Importantly, Brine's deliberations of matters related to the modern question debate did not appear in only a few of his tracts. After the release of *Refutation of Arminian Principles* and *Motives to Love and Unity,* he continued to formulate his ideas in sermons such as *Grace Proved to Be at the Sovereign Disposal of God* and *The Glory of the Gospel Considered*.[45] Engagement with John Johnson, a hyper-Calvinist who ministered in Liverpool, also caused him to clarify his commitments.[46]

In this way, Brine serves as a significant connecting bridge between hyper-Calvinism as it

44. For more information on the difference between Hussey and Gill on this matter, see the preceding chapters. For Brine's attacks on Hussey's Glory-Man position, consider John Brine, *The Proper Eternity of the Divine Decrees* (London: John Ward, 1754), 23–30. For Brine's appropriation of Gill's argument for unconditional election, see Brine, *Causes of Salvation and Vocation Considered,* 28–29.

45. See John Brine, *Grace Proved to be at the Sovereign Disposal of God* (London: George Keith, 1760); idem., *The Glory of the Gospel Considered* (London: George Keith, 1762).

46. The debate between Brine and Johnson will receive attention below, but consider Brine's most significant work against Johnson. See John Brine, *Some Mistakes in a Book of Mr. John Johnson's of Liverpool* (London: John Ward, 1755).

existed before the modern question debate and hyper-Calvinism as it presented itself after Maurice's pamphlet. Earlier, Lewis Wayman in his *A Further Enquiry* minimized talk of eternal salvation and focused on the concerns raised by Maurice. Yet, Wayman was not as creative as Brine, and his publications were not as influential. Brine served in London, a location that granted him significance in his denomination, and he closely connected himself to the respected John Gill. His willingness to address the modern question directly and advance new theological proposals in light of it created represents a turning point in discussions about hyper-Calvinism.

Subsequent Publications

Other publications that appeared after Brine's *Refutation of Arminian Principles* reveal that Maurice's work continued to enjoy influence.[47] Alvery Jackson, a Baptist minister in Barnoldswick, offered in 1752 *The Question Answered.* Echoing Maurice's rhetoric, he asked on the title page "whether saving faith in Christ is a duty required by the moral law, of all those who live under the Gospel revelation?"[48] Jackson answered this query in the affirmative and provided eight points to support his case.

The Liverpool minister John Johnson entered the modern question controversy in 1754 with *The Faith of God's Elect*. Johnson possessed great familiarity with Hussey's writings. He used Hussey's phrase Glory-Man to describe his Christology.[49] He wrote of "eternal redemption," and he constructed his understanding of the *pactum salutis* to frame salvation as occurring pre-temporally.[50] He even directly copied some of Hussey's terminology. When explaining the eternal union the elect have with Christ, he used phrases drawn from Hussey

47. I do not include in this survey a work purported to have been written by Thomas Gutteridge around the time of Brine's engagement with the modern question. John Ryland recorded in his biography of Andrew Fuller that a Thomas Gutteridge of Oundle composed a tract that answered the modern question on the affirmative side. See John Ryland, *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, the Patience of Hope Illustrated; in the life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (London: Button & Son, 1816), 7. I have not located a copy of this publication. Cross hypothesizes that Ryland could have mistaken Gutteridge's writing for Taylor's. See Cross, *Useful Learning,* 118. I find Ryland's claim that Gutteridge composed a tract answering the modern question on the affirmative interesting. Gutteridge authored funeral elegies for Joseph Hussey and William Bentley, a devoted Hussey supporter. This fact would seem to indicate that Gutteridge was sympathetic to the hyper-Calvinist side. Gutteridge's elegy for Hussey remains hard to find, but an abridgment of it appears in Thomas Gutteridge, *The Universal Elegy, or a Poem on Bunhill Burial Ground* (London: published by author, n.d.), 25. For Gutteridge's elegy for Bentley, see idem., *An Elegy Sacred to the Memory of Rev. Mr. William Bentley* (London: published by author, n.d.), 1. For a brief analysis of Gutteridge's elegies, see Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 2:102–103.

48. Alvery Jackson, *The Question Answered* (London: J. Ward, 1752).

49. John Johnson, *The Faith of God's Elect: Or, the Life of Jesus Manifest in his Saints* (Liverpool: E. Owen, 1754), 235. A later historian would record that Johnson's followers embraced the so-called "indwelling scheme" favored by Isaac Watts. The Christology promoted by Watts was nearly the same as the position Hussey favored. See Edward Deacon, *Samuel Fisher: Baptist Minister of Norwich and Wisbech* (Bridgeport: Brewer-Colgan, 1911), 43–44.

50. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect*, 34–35.

such as spiritual union and marriage union.[51] He further mimicked Hussey's phrasing when he wrote that salvation must occur in an "above the fall" way.[52]

Johnson also had knowledge of Gill's works and expressed high praise for them. He never addressed Gill's soteriology directly in his published pieces. Still, writing about Gill's brilliance as a theologian Johnson once claimed, "I think there is no subject treated on in all his works wherein he has not taken care to have some learned men to keep him in countenance, though he may exceed them in his way of opening it."[53]

Nevertheless, when Johnson decided to defend hyper-Calvinism, he focused almost exclusively on the issue of human obligation before God. He mentioned his commitment to eternal salvation, but he did not allow that commitment to play a leading role in his apology for the hyper-Calvinist approach.[54] In his work that sought to show "the nature of the question and wherein the controversy consists," Johnson focused exclusively on the question that Maurice raised—"what is the duty we have to our creator?"[55] He would go on to outline an intricate and controversial account of human responsibility to the Gospel in *Faith of God's Elect* and also in its sequel, *Evangelical Truths Vindicated.*[56]

Modern Question Debates Over the Nature of Faith

This willingness to minimize eternal salvation represents a surprising turn in hyper-Calvinism's development. Perhaps Wayman, Brine, and Johnson took this approach because they wished to engage directly with the first significant challenger to their position. Maybe they hoped that by concentrating on Maurice's rhetoric about a universal human obligation to have faith that they could provide a more satisfying defense of their views. In addition, they possibly realized that Maurice agreed with certain aspects of their soteriology—justification before faith, for example—and only wished to engage him on disputed matters.

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51. Ibid., 35–37.

52. John Jonson, *Original Letters Written by the Late Mr. John Johnson of Liverpool* (Norwich: Crouse, Stevenson, and Matchett, 1796), 1:24. This publication does not provide the name of an editor, but other sources indicate that Samuel Fisher, a ministry associate of Johnson's, performed all editorial work. E.g., Deacon, *Samuel Fisher*, 33.

53. Johnson, *Original Letters*, 32.

54. For brief allusions to salvation in eternity in Johnson's published corpus, consider ibid., 63–75. Later, Johnson did more openly express his views on eternal salvation after Brine challenged him to disclose his soteriological commitments in more detail. However, this disclosure occurred in a tract intended to rebut John Brine—not in a work directly related to the modern question controversy. See John Johnson, *Evangelical Truths Vindicated* (Liverpool, E. Owen, 1758). 2–22.

55. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect,* 1.

56. See Cross, *Useful Learning, 129.* Cross incorrectly identifies the work's title as *Divine Truth.* However, Johnson wrote *Evangelical Truths Vindicated* as the sequel to *Faith of God's Elect.* With it, Johnson responded to criticisms lodged against him by John Brine. Johnson authored *Divine Truth* in 1769 as a meditation on the divine attributes. See John Johnson, *Divine Truth* (London: J. Johnson & J. Payne: 1769).

Of course, naivety might have also played a role. Wayman, Brine, and Johnson wrote prolifically, but their works do not feature the careful desire for consistency found in Gill's publications. Perhaps these men failed to appreciate that by focusing almost exclusively on their opponent's statements about universal obligations to the Gospel they might substantially alter the way they presented their theology.

Whatever the reasons behind this change, a willingness to downplay eternal salvation and embrace Maurice's phrasing was not without ramifications. Maurice wrote about a general obligation to exercise faith in Christ. With his arguments, he sought primarily to address the issue of duty faith. Maurice engaged little with the rejection of Gospel offers, the theological conviction that accompanied hyper-Calvinist denials of duty faith. Participants in the modern question debate followed his lead. Wayman, Brine, and Johnson never explicitly denied Gospel offers, but they also never strongly defended them. They concentrated exclusively on demonstrating why Maurice's proposal was incorrect when he advocated for a universal requirement to believe the Gospel.

Avoiding eternal salvation, hyper-Calvinist rejoinders to Maurice hinged on a distinction between two kinds of faith. Lewis Wayman, the first minister to answer Maurice's *Modern Question Answer'd*, created a contrast between "natural, common, or historical faith" and "supernatural or special faith."[57] He defined natural faith as mental assent to the truths of the Gospel and alleged that this faith merited the appellation natural because it could occur in both the regenerate and the non-regenerate. Supernatural faith, he argued, can only occur in regenerate persons. This form of faith entails placing trust in Christ to receive salvation.

Wayman then asserted that God requires "unconverted sinners" to exercise natural faith. These sinners possess a duty to "believe the Gospel and to believe Christ and his ministers," but they are not responsible to "believe *in* Christ" or to "possess Christ for themselves."[58] Only the regenerate elect have such an obligation. Only they can possess supernatural faith.

This separation between different forms of faith often appeared during the modern question debate. John Brine employed the same formulation in his 1753 response to Abraham Taylor. Brine asked, "What is the duty of unconverted sinners?" He replied by explaining, "It is a belief of the truth of the report of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ." Such a belief, Brine quickly noted, is "not a sinner's fleeing to, receiving of, and resting on the Lord Jesus Christ."[59] The possession of a faith relevant to salvation was for the elect alone.

57. Wayman, *Further Enquiry*, 4.
58. Ibid., vii–viii.
59. Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity,* 28–29.

Hyper-Calvinist ministers who promoted this understanding of faith deemed it a suitable way to combat Maurice's rhetoric. Maurice had argued for a universal responsibility to place faith in Christ. Hyper-Calvinists hoped that by positing two kinds of faith, they might bring nuance to Maurice's phrasing. They could agree with Maurice on a universal duty to exercise faith, but they wished to delineate that duty differently. For them, all people should have faith in the sense that they should believe the Gospel to be true, but only the elect must have saving faith in Christ.

This distinction between two types of faith was not new. Joseph Hussey had earlier argued for two kinds of repentance in his *Glory of Christ Unveiled.* He contended that the non-elect must perform natural repentance, that is, mental assent to the truth of the Gospel message and a commitment to moral reform. Spiritual repentance, an actual acceptance of salvation, remained the purview of the elect. John Gill promulgated a similar construction with his frequent references to legal repentance and evangelical repentance. Wayman rightly recognized the equivalence between his position on faith and the one taken by Hussey and Gill. He wrote that it was not necessary for him to outline in detail the "distribution of faith into its several kinds" lest he unnecessarily bore his readers by rehashing what writers before him once espoused.[60]

What had changed was the context in which Wayman and his associates advanced this bifurcated view of faith. Hussey and Gill advocated their conception of faith as part of their commitment to eternal salvation. They understood that different requirements for the elect and the non-elect emerged directly from their claim that God accomplished salvation pre-temporally, apart from any human action. However, the hyper-Calvinists who took up the modern question debate had no recourse to this argument. They followed Maurice by rejecting any serious considerations of salvation in eternity. The rise of the modern question forced them to find fresh justifications for their two-tiered view of faith.

In this search for an answer, hyper-Calvinists did not reach for the Biblicist approach favored by Maurice. Throughout *Modern Question Answer'd,* Maurice provided numerous Scriptural texts that featured general invitations to receive the Gospel. He interspersed those texts with brief commentary. Maurice did not build a theological account for how God might expect all persons who hear the Gospel to arrive at saving faith; he did not even substantially address potential objections to his argument. He contented himself with demonstrating that Scripture closely connected the preaching of the Gospel with the need for a positive human

60. Wayman, *Further Enquiry,* 4.

response.

Wayman and his hyper-Calvinist compatriots appealed to Scripture, but not with the frequency of Maurice. Abraham Taylor once documented that throughout the modern question controversy, the hyper-Calvinists cited Titus 1:1—"the faith of God's elect"—and 2 Peter 1:1—a "precious faith"—to argue that a special kind of faith existed solely for God's elect.[61] Still, hyper-Calvinists focused most of their attention on fashioning a novel and complex theological proposal. They hoped that by outlining an alternative account of humanity's duties before God that they might circumvent Maurice's frequent citations from the Bible.

This tactic did not go unnoticed. In his fictional conversation between supporters and detractors of hyper-Calvinism, Abraham Taylor noted that all the participants in the modern question debate agreed on the Bible's authority, the need for careful exegesis, and the work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian interpreter. Nevertheless, he portrayed the hyper-Calvinists as persons who deliberately allowed certain theological presuppositions to drive their argumentation.[62] Taylor wrote as a critic of hyper-Calvinism; he was not always the movement's most unbiased examiner. On this point, however, he correctly assessed his opponents' method.

The ministers who opposed Maurice's modern question constructed theological positions that were new to hyper-Calvinism. An unwillingness to engage substantially with salvation in eternity and a desire to combat Maurice's appeals to Scripture drove them in this direction. In their published tracts, they claimed that prelapsarian Adam had no duty or ability to believe the Gospel. From this conclusion, they offered a passionate defense for their two forms of faith.

This response would indelibly mark hyper-Calvinism. Though this proposal originated within a specific polemical context, ministers and theologians who later sought to address hyper-Calvinism would have to confront it. As will become clear later, this approach would prove especially significant for Andrew Fuller's understanding of hyper-Calvinism.

The Argument from Adamic Inability

Seeking to defend a two-tiered understanding of faith that did not rely on eternal salvation, Wayman devoted a lengthy section in his *Further Enquiry* to arguing that God does not

61. Taylor, *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith*, 9–28. These quotations are from the Authorized Version of the Bible, the translation cited in Taylor's remarks.

62. Ibid., 1-8, 29–53.

condemn non-elect persons for rejecting the Gospel. This lack of condemnation, he claimed, revealed that the non-elect do not have a mandate to turn to Christ for salvation.

He rested this assertion on the conviction that God would not hold people responsible for what they are unable to accomplish. The ability to believe the Gospel was, Wayman wrote, "not in the power of man, in his best estate, before the fall."[63] In his estimate, since not even prelapsarian Adam could receive salvation, surely God would not expect fallen humans to receive salvation after the fall.

Outlining his stance in a series of long and unwieldy arguments, Wayman explained that no legitimate reason existed for prelapsarian Adam to accept the Gospel. He alleged that if Adam had somehow gained a full appreciation for the Gospel before the fall, Adam might have then possessed spiritual longings for Christ—longings that would have remained unfulfilled in the Edenic state.[64] In addition, Adam might have seen the glory of Christ and refrained from sinning, an event that would have been a tragedy from Wayman's perspective.[65] Surely, Wayman believed, God intended from before the creation event to send Christ as a mediator. Nothing could have hindered this divine plan. Adam, therefore, simply had to sin.

From these convictions, Wayman concluded that Adam possessed no faculty by which he could accept the Gospel. God withheld from Adam such a capability because it was not relevant to Adam's location in the plan of redemption. Adam could love God, honor God, and appreciate God as his creator. He could even obey God and worship God. Adam, however, could not trust in Christ as his redeemer.

This incapacity to receive the Gospel continued through subsequent human generations because Adam served as the human race's representative head. In Wayman's phrasing, "Whatever power God gave to men, and whatever endowments he bestowed upon our nature in Adam, we being in Adam our head, those endowments he bestowed upon every one of us."[66] Those endowments included the ability to honor God as creator and sustainer, but they did not entail the capacity or obligation to trust in Christ as Savior.

Full acceptance of the Gospel could only arrive following Christ's cross work. Wayman argued that after Christ's resurrection, the Spirit could share the "spiritual blessing" of faith with God's elect.[67] This blessing allows the elect to comprehend the Gospel's full

63. Wayman, *Further Enquiry,* 51.
64. Ibid., 60–61.
65. Ibid., 62–63.
66. Ibid., 53.
67. Ibid., 59.

significance and exercise trust in Christ. This saving faith represents a superadded capacity given exclusively to the elect. With the Spirit's empowerment, the elect can undertake an action not natural to humanity—they can believe in Christ for salvation.

This concept of Adamic inability served Wayman's distinction between natural and supernatural faith well. Wayman opined that from creation Adam possessed a natural faith that "was suited to the enjoyment of God in a lower way…according to the covenant works." However, a "supernatural work of grace" that the elect receive during regeneration could carry the human soul beyond natural faith. This Spirit-given supernatural faith might bring a person "from that natural way of knowing and enjoying of God into another way of knowing him in a mediator and enjoying of him in a nearer relation by Christ."[68]

From this theological foundation, Wayman asserted that the non-elect who do not receive the Spirit's work can only possess natural faith. Such persons should believe that the historical events surrounding the Gospel occurred in human history; they should accept, for example, that Christ died and rose again. Non-elect persons should even attempt to reform their behavior to align more closely with the Bible's ethical demands. Nevertheless, only the elect might have supernatural faith. Only they can go beyond merely giving mental assent to the historical truths of the Gospel and can comprehend the Gospel's full significance. By way of the Spirit's operation, the elect can trust in Christ and receive salvation.

Wayman exhorted Christian ministers to preach with these assumptions in mind. Ministers should preach the indicatives of the Gospel openly so that the non-elect might have a natural faith in the historicity of the Gospel and attempt personal moral reform. He warned ministers, though, against issuing broad calls to respond to the Gospel. Non-elect persons had no ability or duty to make such a response, and implying that they did could only diminish the powerful work to the Spirit in bringing about a "supernatural faith." Attacking Maurice's claim that all people have a duty to respond to the Gospel positively, Wayman admonished his readers to remember "what kind of faith it is which is the duty of unconverted sinners, by the law; and what that faith is which is the gift of God by the covenant of grace."[69]

Wayman's comments about prelapsarian Adam played a significant role in both his theology and his approach to evangelism, and he increased his interest in Adam as the modern question debate continued. In his second tract, *A Defence of the Further Enquiry After Truth,* he sought to defend Joseph Hussey from the charge that Hussey could at times issue contradicting statements. Interestingly, while Wayman expressed gratitude for Hussey,

68. Ibid., 77–78.
69. Ibid., 2.

he did not follow Hussey by advocating for salvation in eternity. Instead, he presented Adam's inability to believe the Gospel as hyper-Calvinism's chief tenet. He alleged that until his critics addressed the question of Adam's relationship to the Gospel that they had "little more to say." All other theological issues had become "but cobwebs."[70]

John Brine similarly appealed to Adam's pre-fall inabilities. In his response to Abraham Taylor, he outlined the core theological commitments that led him to deny duty faith. Even though Brine was a Gill-inspired minister who could passionately defend salvation in eternity, when he defended hyper-Calvinism he focused his concern exclusively on Adam. In his *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* he wrote that he did not deny "that it was the duty of man in his primitive state to believe the truth and importance of every revelation he should receive from God." However, he explained that "with respect to special faith in Christ it seems to me that the powers of man in his perfect state were not fitted and disposed to that act."[71]

Brine offered two reasons that lead him to this verdict—reasons that closely followed the justifications Wayman provided. Concerning belief in the Gospel, Brine stated that "the communication of such a power to man in his primate state would have been in vain" given that Adam did not need salvation. Also, Brine alleged that "special faith in Christ belongs to the new creation" ushered in by Christ. The ability to exercise special or supernatural faith was not given "to man by or according to the law of his first creation."[72]

Brine's later work, *Motives to Love and Unity,* revealed just how firmly he became interested in Adam. He wrote that "if proof could be given that Adam had such power" as believing in the Gospel before the fall, the reasoning of those who held to duty faith would be "most certainly right."[73] This startling admission disclosed that concerns about Adam had become deeply engrained in the hyper-Calvinist movement. Brine made no mention of theological standpoints such as eternal salvation that could have also led to denials of duty faith. For him, his rejection of duty faith stood or fell on the foundation laid by his claims about Adam.

John Johnson also mentioned Adam. He declared that Adam did not possess the "grace of

70. Wayman, *A Defence of Further Enquiry,* 76–77.

71. Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* 5. Even though Brine wrote that prelapsarian Adam did not have a duty to receive Christ, he fervently believed that Adam in this state could still love and honor God. See John Brine, *A Treatise on Various Subjects,* 2nd ed. (London: George Keith: 1766), 1–31. Brine's *A Treatise on Various Subjects* remains difficult to access. I discovered an old copy of it, but an abridgment of comments that Brine made in that work appear in Michael A. G. Haykin, "Baptists Reflecting on Adam and Eve in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15, no. 1 (2011): 95–97.

72. Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles*, 5–6.

73. Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity,* 52.

God in Christ" because such grace "was a mystery hid in God." As a spiritual mystery, this grace could not "be enjoyed without a revelation…from the Son." Barring this dramatic revelation, none of Adam's descendants could possess the obligation or ability to trust in Christ.[74]

Hyper-Calvinism's opponents noticed these frequent appeals to Adam's inability. Alvery Jackson retorted that ministers who denied duty faith could find no foundation for their position in Scripture. For want of better support, they were willing to "venture the weight of their whole building on the crazy bottom of one single human argument," which, he expounded, was "only this: Adam had not faith in Christ."[75] Abraham Taylor authored a fictitious theological debate between both sides of the modern question. He presented the hyper-Calvinist disputant as resting his entire case on a single point—that Adam had no obligation to believe the Gospel.[76]

Despite the frequency with which Wayman, Brine, and Johnson mentioned Adam, they left the concept of Adamic inability surprisingly ill-defined. Wayman could exhibit great passion in his writing, but he failed to detail what exactly his comments about Adam might entail. He never explained whether he referred to a cognitive inability that would render humans as unable to comprehend all of the truths of the Gospel or to an inability that would keep humans from possessing faculties necessary to relate to Christ. His language often suggested both options. Rather than providing further explanation, however, in his polemical pieces he would often cite the Scriptural text "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" and then quickly drop the matter.[77]

Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity* at least displayed some effort to bring clarification to the claim. Brine employed covenant theology to outline Adam's powers—a theological framework that was only implicit in Wayman's statements. He granted that the covenant of works (*foedus operum*) required from all people "a belief of the truth of every revelation, which God, at any time, shall be pleased to make." He even admitted that the "mysteries of redemption by Christ" remain a revelation from God "not above the capacities of men." Nevertheless, Brine went on to argue that people are not capable of understanding the "*real* nature" of redemption without first receiving "additional supernatural revelation or illumination of the mind." This fact meant that although the *foedus operum* could require "of

74. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect,* 96. See also ibid., 11, 28; idem., *Evangelical Truths,* 69.
75. Jackson, *The Question Answered,* 48–49.
76. Taylor, *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith,* 29–53.
77. E.g., Wayman, *Further Enquiry,* 7, 33, 90.

men a belief of and reverential regard to the doctrine of the new covenant," it could not "oblige them unto acting faith on Christ for salvation."[78] Brine's phrasing retained Wayman's stress on the Spirit's supernatural working; it just made use of covenant theology to elucidate the point.

Brine's formulation did not substantially change the Adam proposal, but it did succeed in presenting a somewhat abstract argument in a slightly more understandable format. The use of covenant theology allowed Brine to convey the central point concisely. The writings of hyper-Calvinist opponents display the rhetorical effectiveness of Brine's approach. Abraham Taylor perceived the *foedus operum* as a central component in hyper-Calvinist remarks about Adam.[79]

Notwithstanding this subtle modification made by Brine, the notion that Adam possessed an inability to accept the Gospel remained underdeveloped throughout the entirety of the modern question debate. Its advocates left significant questions about the nature of Adam's incapacities and the reasons for those incapacities unaddressed. Ministers who rejected the concept attacked it for its simplicity and—in many cases—openly mocked it.

The fact that both Hussey and Gill never promoted the idea contributed to it not reaching maturity. Hussey avoided the topic altogether. He focused solely on his concern for eternal salvation. Gill briefly recommended the notion in a sermon entitled *Faith in God and His Word.* He remarked that in regard to salvation, "Man never had in his power to have or to exercise, no, not in the state of innocence."[80] However, in *Cause of God and Truth,* Gill claimed that "Adam, in a state of innocence, had a power of believing in Christ, and did believe in him as the second Person in the Trinity, as the Son of God, cannot well be denied."[81] Gill's stance on the matter was, therefore, at best inconsistent.[82] His denials of

78. Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity*, 39–40. Here Brine made use of the covenant of works in an unconventional manner. More traditional expressions of the *foedus operum* saw faith in Christ as 'superfluous" to discussions about the covenant of works because in that agreement "God promised eternal life to man on the condition of God works." See Robert Letham, "The *Foedus Operum*: Some Factors Accounting for Its Development," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 4 (1983): 457.

79. Taylor, *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith,* 29–53.

80. Gill, *Sermons and Tracts,* 1:82.

81. John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1828), 308.

82. Jonathan White has attempted to demonstrate that Gill was consistent in his remarks about Adam's capacities before the fall. However, his argument remains unconvincing; it does not sufficiently remove the discrepancies that exist between Gill's statements. See Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 140–144. Andrew Fuller, a careful reader of Gill, rightly saw that Gill's statements were contradictory. Concerning the modern question controversy, Fuller wrote, "Yea, in some parts of this controversy, they [Brine and Gill] took different grounds. Though Mr. Brine maintained the argument from Adam's incapacity to believe, yet Dr. Gill, when contending with the Arminians, gave it up." In mentioning Gill's debate with the Arminians, Fuller referred to Gill's *Cause of God and Truth,* a polemical work that Gill originally composed to rebut the Arminian theologian Daniel Whitby. See Andrew Fuller, *The*

Gospel offers and duty faith relied on his constant promotion of salvation in eternity—not his erratic comments about Adam's nature.

When Wayman, Brine, and Johnson all downplayed salvation in eternity because of the terms set by the modern question dispute, their hyper-Calvinist tradition provided them with few other theological justifications for rejecting duty faith. They had to create their arguments for Adamic inability hastily and within a heated polemical context. This fact partly accounts for the unrefined manner in which they espoused their concerns.

Even though conversations about Adam's hypothetical relation to the Gospel were new to the debates over Gospel preaching that occurred amongst these nonconformist ministers in England, they were not new to the broader Christian tradition. Jacob Arminius in his *Apology* admitted that his critics charged him with teaching that "before the fall, Adam had not the power to believe [the Gospel], because there was no necessity for faith." From this conclusion, Arminius's challengers alleged that Arminius deduced that "God…could not require faith from him [Adam] after the fall."[83]

Arminius rejected this accusation with fervor. As Carl Bangs has noted, Arminius composed his *Apology* in the midst of heated attacks on his theology and character. Throughout the *Apology*, Arminius lashed "out indignantly against the tactics of his enemies."[84] This tendency to write impassionately appeared as Arminius clarified that he never stated that God refrained from requiring faith after Adam's fall.

Possibly with some sarcasm, Arminius propounded, "Unless I was well acquainted with the disposition of certain persons, I could have taken a solemn oath, that the ascription of this article to me, as the words now stand, is an act which is attributed to them through calumny." Then, straightforwardly distancing himself from the idea that God could not require faith after the fall he wrote, "I do not think, that there is a single Mahometan or Jew who dare[s] make any such assertion as this article contains. The man who will affirm it, must be ignorant of the nature of faith in its universal acceptation." He later asserted that the entire concept was an absurd dogma that would not "easily obtain credit with such persons as have learned to form a judgement from the Scriptures."[85]

Complete Works of Andrew Fuller, ed. Joseph Belcher (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 2:421.

83. James Arminius, *The Works of Arminius*, trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Auburn: Derby, Miller and Orton, 1853), 1:332.

84. Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 301.

85. Arminius, *Works of Arminius*, 1:332, 335–336. For a helpful summary on Arminius' views on the exercise of human faith after Adam's fall, see Richard A. Muller, "The Priority of the Intellect in the Soteriology of Jacob Arminius," *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993): 55–72.

Though he rejected the idea that God did not require personal faith after the fall, Arminius did maintain that before the fall Adam could not believe the Gospel. In a series of short remarks, he sought to describe why "Adam did not possess the power to believe in Christ." Arminius explained that before the fall, belief in the Gospel "would have been futile" because Adam did not need to believe the Gospel. He further declared that because "faith in Christ is prescribed in the Gospel," such faith would not have been relevant to Adam while he was still under God's "legal covenant."[86]

Arminius did not follow these claims to the conclusion that God did expect faith from Adam's descendants, but his remarks at times did have a strong resemblance to the rhetoric found in the hyper-Calvinist literature. Some of his statements matched the reasoning provided by Wayman and Brine almost exactly.

Alvery Jackson wasted no time in highlighting these similarities. In his *The Question Answered*, he exulted that his opponents—men who styled themselves as staunch defenders of Calvinism—advocated an opinion remarkably similar to the much-maligned Arminius.[87] With hyperbolic language, Jackson warned that denials of duty faith were "beholden to Arminius" and rested on a "rotten foundation."[88]

As one might expect, Brine quickly endeavored to distance himself from Arminius. In *Motives to Love and Unity,* he declared that his position on Adam did not "give the least support to Arminianism." Then, attempting to turn Jackson's words against him, Brine framed ministers who maintained that prelapsarian Adam could believe the Gospel as the real Arminians. He charged that only supporters of "conditional election" and the "free-will in man to good" would ever dare to portray Adam as possessing spiritual powers. Taking direct aim at Jackson, Brine wrote, "Sometimes men of great abilities, designing to clog an adversary with a difficulty, advance that which embarrasses themselves as much or more than it does those whom they oppose."[89]

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86. Arminius, *Works of Arminius*, 1:334–335.

87. The teachings of Arminius encountered strong opposition among the Particular Baptist and Congregational ministers who concerned themselves with the modern question debate. Ministers who participated in that debate almost universally derided Arminius' name. However, not all dissenters in Britain rejected Arminius. See David Steers, "Arminianism amongst Protestant Dissenters in England and Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," in *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe: Jacobus Arminius (1559/60–1609)*, ed. Th. Marius van Leeuwen, Keith D. Stanglin, and Marijke Tolsma (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 159–200.

88. Jackson, *The Question Answered,* 52.

89. Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity,* 51–53. Brine also gave a brief interpretation of Arminius's comments about Adamic inability. However, he misunderstood Arminius. Brine assumed that because Arminius asserted Adamic inability that he also concluded subsequent generations had no obligation to believe the Gospel. Arminius rejected this latter point. Failing to see this fact, Brine charged Arminius with inconsistencies. He alleged that Arminius' supposed rejection of duty faith did not accord with his commitment to unconditional election. See ibid., 51–53. Brine also considered Arminius' statements in Brine, *Refutation of Arminian*

The Motivation Behind Arguments for Adamic Inability

Despite Jackson's allegation, the ministers who denied duty faith during the modern question controversy did not receive inspiration from Arminius. Still, why did Wayman, Brine, and later Johnson so tenaciously hold to their theology in the face of mounting criticism? Their writings boldly set out a distinction between natural and supernatural faith. They also contained strong proclamations about Adam's impotency regarding the Gospel. What incentivized hyper-Calvinists to make these claims? Exploring this question will prove helpful. Such an investigation can assist in contrasting the hyper-Calvinism of Hussey and Gill with the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question controversy.

Clear differences between the two varieties of hyper-Calvinism are apparent. Hussey and Gill propounded that Gospel offers and duty faith are illegitimate because they do not comport with eternal salvation. Human action may play no role in salvation's reception because God accomplished salvation in eternity—before humanity's creation. To display this eternal aspect of salvation most clearly, Hussey and Gill countenanced the cessation any preaching that might imply the necessity of a human response.

Wayman and his associates embraced a completely different tactic. Their reasoning focused on the question of epistemology and spiritual inability; they alleged that Adam could not comprehend the Gospel's spiritual realities. This lack of comprehension did not arise due to original sin. It featured in humanity's constitution from the act of creation. Incapacity to comprehend the Gospel led to no obligation to receive the Gospel in a saving way. While Adam and his descendants can recognize the truthfulness of historical claims related to the Gospel—Christ's death and resurrection, for example—they cannot appreciate the spiritual significance of these events. For this reason, they cannot apprehend salvation without an extraordinary work of the Spirit. This work appears only for the elect, and the limited scope of the Spirit's revelatory work renders any notion of duty faith superfluous.

This noteworthy variance gave hyper-Calvinist writings of the modern question period a different focal point than that one found in the works of Joseph Hussey, hyper-Calvinism's theological founder. As noted in chapter one, Hussey promoted eternal salvation in part because he sought a Christological emphasis in his theology. Attending to salvation in eternity would, in his estimate, make Christ and his pre-temporal work the center of the Gospel narrative. In contrast, Wayman, Brine, and Johnson emphasized humanity's

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Principles, 6–7.

incapacities. They concerned themselves with what Adam and his heirs could not accomplish. Hussey, to be sure, could offer impassioned statements about human helplessness. Nevertheless, he sought with his theology to highlight what he deemed a positive and life-giving point—Christ and redemption. This intense focus on redemption did not appear in hyper-Calvinist texts from the modern question era.

These substantial dissimilarities in both content and tone raise an inescapable question—was the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question the same theological movement championed by Hussey and Gill, or was it something entirely different? Probing the motivations that inspired Wayman, Brine, and Johnson provides the answer. Despite significant theological differences, all members of the hyper-Calvinist tradition exhibited the same overarching concern—to maximize divine grace by diminishing human responsibility. This shared concern and the historical context that gave rise to it unite two seemingly disparate forms of hyper-Calvinism.

Hussey and Gill operated with the assumption that divine grace must be unilateral, countenancing no human involvement. Wayman and his allies agreed with this position. In *Further Enquiry After Truth,* Wayman admitted, "I humbly conceive [that] to put the creature upon doing anything for life, to procure peace and pardon, agrees neither with the law nor the Gospel."[90] Similarly, Brine wrote in *Refutation of Arminian Principles* that should salvation depend on "faith and repentance…as man's duties" then "men are in part causes of their salvation."[91] John Johnson offered likely the most bombastic commentary on this point, choosing to open his *Faith of God's Elect* with the reprimand that some theologians "depreciated" salvation to a "dry creature duty." He alleged that theologians could only "pretend to maintain the doctrines of sovereign grace." Their beliefs brought "the glory of the Lord from heaven" to a "level with the man of the earth."[92]

Hyper-Calvinists held this theological commitment in common because they drew from the same source—contra-Puritanism. Tobias Crisp, a leading contra-Puritan thinker, feared that construing faith and repentance as conditions for salvation would minimize divine grace by making redemption contingent on human action. He constructed his covenant theology with the expressed purpose of avoiding conditional language. Hussey and Gill agreed with Crisp's repudiation of conditions. They built their commitment to eternal salvation on the foundation laid by Crisp's work.

90. Wayman, *Further Enquiry,* 19.
91. Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* 36.
92. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect,* 5.

The ministers who rejected duty faith during the modern question controversy also followed Crisp's rejection of conditions. Lewis Wayman warned that making salvation contingent on the fulfillment of conditions was "contrary to all reason" and opposed to "all sound divinity."[93] John Brine cautioned that "if repentance and faith are proper conditions of salvation, they are made a covenant of works."[94] John Johnson propounded that Christ did not commission his ministers to "preach works of righteousness, as conditions of obtaining the righteousness of Christ." He then listed faith and repentance as examples of such conditions.[95]

The manner in which these men issued their statements disclosed their indebtedness to Crisp. All three ministers stated that they feared human participation in salvation would mark a return to the covenant of works. By using this argument, they harkened directly back to rhetoric Crisp employed. In his published sermons, Crisp urged that any conception of salvation that considered a human response would only "bring back again the covenant of works" and represent a loss of divine grace.[96]

Unity around this theological commitment and to Tobias Crisp's writings arose because all hyper-Calvinists had some connection to the Northamptonshire region. Gill received a heady dose of Crispism as a young man in Kettering. John Brine also originated from Kettering, and as a youth he attended the same church as Gill. Lewis Wayman spent his formative years in the Rothwell chapel once led by the Richard Davis, a controversial proponent of Crisp's teachings. Even hyper-Calvinist theologians not from Northamptonshire drew heavily from ministers with close ties to that region. Joseph Hussey possessed great familiarity with Crisp's published works. John Johnson revealed an extensive knowledge of Crisp's writings as well as the writings of Hussey and Gill.

Given these commonalities, contemporary researchers should not view the hyper-Calvinism promoted by Hussey and Gill and the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question era as completely separate entities. Instead, they should interpret these distinct approaches as two branches of a surprisingly diverse tradition. Hussey, desiring to take Crisp's teachings about human inaction seriously, advanced eternal salvation and crafted his denial of Gospel offers and duty faith. Gill then followed Hussey's lead. Later, Wayman, Brine, and Johnson agreed

93. Wayman, *A Defence of Further Enquiry,* iii–iv. Wayman's concerns about Maurice remain especially interesting given that Maurice was mostly sympathetic to Richard Davis, a minister who accepted tenets of Crisp's theology. See the opening of this chapter for more information.

94. Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* 36.

95. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect*, 257.

96. E.g., Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted: The Complete Works of Tobias Crisp,* ed. John Gill (London: John Bennett, 1832), 1:162; 2:173.

with Crisp's concerns. They even favored Hussey's notion of salvation in eternity. However, faced with a new polemical context, one shaped by the popularity of Maurice's *Modern Question Answer'd*, these ministers sought a new argument that focused on Adamic inability. Their argument differed from the one advocated by Hussey and Gill, but the motivation that empowered it was the same one that drove Hussey and Gill—to preserve salvation solely as a work of God.

Statements that Wayman, Brine, and Johnson made about how the Spirit operates on the elect reveal that they wished to connect their remarks about Adamic inability to their call for human passivity in salvation. All three men envisioned the Spirit working in such a way that human action could become largely unnecessary. However, though they all three shared this goal, they formulated their proposals differently.

Lewis Wayman and the Spirit Overcoming the Human Will

Wayman began his account of the Spirit's operation by building on his bifurcation between natural and supernatural faith. He put forward that Scripture is "not all the revelation God gives of Jesus Christ unto the souls of those whom he saves; nor is it [i.e., the Scripture] sufficient for the soul to see Christ so as to believe in him unto everlasting salvation." While the written word might engender natural faith that can bring about knowledge of the Gospel's historic truths, it cannot make known the Gospel's spiritual realities. In addition to the "proposition of things" that Scripture can display, there must also be an "an ability to comprehend and know" that can only originate from the Spirit. For this reason, Wayman concluded, "Whether the preaching of the Gospel can, in any good sense, be called a revelation of Jesus Christ to all that hear it, is doubted."[97]

Only the elect are the recipients of this special revelation given by the Spirit, and the Spirit communicates to them in a mysterious but effectual manner. Using a series of metaphors, Wayman compared the Spirit's work to the illumination given by a great light; with it, the elect can suddenly see new realities. He also described the Spirit as akin to a die that conforms hot wax into its image. By unveiling truth to the elect and then molding their emotions and wills, the Spirit can fashion them into people who possess assurance of salvation and a desire to know Christ more.[98]

Wayman envisioned this dramatic encounter with the Spirit as transcending all human reason; indeed, he wrote that the Spirit's revelation involves no "persuasion or reasoning"

97. Wayman, *Further Enquiry,* 35–36.
98. For these illustrations, see ibid., 84–86.

whatsoever.[99] Throughout his writings, he consistently minimized references to the human intellect and the means God might use to appeal to the intellect. While human reasoning might cohere with natural faith, it could have little relevance for supernatural faith. Wayman explained that the written word, Scripture, is only temporal and at the end of time "shall cease to be." Scripture can give the elect "title" to the so-called estate of their salvation, but it cannot give them "eyes to see" the title. Only the truly eternal Word, the Son of God, shall "liveth and abideth" forever, and only to this Word does the Spirit make revelation.[100] Wayman also attacked the means of preaching. He deemed any attempt to persuade audiences to accept the Gospel as superfluous. Hearers of the Gospel message do not need the letter, that is, arguments about why they should receive the salvation. They need an existential encounter with the Spirit.[101]

This strong emphasis on unilateral action by the Spirit allowed Wayman to stress human passivity when describing faith. The elect should indeed place faith in Christ, but Wayman's account of the Spirit's involvement in that process was so consequential that considerations of human involvement in the process become irrelevant. In his description of faith, Wayman wrote, "For let the opinions of God's people be ever so diverse, and ever so many, and the difference ever so great as to degrees of knowledge, the principle [of faith] is one; and all are alike passive in the reception or implantation of that principle. We were passive in it, as in our mother's conception of us."[102] Connecting this human passivity with his denials of duty faith, he propounded, "From what hath been said above, viz. that the principle of faith is supernatural light, distinct from reason…and so as to the principle, it is God's acts or work, not the creature's: How can we conceive that faith, as to the being of the principle, comes under the nature or notion of a duty at all?"[103]

Of course, Hussey and Gill also conceived of the Spirit providing special illumination to the elect. In their theology, the Spirit communicates to the elect in time what occurred in eternity. From the Spirit, the elect gain the knowledge that God justified them pre-temporally. Wayman's scheme did not match theirs. Since he did not highlight eternal salvation in his

99. Ibid., 89.

100. Ibid., 96–97.

101. Ibid. Wayman even argued that since salvation relies primarily on knowledge given by the Spirit, he believed that elect infants who cannot comprehend propositional statements related to the Gospel message can still fully participate in salvation if they receive the Spirit. See ibid., 93–94, 95.

102. Ibid., 92–93.

103. Ibid., 98. Wayman expressed similar sentiments in Wayman, *A Defence of Further Enquiry,* 41. Contrast Wayman's remarks with a more traditional account of conversion and the human will. E.g., Hoglund helpfully surveys the broader Reformed tradition's understanding of conversion and calling in Jonathan Hoglund, *Called by Triune Grace*: *Divine Rhetoric and the Effectual Call* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2016), 1–41.

argument, he envisioned the Spirit working differently. He conceived of the Spirit giving the elect a dramatically new revelation of the Gospel—a revelation so powerful that it provides the elect with a superadded ability to apprehend spiritual truth. This spiritual operation is so effectual that it renders talk of human action unnecessary.

This contrast displays the continuity and the discontinuity that existed among the two branches of hyper-Calvinism. Wayman's minimization of eternal salvation led him to fashion the Spirit's work differently from the conception provided by Hussey and Gill. Nevertheless, Wayman's aim was the same as his hyper-Calvinist forbearers—to diminish human agency in salvation's reception.

John Johnson and the Life of God in the Soul

The Liverpool minister John Johnson exhibited the same intention in his writings. Though not well known today, Johnson enjoyed some influence over Baptists during his lifetime. The historian Evan Owen once estimated that throughout the eighteenth century around twenty churches accepted Johnson's teachings.[104] Researchers often give these congregations the descriptor Johnsonian Baptists to show their deep affinity for Johnson's writings.[105] Johnson's most notable follower became Samuel Fisher, a minister who served in Norwich and Wisbech. Fisher's extensive preaching and writing ministry allowed Johnson's ideas to extend from Liverpool to eastern England.[106]

Notably, Andrew Fuller remarked in his biography that at one time even he favored Johnson's sentiments. Fuller reflected, "There was something imposing in his manner, by which a young and inexperienced reader is apt to be carried away."[107] Revealing just how widely Johnson's writings had disseminated, Fuller went on to disclose that during his childhood his pastor had been one of Johnson's admirers. For these reasons, Fuller devoted sections of his *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* and his diary to wrestling with the conclusions reached by Johnson.[108]

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104. During the early twentieth century, Owen collected historical documents relevant to Baptist life in the Liverpool region. His work now resides in the Liverpool Records Office, and I am grateful to the staff of this office for providing me with digital copies of Owen's notes. Owen's assessment of the Johnsonian movement's popularity appears in Evan Owen, The Evan Owen Papers Towards a History of Baptists in Liverpool, OWE 218/19, Liverpool Records Office. For a brief introduction to Owen's contributions to Baptist research, see the introduction to his collection found online at The Liverpool Record Office, "The Evan Owen Papers," National Archives, http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/e241e9cb-210d-44f8-b392-f732b67146fc

105. See Hipper, "The Johnsonian Baptists of Norwich," 19–32; Dawbarn, "The 'Johnsonian Baptists,'" 54–61.

106. For information on Fisher, see Deacon, *Samuel Fisher.* Fisher preached a biographical sermon on Johnson's life. See Samuel Fisher, *The Christian Warfare: Or, the Character of a Gospel Minister Represented in a Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Mr. John Johnson of Liverpool* (Liverpool: H. Hodgson, 1791).

107. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 1:14.

108. E.g., ibid., 1:14–16; 2:367.

Johnson claimed to favor a strict Biblicism; his was a restorationist project that attempted to return Baptist churches to the supposedly pure Christianity of the first century. However, his shunning of creeds and the broader Christian tradition led him to favor controversial positions. Often writing with unclear language, he denied original sin and the Son's eternal generation. In addition, his critics perhaps rightly charged him with promoting Sabellianism.[109]

Interestingly, despite his claims to Biblicism, Johnson relied heavily on the Adamic inability argument proffered by the hyper-Calvinists of the modern question era. This fact, coupled with his unconventional views and difficult writing style, can make assessing his remarks about soteriology a difficult task. At times, Johnson could simply offer citations of Biblical texts to support his arguments. On other occasions, he could construct complex theological arguments that challenged his opponents and significantly revised traditional Christian dogmas. The dramatic changes in tone and method apparent throughout his writings imbue his works with a sense of tension—and even significant contradictions.

Nevertheless, Johnson remained consistent when he wrote of human passivity in the reception of salvation. He began his *Faith of God's Elect* with rhetoric similar to that found in Wayman's writings. He explained that while Adam possessed a duty to love and honor God, "special faith is of a divine original, absolutely above the capacity of any created being to work, communicate, or procure."[110] Only the elect can have the ability and obligation to trust in Christ for salvation because they alone can receive a "divine principle of faith" communicated by "special grace."[111] While the non-elect might understand "the truth of any proposition" related to the historical Jesus, Johnson argued that their faith differs from the supernatural faith provided by the Spirit. He described supernatural faith as "a work above all the powers of nature" because it "depends upon the powerful actuation of special grace" and "can never be performed by any creature as his own act or duty."[112]

Much like Wayman before him, Johnson's emphasis on a dramatic work accomplished by the Spirit led him to devalue the importance of both the human intellect and the Christian Scripture. Johnson opposed "moral suasion," fearing that broad appeals to come to Christ might incorrectly imply that supernatural faith is an action that humans must undertake.[113] He

109. For Johnson's denial of original win, see Johnson, *Original Letters,* 152, 155, 182, 274–278. For his denial of eternal generation, see ibid., xxv. For the charge of Sabellianism, see ibid., xx; Even Owen Papers, 286/13.

110. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect,* 8.

111. Ibid., 11.

112. Ibid., 54.

113. Ibid., 186.

also warned that the Bible is "a book constructed by the hands of men composed of paper and ink and the art of writing." As such, the Bible cannot be "the Word of God" but only the "tare or case in which it is conveyed." The true word of God remains the Spirit's revelation given to the elect. As such, this word from the Spirit "is life and cannot be conveyed by that which is not life. The book and the [minister's] voice (being only natural instruments) can only convey the natural signification, or the truth in an external mode, to the outward senses." The Spirit, being life, "conveys the life…to the heart and soul."[114]

Johnson went beyond Wayman, however, in how he presented the human will in the procurement of salvation. In Wayman's judgment, the effectual work of the Spirit renders considerations of the human will unnecessary. He asserted that the elect find the Spirit's operations so compelling that in the end theologians may credit only the Spirit with turning people to Christ. Despite this fact, Wayman never argued that humans possess no will whatsoever. Wayman's argument was radical in that it dramatically diminished the role of the human will, but with it Wayman did still conceive of the will as a legitimate component of the human constitution. Johnson, in contrast, desired to reject discussion about the human will *in toto*.

Johnson envisioned the Spirit coming upon the elect and dwelling within them. This spiritual indwelling proved so potent that he conceived of the Spirit as standing in the place of the human will. He described his position as "the life of God in the soul" and also as a spiritual possession in which Christ become "the life of the soul."[115] This possession results in a "real passiveness in the soul" that Johnson likened to "trees and plants shooting forth…and bearing fruit…not from their own [conscious] activity." Explaining his intentions, Johnson wrote that he considered the human soul "not under the determination of his [its] own will but under the powerful actuation of special faith or irresistible grace."[116] This fact meant that faith could occur solely as a work of God—for God alone accomplished the act of faith in the human person. "Faith," Johnson boldly asserted, "is not an act." It is instead "nothing more than the Word of God settling in the heart."[117]

Contrasting this dramatic spiritual possession with the abilities that Adam possessed at creation, Johnson wrote that this "spiritual life" remained "infinitely superior to that which

114. Johnson, *Original Letters,* 256.

115. E.g., Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect,* 39; idem., *Evangelical Truths Vindicated,* 31. Readers should not confuse Johnson's terminology with the phrasing found in the title of the popular work by Scougal. See Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Aberdeen: F. Douglass and W. Murray, 1757).

116. Johnson, *Faith of God's Elect,* 40–41.

117. Ibid., 38. Johnson, *Evangelical Truths Vindicated,* 49.

Adam was possessed of before the fall." Adam could obey God, but he could not possess spiritual faith because "the grace of God in the saints" cannot have a relation to a creaturely ability.[118]

John Brine and a Warrant for Salvation

Resistance to Johnson's proposal appeared from an unlikely source—his fellow hyper-Calvinist John Brine. In *Some Mistakes in a Book of Mr. Johnson's of Liverpool*, Brine took issue with several of Johnson's theological commitments, but he expressed particular opposition to Johnson's statements about faith. Writing of Johnson, Brine warned, "According to that account which this writer gives of faith, to the best of my apprehension, it is a mere nullity. Or, if it is anything, it is something in a person, which hath subsistence of itself, distinct from him…and none of its acts are the acts of the person." Brine expressed astonishment that Johnson would go to such lengths to minimize human agency. He concluded that Johnson must have confused actuating faith—that is, the Spirit's effectual working on the elect—with acting faith, what Brine defined as the elect's God-enabled responsibility to believe in Christ.[119]

Brine responded to Johnson because he rightly saw that Johnson conceived of faith differently than he did. Johnson nullified both the human will and intellect. Brine's understanding of faith was different; it at least attempted to retain these aspects of human nature. In his scheme, the human will can play no role in procuring salvation. However, the human intellect could through the Spirit comprehend the truthfulness of salvation, and the human will could then embrace this truth and rejoice in it. This admittedly minimal understanding of human engagement differed from Johnson's absolute rejection of human activity. Contrasting his views with Johnson's, Brine wrote, "I am astonished that Mr. Johnson would argue…that we are not properly active in thought and volition."[120]

While Brine disagreed with what he perceived as excesses in Johnson's theology, he did not reject Johnson's chief concern—human passivity in salvation. Throughout his writings, Brine continually advocated such passivity. He made this point especially clear in tracts that he composed during the modern question debate. Indeed, he used the opportunity provided by the modern question controversy to develop further the hyper-Calvinist tradition's emphasis on minimal human agency in salvation.

Brine did so by writing of the necessity of a spiritual warrant. Explaining his position, he

118. Johnson, *Evangelical Truths Vindicated,* 54.
119. Brine, *Some Mistakes,* 30–33.
120. Ibid., 33.

began by setting out his argument that Adam served under a covenant of works that required no obedience to or even awareness of the Gospel. Only the elect, he explained, can enjoy Christ because only they receive a special revelation from the Spirit that allows them to transcend Adam's original capabilities and obligations. From these points, Brine segued into the claim that until a person is assured that they have experienced this special revelation, they "hath no warrant to receive Christ as a Savior or to hope for salvation through him."[121] This position meant that persons who hear the Gospel should not consider that Christ might be for them, and they should attempt no actions like faith or repentance. Such persons should simply examine themselves to see if they have received a testimony from the Spirit.

This concept of warrant marked the evolution of a notion that had until this point remained dormant in the hyper-Calvinist tradition. Hussey wished to point his audience away from the introspection that he found in the Puritan tradition. He directed them instead to the redemption that he claimed Christ procured in eternity. Ironically, Hussey's theology implied that people cannot look to Christ until they are confident that they have received a personal revelation from the Spirit that testifies to them that they have been eternally justified. He never attempted to make his rejection of introspection consistent with the emphasis on self-examination to which his theology pointed.

Gill exhibited the same tendency in his publications. He admonished that persons who receive the Gospel message should not seek after Christ but should instead attend to the means of grace—namely, preached sermons and earnest Bible reading. Through these means, he argued, the Spirit can reveal to the elect their eternal standing in Christ. As Gill put it, the Spirit can make "application" of salvation "as He shall think fit."[122] This position, much like Hussey's, suggested a process of introspection. However, also like Hussey, Gill never clarified this particular aspect of this thought. He directed his theological tracts primarily to ministers, instructing them to avoid Gospel offers and the notion of duty faith. He had little to say about hearers of a sermon who might wrestle with the introspective soul-searching that his theology could induce.

By referring to a warrant, Brine made explicit what had been implicit in the works of Hussey and Gill. He openly embraced the idea of introspection and stated that people who come to Christ must first believe that they have a God-given justification to do so. He exhorted his readers, "This becomes the duty of men, when they have warrant from the divine

121. Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity,* 38–39.

122. John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity,* 2 vols. (New ed.; London: Tegg & Company, 1839), 2:122.

Word, to consider God as their redeemer in Christ, which no unregenerate men have warrant to do."[123]

Although Brine clearly accepted a concept latent in the writings of Hussey and Gill, he constructed it on a different theological foundation than they did. He remained a committed advocate of eternal salvation throughout his life, but in his writings on the modern question controversy, he avoided mentions of salvation in eternity. He concentrated instead on Adamic inability. His comments about warrant emerged specifically from his discussions about Adam.[124]

Interestingly, Brine never detailed how his comments about warrant might cohere with his belief in eternal salvation. He simply offered two separate rationalizations for hyper-Calvinism. In his published sermons and theological tracts, he often appealed to eternal justification. In his polemical works related to the modern question controversy, he addressed Adamic inability and the attending idea of warrant. The fact that Brine mostly wrote occasional pieces and did not compose a comprehensive systematic theology helps account for this tension in his thought.[125]

To be sure, other hyper-Calvinist entrants in the modern question debate also held to eternal salvation, but their willingness to affirm both salvation in eternity and Adamic inability was not as noticeable as it was in Brine's writings. Wayman and Johnson wrote almost exclusively about the modern question debate. They admitted their allegiance to salvation in eternity, but they devoted their attention to Adamic inability. Brine, in contrast, composed numerous theological treatises and sermons. His works encompassed everything from careful restatements of Gill's soteriology to attacks on Abraham Taylor. For this reason, reading through the entirety Brine's extensive corpus proves a jarring experience; it reveals how quickly he could shift between two different approaches to hyper-Calvinism.

Throughout all of his publications, however, Brine's overarching concern was the same that drove his theological mentor John Gill—the diminishment of human participation in salvation. This singular motivation explains Brine's willingness to champion both eternal salvation and Adamic inability. He wished to defend a lack of human action in salvation in a variety of modes—from detailed essays on salvation in eternity to argumentative pieces that

123. Brine, *Refutation of Arminian Principles,* 10. See also ibid., 20.

124. For example, consider how closely Brine linked his arguments about Adamic inability with his calls to receive a spiritual warrant in Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity*, 37–39.

125. E.g., Brine further commented on the need for a spiritual warrant in in Brine, *Causes of Salvation and Vocation Considered,* 11–12; idem., *Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ,* 140–143. Interestingly, in these works, he simply inserted the ideas of warrant and Adamic inability into tracts on particular redemption and eternal salvation whilst providing little explanation.

addressed the modern question. Advocating the need for a warrant allowed Brine to highlight just how inactive humans are in salvation; they cannot even look to see if they can enjoy Christ without first receiving permission to do so.

Brine's willingness to stress the need for an inner warrant made him an important figure. As Andrew Fuller attested in his autobiography, the followers of Brine in and around the Northamptonshire region began to prioritize the idea. Soon, calling people to discern whether they might possess a warrant for salvation would become one of hyper-Calvinism's defining features.

Responses from Critics of Hyper-Calvinism

Early critics of hyper-Calvinism such as Maurice, Jackson, and Taylor never recognized that this Crisp-inspired concern for human passivity inspired Wayman, Brine, and Johnson to compose their works. At least if they did, these critics did not address the issue. Apart from Jackson's ill-founded accusation of Arminianism, all rebuttals of hyper-Calvinism during the modern question debate centered around the notion of Adamic inability. They left critical underlying issues such the operation of the Spirit in the hearts of the elect and Brine's conception of warrant unaddressed.

Despite the fact that they did not consider the issue of human passivity, the responses issued by opponents of hyper-Calvinism during the modern question debate shaped Andrew Fuller's thinking. As such, these responses merit a brief survey. Examining them will serve to contextualize Fuller's remarks in the subsequent chapter.

To combat the doctrine of Adamic inability, Matthias Maurice and Alvery Jackson appealed the existence of a universal moral law—that all people should seek to love God and honor him.[126] By citing this law, they argued that a requirement to accept the Gospel could have existed in all stages of the *historia salutis*—from the time of Adam to the time after Christ's resurrection.

In Maurice's response to Lewis Wayman in *Modern Question Affirm'd,* he weighed whether immediately after the fall Adam could exercise faith in Christ. He relied on an inferential argument—if God expected Adam to seek redemption after the fall, then God would similarly expect Adam's descendants to pursue redemption. Maurice pointed to the proto-evangelium (Genesis 3:15) as confirmation that God preached the Gospel to Adam. He

126. Like Maurice and Jackson, Abraham Taylor could also mention a universal moral law in relation to acceptance of the Gospel. However, he did so inconsistently. At times he also seemed to reject the notion. Taylor's remarks proved especially influential on Andrew Fuller. As such, I will detail Taylor's thought in the subsequent chapter. See Taylor, *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith*, 29–53.

then contended that a universal "moral law" to love God and to love one's neighbor required Adam to seek reconciliation through the Gospel. From this law, Maurice concluded, "If it remained Adam's duty to love God with all his heart, it must be his duty to be reconciled to him." Adam, therefore, "could not neglect or omit believing in Christ without sin."[127]

Maurice's case relied on a subtle but effective modification made to typical presentations of Adamic inability. Hyper-Calvinists affirmed that before the fall, Adam had to love God and obey his commandments. By framing acceptance of the Gospel after the fall as a way for Adam to love God and obey his commandments, Maurice could present belief in the Gospel as one of Adam's natural duties. He could neutralize hyper-Calvinist claims that Gospel acceptance represented a separate obligation not originally given at creation. Maurice contended that "God did not need to bring in a new law to make this [Gospel acceptance] a duty" because Adam "thought the good old law of God sufficient, for he knew it obliged him to love God with his heart."[128]

Alvery Jackson likewise made the moral law central in his polemic. In *The Question Answered,* he asked whether "saving faith in Christ is not also a duty required by the moral law of God." Jackson recognized that writers such as Lewis Wayman and John Brine would likely respond by answering, "How can that be a duty required of men by the moral law of God which they have not power to perform of themselves?" However, he quickly countered this possible objection with a shrewd rhetorical question. He responded, "How can the moral law of God require either perfect and unsinning obedience or full satisfaction for our offenses of us; which we have not power to perform and the latter of which we never had." Shifting his focus to Christ, he then affirmed "And if that [perfection] be required of us by the moral law under pain of eternal damnation…then it is also possible that by the same moral law and under the same penalty that faith in Christ may be required of us."[129]

The polemical context in which Maurice and Jackson wrote influenced their rhetoric. Their opponents wished to separate general obligations given to Adam from spiritual obligations brought by the Gospel. As a counterargument, these men endeavored to show the cohesiveness of God's redemptive plan. They insisted that at all times God demanded that humans love him. This love could take different forms depending on a person's location in

127. Maurice, *Modern Question Affirm'd,* 58–77. Of course, Maurice's willingness to portray the reception of the Gospel as part of a universal moral law becomes somewhat ironic considering how attached he was to the theologies of Crisp and Davis. Nevertheless, Maurice did not intend to present salvation in a legalistic or conditional framing. For Maurice's appreciation of Crisp and Davis, see the beginning of this chapter.

128. Ibid., 78.

129. Jackson, *The Question Answered,* 7–8.

the outworking of redemption. For prelapsarian Adam, love for God entailed honoring God and obeying his commandments. For Adam's fallen descendants, love for God entailed honoring God by pursuing redemption through the appointed means.

As to be expected, any language that framed acceptance of the Gospel as the fulfilling of a legal requirement greatly troubled hyper-Calvinist writers. They were already suspicious of any talk of conditions in reference to salvation. Lewis Wayman reacted especially harshly and accused Maurice of introducing "a new law." Using wording that in his estimate was surely one of the highest of insults, Wayman warned that presenting belief in Christ as the fulfillment of a moral law would make "faith the condition of salvation."[130]

By likening reception of the Gospel to obedience to a moral law, Maurice and Jackson attempted only to convey a point that remained uncontested outside hyper-Calvinist circles —that all people should exercise faith in Christ. They referenced a moral law because of their polemical context; they sought to provide an explanatory tool that might overturn the idea of Adamic inability. While their phrasing was perhaps not always sufficiently clear and their opponents could easily misunderstand it, their intention was not to introduce a form of legalism into the Gospel message. They argued not that persons have to fulfill a specific law to merit salvation but contended only that acceptance of the Gospel remains an obligation for all people.[131]

This appeal to a universal moral law did not gain traction amongst Wayman, Brine, and Johnson. The modern question controversy remained a battle between two entrenched sides. New leaders soon entered the contest, however. The most notable was the Particular Baptist minister Andrew Fuller, to whom I devote the remainder of this thesis.

Conclusion

The modern question debate profoundly shaped hyper-Calvinism. By accepting Maurice's singular focus on human responsibility before God, the hyper-Calvinist leaders Lewis Wayman, John Brine, and John Johnson refrained from stressing salvation in eternity. To preserve their bifurcation between natural faith and special faith, they turned to a new

130. Wayman, *A Defence of the Further Enquiry,* iii.

131. E.g., even the Formula of Concord with its strong distinction between law and Gospel could state that the Gospel "teaches and commands…faith in Christ." The group of Lutheran theologians who crafted this document did not understand the imperative to accept the Gospel as a law. While the Formula emerged from a completely different context than the modern question controversy, the broader point that acceptance of the Gospel does not in and of itself constitute legalism remains relevant. Maurice and Jackson were attempting to make a similar point—though they used strong language about law and moral duty to do so. See Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 585.

theological argument—Adam's supposed inability to believe the Gospel before the fall. This argument received responses from Alvery Jackson and Abraham Taylor, but Fuller's engagement with the hyper-Calvinist tradition would prove decisive for Particular Baptist life. To his contribution, I now turn.

Chapter Four

Contextualizing Andrew Fuller's Response to Hyper-Calvinism

Introduction

Fuller's biography and published works reveal a deep awareness of hyper-Calvinist theology in its various formulations. His geographic location doubtlessly assisted him in gaining this knowledge. He spent his formative years in a region of Cambridgeshire where, according to his autobiography, nonconformists deeply imbibed the writings of Gill, Brine, and Johnson. He then lived and ministered in Kettering, a central hub for hyper-Calvinism and contra-Puritanism.

Fuller's exposure to these two contexts makes his departure from hyper-Calvinism remarkable. Nuttall once compared it to a dramatic "volte-face" and wrote that "it is difficult to exaggerate its force."[1] In what was undoubtedly a great surprise to many, Fuller, once a passionate supporter of the hyper-Calvinist cause, came to prominence by attacking hyper-Calvinism. He did so while serving in Kettering, the very location from which John Gill and John Brine originated.

Historians past and present have expressed interest in Fuller's dramatic conversion to a more evangelistic approach to ministry; however, a neglect of hyper-Calvinist primary sources means that significant details about Fuller's life and work remain unexplored. In some cases, mistaken assumptions about hyper-Calvinism have allowed errors to appear in the existing scholarship.

The primary problem is a failure to address both the hyper-Calvinism promoted by Hussey and Gill and the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question era. Peter Morden, the most significant of Fuller's recent biographers, rightly explains the hyper-Calvinists of Fuller's day claimed that "unconverted sinners were under no moral obligation to repent and believe the Gospel."[2] He also correctly highlights Joseph Hussey and John Gill as influential ministers.

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1. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Northamptonshire and the Modern Question: A Turning Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent," *Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 1 (1965): 121.

2. Peter J. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World: Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) and the Revival of Eighteenth Century Particular Baptist Life* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 12. In making this statement, Morden quotes from Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792–1992* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 5. Morden has authored other biographies of Fuller; while excellent, they follow the same definition of hyper-Calvinism found in *Offering Christ to the World.* See Peter J. Morden, "Andrew Fuller and the Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation" in *Pulpit and People: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Baptist Life and Thought,* ed. John H. Y. Briggs (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 128–151; idem., *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2015); idem., "Continuity and Change: Particular Baptists in the 'Long Eighteenth Century' (1689–1815)," in *Challenge and Change: English Baptist Life in the Eighteenth Century,* ed. Stephen Copson and Peter J. Morden (Oxford: Baptist Historical Society, 2017), 1–28.

In his analysis of Fuller's theological context, however, he makes no significant mention of John Brine or Lewis Wayman, and he fails to consider the tenets that surfaced during the modern question controversy. This neglect leaves his otherwise excellent research incomplete. Morden does not sufficiently consider the personalities and convictions that created the hyper-Calvinism that Fuller faced.

The same issue appears in Keith Grant's consideration of Fuller's pastoral theology. In a survey of the ideological commitments that shaped Fuller's formative years, Grant quickly outlines the work of Tobias Crisp. He then documents how the Crispian tradition morphed into the belief in eternal salvation found in the writings of Hussey and Gill. Grant perceptively argues that by portraying justification as occurring in eternity, Hussey and Gill made personal assurance of salvation difficult to obtain and free Gospel offers illegitimate.

Unfortunately, Grant does not supplement this argument with an exploration of the modern question debate. This fact leads him to interpret Fuller's rebellion against hyper-Calvinism as a rejection of the theology of Hussey and Gill when in fact the modern question controversy profoundly influenced Fuller's concerns. In the end, Grant provides a helpful but ultimately incomplete portrayal of Fuller. For example, he supplies no adequate explanation for the doctrines of spiritual warrant or Adamic inability, concepts that featured prominently in Fuller's writings.[3]

Contemporary historians who examine Fuller should possess a great appreciation for the substantial research conducted by Morden and Grant, but they should also desire a more nuanced understanding of eighteenth-century hyper-Calvinism.[4] Such an understanding would allow historians to locate Fuller in his context. It would also reveal Fuller's true sparring partners and concerns, illuminating aspects of his theology that have heretofore gone unexplored.

Throughout this chapter, therefore, I build on the research found in the preceding sections

3. For the relevant passages in Grant's text, see Keith S. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 23–50.

4. Other writers have also researched Fuller's background, but I cite Morden and Grant because they have produced quality research that has recently gained much attention. Clipsham produced a very detailed overview of the hyper-Calvinism present in Northamptonshire during Fuller's day, but he also failed to note differences between modern question hyper-Calvinism and the hyper-Calvinism of Hussey and Gill. See E. F. Clipsham, "Andrew Fuller and Fullerism: A Study in Evangelical Calvinism," *Baptist Quarterly* 20, no. 6 (1964): 99–114. For other examples of historians who have not always portrayed eighteenth-century hyper-Calvinism in sufficient detail, see Clive Jarvis, "The Myth of Hyper-Calvinism?," in *Recycling the Past or Researching History?: Studies in Baptist Historiography and Myths*, ed. Philip E. Thompson and Anthony R. Cross (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005), 231–263; Jonathan Anthony White, "A Theological and Historical Examination of John Gill's Soteriology in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Hyper-Calvinism" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

of this thesis to contextualize Fuller's remarks about hyper-Calvinism. I begin with a biographical survey in which I document Fuller's departure from hyper-Calvinism. Understanding Fuller's biography is important. As Grant has noted, Fuller's personal experiences—particularly his experiences at the Soham church of his youth—informed his understanding of hyper-Calvinism.[5] Fuller admitted as much when he wrote that his time at Soham turned his "thoughts to most of those subjects on which I have since written."[6]

To be sure, several excellent biographies of Fuller do exist. Nevertheless, by not adequately documenting the nuances present in eighteenth-century hyper-Calvinism, these works often miss important aspects of Fuller's early life.[7] My approach will differ. It will not provide a comprehensive overview of Fuller's life. It will concentrate exclusively on the theological concepts that motivated Fuller, and it will do so in conversation with a more robust understanding of hyper-Calvinism.

After this biographical survey, I will examine Fuller's chief tract against hyper-Calvinism, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation,* as well as several other pertinent works that he authored. Current research on these texts has focused primarily on summarizing their contents or on mildly critiquing Fuller for not upholding commitments perceived as normative for the broader Reformed tradition.[8] By placing Fuller's remarks in their historical setting, I intend to illuminate details in his writings that scholars have not yet addressed.

This effort to contextualize Fuller yields several interesting results. Fuller was acquainted with hyper-Calvinism as it existed in its various manifestations—from the focus on eternal salvation advanced by Hussey and Gill to the emphasis on human inability found in the modern question controversy. However, he devoted his attention not to hyper-Calvinism in general but to the specific set of convictions that he often encountered during his youth in Soham. Fuller addressed the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question controversy.

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5. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal,* 25.

6. Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, ed. Joseph Belcher (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 1:10.

7. For worthwhile biographies of Fuller, see the aforementioned works by Morden. See also Michael A. G. Haykin, "A Historical and Biblical Root of the Globalization of Christianity: The Fullerism of Andrew Fuller's *Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation," Puritan Reformed Journal* 8, no. 1 (2016): 165–176; Tom J. Nettles, "Andrew Fuller (1754–1834)," in *The British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910,* ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 97–141.

8. E.g., A volume of collected essays that consider Fuller's work as an apologist provide valuable introductions to Fuller's key texts, but many of the essays—perhaps understandably—focus on introducing Fuller and summarizing his remarks. Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *'At the Pure Fountain of Thy Word:' Andrew Fuller as an Apologist* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004). Consider also the work of Gerald Priest. He provides a survey of Fuller's biography and then a summary of *Gospel Worthy* in Gerald L. Priest, "Andrew Fuller's Response to the 'Modern Question'—A Reappraisal of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 6 (2001): 45–73. Priest then critiques Fuller for allegedly not maintaining a traditional Reformed understanding of total depravity.

Given this fact, Fuller relied on theologians who wrote in opposition to hyper-Calvinism during the modern question debate. Researchers in recent years have rightly probed Fuller's indebtedness to Jonathan Edwards and to his colleagues in the Northamptonshire Baptist Association. However, contemporary researchers have not considered whether contributors to the modern question debate influenced Fuller. This fact is worrisome because Fuller credited a text from the modern question dispute—Taylor's *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith*—with helping him reject hyper-Calvinism. Situating Fuller in his context as a pastor-theologian who rebutted the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question era will reveal that publications like Taylor's shaped Fuller's thought.

With this chapter, then, I contend that Fuller responded to the form of hyper-Calvinism that emerged during the modern question debate. This hyper-Calvinism promoted human passivity in salvation's reception by championing a human inability to engage in spiritually meaningful acts. Seeking to rebut this theology, Fuller employed the intellectual resources found in the writings of Matthias Maurice, Abraham Taylor, and possibly even Alvery Jackson—ministers who participated in the modern question discussion.

A Biographical Survey of Fuller's Early Life

Important Primary Sources

Efforts to reconstruct Fuller's turn away from hyper-Calvinism can prove unexpectedly difficult. Like many evangelicals from his era, Fuller kept a diary in which he recorded his reflections on theology and ministry. Unfortunately, prior to his death, Fuller destroyed the portions of his diary directly related to his transition away from hyper-Calvinism.[9] This destruction doubtlessly led to the loss of valuable autobiographical information.

Modern researchers do at least have access to a series of letters that Fuller composed for Charles Stuart, an associate of Fuller's in Edinburgh. With these letters, Fuller provided a narrative of his conversion. He documented his exposure to hyper-Calvinism in the Soham congregation that he attended during his youth and then his eventual rejection of that theology. Stuart later published Fuller's letters in *Evangelical Magazine*, and Fuller's biographers have since used those letters to recreate Fuller's early life.[10]

9. See the textual history of Fuller's diary in Michael D. McMullen and Timothy D. Whelan, introduction to *The Diary of Andrew Fuller*, *1780–1801*, by Andrew Fuller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), xiii.

10. John Ryland later included these letters in his memoir of Fuller's life. For this thesis, I consulted both Ryland's text and copies of original letters sent to Stuart. For Ryland's reproduction of the letters, see John Ryland, *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope Illustrated; in the Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (London: Button and Son, 1816), 15–65. For copies of the original letters sent to Stuart, see Andrew Fuller, Letter to Charles Stuart, January 1815, Typed Fuller's Letters, Box 4/5/1, Angus Library, University of Oxford. For an overview of Fuller as a letter writer, see Earnest A. Payne "Andrew Fuller as a

In addition to these letters, several of Fuller's contemporaries authored biographies about Fuller shortly after his death. Among them, John Ryland's *The Work of Faith* remains the most helpful. Ryland was a close associate of Fuller's; he labeled himself "Fuller's oldest and most intimate friend."[11] Ryland relied on Fuller's letters to Charles Stuart as well as the remaining entries in Fuller's diary to construct his biography. His direct involvement in Fuller's life allowed him to incorporate into *Work of Faith* his memories of key events and people.

A recently rediscovered manuscript from Fuller's time at Soham proves especially helpful. Fuller's son, Andrew Gunton Fuller, claimed in an 1882 biography of Fuller that he possessed an awareness of an early version of *Gospel Worthy.* Remarking on *Gospel Worthy's* textual transmission*,* Gunton Fuller wrote that his father

> tells us in the preface that it [Gospel Worthy] was written in 1781, yet a paper which he has endorsed with the date of 1776, the year after his entrance on his pastorate, contains the elements of it, written probably at intervals, and neither designed nor adapted for publication, and must have been written in the 23rd year of his age.[12]

For years, researchers proved unable to locate this document. Peter Morden declared in 2003 that "the paper to which Gunton Fuller referred is now lost."[13] Thankfully, Michael A. G. Haykin of the Andrew Fuller Center at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary discovered the manuscript in the archives of the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in 2010. The title information displayed on the document's cover reveals that Fuller wrote the piece around 1778 and entitled it *Thoughts on the Power of Men to do the will of God.*[14] Originating several years before *Gospel Worthy* and serving as a private journal rather than a tract intended for public release, *Thoughts on the Power of Men* provides insight into Fuller's

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Letter Writer," *Baptist Quarterly* 15, no. 7 (1954): 290–296.

11. Ryland, *Work of Faith,* vi–vii. In addition to Ryland's biography, consider J. W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (Boston: Lincoln and Edmands, 1830).

12. Andrew G. Fuller, *Men Worth Remembering: Andrew Fuller* (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1882), 168.

13. Morden, *Offering Christ to the World,* 50. After *Thoughts on the Power of Men* was discovered, Modern did include information drawn from the manuscript in his subsequent work. E.g., Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 54–56.

14. For brief details on this document's discovery, see Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 39–42. For the original text, see Andrew Fuller, "Thoughts on the Power of Men to Do the Will of God," Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. I express graduate to Michael A. G. Haykin and Adam Winters, the archivist at Southern Seminary, for granting me access to this document. *Thoughts on the Power of Men* is only starting to receive serious consideration from Fuller scholars. Analysis of it has recently appeared in Dustin Blaine Bruce, "'The Grand Encouragement:' Andrew Fuller's Pneumatology as a Reception of and Advancement on Orthodox, Puritan, and Evangelical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 205–209; Ryan Patrick Hoselton, "'The Love of God Holds Creation Together:' Andrew Fuller's Theology of Virtue" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013), 7–18.

struggles with hyper-Calvinism.

With these sources, then, historians can understand the contours of Fuller's early theological development. While Fuller's diary entries from this period would have proven invaluable, even in the absence of those texts, scholars do retain access to helpful primary source material.[15]

Identifying Fuller's Theological Context

In his *Work of Faith,* John Ryland carefully documented the theological context from which Fuller emerged. He explained that out of a misplaced zeal for Calvinism, some Baptist leaders during the eighteenth century denied "that all who hear the Gospel are called to that exercise of repentance and faith which is connected to salvation." Ryland cited the modern question controversy as the origins of this theological position, and he rightly credited Northamptonshire figures like Richard Davis and Lewis Wayman as its most significant thinkers. Interestingly, though Ryland mentioned both John Gill and John Brine, he did not attribute hyper-Calvinism's rise to their commitment to salvation in eternity. For Ryland, Gill and Brine merely served to popularize a diminished understanding of evangelism because of their influence and numerous publications. Hyper-Calvinism as a theological movement rested not on the concept of eternal salvation but on Adamic inability. Ryland explained that advocates of hyper-Calvinism "supposed the faith connected with salvation could not be a duty, because Adam, as they then thought, had not power (that is, he had no occasion or opportunity) to believe in Christ."[16]

Ryland also pointed to several Calvinistic Methodists associated with Lady Huntingdon's Connection who became, in his words, "tinged with false Calvinism." In his estimate, these advocates for false Calvinism were not led to their convictions "by reading a great deal of controversial divinity, or by a polemical discussion of the five points disputed between us and the Arminians." Rather, they subscribed to a "vague, crude idea" that bore a striking resemblance to the Adamic inability argument proffered by hyper-Calvinists of the modern question debate. According to Ryland, the promoters of this false Calvinism held to an understanding of "the term power, which led them to suppose, that nothing could be a bad man's duty but what he could perform without any special influence from God." Ryland then noted that this idea, although it did not originate from within a Baptist context, "was

15. I survey here works that I deem most significant for discerning Fuller's early theological development. For a list of other relevant sources, see Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 3–8.

16. Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 5–9.

spreading, faster than we were aware among our [Baptist] churches also."[17]

Fuller's reflections on his formative years reveal that Ryland was correct to associate the hyper-Calvinism found in Fuller's Soham context with the concerns raised during the modern question debate. In the autobiographical details that Fuller provided to Stuart, Fuller did not mention the doctrine of eternal salvation as espoused by Hussey and Gill. He devoted his attention to the concept of a spiritual warrant and to the doctrine of human inability.

Writing to Stuart, Fuller explained that as a teenager, he attended a small Baptist congregation in Soham, England, that could trace its lineage back to John Davis. George Simson, Davis' successor at the Stone Yard Church, founded Fuller's church around 1752, and John Eve, the man who served as Fuller's first pastor, also originated from Stone Yard. Although the precise details of the congregation's shift from Davis' theology to hyper-Calvinism remain difficult to determine, Fuller remembered that during his lifetime his minister "had little or nothing to say to the unconverted."[18]

Eve's ministerial practice left Fuller struggling to find assurance of salvation, primarily because Fuller thought that he had to discern a spiritual warrant. Fuller believed that before he could come to Christ and seek salvation, the Spirit had to give him an inner testimony informing him that he could approach Christ. Fuller later remembered, "I was not then aware that any poor sinner had a warrant to believe in Christ for the salvation of his soul, but supposed there must be some kind of qualification to entitle him to do it; yet I was aware that I had no qualification."[19]

In his letters to Stuart, Fuller also highlighted a bitter church dispute that occurred at Soham Baptist. The schism became so acrimonious that it eventually led to the departure of John Eve, the church's minister. This event left an indelible impression of Fuller. He entitled the affair the "wormwood and gall of my youth."[20]

The argument considered whether human beings have the power to perform the will of God. It began when James Levit, a member of the Soham church, underwent church

17. Ibid., 10–11. Ryland provided no additional details about the members of Lady Huntingdon's Connection who imbibed what he entitled false Calvinism. However, Harding has documented that some followers of the "hyper-Calvinist" William Huntington partnered with the Huntingdon Connection. Ryland perhaps referred to those figures. See Alan Harding, *The Countess of Huntington's Connexion: A Sect in Action in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 282–283. For Huntington's appreciation for Tobias Crisp and John Saltmarsh, see Curt Daniel, "John Gill and Calvinistic Antinomianism," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation,* ed. Might A. G. Haykin (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 188–190.

18. As recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 17. For the history of the Soham Baptist church, see Nuttall, "Modern Question," 121; Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 15–16.

19. Recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 29.

20. Ibid., 42.

discipline for public intoxication.[21] Fuller confronted Levit about his behavior, but when Levit defended himself, he appealed to an innate spiritual helplessness. According to Fuller, Levit explicitly claimed that he was powerless to avoid sin.

Controversy soon erupted not over whether the Soham congregation should enact redemptive church discipline on Levit but over remarks that John Eve made during the church's disciplinary proceedings. According to Fuller's recollection, Eve stated that "we certainly could keep ourselves from open sins. We had not power to do things spiritually good; but as to outwards acts; we had power both to do the will of God and disobey."[22]

This seemingly innocuous comment created an unexpected firestorm. Members of the Soham church soon examined in earnest the "abstract question of the power of sinful men to do the will of God, and to keep themselves from sin." Eve maintained that humans could perform morally good acts that comport with God's revealed will but that they could not enact spiritually beneficial acts such as apprehending salvation. Such acts would require the Spirit's intervention. Some outspoken members of the Soham congregation, including Fuller's mentor Joseph Driver, disagreed. They went further than Eve and claimed that "all our conformity to the divine precepts is of grace."[23] With their position, they contended that an innate inability renders all individuals incapable of performing any good action whatsoever. They insisted that conformity to God's most basic statutes requires divine favor.

Fuller's focus on a spiritual warrant and his church's fascination with the issue of human inability provide evidence that the set of beliefs Fuller encountered in Soham corresponded more to the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question era than to the position taken by Hussey and Gill. In his autobiographical narrative, Fuller wrote of a spiritual warrant. Brine was the first writer to call explicitly for the necessity of such a warrant—not Hussey or Gill. Brine did so not in his arguments for eternal salvation but in remarks on Adamic inability. He believed that by emphasizing a warrant, he could better portray human passivity in salvation's reception. In his framing, a warrant served to remind recipients of the Gospel that God alone accomplishes the work of salvation. For this reason, Brine informed his followers that they must await a divine summons before they can enjoy salvation's benefits.[24]

Of course, an astute thinker like Fuller might have recognized that the theology advanced

21. Morden's extensive research has helpfully provided Levit's name; he pursued the minutes of the Soham church book to discover it. See Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 34.

22. Recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 38.

23. Ibid., 38, 41.

24. E.g., John Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity,* (London: John Ward, 1753), 38–39; idem., *A Refutation of Arminian Principles* (London: A. Ward, 1743), 10, 20.

by Hussey and Gill at least implied the need to have a spiritual warrant, but his description of his lengthy search for a sense of warrant makes this fact doubtful. Fuller seems to have reacted to a church setting in which his minister did more than imply the necessity of a spiritual warrant; he appears to have possessed familiarity with open calls for such a warrant.

In addition, the heated controversy in the Soham church that Fuller described in anguished detail pertained to human inability, a concept at best tangential to the Hussey and Gill tradition but at home in hyper-Calvinist writings from the modern question period. Both Hussey and Gill affirmed that the non-elect can outwardly perform God's revealed will as found in Scripture. In their writings and sermons, they counseled non-elect recipients of the Gospel message to commit themselves to the means of grace and a process of moral reform. Through this process of reform, they believed that even the non-elect might improve their ethical behavior. Their theology prioritized the doctrine of eternal salvation and did not rely on a human incapacity to obey God's commandments.

In contrast, the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question debate stressed human inability. Lewis Wayman, John Brine, and John Johnson all presented prelapsarian Adam as unable to comprehend or believe the Gospel. This emphasis shifted hyper-Calvinist theology away from considerations of God's pre-temporal works to discussions about the spiritual impotence of human beings.

This change in focus likely contributed to the contentious debate that engulfed Fuller's church. In arguing that humans can perform no morally good actions apart from the Spirit's assistance, Joseph Driver and his supporters appear to have repeated a crude and popular-level version of the Adamic inability argument found in hyper-Calvinist tracts from the modern question era. Though Fuller did not directly mention Adamic inability in his account of the Soham dispute, he did suggest that the doctrine shaped the theology that his congregation embraced. Describing the type of hyper-Calvinism that he once espoused as a faithful member of the Soham church, he wrote, "I supposed there must be two kinds of holiness, one of which was possessed by man in innocence, and was binding on all his posterity—the other derived from Christ, and binding only on his people."[25]

Fuller's Rejection of Hyper-Calvinism

Fuller's account of his transition from hyper-Calvinism further supports the claim that he

25. Recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 59. Fuller elsewhere explained that the writings of John Johnson, the controversial hyper-Calvinist minister who participated in the modern question debate, exercised influence over his church—especially over his pastor, John Eve. See ibid., 54–55. Fuller did not detail the exact ways Johnson's theology shaped his context, but the presence of Johnson's thought further supports the claim that the hyper-Calvinism present in Soham originated from figures related to the modern question debate.

reacted to the hyper-Calvinism expressed in the modern question debate. He cited his encounter with Abraham Taylor's *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith* as his first significant break from the hyper-Calvinist tradition. In a letter to Charles Stuart, he wrote, "In the autumn of 1775, being in London, I met with a pamphlet by Dr. Abraham Taylor, concerning what was called *The Modern Question.*" He then explained that his Soham provenance had up to that point prevented him from knowing the contours of the larger modern question discussion. His location in a more rural setting had provided him little access to many of the debate's most significant publications. Nevertheless, Fuller claimed that though he had "never seen anything relative to the controversy before…the subject, as I have stated, had occupied my thoughts." Apparently, the strong similarities between the hyper-Calvinism that Taylor attacked in the *Modern Question* and the theology preached at the Soham church shocked him. He divulged that Taylor's tract "set me fast." Describing the course of study on which Taylor's work directed him, Fuller wrote, "I read and examined the Scripture. The more I read and thought, the more I doubted my former views."[26]

Fuller then began to reconsider his soteriology in earnest, a process that started with him examining humanity's abilities and responsibilities before God. In *Thoughts on the Power of Men,* composed either in 1777 or 1778, he admitted, "If the question was put to me whether man since the fall has any power to do the will of God, I would endeavor to answer with 'meekness and fear.'" Through the act of writing, though, he hoped to formulate his opinion. In his manuscript, he explained, "I would endeavor to declare my thoughts on this subject in as clear a light as I am able."

Employing an argument that would appear later in *Gospel Worthy*, Fuller wrote,

> I cannot but think the distinction made by some divines between natural and moral ability sufficient to determine this difficulty. By the former I understand, and I think they understand, 'the enjoyment and exercise of the faculties of our souls and the members of our bodies.' By the latter, 'an inclination or disposition of mind to exercise these natural powers, to good or holy purposes.'

Subsequent to the fall, Fuller explained, humans retained their natural abilities but lost their power to pursue after God. He claimed, "Man has utterly lost all moral power to do the will of God. Their whole soul is depraved, nor is there any sparks of moral goodness left in them."[27]

With this framing, Fuller believed that he could contend "for our performing anything and everything that God requires at our hands, whether external or internal, were it not for the

26. Recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 60.
27. Fuller, *Thoughts on the Power of Men,* 2–3.

fearful depravity that inhabits all these powers." Writing in opposition to the doctrine of Adamic inability that he encountered at Soham, he sought to portray disobedience to God as originating from rebellious desires and not an innate incapacity to obey God's revealed will.

Developing the concepts of natural ability and moral ability further, he referenced a distinction between natural inability and moral inability. With the term natural inability, Fuller referred to any "natural power" that might hinder a person from obeying God. This form of inability stood in contrast to moral inability, which he defined as fallen humanity's lack of "an inflation or heart to do good."[28]

Fuller displayed particular concern for the pastoral consequences that a strong focus on a "merely natural" inability might bring. He feared that with such a theology, a sinful person "would be pitiable rather than blamable; for who would blame a man for the non-performance of that which he cannot effect?" Likely remembering the dispute that transpired at his Soham church, he warned that the doctrine could turn a person into "a monster of iniquity" who claims that they cannot avoid sin.[29]

Of course, this bifurcation between natural inability and moral inability did not originate with Fuller. Edwards scholar Chris Chun has argued that Fuller's use of these phrases relied heavily on Edwards' *Freedom of the Will*, a work composed over twenty years before Fuller's *Thoughts on the Power of Men.* Chun has evidence to support this conclusion.[30] In a letter to Stuart, Fuller noted that Edwards made use of the two terms. Fuller even cited Edwards in the opening of *Thoughts on the Power of Men* as "ably handling the subject."[31]

Nevertheless, Fuller's usage of these concepts differed markedly from Edwards'. As Paul Ramsey has explained, Edwards issued his *Freedom of the Will* as an attack on libertarian free will, a position that he perceived at the heart of Arminianism. In a broad and extensive argument for determinism, Edwards distinguished between natural necessity and moral necessity to rebut "the charge that every form of necessity or determinism makes men blocks or stones."[32]

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28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 19, 54.

30. For Chun's examination of the Edwardsean influence present in Fuller's *Thoughts on the Power of Men,* see Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 39–45. For a summary of Chun's broader argument about Fuller's use of the terms natural inability and moral inability, see Chris Chun, "A Mainspring of Missionary Thought: Andrew Fuller on Natural and Moral Inability," *American Baptist Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2006): 335–355. To be sure, Edwards was not the only theologian to distinguish between natural and moral inability. He merits attention here because he influenced the direction of Fuller's theology.

31. Fuller, *Thoughts on the Power of Men,* 3.

32. Paul Ramsey, introduction to *The Works of Johnathan Edwards: Freedom of the Will,* vol. 1*,* by Johnathan Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 37. For an older but still helpful examination of the context in which Edwards wrote *Freedom of the Will,* see Conrad Wright, "Edwards and the Arminians on

Writing for this purpose, Edwards defined natural necessity as the "necessity as men are under through the force of natural causes" and compared this definition to the moral necessity which he considered pertinent to the human will. He wrote that by a moral necessity, he envisioned "that necessity of connection and consequence, which arises from such moral causes as the strength or inclination, or motives, and the connection which there is in many cases between these and such certain volitions and actions."[33]

With this foundation in place, Edwards could address natural inability and moral inability. Concerning natural inability, he explained, "We are said to be naturally unable to do a thing when we can't do it if we will because what is most commonly called nature don't allow of it or because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will." A morality inability, however, cannot "consist in any of these things" but is instead "the opposition or want of inclination." Clarifying his remarks, Edwards noted, "When a person is unable to will or choose such a thing through a defect of motives or prevalence of contrary motives, 'tis the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination."[34]

For Edwards, differentiating between natural inability and moral inability proved useful in debates about divine determinism; however, Fuller employed the same differentiation in his struggle with the doctrine of Adamic inability. This difference in context means that a direct correspondence between Edwards' intended meaning and Fuller's does not exist. When the two men wrote of natural inability and moral inability, they did so in vastly different settings. These contexts shaped what they meant by the two terms.

Chun did not explore this fact in detail when he probed Fuller's indebtedness to Edwards, and this neglect perhaps led him not to recognize that Fuller relied on more than just Edwards when he appropriated these categories. Fuller turned to a seemingly unlikely theologian when he explained natural inability and moral inability—John Gill. In his autobiographical narrative, he praised Gill for helping him understand the difference between natural and moral inability. He even claimed to have discovered the concepts first in Gill's writings, not in Edwards'. Writing to Stuart, he recounted

> I met with a passage in Dr. Gill...in which he distinguished between a thing being 'in the power of our hand, and in the power of our heart.' This, thought I, is the clue to our [Soham] dispute. Every man has it in the power of his hand to do good and abstain from evil; and this is what makes us accountable beings...We have it in the

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the Freedom of the Will," *Harvard Theological Review* 35, no. 4 (1942): 241–261. For a summary of Edwards' argument in *Freedom of the Will*, see C. Samuel Storms, "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," *Trinity Journal* 3 (1982): 131–169.

33. Johnathan Edwards, *The Works of Johnathan Edwards: Freedom of the Will,* vol. 1, edited by Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 156–157.

34. Ibid., 159–160

> power of our hands to do good, but we are disposed to do evil, and so to do good is not naturally in the power of our hearts.

Fuller then wrote that it was only "sometime after this" that he "became acquainted with Mr. Robert Hall of Arnsby" who recommended to him Edwards' *Freedom of the Will.*[35]

Fuller's *Thoughts on the Power of Men* reveals the significant influence that Gill had over his thought during this stage in his life. He included in his manuscript numerous quotations and paraphrases from Gill's commentaries and theological tracts, but he mentioned Edwards by name only once, and he never quoted from Edwards.[36] When Fuller described natural inability and moral inability, he admitted that Edwards ably discussed those words. However, he defined the distinction between the two abilities by providing an extensive quotation from Gill's *Cause of God and Truth.*[37]

Importantly, the meaning that Gill gave to the two terms accords better with the explanation that Fuller wished to convey than the definition that Edwards provided for the words. Gill highlighted the differences between Adam before and after the fall, and he centered his discussion on the nature and limits of human depravity. This detailed consideration of pre-fall and post-fall capacities was not as pronounced in Edwards' *Freedom of the Will*.

Fuller's heavy use of Gill in this way does not overturn Chun's overall argument that Fuller could often "expand, implicate and apply Edwardsean ideas and concepts in his own historical setting," but it does add nuance to that conversation.[38] Fuller indeed drew inspiration from Edwards throughout most of his life, and Chun's excellent research has rightly documented this fact. In this particular instance, though, Fuller appears to have relied more on Gill than Edwards. In *Thoughts on the Power of Men,* Fuller used Edwards as merely an example of a respected theologian who embraced the categories of moral inability and natural inability. He used Gill to construct his explanation of those categories.

Fuller could turn to Gill because he recognized that Gill at times rejected the doctrine of Adamic inability. In the text from which he quoted, *The Cause of God and Truth,* Gill explicitly opposed the idea. Gill wrote, "That Adam, in a state of innocence, had a power of believing in Christ, and did believe in him as the second Person in the Trinity, as the Son of

35. Recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 43–44.

36. For Fuller's references to Gill, ibid., 3–4, 11–12, 55.

37. Fuller provided a quotation from Gill's text that encompassed over a page and half in *Thoughts on the Power of Men.* See ibid., 3-4. For the original quote, see John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1828), 16.

38. Chris Chun, "'Sense of the Heart:' Jonathan Edwards' Legacy in the Writings of Andrew Fuller," *Eusebeia* 9 (2008): 127.

God, cannot well be denied."[39] Since Gill's hyper-Calvinism emerged from his understanding of eternal salvation and not questions about Adam's abilities, Fuller found in some of Gill's writings a resource in his fight against the hyper-Calvinism of his Soham church.

Fuller's Early Assessments of John Gill and Joseph Hussey

Fuller's serious examination of human abilities before God led him to reject the hyper-Calvinist theology that he received during his youth. In the year 1779, he preached his first sermon with direct appeals to the unconverted. He did so as the new minister of Soham Baptist Church, a role that he undertook after the departure of John Eve. He remembered that while not all church members opposed his new preaching style, his congregation did experience a certain "bitterness of spirit."[40]

In all of his accounts of his transition from hyper-Calvinism, Fuller never presented salvation in eternity as a significant issue. He also avoided the Crispian debates over the legitimacy of conditional language in accounts of salvation. Fuller concentrated his attention instead on the notion of a spiritual warrant and the doctrine of Adamic inability, the two concepts prevalent in the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question.

His singular focus on these two issues led him to compartmentalize the way in which he described his journey from hyper-Calvinism. In a section of his autobiography that he demarcated as distinct from his struggle with hyper-Calvinism, he outlined John Gill's understanding of justification. Fuller remarked, "When I first set out in the ministry, I had no other ideas of justification than those which are stated by Dr. Gill." Then, quoting directly from Gill's systematic theology, he expressed Gill's viewpoint. He noted Gill's assertion that

> 'justification . . . may be distinguished into active and passive. Active justification is the act of God. It is God that justifieth. Passive justification is the act of God terminating on the conscience of a believer, commonly called a transient act passing upon an external object.'

Fuller rightly understood that Gill's position resulted in salvation occurring in eternity. Stringing together a series of quotations from Gill's text, he explained, "The former [active justification] is an act internal and eternal, taken up in the Divine mind from eternity, and is an immanent, abiding one in it….the Doctor [also] speaks of [passive] justification as it

39. Gill, *Cause of God and Truth,* 307–308. Fuller appreciated that Gill could on occasion affirm the doctrine of Adamic inability—especially as he aged. However, Fuller also understood that Gill's commitment to this doctrine never served as the central feature of Gill's hyper-Calvinist theology. See, for example, Fuller's analysis of Gill views in Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:421.

40. As reported in Gunton Fuller, *Men Worth Remembering,* 45. Ryland noted that "a tinge of False Calvinism infected some of the [Soham] people, who were inclined to find fault with his [Fuller's] ministry, as it became more searching and practical, and as he freely enforced the indefinite calls of the Gospel." Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 71.

'terminates in the conscience of a believer, and which (he says) the Scriptures style justification by faith.'"[41]

Fuller then surprisingly claimed that only after he changed his mind away from hyper-Calvinism did he reject Gill's distinction between active and passive justification. Writing in 1796—seventeen years after he first incorporated broader appeals to sinners in his preaching—Fuller admitted that "till within a few years [i.e., until recently]" he held to the same understanding of justification that Gill promoted. He claimed that he eventually "felt dissatisfied" with Gill's formulation because he believed that such a view "did not quadrate with the Scriptures."[42]

Apparently, Fuller considered Gill's presentation of justification an issue distinct from hyper-Calvinism. For a time, he conceived of himself as abandoning hyper-Calvinism while simultaneously holding to salvation in eternity. In his assessment, hyper-Calvinism centered on theological commitments other than the doctrine of justification. The theology that he encountered in Soham prioritized the need for a spiritual warrant and human inability before God—not elaborate descriptions of justification's timing.

Fuller offered similar rhetoric when he addressed Joseph Hussey's convictions. He wrote that during the time in which he examined the "high, or rather hyper-Calvinist strain" of theology, his mind "also frequently diverted to other subjects of inquiry." He deemed those subjects unrelated to the important pastoral concerns generated by hyper-Calvinism. One such matter that he considered was "the pre-existence of Christ's human soul."[43] He admitted that he read a book by Samuel Stockell in which Stockell argued for a pre-existent human soul in the Son. Stockell was a devoted follower of Hussey, and like Hussey, he used his aberrant Christology to contend for salvation in eternity and reject open Gospel offers.[44] Despite Fuller's knowledge of Stockell's publication, he never connected Stockell's argument for eternal salvation to his struggle over hyper-Calvinism. For Fuller, the two subjects were unrelated.

Examination of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*

41. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 1:14–17.

42. Ibid., 18. Howson correctly records Fuller's remarks about Gill's doctrine of justification, but he incorrectly assesses the year in which Fuller made them. See Barry Howson, "Andrew Fuller's Reading of John Gill." *Eusebeia* 9 (2008): 79–80.

43. As recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 52–54, 61–62.

44. Fuller referred to Samuel Stockell, *The Redeemer's Glory Unveiled* (London: J.H. 1733). Stockell attended Hussey's church for a time and wrote an impassioned apology for Hussey's doctrine of the Christ's preexistent human soul. For analysis of Stockell's views, see Peter Toon, "Samuel Stockell: His Influence on Strict Baptist Thought," *Free Grace Record* 4, no. 6 (1967): 263–270.

Fuller's Decision to Publish *Gospel Worthy*

Fuller's life dramatically changed after he abandoned hyper-Calvinism. Following a season of great soul searching, he left Soham to serve as a minister for the Baptist church in Kettering. The Baptist meeting in Kettering existed as a bastion of Crispian theology for years, and it produced such leaders as John Gill and John Brine. Nevertheless, the congregation had recently begun to accept more evangelical sentiments. When Fuller officially arrived at the church in 1783, he included in his public confession of faith statements that upheld the legitimacy of Gospel offers and duty faith. He also alluded to his distinction between natural inability and moral inability. He wrote in his confessional statement, "I believe that men are now born and grow up with a vile propensity to moral evil, and that herein lies their inability to keep God's law, and as such it is a moral and a criminal inability."[45]

Fuller also began an active publishing ministry. His first public work appeared in 1784. Entitled *The Nature and Importance of Walking by Faith,* the text represented a sermon that Fuller delivered during a Northamptonshire Baptist Association call to prayer. True to his new evangelical convictions, Fuller used the sermon to encourage "earnest and united prayer" so that members of his association might proclaim Christ throughout the world.[46]

While *The Nature and Importance of Walking by Faith* was Fuller's first published work, it was not the first publication that he composed. Peter Morden has demonstrated that Fuller started to write *Gospel Worthy* while he was still living in Soham.[47] He began work on that piece soon after he finished his personal reflections in *Thoughts on the Power of Men*; indeed, he took many of the statements and ideas found in *Thoughts on Power the Power of Men* and incorporated them directly into the text of *Gospel Worthy.*

Gospel Worthy underwent a long period of gestation partly because Fuller wished to avoid controversy and unnecessary attention. In a diary entry dated nearly one year before the tract's public release*,* he wrote,

> The weight of publishing still lies upon me. I expect a great share of unhappiness through it. I had certainly much rather go through the world in peace, did I not

45. See Fuller's confession of faith recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 99–109. Fuller composed a brief summary of the religious landscape of the Northamptonshire region ten years after he arrived at Kettering. This document provides insight into both his congregation and the congregations around him. See Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The State of Religion in Northamptonshire (1793) by Andrew Fuller," *Baptist Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1981): 177–179.

46. See *The Nature and Importance of Walking by Faith* found in Fuller, *Complete Works,* 1:117–134. The Northamptonshire prayer call served to rally evangelical Calvinists in the Particular Baptist denomination and proved important in the later formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. See E. A. Payne, *The Prayer Call of 1784* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1941).

47. Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 38–39.

> consider this step as my duty. I feel a jealousy of myself, lest I should not be endued with meekness and patience sufficient for controversy. The Lord keep me![48]

Fuller's sense of duty coupled with the encouragement that he received from colleagues such as John Ryland did eventually persuade him to make his argument widely available. The first public edition of *Gospel Worthy* appeared in 1785.

The Need to Set *Gospel Worthy* in its Context

Several important theologians and ministers informed the argument that Fuller presented in *Gospel Worthy.* Fuller openly professed his dependence on Jonathan Edwards and other evangelicals who participated in the transatlantic revivals of the eighteenth century.[49] He received inspiration from fellow ministers in the Northamptonshire Baptist Association.[50] On occasion, he even drew from Puritan writers—most notably John Owen—and the Protestant Reformer John Calvin.[51]

Peter Morden has correctly stressed that in addition to these sources, Fuller received important motivation and guidance from his Biblicism.[52] Fuller's commitment to Biblical authority worked to drive him away from hyper-Calvinism and then convinced him to issue a public refutation of that theology. In 1780, just one year before Fuller started to compose *Gospel Worthy,* he entered into what he described as a covenant with God. In a short document he entitled *A Solemn Vow, or Renewal of Covenant of God,* he wrote a prayer in which he stated, "Lord, thou hast given me a determination to take up no principle at second-

48. Andrew Fuller, *The Diary of Andrew Fuller, 1780–1801,* vol. 1 of *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller,* eds. Michael D. McMullen and Timothy D. Whelan (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 69.

49. Among the many works that consider Fuller's indebtedness to Edwards, consider: Chun, *Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*; idem., "A Mainspring of Missionary Thought: Andrew Fuller on Natural and Moral Inability," 335–355. See also Nathan A. Finn, "Andrew Fuller's Edwardsean Spirituality," in *The Pure Flame of Devotion: The History of Christian Spirituality,* ed. G. Stephen Weaver Jr. and Ian Hugh Clary (Ontario: Joshua Press, 2013), 387–404; Thomas J. Nettles, "The Influence of Jonathan Edwards on Andrew Fuller," *Eusebeia* 9 (2008): 97–116; idem., "Jonathan Edwards' Impact on the Baptists," in *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Essays in Honour of Robert W. Oliver*, ed. Robert Strivens and S. Blair Waddell (Welwyn Garden City: EP Books, 2016), 147–170; Peter Beck, "Trans-Atlantic Friendships: Andrew Fuller and the New Divinity Men," *The Journal of Baptist Studies* 8 (2016): 16–50; Roger Hayden, "Evangelical Calvinism Among Eighteenth-Century British Baptists" (PhD thesis, University of Keele, 1991), 336–345. Interestingly, these texts tend to make general comments about Fuller's use of Edwards and do not probe specifically whether used Edwards when he authored *Gospel Worthy.*

50. For information on Fuller's connections in the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, see T. S. H. Elwyn, *The Northamptonshire Baptist Association* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1964), 11–28; Michael A. G. Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, His Friends and His Times* (Durham: Evangelical Press, 1994); idem., "'A Little Band of Brothers:' Friendship in the Life of Andrew Fuller—An Essay on the Bicentennial of His Death," *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 12, no. 2 (2015): 2–14.

51. For analysis of Fuller's use of Owen, see Shane Shaddix, "'No Writer for Whom I Have so Great an Esteem:' John Owen's Influence on Andrew Fuller" (paper presented at the Andrew Fuller Conference at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 19 September 2016), 1–17; Carl R. Trueman, "John Owen and Andrew Fuller," *Eusebeia* 9 (2008): 53–69. For Fuller's use of Calvin, see A. H. Kirkby, "The Theology of Andrew Fuller in its Relation to Calvinism" (PhD thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 1956).

52. See, for example, Morden, *Offering Christ to the World,* 36–38.

hand; but to search for every thing at the pure fountain of thy word."[53]

While Morden has rightly prioritized Fuller's Biblicism, he has not sufficiently probed the historical context in which Fuller read the Bible.[54] *Gospel Worthy* had a Soham provenance. Fuller wrote the majority of that text in 1781, just before he departed for Kettering.[55] This particular setting shaped the questions that he asked of the Bible and even the answers that he believed he found in the Bible.

As Fuller's biographical details reveal, the hyper-Calvinism present at Soham did not originate from the writings of Hussey or Gill. The soteriology of the Soham church centered around concerns present in the modern question controversy—specifically, John Brine's idea of a spiritual warrant and the doctrine of Adamic inability. Fuller crafted his remarks in *Gospel Worthy* with this version of hyper-Calvinism in mind. A study of *Gospel Worthy* within this unique theological context does not presently exist. Such a study will produce fresh insight into the document.

Fuller's Chief Theological Targets in *Gospel Worthy*

Fuller began *Gospel Worthy* with a brief allusion to his struggles with hyper-Calvinism. He admitted that for some time, his understanding of human inability led him to oppose universal Gospel offers and the notion of duty faith. He wrote, "Now, thought I, respecting faith, if that is not the duty of unconverted sinners, then their inability to come to Christ must be purely natural, or it must be an inability wherein they are not voluntary." The distinction between natural inability and moral inability eventually freed him from this opinion. Fuller explained, "But, upon examination, I found that men's inability to that [faith in Christ], and all other things truly and spiritually good, was of the voluntary kind—that they will not come to Christ that they may have life." With this new realization, he believed that he could designate rejection of Christ "criminal" and acceptance of Christ a "duty."[56]

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53. Recorded in Ryland, *Work of Faith,* 203

54. To be fair, Morden does a superb job of contextualizing many of Fuller's statements. I only argue here that he does not sufficiently detail exactly how the form of hyper-Calvinism present at Soham shaped Fuller's thought. For a summary of Morden's remarks on Fuller's broader context, see his two published books on Fuller as well as Peter J. Morden, "Andrew Fuller and the Birth of 'Fullerism,'" *Baptist Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (2015): 140–152.

55. *Gospel Worthy* appeared in two editions—the original 1785 version and then a subsequent edition released in 1801. In the second edition, Fuller reworked his comments on particular redemption in light of criticism that he received. He also incorporated material on Sandemanianism and employed clearer rhetoric. Nevertheless, "the distinction between natural and moral inability, as the ground for asserting that saving faith was the duty of all, had been maintained." Morden, *Offering Christ to the World,* 74. Throughout this chapter, I make use of both versions of *Gospel Worthy* but rely most heavily on the second edition. When there are significant discrepancies between the two texts, I note them.

56. These remarks appeared in the first edition of *Gospel Worthy.* See Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (Northampton: T. Dicey & Co., 1785), v–vi. Fuller stripped this lengthy autobiographical narrative from the text's second edition, but he retained his remarks on Adamic inability. See Fuller, *Complete*

Fuller then portrayed the entire hyper-Calvinism debate as a discussion about humanity's ability to believe the Gospel. Noting that hyper-Calvinists and evangelical Calvinists agreed on such matters as unconditional election and the nature of God's law, he focused his attention solely on the question of humanity's capacities before God. Likely referencing Lewis Wayman who appealed to 1 Cor 2:14, Fuller noted that some ministers argued that because "the natural man receiveth not the things of God" there could be no universal obligation to accept the Gospel. For them, an incapacity to comprehend the Gospel led to no requirement to receive the Gospel. Fuller labeled this matter the fundamental "purpose" of the dispute and clarified that while he affirmed that "those in the flesh cannot please God," he was far from "imagining that on this account they are not bound to please God."[57]

This singular focus on human inability led Fuller to eschew any other concerns related to hyper-Calvinism. Nowhere in *Gospel Worthy* did he address salvation in eternity or the role that faith might play in salvation's reception. His tract sought only to overturn the claim that because humans are not able to understand the Gospel fully, they are not expected to believe it.

Fuller's brief interaction with Joseph Hussey's writings in the body of *Gospel Worthy* illustrates his attention to this one issue. In a section devoted to outlining the differences between natural inability and moral inability, he cited Hussey's reading of John 5:40—"ye will not, or ye are not willing, to come unto me"—to demonstrate that some "writers have affirmed that men are under both a moral and a natural inability of coming to Christ."[58] Interestingly, a concern about a natural inability to approach Christ did not feature in Hussey's writings. Hussey used the John 5:40 text to contend that because of the truthfulness of eternal salvation, universal offers of the Gospel have no legitimacy.[59] Hussey said nothing about a human inability to respond to the Gospel. Fuller read the context of the modern question controversy back into Hussey's remarks. He assumed that by denying Gospel offers, Hussey must have appealed to an innate incapacity to believe in the Gospel.

Perhaps most revealing, Fuller concluded *Gospel Worthy* with a lengthy chapter in which he outlined potential counterarguments to his call for open Gospel preaching. Nearly every

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Works, 2:329–331.

57. Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* ix–x. The second edition stated this same point but with more concise wording. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:331.

58. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:356.

59. See the passage in Hussey's text to which Fuller pointed. The broader context reveals that Hussey referred to implications drawn from his doctrine of eternal salvation. Joseph Hussey, *The Glory of Christ Unveiled: The Excellency of Christ Vindicated* (London: J. and D. Bridge, 1706), 615. Fuller owned a copy of Hussey's *Christ Unveiled* in his library. See McMullen and Whelan, *Diary of Andrew Fuller*, 225.

objection that he presented pertained to "the inability of innocent Adam to believe in Christ."[60] Only one of the six counterarguments that he listed—the issue of particular redemption—did not relate to humanity's spiritual capabilities before God. A summary of his comments from this chapter discloses just how entrenched he was in the modern question debate.

In the very first section in his "answers to objections," Fuller addressed the "principle of holiness possessed by man in innocence." Quoting directly from John Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity,* he described the hyper-Calvinist understanding of Adamic inability as

> the Holy principle connatural to Adam, and concreated with him, was not suited to live unto God through a mediator; that kind of life was above the extent of his powers, though perfect; and therefore as he in a state of integrity had not a capacity of living unto God, agreeably to the nature of the new covenant, it is apprehended that his posterity, while under the first covenant, are not commanded to live unto God in that sort, or, in other words, to live by faith on God through a Mediator.[61]

Displaying how familiar he was with the literature from the modern question era, Fuller also noted John Johnson's formulation of Adamic inability.[62]

A focus on Adam's prelapsarian abilities appeared again under a heading that Fuller entitled "on sinners being under the covenant of works."[63] Here he offered not just an overview of the hyper-Calvinist position on Adam but investigated how John Brine in particular advanced the proposal. During the modern question dispute, Brine maintained a unique understanding of Adam's incapacity to believe the Gospel that relied on covenant theology. Brine promoted his explanation to defend his theology from potential criticism. He believed that by appealing to covenant theology, he could present a more sophisticated version of hyper-Calvinism.

Fuller recognized this fact and in this section devoted his attention to Brine's unique formulation of the argument. He quoted extensively from Brine's writings and even admitted that some ministers had given Brine's view a warm reception. Fuller wrote that "much has

60. Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 109. In the text's second edition, Fuller changed the wording to "the nature of original holiness, as it existed in our first parents." With this language, he referred to the same concept but likely adjusted his phrasing to offer clarity for readers unfamiliar with the modern question debate. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:366.

61. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:368. Brine's original text appeared in Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity,* 50–51. Fuller's language changed slightly from the first to the second edition of *GWAA*. In the first edition, he labeled this heading, "concerning the nature of that divine principle which Adam possessed." His intended topic of discussion remained the same, and he likely changed his wording to provide additional clarity.

62. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 367.

63. This language appeared in the second edition of GWAA; in the first, Fuller labeled the heading "concerning men's being under the covenant of works." The attending discussion remained similar in both versions of the text, but I draw from the first version because in that edition Fuller offered a lengthier overview of Brine's argument. C.f., Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 139–144; idem., *Complete Works,* 2:375.

been said upon this subject in relation to this controversy."[64]

Even topics seemingly disconnected from consideration of Adam's pre-fall abilities—the work of the Holy Spirit, the logical ordering of the divine decrees, and the need for divine grace to engender belief in the hearts of the elect—in Fuller's estimate all circled back to the issue of Adamic inability. In his discussion of divine decrees, Fuller cited the obligations that humans possess before God both before and after the fall.[65] Addressing the ministry of the Spirit, Fuller provided a long excursus on natural ability and moral inability.[66] In a section on divine grace that Fuller entitled "of the necessity of a divine principle in order to believing," he interacted with a quotation from Lewis Wayman in which Wayman contended for prelapsarian Adam's incapacity to believe the Gospel.[67]

Following this analysis of possible counterarguments to his position, Fuller concluded *Gospel Worthy* with a rousing call to unhindered Gospel preaching. The passion with which Fuller addressed modern-question-era hyper-Calvinists in his text's first version remains striking. He mentioned John Brine and John Johnson and repeatedly addressed the issue of natural and moral inability. He even claimed in a closing line that the entire "point then in question" was humanity's ability to believe the Gospel.[68]

Scrutinizing hyper-Calvinist claims about Adam was important. Fuller knew that from their belief in Adamic inability his opponents developed their denials of Gospel offers and duty faith. Summarizing how the hyper-Calvinist position on Adam influenced Gospel preaching, he pointed to Lewis Wayman. He quoted directly from Wayman's *Further Enquiry* to show that Wayman contended that only the elect, the possessors of a "special faith," can accept salvation.[69]

Fuller did not outline Wayman's work in detail, but he did display an awareness of its key points. In *Further Enquiry*, Wayman contrasted the special (or supernatural) faith expected of

64. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:375.

65. This attempt to connect discussions of the divine decrees with Adamic inability appeared only in the first version of *GWAA*. See Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 131.

66. Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 146–147. Fuller maintained this discussion in the text's second edition but used such terms as "natural impotency" in an attempt to provide clarity. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:379–380.

67. Fuller, *Gospel, Worthy,* 154. Fuller removed this reference in the second edition of *GWAA* and concentrated instead on criticism that he had recently received from Abraham Booth. Interestingly, he contrasted Booth's understanding of faith with that advanced by John Brine. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 3:380–383. For recent analysis of Booth's account of human faith, see David G. Norman, Jr., "'The First Counsellor' of Particular Baptists: Reassessing the Soteriological Thought of Abraham Booth" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 145–169.

68. Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 194.

69. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:333. Fuller quoted from Lewis Wayman, *A Further Enquiry After Truth* (London: J. And J. Marshal, 1738), 12–13. Fuller spelled the title of Wayman's tract as *Further Inquiry* but I have retained its original spelling.

the elect with the mere natural faith supposedly expected of the non-elect. In his judgment, natural faith obligated the non-elect to give mere mental assent to the Gospel's claims about Christ's death and resurrection. Taking aim at this position, Fuller wrote that by accepting the truth of the Gospel he personally meant "not just the propositional content of the Scripture but the beauty and majesty of it—it is truly worthy of all acceptation."[70]

The strong bifurcation between natural and supernatural faith disturbed Fuller because he feared that it would lead not just to diminished Gospel preaching but also to the anguished spiritual introspection he experienced as a young man in Soham. The distinction between two forms of faith might cause hearers of the Gospel to look inward in search of a spiritual warrant. That is, the hyper-Calvinist message might cause persons to explore their "interest in spiritual blessings" in an attempt to determine whether or not they have the required supernatural faith.[71]

The Modern Question Debate in Fuller's Arguments Against Hyper-Calvinism

Emerging from the modern question controversy, Fuller's *Gospel Worth*y featured continued to emphasize two themes—Adamic inability and a spiritual warrant. The document's provenance provided it with another interesting feature, however. Fuller made heavy use earlier writers as he presented his case against hyper-Calvinism. For rhetorical effect, he often appealed to John Gill, a noted hyper-Calvinist who did not consistently subscribe to Adamic inability. He also relied on the reasoning provided by Abraham Taylor and Matthias Maurice, participants in the modern question debate who rejected hyper-Calvinism. Contemporary researchers have not always acknowledged Fuller's use of these sources.

Fuller's attack on the doctrine of Adamic inability relied on two approaches. In the first version of *Gospel Worthy,* he sought to consider the concept with some degree of seriousness and outline its shortcomings. In the second version, he maintained his argument against the position but employed bolder rhetoric, bluntly declaring that the doctrine's advocates offered no proof in its defense.[72] In both versions of his text, he appealed to John Gill as a credible testimony against the position.

This manner of quoting Gill was not new. As noted, Fuller previously cited Gill as a respected theologian who denied Adamic inability in his *Thoughts on the Power of Men.* He

70. Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 13. This line did not appear word-for-word in the second edition of *GWAA.* In that edition, Fuller supplemented his remarks with a lengthy quotation from John Downame that he believed proved his point. The source from which he quoted was John Downame, *A Guide to Godliness, or a Treatise of a Christian Life* (London, 1622).

71. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:333. The first edition of *GWAA* used similar language in idem, *Gospel Worthy,* 5.

72. C.f., Fuller, *Gospel Worthy,* 112–123; idem., *Complete Works,* 2:368–371.

continued that trend in *Gospel Worthy* and cited the same passage from Gill—a quotation from *Cause of God and Truth* in which Gill alleged, "That Adam in a state of innocence had the power of believing in Christ, and did believe in him as the second person of the Trinity, as the Son of God, cannot well be denied."[73] Fuller cited Gill another time as a means to silence John Johnson, noting that Gill's interpretation of Adam's creation stood at odds with Johnson's more eccentric reading of the Genesis.[74]

Fuller was surely aware of the rhetorical force of this argument. He might have used Gill in his *Thoughts on the Power of Men* simply because his Soham context afforded him frequent exposure to Gill's writings, but by the time he cited Gill in his *Gospel Worthy* he likely knew that Gill would serve as a powerful ally. Fuller's chief opponents claimed an admiration and respect for theologians such as Gill. By revealing that a hyper-Calvinist leader like Gill rejected Adamic inability, Fuller could produce a compelling argument. Of course, his strategy worked because the hyper-Calvinism of Gill and the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question era depended on two different foundations—the former on salvation in eternity and the latter on an argument for human incapacity.

Supplementing this quotation from Gill was a new argument that did not appear in *Thoughts on the Power of Men*. Fuller alleged that the hyper-Calvinist conviction about Adam's spiritual incapacities aligned with a stance taken by significant Arminian theologians. To support this claim, he put forward excerpts from John Owen's *A Display of Arminianism.* In a chapter entitled "of the state of Adam before the fall," Owen issued the charge that Arminianism placed the "corrupted nature of man into that state of innocency and holiness."[75]

By associating hyper-Calvinism with Arminianism, Fuller echoed sentiments Alvery Jackson originally published in *The Question Answered.* During a heated exchange over the modern question, Jackson likened John Brine's understanding of Adamic inability to remarks that Arminius made in his *Apology*.[76] Jackson knew that in the context of eighteenth-century Particular Baptist life, any association with Arminius would prove troublesome. His willingness to connect Brine with Arminius was a shrewd polemical move.

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73. E.g., Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:369.

74. Fuller did not cite a specific passage from Gill's Biblical commentary and merely alluded to the manner in which Gill expounded the Biblical text. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:367.

75. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:369. For background on the supposed connection between Arminian theology and the hyper-Calvinist understanding of Adam, see the remarks in the previous chapter. For Owen's remarks, see John Owen, *The Works of John Owen,* ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1862), 10: 82–87.

76. E.g., Alvery Jackson, *The Question Answered* (London: J. Ward, 1752), 52.

Fuller did not mention Jackson by name in *Gospel Worthy,* but the similarities between his approach and Jackson's mean that he possibly relied on Jackson's text. That he knew Jackson personally or at least read Jackson's publication is not unthinkable. In the relatively close world of eighteenth-century Particular Baptist associations, Fuller had ministry colleagues closely connected to Jackson.[77]

Analyzing *Gospel Worthy* alongside tracts from Matthias Maurice and Abraham Taylor reveals firmer evidence that Fuller relied on arguments produced during the modern question controversy. The rationale for unfettered Gospel preaching that he put forward bears a resemblance to the case made by those two writers. Fuller employed their explanations and perhaps even emulated their phrasing; he appears to have fashioned *Gospel Worthy* after the pattern set by their writings.

His background afforded him great familiarity with Maurice and Taylor. Taylor's *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith* proved consequential in helping Fuller reject hyper-Calvinism during his youth, and Maurice's influential *A Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* appears in the list of books that Fuller held in his personal library.[78]

Following the trajectory set by those two works, Fuller supplemented his rebuttal of Adamic inability with a constructive argument for why people with knowledge of the Gospel should exercise faith in Christ. Throughout *Gospel Worthy*, he appealed to Scripture and theological reasoning to defend this point.

In Fuller's evaluation, Scriptural texts such as Psalm 2:11-12 ("kiss the Son, lest he be angry"), Isaiah 55:1–7 ("Ho, every one that thirsteth"), and John 6:27–29 ("This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent") exhorted the unconverted to believe in Christ for salvation. These passages could therefore render the distinction between natural faith and supernatural faith illegitimate. Mentioning Wayman and Brine by name, he admonished hyper-Calvinists for distorting Scripture in such a way that it encouraged only mental assent to the truths of the Gospel and not full acceptance of salvation.[79]

Fuller accompanied this list of Scriptural texts with a theological justification for his position—namely, that all people must accept "whatever God reveals." Citing the commandment to love God with all of one's "heart, soul, mind, and strength," Fuller contended that "the same law that obliged Adam in innocence to love God in all his

77. See the personal connections between Fuller and some of Jackson's associates outlined in Stephen Copson, "Two Ordination Sermons at Bridlington in 1737," *Baptist Quarterly* 33 (1989): 148.

78. McMullen and Whelan, *Diary of Andrew Fuller,* 227.

79. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:343–349.

perfections…[now] obliges us to love him in other discoveries" such as his "saving sinners through the death of his Son."[80]

Clarifying how the free grace of the Gospel might accord with this obligation, Fuller used divine goodness as an illustration. He explained that "the goodness of God" is not in and of itself "a law or formal precept, yet [it] virtually requires a return of gratitude." Divine goodness "deserves" such a "return," but the law of God also "formally requires it on his behalf." Similarly, the Gospel, "the greatest overflow of Divine goodness that was ever witnessed," necessities a "return suitable to its nature." This return is "required virtually by the Gospel itself, and formally by the divine precept on its behalf."[81]

In this way, both gratitude for grace and recognition of obligation might intermingle. The unconverted should accept the Gospel out of thankfulness for divine goodness but also out of a desire to obey the precept that all people should honor and love God. For this reason, Paul could speak of "obeying the Gospel" in Romans 10:16.[82]

Fuller then closed his argument for a universal obligation to possess saving faith by commenting on the nature of human responsibility. Frequently quoting from Brine and Wayman, he criticized hyper-Calvinists for asserting that since no universal human ability to believe the Gospel exists, there can be no universal requirement to accept the Gospel.

While Fuller's case was compelling and well-argued, elements of his reasoning appeared earlier in Maurice's *Modern Question Modestly Answer'd.* Maurice opened his tract with a study of relevant Biblical passages and, rather significantly, referenced many of the texts that Fuller would later cite—Psalm 2:11–12, Is. 55:1–7, and John 6:27–29. Maurice interspersed these texts with a consideration of the duties that all people have before God. Since all people must walk humbly before God, he reasoned, all people have the duty to accept the Gospel once they receive it. Humility entails obedience and faith.[83]

Maurice maintained this approach in his subsequent work, *Modern Question Affirm'd and Proved.* No definitive evidence exists that Fuller read this tract; the publication does not appear in the list of books that Fuller possessed in his library. Still, significant similarities between *Modern Question Affirm'd* and *Gospel Worthy* merit brief mention. Fuller perhaps read Maurice's tract but did not own a copy of it.

In *Modern Question Affirm'd,* Maurice further developed his contention that all people

80. Ibid., 2:351.
81. Ibid., 2:352–353.
82. Ibid., 2:353–354.
83. See Matthias Maurice, *A Modern Question Modestly Answer'd* (London: James Buckland, 1737), 4–21.

possess the duty to respond to the Gospel. He appealed not to the universal need for humility before God as he did in his earlier work but to the divine commandment to love God with all of one's heart—the same text that Fuller cited later when he made this same point. Then, in a section in which Maurice countered belief in Adamic inability, he offered a rhetorical flourish to demonstrate the import of the Gospel's message. In a single paragraph, he repeatedly wrote that Gospel tidings remain "worthy of all acceptation."[84] Perhaps this language inspired Fuller when he entitled his publication.

Abraham Taylor's *Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith* also possesses features found later in *Gospel Worthy*. Taylor imagined an extended conversation with proponents and opponents of hyper-Calvinism. In his record of their dialogue, he included an extended description of the Gospel call. Specifically, he had his characters explore how a universal necessity to believe the Gospel might have legitimacy. One character maintained the "moral law" as sufficient for all spiritual duties and framed acceptance of the Gospel as the fulfillment of a divine command. Another pointed to "God's disposition of mercy and grace in Christ" as the motivating factor; in this account, all persons should receive the Gospel because all persons should have gratitude to God.[85]

This inquiry was not merely speculative. It served to buttress Taylor's criticism of the hyper-Calvinist separation between natural faith and supernatural faith. By presenting two possible theological foundations for duty faith, Taylor desired to promote a robust and multi-faceted argument for his position. The obligation to receive the Gospel could exist either as gratitude to God or obedience to divine commandment.

This sophistication did not appear in the writings of other participants in the modern question debate. Alvery Jackson explicitly defined "saving faith in Christ" only as a "duty required by the moral law."[86] Matthias Maurice likewise argued that the moral obligations to have humility before God and to love God with one's entire heart logically led to the need to receive the Gospel.

Fuller preserved the more complex rendering present in Taylor's argument when he presented both gratitude and divine command as legitimating saving faith in the Gospel. While Taylor wrote of the "foundation" for duty faith as the "moral law" and "God's disposition of mercy grace in Christ," Fuller echoed his phrasing by speaking of the "divine

84. Matthias Maurice, *The Modern Question Affirm'd and Prov'd* (London: James Buckland, 1739), 58–79.

85. Abraham Taylor, *The Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith* (London: James Brackstone, 1742), 41–44.

86. Alvery Jackson, *The Question Answered* (London: J. Ward, 1752), 7–8.

precept" virtually required on behalf of the Gospel and the "overflow of divine goodness" manifest in the Gospel.[87]

Other Works Relevant to Fuller's Engagement with Hyper-Calvinism

Upon its release, *Gospel Worthy* generated both appreciative comments and critical responses. While evangelical ministers such as John Ryland expressed approval, some Arminians and hyper-Calvinists issued rejoinders. The General Baptist leader Dan Taylor critiqued Fuller for maintaining his commitment to Calvinism. Hyper-Calvinist theologians accused Fuller of succumbing to Arminianism.

Of these various replies, Dan Taylor's *Observations on the Rev Andrew Fuller's Late Pamphlet* remains the most significant. It was conciliatory in tone, and it challenged Fuller to clarify his thinking about the atonement. The work also gave rise to a healthy interchange between Fuller and Taylor. The two men exchanged numerous tracts following the release of the work.[88]

Hyper-Calvinists were not as irenic as Taylor. Philip Withers, an Anglican minister, released a public retort to *Gospel Worthy* and threatened that he would "reduce to dust" Fuller's publication.[89] Joshua Thomas, a Baptist leader at Leominster, composed a private letter to Fuller that, in Fuller's words, "had some effect upon my heart in a way of tender grief and fear."[90] John Martin, a Particular Baptist minister in London, circulated bombastic pamphlets with the intention of refuting Fuller's central claims.[91]

Though painful to Fuller, these hyper-Calvinist rebuttals carried little lasting significance. Few contemporary copies of Withers' work exist, and Fuller never issued a reply to it.[92] Though Thomas composed an impassioned private letter to Fuller, he never released a public

87. Taylor, *Modern Question,* 41; Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:352–353.

88. For Taylor's work, see Philanthropos [Dan Taylor], *Observations on the Rev Andrew Fuller's Late Pamphlet entitled Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (London: J. Buckland, 1788). For analysis of Taylor's exchange with Fuller, see Richard T. Pollard, *Dan Taylor (1738–1816), Baptist Leader and Pioneering Evangelical* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2018), 141–178; Morden, *Offering Christ to the World,* 63–75; Michael A. G. Haykin, "'The Honour of the Spirit's Work:' Andrew Fuller, Dan Taylor, and the Eighteenth-Century Baptist Debate over Regeneration," *Baptist Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2016): 152–161.

89. [Philip Withers], *Philanthropos, or a Letter to the Revd. Fuller in Reply to his Treatise on Damnation* (London: J. Moore, 1785). Fuller recorded the allegation that Withers wished to reduce *Gospel Worthy* to dust in his diary. See Fuller, *Diary of Andrew Fuller,* 47.

90. See Fuller, *Diary of Andrew Fuller,* 149.

91. See John Martin, *Thoughts on the Duty of Man, Relative to Faith in Jesus Christ* (London: W. Smith, 1788–1788). Fuller replied to Martin in 1788 with *Remarks on Mr. Martin's Publication Entitled 'Thoughts on the Duty of Man.'* See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:716–736. Consider also Dustin Blaine Bruce, "Andrew Fuller and His Controversy with John Martin" (paper presented at Andrew Fuller and His Controversies Conference at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 27 September 2013).

92. Morden was unable to locate a copy of the Withers text, but a manuscript of it does exist in the University of Manchester Library. See Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 82.

document that addressed Fuller's key principles. Fuller did respond to John Martin with *Remarks on Mr. Martin's Publication* (1788), but he soon ceased that conversation after he assessed that Martin only sought controversy.

The hyper-Calvinist William Button, however, constructed a volume that had some influence, and his contribution has relevance for considerations of Fuller's engagement with hyper-Calvinism. With *Remarks on a Treatise Entitled the Gospel Worthy,* Button engaged in the same aggressive rhetoric found in the writings of his colleagues, but his ministerial position afforded him a hearing. He served as pastor of Dean Street in Southwark, a congregation that came into existence as a splinter group from John Gill's Carter Lane church. Following Gill's death, a small number of Carter Lane members opposed the appointment of John Rippon as Gill's successor, and they departed their church to form the Dean Street meeting. Standing as the theological and ministerial heir to John Gill, Button proved a notable adversary.[93]

Button routinely signaled his allegiance to Gill and to Gill's protégé, John Brine. He opened *Remarks on a Treatise* by registering his anger with a group of Fuller's supporters who exulted that *Gospel Worthy* would overturn "Gillism and Brinism." Defending the theology of his two heroes, Button wrote that the "characters and works" of Gill and Brine "ought ever to be revered and esteemed by all who call themselves Christians." Then, expressing his hope that Fullerism would not receive broad acceptance, he wrote, "I trust there are some yet remaining, who are too bad of the disease of Gillism and Brinism (if it be a disease) to be cured."[94]

Remarkably, although Button led a faction that emerged from Gill's former church and openly identified himself as a defender of Gill's cause, the convictions that shaped his hyper-Calvinism differed markedly from the beliefs that motivated Gill. Nowhere in his *Remarks on a Treatise* did Button address salvation in eternity or justification's timing. His entire case for hyper-Calvinism revolved around a theological tenet not consistently found in Gill's writings—Adamic inability.

Throughout his rebuttal of Fuller, Button repeatedly circled back to claims about Adam's prelapsarian capabilities. He contrasted Adam's "natural holiness" with a so-called "spiritual

93. For excellent historical research on Button's background, see Robert W. Oliver, "The Emergence of a Strict and Particular Baptist Community among the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1770–1850" (PhD thesis, CNAA/London Bible College, 1986), 86–89.

94. William Button, *Remarks on a Treatise Entitled, The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (London: J. Buckland, 1785), preface.

holiness" that enabled humans to perceive Gospel truths.[95] He unleashed fervent rhetoric on Fuller's disregard for Adamic inability, and answered almost every objection that Fuller raised with appeals to Adam's supposed incapability to believe the Gospel.[96]

Button did so because even though he frequently mentioned Gill, he drew his inspiration from hyper-Calvinist theologians who engaged in the modern question debate. *Remarks on a Treatise* contains numerous references to and quotations from John Johnson and John Brine. Crucially, the passages from Brine's writings to which Button turned related to Brine's engagement with the modern question discussion. Button did not interact with Brine's published works that outlined salvation in eternity. Though an avowed Gillite, Button received instruction from sources other than Gill's systematic theology.[97]

In an ironic twist for a self-professed advocate for Gillism, Button appears mistaken about Gill's actual beliefs. He erroneously thought that the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question debate represented Gill's views. At times, he interpreted Gill's remarks in light of the modern question. In one instance, perplexed by Fuller's willingness to cite Gill as an opponent of Adamic inability, Button countered Fuller by incorrectly construing Gill's Biblical commentary. He wrongly read Gill as arguing that prelapsarian Adam had certain spiritual incapacities.[98]

Button's unwitting promotion of this particular strand of hyper-Calvinism reveals just how profoundly the modern question debate influenced Particular Baptist soteriology. Though a prominent minister such as Button might write of Gillism, with that term he referred not to eternal salvation but to the set the doctrinal commitments that emerged soon after Gill. Gillism became a moniker for hyper-Calvinism in general—and to modern question hyper-Calvinism in particular.

Fuller submitted an answer to Button with his *A Defence of a Treatise Entitled The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*.[99] He struck out at Button's heavy reliance on the doctrine of Adamic inability. He wrote, "Upon this single point, of Adam's incapability to do things

95. Ibid., 67–68. Morden believes that by contrasting a natural holiness possessed by Adam with a spiritual holiness related to the Gospel, Button revealed that he took Fuller's comments about natural inability and moral inability out of context. Morden, *Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller,* 89. I believe that with this contrast Button echoed John Johnson's rhetoric. Johnson similarly distinguished a natural holiness with a spiritual holiness found in the Gospel dispensation. For Johnson's remarks on Adam, see John Johnson, *The Faith of God's Elect* (Liverpool: E. Owen, 1754), 28–30, 96, 99.

96. E.g., Button, *Remarks on a Treatise,* 67–68, 73–75, 83, 89, 92–93, 94.

97. For a sample of Button's many references to Johnson and Brine, see ibid., 26, 38, 48, 56–57, 61, 64, 82, 91.

98. Ibid., 79–82.

99. Fuller issued his *Defence* in 1787, two years after Button's *Remarks* appeared. He included in the *Defence* a response to Dan Taylor. See Fuller, *Complete Works,* 417–511.

spiritually good, Mr. B. [Button] rests all his arguments." Elsewhere, Fuller claimed Adam's incapacity to believe the Gospel as Button's "favourite hypothesis" and the "cornerstone upon which the whole fabric of Mr. B's [Button] scheme is founded."[100]

Rightly distinguishing between Gill's thought and the hyper-Calvinism of the modern question, Fuller explained that while Gill and Brine were "worthy men," on some points they "took different grounds." Brine, Fuller noted, "maintained the argument from Adam's incapacity to believe," but Gill "gave it up." Perhaps using this disagreement between Brine and Gill to spur Button to think more critically, Fuller asserted, "But they were great and upright men, and thought for themselves; and it is to be hoped that others may do the same."[101]

Supplementing these comments with an explanatory history of hyper-Calvinism, Fuller asserted that Hussey "by the general tenor of his writing, laid the foundation for this sentiment." Yet, rather provocatively, Fuller alleged that Hussey "did not, that I recollect, expressly avow it." Even John Gill only "implied" the doctrines of hyper-Calvinism through the "general tenor of his writings." The first "writer of eminence" to "defend the sentiment" of hyper-Calvinism was John Brine.

Fuller arrived at this incomplete account of hyper-Calvinism's development because he defined the movement in a limited manner. He understood hyper-Calvinism as synonymous with the commitments advanced by Wayman, Brine, and Johnson during the modern question debate. In his definition of the term hyper-Calvinism, he spoke of "the controversy," a reference to the modern question. He centered his concerns not on salvation in eternity but on Adamic inability. He explained that Gill could not qualify for his description of a hyper-Calvinist because in *Cause of God and Truth* Gill made "use of our arguments" against Adamic inability. Brine, however, qualified as the first hyper-Calvinist of note because in contrast to Gill he made a case for "the sentiment."[102]

Button and Fuller, then, shared a similar understanding of hyper-Calvinism. Both men interpreted it through the lens of the modern question. For them, hyper-Calvinism referred not to beliefs proposed by Hussey or Gill but to the set of principles that appeared following Maurice's *Modern Question Modestly Answer'd.*

They disagreed over how to connect those principles back to Gill. Button inaccurately read Gill as sharing Wayman, Brine, and Johnson's dedication to Adamic inability. Fuller

100. Fuller, *Complete Works,* 2:443–444.
101. Ibid., 2:421–422.
102. Ibid., 2:422n.

correctly pointed out that Gill never consistently espoused that doctrine.

Conclusion

Not attending to the diversity present in the hyper-Calvinist tradition, contemporary researchers have tended to place Fuller in conversation with Hussey and Gill, assuming the theology that Fuller countered matched the convictions that those noteworthy hyper-Calvinists espoused. However, Fuller's Soham provenance introduced him to a theological tradition with origins in the modern question debate. This tradition differed from the perspective proffered by Hussey and Gill. In his *Gospel Worthy,* Fuller sought to rebut this version of hyper-Calvinism. He primarily defined hyper-Calvinism by the doctrine of Adamic inability, a position borne out of the modern question discussion. He avoided any significant mention of eternal salvation, a key proposal found in works by Hussey and Gill.

Fuller's focus on Adamic inability allowed him to rely on resources produced during the modern question debate, most notably publications by Matthias Maurice and Abraham Taylor. It also afforded him the chance to employ John Gill, a hyper-Calvinist who denied Adamic inability, as an ally for his cause. Fuller's reliance on those sources does not receive sufficient mention in modern literature. This fact is unfortunate. Those sources assisted him as he made his case against hyper-Calvinism.

Thesis Conclusion

A Summary of Findings

Current literature on Fuller has not adequately explored the context in which Fuller composed *Gospel Worthy.* Incomplete or even inaccurate depictions of hyper-Calvinism feature in most accounts of Fuller's theology. Fuller devoted much of his attention to rebutting hyper-Calvinism. Modern scholarship needs a detailed examination of the hyper-Calvinist tradition that existed in Northamptonshire during the eighteenth century.

This thesis met this need by documenting the convictions of important hyper-Calvinist figures and then revealing how knowledge of hyper-Calvinism can serve to contextualize Fuller's writings. Joseph Hussey and John Gill posited salvation as occurring in eternity in an attempt to minimize human agency and highlight the unilateral saving action of God. In response to criticisms brought against hyper-Calvinism during the modern question debate, hyper-Calvinist ministers such as Lewis Wayman, John Brine, and John Johnson chose an approach that differed from Hussey and Gill. They argued that humans possesses no ability to understand the Gospel message, and they based this claim on Adam's alleged incapacity to understand the Gospel at creation. This change led to significant differences in the hyper-Calvinist movement. Some hyper-Calvinist ministers considered to the pre-temporal works of God; others highlighted humanity's innate incapacities to perform a spiritual action. All hyper-Calvinists, though, shared in common a desire to maximize divine grace by diminishing the human response to the Gospel.

Coming of age in a context shaped by hyper-Calvinism, Fuller eventually composed an earnest response to that theology. He focused his attention on hyper-Calvinism as it appeared after the modern question debate—not the theology of Hussey and Gill. As such, he discussed the concept of human inability frequently as he argued for a universal obligation to exercise saving faith in Christ. In making his case, Fuller relied not primarily on the writings of Jonathan Edwards but works by Matthias Maurice and Abraham Taylor, two evangelically-minded ministers who participated in the modern question discussion. He also exploited differences in the hyper-Calvinist tradition by citing John Gill's remarks on humanity's ability to understand the Gospel.

Contributions to Scholarship

Interpreting Fuller's interaction with hyper-Calvinism in the manner that I outline here produces several new insights. First, the diversity present within Northamptonshire hyper-

Calvinism merits more attention than it presently receives. Contrary to how many researchers currently describe the movement, hyper-Calvinists did not espouse the same theological convictions. Significant differences existed between the theology's leading exponents. Only by appreciating those differences can historians understand Fuller's context.

Second, publications from Matthias Maurice, Abraham Taylor, and John Johnson influenced both the development of hyper-Calvinism and Fuller's response to hyper-Calvinism. Most readers of Fuller have not accessed these texts because the works are scarce and difficult to find. Future investigations of Andrew Fuller should carefully peruse these writings.

Third, disputes over John Gill's theological identity have not considered how profoundly the works of Joseph Hussey shaped Gill's thought. This fact is likely true because Hussey has largely remained an unexplored figure; this thesis provided the first extensive account of his theology. Still, Gill's doctrine of eternal salvation emerged directly from Hussey's *Glory of Christ Unveiled*, and Gill only slightly modified Hussey's system. Following Hussey, Gill used his commitment to salvation in eternity to reject open offers of the Gospel and the duty that all people have to respond to the Gospel. Future scholars should proceed with this reading of Gill in place. Gill was a sophisticated theologian who exhibited many positive features, but he was an avowed hyper-Calvinist.[1] Recent attempts to defend Gill from the charge of hyper-Calvinism are not successful.

Fourth, though Gill was a hyper-Calvinist, the way in which many Baptist histories draw a contrast between Gill and Fuller needs revision. The divide between what became known as Gillism and Fullerism appears so regularly that it has become something of a trope in Baptist research.[2] Even contemporary biographers of Fuller tend to designate Gill as Fuller's chief target. Fuller, however, responded to a version of hyper-Calvinism that differed from the theology that Gill advanced. He concentrated his attention on concepts found in the modern question debate—not on Gill's belief in salvation as a pre-temporal work of God.

Fuller did grow more critical of Gill following the release of *Gospel Worthy*. In a series of letters written to John Ryland, he warned in a footnote that Gill's atonement theology would

1. E.g., Gill's impressive knowledge of earlier writers makes him useful in discussions about how Baptists might interact with the broader Christian tradition. See David Mark Rathel, "A Case Study in Baptist Catholicity: The Scriptures and the Tradition in the Theology of John Gill," *Baptist Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (2018): 108–116.

2. E.g., Joseph Ivimey, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Rev. Joseph Ivimey,* ed. George Pritchard (London; George Wightman, 1835), 126; David Benedict, *Fifty Years Among the Baptists* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1860), 135–136; William H. Brackney, *The A to Z Guide to the Baptists* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 23.

lead to diminished Gospel offers.[3] I do not mean to suggest, then, that Fuller did not recognize the problems inherent in Gill's approach. I only claim that surveys that seek to compare Gill with Fuller are too simplistic. Other ministers shaped Fuller's setting. Lewis Wayman, John Brine, and John Johnson served as Fuller's most significant sparring partners in *Gospel Worthy*—not Gill.

Fifth, Fuller made use of resources that researchers have up to this point failed to appreciate. He drew inspiration from arguments made by Matthias Maurice and Abraham Taylor during the modern question debate. He also cited Gill to support his most significant claims. Fuller praised Gill as a respected theologian who agreed with him on Adam's prelapsarian capabilities. This move was rhetorically useful given the Particular Baptist context in which Fuller served.

Sixth, Fuller's use of Maurice, Taylor, and Gill raises questions about how much he relied on Jonathan Edwards when he composed *Gospel Worthy.* The distinction between natural inability and moral inability did appear in Edwards' writings, and Fuller rightly noted this fact. Nevertheless, Fuller's case for duty faith originated from reasoning provided by Maurice, Taylor, and Gill. Indeed, Fuller claimed to have discovered the distinction between natural inability and moral inability in Gill's publications before he found it in Edwards'. Future readers of Fuller should take these facts into account when they assess Fuller's reliance on Edwards.

Suggestion for Further Research

After the release of *Gospel Worthy,* Fuller continued to involve himself in controversy. Most significant for this thesis, he engaged in a dispute with Abraham Booth, a Particular Baptist minister famous for writing *The Reign of Grace,* and in a lengthy dialogue with Archibald McLean, a Scotch Baptist minister who accepted tenets of Sandemanianism.[4] These disputes allowed Fuller to develop further the positions that he outlined in *Gospel Worthy*.[5] As he interacted with Booth and McLean, the constructive account of human faith that he provided

3. Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, ed. Joseph Belcher (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 2:712.

4. For helpful sources, see David G. Norman, Jr., "'The First Counsellor' of Particular Baptists: Reassessing the Soteriological Thought of Abraham Booth" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018); Nathan A. Finn, introduction to *Strictures on Sandemanianism*, by Andrew Fuller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 1–35; Thomas Jacob South, "The Response of Andrew Fuller to the Sandemanian View of Saving Faith" (PhD diss., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993).

5. E.g., Fuller attached an appendix to the second edition of *Gospel Worthy* in which he addressed McLean's Sandemanianism. In that appendix, he began to outline in more detail his convictions about human faith.

in *Gospel Worthy* continued to grow in complexity. He addressed how the Spirit accomplishes regeneration, and he clarified the role that the human will plays in procuring saving faith.

This thesis set Fuller's battle against hyper-Calvinism in its historical context. As such, this study should serve as a useful starting point for future research that might examine how Fuller's theology developed from that found in *Gospel Worthy* to that on display in his later polemical works. Though Fuller receives fame today as the author of *Gospel Worthy,* his other publications deserve attention as well. Future researchers could consider these publications in an attempt to document the trajectory of Fuller's thought.[6]

6. I have started work on such a project. Space constraints have precluded me from including information drawn from this research into this thesis, but see my comments on Fuller's interactions with Archibald McLean in David Mark Rathel, "Searching for A Faith Worthy of all Acceptation: John Gill, Andrew Fuller, and the Role of Justification by Faith in Eighteenth-Century Baptist Debates over the Presentation of the Gospel" (paper presented at the Scottish Baptist History Project, Edinburgh, Scotland, 23 April 2017); idem, "Baptist Theology in the Age of Enlightenment: Contextualizing the Soteriological Proposals of John Gill and Andrew Fuller" in *Baptists, Gospel and Culture*, ed. William L. Pitts (Macon: Mercer University Press, forthcoming).

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