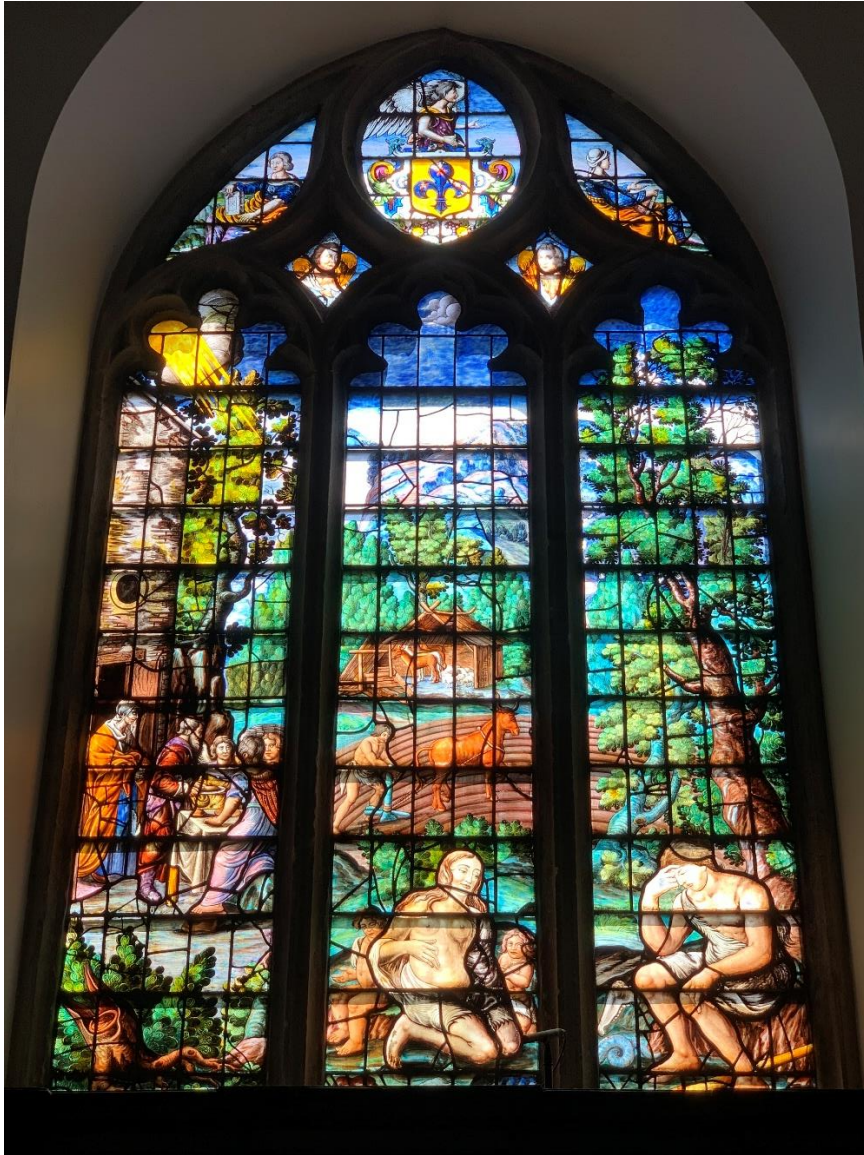


**‘The most Ancient Monument and Record of our Religion’:
Genesis, the Church, and Religious Authority in early modern
England, c.1590-c.1650**



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The front cover illustration features a seventeenth-century stained-glass window crafted by the Emden artist Abraham van Linge. It depicts a fallen Adam and Eve, and various scenes that are narrated in the Book of Genesis. This decorative work is located on the south side of the chapel in University College, University of Oxford. The photograph was taken by the author, and it is reproduced here with the kind permission of the college's chaplain.

For my parents — one who wishes they had taken O-Level History, the other who much prefers Geography.

Acknowledgements

At the end of *Little Gidding*, a poem suffused with imagery from the Book of Genesis, T. S. Eliot reminds us that in life ‘We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time’. This ringing affirmation of the human instinct to seek our origins, both individual and communal, is one that the early modern divines discussed in this thesis all acknowledged through their engagement with the Bible’s opening book. And though I have not returned to where I began through completing this thesis, Eliot’s words do capture something of my own experience when researching and writing it. I find myself now better able to understand the intellectual place where I started, and to appreciate what a good deal of reading, writing, and thinking have taught me on the way to where I have finished (at least for now). Doubtless, however, this formative experience would have been far less fulfilling and transformative had I not received a considerable amount of welcome scholarly advice, encouragement, and kindness from others along the way.

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and helped me to improve it enormously. I am also immensely grateful to Leif Dixon, Diarmaid MacCulloch, Judith Maltby, and to Peter McCullough for his feedback on Chapter Two.

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Pursuing a doctorate without funding is a risky endeavour in the current academic climate. But it is not nearly as foolish as failing to seize a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity made possible largely by the hard work and love of those closest to you. This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Amanda and Michael Head, without whose support I would neither have been able to undertake this doctorate nor to complete it. I am endlessly grateful that they nurtured my love of history from an early age, patiently listened to my endless ramblings about the past over the years, and put up with far too many books purloined from charity shops and library giveaways clogging the shelves in their home. This is my last degree I promise!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my wonderful partner Melissa Anane for the selfless support and understanding she has shown me, while I have been writing this thesis and she has been preparing for several advanced medical examinations. Completing a doctorate can be a very lonely business, and in Mel I have had the warmest and most gentle library companion, seminar paper reviewer, and thesis proof reader that I could have wished for. We first met near the Radcliffe Camera, one of us a ‘doctor of medicine’ and the other an aspiring ‘doctor of books’, and she remains to this day by far my most important discovery while studying in Oxford. *Meda wo ase.*

Short Abstract

This thesis examines how Protestant English divines intervened in ecclesiological debates during the late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart period, through interpreting the Book of Genesis. Genesis's account of religion's role in the foundations of human society enabled these clergy to conceptualise—in commentaries, lectures, sermons, and other genres—the nature of the church and religious authority in different ways, though they all agreed with the Protestant principle that since the beginning establishing and maintaining godly rule had been the end of politics.

By uniting theological works on Genesis and contextualising them within ecclesiological debates, this thesis demonstrates how Reformed, Lutheran, Catholic, and Jewish reflections on religious communities in pre-Mosaic sacred history fed a sacral political discourse in early modern England. While historians of early modern English political thought have often emphasised the de-sacralisation of political languages in this period, this thesis underlines links between exegesis and ecclesiology, and details how different interpretations of Genesis were used to explain the nature of the church, and the magistrate and minister's duties. In establishing this connection between theology and politics, the thesis's focus on early modern divines' understandings of the religious origins of human society affords an original perspective on the religious causes of seventeenth-century England's conflicts.

Collectively, the sources selected for inclusion in this thesis represent the main strands of early modern English Protestant theology. Lancelot Andrewes, Andrew Willet, Henry Ainsworth, John Buckeridge, John Pocklington, George Walker, and John Ley's works illustrate how Genesis's sacred history could be used to underwrite rival visions of the church, and religious authority, during a period in which ecclesiological differences of opinion contributed to political tensions, and ultimately civil war. Indeed, throughout the thesis two

broad interpretations of the religious communities in Genesis recur that align with the opposing ecclesiologies that divided England's seventeenth-century church.

Long Abstract

This thesis examines how Protestant English divines intervened in ecclesiological debates during the late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart period, through interpreting the Book of Genesis. Genesis's account of religion's role in the foundations of human society enabled these clergy to conceptualise—in commentaries, lectures, sermons, and other genres—the nature of the church and religious authority in different ways, though they all agreed with the Protestant principle that since the beginning establishing and maintaining godly rule had been the end of politics.

By uniting theological works on Genesis and contextualising them within ecclesiological debates, this thesis demonstrates how Reformed, Lutheran, Catholic, and Jewish reflections on religious communities in pre-Mosaic sacred history fed a sacral political discourse in early modern England. This focus offers a different emphasis to narratives of early modern English political thought that have privileged evidence of the de-sacralisation of political theory and sought the origins of liberal modernity. According to Quentin Skinner, the paradigmatic shift in seventeenth-century Protestant English political thought was an acceptance that political society existed exclusively for political purposes. On this reading, it was the abandonment of the Protestant dictum that politics consisted of divinely imposed duties by the likes of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, who drew upon Catholic scholastic notions of nature without grace in their accounts of how political communities form, which enabled the separation of theology from theories of state. But this division was not one that the English Protestant divines discussed in this thesis acknowledged; these clergymen insisted that the end of politics was the upholding of true religion. This shared assumption brought with it controversial questions about a community's obligations to God and the religious duties of the

magistrate and the minister, as Sarah Mortimer and other historians of political thought have recently demonstrated.

Rather than seeking the foundations of modern political theory in the separation of religion from politics, then, this thesis studies these Protestant divines' thought regarding the interconnected nature of religion and political community on its own terms. In so doing, it illustrates how a contextually sensitive examination of early modern theological studies of Genesis opens up a previously unexploited vista onto the religious politics of England's Reformation and the arguments about the relationship between civil and ecclesiastical power at its heart. When the Protestant English divines studied in this thesis commented on Genesis, they believed that the end of the church was bound up with that of the commonwealth and that pre-Mosaic sacred history provided a divinely-inspired account of a godly religious and political community at the beginning of time.

Looked at more broadly, this thesis's focus on early modern English divines' understandings of religion at the origins of human society affords a new perspective on the religious causes of early modern England's tensions and conflicts. Scholars like John Morrill, Glenn Burgess, Charles Prior, and Anthony Milton have stressed the interwovenness of theology and politics in seventeenth-century England's ideological conflicts, arguing that the legacy of the English Reformation and its church 'by law established' included an interminable dispute over where religious authority resided, and the relationship between the ecclesiastical and civil powers. As a result, theological issues continually blurred the boundaries between the civil and the sacred during the early modern period. Indeed, according to this revisionist historiography the ecclesiological battles that were central to the English Civil Wars sank deep roots in England's Reformation. This thesis lends support to that claim by illustrating how Genesis was read in comparable ways across several generations of English divines who were loyal to similar ecclesiologies.

Collectively, the sources selected for inclusion in this thesis represent the main strands of early modern English Protestant theology and they demonstrate how interpretations of what Genesis suggests about the religious origins of human society could radically differ depending on each divine's ecclesiological commitments. From Lancelot Andrewes, Andrew Willet, and Henry Ainsworth to John Buckeridge, John Pocklington, George Walker, and John Ley, these clergymen's commentaries, lectures, and sermons illustrate how Genesis's sacred history was used to dispute contemporary ecclesiological questions about ecclesiastical authority, the nature of the church, and its relationship to the civil power.

Furthermore, two patterns of interpretation can be discerned throughout their works, which allow us to map interpretations of religion in Genesis's sacred history onto opposing ecclesiological ideologies that divided England's seventeenth-century church and defined the nation's religious politics. On the one hand, conformist anti-Puritan divines tended to view the church in Genesis as proof of the legitimacy of a visible, sacerdotal church that collaborated with the magistrate and ensured an orderly and hierarchical society through coordinating a sacramental corporate worship. On the other hand, both conformist and non-conformist Puritan clergy stressed the purity of the patriarchal church and its dedication to preaching and living God's Word in their commentary on Genesis. Often persevering amidst a sinful and corrupt humanity, the church in Genesis was (for these divines) the archetypal godly community.

This thesis's chronological scope begins in the late Elizabethan age and ends during the English Civil Wars, because this period witnessed a theologically diverse range of English divines using commentary on Genesis's sacred history to promote alternative visions for the visible church, which were ultimately fought over. The sources foregrounded in Chapter Two to Chapter Seven have been privileged because they illustrate most clearly and in most detail how versatile Genesis's sacred history was for thinking about the relationship between religion

and politics in England during this fraught period, when the ecclesiological consequences of England's Reformation repeatedly invited political conflict.

The selected sources also evince the role of theological genres, including lectures, sermons, and commentaries, in discourses of early modern religious politics. This thesis's contextualising methodology emphasises the interventions each source's author was making in contemporary ecclesiological debates—an approach that draws on the scholarship of Peter Lake and several other scholars, while still attending to the institutional, intellectual, and literary contexts that shaped each text. After all, the sources prioritised in this thesis did not emerge from an intellectual vacuum. Hence it is important to set this thesis's chronological scope and source selection in a longer-term intellectual context—this matter is handled at length in Chapter One. Equally, while the thesis terminates in the mid-seventeenth century in order to maintain a manageable scope, engagement with Genesis's sacred history by divines concerned about contemporary ecclesiological disputes did not cease then. Thus, the thesis's conclusion will reflect on the relationship between interpretations of the role of religion at the origins of human society derived from Genesis, and English theology and political thought in the later seventeenth-century.

Chapter One will contextualise this thesis's chronological scope and source selection by surveying sixteenth-century English Genesis commentary, but it will also do so by setting this genre in the context of the European Reformation through establishing which continental works on Genesis were most influential; it transpires that English expositors used continental interpretations of Genesis to reflect on domestic ecclesiological debates. The English sources at the centre of this thesis did not just reference Reformed commentaries though. Therefore, Chapter One also considers important continental publications that provided English divines with access to Catholic, Jewish, and Patristic scholarship on Genesis. The English expositors discussed in Chapter Two onwards availed themselves of these sources of Genesis commentary.

Indeed, throughout the thesis there are examples of divines strategically using or avoiding established lines of Genesis interpretation in order to steer the reader towards ideologically agreeable conclusions regarding the nature of the church and its relationships to the temporal authority.

In Chapter Two the thesis enters into the first of its contextual studies of early modern English commentary on Genesis. The subject of the chapter is a series of lectures on Gen. 1-4 that were given by Lancelot Andrewes in late-Elizabethan London. A close reading of a transcript of Andrewes' lectures reveals that he was able to use Genesis to generate a defence of a sacerdotalist vision of the established Church that positioned the clergy as mediators of public worship and as custodians of social order, through their secular authority as landholders and as judges in church courts. In making these arguments Andrewes not only subverted the godly lectureship he had been given but he also embroiled himself in the conflicts between bishops and common lawyers, Puritans and anti-Puritans, which characterised late-Elizabethan religious politics.

The subject of Chapter Three, Andrew Willet, was just as immersed in religious politics at the turn of the seventeenth century as Andrewes, and his popular commentary on Genesis entitled *Hexapla in Genesin* (1605)—which he dedicated to the recently crowned King James VI & I—directly contributed to a renewed godly campaign for reformation within the established Church. Chapter Three will demonstrate how Willet used his commentary to insist that Genesis contained a blue-print for a magisterial reformation grounded upon the building out of a national preaching ministry. Regularly polemical in its eliding of pre-Mosaic idolatry with contemporary Roman Catholicism, Willet's *Hexapla* illustrates how Genesis could be used in early-Jacobean England to promote a vision of a national church led by a godly magistrate and championed by an army of evangelical preachers.

Outside of the established Church Willet was rivalled in his expertise on Genesis by the English Separatist Henry Ainsworth, whose highly regarded *Annotations upon the first book of Moses, called Genesis* (1616) is the subject of Chapter Four. While living in exile as the teacher and then the leader of a congregation in Amsterdam called the Ancient Church, Ainsworth drew upon his Hebrew expertise in order to produce a highly literal English translation of Genesis and an accompanying set of annotations for each chapter in the Bible's first book. Like Willet, Ainsworth saw in the Patriarchs a model of godly self-restraint and faithful perseverance. But unlike his conformist rival, Ainsworth thought that the covenanted tribes of Noah, Abraham, and Jacob constituted evidence of the need for the truly godly to separate themselves from the rest of the community and that they offered his congregation an example of perseverance in spite of ungodly persecution. Furthermore, for Ainsworth the Patriarchs' discipline in staying true to God's Law whilst the rest of mankind fell away into corruption was the defining feature of the 'Church of Jacob' and his own Ancient Church too.

Chapter Five brings together a selection of texts belonging to different genres—including a collection of church canons, two sermons, and a treatise—that illustrate how certain English divines in the late-Jacobean and Caroline eras investigated what Genesis suggested about religion and the origins of human society so as to generate a vision of an embodied, decorous, and sacramental Protestant national church. These clergymen did so in order to respond to alternative Catholic and Presbyterian conceptions of the church by insisting that it ought to be a visibly embodied institution governed by a hierarchical clergy wielding a *iure divino* ecclesiastical authority, which ministers expressed through ritual ceremony and religious instruction. This approach to using Genesis did not emerge spontaneously in the 1620s and 1630s but rather it began earlier at the turn of the seventeenth century. Therefore, Chapter Five charts a pattern of using Genesis to justify a sacerdotalist vision of the church and to defend it from lay interference. In so doing, this chapter will develop several themes that emerged in

Chapter Two. But Chapter Five also shows how these Genesis-inspired arguments for a particular vision of the church and its relationship to the civil power were intensified during the 1630s.

In sharp contrast, Chapter Six considers *The History of the Creation* (1641) by the godly London minister George Walker. Walker had regularly been in trouble with the authorities during the Personal Rule, and he made a prudent decision not to pursue publication until the following decade. Not only was Walker notorious amongst the Church's leadership under Charles I, but his *History* can be shown to have implicitly criticised the Caroline Church through its emphasis on the role of ministerial preaching in binding together a religious community. However, at the time of its publication in the much-changed context of the early-1640s Walker's *History* can be read more positively, as a contribution to debates about church reform on the eve of the Civil Wars. Indeed, in focusing on the earliest parts of Genesis Walker derived a cosmopolitan vision of the church that like Willet's interpretation was centred on the right preaching of the Word. This model appealed to the godly, who had been disillusioned with the English national Church in the 1630s, and who wished to align England's Church with an international Reformed identity in the 1640s. However, Walker's emphasis on the role of preaching in the early Genesis church was also an assertion of ministerial authority in response to the creeping threat of heterodoxy in the mid-seventeenth century, and an acknowledgement of the need to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy within the church.

Chapter Seven will continue the thesis's study of how Genesis was used by firmly Reformed clergymen to think about the reformation of the national church in the 1640s, by turning to a set of notes on the Bible's opening book written by the prominent Westminster Assembly member John Ley, which formed part of a new set of *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament* (1645) commissioned by Parliament. Chapter Seven will contend that in compiling his annotations on Genesis Ley made an optimistic case for a conception of

the national church that might appeal to both the godly in England and to the Scottish Covenanters. Drawing on the themes of covenanting, solemn worship, and respect for authority that were all displayed by Genesis's Patriarchal church, Ley used his annotations to continue his career-long ambition of uniting Reformed Protestants against a common (Catholic) enemy through elaborating a particular conception of the church and of the religious authority of minister and magistrate. Whilst the Presbyterian party ultimately failed to dictate the future of England's church after the Civil Wars, Ley's annotations demonstrate why Genesis's account of the church before the Law held a particular appeal at a time when the legislative framework that undergirded the pre-war Church was being systematically dismantled, with no agreed alternative to replace it.

Thus the thesis culminates in the middle of the seventeenth century, a period which inherited the variety of approaches to thinking about the church in Genesis charted across the preceding chapters. The decision to end the thesis here does not imply that after the Civil Wars Genesis was no longer of interest as a resource for thinking about the contemporary church and religious authority. In fact, the conclusion will discuss several examples of works that appear to continue applying the patterns of interpretation of Genesis canvassed in this thesis to ecclesiological issues in the later seventeenth century. Thus, the conclusion will reflect on how this thesis's findings contribute to both the history of seventeenth-century English political thought and theology. But the chosen end point acknowledges that the mid-seventeenth century also witnessed significant changes in how Genesis was used to think about the church and religious authority.

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Abbreviations and Conventions

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
<i>CSP</i>	Calendar of the State Papers Domestic
<i>CH</i>	Church History
<i>CJ</i>	Journal of the House of Commons
<i>EHR</i>	The English Historical Review
Gen.	Book of Genesis
<i>HEI</i>	History of European Ideas
<i>HJ</i>	The Historical Journal
HL	The Huntington Library
<i>HP</i>	Hartlib Papers
<i>HPT</i>	History of Political Thought
<i>JBS</i>	Journal of British Studies
<i>JEH</i>	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
<i>JHI</i>	Journal of the History of Ideas
<i>LJ</i>	Journal of the House of Lords
LP	Lambeth Palace Library
<i>MGH</i>	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
<i>ODNB</i>	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Private Libraries in Renaissance England</i>
PRO	Public Record Office
<i>SCJ</i>	The Sixteenth Century Journal
TNA	The National Archives
<i>TSCJ</i>	The Seventeenth Century Journal

Conventions

- Dates are given in the Old Style, but the year is taken to begin on 1 January.
- Original spellings have largely been maintained to the extent that they do not undermine clarity, except that the use of u/v, i/j, and vv/w has been modernised, and all contractions in English (e.g. á, é, ē, ō, ó, and yt) have been fully expanded. Latin contractions have been left unexpanded.
- Italics in quotations are original to the printed sources, as are all archaic spellings. The editorial notation [*sic*] is used sparingly throughout to indicate a typographical error in the original source.
- Square brackets [] indicate authorial interpolations made for the sake of clarity. When [] appear in the footnotes they either indicate a page number that is not present in the original text, but which is provided by the author to aid the reader in locating a reference, or they introduce a Latin passage excerpted from the original source for the reader's edification.
- All translations are the author's own, unless otherwise stated.
- All biblical verses quoted in the main text or the footnotes are taken from the Geneva Bible (1599), unless otherwise stated.
- Where there is variety in the spelling of biblical names in the original sources, the author has endeavoured to maintain consistency in using one variant throughout the thesis, e.g. Enosh (not Enos).
- Printed primary sources originated in London, unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction — ‘the first begininge of a thinge, is the surest rule thereof’: Genesis, the Church, and Religious Authority in early modern England, c.1590-c.1650

One of Oliver Cromwell’s chaplains, the English Presbyterian Thomas Manton (1620-1677), insisted in 1656 that studying the Book of Genesis was vital to understanding the foundations of both a godly church and commonwealth. As ‘The most Ancient Monument and Record of our Religion’ wrote Manton, which describes ‘the Founding [of] the Church, and the Infancy thereof’, Genesis reveals ‘how the state of that Religion which we do professe was at first laid’.¹ Here, Manton gave voice to a long-established conviction amongst early modern English divines regarding Genesis’s relevance, not only to questions about salvation, but also to debates about the church and the religious and political duties God imposed upon human communities.

Two generations earlier, Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) had similarly thought it ‘verie convenient...to fynd oute...howe everie thinge was...at the begininge’ by turning to Genesis.² He argued that enquiring into the original state of society was essential when disputing sacred matters in the present, since ‘the first begininge of a thinge, is the surest rule thereof’.³ In fact, throughout the late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart period a variety of Protestant English clergy used Genesis’s history to conceptualise the church and religious authority in different ways, and they shared in a distinctive ‘language’ of sacred politics.⁴ This thesis recovers these divines’ important, yet understudied contribution to early modern England’s ecclesiological debates.

¹ T. Manton, ‘To the READER’, in J. White, *A commentary upon the three first chapters of the first book of Moses called Genesis* (1656), unfol.; *Ibid.*, p. 2.

² HL MS Hastings Religious Box 1 (4), f. 23.

³ [‘Principium Index certissimus’] L. Andrewes, ‘Nunquid Per Jus divinum Magistratuiliceat a Reo *Jusiurandum* exigere? Et id, quatenus act quousque liceat?’, in R. Cosin, *An apologie for sundrie proceedings by jurisdiction ecclesiasticall* (1593), p. 243. The English translation quoted above is from MS Hastings Religious Box 1.

⁴ J. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 88-9; M. Goldie, ‘The Ancient Constitution and the Languages of Political Thought’, *HJ* 62/1 (2019), p. 6.

Genesis, Godly Community and Protestant Theology

This thesis's study of Protestant English Genesis commentaries, lectures, sermons and a set of church canons demonstrates that the Bible's opening book was prized by their authors for its history of the earliest communities and their religious practices. Crucially, all the divines discussed herein concluded that for these primitive societies the ends of political life were inseparable from those of divine worship. This interpretive move enabled these clergy to use Genesis's sacred history to underwrite a classically Reformed principle: the 'rejection of politics as a separate discipline' geared towards the concerns of this world alone, as Sarah Mortimer describes it.⁵ According to the sources canvassed in this thesis, political society in Genesis 'embodied true religion'.⁶ Their authors concluded that in the churches of the Patriarchs the godly magistrate was responsible for enforcing the whole moral law—that is, the religious as well as civil duties that God imposed on all mankind from the very beginning. But these authors also considered the responsibilities of the minister in the patriarchal churches, and hence in the present too.

When these early modern English Protestant interpretations of the church in Genesis are read contextually, in relation to the discussions about the nature of the church and its relationship to the temporal authority that were perennially disputed during what Peter Marshall calls the 'long Reformation', the significance of interpretations of religion in Genesis's communities for contemporary ecclesiological and political disputes emerges.⁷ Furthermore, this thesis's argument about the role that interpretations of Genesis's sacred history performed in debates about ecclesiology and the religious authority of magistrate and

⁵ S. Mortimer, *Reformation, Resistance, and Reason of State (1517-1625)* (Oxford, 2021), p. 64.

⁶ M. Goldie, 'The civil religion of James Harrington', in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. A. Pagden (Cambridge, 1987), p. 201.

⁷ On reading sources contextually, see Q. Skinner, *Visions of politics: Volume I Regarding Method* (Cambridge, 2002), p. vii. For the phrase 'long Reformation', see P. Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *JBS* 48/3 (2009), p. 567.

minister contributes to the modern historiography concerned with the impact of Protestant theology on early modern English political discourse.

Traditionally, historians of early modern English political thought have focussed on the contribution of Protestant theology to the emergence of a recognisably modern (and secularised) conception of political authority. For example, in his classic work *The Revolution of the Saints* Michael Walzer argued that the political individualism inherent to the Calvinist doctrine of election paved the way for political resistance against tyrannical, ungodly monarchs.⁸ As Mark Goldie has observed, the belief that there was an intimate association between Calvinist theology and revolution also informed Christopher Hill's Marxist reading of England's mid-seventeenth century social and political history.⁹ According to these scholars, Protestant theology contained the seeds of a revolutionary ideology that was foundational to modernity.

When Quentin Skinner refuted Walzer's thesis in the second volume of his seminal *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, he did so by emphasising continuities between Catholic and Reformed Protestant resistance theories. Broadly stated, he argued that influential Protestant political theorists adopted a Catholic scholastic understanding of political authority based in natural law, while delegitimising the papalist claim that the Catholic Church's authority was grounded in a higher, supernatural law. For Skinner, the paradigmatic shift in seventeenth-century Protestant English political thought was an acceptance that 'political society is held to exist solely for political purposes'.¹⁰ Though not discussed at length in the *Foundations*, Skinner's narrative pointed forward, ultimately, to John Locke's *Two Treatises*

⁸ M. Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: a study in the origins of radical politics* (Cambridge MA, 1965), p. 64.

⁹ M. Goldie, 'The context of the *Foundations*', in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, eds. A. Brett, J. Tully, and H. Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge, 2006), p. 14.

¹⁰ Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Volume 2 The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 352.

on *Government* (1689), with its populist account of constitutional government and individual rights of resistance grounded in the law of nature.¹¹ Locke's arguments, and indeed those of that other giant of seventeenth-century English political theory—Thomas Hobbes—presupposed an abandonment of the Protestant principle that politics was a divinely imposed set of duties. According to Annabel Brett's reading of Skinner's *Foundations*, the notion that politics was inextricable from divine revelation was an obstacle circumvented by certain Protestant political theorists, most notably Hobbes and Locke, who sought to establish a secular theory of the state and of popular sovereignty respectively, which were immune to confessional strife, by adapting a Catholic scholastic theory of a political society governed by natural laws that was unassisted by grace. On this reading, Hobbes and Locke directly contributed towards the emergence of a modern, secularised conception of the state by drawing on Catholic political thought.¹² Francis Oakley has argued similarly that it was the abandonment of the Protestant insistence that political theory ought to be grounded in scripture that set English political thought on its modern path.¹³ Paradoxically though, Protestant theology remains central in this narrative, since in seeking to escape religious conflict political theorists were compelled to abandon the Reformed notion of politics as a set of divinely imposed duties to enforce true religion.

Tellingly, within this still dominant historiographical narrative readings of Genesis focus on secular themes of sovereignty and natural communities.¹⁴ One of Locke's main targets when writing the *Two Treatises* was Sir Robert Filmer's posthumously published defence of divine right kingship, *Patriarcha* (1680) and early modern patriarchalist theories of kingship

¹¹ Ibid., p. 347.

¹² A. Brett, 'Scholastic Political Thought and the Modern Concept of the State', in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, eds. A. Brett, J. Tully, and H. Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 137-8.

¹³ F. Oakley, 'Christian Obedience and Authority, 1520-1550', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J. Burns and M. Goldie (Cambridge, 2008), p. 191.

¹⁴ Skinner, *Foundations*, p. 347.

in general, which had used Genesis's account of God granting Adam dominion over his family and all of Creation to justify absolute sovereignty—a move that Locke rejected when he pointed to primitive groups in Eden-like America as examples of communities possessing popular sovereignty.¹⁵ The lack of discussion of interpretations of religion and worship in Genesis in this context overlooks the fact that there is not a clear distinction between politics and religion, nature and grace, in the first age of sacred history.

More recently, however, Mortimer, Karie Schultz, and others have re-evaluated Protestant theology's impact on early modern political thought, and they have focussed on the relationship between ecclesiological and political ideas in the early modern period by centring conceptions of the church as well as of the commonwealth in their scholarly discussion. For instance, both Mortimer and Schultz have considered how the Protestant commitment to godly magistracy, which was a conclusion derived from a theological principle that dissolved any absolute distinction between the spiritual and temporal spheres, had significant implications for early modern political thought.¹⁶ Mortimer in particular has shown that this epoch-making theoretical development mattered not only for discussions about civil authority and the right of resistance, but also for debates about individual moral obligation and duty.¹⁷ Indeed, this latter set of discussions raised pressing queries about the role of the magistrate and of the minister in enforcing God's commands regarding divine worship and civic life. It is in relation to these

¹⁵ C. Cuttica, *Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) and the Patriotic Monarch: Patriarchalism in Seventeenth-Century Political Thought* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 68-76; Idem., 'Filmer's Patriarcha (1680): Absolute Power, Political Patriarchalism, and Patriotic Language', in *Patriarchal Moments: Reading Patriarchal Texts*, eds. C. Cuttica and G. Mahlberg (London, 2015), pp. 66-7; J. Daly, *Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought* (Toronto, 2017), pp. 57-81; J. Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 148-60; J. Sommerville, 'Absolutism and Royalism', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J. Burns and M. Goldie (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 358-61; J. Sommerville, 'Richard Hooker, Hadrian Saravia, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings', *HPT* 4/2 (1983), p. 238; Idem., *Royalists and Patriots: Politics and ideology in England, 1603-1640* (London, 2014), p. 43; G. Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Political Attitudes in 17th-century England: Patriarchalism in Political Thought* (New Brunswick, 1988), pp. 136-58.

¹⁶ K. Schultz, *Protestantism, Revolution and Scottish Political Thought: The European Context, 1637-1651* (Edinburgh, 2024), pp. 24-33; P. Odile, 'Heresy and Authority in the Thought of Théodore de Bèze', *Renaissance and Reformation* 45/1 (2022), pp. 33-72.

¹⁷ Mortimer, *Reformation*, p. 63.

abstract, yet consequential questions about the nature of the church and religious authority that the lectures, commentaries, sermons and other English Protestant sources on Genesis discussed herein made a distinctive contribution. Thus, this thesis's study contributes to the 'religious turn' in intellectual history, a disciplinary development which has witnessed scholars firmly insisting upon the inherent connections between religious and political categories in early modern thought.¹⁸

Once the Protestant conception of politics as a set of duties divinely imposed on the community is foregrounded, and any distinction between the temporal and spiritual spheres is dissolved, the special appeal of Genesis for thinking about the nature of the church and religious authority during England's 'long Reformation' becomes clearer. Genesis describes a period in sacred history when constitutional ideas played a relatively small part in defining the church (as opposed to divine revelation), and it features a highly sacralised political community. Indeed, the early human societies recorded in Genesis existed prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law and their communities were characterised by a blending together of religious and political life. This thesis contends that that sacred historical environment appealed to late-Tudor and early-Stuart Protestant divines who were keen (albeit often in strikingly different ways) to use Genesis to explain how the contemporary church ought to be configured, and how it related to civil authority.

Recognising the role that interpretations of the Bible's opening book played for early modern English divines during debates about the nature of religious community and authority requires 'seeing things their way' by putting aside any conception of the state as separate from

¹⁸ J. Coffey, 'Quentin Skinner and the Religious Dimension of Early Modern Political Thought', in *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, eds. A. Chapman, J. Coffey, and B. Gregory (Notre Dame, 2009), pp. 46-74.

the church, and of politics as secluded from theology.¹⁹ The divines discussed in this thesis were certainly not seeking to elaborate a secular theory of sovereignty and the state in their commentaries on Genesis. On the contrary, one of the main things they were doing was investigating the religious origins of human society according to the Bible, with a view to justifying their contrasting visions for the contemporary church and the religious authority of the godly magistrate and minister.

When considering the politics of religious authority, historians of early modern English political thought have predominantly focussed on genres where natural and Roman jurisprudential discourses predominate, such as legal and theological treatises.²⁰ While other ‘languages’ including sacred history are present in these works, the conventions of the genre in which their authors imagined they were writing ensured that jurisprudential discourses predominated.²¹ A consequence of this has been a historiographical emphasis on non-scriptural approaches to conceptualising early modern political and religious communities. The focus in this thesis on Genesis commentaries, lectures, and annotations composed by learned divines does not preclude attention to these legal discourses alongside sacred history—indeed the former is present throughout the selected sources—but it does acknowledge that for the early modern divines discussed herein scriptural and legal discourses were simultaneously distinct and interwoven, just as the church and political society were.

In taking this methodological approach, the thesis contributes to a recent shift that has seen scholars of early modern political thought engaging with less considered sources and genres. For example, sixteenth-century Dominican and Jesuit commentaries on St Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* have long been regarded as the pre-eminent genre in which

¹⁹ J. Coffey and A. Chapman, ‘Introduction: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion’, in *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, eds. A. Chapman, J. Coffey, and B. Gregory (Notre Dame, 2009), p. 1.

²⁰ Goldie, ‘The Ancient Constitution’, pp. 5-6.

²¹ Mortimer, *Reformation*, pp. 10-11.

Catholic political thinking was done.²² This historiographical hegemony has been challenged by Ian Campbell and Todd Rester though, whose recent edited collection emphasises the importance of Scotist and Franciscan sources in early modern political thought.²³ In an English context, studies of early modern debates about the church and religious authority have often gravitated towards Richard Hooker's eight-volume defence of the Elizabethan Church settlement, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Policie* (the first four volumes of which were published in 1593).²⁴ One explanation for this is surely the modern historiographical preoccupation with legal discourses described above—though of course there are copious scriptural references throughout Hooker's work.²⁵ Yet, this thesis's study of far less discussed, though (at least in some cases) more popular vernacular works than Hooker's judicious treatise demonstrates that Genesis commentary constituted another important, though less recognised means of theorising about religious communities and authority, which emerged in the sixteenth century.

In contributing new insights to scholarly discussions about the significance of Protestant theology for the history of early modern English political thought, this thesis's argument—that interpreting Genesis enabled early modern English divines from across the spectrum of Protestant opinion to contribute to contemporary debates about ecclesiology and the *loci* of religious authority—also furthers the broader historiography on early-seventeenth-century England's religion and politics, a discipline which in recent decades has seen scholars

²² E.g., S. Mortimer, 'Law, Justice, and Charity in a Divided Christendom: 1500–1625', in *International Law and Religion: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. M. Koskenniemi, M. García-Salmones Rovira, and P. Amorosa (Oxford, 2017), pp. 26-31.

²³ I. Campbell and T. Rester, eds., *Franciscans and Scotists on War: John Duns Scotus's Theology, Anti-Judaism, and Holy War in Early Modernity* (Oxford, 2024).

²⁴ A representative sample of which can be found in T. Kirby, ed., *A Companion to Richard Hooker* (Brill, 2008).

²⁵ W. Kirby, 'Richard Hooker's Theory of Natural Law in the Context of Reformation Theology', *SCJ* 30/3 (1999), pp. 681-703.

emphasising the interwovenness of theology and politics in the ideological causes of the era's tensions and (ultimately) of its civil conflicts.

This revisionist position was stridently expressed in John Morrill's statement that 'The English civil war...was the last of the Wars of Religion'.²⁶ Morrill contended that it was only by situating the civil wars in an early modern European context of confessional conflict that their causes could be properly examined.²⁷ While he notes that Morrill has subsequently softened his claim so as to avoid the appearance of mono-causal argumentation, Glenn Burgess has argued persuasively that historians must still pay close attention to 'the variety of ways in which contemporary discourse distinguished, linked and drew together religious and political matters' in the seventeenth century.²⁸

This thesis attempts to do just that. It reveals how the authors discussed herein used investigations into what Genesis might be said to suggest about the religious origins of human society to make ecclesiological claims about the nature of the church and where different kinds of religious authority resided. These matters were unavoidably political in the period surveyed by this thesis, because England's Reformation began with an act of state that declared the church to be 'by law established' but which left open a question about where exactly religious authority lay.²⁹ The early modern English lectures, sermons, commentaries and other sources on Genesis examined in this thesis contain differing and sometimes conflicting answers to this question, but they all demonstrate how religious issues 'blurred the boundaries of civil and sacred authority' at that time, to quote Charles Prior.³⁰

²⁶ J. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 68.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁸ G. Burgess, 'Introduction: Religion and the Historiography of the English Civil War', in *England's Wars of Religion, Revisited*, eds. C. Prior and G. Burgess (Farnham, 2011), pp. 36-7.

²⁹ G. Burgess, 'Was the English Civil War a War of Religion? The Evidence of Political Propaganda', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 61/2 (1998), p. 201; C. Prior, 'Religion, Political Thought and the English Civil War', *History Compass* 11/1 (2013), p.29.

³⁰ Prior, 'Religion, Political Thought and the English Civil War', p. 25.

Another influential scholar who has observed the ways in which controversies over ecclesiastical jurisdiction and church government ‘inevitably held implications for issues of civil polity’ in early seventeenth-century England is Anthony Milton, whose scholarship on the history of theology and the established church in this era is cited throughout this thesis.³¹ Milton has shown us conclusively that there was a continual contestation over the church’s identity during this period, conducted by different individuals and factions with contrasting ecclesiologies but who nonetheless regarded themselves as custodians of the same single, national church. Far from an aberration, then, for Milton the intense religious disputes of the civil war era where this thesis culminates represented a continuation of long-term arguments about the national church and its relationship to the civil power, which sank deep roots in England’s sixteenth-century Reformation.³² Relatedly, Milton’s work has also demonstrated the ways in which these arguments about the church were often framed historically, involving appeals to earlier precedents in ecclesiastical history.³³

In its focus on the use of Genesis’s sacred history for promoting different visions of the contemporary church and the role of magistrate and minister, this thesis supports both of Milton’s arguments, but it also pushes them in new directions. It does so by showing how English Protestant divines from across the ideological spectrum appealed to the earliest period in sacred history in order to ground their ecclesiological visions for the national church in late-Tudor and early-Stuart England. Put another way, this thesis argues that historians concerned with the religious causes of political turmoil during this period would profit from attending to early seventeenth-century English understandings of the religious origins of human society,

³¹ A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 449.

³² A. Milton, *England’s Second Reformation: The Battle for the Church of England 1625–1662* (Cambridge, 2021), p. 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

which were expressed in published, vernacular sermons, commentaries, lectures and other materials concerned with Genesis.

This connection between the study of early sacred history and early modern ecclesiological debates can be uncovered by treating these studies of early sacred history contextually. Herein, the contents of these works on Genesis are read against the backdrop of specific contexts (foremostly contemporary ecclesiological debates), which their authors can be shown to be responding to. In its reading of these learned theological materials within particular historical moments, this thesis draws on the approach of another prominent historian of early modern England's theology—Peter Lake.

Lake has argued forcefully that to assume early modern theological genres, such as commentaries and sermons, were neutral or unpolemical, is to hold an 'entirely mistaken belief'.³⁴ In several works covering the late-Tudor and early-Stuart periods, which are cited across this thesis, Lake shows how theological discourses contained in sermons and polemics were employed as tools in political debate and ecclesiological identity formation.³⁵ The late Kevin Sharpe made a similar point in his study of early modern commentaries on the Book of Revelation. As he put it, 'the contest for ecclesiastical and political authority...was (and is) never separable from the struggle to control interpretation of valorising but ambiguous texts.'³⁶ Drawing on Lake and Sharpe's approaches, as well as that of Debora Shuger in her study of paratext in different editions of the English Bible, all of which blend the discipline of book history with the history of religion and political thought, this thesis demonstrates how the

³⁴ P. Lake, *The boxmaker's revenge: 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy' and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 5-6.

³⁵ P. Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982); Idem., *Anglicans and Puritans?: Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London, 2020); Idem., *On Laudianism: Piety, Polemic and Politics During the Personal Rule of Charles I* (Cambridge, 2023).

³⁶ K. Sharpe, 'Reading Revelations: Prophecy, Hermeneutics and Politics in Early Modern Britain, 1560–1720', in *Reading, Society, and Politics in Early Modern England*, eds. K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker (Cambridge, 2003), p. 129.

interpretations of Genesis examined herein were deployed in contemporary debates about the church and its relationship to the civil authority.³⁷

In focusing on the relationship between early modern English Genesis commentary and contemporary disputes surrounding the church, this thesis offers a contrasting perspective on early modern biblical engagement to that which has been emphasised in a swathe of modern studies on the history of early modern Bible scholarship. Collectively, these important works have transformed our understanding of how learned individuals operating within Europe's scholarly networks and educational institutions combined to revolutionise Old Testament erudition through their contributions to the study of philology, chronology, and sacred history.³⁸ Furthermore, this research has also illustrated how advances in scholarly method were often encouraged by post-Reformation Europe's highly confessionalised environment.

Naturally, the emphasis in this historiography has often been on those early modern biblicists whose works displayed notable methodological originality and who challenged conventional scholarly opinion, such as Joseph Scaliger, Isaac Casaubon, or Hugo Grotius.³⁹ Indeed, an important theme in these notable biblicists' approach to reading the Bible, which has been repeatedly emphasised by modern scholars, was a willingness to abandon the twin

³⁷ D. Shuger, *Paratexts of the English Bible, 1525-1611* (Oxford, 2022).

³⁸ I. Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378-1615)* (Leiden, 2003); T. Dunkelgrun, *The Multiplicity of Scripture: The Making of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible* (Toronto, 2025); A. Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800* (Cambridge MA, 1991); D. Levitin, 'Introduction: Confessionalisation and Erudition in Early Modern Europe: A Comparative Overview of a Neglected Episode in the History of the Humanities', in *Confessionalisation and Erudition in Early Modern Europe: An Episode in the History of the Humanities*, eds. N. Hardy and D. Levitin (Oxford, 2019), pp. 1-94; K. MacFarlane, *Biblical Scholarship in an Age of Controversy: The Polemical World of Hugh Broughton (1549-1612)* (Oxford, 2021); J-L. Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford, 2009); P. van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn l'Empereur (1591-1648), Professor of Hebrew and Theology at Leiden* (Leiden, 1989); D. Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, 1994); T. Twining, *The Limits of Erudition: The Old Testament in Post-Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2024).

³⁹ E.g., A. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1983-1993); N. Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 125-7; A. Ossa-Richardson, 'The Naked Truth of Scripture: André Rivet between Bellarmine and Grotius', in *Scriptural Authority and Biblical Criticism in the Dutch Golden Age: God's Word Questioned*, eds. H. Nellen, D. van Miert, P. Steenbakkens, and J. Touber (Oxford, 2017), pp. 109-130.

Reformed principles of scriptural univocity and total inspiration—that is, the related beliefs that one biblical passage could illuminate another’s meaning since they shared the same divine author, and that the totality of the scriptures were inspired by God—and to adopt a more historical, comparative approach that emphasised contextualising particular verses linguistically and cross-culturally using external, non-scriptural sources.⁴⁰

Chronology was one of the major early modern disciplines that provided crucial evidence that helped to stimulate this kind of contextual exegesis, as Anthony Grafton and other scholars have shown.⁴¹ Moreover, for early modern chronologists the challenge of aligning the events narrated in Genesis, such as the Flood, with classical and other non-scriptural histories, was a crucial aspect of their craft.⁴² However, most intellectual historians and historians of scholarship concerned with the development of new chronological and philological methods, and with the impact on religious and political debates of the resulting advancements in exegesis, have tended to focus on biblical books other than Genesis. For instance, there is a rich body of research on seventeenth-century engagement with the Old Testament history of the Hebrew Republic and with rabbinic sources that concerned it. For instance, Eric Nelson and others have considered how English scholarship on the ancient Israelite kingdom’s constitution and its basis in human and divine positive law shaped early modern English political thought regarding questions of church government, property rights, and religious toleration.⁴³

⁴⁰ D. Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c.1640-1700* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 122.

⁴¹ A. Grafton, ‘Chronology and Its Discontents in Renaissance Europe: The Vicissitudes of a Tradition’, in *Time: Histories and Ethnologies*, eds. D. Owen Hughes and T. Trautmann (Ann Arbor, 1998), pp. 139-67; Idem., ‘Some Uses of Eclipses in Early Modern Chronology’, *JHI* 64/2 (2003), pp. 213-229; S. Mandelbrote, ‘“The doors shall fly open”: Chronology and Biblical Interpretation in England, c.1630–c.1730’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c.1530-1700*, eds. K. Killeen, H. Smith, and R. Willie (Oxford, 2015), pp. 176-95; K. MacFarlane, ‘Gospel harmonies and the genres of biblical scholarship in early modern Europe’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 76/3 (2023), pp. 1027-67.

⁴² Grafton, *Scaliger*, vol. 2, pp. 262-9.

⁴³ A. Grafton, ‘Church History in Early Modern Europe: Tradition and Innovation’, in *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, eds. K. Van Liere, S. Ditchfield, and H. Louthan (Oxford, 2012),

Equally, Sarah Mortimer and others have shown how exiled English episcopalians could draw upon New Testament biblical criticism, and specifically Grotius' annotations on the Book of Acts, to pinpoint the origins of the church in a specific historical moment. As we have already noted, Reformed Protestant expositors typically argued that the church, as well as other kinds of community, had a continuous history all the way back to Genesis and the Creation. However, anti-Calvinist exiled episcopalians like Henry Hammond were attracted to Grotius' differentiation of the beginnings of the church and the commonwealth. At a time when their political opponents ruled the British Isles in the aftermath of the Civil Wars, the exiled episcopalians desired to protect what remained of their church from the regime and its avowedly Reformed identity. Grotius' distinction between the natural origins of commonwealths and the historical origin of the Christian church in the time of the Gospel enabled them to do that, by temporally separating the origins of the church and commonwealth.⁴⁴

Nonetheless, developments in exegetical method were consequential for how Genesis was read and then deployed in contemporary debates, because a greater attention to historical context made it harder to suggest that claims about the ordering of the church and its relationship to the civil authority in pre-Mosaic history could be straightforwardly applied to the present. A greater awareness of the context in which different parts of the scriptures were written brought with it an increased sense of historical difference, and therefore of the potentially problematic application of Old Testament models to the present. Some scholars went so far as to challenge the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and its status as the only authentic history of mankind's beginnings, with the seventeenth-century French theologian Isaac La

pp. 3-26; A. Guibory, *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2010); E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge MA, 2011).

⁴⁴ S. Mortimer, 'Kingship and the 'Apostolic Church,' 1620-1650', *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 13/2 (2011), p. 241; Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 468-72.

Peyrère even postulating a pre-Adamite society not described in Genesis.⁴⁵ Despite these startling developments, the sacred history contained in the Bible's opening book continued to be used as an alternative to natural law for reflecting on how human communities were first formed and bound together.⁴⁶

An important way in which this thesis exposes the application of interpretations of Genesis's sacred history, which were informed by scholarly insights, to contemporary ecclesiological debates is by considering the original context in which the biblical lectures, commentaries, sermons, and other sources discussed here were orally delivered or composed. Peter McCullough and other scholars have shown how early modern preachers used particular interpretations of specific scriptures to respond to religious and politics disputes.⁴⁷ Similarly, each expositor discussed in this thesis will be shown to have used a variety of hermeneutical approaches to meld events from pre-Mosaic sacred history to the present-day church for polemical purposes. Thus, this thesis brings together a selection of sources that evince how studies of Genesis generated a contested discourse of sacral politics that was used by divines to dispute the nature of the church and religious authority in early modern England.

⁴⁵ N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 383-431.

⁴⁶ J. Robertson, 'Sacred History and Political Thought: Neapolitan Responses to the Problem of Sociability After Hobbes', *HJ* 56/1 (2013), pp. 1-29.

⁴⁷ P. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge, 1998); L. Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers and the Rhetoric of Conformity, 1603-1625* (Stanford, 1998).

Source Selection and Chronological Scope

A decision has been made to include sources authored by representatives of all the main strands of early modern English Protestant theological opinion in this thesis. These sources not only individually evince the thesis's central argument that early modern English divines of all stripes regarded worship as fundamental and inseparable from human society, but collectively they reveal patterns of interpretation shared by divines with similar ecclesiological commitments. The word 'pattern', rather than 'tradition', is used consciously throughout this thesis to highlight that certain interpretations of key verses and narratives in Genesis recur in the sources discussed here, and to argue that these recurrences occurred when the authors shared similar ecclesiological loyalties. However, it is not suggested that particular authors considered herein directly influenced other expositors, except where explicit references made in the sources are highlighted.

Unsurprisingly, there are also instances throughout this thesis where the commentators reach starkly different conclusions about the meaning and contemporary application of the same ambiguous verses. These pericopes emerge as scriptural flashpoints in the ecclesiological culture wars within and beyond the late-Tudor and early-Stuart established Church that have been the topic of much modern scholarship.⁴⁸ Genesis was a highly flexible, ambiguous, and even dangerous text that could be used to critique existing ecclesiastical constitutional arrangements—therein lay its appeal.

⁴⁸ E.g., K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, *Altars Restored: the Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford, 2007); S. Hampton, *Grace and Conformity: The Reformed Conformist Tradition and the Early Stuart Church of England* (Oxford, 2021); Lake, *On Laudianism*; A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*; Idem., *England's Second Reformation*; C. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603–1625* (Cambridge, 2005); Idem., *A Confusion of Tongues: Britain's Wars of Reformation, 1625-1642* (Oxford, 2012); E. Shagan, *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2009).

It is important to note that the sources that are contextualised in relation to ecclesiological debates in Chapter Two to Chapter Seven of this thesis represent a sample from a larger body of vernacular English works on Genesis that were printed during the late Tudor and early Stuart period. To gauge how significant this body of commentary on the Bible's opening book was in early modern England's biblical culture it is necessary to compare the quantity of works on Genesis printed in this period relative to those concerning the Bible's other books. A useful guide here is a catalogue of English Bible scholarship compiled by the bibliographer William Crowe soon after the Restoration, which purported to list 'An Exact Collection Or Catalogue Of our English Writers On the Old and New Testament, Either in Whole, or in Part: Whether Commentators, Adnotators, or Elucidators, Expositors, At large, or in Single Sermons'.⁴⁹ Crowe's catalogue, which listed vernacular works only, indicates that the Bible's opening book was one of the most popularly commented upon parts of the Hebrew Bible in late-Tudor and early-Stuart England.⁵⁰

However, a more revealing comparison is to compare Crowe's list of printed works on Genesis with his catalogue of studies on the New Testament, and two biblical books in particular—St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the Book of Acts. Historians of early modern English political thought and theology have drawn attention to the relevance of these two New Testament books for debates about non-resistance and ecclesiology respectively. Paul's injunction in Romans 13 to obey the civil authority 'not because of wrath only, but also for conscience sake' was a scriptural commonplace cited in works on the doctrine of non-resistance.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the Book of Acts' description of the apostolic church and the

⁴⁹ W. Crowe, *A collection, or catalogue of our English writers on the Old and New Testament* (1663).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-12.

⁵¹ See Chapter Five, p. 202. On Romans and political thought see R. Kingdon, 'Calvinism and Resistance Theory, 1550-1580', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J. H. Burns and M. Goldie (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 203-4; R. Serjeantson, 'Preaching Regicide in Jacobean England: John Knight and David Pareus', *EHR* 134/568 (2019), pp. 553-88.

persecution of the first Christians by the Roman authorities provided inspiration for English Presbyterians in the sixteenth century and exiled Episcopalians in the mid-seventeenth century.⁵² According to Crowe's catalogue, the amount of printed vernacular material on Genesis was broadly comparable to that concerned with the Book of Acts. Crowe identifies one hundred and twenty-one different authors of works on Genesis, and one hundred and twenty-six on the Book of Acts. Paul's Epistle to the Romans exceeds both with one hundred and sixty-six authors listed. Nevertheless, these numbers underscore Genesis's popularity and the importance of Genesis commentary in this period.⁵³

This thesis focusses exclusively on vernacular works, as opposed to learned early modern studies of Genesis written in Latin or other ancient languages. The authors discussed herein were all beneficiaries of a university education and were therefore accomplished linguists able to engage with questions of philology that concerned multiple languages. Nevertheless, their commentaries on Genesis were published in English and were accessible to a wider literate audience. Unsurprisingly, authoritative commentaries written in academic Latin by prominent theologians are often cited within these vernacular works, but they tend to be continental, as opposed to English, in origin. The *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* project bears out this pattern in its ongoing study of private library booklists in early modern England. Continental authors dominate the entries for works on Genesis written in Latin held in the libraries surveyed so far.⁵⁴ The lack of formal Latin works on Genesis by English divines printed in England during the period covered by this thesis may reflect a smaller market for such works compared to the continent. Relatedly, in the sixteenth century this shortage of domestic Latin studies may also have been the result of a combination of other factors,

⁵² On the Book of Acts, Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p. 4; Mortimer, 'Kingship and the 'Apostolic Church,' 1620-1650', p. 241.

⁵³ Crowe, *A collection*, pp. 1-12, 176-84, 184-95.

⁵⁴ R. Fehrenbach, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and early Stuart Book-Lists* (Binghampton, 1992-2020), e.g., *PLRE* 1:54, 4:357, 110:14, 110:36, 110:119.

including the presence of a relatively inferior publishing network, Tudor government censorship that discouraged individuals from expounding on the Bible or translating it in private, and the unsettled politics of England's Reformation.⁵⁵ In Chapter One we will return to these matters in further detail.

In contrast to the absence of Latin works, there was undoubtedly a gradual flourishing of vernacular printed texts on Genesis in late-Tudor and early-Stuart England, which anecdotal evidence testifies to. Writing in 1592, the future bishop and translator of the Authorised Version Miles Smith expressed his despondence at the lack of vernacular, domestically produced biblical commentaries, and he praised his colleague Gervase Babington (then Bishop of Llandaff) for remedying the situation by penning an accessible guide to Genesis.⁵⁶ Yet only thirty years later, the English cleric and miscellanist Samuel Purchas (c.1577-1626) was bemoaning the size of several recently published commentaries upon Genesis, which, he complained, 'have almost oppressed the Presse with their huge Volumes'.⁵⁷ According to Purchas, these modern, swollen folios were merely the latest works in a long line of 'divers' Genesis commentaries penned by a 'cloud indeed of authors'.⁵⁸ Additionally, Crowe's catalogue enables us to quantify this increase in production of vernacular works on Genesis. There are only eight entries for English works published before 1600. Between 1600 and 1640 a total of fifty-six works are recorded, but during the period 1640-1660 sixty-one individual publications are listed.

While the chronological sweep of this thesis does align with the period when vernacular commentary on Genesis emerged and flourished in England, the project's scope does not

⁵⁵ J. Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture – Old Testament I: Genesis 1-11* (Downers Grove, 2012), p. xxxiv.

⁵⁶ M. Smith, 'The Preface to the Christian Reader', in G. Babington, *Certaine plaine, briefe, and comfortable notes upon everie chapter of Genesis* (1592), unfol.

⁵⁷ S. Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage, or, Relations of the world and the religions observed in all ages and places discovered, from the creation unto this present* (1626), p. 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

simply reflect this trend. Instead, it is dictated by the deliberate selection of certain sources. Some of the works discussed, such as Andrew Willet's *Hexapla in Genesin* (1605) and Henry Ainsworth's *Annotations upon the First Book of Moses* (1616), were among the most popular early modern English commentaries on Genesis, a point which Chapter Three and Chapter Four will evince. However, other works selected for inclusion in this thesis were less notable or only appeared in print long after they were first produced. Hence the criterion for inclusion is not based upon popularity but rather on what each source reveals about how English divines with different ecclesiological commitments exploited a discourse of sacred politics told through Genesis's sacred history that emphasised divinely imposed duties. Of course, sermons and other kinds of writing in English on Genesis printed in the late Tudor and early Stuart period could be and were produced for a range of other purposes, to provide practical pastoral advice for example or to engage with questions of natural science. Works such as the Durham preacher Nicholas Gibbons' *Questions and Disputations Concerning the Holy Scripture* (1602) and Alexander Ross' *An exposition on the fourteene first chapters of Genesis* (1626) bear out this observation.⁵⁹ However, while texts such as these were cited in the sources discussed below they are not foregrounded in this thesis since they do not explicitly engage in ecclesiological debates to the same extent as those sources that have been selected for extensive examination here.

The thesis's earliest sources, which are examined in Chapter Two to Chapter Four, collectively demonstrate how three divines that represent the main strands of English Protestant thought in late-Elizabethan and Jacobean England could use Genesis's sacred history to justify their conflicting ecclesiological perspectives, in particular contexts. Furthermore, the decision to begin by examining Lancelot Andrewes' Genesis lectures in Chapter Two does not imply a

⁵⁹ N. Gibbons, *Questions and Disputations Concerning the Holy Scripture* (1602); A. Ross, *An exposition on the fourteene first chapters of Genesis* (1626).

claim that he initiated the vernacular study of Genesis in early modern England—indeed Chapter One will survey and further quantify English Genesis commentary from earlier in the sixteenth century. However, Andrewes' use of Genesis does reflect a growing interest in exploiting early sacred history to contest the nature of the church and religious authority in late-Elizabethan and early Jacobean England.

In its later chapters, the thesis examines how different patterns of interpretation of Genesis established in these earlier texts were revisited and built upon in mid-seventeenth-century works that responded to the intensifying conflicts within England's Church and polity. In order to maintain a manageable chronological and evidential scope the thesis culminates during the English Civil Wars, which was a period that witnessed a dramatic acceleration in the number of printed works on Genesis and the Bible more broadly as our consultation of Crowe's catalogue indicated. Chapter Seven's discussion of John Ley's Genesis annotations enables us to see how useful Genesis proved to ministers intent on erecting a new national church and a godly commonwealth in this period. Additionally, the semi-official nature of the annotations project that Ley contributed his notes on Genesis to also makes this source a particular useful one for understanding how important a discourse of sacred politics narrated through Genesis's sacred history was to leading divines in the mid-seventeenth century. Therefore, although the scope and structure of this thesis does not suggest a single teleology, across its arc it does uncover different patterns of Genesis interpretation and their application for different ecclesiological perspectives in alternative contexts. These trends are outlined briefly in the chapter summaries that will now complete this introduction.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One will further contextualise the scope and source selection of this thesis by surveying the state of English commentary on Genesis in the sixteenth century, and by setting it in the context of the European Reformation through establishing which continental works on Genesis were most influential in late-sixteenth century England; this thesis reveals that English expositors inherited and readily applied continental interpretations of the Bible's opening book to domestic ecclesiological debates. The English sources at the centre of this thesis did not just reference Reformed commentaries though. Therefore, Chapter One also considers important continental publications that provided English divines with access to Catholic, Jewish, and Patristic scholarship on Genesis. The English expositors discussed in Chapter Two onwards availed themselves of all these sources of Genesis commentary. Indeed, throughout the thesis there are examples of divines strategically using or avoiding established lines of Genesis interpretation in order to steer the reader towards ideologically agreeable conclusions regarding the nature of the church and its relationships to the temporal authority.

In Chapter Two the thesis enters the first of its contextual studies of early modern English commentary on Genesis. The subject of the chapter is a series of lectures on Gen. 1-4 that were given by Lancelot Andrewes in late-Elizabethan London. A close reading of a transcript of Andrewes' lectures reveals that he was able to use Genesis to generate a defence of a sacerdotalist vision of the established Church that positioned the clergy as mediators of public worship and as custodians of social order, through their secular authority as landholders and as judges in church courts. In making these arguments Andrewes not only subverted the godly lectureship he had been given but he also embroiled himself in the conflicts between bishops and common lawyers, Puritans and anti-Puritans, which characterised late-Elizabethan religious politics.

The subject of Chapter Three, Andrew Willet, was just as immersed in religious politics at the turn of the seventeenth century as Andrewes, and his popular commentary on Genesis entitled *Hexapla in Genesin* (1605)—which he dedicated to the recently crowned King James VI & I—directly contributed to a renewed godly campaign for reformation within the established Church. Indeed, the *Hexapla* was more controversial than Milton has previously suggested.⁶⁰ Chapter Three will demonstrate how Willet used his commentary to insist that Genesis contained a blue print for a magisterial reformation grounded upon the building out of a national preaching ministry. Regularly polemical in its eliding of pre-Mosaic idolatry with contemporary Roman Catholicism, Willet's *Hexapla* illustrates how Genesis could be used in early-Jacobean England to promote a vision of a national church led by a godly magistrate and championed by an army of evangelical preachers.

Outside of the established Church Willet was rivalled in his expertise on Genesis by the English Separatist Henry Ainsworth, whose highly regarded *Annotations upon the first book of Moses, called Genesis* (1616) is the subject of Chapter Four. While living in exile as the teacher and then the leader of a congregation in Amsterdam called the Ancient Church, Ainsworth drew upon his Hebrew expertise in order to produce a highly literal English translation of Genesis and an accompanying set of annotations for each chapter in the Bible's first book. Like Willet, Ainsworth saw in the Patriarchs a model of godly self-restraint and faithful perseverance. But unlike his conformist rival, Ainsworth thought that the covenanted tribes of Noah, Abraham, and Jacob constituted evidence of the need for the truly godly to separate themselves from the rest of the community and that they offered his congregation an example of perseverance in spite of ungodly persecution. Furthermore, for Ainsworth the Patriarchs' discipline in staying

⁶⁰ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 25.

true to God's Law whilst the rest of mankind fell away into corruption was the defining feature of the 'Church of Jacob' and his own Ancient Church too.

Chapter Five brings together a selection of texts belonging to different genres—including a collection of church canons, two sermons, and a treatise—that illustrate how certain English divines in the late-Jacobean and Caroline eras investigated what Genesis suggested about religion and the origins of human society so as to generate a vision of an embodied, decorous, and sacramental Protestant national church. These clergymen did so in order to respond to alternative Catholic and Presbyterian conceptions of the church by insisting that it ought to be a visibly embodied institution governed by a hierarchical clergy wielding an *iure divino* ecclesiastical authority, which ministers expressed through ritual ceremony and religious instruction. This approach to using Genesis did not emerge spontaneously in the 1620s and 1630s but rather it began earlier at the turn of the seventeenth century. Therefore, Chapter Five charts a pattern of using Genesis to justify a sacerdotalist vision of the church and to defend it from lay interference. In so doing, this chapter will develop several themes that emerged in Chapter Two. But Chapter Five also shows how these Genesis-inspired arguments for a particular vision of the church and its relationship to the civil power were intensified during the 1630s.

In sharp contrast, Chapter Six considers *The History of the Creation* (1641) by the godly London minister George Walker. Walker had regularly been in trouble with the authorities during the Personal Rule, and he made a prudent decision not to pursue publication until the following decade. Not only was Walker notorious amongst the Church's leadership under Charles I, but his *History* can be shown to have implicitly criticised the Caroline Church through its emphasis on the role of ministerial preaching in binding together a religious community. However, at the time of its publication in the much-changed context of the early-1640s Walker's *History* can be read more positively, as a contribution to debates about church

reform on the eve of the Civil Wars. Indeed, in focusing on the earliest parts of Genesis Walker derived a cosmopolitan vision of the church that—like Willet’s interpretation—was centred on the right preaching of the Word. This model appealed to the godly, who had been disillusioned with the English national church in the 1630s, and who wished to align England’s church with an international Reformed identity in the 1640s. However, Walker’s emphasis on the role of preaching in the early Genesis church was also an assertion of ministerial authority in response to the creeping threat of heterodoxy in the mid-seventeenth century, and an acknowledgement of the need to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy within the church.

Chapter Seven will continue the thesis’s study of how Genesis was used by firmly Reformed clergymen to think about the reformation of the national church in the 1640s, by turning to a set of notes on the Bible’s opening book written by the prominent Westminster Assembly member John Ley, which formed part of a new set of *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament* (1645) commissioned by Parliament. Chapter Seven will contend that in compiling his annotations on Genesis Ley made an optimistic case for a conception of the national church that might appeal to both the godly in England and to the Scottish Covenanters. Drawing on the themes of covenanting, solemn worship, and respect for authority that were all displayed by Genesis’s Patriarchal church, Ley used his annotations to continue his career-long ambition of uniting Reformed Protestants against a common (Catholic) enemy through elaborating a particular conception of the church and of the religious authority of minister and magistrate. Whilst the Presbyterian party ultimately failed to dictate the future of England’s church after the Civil Wars, Ley’s annotations demonstrate why Genesis’s account of the church before the Law held a particular appeal at a time when the legislative framework that undergirded the pre-war Church was being systematically dismantled, with no agreed alternative to replace it.

Thus, the thesis culminates in the middle of the seventeenth century, a period which inherited the variety of approaches to thinking about the church in Genesis charted in this thesis. The decision to end the thesis here does not imply that after the Civil Wars Genesis was no longer of interest as a resource for thinking about the contemporary church and religious authority. In fact, the Conclusion will discuss several examples of works that appear to continue applying the patterns of interpretation of Genesis canvassed in this thesis to ecclesiological controversies in the later seventeenth century. Moreover, the Conclusion will also reflect on how this thesis's findings contribute to both the history of early modern English political thought and theology, while considering more broadly what it has revealed about the place of Genesis in the early modern English cultural imagination.

Chapter 1 — Early modern English Genesis Commentary and its Continental Sources: Scripture, Authority, and the Contested Origins of the Church

Writing in 1592, Miles Smith succinctly described England's debt to continental biblical scholarship, given the absence of native exegetical works written in the vernacular: 'others have laboured for us'.¹ In the same passage, Smith also complained that the rare few commentaries composed in the common tongue previously by English divines 'want application for the most part'.² We have already noted in the Introduction how this state of affairs would rapidly change in the ensuing half-century with the flourishing of printed vernacular works on Genesis. However, before we examine a selection of such texts from across that period in the context of ecclesiological disputes, it is important to interrogate Smith's concerns and to establish the extent of engagement with Genesis amongst sixteenth-century English divines as evidenced by works written in the vernacular and in academic Latin. Furthermore, given Smith's remarks, it is also crucial to establish which continental sources on Genesis and therefore which foreign theological figures were most influential in early modern England. Chapter One will consider these questions and in so doing provide an important intellectual context for the remainder of this thesis, as well as further justifying the study's evidential and chronological scope.

¹ M. Smith, 'The Preface to the Christian Reader', in G. Babington, *Certaine plaine, briefe, and comfortable notes upon everie chapter of Genesis* (1592), unfol.

² Ibid.

Genesis Commentary in sixteenth-century England

According to William Crowe's early Restoration catalogue of domestic biblical scholarship, and several modern studies, printed works on Genesis written in English were comparatively rare in early- and mid-sixteenth-century England.³ Crowe's record appears to suggest that the late-sixteenth and seventeenth century was a notably more propitious period for the production of these kinds of texts. Yet these works did not emerge from a vacuum and it is undoubtedly the case that in the sixteenth century Genesis was 'seminal for all aspects of...cultural life', as Philip Almond has pithily put it.⁴ Increasingly, the Bible's opening book was being read by all classes in this period, not just by theologians.⁵ Therefore, it is important to recognise that the different genres of printed vernacular works at the centre of this thesis belonged to a broader and older corpus of what Arnold Williams termed 'Genesis material', the constituent texts of which were written for a variety of purposes, including ecclesiastical reflection.⁶

Unsurprisingly, the sermon genre was one of the main locations for engagement with Genesis in sixteenth-century England. For example, the Puritan preacher Eusebius Pagit's *A godlie and fruitefull sermon on Gen. 14:20-2*, which was printed in London in 1583, used Abraham's payment of a tithe to Melchizedek as a scriptural stepping stone for considering 'what provision ought to be made for the mynister'—a controversial question in an era of disputes over impropriation and parochial pluralism.⁷ In contrast, the learned divine Adam

³ W. Crowe, *A collection, or catalogue of our English writers on the Old and New Testament* (1663), pp. 1-12. Two medieval Anglo-Saxon English works on Genesis written in Latin are listed in W. Crowe's catalogue of the Lambeth Palace Library (1663)—the Venerable Bede's five-volume exposition on Genesis addressed to Bishop Acca of Hexham and Alcuin of York's *Questions and Solutions on Genesis*. See Bodl. MS Tanner 274, f.10r. See also the bibliographies of primary sources in: P. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 215-24; A. Williams, *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527-1633* (Richmond, 1948), pp. 269-77.

⁴ Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Williams, *Common Expositor*, p. 4.

⁷ E. Pagit, *A godlie and fruitefull sermon, made upon the 20. & 21. verses of the 14. chapter of the booke of Genesis* (1583). For the mid-Elizabethan controversies over these and related matters see P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 2020), pp. 51-2.

Hill's *A sermon upon the 18 Chapter of Genesis the 21 and 22 verses*, which was also printed in London (albeit a decade later), reflected upon what its author regarded as the moral degeneracy of late Elizabethan England's society.⁸ These two printed works presumably constitute a small, surviving sample of a much larger body of sermons that were delivered in the parishes.⁹ Moreover, these texts also suggest that while vernacular commentaries on Genesis may have wanted 'application' as Smith put it, sixteenth century printed sermons may not have.

Beyond sermons, Genesis was encountered in a variety of printed genres in sixteenth-century England, both inside and beyond the parish church. These works ranged from official texts like the *Book of Common Prayer* and Elizabethan homilies to eccentric works like the notable musician William Hunnis' *A hyve full of hunnye* (1578), which contained a vernacular rendition of Gen. 1 written in the form of poetry.¹⁰ A keen evangelical with links to the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Essex, Hunnis also produced a predestinarian court play entitled *Jacob and Esau* at a time when making explicit statements on soteriology was unavoidably political in the context of godly campaigns for further reformation.¹¹ There is also evidence in the Elizabethan period of vernacular exegetical treatises on Genesis, such as John Overton's *Jacobs troublesome journey to Bethel*—a work which features an exposition on Gen. 33:1-4 that critiques the Catholic Church's claim to intercessionary powers.¹² Already in the sixteenth century, then, divines were bringing Genesis to bear on questions about the nature of the church and religious authority.

⁸ A. Hill, *A sermon upon the 18 Chapter of Genesis the 21 and 22 verses* (1593).

⁹ See also H. Smith, *Nyne Sermons of master Henrye Smith... 5. genesis 9 chapter 20 verse* (1591).

¹⁰ W. Hunnis, *A hyve full of hunnye contayning the firste booke of Moses, called Genesis* (1578)

¹¹ I am grateful to Dr Henry Oscar Davies Patton for bringing Hunnis's works on Genesis to my attention. See W. Hunnis, *Jacob and Esau* (1568). Also, A. Ashbee 'Hunnis, William (d. 1597)', *ODNB*.

¹² J. Overton, *Jacobs troublesome journey to Bethel conteining a briefe exposition, or excellent treatise of the four first verses of the 33. chapter of Genesis* (Oxford, 1586). See also H. Broughton, *A seder olam, that is: order of the worlde* (1594); T. Cooper, *A briefe exposition of such chapters of the Olde Testament as usually are red in the church at common praier on the Sondayes* (1573); R. Daniel, *Matrimoniall Honour* (1592).

A notable early example of this kind of application of Genesis by an English author is the Bible translator William Tyndale's *The Fyrst Boke of Moses called Genesis* (1530), which featured part of the itinerant scholar's English translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch. Surprisingly, as we shall see, whilst Tyndale's work on Genesis provided translations that were recycled in later versions of the vernacular Bible, his name rarely appears as an authority in late-sixteenth and seventeenth-century English commentaries, annotations, and lectures on the Old Testament's opening book. According to the 'address to the reader' in *The Fyrst Boke*, Tyndale's insistence on the importance of lay access to a vernacular Bible, on the literal (rather than allegorical) reading of Scripture, and on the value of humanist learning for exegetes had incurred the wrath of senior clergy in Henrician England—'those stubborn Nimrods'—and had thereby prevented its publication.¹³ This may offer an explanation for Tyndale's apparent lack of influence in early modern England as a commentator on (as opposed to a translator of) Genesis.

Published in Marburg on 17 January 1530, Tyndale's *Fyrst Boke* contained an English translation of Genesis, but it also included several marginal annotations that featured political and ecclesiological observations alongside comments pertaining to practical divinity. Three of the marginal notes contained excoriating attacks on clerical abuses of privilege and warnings about the deleterious effect of the Church on the authority of the civil magistrate. In the first annotation, Tyndale compared the mark of Cain to benefit of clergy: 'ye pope...toke an occasion to marke all his creatures: and to forbid under payne of excommunication that no man whether he were kige or emperowre be so hardy to punishe them'.¹⁴ The second marginal note discussed the Noahide Law of retribution for the shedding of another's blood and here Tyndale castigated clerical privilege for impeding the magistrate's legal right and spiritual duty to execute justice

¹³ W. Tyndale, *The Fyrst Boke of Moses called Genesis* (Antwerp, 1530), 'W.T. to the Reader', unfol.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 'The .iiii. Chapter.', unfol., [p. 2].

on all his subjects.¹⁵ Lastly, Tyndale alighted on the fact that Joseph was required not to requisition the land belonging to Pharaoh's priests when he was preparing Egypt for famine. Here he remarked on how self-interested clergy shielded their peers from Christian justice and he suggested that the Church weakened civil society by malignly accruing secular power.¹⁶ Despite their lack of quantity, Tyndale's marginalia evince the fact that in the early years of the Reformation English reformers associated verses from Genesis with anti-Catholic arguments about religious authority and the church's relationship to the magistrate.

In contrast to Tyndale's seemingly rarely cited annotations, there was another sixteenth-century vernacular work on Genesis (and the rest of the scriptures) that was considerably more influential: the marginal annotations composed for the English translation of the Geneva Bible, which were compiled by the Marian exiles in the mid-sixteenth century and which were later published in England.¹⁷ The annotations asserted that Moses' principal purpose in writing Genesis had been to record the earliest history of the true church.¹⁸ Moreover, according to the annotators, Genesis told the story of how a small band of godly individuals under the leadership of the Patriarchs formed a church defined by its membership's calling and their pure worship according to God's Word. Thanks to divine providence this congregation persisted in their obedience to God despite the tyranny under which they often lived, and they served as preachers inspired by God's spirit who urged the ungodly to repent.

This particular interpretation of the church before the Law was an arresting one, it had an obvious appeal to the Marian exiles who had been driven from Catholic England and indeed to Protestants across Europe who were confronted with the reality of persecution for their faith.

¹⁵ Ibid., 'The .ix. Chapter.', unfol., [p. 1].

¹⁶ Ibid., 'The .xlvii. Chapter.', unfol., [p. 4].

¹⁷ M. Betteridge, 'The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and Its Annotations', *SCJ* 14/1 (1983), pp. 41-62.

¹⁸ W. Whittingham, A. Gilby, T. Sampson, *et al.* *The Bible: that is, the Holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament. Translated according to the Hebrew and Greeke, and conferred with the best translations in divers languages. With most profitable annotations upon all the hard places, and other things of great importance* (1599), sig. 4v.

Indeed, throughout this thesis there will be several examples of commentators on Genesis drawing on this interpretation of the Patriarchs' godly example in order to urge further reformation within England's church. However, while the marginal notes on the Geneva Bible proved immensely popular, their sheer size ensured that commentary on individual verses was mostly limited to philological insights rather than contemporary application.¹⁹

Nonetheless, the immensely popular Geneva Bible helped to bridge the divide between formal exegesis of the kind usually produced in voluminous Latin tomes by learned university divines and popular printed works that applied Genesis's contents to contemporary topics in more accessible, vernacular prose. Importantly, according to both contemporary catalogues and modern studies, there appears to have been a distinct lack of the former—that is, technical Latin commentaries—printed in England during the sixteenth century. As was noted in the Introduction, this may reflect a comparative lack of demand for such works in the English print market. For instance, modern studies by Williams and Mickey Mattox that feature exhaustive lists of sixteenth century Genesis commentary in Latin are dominated by continental works.²⁰ Meanwhile, the evidence contained in *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* also indicates the dearth of studies on Genesis written in Latin by English divines, but the presence on shelves of both new commentaries and newly printed editions of much older patristic texts that originated on the continent. Sixteenth century Protestant theologians such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, Peter Martyr Vermigli, and Wolfgang Musculus appear alongside ancient figures including John Chrysostom, Philo, and St Ignatius.²¹

¹⁹ Betteridge, 'The Bitter Notes', pp. 41-62; Babington, *comfortable notes*, 'The Preface', unfol.

²⁰ M. Mattox, "*Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs*": *Martin Luther's Interpretation of the Women of Genesis in the Enarrationes in Genesim, 1535-1545* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 277-99; Williams, *Common Expositor*, pp. 269-77.

²¹ R. Fehrenbach, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and early Stuart Book-Lists* (Binghampton, 1992-2020), e.g., PLRE 4.44, 80.20, 110.14, 142.39, 150.2, Ad59.42:2, Ad153.22.

When English divines sought sophisticated philological justifications for their favoured interpretations of particular verses in Genesis, then, they were compelled to draw upon continental and ancient works written in Latin, and to re-apply these texts' insights to a contemporary English context. English expositors often referred to copies or translations of continental Latin commentaries, lexicons, and catenae that offered theological, philological, and historical guidance on the scriptures. These continental reference texts typically featured original exegesis on Genesis informed by contemporary confessional concerns, alongside insights drawn from patristic texts like Chrysostom's *Homilies* on Genesis, Ambrose's *Hexameron* and St Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*, *Confessions*, and *City of God*. Also cited therein was the increasingly accessible genre of rabbinic scholarship on Genesis, as well as medieval Christian works on the Bible's opening book.²² The paratexts and the commentary contained in these continental Genesis commentaries indicate that their authors were explicitly engaging with matters of contemporary religious politics while writing. Therefore, it is crucial that we now consider (chronologically) the foreign sources most often cited in the English vernacular works on Genesis discussed throughout this thesis and survey the ecclesiological positions they contained. The first of these is a set of lectures on Genesis given by the German reformer Martin Luther near the end of his life, which were then printed in Latin soon after his death.

²² D. Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: scholarship, sacrifice, and subjectivity* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 16-29.

Martin Luther's Genesis Lectures (1536-1545)

Luther gave a series of lectures on his 'beloved' Genesis at the University of Wittenberg between 1536-1545.²³ Alongside several other of Luther's students, Veit Dietrich transcribed the lectures, which would prove to be the great reformer's 'swan song' as another of his followers put it.²⁴ The dedicatory epistle that prefaced the posthumously printed version of Luther's lectures was also written by Dietrich and it was addressed to John Ernest, the Duke of Saxony. Significantly for our purposes, Dietrich's epistle explicitly articulated an evangelical understanding of Genesis's importance as an account of the church's origins and its nature.

Early on in the dedication, Dietrich remarked that 'we must come here [to the Book of Genesis] for [a description of] the beginnings of the Church'.²⁵ In the same passage, Luther's former student explained that since 'the oldest doctrine must be the true one', 'it can be most manifestly proved that the doctrine now held by the Church is the first doctrine that was ever delivered to the world. And that is plainly shown in this [Book of Genesis] where...the doctrine is recorded as having been delivered of God'.²⁶ Dietrich was alluding here to the Protestant view that adherence to God's Word since the beginning of time was the one true doctrine of the church, rather than what he regarded as the Roman Church's false claim about an apostolic authority embodied by the Church's traditions, as well as scripture. This Protestant argument raised the profile of the Genesis Patriarchs, who according to Dietrich had not (until recently) been considered 'above the common rank of shepherds'.²⁷ Now they were lauded as the godly founders of the true Protestant church.

²³ B. Faber, 'To the Worthy, Honourable, and Illustrious Christopher von Steinberg, my gracious Lord', in M. Luther, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 1, trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker (Minneapolis, 1904), p. 28.

²⁴ Luther, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 1, p. 16.

²⁵ ['Ergo hinc Ecclesiae initia'] V. Dietrich, 'Praefatio', in M. Luther, *In primum librum Mose enarrationes* (Bamberg, 1555), sig. aiiij

²⁶ ['vetustissimam Doctrinam veriorem esse...ac manifeste convince potest, primam esse omnium Ecclesiae Doctrina. Id hic ostenditur, cum & doctrina à Deo traditae recitatur'] Ibid. Trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker.

²⁷ ['aut non multum eos supra vulgus pastorum collocabat'] Ibid., unfol. Trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker.

Throughout the remainder of his epistle, Dietrich continued his explanation of Genesis's importance by describing the nature of the church in the time of the Patriarchs and thereafter. From reading Genesis alongside his former master's lectures, Dietrich concluded that

it appears that the Church is not a kingdom or body politic, belonging to this world, enclosed and guarded by armed garrisons; but a body formed of widely dispersed assemblies, though not hidden and obscure; bearing about with them the divine voice and the Word, and dispensing it in public congregations of honest men, to kings, rulers and cities; and calling and drawing many everywhere to prayer and to the true worship of God; though they are all the while derided, cast out, and driven away by tyrants and by the great part of mankind.²⁸

According to Dietrich, then, a church had always been a manifestly different kind of community to a commonwealth. This perspective contrasts sharply with Figgis' influential suggestion that churches were considered as 'one of a class, political societies'.²⁹ It is important to note here that Figgis' claim emerged from his analysis of a particular historical moment, the late medieval Catholic Church's conciliar debates. Famously, the conciliarists had attempted to argue for the Church's collective right to purge itself of a tyrannical Pope by drawing a comparison between churches and commonwealths as examples of perfect (corporate) societies.³⁰ The conciliarists had argued that churches, like commonwealths, were founded upon natural law and that they possessed a legal recourse for their own self-preservation.³¹

In his dedication, however, Dietrich was responding to an entirely different context, and he was saying something distinctive about churches and commonwealths as a result. In distinguishing between a kingdom guarded by garrisons and a Patriarchal church composed of

²⁸ ['Deinde in propagation & instauratione Ecclesie, proponitur illustris imago, in qua apparet Ecclesiam non esse regnum aut Politiã mundanam, septam armatis presidris, sed cetus despertos, non tamen obscuros, sed circumferentes voce divina, et in congressibus publicis ac honestis, ut in scholis, impertientes ea regibus, principibus, civitatibus, et multos passim ad vera invocationem Dei pertrahentes, etiamsi interim riderentur, exploderentur,, pelleretur à tyrannis, & à maxima parte hominur'] Ibid., sig. aiiij. Trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker.

²⁹ J. Figgis, *Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius: 1414-1625* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 48.

³⁰ K. Kubala, 'The Right of Resistance', in *The Cambridge History of Rights. Volume III: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, eds. Andrew Fitzmaurice and Rachel Hammersley (Cambridge, 2026), p. 369.

³¹ Figgis, *Studies of Political Thought*, pp. 35-61.

visible, yet widely dispersed ‘public congregations of honest men’, Luther’s student was contrasting the imposing grandeur of the visible Catholic Church, with the vulnerable newly formed Protestant churches.³² But he was also emphasising that then (as now) the only source of legitimate authority in the church, which could call people to worship, was the Word of God—as opposed to any human authority claimed by the papacy, or by a church council. This difference, wrote Dietrich, was what distinguished ‘political government’ from the government of a church.³³

But Dietrich did not want to suggest that the Patriarchs and their families had lived apolitical lives, or that their church was entirely detached from their political community. Indeed, whilst Dietrich acknowledged that Moses’s primary purpose in writing Genesis had been to narrate the beginnings of the church and the lives of the individuals who comprised it, yet ‘as the members of that Church participated in civil life, its history consists in domestic and political actions’.³⁴ In other words, the Genesis scriptures were an authority on both political and religious life in the pristine age. Dietrich explained that during their lives the Patriarchs had manifested their faith through their godly conversation and their honourableness towards others, but they had also done so through performing sacrifices, ceremonies, and holy exercises that involved explaining the revealed will of God to their families. This conclusion exemplifies a key Protestant argument discussed in the Introduction: religion and politics were considered as bound together, both were orientated towards achieving Christ’s kingdom on earth.³⁵ In other words, for Protestants ordering the commonwealth and orchestrating the right worship of God were two actions directed towards the same godly end. Genesis was uniquely useful for making

³² [‘congressibus publicis ac honestis’] Luther, *ennarationes*, sig. aiiij. Trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker.

³³ [‘Hec politica gubernatio, humanis legibus, consiliis & viribus munita est. Longe dissimilis est Ecclesiae gubernatio’] *Ibid.*, unfol.

³⁴ [‘tamen quia in vita civili degit, versatur in actionibus oeconomicis & politicis pro occasione & vocatione’] *Ibid.*, unfol. Trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker.

³⁵ S. Mortimer, *Reformation, Resistance, and Reason of State (1517-1625)* (Oxford, 2021), p. 64.

this argument against a separate natural politics since the Book's account of society before the Law did not sharply distinguish the boundaries between the religious and civil spheres.

Throughout his lectures, Luther had elaborated on these ecclesiological themes that Dietrich flagged, when he had considered what specific passages from Genesis revealed about religious authority, the nature of the true church, and its relationship to other kinds of authority. For example, during his discussion of Gen. 2:15-17 Luther remarked that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was instituted by God as a sign that by nature individuals must convene in public to worship under the guidance of a minister.³⁶ Indeed, Luther also suggested that Gen. 2:15-17 marked the moment when the (visible) church was first created, which proves that the ecclesiastical body precedes all other kinds of community, such as the household or commonwealth.³⁷ This observation provided a useful argument for later English commentators who wanted to suggest that the church's ecclesiastical authority rather than the sovereign's civil authority were essential to binding the community together. Furthermore, according to Luther the godly Patriarchal church was renewed with preaching and reverent sacrifices that complied with God's Word under the guidance of Adam's grandson Enosh, a moment which is supposedly described in Gen. 4:26.³⁸ This last piece of analysis exemplified Luther's insistence throughout his lectures that the Patriarchs played a crucial role as governors of the church, as well as leaders of the state and their households.³⁹ As we shall see, the dual role of the Patriarchs as both religious and civil leaders was another feature of Genesis highlighted by Luther that

³⁶ ['Si itaque Adam non esset lapsus, fuisset haec arbor ceu commune templum, & basilica quaedam, ad quam homines confluxissent.'] Luther, *enarrationes*, p. xxviiv.

³⁷ ['Haec est institutio Ecclesiae, antequam esset Oeconomia & Politia'] Ibid., p. xxx. See also D. Whitford, 'Cura Religionis or Two Kingdoms: The Late Luther on Religion and the State in the Lectures on Genesis', *CH* 73/1 (2004), pp. 47.

³⁸ ['ut in certo loco convenirent, docerent, orarent, sacrificarent'] Luther, *enarrationes*, p. xciv.

³⁹ ['tantum virum non potuisse otiosum esse, sed occupatum gubernatione Ecclesiae, quam solus instituit & gubernavit...Deinde etiam habuit suas politicas occupationes, constituendis rebus publicis, figendis legibus, sine quibus libido hominum non potest constringe. Ad haec accessit propriae domus gubernation, seu oeconomica cura'] Ibid., p. cliv.

later English commentators found appealing when thinking about the church in an English context that was overshadowed by the Royal Supremacy.

The interpretation of the church before the Law that Luther advanced in his lectures legitimised several core principles of evangelical theology, but it also enabled the reformer to respond to broader questions about religious authority, the church, and its relationship to the magistrate, in a way that refuted both Catholic and radical Protestant perspectives. It was these arguments especially that later English commentators on Genesis would reapply to their own contexts. For instance, Luther insisted that since the beginning the true church had been characterised by its godly members' adherence to God's Word alone. It was this fidelity that had distinguished God's church from its false, hypocritical opposite since the days of Cain and Abel.⁴⁰ According to Luther's reading of Gen. 3, authority within the church had always stemmed from scripture alone. This was a direct rebuke to Catholic arguments about the authority of the Church's magisterium that English Puritan commentators could later redeploy in order to criticise the established Church in England and the monarch's prerogative authority, and those, like Hooker, who defended its adiaphoric features.⁴¹ But Luther was equally careful to argue that the church before the Law had been characterised by a hierarchy under the governance and authoritative teaching of the Patriarchs.⁴² This more conservative theme, which was intended as a rebuke to the Anabaptists whom Luther regarded as overturning order in the church, will appear redeployed in later chapters too.

Multiple chapters in this thesis will draw attention to references to Luther's lectures in English commentary on Genesis and the way in which his insights, such as those just discussed regarding the church before the Law, aided individuals to make specific claims about the

⁴⁰ ['Atque hic incipit Ecclesia dividi in Ecclesiam...'] Ibid., p. lxxiii.

⁴¹ For an analysis of similar arguments made in a Scottish context, see K. Schultz, *Protestantism, Revolution and Scottish Political Thought: The European Context, 1637-1651* (Edinburgh, 2024), pp. 15-16.

⁴² ['Nam solus haec officia apud posteritatem, dum uixit, omnia sustinuit, Aluit familiam, gubernavit eam, & instruxit eam ad pietatem, fuit Pater, Rex & Sacerdos.'] Ibid., p. lxii.

origins of the church and the nature of religious authority. In doing so, this thesis identifies new evidence of the long-term significance of Luther's lectures on Genesis in an English context.⁴³ Previously, scholars have tended to emphasise the purely theological significance of their doctrinal content.⁴⁴

However, it is important to acknowledge that Luther's reading of Genesis was received and interpreted by other leading reformers who produced later commentaries on the Bible's opening book that were translated and more often cited by English divines. The comparative lack of direct references to Luther's Genesis lectures was arguably due to the fact that the Reformed tradition swiftly supplanted Lutheran thought as the dominant theological influence in mid- to late-sixteenth-century England.⁴⁵ One of the most often cited of the former confession's Genesis commentaries was produced by the leading French reformer John Calvin.⁴⁶

⁴³ Here I am building on P. McCullough, ed., 'Introduction', in L. Andrewes, *Selected Sermons and Lectures* (Oxford, 2005), p. xx.

⁴⁴ P. Krey, *"I am Joseph": Luther's last lectures on the last chapters of Genesis* (New York, 2023); M. Laffin, 'Babel, Tyranny and Totality: Reading Genesis 11 with Luther', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 31/4 (2018), pp. 408-21; J. Maxfield, *Luther's lectures on Genesis and the formation of evangelical identity* (Kirksville, 2008).

⁴⁵ E.g., B. Hall, 'The Early Rise and Gradual Decline of Lutheranism in England (1520-1600)', *Studies in Church History Subsidia* 2 (1979), pp. 103-31.

⁴⁶ R. Zachman, 'Calvin as commentator on Genesis', in *Calvin and the Bible*, ed. D. McKim (Cambridge, 2006), p. 19.

John Calvin's *Commentaries on the first book of Moses, called Genesis* (1563/1578) and other Reformed works on Genesis

On 31 July 1563, towards the end of his life, John Calvin dedicated his Latin commentary on Genesis to the juvenile heir of the then Huguenot Kingdom of Navarre, Duke Henry of Vendome. Calvin pointedly advised the Duke that as well as containing a stimulating history of the world's creation, Genesis featured Moses's account of the beginnings of the Ancient Church—the congregation of the holy Patriarchs adopted by God, who, like the French Huguenots in the present, endured persecution and conflict by remaining faithful to the Word.⁴⁷ Calvin noted that Genesis was of 'an inestimable value' since 'it alone reveals...in what manner God...adopted to himself a Church; what constituted the true worship of himself, and in what offices of piety the holy fathers exercised themselves'.⁴⁸

When Calvin's commentary was first published in English in 1578, the translator Thomas Tymme reiterated the Frenchman's point about Genesis's importance :

this booke of Moses deserveth to be esteemed as a most precious jewel which certifieth us not only of the creation of the worlde, but also howe...God adopted a Church to him selfe: which was the true worship of him, and with what exercises of godlinesse the fathers occupied them selves.⁴⁹

Both men agreed then that despite 'the distance of time' that separated the age of Genesis from sixteenth-century Europe, the Bible's opening book contained the most important precedent for how a religious community ought to be arranged. However, the circumstances in which the two men commented on Genesis's importance for thinking about the contemporary church were markedly different.

⁴⁷ ['quomodo post exitialem hominis lapsum Ecclesiam sibi Deus adoptaverit: quisnam fuerit verus eius cultus, et quibus pietatis officiis se exercuerint sancti Patres: quomodo pura religio, hominum ignavia ad tempus collapsa, quasi postliminio in statum integrum redierit...quam inopinatis modis et extulerit et tutatus sit electam a se domum, licet inopem, omnibus praesidiis nudatam, et ad quosvis aestus expositam, multiplices hostium copiae undique cingerent'] J. Calvin, *In Librum Geneseos Commentarius* (Berlin, 1838), p. viii.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ J. Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvine upon the first booke of Moses called Genesis*, trans. T. Tymme (1578), 'The Epistle', sig. ¶.y.v.

When Calvin dedicated the original Latin text to young Henry and complemented his mother (Queen Jeanne III of Navarre) for her godliness in the dedicatory epistle, he was seeking to build a rapport with the scion of a Protestant dynasty, who was a future contender for the French throne, at a time when the First War of Religion had left France's Huguenot population hard pressed. There was an obvious comparison to draw between the destitute condition of the Patriarchs in the wilderness described at various points in Genesis and the plight of the Huguenot congregations in mid-sixteenth-century France.⁵⁰

In contrast, when translated and read in a mid-Elizabethan context Calvin's Genesis commentary—with its emphasis on the godliness of the Patriarchal 'Ancient Church'—could be read by godly individuals like Tymme as an analogy for those who conformed to the established Church, but who campaigned for further reformation from within. The abandonment of pure worship by all mankind apart from the Patriarchal families, which Calvin emphasised as a theme in Genesis, could be invoked as an analogy for the present condition of England's established Church and the Puritan faction within it. Tellingly, when Tymme's translation was printed he dedicated it to the Privy Councillor Ambrose Dudley (3rd Earl of Warwick), an influential patron of godly preachers like Calvin's English translator.⁵¹ The prompt translation of Calvin's Genesis commentary into English contrasted with Luther's lectures, which remained in Latin only. Though the learned divines discussed in this thesis had considerable facility with Latin, the existence of a contemporary translation of Calvin's Genesis commentary reflects a higher demand in England for Reformed as opposed to Lutheran theological and exegetical works.

Commenting on Genesis and other biblical books was arguably Calvin's most important scholarly project. Whilst his systematic theological text—the *Institutes*—is most often cited,

⁵⁰ Zachman, 'Calvin as commentator on Genesis', p. 29.

⁵¹ S. Adams, 'Dudley, Ambrose, earl of Warwick (c. 1530-1590)', *ODNB*.

Calvin dedicated just as much time to scriptural exegesis and the translation of works by the Church Fathers as he did to speculative theology. At one stage he even proposed to translate Chrysostom's *Homilies* into French, a work which included several homilies on Genesis that Johannes Oecolampadius had recently translated into Latin.⁵² Calvin's interest in Genesis was fuelled by the theological and political controversies in which he was embroiled, including the controversies over the Lord's Supper and eternal predestination that divided not only Protestants and Catholics, but the former among themselves.⁵³

Yet Calvin was also much exercised by the treatment of the Huguenots in his native land and he wondered how a Protestant community not established in law could maintain its cohesion when persecuted—a question that we shall return to in Chapter Four's study of the English Separatist Henry Ainsworth. Genesis, with its account of the church before the Law, proved particularly useful for thinking about this problem. Calvin thought that the divinely inspired Moses had accommodated his written narrative to the capacities of the ancient Israelites and that therefore knowledge of ancient Hebrew was essential to interpreting the Bible's first book, indeed he often referred to rabbinic scholarship and work by Christian Hebraists.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Calvin considered Genesis to be instructive to Huguenots and other Protestants in the present regarding the church, since he was 'convinced that the fathers and mothers in Genesis [were] part of the same church of which he [was] a member'.⁵⁵ This notion of a spiritual genealogy connecting the church before the Law and the church in the present was a recurring motif in English commentary on Genesis too as we shall see.

⁵² W. Hazlett, 'Calvin's Latin Preface To His Proposed French Edition Of Chrysostom's Homilies: Translation and Commentary', in *Humanism and Reform: the church in Europe, England, and Scotland, 1400-1643: essays in honour of James K. Cameron* (Oxford, 1991), p. 147.

⁵³ Zachman, 'Calvin as commentator on Genesis', p. 2.

⁵⁴ R. Gamble, 'The Sources of Calvin's Genesis Commentary: A Preliminary Report', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 84/jg (1993), pp. 206-22; A. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 205-259; H. van Rooy, 'Calvin's Genesis Commentary – Which Bible Text Did He Use?', in *Our Reformational Tradition. A Rich Heritage and Lasting Vocation*, ed. B. van der Walt (Potchefstroom, 1984), pp. 203-216.

⁵⁵ Zachman, 'Calvin as commentator on Genesis', p. 29.

Indeed, Genesis provided Reformed divines with the contours of what they considered to be the true church. As Calvin put it in his dedication, Genesis contained the ‘marks by which Moses designates the Church’—namely, worship performed in accordance with the Word of God alone.⁵⁶ Calvin contrasted this with the superstitious and unscriptural ceremonies he identified in the Catholic Church. However, he also suggested that reading Genesis offered a corrective to those ‘morose professors of the Gospel’ whose ‘rage of furious zeal’ threatened to ‘render asunder the Church of our own age’.⁵⁷ Here Calvin was referring to the Anabaptists against whom he argued throughout his career. The example of the ancient church in Genesis, Calvin thought, could be used to police orthodoxy within the Protestant church by providing guidance on discipline, as well as worship. The Patriarchs had enjoined their families to pursue a purer form of worship according to God’s commands. They had taken action to wipe out idolatry and to maintain order by passing down a revealed knowledge of God’s Word through the generations. As we shall see, godly English commentators on Genesis could use this same theme to appeal to the magistrate when campaigning for reform of the national church. The later chapters in this thesis will demonstrate that several English expositors on Genesis not only cited Calvin’s commentary whilst explaining specific verses but also agreed with his broader interpretation about the nature of the church before Moses, and they applied it to the national church in the very different English context.

Calvin’s commentary on Genesis was a popular and important resource that English divines were able to draw upon creatively when writing. However, it is important not to assume that Calvin was the pre-eminent Reformed theologian, despite the popularity of his commentary on Genesis and other works in late sixteenth-century England. After all, delivering

⁵⁶ [‘At si ad eas notas, quibus Ecclesiam designat Moses... ex solo Dei verbo pependerit’] Calvin, *Geneseos*, pp. viii-ix. Trans. J. King.

⁵⁷ [‘Quo maiore odio digni sunt turbulenti quidam homines, qui nescio quo furiosi zeli oestro perciti, Ecclesiam nostrae aetatis plus satis dissipatam, assidue discernere conantur... de morosis quibusdam Evangelii professoribus’] *Ibid.*, p. ix. Trans. J. King.

lectures on Genesis or writing substantial commentaries was something that many of the leading Protestant reformers had in common. Not only Luther and Calvin, but also Huldrych Zwingli, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Johannes Oecolampadius, Konrad Pellikan, Martin Cellarius, Johannes Piscator, and Wolfgang Musculus produced either lectures or written notes on the Bible's opening book that made it into print. In addition to these illustrious figures, less discussed Protestant biblicists like Calvin's compatriots Augustin Marlorat and Jean Mercier penned studies on Genesis. Indeed, the latter's work was informed by considerable Hebrew learning, and it was praised by Theodore Beza in the preface he penned for Mercier's posthumously published commentary.⁵⁸ Consulting *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* reveals that these learned commentators works on Genesis were also present in England, and that Vermigli and Musculus' works were arguably as popular as Calvin's.

Several recent studies have drawn attention to the rich content of this Protestant genre of Genesis exegesis and have therefore argued for the inclusion of other commentators alongside Luther and Calvin in discussions of Reformation-era Genesis commentary. For instance, Ian Campbell and Floris Verhaart have translated part of Vermigli's lectures in order to show how the reformer consulted Genesis when lecturing on the subject of just war during a stint at Strasbourg, between October 1542 and November 1547. These lectures were eventually published in 1569, seven years after Vermigli's death, with a dedication to his close friend Bishop John Jewel, a man equally interested in religion and the origins of human communities.⁵⁹ Additionally, Emidio Campi's work on Vermigli's Genesis lectures reminds us

⁵⁸ J. Mercier, *In Genesin Primum Mosis Librum*, ed. T. Beza (Geneva, 1598), sig. ¶ ij; F. Giacone, 'Note sur Jean Mercier et l'Ancien Testament', in *Jean (c.1525-1570) et Josias (c. 1560-1626) Mercier: l'amour de la philologie à la Renaissance et au début de l'âge Classique*, ed. F. Roudaut (Paris, 2007), pp. 131-58; Thompson, *Reformation Commentary, passim*; J. Weinberg, 'The Hebraic Explorations of the English Mercier: Richard Kilbie (1560/61–1620)', in *Labourers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, ed. M. Feingold (Leiden, 2018), p. 169.

⁵⁹ I. Campbell and F. Verhaart, eds., *Protestant politics beyond Calvin: Reformed theologians on war in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Abingdon, 2022), pp. 33-45; A. Gajda, 'The Elizabethan Church and the antiquity of parliament', in *Writing the history of parliament in Tudor and early Stuart England*, eds. P. Cavill and A. Gajda (Manchester, 2018), pp. 80-3.

that, like Calvin, Vermigli regarded ‘the community of the Patriarchs in Genesis as parallel to the church and their faith as the same faith which the church has today’.⁶⁰ For Vermigli, Moses’s teaching contained in Genesis was not bound to the Israelites of the prophet’s time, but could be extended ‘to believers of all ages as they all worship the same God’.⁶¹ Thus the Florentine could assert that ‘the whole scope or intention of Genesis is to teach “*mente digna concipere de Deo & de Ecclesia*” [to think worthily about God and the church].⁶²

In the same passage of the introductory remarks to his lectures on Genesis where he wrote this assertion regarding the end of Genesis, Vermigli explicitly affirmed the thoroughly Protestant view that the history of their church could be traced back to the earliest period of sacred history: ‘Let us go to Genesis. There...we may also find the origin and earliest beginnings of the Church, which has always been the same from Adam down to us.’⁶³ The Florentine reformer also clarified what he meant by ‘Church’ in this context. According to Vermigli, the ‘Church of God’, ‘whose origin is described in the first parents’, consisted of ‘the people...to whom such great things are promised [by God] and such beneficial commands are given’.⁶⁴ This definition too was a recognisably evangelical claim that we have already seen made in Calvin’s Genesis commentary and that godly English divines throughout this study repeatedly evoked in their own writings. Like Calvin, Vermigli, and other Reformed commentators on Genesis, these clergymen emphasised the supernatural qualities of the church

⁶⁰ E. Campi, ‘Genesis Commentary: Interpreting Creation’, in *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli*, eds. T. Kirby, E. Campi and F. James III (Leiden, 2009), pp. 210-17.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. This translation belongs to Emidio Campi.

⁶³ [‘Ad Genesim accedamus...illic reperire licet deinde Ecclesiae ortum & incunabula, quae semper ab Adamo usque ad nos eadem fuit.’] P. Vermigli, *In Primum Librum Mosis, Qui Vulgo Genesis Dicitur Commentarii* (Zurich, 1569), sig. A v.

⁶⁴ [‘cuiusmodi sit is populus cui tanta promittitur ac adeo utilia jubentur, is est Dei Ecclesia, cuius ortus in primis parentibus describitur.’] Ibid.

in the most ancient past and in the present. To paraphrase Vermigli, the community who form a church are defined exclusively as the adherents of God's divinely revealed commands.⁶⁵

This Reformed argument ventured by Calvin and Vermigli amongst others, which found in Genesis the revealed principles upon which to construct a godly church and society, relied upon an insistence on deep continuities between the two Testaments and the theological assumption that the people of the Law and Gospel were bound together in a single covenant with God.⁶⁶ As later chapters will demonstrate, this argument for biblical continuity provided a crucial justification for English Protestant commentators who sought to trace the origins of the church back to Genesis in order to contest the Catholic Church's claim to an apostolic authority rooted in the New Testament.

However, any substantiation of this claim about continuities in religion and authority between Patriarchal, Israelite, and Christian communities required a thorough-going knowledge of Hebrew and of the voluminous rabbinic writings on Genesis and the other books of the Old Testament. The last part of this chapter will therefore consider the influence of Jewish interpretations of the church in Genesis, as well as of Catholic commentaries, which English expositors relied upon despite confessional differences of opinion.

⁶⁵ ['Gentium urbes & regna, fabulosa habent exordia. Certissime potest haec ostendere unde sit orta. Ita habetur quis Legislator, quis promittens: rursusque qui illi quibus iubetur atque promittitur.'] Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 218.

Non-Protestant Genesis Commentary: Early modern Catholic and Jewish Sources

The sixteenth century witnessed the publication of several landmark texts that made Hebrew more readily comprehensible to Christian divines and that opened up new perspectives on Genesis and indeed the entire Old Testament. These works included Sebastian Münster's *Hebraica Biblia Latina* (1534-5), the Bomberg Bible (1517)—which standardized the Masoretic Hebrew scriptural text, and new editions of the Jerusalem and Chaldean Aramaic Targums that contained fragmentary paraphrases of the Hebrew Pentateuch. Additionally, several other works were printed across sixteenth-century Europe that opened up access to rabbinical scholarship on Genesis, including the ancient writings of Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, and medieval commentaries by Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon (Maimonides), Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (Rashi), Ibn Ezra, and David Kimchi.⁶⁷ The challenge for Christian commentators on Genesis was to distinguish between the features of Patriarchal worship and custom revealed in these Jewish commentaries that they wished to retain as perpetually obliging, those aspects that they acknowledged as historically practiced but desired to consign to the ancient past, and those that they condemned as mere Talmudic myths.

An important example of how rabbinic commentary on Genesis could be utilised by Protestant expositors in order to present a particular interpretation of the church and its practices before the Law are the discussions in the *Mishneh Torah* and other rabbinical literature of the Noahide Laws, the seven injunctions that God supposedly gave to the Patriarch Noah in the aftermath of the Flood—only one of which is explicitly referred to in the Bible. In the early-seventeenth century, leading Hebraists including Petrus Cunaeus and Hugo Grotius, who were for a time enticed by the Kingdom of Israel as a possible constitutional model for the recently independent Netherlands, took a keen interest in the Noahide Laws and their

⁶⁷ Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, pp. 30-33; T. Twining, *The Limits of Erudition: The Old Testament in Post-Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2024), pp. 14-15.

absorption into the Hebrew Republic's constitution. These Dutch scholars built on the earlier scholarship of Scaliger and Johannes Drusius the Elder. As Chapter Four will demonstrate, in his annotations on Genesis Henry Aynworth also contributed to this early-seventeenth-century investigation of ancient Jewish law in the Low Countries. The Separatist drew on Maimonides's discussion of the Noahide Laws, and he explained both their revealed nature and their perpetually obligatory quality as injunctions concerning both temporal and spiritual life. He drew his reader's attention to the inseparability of religion and politics when both were regulated solely by divine revelations, and hence he asserted the importance of scripture as the only authority within a separatist community.

Advances in Hebrew scholarship continued to inform both Protestant and Catholic biblical scholarship deep into the seventeenth century. The ongoing importance of Dutch and English Reformed Hebraist erudition for interpreting the church in Genesis can be seen for example in references by English commentators on Genesis like John Ley to the *Statenvertaling* (Bible Annotations) that were compiled by Dutch Hebraists after the Synod of Dort. In particular, understanding ancient Hebrew was considered vital since it was widely believed that the continuity of the true church from the time of the Patriarchs onwards was attested in the language that had preserved God's revelations. Recovering that primordial language was a philological endeavour that all confessions invested heavily in, and facility with Hebrew and Greek was increasingly regarded as a pre-requisite amongst clergy and those seeking patronage or promotion.⁶⁸

However, it was often Catholic sources that provided the most cutting-edge guidance on Old Testament Hebrew, at least at the beginning of the period surveyed in this thesis—though the Italian Reformer Immanuel Tremellius's Latin translation of the Hebrew and Syriac

⁶⁸ For example, see this exposition on Gen. 1:1 written in Greek and Hebrew by one D. S., who was seeking the patronage of Bishop William Barlow of Rochester, in Bodl., MS Tanner 279, f. 249.

scriptures was a popular sixteenth-century Protestant work on Hebrew that was printed with the aid of Franciscus Junius.⁶⁹ Although the doctrinal content of these Catholic materials was often decried, certain English divines made creative use of the interpretations of the church in Genesis that they found in their opponents' works.

As we shall see in the following chapters, English commentators regularly referenced Catholic scholarship on Genesis alongside Protestant and Hebrew authorities. Works like Benedict Pereira's *Commentariorum et Disputationum in Genesin* (1589-98) contained an invaluable compilation of Christian and Jewish commentary on Genesis that was highly useful to English divines.⁷⁰ Thus, even whilst decrying the errors that works like Pereira's contained, English Genesis commentators like Andrew Willet grudgingly acknowledged the value of certain Catholic works like the *Commentariorum* and an older Genesis commentary by Cardinal Tommaso Cajetan entitled *Commentarii in quinque Mosaicos Libros* (1539). The contribution made to European biblical erudition by these and a host of other Catholic Bible scholars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been detailed in several recent monographs, which focus on the production of polyglot bibles and translations of both the Masoretic and Septuagint scriptural texts.⁷¹

Alongside Cajetan and Pereira's Genesis commentaries there were multiple other landmark Catholic works concerned with the Bible and Hebrew that became reference texts for scholars across sixteenth-century Europe. Two of these were lexicons produced by the Bible scholar Johannes Reuchlin (1506) and a Dominican biblicist named Sanctes Pagninus (1529),

⁶⁹ I. Tremellius and F. Junius, *Testamenti Veteris Biblia Sacra, sive Libri Canonici, Priscae Judaeorum Ecclesiae A Deo Traditi* (Frankfurt, 1579).

⁷⁰ M. Reiser, 'The History of Catholic Exegesis, 1600-1800', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology*, eds. U. Lehner, R. Muller, and A. Roeber (Oxford, 2016), p. 77.

⁷¹ Twining, *The Limits of Erudition, passim*; T. Dunkelgrun, *The Multiplicity of Scripture: The Making of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible* (Toronto, 2025).

which provided philological guidance on ancient Hebrew.⁷² Several others came in the form of polyglot bibles, such as the Complutensian (1520) and Antwerp (1568-1573) editions—the latter of which was edited by Benito Arias Montano.⁷³ References to works such as Montano’s polyglot and Pagninus’ lexicon appear in Willet’s Genesis commentary and several other sources that will be discussed later on in this thesis. These reference texts provided a valuable compilation of philological insights, but also contextual information drawn from classical as well as Christian and Jewish sources. For both Protestant and Catholic Bible commentators, citing classical authorities offered a way of circumventing doctrinal controversy when explaining particular passages of scripture. For instance, in Chapter Four attention is paid to the way in which Ainsworth cites classical authors in his *Annotations* alongside rabbinic authorities in order to avoid confessional differences of ecclesiological opinion and thereby to legitimise his own religious community, which existed outside the established Protestant churches.

Despite the useful compilation of different Christian and non-Christian sources within Catholic Genesis commentaries, there were clear differences regarding how Protestant and Catholic commentators understood what the church before the Law suggested about the nature of religious communities. These kinds of fundamental disagreement meant that whilst Catholic commentaries on Genesis were an important source for English expositors in the late-Tudor and early-Stuart period, they were also a target for some of these authors to rebuke. That said, for some of the other English commentators on Genesis discussed in this thesis, who were intent on upholding ecclesiastical authority, Catholic exegesis on certain scriptural passages proved more appealing than their Reformed, Lutheran, or rabbinic alternatives. This was

⁷² M. Goshen-Gottstein, ‘Foundations of Biblical Philology in the Seventeenth Century: Christian and Jewish Dimensions’, in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, eds. I. Twersky and B. Septimus (London, 1987), pp. 77-95.

⁷³ S. Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500-1660)* (Leiden, 2012), p. 69.

because greater emphasis was placed in Catholic commentaries on the visibility of the church before the Law and on the role of the Patriarchs as priests mediating between God and worshippers through conducting ceremonies and enacting sacrifices.

For example, in the dedicatory epistle to his work *De ecclesia ante legem* [of the church before the Law] (1626), the French Capuchin biblicist Jacques Bolduc interpreted Genesis as showing that visible, hierarchical sacred governance, which was manifested in a continuous succession of priests, was a necessary component in any religious community—as opposed to being a distinguishing feature of the Catholic Church that had been commanded by Christ.⁷⁴ As Chapter Two and Chapter Five will demonstrate, a Catholic reading of Genesis such as this was extremely useful to certain English divines who wanted to defend ecclesiastical authority and the importance of a visible, sacramental national church. However, as we shall also see, for other expositors like John Ley, Catholic interpretations of the Patriarchs' acts that emphasised their role as priests and as privileged mediators between the community and the divine, urgently needed to be refuted—this was so that the godly vision of the priesthood of all believers could be maintained.

⁷⁴ J. Boulduc, *De Ecclesia ante legem* (Lyon, 1626), unfol., [sig. IVv].

'right worthie and most woorth the reading': Domestic and continental Genesis commentary in sixteenth-century England

Chapter One has offered a survey of the state of printed, vernacular engagement with Genesis in sixteenth-century England, and it has highlighted the influence of continental Latin studies on the Bible's opening book—with particular attention to the ecclesiological implications of the interpretations of religion in early sacred history that they contained. It has indicated major sources for the different interpretations of the church and religious authority in Genesis that recur in this thesis, which include Reformed, Lutheran, Catholic, and Jewish works. As we shall now see, English commentators were able to take up the patterns of interpretation they found in these works and to reapply them in their own contexts.

This chapter's approach has established an important intellectual context for the works examined in the remainder of this thesis. Indeed, it has shown that already in the mid-sixteenth century English clergy were beginning to apply interpretations of verses from Genesis to contemporary ecclesiological disputes, as well as to a range of other topics. The sources that are privileged in this thesis can thus be regarded as the continuation and expansion of a pre-existing aspect of early modern English biblical culture, rather than as an innovation that began with Lancelot Andrewes's Genesis lectures in the 1590s (which are the subject of Chapter Two).

Nonetheless, the comparatively more substantial studies on Genesis contextualised in the following chapters reveal how the application of interpretations of religion in early sacred history to contemporary ecclesiological debates broadened and deepened in the late Tudor and early Stuart eras. The perpetually tense religious politics of that period invited English divines to reflect deeply on the role of religion in the origins of human society, and to generate contrasting visions of the nature of the church and religious authorities through a discourse embedded in early sacred history. But this intellectual phenomenon cannot be wholly

understood without regard for the wider European Reformation context. Not least because continental commentaries deeply influenced English studies of Genesis throughout the period considered here. Some English divines appealed to the vision of the godly Patriarchal church outlined in the Reformed commentaries discussed above, while others rejected this ideal and turned to Lutheran and even Catholic interpretations of religion in Genesis's sacred history for a defence of ecclesiastical authority. As we shall now see, Lancelot Andrewes belonged firmly to the latter camp.

Chapter 2 — ‘Woe unto you Lawyers’: The Visible Church and Ecclesiastical Authority in Lancelot Andrewes’ Genesis Lectures, c.1591-c.1599

On 13 October 1590, Lancelot Andrewes commenced a series of thrice-weekly lectures on the Book of Genesis at St Paul’s cathedral where he was a residentiary canon.¹ Over the following sixteen months he lectured on each verse from Gen. 1:1 to 3:13, while regularly preaching in his nearby parish church of St Giles-without-Cripplegate just beyond the city’s walls.² After a hiatus that lasted several years Andrewes then continued his lectures—though now at St Giles—and completed the remaining verses in Gen. 3 and all of Gen. 4 between 18 June 1598 and 17 February 1600.³

Until recently, the only evidence thought to remain of these lectures was a posthumously printed text, derived from a presumably lost manuscript of notes taken down by one of Andrewes’ auditors. This was published by a group of royalist booksellers, together with notes of contemporary lectures on other parts of the Bible, as *Apospasmata Sacra, or, A collection of posthumous and orphan lectures* (1657).⁴ However, a manuscript has been discovered that—according to Paul Stanwood and Peter McCullough—confirms that the Genesis lectures printed in *Apospasmata Sacra* derived from Andrewes’ authorial script.⁵ Doubts over *Apospasmata Sacra*’s authenticity have traditionally prevented the lectures printed therein from being included in collections of Andrewes’ works. Even recent studies,

¹ L. Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra, or, A collection of posthumous and orphan lectures delivered at St. Pauls and St. Giles his church* (1657), p. 657.

² Ibid., pp. 1-312; H. Isaacson, *An exact narration of the life and death of...Lancelot Andrewes* (1651), sig. *2v.

³ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, pp. 305*-499. There is a pagination error in the 1657 edition, after p. 312, the numbering restarts at 305 where the St Giles Genesis lectures begin. The new numeration continues throughout the text, leading to a duplication of pagination for pp. 305-12. Throughout Chapter Two, the * symbol indicates that the second instance of a page number is being referenced.

⁴ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, sig.)()()3v-sig.)()()()().

⁵ P. Stanwood, ‘Lancelot Andrewes’ “Orphan Lectures”: The Exeter Manuscript’, in *New texts and discoveries in early modern English manuscripts*, ed. P. Beal (London, 2007), p. 35; L. Andrewes, *Lancelot Andrewes: Selected sermons and lectures*, ed. P. McCullough (Oxford, 2005), p. 100.

whose authors insist that *Apospasmata Sacra*'s Genesis lectures belong to the Andrewes canon, have only considered a few of them in-depth.⁶ This chapter contains the first study of the Genesis lectures contained in *Apospasmata Sacra* as a whole, and it contextualises Andrewes' exposition on the Bible's opening book in relation to the debates about the nature of the church and of ecclesiastical authority that preoccupied late-Elizabethan England's religious politics.

Traditionally, historians have classed Andrewes as a pre-eminent Jacobean court divine and advocate of *iure divino* episcopacy. For Thomas Babington Macauley, Andrewes was one amongst a 'new race of divines...rising in the Church of England' who insisted that episcopacy was divinely ordained and essential for the efficacy of the Church's ordinances and the commonwealth's welfare.⁷ However, revisionist studies of Andrewes by McCullough, Nicholas Tyacke, and Peter Lake have shown that Andrewes' ideology is irreducible to a single issue, such as church government. Indeed, McCullough and others have shown that Andrewes' lectures and sermons—which spanned the late-Elizabethan and Jacobean eras—thoroughly contested a range of prevailing views about the nature and doctrine of the Church, and about ecclesiastical authority, not just forms of church government.⁸ Furthermore, both McCullough and Tyacke have suggested that early signs of Andrewes' mature thought can be detected in his late-Elizabethan lectures.⁹ Indeed, McCullough rightly argues that far from being the influential Jacobean Court preacher memorialised by his acolytes William Laud and John

⁶ Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, pp. 100-107, 138-45; M. Dorman, 'Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626): mentor of Reformed Catholicism of the Post-Reformation English Church' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bristol, 1996), *passim*.

⁷ T. B. Macauley, *The History of England from the Accession of James II: Volume I* (London, 1849), pp. 71-2, 77.

⁸ P. McCullough, 'Avant-Garde Conformity' in the 1590s', in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity c.1520-1662*, ed. A. Milton (Oxford, 2017), pp. 380-94; N. Tyacke, 'Lancelot Andrewes and the Myth of Anglicanism', in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660*, eds. P. Lake and M. Questier (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 14; Idem., *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c.1590-1640* (Oxford, 1990), p. 20; Peter Lake, *On Laudianism: Piety, Polemic and Politics During the Personal Rule of Charles I* (Cambridge, 2023), pp. 45-118.

⁹ Tyacke, 'Myth of Anglicanism', pp. 5-33; McCullough, 'Avant-Garde Conformity', pp. 380-94.

Buckeridge—an image that was later perpetuated in nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholic histories and in the writings of T. S. Eliot—the younger Andrewes was an industrious parish minister, who was already exploring controversial ideas about sacramental theology and the hierarchical nature of the visible church during his early performances in the pulpit.¹⁰

Chapter Two opens a new perspective on these revisionist historiographical insights by showing how Andrewes articulated a vision of the church and of ecclesiastical authority through lecturing on Genesis. In his expositions on Gen. 1-4, Andrewes excavated the origins of a visible, hierarchical, and corporate church that encompassed the entire early human community. He also found that Genesis proved the distinctive and perpetual role of the clergy as—to quote Debora Shuger—‘bearers of the sacred’ within any society.¹¹ Andrewes argued that a distinctive ecclesiastical authority, like its civil counter-part, was inherent to human society since it was necessary for maintaining moral order before, not only after, the Fall.

Andrewes drew these claims about the nature of ecclesiastical authority from Genesis by relating his exegesis on choice verses to contemporary issues of religious politics. First, whilst explaining what the ‘dominion’ that God granted Adam and his descendants represented, Andrewes gestured towards secular ecclesiastical authority and the importance of defending church property against acquisitive laypeople. Sacrilege was a matter of grave concern to Andrewes, and he campaigned against it (and lay interference in the church more generally) throughout his career. Secondly, during an exegesis on God’s punishment of sinful Adam, Andrewes justified the ceremony of oath-swearing in church courts as part of due legal process, and hence defended ecclesiastical legal authority. Thirdly, during several lectures on Gen. 4,

¹⁰ Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, p. xvi. For the presentation of Andrewes as a Jacobean Court preacher, see Lancelot Andrewes, *XCVI. Sermons by the Right Honorable and Reverend Father in God, Lancelot Andrewes, late Lord Bishop of Winchester*, eds. W. Laud and J. Buckeridge (1629). See also T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London, 1928), p. 14.

¹¹ D. Shuger, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare’s England: The Sacred and the State in Measure for Measure* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 46.

Andrewes formulated an account of right worship that emphasised the importance of public, corporate acts of prayer-giving and offerings to God. The acme of this worship was the sacrament of the Eucharist, an offering facilitated by the clergy that was made to God alone. Here was an argument derived from Genesis for the ceremonial authority of the clergy, which was based not only upon their learning and their status as licenced preachers, but also their ministering of the sacrament. Each of these three claims that Andrewes made regarding ecclesiastical authority based on his reading of Genesis challenged prevailing ecclesiological sentiments in late-sixteenth-century England.

Andrewes' examination of Gen. 1-4 began life as a series of endowed public divinity lectures. This genre was a vital component of post-Reformation England's public system of religious education. It was a markedly different form to a parish sermon, since it enabled a learned university-trained theologian to elaborate on doctrine to a well-educated audience, to criticise heterodox ideas, and thereby to re-affirm the boundaries of English Reformed orthodoxy.¹² Andrewes' contemporary, the poet and preacher John Donne, offered this comparison of the two modes:

a Sermon intends Exhortation principally and Edification, and a holy stirring of religious affections, and then matters of Doctrine, and points of Divinity, occasionally, secondarily, as the words of the text may invite them; But Lectures intend principally Doctrinall points, and matter of Divinity, and matter of Exhortation but occasionally, and as in a second place.¹³

Andrewes' lectures also differed from another significant genre discussed throughout this thesis: the Bible commentary. Whilst a lecture was first and foremost an oral performance, in preparing his notes, Andrewes undoubtedly referred to several Genesis commentaries. This

¹² P. Seaver, *The Puritan lectureships: the politics of religious dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford, 1970), pp. 22-6, 76-7.

¹³ J. Donne, 'Bridgewater marriage sermon', in *The Sermons of John Donne, Vol. 8*, eds. E. Simpson and G. Potter (Oakland, 1962), Sermon 3, ll.9-14.

I am grateful to Prof. Peter McCullough who made me aware of this reference, and who has provided me with invaluable suggestions regarding this chapter.

is evinced by the fact that he regularly mentions comments by various Church Fathers on Genesis, but it is also evidenced by similarities between his reading of certain verses and those contained in prominent early modern commentaries and lectures by the Spanish Catholic biblicalist Benedict Pereira and the German reformer Martin Luther, which were discussed in Chapter One.¹⁴

Andrewes' debt to Catholic and Lutheran sources, and his comparative lack of reliance on Reformed Genesis commentaries, is revealing. Indeed, it suggests that in seeking to develop his vision of the visible church and ecclesiastical authority through interpreting Gen. 1-4, Andrewes found more ammunition in patristic authors and the works of rival confessions than in Reformed commentaries on Genesis.¹⁵ The religious politics underlying Andrewes' expositions on the theme of authority in the Bible has often gone unnoticed; in the case of the Genesis lectures, Andrewes' exegesis generated ideas about the church and ecclesiastical power that challenged Puritan principles and Parliament's claim to supremacy.¹⁶

Crucially, this chapter will cast Andrewes' Genesis lectures as yet more evidence of his precocious theological and ecclesiological evolution away from conformist Puritanism, a late Elizabethan development attested in more recent scholarship.¹⁷ Andrewes subverted the St Paul's lectureship to promulgate anti-Puritan ideas about the nature of the Church, and to define ecclesiastical authority in a way that ran counter to a prevailing godly ideal of prelacy. In his study of the Jacobean Church, Kenneth Fincham identified this ideal as the 'preaching pastor'.¹⁸ As Fincham's label suggests, the 'ceaseless ministration of the Word' and the

¹⁴ B. Pereira, *Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesin* (Lyon, 1594); M. Luther, *In primum librum Mose enarrationes* (Bamberg, 1555). References to Luther's Genesis lectures in the rest of this chapter will direct the reader to the following modern translation — M. Luther, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 1, trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker (Minneapolis, 1904).

¹⁵ McCullough, 'Introduction', p. xx, lv.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxvii; J. McGovern, 'The political sermons of Lancelot Andrewes', *TSCJ* 34/1 (2019), p. 4.

¹⁷ Andrewes, *Selected Sermons*, p. xvi.

¹⁸ K. Fincham, *Prelate as pastor: the episcopate of James I* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 249-55.

provision of teaching was central to this concept. Tellingly, Fincham notes that ‘it would have been inaccurate and inappropriate to cast Andrewes in the mould of the preaching pastor’ since he criticised excessive preaching and the concomitant lack of focus on ceremonial discipline.¹⁹ It is important to note though that Andrewes championed an alternative conception of prelacy during his Elizabethan career, long before he was the Jacobean bishop who features in Fincham’s study. Indeed, throughout his St Paul’s lectures, Andrewes espoused an altogether different ideal of the office of the clergy that focussed more on ordered hierarchy and liturgy, and less on preaching. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates that when Andrewes resumed the Genesis lectures several years later at his large, but less high-profile parish church of St Giles, he was able to express these radical ideas even more stridently now that he was away from the spotlight.²⁰

Though he had already attained a reputation as a learned divine and as a gifted preacher by the time that they began, it was his series on Genesis alongside his parish sermons at St Giles that brought Andrewes fame. Indeed, two of late-Elizabethan London’s leading literary figures, John Lyly and Thomas Nashe, attended Andrewes lectures and complimented his abilities—the latter declared him ‘the absolutest Oracle of all sound Devinitie heere amongst us’.²¹ These men were precisely the kinds of educated individuals who comprised Andrewes audience at St Paul’s. Andrewes’ regular divinity lectures there, in a building which was situated close to London’s legal quarter, were aimed at the City’s godly professional middle-classes, which included merchants, ministers, and (of course) lawyers.²² Noting the almost certain presence of civilian and common lawyers in Andrewes’ audience is important as a key

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tyacke, ‘Myth of Anglicanism’, p. 14.

²¹ McCullough, ‘Introduction’, p. xviii; T. Nashe, *Have With You to Saffron-walden* (Oxford, 1958), sig. Q3v.

²² Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships*, p. 181.

feature of his Genesis lectures examined below is the deliberate interweaving of sacred historical and juridical discourses in comments with anti-Puritan ecclesiological implications.

This chapter demonstrates that Andrewes' arguments about the nature of the church and ecclesiastical authority in the Genesis lectures confirmed his evolution away from conformist Puritanism, by relating their content to their immediate political and ecclesiological context. As the son of a prosperous merchant, Andrewes' life had begun conventionally enough with a comprehensive education under the noted pedagogue Richard Mulcaster at the Merchant Taylors' school in London, which secured him a scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1571.²³ There, Andrewes regularly attended Bible study sessions with Puritan luminaries such as the Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge Laurence Chaderton and the prominent Essex preacher Ezekiel Culverwell.²⁴ At the time there was little to suggest that Andrewes was anything other than a conventional English Reformed future divine. Evidence gleaned from his performances in disputation and his college catechising indicates a theology characterised by mild predestinarianism, support for Sabbatarianism, and suspicion of church decoration. Although his reverence for the sacrament was also apparent at this time, as was his willingness to defend the church's rights in relation to tithes and to denounce sacrilege. Typically, these two causes were not pressed by the godly since they reinforced the church and its clergy's financial privileges.²⁵

The content of Andrewes' Genesis lectures suggests that it was the creeping attempts by the common lawyers (who were not clergy of course) in Parliament and their Puritan allies in the 1580s to bring about reform of the Church that spurred Andrewes' ideological shift. During this period there were a series of controversial parliamentary bills introduced by the

²³ P. McCullough, 'Andrewes, Lancelot (1555-1626)', *ODNB*; J. Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. O. Lawson-Dick (London, 1992), p. 6.

²⁴ M. M. Knappen, 'The Early Puritanism of Lancelot Andrewes', *CH* 2/2 (1933), p. 97.

²⁵ Tyacke, 'Myth of Anglicanism', pp. 7-12; Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, pp. xv-xvii, 82-99.

common lawyers, which attempted to replace the Book of Common Prayer with a Book of Discipline. Figures such as Robert Beale and James Morrice, who are discussed later in this chapter, were central to this campaign and they used the Common Law to help Puritan ministers and preachers resist Archbishop John Whitgift's discipling of the clergy.²⁶

That Andrewes intended to target the Puritans and the common lawyers when he embarked on his Genesis lectures was signalled by his introductory lecture to the series, in which he elaborated on Luke 11:52 and Jesus's rebuke to the Pharisees: 'Woe unto you lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge'.²⁷ And in case Andrewes' audience was still unsure as to his polemical intentions, he began the preliminary lecture by reminding his listeners that it is 'holy men' who call the people towards the knowledge of holy things.²⁸ Andrewes' hostility towards 'the lawyers', whom he later accused of inhibiting the 'safeguard and protection of the Church' by depriving it of money, persisted throughout the lecture series.²⁹

The hypocrite Pharisee was of course a stock trope in anti-Puritan discourse. Cast by Andrewes and his ilk as precisians who obsessed over abstract points of doctrine—and most especially over the Calvinist doctrine of predestination—but who failed to practise the attitude of godly love they preached, their Puritan opponents were easily compared to the Pharisaical 'lawyers' castigated by Christ. Moreover, Andrewes contended that the Puritans' excessive pursuit of theological knowledge risked reducing worship to sermon hearing alone. Andrewes' understanding was that prayer must involve all the senses, and that divine grace was conducted not only through the holy scriptures but through all the visible church's actions. Thus, theology and ecclesiology were tightly interwoven in Andrewes' thought, and the concepts of the visible

²⁶ P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 2020), pp. 281-6; J. Guy, 'The Elizabethan establishment and the ecclesiastical polity', in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. J. Guy (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 131-6.

²⁷ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, pp. 657-60.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 493.

church and ecclesiastical authority that emerged from his exegesis on Genesis had direct implications for contemporary religious politics.

‘In the midst of the Garden was the Pulpit’: Andrewes on the nature of the Church and ecclesiastical authority in Genesis

It is significant that half of the Genesis Lectures recapitulated in *Apospasmata Sacra* concern Chapters 1 and 2 of the Bible’s opening book.³⁰ While dwelling on the text’s account of pre-Lapsarian creation, Andrewes was able to make claims about the nature of the original divine order as it related to mankind, prior to the entrance of sin into the world. In this section the chapter examines those claims, and it explains how Andrewes interpreted Genesis in order to prove that hierarchy and order were innate to Creation, that humans were uniquely predisposed to religion, that the first type of human community was a church that encompassed both saint and sinner, and that authority over that (and all other types of community) was divinely instituted from the beginning, as opposed to it being a product of consent from below or being instituted at a later point in history. This claim about the origins of authority had the double benefit of refuting the Presbyterian call for a flattening of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and countering the Papacy’s claim to supremacy, which it grounded upon Christ’s historic commission to St Peter in first-century CE Palestine.

Andrewes’ use of Genesis to think about the nature of the Church and the authority of the priesthood aligns with a wider intellectual development in the early 1590s that has previously been acknowledged by historians of political thought; this innovation involved using Genesis as a resource for grounding an account of the divine origins of authority on God’s paternal relationship with Adam.³¹ Whilst this polemical move is most famously associated with a Caroline work—Sir Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha*—its utility was already being comprehensively exploited in late-Elizabethan works such as Adrian de Saravia’s *On the*

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 1-245.

³¹ J. Sommerville, ‘Absolutism and royalism’, in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J. Burns and M. Goldie (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 358-61; J. Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 137-76.

Authority to Command, and Christian Obedience (1593).³² Andrewes' Genesis lectures arrived at similar conclusions about the beginnings of authority and he shared these with his audience through sophisticated exegesis.

One of the most striking insights from Andrewes reading of Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 in relation to humanity's beginning is his insistence that three types of community: the church, the commonwealth, and the family, originated (in that order) in Paradise, rather than as a consequence of the Fall. This opinion contradicted the view that politics was a response to human sinfulness, which was promulgated widely in early modern works of political theory that drew upon St Augustine.³³ Andrewes was keen to invest order, government, and authority with a sacred value, however, since he wished his audience to regard the hierarchy in the church as a reflection of the divine Creation itself. Since Gen. 1:27 states that mankind was made in the image God, Andrewes suggested that this meant humanity was made to worship and that the verse therefore implied the 'ecclesiastical estate' (Church).³⁴ Meanwhile, Andrewes thought that Adam's dominion over the rest of Creation 'is the ground of a Commonwealth'.³⁵ This God-given authority was illustrated in Gen. 2:19 when Adam named all of the animals: 'God, the cheef Lord of all things, maketh man ruler over the Earth...So that men are no usurpers, but lawfull rulers'.³⁶ Andrewes brought this biblical event to life for his audience by describing it in distinctly presentist terms: 'all creatures by Gods appointment doe as it were meet at a Parliament by general consent, to anoint man to be their King'.³⁷ The reference to parliament anglicised Gen. 2:19 but Andrewes was quick to head off any idea of popular election by

³² C. Cuttica, *Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) and the Patriotic Monarch: Patriarchalism in Seventeenth-Century Political Thought* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 91-103; J. Sommerville, 'Richard Hooker, Hadrian Saravia, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings', *HPT* 4/2 (1983), pp. 229-45.

³³ S. Mortimer, 'Christian Time and the Commonwealth in Early Modern Political Thought', in *Time, History, and Political Thought*, ed. J. Robertson (Cambridge, 2023), p. 89; J. Figgis, *The political aspects of S. Augustine's 'City of God'* (London, 1921), pp. 62-3.

³⁴ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 99.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

immediately mentioning anointing—this sacred ceremony, which is the acme of the coronation, emphasises the divine grant of monarchical authority and the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury as the mediator of that bestowal. Finally, thought Andrewes, ‘In creating them [Adam and Eve] Male and Female’ there was the ‘perfect resemblance of the Oeconomically estate of every House and of every Familie’, in which children naturally owe obedience to their parents.³⁸

For Andrewes, authority, order, and hierarchy were part of the pattern of creation itself. At the apex of society are its leaders, the magistrate and senior clergy. Andrewes told his audience that in the figure of the shepherd ‘is represented the care and oversight [sic], that temporall magistrates have over their people and subjects... And for ecclesiastical government, that is no lesse set out in the care of shepherds. And therefore Christ who is the chief shepheard saith to Saint Peter, *Pasce agnos meos* [feed my sheep]’.³⁹ Of course, the first shepherd mentioned in the Bible was righteous Abel. In line with other divines interested in using Genesis and patriarchy to explain the origins of authority, Andrewes exalted both the monarch and the leaders of the Church. Sir John Harington, courtier, author, and early biographer of Andrewes, underlined this, referring to: ‘things I have observed in his preaching that I may not omitt to speake of, one to raise a joynt reverence to God and the Prince, to the spirituall and civile Magistrate, by uniting and not severing them’.⁴⁰ Harington made this remark in relation to a Lent sermon that Andrewes had preached before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich, on 24 February 1590.⁴¹

Beneath the magistrate and the clergy were their flock, and Andrewes maintained that every individual has a role apportioned to them by God that they ought to perform. Failure to

³⁸ Ibid., p. 100, 184-5.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 374.

⁴⁰ Sir J. Harington, *A supplie or addicion to the catalogue of Bishops to the yeare 1608*, ed. R. Miller (Potomac, 1979), p. 140.

⁴¹ Lancelot Andrewes, *Ninety-Six Sermons*, vol. 2 (1882), pp. 16-36.

do so, for example by those who conceived of ideas above their station, would result in ‘the confusion of Church and Common-wealth’.⁴² Andrewes advised that ‘it is a great benefit to the Common-wealth, when men set their children to such trades as they are fit for’.⁴³ Likewise, a subject should not question the laws pronounced by their magistrate and should content himself with living

either by the care of his minde, or by the sweat of his body. For as members of our natural bodies have their several offices... So (as all the members doe not labour, for some doe only take care, as the eye and the ear, other doe labor and sweat, as the hands and feet) in the body Politick there are divers members, and they accordingly have several gifts from God.⁴⁴

Just as it was in the commonwealth, so it was in the Church. According to Andrewes, God granted different gifts to members of the congregation: some were to govern, some were to teach, and some were to learn. Any attempt to flatten this hierarchy—for example, by taking it upon oneself to preach without a calling to do so—constituted a challenge to the order and harmony of the body ecclesiastical.⁴⁵ What Andrewes was implying here was the necessity of episcopal ordination and possession of a licence to preach as separate indicators of hierarchical seniority and authority within the established Church.

During his lecture on Gen. 1:27, which was delivered at St Paul’s on 6 February 1591, Andrewes considered what it meant for mankind to have been created in the *imago dei* [image of God]. Citing the Church Father St Ambrose, Andrewes explained that in carrying the *imago* mankind is uniquely directed towards God. Thus, it is a capacity for religion that marks mankind out from the rest of creation: ‘The Butter-flie can be glorious, the Ant provident, the Wasp can revenge, but to think of God belongeth to man alone, whose Image he is’.⁴⁶ There

⁴² Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 373.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 498.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

were a range of available sources for Andrewes' view that religiosity was a characteristic unique to human nature. These included classical texts such as Cicero's *On the Laws* and *On the Nature of the Gods*, patristic sources including Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* and *On the Wrath of God*, and works of Reformed theology like John Calvin's *Institutes*.⁴⁷ For Andrewes, and here he reiterated a classical and patristic dictum again, man is not only a reasonable creature with an '*appetitus socii*' [desire for society] but he is also naturally a religious being.⁴⁸ In this claim, Andrewes found a powerful, universalising impulse that drew all people within the bounds of the visible church. Citing a commonplace from the Gospel according to Matthew, Andrew described how 'here God is a Fisher, and Common-wealths and Churches are as a Net, which hath in them good and bad together'. In other words, the national Church encompassed every soul in the community and compulsory infant baptism ensured the individual's membership.⁴⁹ There was no room here for a godly conception of an elect church comprised only of saints.

Andrewes pinned the origins of religion and of the Church to Gen. 2:16-17. Indeed, according to him, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was 'Adam's little Bible, and the fountain of all divinity'.⁵⁰ Andrewes use of this distinctive phrase suggests that his exegesis on Gen. 2:15-17 was informed by Luther's Lectures on Genesis. Previously, McCullough has pointed out in relation to Gen. 2:18 that Andrewes' offered a notably positive treatment of Eve, and the theme of female goodness is far closer to Luther's commentary on Genesis than other more misogynistic glosses, such as Calvin's.⁵¹ Andrewes' interpretation of the immediately preceding verses is also similar to Luther's. As we noted in Chapter One, there is a passage in

⁴⁷ R. Mills, 'Defining Man as *Animal Religiosum* in English Religious Writings ca. 1650-ca. 1700', *CH* 88/4 (2019), p. 930.

⁴⁸ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 210.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31, 98.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁵¹ Andrewes, *Selected Sermons*, p. 102.

Luther's lectures where he imaginatively describes Adam coordinating worship in the Garden of Eden, with the trees surrounding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil serving as a 'church'.⁵² In a similar vein, Andrewes describes how 'In the midst of the Garden was the Pulpit, and this is the Sermon which was preached unto him, by these things which the trees did represent, namely, That God was his life and length of dayes'.⁵³ The influence of Lutheran thought on Andrewes' reading of Gen. 2:15-17 is suggestive of a shared view concerning the necessity of settled external worship, which began in Eden. In contrast, Calvin's commentary does not mention this gloss.⁵⁴ Moreover, by avoiding any explicit mention of episcopacy in his lectures, Andrewes could draw upon a Lutheran commentary on Genesis to establish the primordial imperative for an orderly visible church without unchurching Protestants on the continent.

Expounding further on the same verse and drawing once more on Luther, Andrewes noted that

There is yet another thing which the ancient Writers doe make a great matter of in this place, that is, the marking That here first of all God and Man doe enter into a league, obligation, & covenant one to the other, by which they [the Church Fathers] prove, that *Ecclesia* [the church] & *vinculum Ecclesia* [the bond of the Church] is more ancient than the state Politique, that is, that the bond ecclesiasticall is of greater antiquity than the bond of Commonweals Politicall or oeconomicall : For before Eve was made, or ever Man and Wife, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants were united with a bond of duty , which commendeth the bond of true Religion and Divinity, which by obedience teacheth us how to be inseparably united to God, and made one of his Church.⁵⁵

Locating the beginnings of religion at this moment had an important and useful implication for Andrewes' wider argument about ecclesiastical authority. His reading of Gen. 2:16-17 asserted that it was religion (and hence the church and its clergy) which first binds a community

⁵² Luther, *Genesis*, vol. 1, pp. 174-5.

⁵³ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 165.

⁵⁴ J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the first book of Moses, called Genesis*, vol. 1, trans. J. King (Grand Rapids, 1948), pp. 125-8.

⁵⁵ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 187; Luther, *Genesis*, vol. 1, pp. 174-5.

together. Claiming that it was the church, not the commonwealth, which first bound together human community was a strong statement about the respective importance of those two institutions. Moreover, in the 1590s, when concerns over the royal succession hung in the air, Andrewes offered the Church of England as a stable, alternative source of order and unity to the crown. There are intriguing parallels here with arguments advanced in a Catholic polemic from this period, Robert Parsons's (*alias* Dolman) *Conference about the next succession* (1595). In the *Conference*, Parsons emphasised the role of the church and its clergy in first uniting the multitude into a commonwealth, and then initiating the latter's entry into contract with a king through the act of anointing.⁵⁶ Though Parsons's subtle tract was designed to influence the English debate about the succession in favour of a Catholic candidate, his arguments about the primary importance of the church in binding together a community paralleled Andrewes' claims about Genesis's society.

Andrewes complained to the audience that in his own time the importance of order and hierarchy was diminished in comparison to mankind's earliest days: 'For then men were so simple and Childe like, that they would be content quietly to be under government, but now the world is grown wiser, and every one thinketh it a childish thing to be governed by others'.⁵⁷ This would not be the last time that he drew a comparison between the present and Genesis's early sacred history. Moreover, Andrewes surely had the late-Elizabethan Church in mind when he lamented the decline of order and authority. After all, assaults on the authority of the clergy and the Church's hierarchy were a prominent feature of late-sixteenth-century religious politics. In fact, for Andrewes, such attacks were one of the original sins of the Henrician Reformation itself. He had strongly implied this point during his doctoral Divinity Act performance (c.1590) and in the accompanying sermon he preached at St Mary's Church,

⁵⁶ S. Mortimer, *Reformation, Resistance, and Reason of State (1517-1625)* (Oxford, 2021), p. 207.

⁵⁷ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 142.

Cambridge University—the latter was later published as *Sacrilege a Snare* (1629)—as part of the requirements to acquire his doctorate in divinity.⁵⁸ How Andrewes used Genesis to respond to attacks on the financial, legal, and sacramental foundations of ecclesiastical authority are considered sequentially in each of the following three sections, which are arranged so as to continue through Andrewes' Genesis lectures chronologically.

⁵⁸ Andrewes, *Selected Sermons*, p. 82.

‘Adam he was Gods vassal...as if a Countie Palatine’: Dominion, Sacrilege, and Patrimonial Authority in Andrewes’ Genesis lectures

During a lecture on Gen. 1:28, Andrewes traced the origins of legitimate authority and property-rights to God’s granting of dominion to Adam and his descendants. He explained to his audience how God had given the earth ‘in Fee-farm’ to mankind.⁵⁹ The term ‘Fee-farm’ referred to a type of hereditary leasehold, which was essentially a perpetual rental arrangement in which land was held from a superior—such as the Crown—in exchange for a fixed annual rent. In choosing to employ this legal term, Andrewes was deliberately assimilating the scriptural concept of dominion to the English system of feudal land ownership. Andrewes then deepened his analogy with a curious phrase: ‘God...maketh the earth (as the Germans doe say) a Countie Palatine’.⁶⁰ This was a typical example of Andrewes’ capacity for meaningful word-play, which had once led an unimpressed Scottish nobleman to compare him to a ‘Jack-an-apes...who takes up a thing and tosses and playes with it, and then he takes up another, and playes a little with it’.⁶¹ However, if one unpicks what Andrewes was doing with this particular word choice, then his reading of Gen. 1:28 is revealed as a defence of the secular authority of the clergy and the Church’s right to hold property.

It is important to remember that the Genesis lectures contained in *Apospasmata Sacra* were posthumously derived from an authorial manuscript, so the close-reading done here and elsewhere in the chapter is reliant upon the fidelity of the print-copy. However, given that the phrase ‘palatine’ recurs twice more elsewhere in Andrewes’ Genesis lectures, it seems likely that he did utter the phrase whilst lecturing.⁶² The term ‘palatine’ was used in late-Elizabethan England as a synonym for a vice-regent of the crown. However, Andrewes’ reference to ‘the

⁵⁹ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 103.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, p. 7.

⁶² Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 286, 326.

Germans' would have taken his audience immediately to a continental 'vice-regent', the elector Count Palatine of the Rhineland, who was subordinate to the Emperor and who was seated in the capital of German Calvinism at Heidelberg.⁶³ But Andrewes then brought his auditors straight back to England by adding 'countie' to 'Palatine'. Now he was referencing the quasi-autonomous territories like Chester and Durham that were ruled by nobles who possessed unusual governing powers. Furthermore, Andrewes' listeners would have known that there was only one English context in which alluding to a palatine as a person, as well as a territory, made any sense; the only 'palatine' prince in England was the Bishop of Durham. In February 1591 when Andrewes gave this lecture, the incumbent 'prince bishop' of Durham, Matthew Hutton (intriguingly, a former master of Andrewes' *alma mater*), wielded considerable power over his diocese. His prerogative included the right to raise an army, mint his own coins, and levy taxes. As long as the bishop remained loyal to the monarch, he could govern as a virtually autonomous ruler and reap the revenues from his territory, in exchange for protecting England's border with Scotland. In late-Elizabethan England, then, the Bishop of Durham was the premier example of a senior member of the clergy who wielded significant secular power. Andrewes' allusion to this office amidst an exegesis on Gen. 1:28 invited the audience to consider the theme of ecclesiastical authority, specifically in relation to territory and property.

Throughout his Genesis lectures, Andrewes defended the Church's possessions, justified the secular authority of senior clergy, and decried sacrilege. For example, early in the series he complained that

the Divill seeking to disturb and destroy the Church, by some he laboreth to doe it, by joyning the Queens injunctions and proceedings to it, under which pretence, they satisfie their covetousnesse with the hurt of the Church. Others under the pretence of a good thing, namely of reformation, on the other side doe seek much hurt to Gods Church.⁶⁴

⁶³ A. Milton, 'The Church of England and the Palatinate, 1566-1642', in *The reception of continental Reformation in Britain*, eds. P. Ha and P. Collinson (Oxford, 2010), pp. 136-65.

⁶⁴ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 30.

Here, Andrewes renewed the campaign against acquisitive lay-courtiers and Puritan campaigners that he had launched in his doctoral performances at university; he feared that—albeit for different motives—these two adversaries threatened to strip the Church of its material and spiritual property. It was the former group in particular whom Andrewes sought to criticise in his Genesis lectures. Whereas the Puritans urged the lay impropriation of vacant benefices in order to build up a network of godly preachers, others sought to profit from the sale of Church property, a process begun under Henry VIII.

Later, during a lecture at St Giles, Andrewes used a discussion of the brothers Cain and Abel—and the Augustinian metaphor of the two cities—in order to contrast the interests of the church and the state, the clergy and the laity.⁶⁵ Augustine’s metaphor was an attractive means of describing these oppositions. According to Andrewes, Abel was ‘a pattern of the Saints and the Church of God; and *Cain* of fleshy and wordly [*sic*] minded men’. Indeed, Augustine’s conceit echoed in the following remark by Andrewes: ‘when...there is more spent in the making of Mattocks and Swords, that is a state civill; but when more time and pains is bestowed in the safeguard and protection of the Church, than upon Lawyers...that shows a state ecclesiasticall’.⁶⁶ In a later lecture, Andrewes applied the Augustinian binary once more to sacred history, he described ‘*Enosh* and *Enoch*; as we see a City, so a Church; as in *Enoch* a state civill, so in *Enosh* a state ecclesiasticall; as there we had a company of men that placed their vocation in things of this life, so here we have another company, whose vocation is an invocation, that is, to adore and call upon the name of the Lord’.⁶⁷

Andrewes’ critique of a secular, earthly, and acquisitive ‘state civill’ constituted a direct attack on Elizabethan lawyers, politicians, courtiers, and others who would ‘satisfie their

⁶⁵ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. J. Healey (1931), *passim*.

⁶⁶ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 493.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

covetousnesse with the hurt of the Church'. Similarly, Andrewes expressed fear about attacks on the church and religion in general by secular forces through repeated references to the dangers of rhetorical re-description: 'because the good and the evill, without any distinction or regard, are shuffled together...this confusion in Common-wealths is the cause, by Gods just judgement, of the confusion and renting asunder of Common-wealths and Churches'.⁶⁸ The deliberate rhetorical confusion of good and evil, virtue and vice, termed *paradiastole* by Tudor rhetoricians, was a skill associated with Machiavellian courtiers and *politiques*.⁶⁹ Such figures posed a threat to the authority of the church due to their willingness to centralise power within the monarchy, even over areas, such as worship, which were traditionally controlled by the clergy.⁷⁰ Andrewes' lectures posited a contrast between the worldly-wise lawyer and the saintly true believer, only the latter knows that it is God alone that can define good and evil.⁷¹ Even sovereigns, who might enact positive laws, must still conform to the divine pattern. Andrewes reminded his congregation that a monarch's 'words and commandements have no power to make things good'.⁷² He was insistent that although the sovereign and the leaders of the church ought to govern in harmony, the priesthood possessed an independent ecclesiastical authority, symbolised (among other things) by the possession of property. A parallel claim about the autonomous legal authority of the Church occurred elsewhere in Andrewes' Genesis lectures when he considered the judicial implications of how God dealt with sinful Adam, as we shall see in the following section.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

⁶⁹ Q. Skinner, *Visions of politics: Volume II Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 273-7.

⁷⁰ Mortimer, *Reformation*, pp. 186-9.

⁷¹ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, pp. 191-2.

⁷² Ibid., p. 192.

‘God must proceed in this Judgment *ex officio*’: The Genesis “Trials”, Civil Law, and Andrewes’ defence of ecclesiastical legal authority

Andrewes’ interest in what Genesis revealed about the judicial dimension of ecclesiastical authority was not merely speculative, it was relevant to the daily exercise of his office. In 1594, Andrewes was appointed by Archbishop Whitgift to serve on the Court of High Commission and to investigate a long-running parochial wrangle at Christ Church Newgate Street, in London. The case featured a dispute concerning the provision of five singing ministers according to the parish’s Henrician foundation, and the numerous attempts that were made by the churchwardens and their supporters to have the musicians replaced with lecturers—much to the chagrin of some of the other parishioners. The details of this case have been ably summarised elsewhere, but its significance for this chapter lies in the fact that in ruling on the issue, Andrewes practised the very legal ecclesiastical authority that he can be shown to have analysed in his Genesis lectures several years previously.⁷³

Moreover, as McCullough has shown, Andrewes used his position as a judge in High Commission and another appointment as commissary of the diocese of London to advance the anti-Puritan cause. The latter position was highly influential since it meant that Andrewes exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the capital during the interim between the death of Bishop John Aylmer (5 June) and the appointment of Bishop Richard Fletcher (30 December). For example, Andrewes ruled that the Christ Church singers ought not to be replaced by lecturers, and he likely approved a young Samuel Harsnett to deliver what McCullough has termed ‘one of the decade’s most vehement attacks on double predestination’ in a sermon at Paul’s Cross.⁷⁴ The discussion of ecclesiastical legal authority in Andrewes’ Genesis lectures

⁷³ K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, *Altars restored: the changing face of English religious worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 96-7; McCullough, ‘Avant-Garde Conformity’, pp. 390-3.

⁷⁴ McCullough, ‘Avant-Garde Conformity’, p. 391.

had a direct relevance to the cut-and-thrust church politics that their author was embroiled in on a daily basis, then.

Furthermore, the issue of ecclesiastical legal authority was manifestly relevant to Andrewes' audience too, and to none more so than the ecclesiastical lawyers who inhabited the Cathedral precinct. They were present since several Ecclesiastical Courts regularly convened in the building's side-chapels.⁷⁵ For example, the Court of Arches—the highest ecclesiastical court in the province of Canterbury—occasionally met in a building on the churchyard's north side that was leased from the dean and chapter.⁷⁶ On his way to lecture it is likely that Andrewes would have encountered the Court's members, including his close friend the civil lawyer Richard Cosin.⁷⁷ The importance of Andrewes' relationship with Cosin, for whom he even preached a funeral sermon, and their joint employment in High Commission, will prove important to the following discussion of Andrewes' defence of the legitimacy of ecclesiastical court proceedings in his Genesis lectures.⁷⁸

High Commission was created in 1559 with the purpose of hearing cases pertaining to dissent within the Church.⁷⁹ Its judges were selected from amongst both common lawyers trained at the Inns of Court and civil jurists from Doctors' Commons (who were learned in Roman Law and the closely related system of Canon Law).⁸⁰ Despite the Reformation reducing the influence of Canon Law in England on a variety of issues, High Commission's procedure

⁷⁵ R. Hentschell, *St Paul's Cathedral precinct in early modern literature and culture: spatial practices* (Oxford, 2020), p. 32.

⁷⁶ N. Doe, 'The Court of Arches: jurisdiction to jurisprudence — 'entirely settled'?', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 23/3 (2021), p. 2.

⁷⁷ M. Ingram, 'Cosin, Richard (1548?-1597)', *ODNB*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ K. Pennington, 'Ecclesiastical Law in Early Modern Europe', in *The Cambridge History of Reformation Era Theology*, eds. K. Appold and N. Minnich (Cambridge, 2023), p. 601.

⁸⁰ H. Potter, *A Short Outline of English Legal History* (London, 1945), pp. 244-6.

was closely modelled on the norms of *ius commune* (Roman Civil Law) practised in ecclesiastical courts across Europe.⁸¹

In this section, a sequence of lectures that Andrewes gave on Gen. 3:9-13 and a later set on Gen. 4 are revealed as a defence of ecclesiastical legal proceedings and hence as a justification of the authority of the judges in High Commission. These verses concern God's treatment of Adam after he and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and God's judgement on Cain's fratricide. Andrewes employed an array of juridical terms in his exegesis on these verses so as to situate the events described in the scriptures within a framework of due legal process. Not only did Andrewes' use of legal concepts render passages from the scriptures more digestible to his audience, but it also transformed an exegesis on Genesis into an analysis of inquisitorial trial proceedings conducted within an ecclesiastical law context (a legal process that drew upon civil law precepts), and into an *apologia* for the use of the much-controverted *ex officio* oath—particularly in relation to so-called 'notorious' offences. Andrewes' interweaving of theological and legal discourses here reminds us that these disciplines were distinct, yet inseparable to the early modern mind, which contrasts with the modern tendency to separate them.

It is worth noting that interpreting Genesis through the lens of legal concepts was a crucial strategy in Andrewes' armoury, which enabled him to make polemical points about ecclesiastical judicial authority to a legally literate audience. The inclusion of these concepts served a hermeneutic purpose by providing a framework through which to analyse particular episodes in the Genesis narrative. Yet they also directed the audience's attention towards the polemic that lurked behind Andrewes' exegesis. In reading the scriptures through the lens of contemporary legal concepts, Andrewes collapsed the historical distance between the time of

⁸¹ Pennington, 'Ecclesiastical Law in Early Modern Europe', p. 601. See also R. Helmholz, *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 48.

Adam and the present day in order to advance a polemical argument about ecclesiastical authority. With the aid of these concepts, Andrewes pressed a surprising range of meaning from seemingly sparse scriptural verses.

Andrewes was not merely adducing verses from Genesis as proof-texts for a particular conception of ecclesiastical authority then, he was picking apart scripture with the aid of legal concepts in order to derive polemically useful meaning from the former.⁸² His deployment of juridical language within his exegesis also reveals how concepts with a history in civil law could be used by Andrewes to construct a defence of ecclesiastical authority based upon scripture, which countered the legal criticisms of the common lawyers.⁸³ Indeed, the overt references to the *ex officio* oath in several lectures reminds the reader that Andrewes' performances at St Paul's need to be read within a particular context: the clash between the bishops and Parliament over the locus of religious authority within the constitution of England's post-Reformation Church. Andrewes' defence of ecclesiastical authority in his Genesis lectures constituted a riposte to the common lawyers, who claimed that religious authority lay with the 'King-in-Parliament'.

We need to read Andrewes' lectures on Gen. 3:9-13 alongside a related performance that Andrewes gave at the Cambridge University Divinity Schools in July 1591.⁸⁴ Whilst answering the Commencement Day Divinity Act in disputation, Andrewes defended the use of oaths in ecclesiastical legal proceedings by repeating several arguments present in the lectures on Gen. 3:8-13 that he had presented only a few months before at St Paul's. Recorded in a rarely cited Latin transcript, Andrewes' answer to the act was subsequently appended to his friend Richard Cosin's classic defence of the ecclesiastical courts: *An apologie for sundrie*

⁸² McGovern, 'Lancelot Andrewes', p. 4.

⁸³ Pennington, 'Ecclesiastical Law in Early Modern Europe', pp. 601-603.

⁸⁴ HL MS Hastings Religious Box 1 (4), ff. 23-44.

proceedings by jurisdiction ecclesiasticall (1593).⁸⁵ Cosin's *apologie* was the stand-out treatise written by a canon and civil lawyer in response to the criticisms of High Commission offered by the common lawyers.⁸⁶ Thus, Andrewes' reading of Genesis can be situated at the heart of late-Elizabethan England's most contentious debate about ecclesiastical authority. Initially, Cosin's work was shared in manuscript form to '*certaine others of honour and qualitie*' and given that his illustrious friend's disputation was to feature in the print edition of the *apologie*, it seems likely that Andrewes was one of the persons to whom Cosin alluded warmly in his comment.⁸⁷

Incidentally, Andrewes lectures on 3:9-13 were the last that he gave on Genesis at St Paul's in the early 1590s and the reason behind this interruption to the series remains unclear.⁸⁸ According to Isaacson, Andrewes became gravely ill during this period as a result of overworking and was compelled to retire temporarily.⁸⁹ More cynically, Tyacke has suggested that Andrewes' overtly anti-Calvinist comments in his Genesis lectures may have led to him being silenced as part of a backlash against the perceived threat of Arminian theology at that time.⁹⁰ However, there is little evidence of this anti-Calvinist discourse in Andrewes' discussion of Gen. 3:9-13; rather, the content of these lectures raises the tantalising suggestion that it was his defence of the controversial *ex officio* oath instead that was the cause of his godly lectureship ending abruptly on 13 February 1592. It would be more than seven years before he completed his lectures on the remainder of Gen. 3 and Gen. 4 at St Giles.

⁸⁵ L. Andrewes, 'Nunquid Per Jus divinum Magistratuiliceat a Reo Jusiurandum exigere? Et id, quatenus act quousque liceat?', in R. Cosin, *An apologie for sundrie proceedings by jurisdiction ecclesiasticall* (1593), pp. 243-55.

⁸⁶ E. Shagan, 'The English Inquisition: Constitutional Conflict and Ecclesiastical Law in the 1590s', *HJ* 47/3 (2004), pp. 543-4.

⁸⁷ Cosin, *An apologie*, sig. B.

⁸⁸ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 312.

⁸⁹ Isaacson, *Lancelot Andrewes*, p. viii; Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, p. xvii, 100.

⁹⁰ Tyacke, 'Myth of Anglicanism', p. 14; Idem., *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 20.

On 1 February 1592, Andrewes delivered a lecture on Gen. 3:9, and it is here that his exegetical defence of ecclesiastical legal process began in earnest.⁹¹ In a striking turn of phrase, Andrewes described God's call of 'Where art thou?' to Adam—who at that time was hiding with Eve amidst Eden's trees—as 'judicial'.⁹² He then remarked about the same verse that 'This course of...judgment holden, being the first, is a pattern and plat-form of the whole proceeding of judgment, in all Courts and places of Justice'.⁹³ Here, Andrewes was introducing the audience to a comparison he wanted to make between the events described in Gen. 3:8-19 and a particular variant of contemporary legal proceedings against an accused person known as *inquisitio* [inquisition], which was a feature of Elizabethan ecclesiastical courts.⁹⁴ It was through this analogy, in which theology and law converged, that Andrewes established his defence of ecclesiastical juridical authority on scriptural grounds.

Here Andrewes was repurposing a medieval juridical argument. Since the twelfth century, jurists had argued that the norms of judicial process and procedure were not derived from positive, but rather from natural law, by pointing to Gen. 3:9-12.⁹⁵ A French canonist named Johannes Monachus (1250-1313) developed this idea further by arguing that integral parts of court process, such as the summons to appear, were part of natural law, because even God had to grant Adam this treatment.⁹⁶

Andrewes developed his juridical framework further in the lectures on Gen. 3:9 and Gen. 3:10 by mapping God's treatment of Adam onto a legal schema. To begin with, notes Andrewes, 'at the first Judgment of man before God beginneth, he first sendeth out a voice

⁹¹ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 296.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁹⁴ D. Shuger, 'The Prison Diaries of Archbishop Laud', in *Taking Exception to the Law: Materializing Injustice in Early Modern English Literature*, eds. D. Beecher, T. DeCook, A. Wallace and G. Williams (Toronto, 2015), pp. 127-30.

⁹⁵ K. Pennington, 'Innocent until proven guilty: The origins of a legal maxim', *The Jurist* 63/1 (2003), p. 114.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

calling and crying to *Adam* and *Eve* to arise out of their prison, and to appear before God'.⁹⁷ Here, the Almighty acts as the judge, and, importantly, he calls Adam to court by means of 'a processe to arrest and cite them; which they refusing...God sendeth an attachment.'⁹⁸ That God *qua* judge is the one to arraign Adam is significant, since a defining feature of the *inquisitio* procedural framework was that the judge (as opposed to the plaintiff or the plaintiff's legal representative) took the lead in investigating and prosecuting the case.⁹⁹ Meanwhile, 'process' and 'attachment' were familiar early modern legal terms referring to the two-step method for ensuring a defendant appeared in court, the former was a formal summons whilst the latter was a writ authorizing the arrest or physical compulsion of the accused to attend.

In his lecture on Gen. 3:10, Andrewes reminded his audience of God's due process in compelling Adam to attend his 'triall and purgation': 'First God sent a Sergeant to arrest him, and ascite him to make his appearance to answer for that which should be laid and objected against him... Secondly, he sent out an attachment more forcibly to lay hold on him...and to apprehend him, which he fled from'.¹⁰⁰ This failing, noted Andrewes, 'God came himself, making a search for him...and brought the Malefactor out to his arraignment, and to answer...his inditement and accusation'.¹⁰¹ Once Adam had been brought before God, suggested Andrewes, there followed 'the confession of his guilty conscience; and then followeth the just sentence...[and] the execution thereof'.¹⁰²

Having legitimised the successive elements of due process recognised in the ecclesiastical courts by mapping Gen. 3:9-13 onto them, Andrewes then made a direct reference to a contemporary legal controversy that judges in High Commission, and their opponents,

⁹⁷ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, pp. 296-7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁹⁹ Cosin, *An apologie*, part 2, p. 6, 18, 30; Shuger, 'Prison Diaries', p. 127.

¹⁰⁰ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 298, 303.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 299.

were embroiled in, which had ramifications for debates about ecclesiastical authority in late-Elizabethan England. Reflecting on Gen. 3:9, Andrewes described the Almighty's actions:

Gods course... is first to call forth *Adam* to his answere; but this may seem at the first sight, to be a defective course, because here is none but the Judg, and the party arraigned, to accuse, and to be a witsse against him; upon which the Judg might proceed; for, no other person there, it must needs be, that either God must proceed in this Judgment *ex officio* [by virtue of his office], or else make *Adam* accuse himself.¹⁰³

To his well-informed congregants, the legal quandary Andrewes uncovered in Gen. 3:9 would have been a familiar one: could legitimate proceedings against an accused party be initiated in the absence of a formal accusation by a plaintiff? In other words, did the office of the judge alone provide sufficient authority for pursuing a case? Even to his less-informed congregants, simply uttering the phrase '*ex officio*' mid-lecture may well have been sufficient to indicate to the audience that he was being topical. Indeed, Andrewes was intervening from the pulpit in one of the most pressing political issues of the day—the *ex officio* oaths controversy.

In summary, the *ex officio* oaths row concerned the legitimacy of a specific procedure that occurred in late-Elizabethan ecclesiastical courts, such as High Commission.¹⁰⁴ The practice involved judges, who had arraigned (but not charged) an individual—on the grounds of *mero* [the judge's mere motion] or of *promoto* [information supplied to the judges by a third party]—compelling the accused to swear an oath to answer all interrogatory questions truthfully, before they were examined.¹⁰⁵ There was a precedent for this mechanism in Roman Canon Law and advocates of the *ex officio* oath regarded it as a means of guaranteeing the accused's honesty—after all, an oath sworn before God was not to be trifled with.¹⁰⁶ However, critics protested that there was a risk that the defendant might perjure themselves subsequently

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Guy, 'The Elizabethan Establishment', pp. 126-49.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 131, fn. 19.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 131; G. Bray, 'Canon Law and the Church of England', in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity c.1520-1662*, ed. A. Milton (Oxford, 2017), pp. 168-85.

if they took the oath.¹⁰⁷ There was also the question of what to do if the defendant refused to take the oath? In the late 1580s, a Puritan minister from Rutland named Robert Cawdrey, who was hauled before High Commission for supposedly depraving the Book of Common Prayer (a serious accusation under the 1559 Act of Uniformity), declined to swear the oath—and his obstinacy caused a constitutional imbroglio.¹⁰⁸

The crux of Cawdrey's case was not whether the judges could proceed *ex officio* against him (they undoubtedly could), rather, the lawsuit rested on whether or not the High Commission judges held the authority to deprive him of his benefice because he had refused to take the *ex officio* oath as a matter of conscience. According to the statute book, they did not possess that power. The question, therefore, was whether the royal prerogative—whence the judges derived their authority—trumped common law.¹⁰⁹ Cawdrey's advocate, the common lawyer James Morrice, challenged the judges' original authority to deprive his client in Queen's Bench by quoting from statute. Morrice's allies, including the diplomat, jurist, and parliamentarian Robert Beale and the Privy Counsellor Lord Burghley (William Cecil), regarded Cawdrey's case as totemic; the trial manifested the struggle between Parliament and the clerical hierarchy over their respective religious authorities, the former was grounded in the legal concept of the 'King-in-Parliament' whereas the latter was a product of the monarch's prerogative powers.¹¹⁰ Cawdrey's refusal to swear the oath left him in the midst of a legal tug-of-war between the common lawyers and the High Commission judges.

Ethan Shagan notes the increased use of *ex officio* oaths to entrap Puritan ministers like Cawdrey, by the late-Elizabethan High Commission judges, who, crucially, derived their

¹⁰⁷ Guy, 'The Elizabethan establishment', p. 136.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 131; G. Prothero, *Select Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I* (Westport, 1913), p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ Guy, 'The Elizabethan establishment', p. 132.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 132, 136; P. Collinson, *This England: Essays on the English nation and Commonwealth in the sixteenth century* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 61-121.

authority from a royal commission conveyed by letters patent.¹¹¹ Andrewes provided a thinly veiled allusion to this royal transferral of power in a lecture on Adam's naming of all the animals: 'it is Gods royall prerogative, to cause all the creatures to make their appearance at a certain place and time, which man of himself might not presume to take upon him; therefore God giveth over his right by a letter of Attourney and *dedimus potestatem* [literally, 'we have given power'] to Adam'.¹¹² Setting the *ex officio* oaths controversy in a wider context, Shagan contends that in the 1590s the monarchy 'used religion to generate novel... claims to state power'; the crown's granting of a power to the High Commission judges that enabled them to interrogate suspects under oath, without first charging them, exemplified this development.¹¹³ The debate over *ex officio* oaths pitted English common law against canon law on the legality of ecclesiastical court practices; the authority of Parliament against that of the clerical hierarchy regarding the right of deprivation for oath refusal; statute against royal prerogative regarding the High Commission judges' authority; and, more generally, the constitutionalist common lawyers against the bishops regarding the relative sway of the religious authority inhering in the King-in-Parliament versus that dispensed solely by the monarch.¹¹⁴

In both his lectures at St Paul's and his Divinity School performance, Andrewes explored the technical intricacies of due process and the *ex officio* debate through his exposition of the Genesis scriptures and legitimised the practice and authority of the ecclesiastical courts. For example, Andrewes praised God's interrogation of Adam in Gen. 3:11 and drew an explicit connection with contemporary proceedings:

this is the right and orderly course of proceeding in upright judgement, and determining of causes here taught and allowed by of God, to be imitated and put in practise, namely, that after the indictment and accusation laid against any man for transgressing a Law... that then the party so accused, must be brought to his answer

¹¹¹ Shagan, 'The English Inquisition', p. 542, fn. 4.

¹¹² Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 204.

¹¹³ Shagan, 'The English Inquisition', p. 542; Guy, 'The Elizabethan establishment', p. 126, 129-30.

¹¹⁴ Cf., A. Cromartie, *The Constitutionalist Revolution: An Essay on the History of England, 1450-1642* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 209.

personally, and permitted quietly and freely to put in his answer thereunto, for the acquitting himself if he can... For these are two other parts of Justice and right Judgement, according to Gods Law, and this is a good and a lawfull proceeding, *as we may see by the example and practice of the Church of God.*¹¹⁵

Andrewes contended that God, and hence the Church of England—which claimed to emulate the divine example—followed due legal process in its courts. In his Divinity School performance, Andrews re-affirmed this argument regarding the correct order of proceeding: ‘these three are present in every trial; one must be legally summoned; then the status of the case must be established; and finally, the evidence must be investigated’.¹¹⁶

Central to the *ex officio* controversy was the question of whether it was legitimate to proceed with an inquisition in the absence of a witness accusing the defendant. *Ex officio mero* [the judge’s mere motion] and *ex officio promotio* [information supplied to the judges by a third party] were legal devices for doing just that. However, there was considerable disagreement about the implementation of these mechanisms, which were not a feature of Common Law. Unsurprisingly, Cosin’s *apologie* encouraged an expansion of the use of *ex officio* oaths. He argued that, in the absence of a witness, ‘notoriety’ was sufficient grounds for the judge to proceed *ex officio*.¹¹⁷ Echoing this sentiment in relation to God’s handling of Adam, Andrewes defended proceeding in a trial without witnesses: ‘it is... an error in those which hold that there may not be any just, lawfull, and ordinary proceeding judicially against any unlesse there be brought witnesses face to face to accuse them; for it is plain and evident, that *upon such strong presumptions*; one may be called before the Judge’.¹¹⁸ A justification of this action was also defended by Andrewes in his divinity school performance a few months later and he used precisely the same biblical example to make his point: ‘someone can be brought forth by

¹¹⁵ Andrewes, *Apospasmatica Sacra*, p. 304.

¹¹⁶ [‘Tria ergo haec insunt in omni iudicio; Legitimè quis vocari in jus debet: Pòst status causae fieri: Probationes demùm inquiri’] Cosin, *An apologie*, part 3, p. 247.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 51.

¹¹⁸ Andrewes, *Apospasmatica sacra*, p. 299. Italics are my own emphasis here.

evidence, as in that first divine justice (which all human justice imitates), it was done against Adam without an accuser, by evidence alone'.¹¹⁹

There was one scenario in particular, where, according to Cosin and Andrewes, proceeding without a witnesses' accusation was especially necessary. This was 'when the matter concerneth the trouble and confusion of a Country or Commonwealth'.¹²⁰ Since 'men in authoritie... must be jealous over the Commonwealth and State of a Kingdome, when they see it in danger by troubles and tumults', according to Andrewes they may 'use such an extraordinarie manner and course of judgement in bringing men to their trialls, of whom they have a strong suspicion, and surmise to be the causes thereof'.¹²¹ Here, Andrewes drew the congregation's attention to the example of the Patriarch Joseph in Genesis, who 'to avoid danger to the State', did 'upon surmise and suspicion, call his brethren before him, accusing them for spies'.¹²²

Andrewes' choice of the phrase 'surmise and suspicion' here is suggestive. John Guy notes that Cosin, who was a judge in Cawdrey's case, had circulated a confidential memorandum at the time of the trial. The note stated that 'some crimes were hardly to be proved by witnesses, but were "*vehemently suspected* and offensive to the well disposed, and dangerous to be suffered, as being ill examples in a well governed commonwealth"'.¹²³ The notion of 'vehement suspicion' as sufficient grounds for inquisition could be traced back to an English medieval gloss on Canon Law, where it appeared in relation to the treatment of suspected heretics.¹²⁴ Both Cosin and Andrewes re-deployed this language of suspicion in

¹¹⁹ ['Etenim vel indiciis prodi quis poterit, ut in prima illa justitia divina (quam humana omnis imitator) actum est contra Adamum, sine delatore, solis indiciis'] Cosin, *An apologie*, part 3, p. 247.

¹²⁰ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 299.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Guy, 'The Elizabethan establishment', pp. 139-40.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 140 fn. 55; LP MS 2004, ff. 65r-v; W. Lyndwode, *Provinciale seu constitutiones Angliae* (Oxford, 1679), pp. 302-3.

relation to *ex officio* proceedings in their own time. Indeed, Andrewes repeated his lecture's argument regarding national security and the use of oaths almost verbatim in his Divinity School disputation (he also recycled the example of Joseph's treatment of his brothers).¹²⁵

Lurking behind these comments by Andrewes regarding the arraignment of an individual in the absence of witnesses and the enforcement of an oath was the notion of notoriety. This was an idea that derived from two related Roman legal concepts, *fama* [public knowledge] and *notorium* [notoriety], but which also had parallels with the Bible's account of the Pharisees' confrontation with Paul, in which Gamaliel the Pharisee counselled caution in treating of suspected heresy summarily (as opposed to 'notorious crimes like murder, adultery, and giving false testimony').¹²⁶ Andrewes returned to the concept of notoriety and built on his earlier comments at St Paul's in his lectures at St Giles, when he examined Gen. 4 and the account of Cain's fratricide. Preaching on Gen. 4:9, Andrewes reminded his audience that 'we must call to minde that this is the second judgement which God held: the first was held upon our Parents in Paradise... This second is held upon Cain out of Paradise'.¹²⁷ Despite the absence of a witness to accuse Cain of Abel's murder, God finds him guilty on the basis of evidence, and he passes judgement: 'the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me, from the earth. Now therefore thou art cursed from the earth'. This, Andrewes notes, proves that 'it is a good ground to pronounce sentence: not only when Parties are convicted upon witnesses, which is the more usuall way, but when by manifest arguments and proofs they are proved guilty'.¹²⁸ Andrewes had already drawn upon the example of Cain being convicted without a witness in his disputation performance.¹²⁹ This biblical argument is also another sign of agreement between

¹²⁵ Andrewes, 'Nunquid Per Jus divinum', p. 248.

¹²⁶ J. Vitiello, *Fama, Notoriety, and the Due Process of Law* (Leiden, 2016), p. 88; C. Zwierlein, 'The Waldensians, Bucer, Beza, Castellio, and French-German Confessional Diplomacy 1556/7', *Archive for Reformation History* 106/1 (2015), p. 213.

¹²⁷ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 415.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

¹²⁹ ['In secunda illa, contra Cainum, ex indiciis itidem, (nempe Abele nusquam comparente,) reperta effusione sanguinis'] Cosin, *An apologie*, part 3, p. 247.

Andrewes and Cosin. In his *apologie*, the latter discusses the validity of bringing a case against someone on the basis of fame or notoriety, alone. Cosin points out that ‘Some Divines (for the times they lived in) most excellently learned, could say that a publike fame concerning any crime doth stand in stead of an accusation; and thereunto doe applie that of Genesis, where the bloud of Abell is sayd to crie out against Cain’.¹³⁰ Similarly, in a lecture on Gen. 4:14, Andrewes referred to Cain as ‘a notorious Offender’.¹³¹

Justifying proceedings in ecclesiastical courts like High Commission, in particular the deployment of the *ex officio* oath, was a crucial aspect of defending ecclesiastical authority in late-Elizabethan England. Andrewes’ lectures on the “trials” of Adam and Cain indicate not only his awareness of this contemporary debate but an active participation on his part in the argument, through his exegesis. In a similar fashion, Andrewes also used an interpretation of Genesis’s sacred history to construct a defence of a third aspect of ecclesiastical authority, which centred around ceremonial worship, that will be discussed in the following section.

¹³⁰ Cosin, *An apologie*, part 2, p. 58.

¹³¹ Andrewes, *Apospasmatica sacra*, p. 445.

‘then is invocation at the highest, when a man hath the cup of salvation in his hand’: The Clergy, Offerings, and Public Worship in Andrewes’ reading of Gen. 4

Alongside the Genesis lectures, *Apospasmata Sacra* contains notes of four lectures concerned with the Eucharist, which were delivered between October 1598 and November 1600 and delivered on the first Sunday of the month before communion.¹³² McCullough suggests this pattern indicates that Andrewes celebrated communion monthly with his congregation at St Giles—an unusually frequent and costly practice, especially if the wine was of good quality.¹³³ Unsurprisingly, between 1580 and 1596, the parish’s expenditure on wine doubled.¹³⁴ This largesse provides tangible evidence of Andrewes’ commitment to the Eucharist as the height of worship.

Revisionist scholarship has confirmed the centrality of the sacrament to Andrewes’ theology—not only in these four Eucharistic lectures but also in several of his Genesis lectures delivered in the same period.¹³⁵ In particular, McCullough and Tyacke have drawn attention to his comments on Gen. 4, preached at St Giles between 1598 and 1599, highlighting the anti-Calvinist and sacramentalist tendencies in his exegesis of the Cain and Abel narrative.¹³⁶ However, more can be said about Andrewes’ emphasis on the Eucharist and other forms of offering in these later Genesis lectures, which were performed away from the spotlight. Behind his reflections on the worship of Cain, Abel, Seth, and Enosh lies a defence of clerical authority—one that reimagines early Genesis worship scenes as precedents for contemporary sacramentalism and ceremonialism. In this way, Andrewes concluded his Genesis series by

¹³² Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, pp. 515–22 (on Isaiah 6:6), pp. 572–78 (on Revelations 2:7), pp. 594–600 (on John 6:37), pp. 614–19 (on 1 Corinthians 12:13).

¹³³ Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, see headnote on p. 138; Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor*, p. 140, fn.136; c.f., Arnold Hunt, ‘The Lord’s Supper in Early Modern England’, *Past & Present* 161 (1998), pp. 51–2.

¹³⁴ BL Additional MS 12,222, f. 34v, 38r; Tyacke, ‘Myth of Anglicanism’, pp. 19–24.

¹³⁵ Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, see headnote on p. 138.

¹³⁶ Tyacke, ‘Myth of Anglicanism’, p. 14; Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, pp. xix–xx, see also headnote on p. 138.

invoking a polemical vision of the visible Church and its clergy, and he once again targeted the sermon-centric piety of Puritan practical divinity.

Andrewes grounded his vision of right worship in the church on two passages in Gen. 4 in particular. The first narrated the example of Cain and Abel's offerings, which Andrewes described as the earliest 'act of Religion remembered in Scripture'—a telling point, since it proved that the Bible's first example of worship was not a sermon or a hymn, but a sacrificial offering. Andrewes explained that Cain and Abel had known by revelation from God, via their father—rather than via their natural reason—to make an offering to God when they worshipped.¹³⁷ The emphasis on offerings in Andrewes' exposition of this famous passage from Genesis contrasts with interpretations of the same verses that are canvassed in other parts of this thesis, where the focus (rather tellingly) is on Abel's predestined faith rather than his sacrifice as a prefiguration of an offering with salvific potential.¹³⁸

The key point that Andrewes derived from his reading of the story of Cain and Abel's acts of worship was that right worship must include making an offering, a claim which Andrewes proved by comparing the religious practices of Christians, Jews, and pagans.¹³⁹ What is more, Andrewes noted that the centrality of offerings to worship is re-emphasised after the Flood when Noah disembarks the Ark and immediately performs a sacrifice to thank God for his preservation.¹⁴⁰ An offering also appears at the beginning of the New Testament, when the three wisemen present gifts to the infant Christ.¹⁴¹ Hence, at three crucial junctures in the Biblical narrative, Andrewes found offerings featuring centrally within instances of worship. The second key passage, Gen. 4:26, described the moment at which public offerings began. According to Andrewes this was the time when men 'began to call upon the name of the Lord'

¹³⁷ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 378.

¹³⁸ E.g., p. 135, 194, 220, 279, 286, 289.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

under the guidance of Enosh, who was Adam's grandson through Seth. Furthermore, Andrewes believed that Gen. 4:26 'contained the duty of the whole worship of God'.¹⁴² He therefore dedicated a considerable portion of his lecture to examining what Gen. 4:26 revealed about worship and to proving that the verse legitimised his vision for the present church.

At the centre of Gen. 4:26 is Enosh, who was an attractive figure to Andrewes because he could be cast as a priest-like figure. Citing the Greek Church Father Chrysostom, Andrewes contended that Enosh's name distinguished him as the first individual 'that called upon the Name of the Lord'.¹⁴³ For Andrewes it is significant that it is Adam's grand-son who calls upon the Lord, since it 'shewes what manner of Preacher it should be, that is, he must be one of the sons of *Seth*, that *is*, one of the Church'.¹⁴⁴ Only those in possession of 'the power of ecclesiastical authority' should decide who might fulfil the office of preaching.¹⁴⁵ Here, Andrewes staked a claim for clerical authority over the pronouncement of scripture and contended against lay preaching. It is an abiding irony that Andrewes, who consistently aimed at reducing preaching, would be remembered for giving sermons that 'rank with the finest English prose of their time, of any time'.¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere, Andrewes warned that 'Such as will imploy themselves in the ministry of the Gospell, must not be young Schollars... Nor without ground, and soundnesse of judgement and knowledge, for such undertake that, which they are not fit for'.¹⁴⁷ There was an important connection for Andrewes between specialist knowledge garnered through learning and religious authority. Indeed, by insisting upon the necessity of specialist learning as a pre-requisite to teaching the Gospel, Andrewes could ring-fence clerical

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 492.

¹⁴³ J. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 18-45*, trans. R. Hill (Washington D.C., 2001), pp. 45-6. For information regarding available translations that Andrewes may have used, see S. Kennerley, *The Reception of John Chrysostom in Early Modern Europe: Translating and Reading a Greek Church Father from 1417-1624* (Berlin, 2023), pp. 214-27.

¹⁴⁴ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 495.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 496.

¹⁴⁶ Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 373.

authority and de-legitimise mechanic lay preachers. Whereas Adam, Eve, Abel, and Seth had worshipped privately, according to Andrewes, Enosh introduced public worship. Furthermore, Andrewes pointed out that with the coming of Enosh there was now enough congregants to fill the necessary offices of a visible and, crucially, a hierarchical church. From Gen. 4:26 then, Andrewes was able to tease out the crucial characteristics of a church as he conceived of it: a physical holy space set aside for worship, a set liturgy involving ceremony, and an order of church-men led by a clerical figure.

This reading of Gen. 4:26 departed markedly from contemporary Reformed glosses, however, as will become evident from the discussions of this verse which are discussed in later chapters. Typically, Reformed interpretations of Gen. 4:26 tended to downplay the role played by Enosh and emphasised the godly separation of Adam's family from the wicked.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Protestant Bibles including the Coverdale and Geneva editions translated the verse differently to their Catholic counterparts—instead of Enosh being the first to call upon God, it was simply 'men' that began to call upon the Lord. This choice of translation reflected Reformed resistance to the notion of a mediating priesthood. By rendering the subject as simply 'men', not Enosh, the Geneva Bible precluded any reading that might ground liturgical authority in a priestly precedent. For example, Luther, in his Genesis lectures, deduced that Gen. 4:26 taught the importance of worship centred around confession, prayer, and preaching—not ceremonies.¹⁴⁹

In contrast, there were similarities between Andrewes' reading of Gen. 4:26 and that of the most prominent Catholic commentator in the late-sixteenth century, Benedict Pereira. Like Andrewes, Pereira emphasised Enosh's role and suggested that his distinctive contribution was to discern formal rites and ceremonies.¹⁵⁰ This reading offered Andrewes an obvious argument

¹⁴⁸ For the Reformed readings of this verse that Andrewes is dissenting from here, see the discussions below in Chapter Three, pp. 126-28; Chapter Four, pp. 154-8; and Chapter Seven, pp. 280-1.

¹⁴⁹ Luther, *Genesis*, vol. 2, p. 81.

¹⁵⁰ Pereira, *Commentariorum*, p. 763.

for clerical authority on the basis of ceremonial competency, however it also cut against prevailing English Reformed views on the nature of worship. By interpreting Gen. 4 in this fashion, Andrewes constructed a theology of worship that grounded a visible, hierarchical Church order in scriptural antiquity.

Gen. 4:26 was also especially significant for Andrewes, since it described the moment at which proper invocation and the visible church emerged for the first time. According to him, at this moment in sacred history a hierarchically ordered body of worshippers convened in public so as to worship according to a 'lyturgie' and to outwardly profess their faith through prayer under the guidance of a priest. It was no coincidence that this description aligned with Andrewes' vision for the contemporary church too and that he chose to end his lectures at this moment in sacred history, when '*Moses hath brought us to the Roof of the Church*'.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Andrewes' discussion of 'invocation' in relation to Gen. 4:26 provided a clear statement of his views on ecclesiastical authority in relation to worship.

Andrewes observed that 'there is no part of religion...which may not be reduced to invocation'. For him, invocation, or 'calling upon the name of the Lord', contained all aspects of worship and service to God.¹⁵² According to Andrewes, 'the more generall part of invocation' is prayer.¹⁵³ Moreover, he was keen to emphasise that prayer was itself a composite term that encompassed the inward instilling of faith through hearing the Word preached, the outward expression of faith through acts of corporate liturgical worship, and—most importantly of all—the offering made to God alone during the Eucharist by the priest.¹⁵⁴ For Andrewes, preaching and hearing God's word was only the first stage of prayer properly understood, it must be followed by a public profession of religious belief through participation

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 499.

¹⁵² Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 497.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 496-7.

in visible, corporate worship—an act which reached its consummation in the expressing of praise and thanksgiving during the Eucharistic rite.¹⁵⁵ According to Andrewes, here alone was invocation at its highest.¹⁵⁶ Andrewes considered an offering to God alone—the Eucharist—as the highest form of offering since it represented Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and constituted an act of oblation directed towards God exclusively, which the entire congregation participated in. Crucially, the priest was for Andrewes the minister of that sacrifice who had to guide the congregation through the offering, but who did not perform the sacrifice—a subtle distinction that Andrewes, according to McCullough, may have discovered in Eastern Orthodox (as opposed to Roman Catholic) sacramental theology.¹⁵⁷ By insisting that the Eucharist, which required a priest, was the highest form of worship and always had been, Andrewes made yet another claim for ecclesiastical authority.

But invocation could also be understood in other senses, apart from different kinds of prayer, which nonetheless retained a connection to ecclesiastical authority. Andrewes gave the example of priestly blessings, which ‘is called *A putting of the name of God upon the people*’.¹⁵⁸ Andrewes also included the swearing of vows and oaths as part of invocation and explained that ‘when a man doth call on the name of God, and deliver that which is true; there is also a service of invocation, whereby we confesse God able to punish us as a Judge if we swear not truly’.¹⁵⁹ By including blessings and oaths in his definition of invocation, Andrewes made them central to religion alongside prayer and was able to assert two ways in which the visible church and its ministers ensured sacred order was maintained: the carrying out of judicial enquiry

¹⁵⁵ P. McCullough, ‘Absent Presence’: Lancelot Andrewes and 1662’, in *Comfortable words: polity and piety and the book of common prayer*, eds. S. Platten and C. Woods (Norwich, 2012), pp. 81-2.

¹⁵⁶ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 497.

¹⁵⁷ McCullough, ‘Absent Presence’, pp. 83-4, 87-8.

¹⁵⁸ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p. 497.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

(which was discussed in the previous section) and the co-ordination of public worship. In both cases, the clergy exercised distinctive forms of ecclesiastical authority.

In re-defining worship and insisting on the visibility of the Church, Andrewes was directly attacking what he took to be the Puritan obsession with sermons and ‘the oblation of the lips’.¹⁶⁰ In his exegesis, Andrewes was elevating offerings whilst criticising a contemporary godly sermon culture that, he felt, invited what he would later describe as a ‘*Cyclopiian church*’ in which private inspiration and promiscuous preaching transformed the ordered unity of the *corpus mysticum* into a confusion of tongues.¹⁶¹ When Andrewes used the term ‘invocation’ in relation to prayer he was being unavoidably polemical. As Lake puts it, ‘there can be no doubt that Andrewes was seeking definitively to shift the balance between the constituent parts of divine worship away from preaching and towards the sacrament and public prayer’.¹⁶²

Furthermore, Andrewes’ re-evaluation of the structure of worship had direct implications for the nature of the church and ecclesiastical authority, which he made explicit to his audience at St Giles. For example, he noted that his three-fold definition of prayer (preaching, liturgy, and Eucharist) implied several essential features of the Church. First, since the hearing of the Word was a necessary feature of prayer, Andrewes reasoned that there must be ‘parties to teach, and partes to receive direction’.¹⁶³ However, Andrewes noted that not everyone could assume the office of preaching and engage in ‘prophesying’ (expounding on the scriptures), only those who had been authorised to teach by the third party in the church—the governing part—could do so.¹⁶⁴ Here, Andrewes was asserting that the church was hierarchical by nature and his model was reminiscent of the three-fold Trinity in its tripartite division of offices. Andrewes held that only certain persons (ordained ministers) possessed the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 377.

¹⁶¹ Andrewes, *Selected Sermons*, p. 217; Lake, *On Laudianism*, p. 57.

¹⁶² Lake, *On Laudianism*, p. 117.

¹⁶³ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 498.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 496.

‘key of knowledge’ with which the scriptures may be opened to the uninitiated. His suggestion was that the authority to preach is grounded upon a combination of learning and ordination, though there is some ambiguity between these two criteria in Andrewes’ discussion of Genesis. No where in the Bible’s opening book does an ordination take place, but Andrewes was keen to show in his lectures that Genesis proved that preaching was a duty reserved for a select few members of the church. He warned that there are ‘unlearned and unskilfull men that goe about to open the Scriptures, but they doe but pick the lock; they take not the right course’.¹⁶⁵ The result of this wantonness, warned Andrewes, was ‘false faith, zeale, sincerity, preaching, and reformation of many, which indeed is but falsly so called; for their unfruitfull faith is no faith, their blinde zeal is no zeal, their reformation is deformation, and their preaching is but a jingling or prattling, though it be falsly otherwise called’.¹⁶⁶ A crucial consequence of Andrewes’ argument regarding the office of preaching is the foregrounding of the role of the ordained priest as a privileged individual with special knowledge. Possession of that knowledge was proved at the separate, mandatory assessment that the priest had to go through in order to be licensed to preach.

As a minister in the Elizabethan Church of England, Andrewes was the inheritor of a Protestant tradition that emphasised the hearing of the Word, a principle established by Martin Luther in the earliest days of Europe’s Reformation. However, Andrewes was evidently unhappy with expressions of faith that did not also include offerings to God.¹⁶⁷ His critique of ‘empty handed’ worship goes hand-in-hand with his positive vision of orderly, ceremonial, and clerically coordinated worship. In fact, as McCullough notes in relation to one of Andrewes’ later lectures, he tied the role of the minister to presiding over this aspect of worship rather than to preaching, without straying into the Catholic opinion that the priest performs a sacrifice

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 412.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

during the Eucharist.¹⁶⁸ Andrewes likely drew upon the German Lutheran Martin Chemnitz and the Greek Father John Chrysostom's discussions of the Eucharist in order to make an argument for the priest's importance during the rite that did not rely upon Roman Catholic arguments about the sacrament being a sacrifice.¹⁶⁹ In his discussion of the sacrament, Chemnitz had remarked that

in this life the mind always seeks the aid of the senses... Therefore God, who is rich in mercy... did not want to exhibit His grace to us in one way only, namely by the bare Word, but He willed to assist our infirmity through certain aids, namely through the sacraments which He instituted and joined to the promise of the gospel, that is, through certain signs, rites, or ceremonies which meet the senses... for as the Word enters the ears and touches the hearts, so the rite of the sacrament enters the eyes in order that it may move the heart.¹⁷⁰

This description of the sacrament's edifying role speaks to Andrewes' sense of the fullness of right worship and of the need for believers to 'honour God with ... substance', with body as well as mind. For, Andrewes concludes, '*where there is great faith, there will be great sacrifices and oblations*'.¹⁷¹

Andrewes sacramentalist theology had direct implications for his views on the role of the visible church's ordinances, and hence for the authority of the clergy who presided over acts of ceremonial worship. The anti-Calvinist and sacramentalist tones in the Genesis lectures, which Tyacke and McCullough have noted, signal Andrewes' commitment to the view that grace is distributed to all, regardless of personal religious qualification, by the institutional church, through rituals such as the sacrament. This understanding of the provision of grace exemplifies the concept of *Anstaltsnade* (institutional grace) later theorised by Max Weber.¹⁷² Weber's model of institutional grace is a useful heuristic here for a discussion of Andrewes' thought, as *Anstaltsnade* explains how a particular view on the way in which grace is accessed

¹⁶⁸ McCullough, 'Absent Presence', pp. 83-4.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ M. Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, trans. F. Kramer (St Louis, 1978), p. 64.

¹⁷¹ A quote from Corinthians 2:8 in Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 387.

¹⁷² M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. T. Parsons (London, 1965), p. 187.

by the believer has implications for the nature of a church and for religious authority. If grace is accessible through the sacraments, this means that salvation (and therefore the church) is universal. It also means that the clergy—as dispensers of grace—are elevated and the obedience of each individual within the church’s corporate body is required.¹⁷³ Thus, sacramentalist theology provided a powerful tool for defending clerical authority. Andrewes’ lectures on Abel and Enosh at St Giles involved him drawing upon the evidence of early sacred history to show that making an offering—of which the Eucharist was the supreme example—was essential and thus so too were the clergy who mediated that ceremony and turned an offering into an effectual channel of grace.

Andrewes’ biographer Harington recalled that ‘scandal was taken of some... for his [Andrewes’] reverent speaking of the highest mystery of our faith and heavenly food of the Lord’s supper’.¹⁷⁴ Though it is unclear whether Harington was generalising or referring to a specific occasion when Andrewes preached on the Eucharist, it has already been noted that there were several lectures given by him, during the late 1590s, which contain the kind of remarks that might have elicited the outrage Harington described. One lecture in particular on Isaiah 6.6-7, which was preached on 1 October 1598, involved Andrewes comparing the Eucharist to a burning coal from the altar.¹⁷⁵ Exploiting the analogy, Andrew claimed that, like the coal mentioned in Isaiah, ‘nothing is so available to take away sin as the touching of bread and wine with our lips’.¹⁷⁶ As McCullough notes in his editorial remarks on this lecture, to speak of the Eucharist in such high-flown terms was unusual in a period of the Church of

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁷⁴ Harington, *A supplie*, p. 140.

¹⁷⁵ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 520.

¹⁷⁶ Andrewes, *Selected Sermons*, pp. 138-45.

England's history when Reformed Calvinist theology predominated, foremostly because of the implications of that language for thinking about ecclesiastical authority.¹⁷⁷

McCullough contends that here there is more evidence that Andrewes was drawing upon Lutheran sources. In the Isaiah lecture, Andrewes maintained the real presence in the Eucharist. For him, the consecrated bread and wine contained both natural and divine elements.¹⁷⁸ Crucially, Andrewes contended that Christ's presence adhered to the elements prior to its reception by the believer, and that the presence was independent of the believer's faith.¹⁷⁹ From this position, Andrewes derived the principle that receiving the sacrament remits a believer's actual sin, with original sin having been removed during baptism.¹⁸⁰ Though he did not use the term, Andrewes' position in the Isaiah lecture expresses a consubstantial view of the Eucharist. McCullough has suggested that the most comparable statement of Eucharistic theology to Andrewes' can be found in the writings of Chemnitz.¹⁸¹ Tellingly, Andrewes' *Two answers to Cardinal Perron* (1629) paraphrases whole sections from Chemnitz's masterpiece, the *Examination of the Council of Trent* (1565), which he had undoubtedly read.¹⁸² On the subject of the Eucharist, Chemnitz's *Examination* affirmed the real presence upon consecration, the efficacy of the Eucharist in imparting grace, and its role in remitting sin.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 138. See also N. Lossky, *Lancelot Andrewes the preacher (1555-1626): the origins of the mystical theology of the Church of England* (Oxford, 1991); Lake, 'avant-garde conformity', pp. 113-33.

¹⁷⁸ Andrewes, *Apospasmata sacra*, p. 517.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 519.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 518.

¹⁸¹ Andrewes, *Select sermons*, see headnote on p. 138.

¹⁸² For the notoriously incomplete catalogue of Andrewes' library at the time of his death, see D. Chambers, 'A Catalogue of the Library of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 5/2 (1972), pp. 99-121. It is important to note that the catalogue only records the folios that Andrewes left to Pembroke College if they did not already have a copy. It is certain that the college had a copy of Chemnitz's *Examination* prior to Andrewes' death in 1626. For other examples of Andrewes' paraphrasing of Chemnitz's *Examination*, see Lancelot Andrewes, 'Two answers to Cardinal Perron, and other miscellaneous works of Lancelot Andrewes', in *The Anglo-Catholic Library of Theology*, vol. 9, eds. J. Bliss and J. Wilson (1854), pp. 76-80.

¹⁸³ M. Chemnitz, vol. 2, pp. 64-76; B. Wollan Teigen, *The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Brewster, 1986), *passim*.

When Andrewes, in his final lecture on Gen. 4:26, invoked Psalm 116:13 and proclaimed that ‘then is invocation at the highest, when a man hath the cup of salvation in his hand’, he summarised not only his reading of this particular verse but also his theory of worship and the claim for ecclesiastical authority that underlay it.¹⁸⁴ By reinterpreting the earliest biblical acts of worship through a sacramentalist lens, Andrewes argued for an ecclesiology in which offerings—culminating in the Eucharist—constituted the highest form of invocation, and one that required clerical mediation. This vision was consciously at odds with the dominant Calvinist models of his time, which emphasized preaching and individual faith. Through figures like Abel and Enosh, Andrewes constructed a genealogical precedent for visible, hierarchical, and ceremonial church order, and he grounded clerical authority in scripture and sacrament alike. As such, Andrewes’ lectures not only defended the established Church’s liturgical practices but also articulated a vision of religious authority in which grace was mediated not through subjective assurance but through institutional rites. In a period marked by a contest over the nature of worship and the role of the clergy, Andrewes’ lectures on Abel and Enosh were a liturgical manifesto—one that privileged sacramental presence over sermon-centric piety, and that redefined invocation as a priestly act embedded within the visible church.

¹⁸⁴ Andrewes, *Apospasmatica sacra*, p. 497.

‘the admired Bishop Andrewes’: Genesis, Ecclesiastical Authority, and the early-seventeenth century Church of England

The notes on the Genesis lectures contained in *Apospasmata Sacra* reveal how Andrewes used the Bible’s opening book to ground his narrative about the origins of the church, an institution which he claimed was visible, corporate, and hierarchical in nature. Moreover, Andrewes also used Genesis to justify an independent ecclesiastical authority, which had proprietary, juridical, and sacramental aspects. This chapter’s insights regarding Andrewes’ use of Genesis support the historiographical contention that under Elizabeth he was already developing theological and ecclesiological views in his oratorical performances that challenged prevailing sentiments in the established Church.¹⁸⁵

However, given that the influence which Andrewes had on the seventeenth-century Church of England—especially during the Caroline era—has been widely recognised, it is also important to consider what this chapter’s findings might suggest about the use of Genesis for thinking about the nature of the Church and ecclesiastical authority in that later period.¹⁸⁶ The end of this chapter begins to consider this question, which will be returned to in Chapter Five, by considering the evident continuities between the arguments contained in Andrewes’ Genesis lectures and those expressed in one of his later Court performances delivered in 1618.

On 24 May 1618, Andrewes delivered a Whitsunday sermon before King James VI & I at Greenwich.¹⁸⁷ Twenty years had elapsed since Andrewes completed his Genesis lectures at St Giles and in that time he had risen in the Church to the rank of bishop.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, he had also established himself as the pre-eminent Jacobean Court preacher.¹⁸⁹ For his Pentecostal

¹⁸⁵ See fn. 28 in this chapter. See also A. Milton, ‘The Church of England, Rome, and the True Church: The Demise of a Jacobean Consensus’, in *The early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. K. Fincham (Basingstoke, 1993), pp. 187-8.

¹⁸⁶ See fn. 7 in this chapter.

¹⁸⁷ Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, pp. 207-24.

¹⁸⁸ McCullough, ‘Andrewes, Lancelot’, *ODNB*.

¹⁸⁹ Andrewes, *Selected sermons*, p. xiii.

sermon, Andrewes took Acts 2:16-21 as his text, and he relished the opportunity provided by the occasion to re-iterate his vision of the subordinate relationship of ‘prophesying’ (meaning sermonising) to ‘invocation’ as components of prayer, and to once again emphasise the importance of order and hierarchy within the visible church. As we have seen, these themes had been central to his Genesis lectures.

McCullough has noted that a crucial context for the Whitsunday sermon was James’s ill-fated attempt to impose English ceremonial worship and episcopal church-government on the Scottish Kirk the previous year.¹⁹⁰ By contrast, in the English context Andrewes’ ideas about ecclesiastical authority and the church were in the ascendancy.¹⁹¹ The ideas about the nature of the visible church and of ecclesiastical authority that he promoted in his Genesis lectures, and which are also in evidence in his 1618 Greenwich sermon, became increasingly prominent in the Caroline period, which witnessed a resurgence in episcopal secular authority, confident ecclesiastical courts, and sacramental worship.¹⁹²

When he wrote the foreword to *Apospasmata Sacra* in the much-changed religious context of the late-Interregnum, the royalist episcopalian Thomas Pierce praised ‘the admired Bishop Andrewes’ (alongside the ‘judicious Hooker’) for his insistence on order and hierarchy within the Church.¹⁹³ The publication of the notes on Andrewes’ Genesis lectures in 1657 was clearly part of a project by Pierce and his allies to re-claim the recent history and indeed the identity of the Church of England, and to claim *Apospasmata Sacra*’s source for a particular ecclesiastical tradition.¹⁹⁴ The highly prejudiced Pierce felt that Andrewes’ reading of the origins of the Church in Genesis, with its emphasis on the divine institution of ecclesiastical

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., see headnote on p. 207.

¹⁹¹ Lake, *On Laudianism*, p. 7.

¹⁹² J. Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 46-86.

¹⁹³ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, sig.)()()v.

¹⁹⁴ A. Milton, *England’s Second Reformation: the battle for the Church of England 1625-1662* (Cambridge, 2021), pp. 379-436.

authority and its warnings about lay preaching, was prophetic of the ecclesiological bedlam of the Interregnum.¹⁹⁵ Thus, using Genesis to generate a sacerdotalist vision of the Church in England proved to have a persistent afterlife, as was suggested in the Introduction. Indeed, as Chapter Five will show, later writers followed a similar pattern of interpretation to Andrewes in appealing to Genesis so as to justify a visible, embodied, and sacramental church. However, in the following two chapters, the thesis considers another conformist and then a Separatist example of early modern English Genesis commentary, both of which reached sharply differing conclusions to Andrewes about religious authority, the church, and its relationship to the civil power.

¹⁹⁵ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, sig.)(v).

Chapter 3 — ‘honourable Fathers’? Godly magistracy and ministry in Andrew Willet’s *Hexapla in Genesin*, c.1605

Andrew Willet’s commentary, *Hexapla in Genesin* (1605), brought the Bible’s opening book to bear on the religious politics of early-Jacobean England.¹ Whilst dedicating the work to King James VI & I, the Hertfordshire clergyman commended Genesis as a ‘worthie historie’ from which ‘your majestie may receive somewhat’.² He emphasised that it set ‘forth the life and acts of sixe honourable Fathers’ as ‘examples and inticements to vertue’, but he described their actions in presentist terms.³ There was Adam, ‘who taught his sonnes apart from the wicked’ and separated them ‘from the superstition of the world’; Jacob, the ‘supplanter of Popish superstition’; and Joseph, who had added what was ‘wanting in the Church, or Commonwealth’.⁴ Willet was seemingly suggesting that the Patriarchs were models for England’s monarch that could teach him about enacting reformation. This kind of scriptural comparison was designed to appeal to a monarch who was himself a keen expositor, using exegesis to construct his own authority.⁵ Moreover, Willet intended several Privy Counsellors and Bishops to learn from Genesis through his commentary too. Parts of the *Hexapla* were dedicated to the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Marre, Viscount Cranbourne, Lord Mountjoy, Archbishop Bancroft, Bishop Vaughan, Bishop Matthew, and Bishop Heton. These ancillary dedications reflected on what the Patriarchs could suggest to courtiers and prelates about

¹ A. Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin: That is, A Sixfold Commentarie upon Genesis* (Cambridge, 1605). For a contemporary biography see P. Smith, ‘The Life of Andrew Willet’, in A. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1634), sig. a3v-sig. a4r.

² Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ J. Rickard, ‘The Word of God and the Word of the King: the Scriptural Exegeses of James VI and I and the King James Bible’, in *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and Government*, ed. R. Houlbrooke (London, 2006), p. 135.

furthering reform, and specifically about encouraging preaching and purging Catholic ‘idolatry’.⁶

These illustrious dedicatees were not the *Hexapla*’s sole—or even primary—intended audience, however. Willet’s commentary was an educational resource, which aided ministers, preachers, and students by gathering the collective wisdom of Jewish and Christian exegetes on Genesis into a single compendium. Its title, *Hexapla*, denoted Willet’s six-pronged approach to commentary, which combined exegesis with systematic theology, and which was designed for ease of use.⁷ Each chapter contained a narrative summary, a comparison of translations, and commentaries on the ‘doubtfull questions’, doctrinal, confutational, and moral issues that arose from key verses.⁸ Willet’s commentary featured patristic, medieval scholastic, rabbinic, sixteenth-century Catholic, and Protestant commentaries—though the *Hexapla* was especially indebted to the Reformed French biblicist Augustin Marlorat and his co-religionist and compatriot, the Hebraist Jean Mercier, for their knowledge of Reformed and rabbinic scholarship respectively.⁹ Willet also drew on the Spanish Jesuit Benedict Pereira’s scholarship on the Church Fathers’ Genesis exegeses.¹⁰ After all, he thought that the Spaniard ‘hath taken great paines’ in his commentary, though ‘he have many slips in historie and not a few errors for doctrine’.¹¹ The *Hexapla* was a product of early modern England’s nascent commentary

⁶ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. Aa2-sig. Aa2v; sig. Kk1-sig. Kk2.

⁷ Ibid., ‘Reverendissimis in Christo patribus’, unfol., [p. 1].

⁸ On the *Hexapla*’s layout, see A. Williams, *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527-1633* (Richmond, 1948), p. 19; R. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, 1987), pp. 513-4. Willet consulted the Greek Septuagint, the Aramaic Chaldee, the Vulgate, Immanuel Tremellius’ Latin Bible (1569-1575), the ‘Great’ Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1599), Santes Pagninus’ Latin Bible (1528) and Benedictus Montanus’ interlinear translation of the Old Testament (1568-72).

⁹ A. Marlorat, *Genesis cum Catholica Expositione Ecclesiastica* (Geneva, 1562); J. Mercier, *In Genesin Primum Mosis Librum*, ed. T. Beza (Geneva, 1598). See also É. Haag and E. Haag, *La France Protestante*, vol. 7 (Paris, 1857), pp. 256-9, 368-71.

¹⁰ For further discussion of Protestant reliance on Catholic Genesis scholarship see Williams, *Common Expositor*, p. 33.

¹¹ Willet, *Hexapla*, ‘Certain Directions To the Reader to be observed in the reading of this booke’, unfol.; B. Pereira, *Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesin* (Lyon, 1594). On Pereira, see M. Lamanna, ‘Benet Perera: the Epistemological Question at the Heart of Early Jesuit Philosophy’, in *Jesuit Philosophy on the Eve of Modernity*, ed. C. Casalini (Leiden, 2019), pp. 270-4.

culture, and it reflected the debt of that genre to continental biblical scholarship—a dynamic that was discussed in Chapter One. The commentary’s comprehensiveness, which its author suggested ‘hath not beene yet...set forth upon this book’, ensured that Willet’s ‘absolute Tractate upon Genesis’s was popular. Indeed, the *Hexapla* was re-issued in 1608 and 1632/3, and its appearance in several clerical libraries—including that of his dedicatee Tobie Matthew, at York—indicates its wide appeal to Reformed theologians in England and beyond.¹²

However, the *Hexapla* was more than just a pedagogical text, it possessed a message directed at both its popular and patriciate audiences. Willet’s commentary drew the king and his senior leaders’ attention to the instructiveness of the Genesis Fathers for contemporary rulers. It emphasised the analogy between James’ civil and spiritual authority and the rule of the Patriarchs, and Willet uncovered evidence in Genesis of Patriarchs putting that power to godly ends by preaching and purging idolatry. In the dedications printed alongside the commentary, Willet drew these actions to the attention of the king, his counsellors, and the bishops.

The *Hexapla* presented Genesis as a scriptural blueprint for reformation led by ‘honourable fathers’.¹³ Essential to this reading was the distinctive way in which Willet’s commentary construed authority. According to the *Hexapla*, Genesis proved that authority was both divinely bestowed and inherited. Moreover, in the first age, civil and spiritual offices both supposedly belonged to the same ruler.¹⁴ Importantly, this authority over religious and civil matters stemmed from the holder being a Patriarch, where that term is understood to mean the head of an extended household who acted as both a religious leader and a bearer of legal

¹² Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶2. The *Hexapla* is listed in: W. Crowe, *A collection, or catalogue of our English writers on the Old and New Testament* (1663), p. 2; J. Raine, *A catalogue of the printed books in the library of the Dean and Chapter of York* (York, 1896), p. 449; Anon., *Auction Catalogue of the Library of F. Gomarus*, eds. E. Dekker, J. Knoop, and C. Verdegaal (Leiden, 1996), p. 16; Anon., *Catalogus Librorum bibliothecae collegij Harvardini* (Boston, 1723), p. 34.

¹³ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

authority.¹⁵ According to Willet's reading of Genesis, Creation's hierarchy dictated that the father governed his children, even when they entered adulthood. Thus, the Patriarch could be said to exercise political as well as domestic authority. Moreover, the father also possessed the right to conduct sacrifices, that is, to exercise spiritual authority.¹⁶

Here, Willet exploited one of James' favourite political languages for discussing kingship.¹⁷ The *Hexapla* portrayed the Patriarchs' rule as personal, it was their fatherly leadership that united their kinsmen-subjects, and this was most evident in their directions concerning religious uniformity. This interpretation of authority in Genesis aligned with James's definition of the State 'simply by allegiance to its king'.¹⁸ The model also addressed challenges facing James in the early years of his reign over three kingdoms: how to justify his accession on the basis of descent, and how 'tie up the loose ends left over by the business of the accession' through legislating 'for a union of the kingdoms...in addition to the union of the crowns'.¹⁹ With regards to the first issue, Genesis was useful since it contained discussions of birthright, inheritance, and blood-line, whilst it said nothing about popular consent or legislative bodies. Meanwhile, the Patriarchs' efforts to ensure religious uniformity seemingly answered the problem of unification with Scotland.²⁰ Willet urged James to emulate Jacob and other Old Testament rulers in removing 'all mixture of religion' by not admitting 'any toleration of contrary worship'. The king, he continued, should expell 'all Idolatrous...Masse-Priests' and 'put all such from places of government, and...reject their service and imployment, either in

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 373.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 278-9.

¹⁷ James VI and I, *Political Writings*, ed. J. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1994), p. 76.

¹⁸ M. Questier, *Dynastic Politics and the British Reformations, 1558-1630* (Oxford, 2019), p. 308.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 282.

²⁰ C. Russell, *King James VI and I and his English Parliaments* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 123-39.

Church or common wealth'.²¹ This was a typically godly response to the Catholic argument that union required toleration.²²

However, despite this appeal to James' political instincts, there are strong grounds—based on both Willet's style of divinity and the content of the *Hexapla*—for arguing that he was sceptical of whether the new king would actually fulfil this reforming, patriarchal role. Moreover, he subtly communicated this suspicion to the godly reader; throughout the *Hexapla* there are examples of Willet making asides that were subtly critical of James, 'our peerlesse *Pharoah*'.²³ Meanwhile, Willet's seemingly diverse selection of dedicatees suggested that he was promoting a holistic and unifying vision of religious community—one in which king, counsellor, and prelate encouraged the preaching ministry, which spread the Gospel and fought against popery—but the dedications briefly discussed below reveal that he was less conciliatory than he appeared. Lastly, Willet's Genesis-inspired recommendations for the Jacobean regime's problems put pressure on the authorities to accelerate church reform, because the *Hexapla* communicated his religious and political views to his godly readers—opinions which ministers could then promulgate in parish sermons on Genesis.

This chapter's reading of Willet's *Hexapla* demonstrates how the vernacular biblical commentary genre could serve specific polemical ends through the appropriation of the authority of exegesis.²⁴ In making this argument, the chapter revises the *Hexapla*'s historical significance, its context, and the extent to which Willet's turn to writing commentaries curtailed his involvement in early-Jacobean religious politics. Moreover, it offers a new perspective on the relationship between biblical commentary, Protestant pedagogy, and religious polemic. While historians have noted calls in this period from English clergy for learned Protestant

²¹ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 201.

²² Questier, *Dynastic Politics*, p. 282.

²³ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. Kk1v.

²⁴ Williams, *Common Expositor*, p. 31.

theological works to answer Roman Catholic polemics, less attention has been paid to how these materials could galvanize reforming campaigns by opening the scriptures and identifying useful precedents from sacred history.²⁵ The *Hexapla* is a case in point. Though it was dedicated to those in authority, its call for a preaching ministry and an assault on popery was intended to inspire godly readers. Moreover, the work would have a long-lasting influence. References to the *Hexapla* appeared in works printed during the mid-seventeenth century, a period in which godly religious reforms achieved (and far exceeded) the demands laid out by ‘Doctor *Willet*’ several decades before.²⁶

²⁵ A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: the Roman and Protestant churches in English Protestant thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 14-15, 39.

²⁶ J. Mayer, *A commentary upon the whole Old Testament* (1653), unfol., [sig. A4v].

Willet's *Hexapla* and the Puritan Campaign for Reform in the early-seventeenth century

The *Hexapla* appeared in the Stationers' Register on 9 May 1605.²⁷ Despite its length (the first edition ran to four-hundred and seventy pages), it is difficult to ascertain how long Willet spent working on it whilst he was ministering in Barley—the countryside living near Cambridge that he held from 1599 until his untimely death following a horse-riding accident in 1621. Willet informs the reader that 'I almost have at spare times beene as many yeares occupied in preparing this worke, as the Elephant is in bringing forth her young'. How much time this equated to (and whether he was exaggerating) remains unclear.²⁸ Regardless, the *Hexapla* was produced during the earliest period of James' reign in England. This was a time of religious uncertainty that witnessed renewed Puritan lobbying for reform, which climaxed at the Hampton Court Conference (1604).²⁹

In the early 1600s, Willet was embroiled in controversies with conservative figures in the Church of England.³⁰ To his opponents, Willet was a Presbyterian who had anonymously authored *A Christian letter of certaine English Protestants* (1599), a tract that attacked Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593) and Bancroft's *Dangerous Positions* (1593).³¹ Though he denied authoring this text, its emphasis on the importance of public preaching, and the reserving of that right to those called and ordained alone, echoed Willet's emphasis in the *Hexapla* on promoting a preaching ministry.³² Indeed, Willet had made it clear previously that whilst he accepted episcopacy, he wished for further reform of the Church and

²⁷ E. Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London; 1554-1640 A.D.*, vol. 3 (1876), p. 123b.

²⁸ Willet, *Hexapla*, 'Certaine Directions', unfol.

²⁹ K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I', in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. K. Fincham (Basingstoke, 1993), pp. 25-6.

³⁰ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 17-25.

³¹ Anon., *A Christian letter of certaine English protestants, unfained favourers of the present state of religion, authorised and professed in England* (Middelburg, 1599); R. Hooker, *The Folger Library Edition of The Works of Richard Hooker*, vols. 1-2, eds. G. Edelen and W. Speed-Hill (Cambridge, 1977); R. Bancroft, *Daungerous positions and proceedings* (1593). On Willet's involvement in *A Christian Letter*, see D. MacCulloch, 'Richard Hooker's Reputation', in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. T. Kirby (Leiden, 2008), p. 574.

³² Anon., *A Christian letter*, p. 25.

especially desired the increased provision of preachers.³³ Several of Willet's polemics from these debates were dedicated to the recently crowned James and they called for further reformation.³⁴ Willet's most famous work, an internationally renowned refutation of Catholicism entitled *Synopsis Papismi* (1592), had already gone through several editions and translations by the time that James was crowned.³⁵ However, upon the king's accession Willet swiftly replaced a dedication to Bancroft in the 1603 edition with a new one addressed to James, in which he called upon the monarch to govern the Church in the 'evangelicall way'. He declared that 'God hath a greate worke to be perfected by your hands: what David begun, Solomon must finish'.³⁶ It is possible that he offered similar messages to the heir to the throne, Prince Henry, whilst serving him as a chaplain-in-ordinary.³⁷ On the basis of his stance regarding episcopacy and Church reform, Willet conforms to the category of 'moderate Puritan', which has been outlined by Ken Fincham and Peter Lake amongst others.³⁸ That Willet accepted James' preferred system of ecclesiastical polity, and indeed cultivated relationships with several bishops, suggests that his vision of a reformed church was compatible with the current system of governance.

The most detailed study of Willet in this period appears in Anthony Milton's work *Catholic and Reformed*. Milton uses Willet as a stalking-horse for surveying the theological and political tensions that conformists confronted during the Church of England's transition

³³ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 25.

³⁴ See dedications in A. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1603), sig. A2-sig. A4v; A. Willet, *An antilogie or counterplea* (London, 1603), unfol., [sig. ¶3-sig. ¶4].

³⁵ On the popularity of Willet's *Synopsis*, see MacCulloch, 'Richard Hooker's Reputation', p. 574; A. Milton, 'The Church of England and the Palatinate, 1566-1642', in *The Reception of Continental Reformation in Britain*, eds. P. Ha and P. Collinson (Oxford, 2010), p. 147.

³⁶ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1603), sig. A4v.

³⁷ Milton, 'Willet, Andrew (1561/2-1621)', *ODNB*.

³⁸ Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', pp. 25-6. The label 'moderate Puritan' is used here to denote those clergymen within the established Church who urged greater alignment with the continental Reformed churches, but who worked within the existing ecclesiological system. See P. Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 6. For a summary of previous attempts to classify Willet's religious politics, see D. Pollock, 'Early Stuart Polemical Hermeneutics: Andrew Willet's 1611 Romans Hexapla' (D.Phil. Thesis, Calvinist Theological Seminary, 2016), pp. 3-5.

from the Tudor to the Stuart age.³⁹ Having charted the various theological disputes that Willet weighed into, Milton contends that the *Hexapla* marked a caesura in his career. For Milton, the *Hexapla* represents Willet's acquiescence to Bancroft's request that he focus on writing commentaries.⁴⁰ Willet certainly wanted to give the impression that he, in Milton's words, 'shrank from any further direct involvement in religious politics'.⁴¹ Addressing Bancroft and Vaughan, Willet acknowledged the polemical tone of his previous works and assured them of his resolve 'to compensate for the rashness of my early writings by the maturity of this work'.⁴² However, this chapter revises Milton's interpretation by revealing an ideological dimension to the *Hexapla* that belies Willet's assurances.

The chapter reads Willet's commentary within the context of attempts to lobby James for religious reform following his coronation in England. Rather than marking the end of his involvement in early-Jacobean religious politics, then, the *Hexapla* represented a shift of strategy on Willet's part.⁴³ Several historians have remarked upon the way in which writing scriptural commentary enabled individuals to 'represent their polemical views in less inflammatory ways'.⁴⁴ Willet was doing precisely that in his Genesis commentary. Whilst he laboured to appear conciliatory towards his powerful dedicatees, his *Hexapla* perpetuated the calls for reform that he had voiced throughout his earlier career. It is important, then, to read Willet's commentary in the context of the early-seventeenth century campaigns for religious

³⁹ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp. 13-27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25; Milton, 'Willet, Andrew', *ODNB*. Willet produced commentaries on Genesis (1605), 1 Samuel (1607), Exodus (1608), Romans (1610), Daniel (1611), 2 Samuel (1612), and Leviticus (1631).

⁴¹ Milton, 'Willet, Andrew', *ODNB*.

⁴² ['scriptionis ergo meae temeritatem, si primis annis hic forte impegerim, istius operis maturitate compensare statuo'] Willet, *Hexapla*, 'Reverendissimis in Christo patribus', [p. 1].

⁴³ A similar conclusion is reached in S. Tutino, "Makyng Recusancy Deathe Outrighte"? Thomas Pounce, Andrew Willet and The Catholic Question in Early Jacobean England', *British Catholic History* 27/1 (2004/5), p. 44.

⁴⁴ Rickard, 'The Word of God', pp. 137-8; K. Sharpe 'Reading revelations: prophecy, hermeneutics and politics in early modern Britain', in *Reading, society, and politics in early modern England*, eds. K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 122-64.

reform, which greeted James in the form of the Millenary Petition (1603) as soon as he journeyed south to claim the English throne.

When James was crowned king of England in 1603, there was uncertainty regarding what the monarch's religious policy would be. Michael Questier argues that James deliberately encouraged this confusion so as to avoid being tied down to a specific ideological position, and to give him maximum room to manoeuvre.⁴⁵ From Willet's perspective, there were cautious reasons for optimism. James's advice to his son in *Basilikon Doron* (1599/1603) to see 'your dominions planted with good Pastors' could be read as a call for a godly preaching ministry, for example.⁴⁶ Indeed, Willet shamelessly quoted the king's book back to him: 'your Majestie professeth to be a nourish-father to the Church, *counting it one of your fairest styles*'.⁴⁷ Furthermore, to-date James' religious experience had been as a member of the Scottish Kirk and moderate Puritans like Willet had grounds for hoping that the new king would share their concerns about the English Church. However, James's subsequent pledge at the Hampton Court Conference (1604) to invest further in the preaching ministry did not equate to him aligning with the Puritan cause against the prelates, in fact, it was an attempt to win over more moderate reformers to outright conformity by offering concessions in return for overt professions of loyalty to the crown.⁴⁸

Willet's *Hexapla* appeared in print approximately a year and four months after the Hampton Court Conference took place. Although the event itself and the king's position in the debates remains contested, there is a general consensus amongst historians that the outcomes of the Conference represented a failure by Puritans to secure significant reforms.⁴⁹ Indeed,

⁴⁵ Questier, *Dynastic Politics*, p. 278.

⁴⁶ James VI and I, *Political Writings*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ See Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶2v; James VI and I, *Political Writings*, p. 27.

⁴⁸ Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', p. 26.

⁴⁹ The strongest arguments for the Conference's failure and James' opposition to the Puritans in the Hampton Court debates are F. Shriver, 'Hampton Court Re-visited: James I and the Puritans', *JEH* 33 (1982), pp. 48–71; A. Cromartie, 'King James and the Hampton Court Conference', in *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and*

between the Conference and the *Hexapla*'s publication the 1604 Canons were issued, and a subsequent subscription campaign led by Bancroft resulted in deprivations for around eighty ministers who would not subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer—though the intensity with which this campaign was pursued varied by region.⁵⁰ Whether James or Bancroft is understood as the driving force behind this anti-Puritan policy entirely depends on one's views of the former's stance at the Conference.⁵¹ However, the lobbying efforts leading up to the Conference indicate that the old Elizabethan Puritan movement was alive and still possessed the ability to co-ordinate a reform campaign, with the support of sympathetic courtiers and prelates.⁵²

Willet wrote the *Hexapla* as part of this push for reform. Moreover, in exploiting the commentary genre as a vehicle for lobbying, Willet's commentary helped perpetuate godly ideals in the difficult years that followed. He furnished the Puritan cause with a means to sustain its influence in early-seventeenth-century England's religious politics, through the production of a learned biblical commentary containing ideological messages, which was available to university students, parish preachers, and lay readers for years to come.

This subversive feature of the *Hexapla* has largely gone unnoticed.⁵³ It has often been assumed that early modern English Bible commentaries and other theological genres are somehow neutral and unpolemical—this, as Lake notes, is a mistake.⁵⁴ Though Willet gave Bancroft and Vaughan the impression that his work was a devotional labour, which redounded

Government, ed. R. Houlbrook (London, 2006), pp. 61-80. For a dissenting voice that emphasises the Conference's achievements, see M. Curtis, 'Hampton Court Conference and Its Aftermath', *History* 46/156 (1961), pp. 1-16. For the middle view that James was a partial, third-party contributor at the Conference and that the Puritans failed to make the most of the opportunity presented to them, see P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 2021), pp. 508-28.

⁵⁰ Questier, *Dynastic Politics*, p. 281; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', p. 26.

⁵¹ C.f., Cromartie, 'King James', pp. 73-4; Fincham and Lake, 'Ecclesiastical Policies', p. 173.

⁵² Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 512-13.

⁵³ An exception is Pollock, 'Early Stuart Polemical Hermeneutics', p. 25.

⁵⁴ P. Lake, *The boxmaker's revenge: 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy' and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 5-6; Sharpe 'Reading revelations', pp. 122-64.

to the profit of ‘the Church of God’ and the ‘Christian use of the carefull reader’ by ‘setting forth the word of God’, its edifying function had implications for religious politics.⁵⁵ Willet emplotted a model of godly magistracy and ministry onto Genesis that reflected the early-Jacobean established Church. While he did place demands upon James and the other dedicatees, such as calling for the promotion of preaching, Willet also espoused a moderate vision of the church wherein godly preachers would underwrite the authority of the king and his prelates through their sermons in exchange for adequate provision being made for the planting of every parish. Willet’s affection towards Matthew Heton—his diocesan bishop—and Tobie Matthew, hinged upon their ‘humilitie, and love...towards Ministers and Preachers’. Tellingly, Heton deprived none of his dioceses’ ministers after Bancroft launched the Subscription campaign.⁵⁶ This suggests that Willet’s conception of a godly preaching ministry was compatible with an evangelically orientated episcopate, a point he stressed in the *Hexapla*’s dedications.

⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla*, unfol., [sig. ¶4-sig. ¶4v].

⁵⁶ Willet, *Hexapla*, unfol., between pp. 441-43; Idem., *A catholicon, that is, A generall preservative or remedie against the pseudocatholike religion gathered out of the catholike epistle of S. Jude* (1602), sig. ¶4v. On Heton, see B. Usher, ‘Heton, Martin (1554-1609)’, *ODNB*.

Examples of ‘godly fathers?’ Willet’s dedicatory appeal to the Jacobean “Patriarchs”

There were a range of reasons why an early-Jacobean author might dedicate a work to a potential patron at Court or within the Church, these included: expressing personal loyalty, seeking career advancement, or investment.⁵⁷ None of these motives seem to fit with Willet’s case, however. By the time he came to publish the *Hexapla*, the Hertfordshire clergyman was already well-endowed. Three years before the commentary’s publication, Greenbury Manor in Barley (formerly a Monastic property) was conveyed to Willet by John Payne and his wife Dorothy.⁵⁸ Willet later bequeathed the property (including land held as both demesne and copyhold) to his son John.⁵⁹ Moreover, Willet’s living was a valuable one, which owned glebe land in the parish.⁶⁰ Indeed Willet set up a charity that included a house and three-quarter acres of land, which yielded £3 annually.⁶¹ The clergyman’s will provides further evidence of his personal wealth. Sufficiently wealthy to leave gifts to all fourteen of his children, as well as his wife Jacobine, Willet’s bequests included: £100 per annum to several of his children, two advowsons, and a valuable copy of Montanus’s Hebrew-Latin interlinear Bible that had aided him in writing the *Hexapla*.⁶² It seems unlikely then that Willet’s appeals for patronage were primarily financially motivated. Instead, the following discussion of the dedications in the *Hexapla* suggests that Willet was seeking support for his ideological cause. Besides addressing King James, Willet’s choice of dedicatees was strategic. Moreover, the differences in tone and substance between the dedications indicates that Willet was simultaneously trying to assuage his opponents’ fears whilst promoting his reforming agenda to more sympathetic ears.

⁵⁷ G. Parry, ‘Literary Patronage’, in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, eds. D. Loewenstein and J. Mueller (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 117-40.

⁵⁸ W. Page, ed., *The Victoria history of the county of Hertfordshire*, vol. 4 (London, 1902), p. 39.

⁵⁹ TNA PROB 11/139/289, ff. 194r-v.

⁶⁰ Page, *Victoria history*, p. 39.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² TNA PROB 11/139/289, ff. 194r-v.

The *Hexapla* was principally addressed to ‘The High And Mightie, Right Vertuous and most Christian Prince, King James, *our dread Sovereigne, by the grace of God, King of Great Britane, of France, and Ireland, defender of the true and Christian faith*’ and it celebrated ‘the joyfull entrance of this third yeare of your Majesties happie raigne’.⁶³ At the time of writing, though, this reign was far from settled as has already been discussed. The king’s ambition to rule over a single state was confronted by the problem of regional variation in systems of government, law, and confessional identity. Vital for the monarch’s answer to these challenges was his emphasis on personal monarchy, and a rule based on divine authority rather than popular consent.⁶⁴ The language through which James expressed this notion of kingship was paternalistic; for example, in the *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) he wrote that ‘The King towards his people is rightly compared to a father of children, and to a head of a body composed of divers members’.⁶⁵ This was a biblical analogy. James reminded his reader that ‘as fathers, the good Princes, and Magistrates of the people of God acknowledged themselves to their subjects’.⁶⁶ Naomi Tadmor notes that the term ‘Prince’ was increasingly used in English Bibles during this period as a general translation for several distinct Hebrew terms of office. As well as making the Old Testament polities seem more relevant, Tadmor rightly argues that this choice of translation promoted princely rule.⁶⁷

Nowhere in the Bible was this paternalistic discourse more prominent than in Genesis, where the Patriarchs ruled over their families as fathers, kings, and priests. Often practising a nomadic lifestyle, the Patriarchs united disparate peoples—according to Willet—through securing direct allegiance and enforcing right religion.⁶⁸ An example Willet commented on was

⁶³ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶2.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ James VI & I, *Political Writings*, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Ibid. See also J. Figgis, *The divine right of kings* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 137-9.

⁶⁷ N. Tadmor, *The social universe of the English Bible: scripture, society, and culture in early modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 122.

⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 254.

the occasion when Abraham compelled his servant to swear an oath to serve him: ‘As Abraham here taketh an oath of his servant, so officers may lawfully be sworne for the upright execution of their office, and subjects to be loyall and true to their Prince’.⁶⁹ Whilst this was undoubtedly a riposte to Anabaptist denials of oath-taking that James—who famously denounced ‘that vile sect’ in *Basilikon Doron*—would have appreciated, it also encouraged James to achieve unity in a similar manner to the Patriarchs, by attracting allegiance to his person from his subjects. In 1606, the imposition of a promise of loyalty to the crown on English Catholics via the Oath of Allegiance would lend Willet’s conclusion an added significance.⁷⁰ So too would the lawyer Edward Coke’s findings concerning the case of the *Postnati* two years later, which concluded that individuals born under a sovereign’s rule owe natural allegiance to the monarch in God’s eyes.⁷¹ Additionally, Willet thought that through promoting preaching and through cracking down on divisive idolaters, the king could demonstrate godly leadership as the Church’s ‘high-father’ and unite his subjects under the one true faith.⁷²

Willet’s overriding concern in the dedication was the plight of Puritan preachers—‘those faithfull, sound, and sober preachers of the truth’—and he called on the king to protect them.⁷³ He lauded James’s even-handedness in matters of religious politics: ‘Your Highnesse honourable *equitie* is manifest, in that your Majestie professeth *to love and honour the grave men and preachers of either opinions...as Jacob had a right hand for Ephraim, and a left for Manasses*’.⁷⁴ Willet sought to persuade James that preachers were a loyal resource that strengthened his rule, and that, if they were occasionally too hot, they were deserving of the monarch’s discretionary forgiveness, rather than his ire: ‘Your Majestie in your princely

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ C. Condren, *Argument and authority in early modern England: the presupposition of oaths and offices* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 251. See also Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 232; James VI & I, *Political Writings*, p. 6.

⁷¹ K. Commons, ““Duplex and reciprocal” obligation: Calvin’s Case (1608) and the development of early modern citizenship’, *Historical Research* 20 (2024), p. 2.

⁷² Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶2v.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

wisdom knoweth how for the comon *utilitie* to beare with some mens *informatie* [*sic*]: *as fathers...doe beare with their sonnes while they are children*'.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Willet urged James to grow the national preaching ministry. It was through funding preachers that he felt James could spread God's Word across his kingdoms and establish a fully reformed religious community. The dedication praised the king's policy of seldom raising clerical taxes and of ensuring sufficient provision for the '*sustention of the Pastors and Ministers*', and encouraged him to ensure that '*all the Churches in your Majesties dominions be planted with good pastors*', whilst loiterers—that is, ineffectual parish ministers (including those holding multiple livings)—were 'thrust out'.⁷⁶

Extirpating popery was the most urgent task James faced according to Willet, and he contended that the godly preaching ministry offered a means of doing so.⁷⁷ Just as Adam had 'taught his sonnes apart from the wicked', Willet declared that James must root out 'all idolatrie and superstition' and reject 'all confused motions for a Babylonicall Toleration'.⁷⁸ Willet's strategy here was to emphasise the need for a united front against popery. This was a commonplace Puritan argument that allowed them to present Catholics (as opposed to themselves) as the cause of instability within the commonwealth. Willet's refusal of toleration towards Catholicism manifested the godly theory of how James might achieve unification through enforcing conformity.⁷⁹ Later on, the chapter will demonstrate that throughout the *Hexapla*, Willet emphasised precisely these themes. He repeatedly highlighted how the Patriarchs had championed the preaching of the Word and had preserved their true church against the idolatrous masses since the very beginning, just like James must do in the

⁷⁵ Ibid., sig. ¶3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., sig. ¶2v-sig. ¶3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.; Willet, *Synopsis* (1603), sig. A4v.

⁷⁸ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶3.

⁷⁹ Questier, *Dynastic Politics*, p. 281.

contemporary. Thus, Willet's commentary and his dedications are shown to be working in tandem to polemical effect.

The *Hexapla* also contained two dedications to prominent Jacobean Privy Counsellors, whom Willet desired to make 'united Patrons of these my labours'.⁸⁰ The first was addressed to two of James' 'bed-chamber' Scots: the Duke of Lennox (Ludovic Stuart) and the Earl of Marre (John Erskine).⁸¹ The second addressed the then Lord Deputy of Ireland, Baron Mountjoy (Charles Blount), and the Chancellor of Cambridge University and the king's chief minister Viscount Cranbourne (Robert Cecil).⁸² In these dedications, Willet raised the same themes as those stressed in his address to James. Moreover, he continued deploying references to Genesis in an attempt to persuade these influential courtiers to support his cause. His choice of targets reflected a thorough-going appreciation of the political dynamics of the early-Jacobean Court. In addressing those individuals who exercised the greatest influence in the early-Jacobean regime, Willet tacitly acknowledged that the king might require some godly ecclesiastical counsel before he enacted reform.⁸³

Similarly, the *Hexapla* featured dedications to leading members of the clergy. In the *Hexapla*'s second preface, Willet dedicated the first half of the commentary to Bancroft and Vaughan.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, towards the commentary's end, he dedicated his discussion of Jacob's prophecy and Gen. 49-50 to Matthew and Heton.⁸⁵ Whilst the dedications' contents were

⁸⁰ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. Aa2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, sig. Aa2-sig. Aa2v. On the 'bed-chamber Scots', see S. Doran, *From Tudor to Stuart: the regime change from Elizabeth I to James I* (Oxford, 2024), p. 220. See also D. Bergeron, *The Duke of Lennox, 1574-1624: a Jacobean courtier's life* (Edinburgh, 2022); S. Reid, *The early life of James VI: a long apprenticeship, 1566-1585* (London, 2023), pp. 87-241

⁸² Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. Kk1-sig. Kk2. See P. Croft, 'The Religion of Robert Cecil', *HJ* 34/4 (1991), p. 779, fn. 20; C. Maginn, 'Blount, Charles, eighth Baron Mountjoy and earl of Devonshire (1563-1606)', *ODNB*; Questier, *Dynastic Politics*, pp. 282-3.

⁸³ There was a precedent for Puritans appealing to Cecil and Marre for patronage, see Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, p. 513. On godly counsel, see J. Rose, 'Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal* 54/1 (2011), pp. 53-61.

⁸⁴ Willet, *Hexapla*, 'Reverendissimis in Christo patribus', unfol., [pp. 1-2].

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, unfol., between pp. 441-3.

similar in that they announced Willet's reforming agenda, there was a noticeable difference in the way he presented his call for the provision of godly ministers in each one. When addressing the former pair, Willet defensively pointed out that the king was keen to see preaching provision improved and he presented godly preachers as a means of ensuring obedience to the authorities and of repressing popery. This dedication, therefore, was an attempt by Willet to appear wholly conformist whilst appealing for reform. Willet's double-act comes through in his advice to repress the obstinate, whilst tolerating those who are 'useful and fruitful' to the Church.⁸⁶ Where to draw the line between the obstinate and the useful godly had of course been the cause of 'domesticall contentions' between the likes of Willet and Bancroft for many years.⁸⁷

In contrast, Willet presented a more positive case focussed on evangelisation in the dedication to Heton and Matthew. One reason for this was his pre-existing relationship with the latter. Willet held the fifth prebendal stall at Ely Cathedral, a position approved by Queen Elizabeth I that he had inherited from his father, Thomas Willet. Thomas was given this honour as a reward for his services to the crown as Sub-Almoner to King Edward VI, a position he attained thanks to the patronage of his friend Richard Coxe, who was a prominent reforming bishop.⁸⁸ When Coxe returned from Marian exile and was granted the see of Ely by Elizabeth he elevated Willet's father.⁸⁹ Willet was on similarly good terms with Coxe's successor, Heton, who enjoyed a good reputation amongst the godly in general.⁹⁰ Indeed, he had already been the dedicatee of an earlier work by Willet, who described the 'comfortable experience' he enjoyed under Heton's guidance.⁹¹ During his early career, Willet had built on the reputation for learning he attained whilst at Cambridge by delivering a series of lectures at Ely Cathedral and

⁸⁶ ['homines frugi & Ecclesiae utiles tolerate'] Ibid., 'Reverendissimis in Christo patribus', unfol., [p. 1].

⁸⁷ A. Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum: that is, A sixfold commentary upon the second booke of Moses called Exodus* (1608), sig. A4v.

⁸⁸ F. Heal, 'Cox, Richard (c.1500-1581)', *ODNB*; PRO, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Elizabeth I, 1560-1563* (1948), p. 224.

⁸⁹ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1634), sig. a3v-sig. a4r.

⁹⁰ Usher, 'Heton, Martin', *ODNB*.

⁹¹ Willet, *A catholicon*, sig. ¶4v.

St Paul's in London. He married the daughter of Roger Goad (the godly Provost of King's College, Cambridge) and proceeded to serve in several livings before replacing his father at Barley, all the while publishing works at a prodigious rate.⁹² Willet was an ideal candidate for producing scholarly theological works that could be used in controversy against Catholics. Heton's fellow dedicatee Tobie Matthew had been one of the senior church figures calling for the production of these kinds of materials.⁹³ Indeed, Willet was not the first to dedicate a work on Genesis to him. Several years previously, a vernacular theological work had been dedicated to the bishop by Nicholas Gibbons, who described Matthew as 'a paterne of godly praelacie'.⁹⁴ Willet referenced Gibbon's work in his dedication. He remarked that 'One of your Lordships (Heton) hath an interest in me, as beeing patrone of that Church, to the which I am called, the other (Matthew) hath an interest in this worke: to whom one alreadie, a powerful and industrious man...did dedicate his labours upon Genesis'.⁹⁵

The notion of 'godly praelacie' has been discussed in relation to the Jacobean Church by Fincham and Stephen Hampton. Theologically orthodox with regards to doctrines of grace (in other words, Calvinist not Arminian), godly prelates like Matthew and Heton were also committed to the established Church's episcopal hierarchy.⁹⁶ In their churchmanship, godly prelates were characterised by their commitment to the preaching of the Word through supporting their ministers and preachers, as well as regularly giving sermons.⁹⁷ This was precisely what Willet praised Matthew and Heton for doing. According to him, the Genesis Fathers were models for all Christians, but 'especially us that are set apart to this [ministerial]

⁹² Milton, 'Willet, Andrew', *ODNB*. See the list of works in A. Willet, *Hexapla in Leviticum that is, A six-fold commentarie upon the third booke of Moses, called Leviticus* (1631), sig. A3v. Note though that *Limbo-Mastix* (1604) and *Loidoromastix* (1607) are missing from this list.

⁹³ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ N. Gibbons, *Questions and disputations concerning the holy Scripture* (1602), sig. a:2:.

⁹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla*, unfol., between pp. 441-3.

⁹⁶ S. Hampton, *Grace and conformity: the Reformed Conformist Tradition and the early Stuart Church of England* (Oxford, 2021), p. 21.

⁹⁷ K. Fincham, *Prelate as pastor: the episcopate of James I* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 250-76.

function, to beautifie and adorne our holy vocation, with a godly conversation'.⁹⁸ Later in the chapter, Willet's interpretation of the Patriarchs' religious authority will be discussed. He presented them as archetypes for the likes of Matthew and Heton, whose virtue was measured in terms of their commitment to preaching.

Collectively, then, Willet's dedications betray the agenda he was seeking to promote through publishing his Genesis commentary: support for the preaching ministry and anti-popery. More than that, however, they also indicate the ways in which Willet was negotiating between different factions within the Church, whilst attempting to secure patronage at court. The themes of loyalty and obedience that come through in his address to Vaughan and Bancroft are also intimated in several other dedications. Willet's reading of Genesis, which is the subject of the remainder of this chapter, involved a similar balancing act. He found in the book's sacred history a model for reformation led by fatherly leaders who commanded obedience, but who also vanquished idolatry and preached God's Word.

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla*, unfol., between pp. 441-3.

Genesis and magisterial authority

Whilst commenting on Gen. 21, Willet gave a summary of the three offices or 'states' held by Abraham: the oecumenical [head of the household], the political, and the religious.⁹⁹ According to Willet, then, Abraham was both a civil and an ecclesiastical ruler. Moreover, his authority was premised upon his role as a patriarch. This eliding of oecumenical and political authority, grounded on scripture and an interpretation of natural law, was a common argument in early modern theories of divine kingship.¹⁰⁰ The image of the king as a father to his people is repeated throughout James' *Trew Law*, for example.¹⁰¹ Whilst it was possible to construct a theory of divine kingship without this patriarchalist dimension, which conflated fatherly and kingly power, the principle provided what John Figgis described as 'the best argument' for it.¹⁰² When Willet wrote that 'Kings at the beginning were fathers, and nourishers of their Countrey...happie then is that people, that hath a King for a common father', he was manipulating the fashion of using Genesis in works of patriarchalist political thought like Adrian de Saravia's *On the Authority to Command, and Christian Obedience* (1593).¹⁰³ James himself preferred to reference the Book of Samuel when discussing the divine origins of kingship and the duty of subjects to obey, since it offered a concrete sacred historical example of an irresistible, divinely anointed king.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Willet's heavy emphasis on the language of monarchical fatherhood in relation to his commentary on the patriarchs was geared towards James's views on kingship.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 226.

¹⁰⁰ J. Sommerville, 'Richard Hooker, Hadrian Saravia, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings', *HPT* 4/2 (1983), p. 238.

¹⁰¹ James VI and I, *Political Writings*, p. 65.

¹⁰² Figgis, *Divine Right of Kings*, p. 150.

¹⁰³ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 225. See also C. Cuttica, *Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) and the Patriotic Monarch: Patriarchalism in Seventeenth-Century Political Thought* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 91-103; Sommerville, 'Richard Hooker, Hadrian Saravia, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings', pp. 229-45.

¹⁰⁴ James VI and I, *Political Writings*, pp. 66-71.

Another principle of early modern theories of divine kingship was indefeasible hereditary right, which James himself described as follows: ‘the duty and alleageance, which the people sweareth to their prince, is not only bound to themselves, but likewise to their lawfull heires and posterity, the lineall succession of crowns being begun among the people of God, and happily continued in divers christian common-wealths’.¹⁰⁵ Given that James’ claim to the English throne was legitimised by his ancestry, rather than by law, this was an especially pertinent argument in a Jacobean context. Genesis provided Willet with several opportunities to discuss notions of inherited authority through the recurring themes of birthright and bloodline. On these occasions, he repeatedly opted for exegeses of relevant scriptural passages whose conclusions were conformable to the contemporary discourse of hereditary kingship. Whilst discussing the brothers Esau and Jacob, for example, Willet detailed what he believed the Patriarch’s birthright consisted in: ‘the priority and government of his brethren...the priesthood and right to sacrifice’.¹⁰⁶ This summary referenced the oecumenical, political, and religious authority held by the Patriarchs and it particularly emphasised the Patriarchs’ jointly civil and spiritual role—in the following section, the nature of the priestly office, which, Willet points out, always resided in the father, will be discussed in more detail.¹⁰⁷

Willet explored the themes of birthright and bloodline further in a lengthy elaboration on Gen. 49:10, which narrates Jacob’s prophecy regarding his son Judah.¹⁰⁸ Willet acknowledged that the passage admitted of manifold interpretations, most of which revolved around the philological question of whether the Hebrew word *shebet* ought to be translated in a political vein as ‘sceptre’ or in a genealogical sense as ‘tribe’. But Willet was able to use the line ‘The Scepter [or tribe] shall not depart from Judah’ as an opportunity to make two points

¹⁰⁵ Figgis, *Divine Right of Kings*, p. 5; James, *Political Writings*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁶ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 278.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 278-9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 448-52.

about the nature of kingship. Picking up on Jean Mercier's translation of the Hebrew word *mechōqēq*—which appears in the same verse—as 'law-giver', Willet concluded that as the bearer of the sceptre 'it belongeth to the prince to make laws'.¹⁰⁹ He reached this conclusion from several Bible translations that used the term 'law-giver', including the Vulgate and Pagninus'. Alternatively, if *shebet* was taken to mean tribe—a translation that Willet found in Tremellius' Bible—then the verse foregrounded the strength of Judah's bloodline and the role that genealogy played in sustaining Patriarchal authority.¹¹⁰ Both interpretations were salient in a Jacobean context where inheritance was central to James's claim to power, and where, as Malcolm Smuts notes, the king's theological interests and writings 'fitted in well with the concept of godly monarchy' since he enjoyed 'comparison with law-giving [biblical] kings'.¹¹¹

Beyond identifying a scriptural basis for the principles of Patriarchal kingship using Genesis, Willet's *Hexapla* repeatedly drew the reader's attention to how the Patriarchs wielded that magisterial authority to reform religion and enforce uniformity. At these points in the commentary, Willet lost no time in indicating the contemporary implications of his findings. There was one passage in particular that he laid stress on as an example of Patriarchal Reformation: Gen. 4:26.

This was a contested verse, as we have already seen in Chapter Two. Depending on which translation one consulted, Gen. 4:26 related either how Adam's grand-son Enosh alone, or Adam's family as a whole, 'began to call upon the Lord'. This difference in translation was confessionally motivated. We have already noted how on the back of the Vulgate's rendering of Gen. 4:26 as 'this man [Enosh] began to call upon the name of the Lord', Catholic commentators like Pereira pointed to Adam's grand-son as evidence for the importance of the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 448; ['Nam negation Hebraico more repetenda est, scriba, legislator, rector, sic dictus quòd leges & iura praescribat'] Mercier, *In Genesis*, p. 731.

¹¹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 452.

¹¹¹ M. Smuts, *Court culture and the origins of a royalist tradition in early Stuart England* (Philadelphia, 1987), p. 25.

priest in uniting the community, in performing ceremonies, and in leading the liturgy.¹¹² Such a reading was anathema to Willet, not only because this gloss justified Catholic ecclesiology, but also because it cast Enosh as a priest rather than as a patriarchal reforming king.

The *Hexapla* turned to several Reformed commentaries for a corrective. The implication of Gen. 4:26 for Reformed divines was that the godliness and faith of Adam and his sons led them to a purer form of worship. Indeed, John Calvin's commentary on Gen. 4:26 offered a precedent for Willet's own interpretation. The French Reformer observed that

there is no doubt, that Adam and Eve, with a few other of their children were themselves true worshippers of God... We may readily conclude that Seth was an upright and faithful servant of God. And after he begat a son, like himself, and had a rightly constituted family, the face of the Church began distinctly to appear, and that worship of God was set up which might continue to posterity. Such a restoration of religion has been effected also in our time; not that it had been altogether extinct; but there was no certainly defined people who called upon God; and, no sincere profession of faith, no uncorrupted religion could anywhere be discovered.¹¹³

Calvin and Willet both interpreted Gen. 4:26 as a historical parallel to the state of religion in their own age. In the face of Catholic idolatry, the righteous persisted by distinguishing themselves with a purer form of revealed worship under the guidance of a reforming leader. For Calvin, this reading re-enforced the importance of the magistrate's authority to reform religion, *pace* the Anabaptists. For Willet, however, interpreting Gen. 4:26 in this way offered a means to urge James to champion a godly reformation of the established Church.

¹¹² [‘Varius igitur dictu fuerit, propterea Enos dici primum invocasse nomé Domini, quia super omnes priores ius & religiosus erga Deum fuerit, non modò colendo pietatem & religionem adversùs Deum, sed eam quoque praedicado, divulgando, aliosque homines docendo. Vel quia iste primus certas quidam precationum Dei formulas condidit, certòsque riuus & curemonias divini cultus adinvenit cuius modi fortasse fuit altarium erectio, & certorum locorum ad invocandum Deum cultúmque eius administrandum designation & dedicatio. Vel Denique, quia coepit congregare populum ad tractandum siuls Dei cultum, quasi Ecclesiam fidelium inchoans & adunans’] Pereira, *Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesin*, p. 763.

¹¹³ [Neque tamen dubium est, quin Adam et Heva, paucique alii ex eorum liberis, veri fuerint ipsi Dei cultores...Colligere promptum est, Seth probum et fidelem fuisse Dei servum. Postquam vero filium genuit sui similem, et familiam habuit recte compositam, extare coepit distincta Ecclesiae facies, erectusque est Dei cultus qui instauration: non quod prorsus extincta foret, sed quia nullus erat certus populus qui Deum invocaret, nusquam sincera fidei professio, nusquam religio integra conspici poterat.'] J. Calvin, *In Librum Geneseos Commentarius* (Berlin, 1838), p. 82. Trans. J. King.

As well as Calvin's commentary, the *Hexapla* also relied upon Mercier's arguments regarding Gen. 4:26. The Reformed Hebraist had downplayed the role of Enosh by arguing that Adam and Abel were just as zealous as he in their worship—the implication here was that the Catholic presentation of Enosh as an instigator of public worship was false.¹¹⁴ Paraphrasing Mercier, Willet described the period referred to in Gen. 4:26: 'But now, when as the worship of God began to be corrupted and prophaned in the wicked posterity of Cain, then Adam, Seth, and other of the righteous seed began publikely to exercise religion, and to have their holy meetings and assemblies for the service of God'.¹¹⁵ Willet reiterated Mercier's interpretation a little further on, 'the true meaning [of Gen. 4:26] is, as is before expressed, that now the Church of God being increased to a full number, did make a publike separation in their worship from the generation of the wicked: and began apart in a solemne manner to worship God'.¹¹⁶ Mercier's interpretation of Gen. 4:26 drew out the lesson in the actions of Adam and his righteous descendants for Reformed Protestants:

But the simple sense is the first, that the Church restored began to grow with the son, that whole devout family, and henceforth the foundation of the devout, who persevered in the renewed form of the Church thereafter through subsequent generations until Noah, from whom and to the fathers after the Flood it passed.¹¹⁷

According to Willet, Adam's family in the time of Enosh provided a historical parallel for reformation under the leadership of a patriarchal figure.

Willet also treated the story of how Jacob 'reformed' his house as an analogy for reformation. In seizing his relatives' idols and burying them, Jacob demonstrated the Patriarch's religious authority over the community. For Willet and Calvin, the story of Jacob's reformation lent itself to a confessionally useful conclusion: 'it teacheth us, that all the

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 63.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ ['Sed simplex sensus est primus, restitutam Ecclesiam cum prole nova aucto Adamo & ipsi Seth nato filio auctor esse coepit ea familia tota pia, & fundamentum deinceps piorum, qui in forma Ecclesiae tum renovate perseverarunt deinceps per generationes susequentes usque ad Noe, à quo & ad patres post diluvium transit &c.'] Mercier, *In Genesis*, p. 127.

monuments of idolatry ought to be abolished: and that not onely the Idols themselves are abhominable, but all the ornaments which belong thereunto: such as are many in the Romane Sinagogue, who garnish their idols, with ringes, tablets, pretious stones and jewels'.¹¹⁸ Jacob's mission to rid his community of false idols was readily translated into a story about the Reformation and the need for godly rulers in Protestant lands to lead in cleansing their nation of foreign popish remnants. Episodes in Genesis like this enabled Willet and his sources to prescribe the essential characteristic of magisterial reformation: it ought to be a campaign led by an authoritative ruler responsible for the souls of his or her own people.

In the next section, the chapter discusses how Willet explicitly linked this reading of Patriarchal reformation in Genesis to his concern to promote a preaching ministry, and, more broadly, what the implications of using a scriptural model for reform were for the nature of religious authority in early-Jacobean England.

¹¹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla*, pp. 355-6.

Genesis and religious authority

Strengthening the preaching ministry was ‘perhaps the pre-eminent aim’ of the Church’s leadership at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and in theory it was a mission that English divines of all stripes could support. For the more evangelically minded in particular, the provision of a well-resourced, educated, and active ministry was integral to a Calvinist conformist vision of a national religious community united around the Word preached.¹¹⁹ Throughout James’ early reign, Willet repeatedly praised him for restoring Church revenues, for reducing pluralism and non-residency, and for promoting learned preaching.¹²⁰ However, the promotion of preaching was in tension with an increased desire by anti-Puritan churchmen, like Bancroft, to curb godly activities through controlling preaching licences and enforcing subscription.¹²¹ This struggle within the Church formed the background to the various controversies Willet engaged in whilst drafting the *Hexapla*, which were referenced earlier.

In 1603, Willet penned a polemical work in celebration of James’ coronation entitled *Ecclesia Triumphans*, which was a contribution to Puritan calls for further reformation. In that work, Willet declared that ‘it is God’s ordinance to stirre up the hearts of princes to reforme religion and Ecclesiasticall abuses, and not to leave it wholly to the disposition of the cleargie; it is evident by the experience of al ages: wherein the greatest reformations have beene wrought by kings, not by priests’.¹²² The same strategy of appealing directly to James over the heads of the Church’s leadership, on the basis of sacred history, pervaded his address in the *Hexapla*, wherein he called upon the king to build out the preaching ministry and offered him a scriptural model as justification.

¹¹⁹ K. Fincham, ‘Episcopal Government, 1603-40’, in *The early Stuart Church, 1603-42*, ed. K. Fincham (Basingstoke, 1993), p. 73.

¹²⁰ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 20.

¹²¹ Fincham, ‘Episcopal Government’, p. 75.

¹²² A. Willet, *Ecclesia Triumphans* (Cambridge, 1603), p. 82.

Willet found scriptural authority for godly preaching and its facilitation throughout Genesis. One example was Noah's activities before the Flood. Willet described Noah as 'Gods prophet', through whom the divine power of Christ preached.¹²³ Whilst humanity descended into corruption and drove God to desire its destruction, Noah, imbued with the Holy Spirit, guided his family in right worship and preached to mankind to change its ways.¹²⁴ The fact that the vast majority did not heed Noah's words was a moot point. Similarly, Willet discussed Lot's attempts to warn the inhabitants of Sodom to change their ways before it was too late. He compared Lot's vain attempts at persuasion to the preaching of the Gospel to those that will not heed it: 'the Lord willeth such to be warned, whom hee knew would despise their calling...as he hath appointed the Gospell to be preached to all the world, yet many are called and few chosen, as our Saviour saith' (this was a reference to Matthew 20:16).¹²⁵ This exegesis, which Willet found in Calvin, reconciled a belief in predestination with an insistence on the necessity of ubiquitous preaching.¹²⁶ Moreover, the reading also put pressure on the idea that Bancroft and the Church's hierarchy should enforce a stringent licencing system, given that God had commanded that the gospel be preached 'to all the world'.

The health of the preaching ministry was a constant refrain throughout the *Hexapla* and an important facet of this was the quality of the preachers being deployed. In his dedication to James, Willet suggested that the king should employ those 'that would labour quietlie in the Lords vineyard', so that 'Christ's harvest' might be increased.¹²⁷ Willet returned to this theme during a discussion of Esau and Jacob. At an initial glance, the story of Esau and Jacob presented several problems in a Jacobean context. The younger brother taking the elder's birthright implied an upending of the order of primogeniture and an undermining of inherited

¹²³ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 78.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 212, 215.

¹²⁶ Calvin, *Geneseos*, p. 229.

¹²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla*, sig. ¶3.

authority. No wonder then that Willet pondered how Jacob could have bought his elder sibling's birthright without sinning. His ingenious response was to argue that Jacob had not sinned since Esau's birthright had never actually belonged to him, because he was a 'usurper'. Furthermore, in a striking turn of phrase, Willet wrote that Jacob's action was not 'simoniacal'.¹²⁸ Simony, of course, was the act of buying or selling ecclesiastical offices or other privileges. Whilst the 1604 Canons had denounced simony and imposed penalties on those who committed it, Puritan ministers and their supporters still contended that livings were too often granted on the basis of wealth and connection rather than spiritual qualification.¹²⁹ Willet was keen to rescue Jacob from the accusation that he had bought the office of the Patriarch, and thus religious authority, with a bowl of pottage. At the same time, Willet could also draw out a distinction between rightful inheritance and usurpation, a particularly sensitive difference in the context of James' succession and the theory of divine kingship in general. While according to that theory subjects owed unwavering loyalty to a divinely appointed ruler, it was less clear whether a tyrant or usurper ought to receive the same deference.¹³⁰

Adjacent to the issue of ensuring quality preaching was funding, which Willet raised in his dedications. Towards the end of the *Hexapla* he returned to an analogy that he had made in his address to Blount and Cecil. While commenting on Joseph's time as a governor in Egypt under Pharaoh, Willet reflected on the duties and authority of the Patriarch in relation to the provision of preaching. According to him, and the constellation of authorities on Genesis that he cited, Egypt's priests enjoyed an 'ordinary' (that is, a special customary provision) bestowed upon them by Pharaoh in recognition of their spiritual learning, which came in the form of land.¹³¹ At this point Willet asked whether Joseph offended God by respecting this arrangement

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 278.

¹²⁹ G. Bray, *The Anglican canons, 1529-1947* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 325.

¹³⁰ Figgis, *Divine Right of Kings*, p. 139.

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 433.

and refraining from compulsorily purchasing their land as part of his famine-preparation policy, despite knowing that these sages were idolatrous. Calvin criticised Joseph in his commentary, arguing that the Patriarch was most likely unhappy about this situation but was not able to do anything about it.¹³² Willet, following Mercier, demurred. He concluded that ‘Joseph could not have gainsayed without very great tumult and sedition, seeing those superstitious priests were greatly honoured with the king and people’.¹³³ Moreover, Willet observed that the fact that Pharaoh’s Egypt had such a policy proved that ‘they which attend the service of God, and the instruction of the people, should have their publike maintenance’, by the law of nature.¹³⁴ Through casting Pharaoh’s advisers as instructors of the people, rather than as priests who perform sacrifices, Willet teased out a polemical message: ‘seeing Pharaoh an heathen prince, was so liberall toward his idolatrous preistes: much more should Christian princes take care to provide for the ministers of the Gospell’.¹³⁵ Moreover, Willet implied that James—a modern day Christian “pharaoh”—would strengthen his rule by funding ministers to instruct the people.

The *Hexapla*’s commentary on Joseph’s dealings with Pharaoh’s priests involved a rare appeal by Willet to the language of natural law. He concluded that Pharaoh seemingly knew by reason alone that his priests ought to be afforded financial endowment. This conclusion was obviously convenient for Willet in that it allowed him to insist on the normativity of a well-resourced ministry. In the main, however, Willet avoided appealing to natural law. This was due to the rigidly Calvinist soteriology that is in evidence throughout the *Hexapla*.¹³⁶ Willet held to a standard Reformed doctrine of predestination and solafideism. According to his theology, the impact of the Fall was so extensive that mankind not only lost the state of grace

¹³² [‘Neque tamen inficior quin deliquerit vel hoc ipso, quia non satis cordate superstitionibus restiterit’] J. Calvin, *Geneseos*, p. 235.

¹³³ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 433.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

but their natural reasoning capacities were also damaged too—a process Willet explains in his commentary on Adam’s loss of the *imago dei* [image of God] within him.¹³⁷ Therefore, the arrangement of human society before the Fall could have little bearing on contemporary life, since this was conducted in a fallen world. Only revelation through scripture, rather than natural reason, could yield up information about how a religious community should be organised according to God’s will. An important consequence of this Reformed stance was that biblical commentators, who clarified scripture, claimed an exclusive form of religious authority. Willet’s commentary represented itself as a guide to Genesis for the king, his counsellors, and senior prelates, which made a case for godly reformation backed by revelation. But Willet adduced the Patriarchs as biblical role models for godly ministers and preachers too.

In this chapter’s final stages, the theme of scriptural authority is explored further through a focus on Willet’s desire to deny other forms of authority, which is prominent in his commentary on instances of sacrificial worship in Genesis. Recent scholarship has shown how early modern Catholic readings of such episodes—particularly in sixteenth-century commentaries on Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*—were used as opportunities to show that sacrifice was part of natural law and that priests united human communities by performing them. This in turn facilitated arguments against accepting Protestant rulers, on the basis that they endangered social cohesion by preventing the performance of the Mass (the only legitimate form of sacrifice according to post-Tridentine dogma).¹³⁸ Willet, however, insisted that when the Patriarchs had performed sacrifices, they did so on the basis of revealed rather than natural knowledge. This enabled him to assert scriptural tradition as the only legitimate authority.

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

¹³⁸ S. Mortimer, ‘Sacrifice and the limits of sovereignty 1589–1613’, *HEI* 49/8 (2023), pp. 1302-1315.

The first record in Genesis of the performance of worship occurs at the beginning of Chapter 4. Adam's two sons, Cain and Abel, attempt to revere God by performing sacrifices. A critical question for commentators on Gen. 4:3-5 was how the two brothers knew to sacrifice in the first place. Willet answered as follows: 'Though no mention be made of Adams sacrificing, because no such notable accident fell out therein, as in the sacrifice of his sonnes, yet it is not to be doubted, but that he used to sacrifice, and that of him his sonnes learned to doe the like'.¹³⁹ It is instructive at this point to contrast Willet's answer to this question with that given by a contemporary Catholic divine. In his commentary on the third part of Aquinas' *Summa*, the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez considered whether sacrifice is part of the law of nature. Taking up the example of Cain and Abel, Suárez concluded that they 'worshipped God...each according to his own judgement and will; for to say that they did this by divine or paternal authority is speculative, because it is not founded on any authority or necessary reason'.¹⁴⁰ In other words, according to Suárez they acted in accordance with natural reason alone. The explanation for the opposing answers given by Willet and Suárez was a disagreement over the nature of religious authority in pre-Mosaic times, which had implications for religious authority in the contemporary.

By arguing that Cain and Abel had been taught how to sacrifice by Adam, and that Adam had in turn been instructed by God, Willet was insisting that only revelation could provide authoritative guidance on how to worship correctly. Scripture thus became the key model for reforming the church subsequently, as it alone contained the necessary knowledge, which, in Calvin's phrase, had begun as 'the ancient and perpetual tradition of the Fathers'.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 59.

¹⁴⁰ ['Et fortasse Abel et Cain ita coluerunt Deum, alius ex fructibus terrae, alius ex primogenitis ovium, unusquisque suo arbitrii et voluntate; dicere enim, divina vel paterna auctoritate id fecisse, voluntarium est, quia nec ulla auctoritate, nec necessaria ratione fundatur'] F. Suárez, *Opera omnia*, vol. xxi (Paris, 1878), p. 609.

¹⁴¹ ['ex veteri ac perpetua partum traditione iam nota esset'] Calvin, *Geneseos*, p. 2. Trans. J. King.

Hence commentaries such as Willet's *Hexapla*, which opened up the meaning of the Bible, provided guidance on reformation.

Willet made the same point about the revealed status of religious knowledge a little later on, when discussing the aftermath of the Flood. After Noah had disembarked the Ark, he had immediately performed an act of worship to thank God for preserving him and his family. The Patriarch did so by erecting an altar and performing a sacrifice. Willet remarked that

Noah had no expresse commandement now to offer sacrifice... yet he was not without direction in this case... *Noah* knew by the example and practise of the patriarkes, that God was pleased with this kind of worshippe by sacrifices: as also he was directed thereunto, because to this end there were seaven of the cleane creatures taken into the arke by Gods owne appointment, and for the fashion of the altar, which was made either of earth, or unhewen stones, whereof first mention is made in this place, he had either the patterne from the practise of the elder patriarkes, or by instinct from God.¹⁴²

Here the *Hexapla* emphasised that Noah was applying knowledge that had been revealed to him, either directly by God or by his ancestors. Willet was concerned to deny the possibility that sacrifices that involved burning (or otherwise transforming) a substance were a part of natural law known to unaided reason. However, Catholic commentators were keen to argue that this kind of sacrifice was an injunction of the law of nature as this enabled them to claim that the Catholic Mass was necessary in any Christian land.¹⁴³ Willet was refuting this idea and denying that there might be a source of religious authority in the present, other than scripture.

Willet's concern in the *Hexapla* to deny that reason could be a source of authority in religious matters, particularly in relation to the question of sacrifice, can be further contextualised by consulting the anonymous *Christian Letter* (1599), which he was widely assumed to have had a hand in writing. The *Letter* took issue with Hooker's reliance upon natural law to defend the Church of England's current form and practices. By enlargening the role of reason in religion, the author(s) suggested, Hooker risked putting the authority of the

¹⁴² Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 101.

¹⁴³ Mortimer, 'Sacrifice', p. 1311.

Church on a par with the authority of scripture.¹⁴⁴ Relatedly, the *Letter* complained that Hooker was radically re-framing the role of the minister. Rather than defining the office in terms of a calling and licence to preach the Word, the anonymous author(s) claimed that Hooker was defining the minister's role in relation to the performance of indifferent ceremonies, whose liturgies had been determined by custom.¹⁴⁵ This, the *Letter* claimed, risked returning to the popish emphasis on the priest as the mediator between God and the laity, as opposed to the Reformed understanding of a minister as one who preached the Word to an assembled congregation and who administered the Lord's Supper to the godly.¹⁴⁶

In his discussion of incidents of worship in Genesis, then, Willet repeatedly emphasised the singular importance of revelation as a guide to right religion. This enabled him to claim that scripture alone was the source of religious authority and thereby to position himself as the authoritative interpreter of the knowledge that it contained. Moreover, by explaining the sacrifices narrated in Genesis in terms of revealed knowledge, he was able to deny that acts of that kind (i.e. transforming a substance) were obligatory in the contemporary church. Since they were not occasioned by natural law, they could be explained away as a form of worship mandated by God in the Old Testament but superseded by the new covenant that had broadened the definition of sacrifice to include all sorts of actions including private prayer. This reading contrasted with his interpretation of acts of preaching in Genesis, which he cited as authoritative evidence of the need for a healthy preaching ministry in the present.

Willet adopted a similarly approach to another passage in Genesis that involved a religious act, in order to disarm a rival interpretation put forward by Catholic commentators like Tommaso Cajetan, whom Willet described as 'a chiefe piller of the Popish Church'.¹⁴⁷ In

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, *A Christian letter*, p. 41.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁷ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 171; T. Cajetan, *Commentarii in quinque Mosaicos libros*, ed. A. Fonseca (Paris, 1539), p. lxxiii.

Gen. 14, Abraham is blessed and presented with bread and wine by the mysterious priest figure Melchizedek after a victory in battle. The identity of Melchizedek, whose parentage is not indicated, was a knotty problem for early modern commentators—especially as he is also referenced in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews.¹⁴⁸ Willet recognised that Melchizedek was a priest (as well as a king), but commented that it was ‘not the producing of bread & wine, but the blessing of Abraham [that] was the proper act of Melchisedecks Priesthood’.¹⁴⁹ Shortly afterwards, Willet wrote that ‘Melchisedeck brought not out the bread and wine to sacrifice them’, but rather to provide a weary Abraham with sustenance as custom demanded.¹⁵⁰ The implication of Willet’s interpretation was a denial that this passage supported the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and priestly sacrifice. Indeed, in the succeeding pages he established this refutation in considerable detail.¹⁵¹

There were two more subtle aspects in Willet’s discussion of Melchizedek, however, and they were his conclusions regarding Melchizedek’s identity and Abraham’s offering of a tithe to him. With regards to the first point, which was a perennial debate in the Genesis commentary tradition, Willet explored the various options that different authorities had proposed for Melchizedek’s lineage. In the end, he concluded that Melchizedek must have been Sem—Noah’s most righteous son and one of Jesus’ ancestors.¹⁵² This not only allowed Willet to cast Melchizedek as a prefiguration of Christ, but it also meant that he was party to the traditional revealed knowledge passed down through the Patriarchal generations. His blessing of Abraham, therefore, was not done on the basis of any other authority than revelation. Additionally, Willet pointed to Abraham’s payment of a tithe to Melchizedek as a scriptural

¹⁴⁸ See R. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 169-74

¹⁴⁹ Willet, *Hexapla*, p. 171.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 167.

proof of the need to fund the present-day ministry.¹⁵³ Thus, the interpretation of Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek featured several of the key issues regarding the church and reform that Willet sought to press in the *Hexapla*, and indeed throughout his career.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

A (moderate) Puritan Patriarch?

Willet's will mentions several books and together they encapsulate his life's work: the English Protestant martyrologist John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, the Italian Reformed Latin Bible by Tremellius, and Montanus' Hebrew-Latin interlinear Old Testament.¹⁵⁴ Whilst the latter two were likely at his elbow when he penned the *Hexapla*, it was for the former's cause that he wrote his Genesis commentary and that he was remembered. After Willet's death, Bishop Joseph Hall described him as one of the English Reformed clergy who were the 'wonder of the world'.¹⁵⁵ Later, the mid-seventeenth-century ecclesiastical historiographer Samuel Clarke included Willet in his *Marrow of Ecclesiastical History* (1650), as a representative of a supposedly moderate Puritan tradition.¹⁵⁶ Willet's imprisonment in 1618, for 'dispensing a treaty against the Spanish Match', only served to fuel this posthumous reputation.¹⁵⁷ Chapter Three has argued, moreover, that by penning England's foremost commentary on Genesis in the early-seventeenth century, Willet advanced the cause of conformist Puritanism of which he was later remembered as a champion. Willet's willingness to work within the episcopal system arguably reflects his personal friendship with Heton, rather than any strongly ideological commitment to the system. Certainly, his commentary on Genesis had little to say about episcopacy, its focus was firmly on identifying the ministerial office with preaching.

Willet found Genesis extremely useful for thinking about the religious politics of the early-Jacobean Church. Indeed, he found in Genesis a model for godly magistracy that could be applied to the contemporary church. The Patriarchal nature of civil and spiritual authority in Genesis could be readily applied to the Royal Supremacy. Crucially, Genesis also seemingly proffered a solution to the problem of union. The Patriarchal emphasis on personal allegiance

¹⁵⁴ TNA PROB 11/139/289, f. 198v.

¹⁵⁵ J. Hall, *The works of Joseph Hall doctor in divinitie* (1628), p. 555.

¹⁵⁶ S. Clarke, *Marrow of Ecclesiastical Historie* (1650), pp. 468-74.

¹⁵⁷ M. Everett, ed., *CSP (1611-1618)* (Burlington, 2005), p. 522, 525.

and right religion was, Willet thought, a means of tying James' subjects across three kingdoms to him. Importantly though, the Patriarchs set a clear example of how to promote right religion too: through encouraging preaching and purging idolatry. In the heady days of the Hampton Court Conference, the *Hexapla's* message was clear. In the conference's aftermath, that message continued to carry currency amongst the godly who consulted Willet's work in its subsequent editions.

Chapter 4 — ‘The Inheritance of the Church of Jacob’: Amsterdam’s Ancient Church and Henry Ainsworth’s *Annotations upon the first book of Moses, called Genesis*, c.1616

If Andrew Willet was the foremost expositor on Genesis within the Jacobean Church of England, then Henry Ainsworth (1569-1622) was his counterpart outside of it.¹ Like Willet, Ainsworth was a prodigious Bible scholar with a Cambridge education, who authored—amongst many other works—a popular commentary on the first book of the Old Testament, which was entitled *Annotations upon the first book of Moses, called Genesis* (1616).² However, here the parallels in the two divines’ lives end. Whereas Willet attained Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) status, served as a minister in the established Church throughout his career, and denounced Separatists as ‘Brownists...to be laughed at’, Ainsworth left Cambridge without a degree and renounced the Church of England.³

Having taken the illegal decision to separate from the established Church by the mid-1590s, Ainsworth fled to Dublin and then on to the Dutch *entrepôt* of Amsterdam, where he lived for about a quarter of a century amongst a community of English Separatists known as the ‘Ancient Church’.⁴ Due to his Hebrew expertise, Ainsworth was swiftly elected as the congregation’s official teacher; he later took up the role of pastor and tried to unite an often

¹ R. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, 2003), p. 156. A case could also be made for Hugh Broughton. See K. Macfarlane, *Biblical scholarship in an age of controversy: the polemical world of Hugh Broughton (1549-1612)* (Oxford, 2021), p. 4; D. van Miert, *The Emancipation of Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1590-1670* (Oxford, 2018), p. 16.

² H. Ainsworth, *Annotations upon the first book of Moses, called Genesis. Wherein the Hebrew words and sentences, are compared with, & explaind by the ancient Greek and Chaldee versions: but cheifly, by conference with the holy Scriptures* (Amsterdam, 1616); M. Moody, ‘Ainsworth, Henry (1569-1622)’, *ODNB*. A list of Ainsworth’s works can be found in W. Axon and E. Axon, ‘Henry Ainsworth, The Puritan Commentator’, in *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, vol. 6 (Manchester, 1889), pp. 47-50.

³ C.f., A. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1603), p. 621; H. Ainsworth and F. Johnson, *An apologie or defence of such true Christians as are commonly (but unjustly) called Brownists* (Amsterdam, 1604), sig. ij-sig. ijv. Willet was of course referring pejoratively to the infamous separatist Robert Browne.

⁴ M. Winship, *Godly republicanism: Puritans, pilgrims, and a city on a hill* (Cambridge MA, 2012), pp. 89-110; H. Dexter and M. Dexter, *The England and Holland of the Pilgrims* (Boston, 1906), p. 424; M. Moody, “‘A Man of a Thousand’: The Reputation and Character of Henry Ainsworth, 1569/70-1622”, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 45/3 (1982), pp. 200-214.

cantankerous community. Ainsworth would only leave his post and return to England, via Ireland, shortly before his death.

Likely the result of kidney stones, Ainsworth's death was certainly not due to him being poisoned by an avaricious rabbi after an altercation over a mislaid diamond, as was suggested by his detractors in a scurrilous anti-Semitic rumour promoted at the time.⁵ The similarly vituperative posthumous gossip promulgated by John Paget—who was the leader of the English Reformed Church in Amsterdam—that Ainsworth had conformed to the Church of England and renounced Separatism on his deathbed, was also unsubstantiated.⁶ These rumours bear witness to the animosity between the English Separatist congregation and other godly communities who co-existed in early-seventeenth-century Amsterdam. Even seemingly arcane debates pertaining to points of biblical translation and theology, such as Ainsworth's dispute with the prominent English Hebraist and fellow Amsterdammer Hugh Broughton about scriptural descriptions of priestly garments, came freighted with intra-confessional enmity.⁷ The friction between the leaders of the Ancient Church and its Reformed neighbour, whose members occasionally crossed the floor, occasioned intense scrutiny about the nature of a true Church, the boundaries that delimited its congregation, and about the origins and character of religious authority within it.

However, Ainsworth's *Annotations* has been little studied by modern scholars in relation to this context, despite its author's direct involvement in disputes between rival godly clans in the Netherlands and England. Although studies of Ainsworth that focus on his role as

⁵ Cf., H. Ainsworth, *Certain notes of M. Henry Aynsworth his last sermon*, ed. S. Staesmore (1630), sig. B1v; D. Neal, *The History of the Puritans, or Protestant Non-Conformists*, vol. 2 (London, 1733), p. 48.

⁶ J. Paget, *An Arrow Against the Separation of the Brownists* (Amsterdam, 1618), pp. 91-2; Muller, *After Calvin*, p. 159; M. Moody, 'The Apostasy of Henry Ainsworth: A Case Study in Early Separatist Historiography', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 131/1 (1987), pp. 22-8.

⁷ Macfarlane, *Broughton*, pp. 129-30. See also H. Broughton and H. Ainsworth, *Certayne questions concerning...*, ed. F. Blackwell (Amsterdam, 1605).

a leading English Separatist do exist, and more recently comparative work has been done on his exegetical methodology, he ‘is in need of further scholarship’.⁸ Crucially, his exposition of Genesis has yet to be contextualised against the backdrop of his views on the nature of the church and religious authority.⁹

Genesis’s narration of the Patriarchs fleeing danger and preserving God’s Law in the face of idolatrous corruption evidently struck a chord with Ainsworth, who lived most of his life as an exile for his faith. Strangely though, how Ainsworth’s interpretation of the organisation of religion in Genesis’s patriarchal society provided him with a basis for thinking about a Separatist congregation, and the dynamics of authority within it, has gone undiscussed until now. This is despite the fact that throughout the *Annotations*, Ainsworth observed evidence in Genesis of the development of a distinctive kind of religious community, the first Separatist congregation, which he referred to as ‘the Church of Jacob’ since it predated Moses’ giving of the Law.¹⁰ For Ainsworth, the configuration and practices of this church provided an appealing model for thinking about his own religious community, and for refuting the criticisms of its detractors. Thus, one way in which his *Annotations* can be read is as a meditation on the nature of the church and religious authority that was informed by contemporary preoccupations.

Just like his own Ancient Church, Ainsworth thought that the Church of Jacob had consisted of individuals who voluntarily separated themselves from the ungodly and who had

⁸ R. Blacketer, ‘Henry Ainsworth, Harried Hebraist’, in *Biblical interpretation and doctrinal formulation in the reformed tradition: essays in honor of James A. De Jong Henry*, eds. A. Leder and R. Muller (Grand Rapids, 2014), pp. 155-6; D. Levitin, *Ancient wisdom in the age of the new science: histories of philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 55, fn. 113.

⁹ Blacketer, ‘Henry Ainsworth, Harried Hebraist’, pp. 129-56; H. Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the last three hundred years, as seen in its literature* (New York, 1880), pp. 269-70; P. Ha, ‘Who Owns the Hebrew Doctors? Oriental Scholarship, Historical Proportionality, and the Puritan “Invention” of Avant-Garde Conformity’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 53/1 (2023), pp. 72-80; Moody, “‘A Man of a Thousand’”, pp. 200-214; Idem., ‘The Apostasy of Henry Ainsworth’, pp. 15-31; Muller, *After Calvin*, pp. 156-74.

¹⁰ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, Title-page.

covenanted with God to live purely according to his Word. Taking God's Law, which Ainsworth thought was revealed from the beginning to Adam and then communicated to his righteous descendants, as their sole guide, the members of the Church of Jacob supposedly stayed true to God's Word throughout early human history even whilst most of the mankind fell away. To Ainsworth, this act of discipline marked out the pristine Church as a true body of Christ, which had developed organically (as opposed to suddenly emerging in response to new revelation) and persisted through the ages in the aftermath of the Fall.

The Church of Jacob and the legitimacy of the Ancient Church

The features Ainsworth identified in the Church of Jacob (and indeed in all the true churches descended from it)—their separate, covenanted, and disciplined character—had significant implications for contemporary debates over the legitimacy of the Ancient Church, for the relationship of its congregation to the wider godly community, and for the authority of the civil magistrate. Ainsworth and his opponents were heavily engaged in discussions about these questions. The most important consequence of Ainsworth's conception of the true church was that, because God's revealed Law was understood to be the sole rule governing the Ancient Church, there could be no meaningful distinction between the religious and political community, as Ainsworth denied any moral foundation independent of divine revelation, such as natural reason. An individual's membership of the congregation was conditional upon them maintaining pure conduct in the eyes of their peers, and being banished from the church was synonymous with being outlawed from the community. Separatists like Ainsworth attempted to achieve the kingdom of God in their own community and in so doing they denied any non-scriptural, external religious authority, including the civil magistrate's.¹¹ In Genesis, Ainsworth found a narrative that legitimised this distinctive vision of the church and its relationship to the civil power.

Ainsworth's peculiar reading of Genesis found in the *Annotations* can be shown to have had significant payoffs for him in his arguments with critics of the Ancient Church. On the one hand, he used Genesis to legitimise his Separatist congregation in the face of criticism by the likes of Paget and Broughton, on the grounds that the Church of Jacob had been a voluntary gathering of saints who had elected to live by and preserve God's Law, rather than being a promiscuous congregation. On the other hand, Ainsworth used his reading of the Genesis story

¹¹ M. Haykin, 'Separatists and Baptists', in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume I: The Post-Reformation Era, 1559-1689*, ed. J. Coffey (Oxford, 2020), p. 116.

to distinguish the Ancient Church from the radical Anabaptist and Mennonite sects present in Holland, with whom the Ancient Church was often associated by its enemies.¹² Ainsworth's move here involved stressing that the covenants which first bound the Church of Jacob together were promises to maintain the original purity of God's Law, rather than suggesting that they were markers of a radical decision to break from the past at a specific point in history, on the basis of new revelations.

Ainsworth's two-pronged appeal to the covenanted congregation of the Patriarchs in Genesis to defend his congregation against opponents on either side inevitably featured ambiguities, which reflected the broader tensions in Separatist ecclesiology that manifested in the quotidian life of Amsterdam's Ancient Church. Seemingly petty disputes about attire and the sharing of communion with godly non-Separatists, which fractured Ainsworth's congregation from time-to-time, evinced deeper problems about the relationship between the church and wider society, and about religious authority.¹³ Recently, the traditional historiographical opinion that the Separatist abandonment of national reformation and the established Church led to them 'drawing a curtain over the world', retreating into introspection, and sealing themselves off from the rest of the godly fellowship, has been qualified by a more nuanced discussion of their relations with the wider godly community.¹⁴ For example, Michael Winship has argued that the Separatists' drift towards a Congregational model of Church-Government was a deliberate adaption after the perceived failure of Elizabethan Presbyterians to secure Reformation by repelling the Anti-Christ's prelatical power.¹⁵ Meanwhile, David Como has suggested that whilst the Separatists sought to distance themselves from the rest of

¹² D. Como, 'Radical Puritanism, c. 1558-1660', in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds. J. Coffey and P. Lim (Cambridge, 2008), p. 248.

¹³ Moody, "'A Man of a Thousand'", pp. 201-4.

¹⁴ M. Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London, 1616-1649* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 2; S. Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill, 1991), p. 156; P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p. 328, 433; Idem., *From Crammer to Sancroft: English Religion in the Age of Reformation* (London, 2006), p. 124.

¹⁵ Winship, *Godly republicanism*, p. 88.

godly and ungodly society, their instinct to flatten the ecclesiastical hierarchy by demanding that all congregants exercise their Christian liberty through monitoring their peers' moral lives was arguably a realisation of the Puritan principle of parity, and was therefore a pursuit of godly reformation by a new means.¹⁶

Ainsworth's sense of the Church of Jacob as a congregation that preserved God's universally revealed Word underwrote the Separatist sense of exclusivity, but it also left open the possibility that those outside the congregation whom the Holy Spirit enlightened might also be worthy of membership. The *Annotations*, which were written in English, were penned with a godly English and exiled readership in mind, and Ainsworth saw his work as a resource to aid the reader in recovering the original purity of God's Word so that they too might live righteously.¹⁷ If they did so, there was no reason in Ainsworth's mind why they could not elect to join a congregation like the Ancient Church, and it was on this principle that he resigned from leading the Ancient Church prior to his death after a furore over whether or not a new member called Sabine Staesmore, who had previously broken bread with conforming godly persons in London, might be allowed to join the congregation.¹⁸

Unseemly public arguments such as this one about admission to the church and about who possessed the authority to decide such matters were dangerous given the tenuous position of the exiles who comprised the Ancient Church. They were living in a country that was riven by theological conflict and that was overshadowed by the threat of confessional wars. Not only was the twelve-year truce agreed in 1609 between the United Provinces and the Catholic Hapsburg Empire a fragile arrangement, but the Quinquarticular Controversy that pitched the Dutch Remonstrant and Counter-Remonstrant ministers against each other lent discussions

¹⁶ Como, 'Radical Puritanism', pp. 253-4.

¹⁷ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. †††v.

¹⁸ Moody, "A Man of a Thousand", p. 205.

about the role of the magistrate in religious matters an increasingly toxic air.¹⁹ Ainsworth's *Annotations* were produced in a volatile atmosphere, and whilst his Reformed theology was impeccably Calvinist (as opposed to Arminian), his congregationalist views on religious authority and toleration were likely viewed with suspicion by the Dutch Counter-Remonstrant party, who desired a national orthodoxy defined by synod and policed by the civil magistrate.²⁰ How Ainsworth read Genesis cannot be separated from this context, and it explains why on some questions—such as who precisely holds authority within the church (ministers or the congregation as a whole)—Genesis's ambiguity was appealing to him.

¹⁹ M. van Gelderen, 'Arminian trouble: Calvinist debates on freedom', in *Freedom and the Construction of Europe: Volume 1: Religious Freedom and Civil Liberty*, eds. Q. Skinner and M. van Gelderen (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 21-37.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Ainsworth's Hebraism and the Biblical Origins of Separatism

Placing Ainsworth's *Annotations* back into the context of disputes over Separatism in early-seventeenth-century Amsterdam lends a new perspective on the work's unique features, which have long attracted comment from scholars. The text's structure followed that of the Book of Genesis itself, with each chapter in the *Annotations* containing a translation of the corresponding biblical chapter and a set of (mostly brief) philological, historical, and theological comments on significant phrases. This combination of translation and commentary was intended to help in the 'stirring up of people, in the studie and understanding of Gods law'.²¹ Like other Protestant expositors, Ainsworth believed that one of Moses's chief purposes in penning Genesis had been to narrate the 'the Government of the old World... and of the World that now is, (*especially of Gods church therein*,)'.²² So as to make the divinely revealed history of this pristine church accessible to his readers, Ainsworth provided an original, literal English rendering of the Hebrew *Bereshit* scriptures; he thought that this approach was the surest means by which to recover God's original Word, since 'The litteral sense of Moses Hebrew...is the ground of all interpretation'.²³ Meanwhile, his chapter-by-chapter notes were distinctively beholden to the Jewish Genesis commentary tradition transmitted in the *Mishna* and *Gemara* [Talmud], the *Midrashim*, the *Targums*, and through works by medieval rabbinical authorities such as Maimonides, Rashi, and Kimchi, among others.²⁴

In contrast, Ainsworth presented his decision not to refer to Christian Genesis commentators as an act of expediency. He wrote that 'The Christian Fathers & Doctors because they are usually cited by other expositors abundantly; I thought needless to repete: and the

²¹ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. †††.

²² *Ibid.*, sig. †††v.

²³ *Ibid.*, sig. ∴2v.

²⁴ E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge MA, 2011), pp. 7-16.

rather for brevity, which is requisite in annotations'.²⁵ Ainsworth's knowledge of the contents of other contemporary Genesis commentaries, and his respect for the conventions of the genre in which he was writing, may explain his decision to cite mostly Jewish and occasionally classical sources, rather than Christian ones. But it is important to recognise that in making this decision Ainsworth was deliberately importing a distinctive tradition of interpretation of the Genesis story as a whole. Remarking upon the early modern incorporation of Hebrew learning into Christian studies of the Bible, Jerome Friedman observed that 'exegesis is often apologetic, often polemical, but is never a simple explanation of the text', since any gloss that proffers an elucidation of a verse in the Hebrew Bible—whether its author is Christian or Jewish—always also advances an interpretation, and has implications for questions regarding continuity and change in the church between the Old and New Testament.²⁶ Thus, Ainsworth's thorough incorporation of rabbinical scholarship into the *Annotations* involved importing not only useful glosses on particular passages in Genesis at his 'discretion', but also the powerful underlying narrative *motif* of a chosen, covenanted people that informed Jewish readings of sacred history.²⁷ This trope was one that could be readily mapped onto the Separatist sense of identity as a religious community deliberately set apart from the rest of society, who were attempting to merge the sacred and the secular by realising God's perfect justice on earth.²⁸ Ainsworth's deployment of Jewish commentaries on Genesis thus exemplifies Polly Ha's observation that such materials could be used either to 'stabilize the Church of England or subject it to a radical redefinition'.²⁹

²⁵ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. †††.

²⁶ J. Friedman, 'Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica: Scripture and the Renaissance Myth of the Past', *SCJ* 11/4 (1980), pp. 70-1.

²⁷ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. †††.

²⁸ Haykin, 'Separatists and Baptists', p. 116.

²⁹ Ha, 'Who Owns the Hebrew Doctors?', p. 80.

Ainsworth's engagement with the Hebrew language and Jewish scholarship likely began at Cambridge, where he was tutored at St John's College for a time by the prominent Reformed divine William Whittaker, before moving to Gonville and Caius College—an institution then associated with the study of the ancient biblical language.³⁰ Ainsworth's flight to Amsterdam afforded him the opportunity to further his learning. The exiled separatist's first job was as an impoverished porter for a local bookdealer.³¹ In comparison to late-Tudor and early-Stuart England's censored publishing industry, the unfettered Amsterdam book trade offered Ainsworth access to a wealth of cutting-edge Reformed texts and many other erudite works in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew besides.³² Additionally, the prominent Jewish population in the Dutch city meant that Ainsworth had the opportunity to interact with learned rabbis.³³

By the time he came to write the *Annotations* then, Ainsworth was one of the leading Protestant experts on the Hebrew language and on Jewish biblical erudition. Like his fellow Protestant Hebraists, Ainsworth utilised these intellectual resources readily in his interpretation of the Bible and during his engagement in theological controversy.³⁴ In the case of his *Annotations*, Ainsworth deferred to Jewish rather than Christian commentaries because they provided a more favourable master-narrative for interpreting Genesis as the earliest history of a Separated Church, one which developed organically thanks to God's grace in spite of the majority of mankind's depravity. Meanwhile, Ainsworth was also able to turn to classical sources in order to provide historical context for specific verses and to distance his vision of contemporary worship from confessionally problematic religious practices—like priestly sacrifice or paying tithes. In particular, Ainsworth's appeal to Roman legal concepts reflected

³⁰ J. Venn, *A Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College, 1349-1897*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1897), p. 132; Muller, *After Calvin*, pp. 156-7.

³¹ Muller, *After Calvin*, p. 157.

³² A. Pettegree and A. der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world: making and trading books in the Dutch golden age* (New Haven, 2019), pp. 27-44.

³³ P. van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn l'Empéreur (1591-1648), Professor of Hebrew and Theology at Leiden* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 94-183.

³⁴ Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, p. 17.

the Calvinist theological tradition he was steeped in, but it also enabled him to produce original arguments from within it. It transpires then that the exegetical decisions that Ainsworth made when selecting authorities to cite were shaped by his ecclesiological priorities.

Ainsworth's invocation of Hebrew authorities on Genesis's sacred history presents a very different use of Jewish Old Testament scholarship for engaging with questions about the church to that discussed in recent works, such as Eric Nelson's *Hebrew Republic*.³⁵ Rather than mining Jewish sources for insights on the constitution of Ancient Israel that could be applied to questions about forms of government, property distribution, and religious toleration in a national Church led by a harmonious alliance of magistrate and minister, Ainsworth consulted rabbinical discussions of Genesis and Patriarchal society so as to find inspiration for a Separatist community wherein politics and religion merged into one.

³⁵ Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, *passim*; Y. Hazony, 'The Political Thought of the Biblical History: Genesis-Kings', in *Judaic Sources and Western Thought: Jerusalem's Enduring Presence*, ed. J. Jacobs (Oxford, 2011), pp. 97-124; C. Prior, 'Hebraism and the problem of church and state in England, 1642-1660', *TSCJ* 28/1 (2013), pp. 37-61; J. Sommerville, 'Hobbes, Selden, Erastianism, and the history of the Jews', in *Hobbes and History*, eds. J. Rogers and T. Sorell (Oxford, 2000), pp. 210-48; H. Dongsun Lee, 'The readmission of the Jews and the power of the civil magistrate: Thomas Barlow on the Jews and natural law, 1655-1656', *TSCJ* 38/4 (2023), pp. 1-22; K. Neumann, 'Political Hebraism and the Early Modern 'Respublica Hebraeorum': On Defining the Field', *Hebraic Political Studies*, 1 (2005), pp. 57-70; B. Worden, *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 13-32.

Ainsworth on Separation and Gen. 4:26

In the mid-1590s, Ainsworth fled England so as to avoid persecution by the Church of England's bishops. Since the time of the Vestments Controversy in the 1560s many of those who had elected to separate from the established Church had settled in Amsterdam, and the young Hebrew enthusiast followed suit.³⁶ Though harried from his homeland for his beliefs about the membership and hierarchy of the true church, he could take comfort from a conviction that there was an archaic precedent for his actions. After all, the Lord had 'appointed & made a separation of his people from the world, before the Law, under the Law, and now in the tyme of the Gospell'.³⁷ According to Ainsworth, his exile, and his decision to abandon the established Church that had precipitated it, emulated the actions of ancient biblical figures. Ainsworth believed that he was a spiritual descendant of the Patriarchs and indeed all the individuals throughout biblical history who had chosen to distinguish themselves from a corrupted world by preserving the Law, and, later on, the Gospel too.³⁸ In an *apologia* originally written in 1596 and re-issued in 1604, which constituted a response to a condemnation of separation issued by certain divines at the University of Oxford, Ainsworth associated himself with the belief that 'a true visible Church is a company of people called & separated from the world by the word of God and joyned together by voluntary profession of the faith of Christ in the fellowship of the Gospell'.³⁹ In his *Annotations* published twelve years later, Ainsworth uncovered a precedent for this kind of religious community in Genesis.

According to Ainsworth, the original act of separation could be found at the end of Gen. 4, when Seth, his son Enosh, and their family distinguished themselves from the rest of humanity, which was swiftly descending into corrupt idolatry. Ainsworth rendered the verse as

³⁶ Winship, *Godly Republicanism*, pp. 89-110.

³⁷ Ainsworth, *An apologie or defence of such true Christians*, sig. F2v.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Note the references to Genesis here.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

follows: ‘And to Seth also himself, there was born a son; & he called his name, Enosh: then began-men-profanely, to call on the name of Jehovah’. Several features of Ainsworth’s distinctive methodology are displayed in this passage, including his use of punctuation to indicate the speaker’s pauses, his translation of the tetragrammaton יהוה as ‘Jehovah’ rather than ‘Lord’, and his use of hyphenated English words to translate a single Hebrew term as literally as possible. Most significant, however, is Ainsworth’s treatment of the Hebrew word הִחַל (*huchal*), which appears in Gen. 4:26.

Depending on whether *huchal* is used in an intensive or causative sense, the term can be translated into English as ‘began’ or ‘profaned’. The English translation of the Geneva Bible (1599), which Ainsworth certainly cross-referenced, expressed the causative sense: ‘Then began men to call upon the Lord’. And the translators of the Pentateuch for the King James Bible (1611) had retained this formulation. On the basis of this translation, early modern Protestant commentators (including, as noted in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, Lancelot Andrewes and Andrew Willet) had interpreted Gen. 4:26 positively, as the earliest account of the visible church’s public appearance, though they disagreed as to that church’s structure and defining features. However, Ainsworth noted that ‘The Hebrew word [*huchal*] may be translated, men began, or men profaned: but is commonly understood here, of the learned Hebrewes, to mean profaneness; & some translating it began, yet take it thus, men began, to call (their idols) by the name of the Lord: as images and representations of God, were called Gods’. Ainsworth’s own translation of *huchal*—‘began-men-profanely’—reflected this rabbinical exegetical consensus.

Ainsworth considered his pessimistic translation of *huchal* appropriate, since ‘The sorowes of this age were great, as the very name Enosh testifyeth’. It was a time when ‘impietie crept into the church’ and ‘religion & manners were much corrupted’. This was a description that Ainsworth readily applied to his own age too. He attributed the cause of early human

society's decline, between the time of Cain's fratricide and the coming of Abraham, to the intermarrying of Cain's offspring with those of Seth's line. This sense of spiritual corruption and the need to retain purity within the community, even to the extent of preventing one's offspring from engaging in unsuitable marriages through endogamous marital arrangements, were features of godly culture in Ainsworth's own time.⁴⁰

Importantly, Ainsworth had found this unusually dour interpretation of Gen. 4:26 in one of his favourite Jewish sources: Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*—a monumental twelfth-century C.E. work that had codified Jewish religious law and reconciled various rabbinic juridical and biblical commentaries.⁴¹ In a section of the *Mishneh Torah* entitled 'Worship of the stars', Maimonides explains Moses' prohibitions against idolatry by narrating how earlier on in Enosh's time mankind went astray by worshipping celestial objects. According to the Jewish scholar, over time knowledge of the true God was forgotten as men and women made sacrifices to graven images, listened to false prophets, and adored idols. Maimonides explains further, that, until the time of Abraham, only a righteous few amongst Seth's descendants remembered the 'Rock everlasting' (God) and worshipped him reverently. Maimonides identified these individuals as 'Enoch, Mathusala, Noe, Sem & Eber'.⁴² Ainsworth cross-referenced Gen. 4:26 with several other Old Testament passages in order to confirm Maimonides' view that the idolatrous worship of celestial objects began in Enosh's time: he directed the reader to Deuteronomy 4:19, Amos 5:26, and 2 Kings 21:3 and 5—all of which allude to idol worship.⁴³ Yet, he also suggested that the reader should consult Aristotle's *On the Heavens*, which discussed the heavens as a living body, and the volume entitled 'Foundations of the Torah' in

⁴⁰ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. F3; D. Shuger, *Political theologies in Shakespeare's England: the sacred and the state in Measure for Measure* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 11, 26.

⁴¹ A. Katchen, 'Menasseh ben Israel the Apologist and the Christian Study of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*', in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, eds. I. Twersky and B. Septimus (London, 1987), pp. 201-220.

⁴² M. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, trans. E. Touger (New York, 1990), *Avodat Kochavim*, I, pp. 1-3.

⁴³ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. E4].

the *Mishneh Torah*, where Maimonides described celestial objects as ensouled and classed them as an intermediate life form, existing between Angels and Mankind.⁴⁴

At the end of his annotations on Gen. 4:26, Ainsworth did acknowledge that an alternative interpretation of the passage was available to the one promulgated by Maimonides:

If we understand Moses here otherwise; *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, then it may be meant of more publick worship now erected then before: or, of publick preaching in the name of the Lord, to cal the wicked to repentance: or of calling themselves by the name of the Lord; as in Gen 6.1. the faithful are called *the sonns of God*.

Ainsworth referenced the Chaldee Paraphrases as an ancient Aramaic authority for this translation and interpretation.⁴⁵ Significantly, this was also the standard Reformed gloss espoused by the likes of John Calvin and Willet. In electing not to concur with this interpretation on the basis of Jewish scholarship, Ainsworth was using rabbinical commentary on a controverted pericope to undercut the suggestion that public preaching, a cornerstone of the Jacobean Church of England, might prove effective in bringing the community towards God. Indeed, Ainsworth concluded his annotations on Gen. 4:26 by noting that the Chaldee paraphrases on the Masoretic Bible—an ancient version of the Old Testament favoured by most Protestant biblicists over the Greek Septuagint—‘sayth: *Then in his dayes the sonns of men left-off from praying, or, became profane, so that they prayed not in the name of the Lord*’.⁴⁶ According to Ainsworth and his Jewish source Maimonides, only the faithful amongst the tribes descended from Seth and Enosh prevailed against this turn to idolatry.

For Ainsworth, explaining how these few individuals were able to remain righteous involved examining the concept of covenanting. This was an idea that was also crucial to the

⁴⁴ Aristotle, ‘On the Heavens’, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume 1*, trans. J. Stocks (Princeton, 2014), ll. 279^a30–b3, 285^a27–30; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Yesodei ha-Torah, III, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. E4].

⁴⁶ Ibid. On the general preference amongst Reformed Protestants for the Masoretic Bible over the Septuagint in the early-seventeenth century, see A. Ossa-Richardson, ‘The Naked Truth of Scripture: André Rivet between Bellarmine and Grotius’, in *Scriptural Authority and Biblical Criticism in the Dutch Golden Age: God’s Word Questioned*, eds. H. Nellen, D. van Miert, P. Steenbakkers, and J. Touber (Oxford, 2017), pp. 109-30.

self-understanding of the Ancient Church, and all other Separatist congregations. Unsurprisingly then, Ainsworth commented on examples of covenants from Genesis at length in his *Annotations*.

Covenanting and the formation of the ‘Church of Jacob’ in the *Annotations*

Separatist Churches like Ainsworth’s were voluntary associations by definition. Enacting (they thought) the Pauline injunction to ‘come out from among them, and be ye separate’, each member of the Ancient Church had chosen to renounce the established Church of England and to pledge themselves to an illicit religious community. According to Ainsworth, the corrupt nature of England’s established Church had been proven by the following: its service to the popish Anti-Christ before the Break with Rome and again during the catholic Queen Mary’s reign; its national structure of an unscriptural governing hierarchy of bishops; and—worst of all—its promiscuous membership, which included (in theory at least) every subject of the crown in England.⁴⁷ Separatists like Ainsworth aspired instead to a church limited to a single congregation without external supervision, which elected its own minister, excluded the ungodly from its body, and whose members were visible godly saints deemed worthy by their peers of partaking in the Lord’s Supper.⁴⁸

The concept of covenanting was crucial to how Ainsworth and his peers thought that such a holy company might be formally bound together. Their act of covenanting featured a mutual oath made before God by all the church’s members to everyone else in the congregation, which involved each individual repenting of their formerly sinful ways, and swearing to become ‘living stones’ by conducting ‘themselves in work and worship by the laws of God’.⁴⁹ This public act was sometimes accompanied by the making of an explicit confession of faith regarding key points of doctrine, such as denouncing the Church of England’s episcopal hierarchy as irredeemably corrupt.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ E. Morgan, *Roger Williams: the church and the state* (New York, 1967), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁸ S. Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology, 1570-1625* (Oxford, 1988), p. 124.

⁴⁹ Morgan, *Roger Williams*, p. 20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The biblical concept of the covenant was by no means exclusively of interest to Separatists though. Covenantal theology, which developed in the aftermath of the Reformation, became an increasingly important, though complex aspect of late-sixteenth-century Reformed doctrine.⁵¹ Divines like the Dutch Calvinists Francis Junius and Franciscus Gomarus explained the relationship between the contents of the Old and New Testaments in terms of a promise (or covenant of grace) made by God to mankind after the Fall, which was fulfilled with the coming of Christ.⁵² However, covenantal theory quickly flew the theological nest and entered into political discourse, where it proved a crucial concept for explaining how a multitude of individuals might voluntarily form a single body without the consent of a sovereign.⁵³ For the Separatists, who could not fall back on human legal arguments or a national hierarchical structure to explain their church's formation, the divine covenant was an invaluable crutch for conceptually defining and binding the membership of their congregations.

In the midst of the *Annotations*, Ainsworth drew out two neat etymological points that reminded the reader that the 'Church of Jacob' was the original model for all covenanted congregations. Abram '*the Hebrue*' was so named, commented Ainsworth on Gen. 14:13, not because he had passed over a river (which was an alternative etymology for the word '*Hebrue*') but because he was one of the 'children of Eber' descended from Noah's son Shem. In other

⁵¹ R. Muller, *Post-Reformation reformed dogmatics*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, 2003), p. 78; J. Fesko, *The Covenant of Works: The Origins, Development, and Reception of the Doctrine* (Oxford, 2020), pp. 46-7. For an in-depth discussion of the complexity of covenantal thinking in an early-seventeenth century English context, see A. Martin, *The Covenant with Moses and the Kingdom of God: Thomas Hobbes and the Theology of the Old Covenant in Early Modern England* (Leiden, 2023), pp. 1-19. See also Morgan, *Roger Williams*, pp. 14-5.

⁵² An early example of covenantal thinking discussed in English can be found in H. Bullinger, *The Olde Fayth*, trans. M. Coverdale (Antwerp, 1541). This work was re-published as H. Bullinger, *Looke from Adam, and behold the Protestants faith and religion*, trans. M. Coverdale (1624). See also R. Wainwright, *Early Reformation covenant theology: English Reception of Swiss Reformed thought, 1520-1555* (Phillipsburg, 2020), pp. 177-79.

⁵³ K. Kubala, 'Separatism, the Mayflower, and the Congregational Theory of the Corporation', *Political Theory* 53/4 (2025), p. 16. For the germination of other theories of ecclesiological incorporation in medieval and early modern Catholic and Protestant contexts, see H. de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, eds. L. P. Hemming and S. F. Parsons, trans. G. Simmonds, R. Price, and C. Stephens (Notre Dame, 2007); J. R. Rust, *The Body in Mystery: The Political Theology of the Corpus Mysticum in the Literature of Reformation England* (Evanston, 2014); C. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and political form*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (London, 1996).

words, Ainsworth considered the attribution of *Hebrue* to Abram as a sign that he and his descendants were part of the chosen ‘seed’ who inherited the Patriarchal faith in God thanks to the covenant of grace.⁵⁴ Secondly, Ainsworth’s translation of Gen. 14:13 described Abram’s alliance with the Amorite brothers: Mamree, Eshcol, and Aner, as one between ‘*confoederates.*’—that is, ‘*men (or masters) of league, or covenant: sworn-freinds*’. Ainsworth elected to employ this word as a translation of the Hebrew *berît* (covenant), the Greek *σύμμαχοι* (sworn allies), and the Latin *foederati* (peoples bound by treaty).⁵⁵ This annotation evinces Ainsworth’s opinion that the concept of a covenant had always been used in both a narrowly theological, and a wider political sense.

Whilst Ainsworth noted that of course the earliest covenants were sealed between God and the First Parents, before and then again after the Fall, he commented more substantially on the later covenants that God established with Noah after the Flood and with Abraham, the latter of which mandated circumcision as an outward sign of inner faith, a precursor to the Christian sacrament of baptism. Ainsworth’s more extensive discussion of these latter examples of covenants is potentially due to the fact that these instances pertained more obviously to the formation of an earthly community, and they stipulated particular laws that governed life within those societies. As such, they were more readily applicable as models for the formation and binding of a Separatist congregation in the contemporary.⁵⁶

According to Ainsworth’s *Annotations*, after the Flood the relationship between God and mankind was reaffirmed through the establishment of a covenant and with the provision of certain instructions in the form of the seven Noahide laws. Borrowing once again from Maimonides and the Jewish Genesis commentary tradition, Ainsworth enumerated these

⁵⁴ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. N3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. L3v.

⁵⁶ J. Finley, ‘A Comparison of the Concepts of Jean Calvin and Henry Ainsworth on the Church’ (MA. Thesis, Northeast Missouri State University, 1973), p. 8.

injunctions: no idolatry, no blasphemy, no shedding of another person's blood, no sexual impropriety, no theft, the establishment of courts of justice, and no consumption of animal blood.⁵⁷ However, it was only the last of these precepts that was new, observed Ainsworth: 'the Hebrew Doctors, make this the seventh commandment given to the sons of Noe, which all nations were bound to keep: as there had been six from Adams time'.⁵⁸ The others had been known since the beginning when they were revealed to the first man by God and then taught by the former to his descendants, since, he argued, natural reason alone could not lead mankind to knowledge of these universal moral laws.⁵⁹

Comprehension of these divine positive laws was not natural, then, but revealed and passed down via Patriarchal tradition. Yet Ainsworth, again drawing on Maimonides, explained that the Noahide Laws were still universally obliging when they were delivered, and remained so thereafter. He commented that 'Whosoever in the world, transgressed any of these seven commandments wilfully [that is, knowingly and with prior knowledge of them], the Jewes held he was to be killed with the sword'.⁶⁰ These precepts formed part of the inheritance of the 'Church of Jacob' that Ainsworth urged his godly readers to study. Moreover, whilst the law against eating bloody flesh was supplanted later by the Mosaic Ceremonial Laws, which were themselves then abrogated by Christ, the other six laws were retained and thus to Ainsworth they constituted an ongoing set of obligations for his congregation since God had decreed that punishment would be exacted on those who did not obey them. Re-iterating this idea of perpetual obligation elsewhere, Ainsworth noted with regards to God's blessing of Abraham after he called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, that 'this was *a preaching of the gospel to*

⁵⁷ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. H3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* See also Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Melachim uMilchamot, Ch. 9.

Abraham...And this covenant confirmed before of God in Christ, is observed to be 430. yeres before the Law, and could not by the Law be disanulled, because God gave him it by promise'.⁶¹

Ainsworth's interest in the Noahide Laws and their ongoing obligation needs to be situated in the context of a wider early-seventeenth-century Protestant study of law in the Hebrew Bible, and recognised as part of an ongoing conversation among jurists and biblicists about the implications of the laws' universal quality, and the political and ecclesiastical arrangements they suggested for contemporary communities.⁶² As part of their contestation of the Catholic view that the Church's authority rested solely upon Christ's commission to St Peter, and the parallel claim that the old Law was supplanted by new positive injunctions that Christ promulgated through the Apostles, certain Protestant divines—particularly in the Netherlands—sought to show how the rules and models contained in the Pentateuch and the rest of the Old Testament applied to their own present-day communities by employing Jewish sources.⁶³ Ainsworth's investigations of Genesis belong firmly to this intellectual moment, and he was determined to show how most of the obligations implied by the Noachic covenant continued to apply for religious communities like his in the present.

Ainsworth's analysis of the universal Noahide Laws in the *Annotations* conformed with the conventional early-seventeenth-century Protestant understanding that an individual's knowledge of natural laws always relied upon God's support.⁶⁴ It was for this reason that he insisted that six of the seven Noahide Laws had been revealed to Adam in the beginning and then passed down by tradition, rather than being discovered afresh by each individual's exercising of their independent natural reason. A suggestive consequence of this view, and one

⁶¹ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. K3.

⁶² I am most grateful to Dr Hannah Dongsun Lee for sharing an early draft of her forthcoming article on Hugo Grotius and Protestant Law with me, the contents of which drew this point to my attention. See also A. Katchen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' 'Mishneh Torah'* (Cambridge MA, 1984), pp. 35-7.

⁶³ Katchen, *Christian Hebraists*, pp. 15-30; Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, pp. 13-16.

⁶⁴ J. Sommerville, 'John Selden, the Law of Nature, and the Origins of Government', *HJ* 27/2 (1984), pp. 442-3.

which accorded with Ainsworth's ecclesiology, was that there could be no separation of politics from religion, since no moral life could be sustained on the basis of natural reason alone, without God's input. Hence, only the revelations contained in the scriptures could provide a source of authority within the church. These arguments justified the separation of the Ancient Church's members from an established Church they considered unscriptural, their forming of their own religious community in accordance with their understanding of God's Law, and their denial of the monarch's authority in pronouncing on theological matters from a non-biblical perspective guided by natural reason.

The situation of the English Separatist congregation in Amsterdam was such that this merging of politics and religion in Ainsworth's conception of the true Church could work in practice more easily than in England, since the civil authorities were willing to allow the exiles comparative freedom of action.⁶⁵ And whilst the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church were often critical of the English Separatists in the Netherlands (as opposed to members of Paget's English Reformed Church whom they welcomed), the civil authorities prioritised the economic benefits of the former's presence in cities like Amsterdam. Meanwhile, the leaders of the Separatists dealt with any issues within the congregation internally according to their interpretation of the Law, rather than appealing to the authority of the Dutch magistrate.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church regarded this internal arrangement of the Separatist churches as dangerously egalitarian, and they recommended that any disorders amongst the Separatists ought to be referred to the civil magistrate.⁶⁷ Ironically, during this period the Dutch Church was itself increasingly fractured on the question of what precisely the religious authority of the magistrate was, and matters came to a head at the Synod of Dort in

⁶⁵ K. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: a history of English and Scottish churches of the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Leiden, 1982), p. 55.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

1618-19. But neither the Remonstrants nor the Counter-Remonstrants would have countenanced the suggestion that religious disputes ought to be settled by a congregation in isolation, since this appeared dangerously democratic and reminiscent of Anabaptism.⁶⁸ This context surely clarifies why Ainsworth directed criticism at the Anabaptists amidst his annotations on the Noahide covenant and Laws—he was trying to distance the Ancient Church from the radical sects whilst justifying its ordering with reference to the Church of Jacob in Genesis. Moreover, Ainsworth had personal reasons for wanting to rebuke Anabaptism, since members of the Ancient Church were occasionally lured by this more radical movement during his tenure as teacher and leader of the congregation.⁶⁹

By insisting that the content of all but one of the Noahide Laws was revealed to mankind by God from the beginning, Ainsworth de-emphasised the historical moment at which God spoke to Noah and cast the Church of Jacob as an entity that had developed organically through time. In opposition to the Anabaptist's rejection of tradition and their view of believer's baptism as a deliberate and decisive change in the spiritual life of the individual, Ainsworth presented the Noahide covenant as a promise to retain the purity of God's Law as it was intended in the beginning. More important than the fact of the laws' reaffirmation after the Flood was the renewal of God's relationship with his chosen people. Ainsworth's commitment to infant baptism and his observation that ever since the time of Genesis it had been the parents' responsibility to bring their newborn children to this sacrament can thus be read as a desire to sustain God's pristine church through the generations.⁷⁰ When they grew up, children baptised into a Separatist congregation were expected to renew their covenant with the church and perpetuate its ongoing commitment to God's Word.

⁶⁸ Gelderen, 'Arminian Trouble', p. 33.

⁶⁹ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, p. 49.

⁷⁰ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. N4].

The mark of God's further covenanting with Abraham was circumcision, and Ainsworth was keen to show that whilst the outward sign of the covenant might have changed in time to baptism, the covenant itself remained in place. In making this point, Ainsworth was concerned to distinguish the Ancient Church from the Anabaptists, who denied the validity of infant baptism as a sign of an individual's membership of the Church. Whilst commenting on God's covenant with Abraham, Ainsworth remarked that:

Although the outward signes, and manner of dispensing this covenant, were temporary and changeable, (as *circumcision* into *baptisme*, *Coloss.2.11.12.*) yet the covenant it self remaineth one in substance for ever: being stablished by the blood of Christ, the great Pastor... Herein consisteth the power and life of the everlasting covenant; whereby God himself, his power, wisdom, goodness, mercie &c, is applied unto man, for blessing & salvation: and we are by adoption made the children of God.⁷¹

In an earlier work Ainsworth had already fiercely defended infant baptism on the grounds that it was the replacement of the act of circumcision in the Old Testament, and that both were outward signs of inner faith that the scriptures recorded as God's commands never to be abolished. This was provoked by the publication of *A defence of the Holy Scriptures* (1609), penned by an advocate of believer's baptism named John Smythe, who also resided in the Netherlands and who had defected from the Ancient Church.⁷² Against Smythe, Ainsworth appealed to the practice of the Ancient Church, where baptism marked the entry of an individual into the pure community of saints, and covenanting subsequently as an adult constituted a promise to remain true to the Law and perpetuate the Church's purity.

⁷¹ Ibid., sig. N3.

⁷² H. Ainsworth, *A defence of the Holy Scriptures* (Amsterdam, 1609), p. 25.

Discipline and Exclusion in Genesis and the Ancient Church

Complementing the act of covenanting was the exercise of discipline. This was the mechanism by which the purity of a covenanted Separatist congregation was maintained by its leaders. By the time that Ainsworth wrote the *Annotations* discipline had already long been recognised as one of the markers of a true church—alongside the preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments—by more advanced Reformed Protestants in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Indeed, a classic early Dutch statement of this idea can be found in the Belgic Confession’s (1561) assertion that ‘if church discipline is exercised in the punishing of sin’ this is a sign of a true Church.⁷³ But in the Ancient Church and other Separatist congregations discipline was pursued zealously and its implications were political as well as religious, since there was no distinction between sinful and criminal acts in that community. Minor infractions by individual members could earn them a humiliating public reprimand in front of their brethren, while more serious breaches of the strict moral code—such as gadding to a sermon by a non-Separatist preacher—might lead to an individual being cast out from the church.

The need to maintain purity lay at the heart of the Separatists’ justification for abandoning the Church of England. With its promiscuous membership and laxity around allowing sinners and saints alike to partake in the Lord’s Supper, no parish church (according to the Separatists) was inoculated against the corruption of the institution as a whole. It was the conviction that this Church must therefore be abandoned for conscience’s sake that distinguished the Separatists from the rest of their godly fraternity.⁷⁴ However, in reality the communal imperative to regulate individual behaviour was often the cause of disagreements within congregations like Ainsworth’s. One particularly thorny issue was the acceptance of new members who had previously worshipped alongside non-separatists. Ainsworth was often

⁷³ P. Schaff, *The creeds of Christendom: with a history and critical notes*, vol. 3 (New York, 1877), p. 419.

⁷⁴ Morgan, *Roger Williams*, pp. 15-16.

compelled to arbitrate such debates as a leader of the Ancient Church.⁷⁵ For example, in his capacity as the congregation's pastor, Ainsworth was once forced to defend the Ancient Church's policy of refusing membership to anyone who had been baptised in the Dutch Reformed Church, on the basis that the latter body had been historically lax in its admissions policy.⁷⁶

In the *Annotations*, Ainsworth noted the struggles of the Patriarchs to balance retaining purity in their community through the exercise of discipline with bringing righteous individuals into their tent. This tension between ensuring the purity of the Church and welcoming new godly members, which was noted in this chapter's introduction, plagued the Ancient Church too and raised questions about the relationship of Separatist congregations to the wider godly community in Amsterdam and elsewhere. Ainsworth had intended his work to be read not only by his fellow Separatists but also by other godly readers of English in the Netherlands and across the North Sea. In fact, the work's prefatory address to the reader was deliberately written in a mild, self-effacing manner, with the conclusion warmly inviting the reader to 'trye what I set down, & not accept it, because I say it' and encouraging 'the learned [to] be provoked, unto more large and fruitful labours in this kinde'.⁷⁷ Straight after this though, Ainsworth wrote the following prayer: 'The Lord open al our eyes, that we may see the marveilous things of his Law' (Psalms 119:18).⁷⁸ Throughout the *Annotations* that followed, Ainsworth endeavoured to persuade his reader that it was *his* reading of Genesis and God's Laws, underwritten by Separatist assumptions, which most accurately reflected the divine intention regarding the formation of a church. In other words, Ainsworth's *Annotations* responded to and contested readings of early sacred history offered up by other godly expositors. Crucially, however,

⁷⁵ See the Robinson affair in Moody, "A Man of a Thousand", pp. 207-9.

⁷⁶ Broughton and Ainsworth, *Certayne Questions*, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. †††v.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Ainsworth was engaging with a wide audience, not just his own congregation of saints. Like Noah before him, who according to Jewish and Christian commentaries on Genesis had preached to sinful mankind before the Flood, Ainsworth was expounding God's Law through his *Annotations* in order to try and bring about moral reform and godly living. But Ainsworth's project was also tied to a local context, the squabbles between the different exile churches in Amsterdam. That Ainsworth was the target of vitriolic abuse by Paget, the leader of the rival English Reformed Church, was at least partly due to the fact that the former succeeded in convincing some of Paget's congregation of his cause through his reading of scripture. Moreover, the wider popularity of the *Annotations* in print cannot be separated from the originality of Ainsworth's reading of religion in Genesis.

Certain later-seventeenth-century English Hebraists who are discussed in Nelson's *Hebrew Republic* were attracted to the evidence for toleration they claimed to find in the ancient Kingdom of Israel's constitution, a fundamental law which supposedly suggested that according to God's will only a small number of injunctions regarding religion—those with civic implications—could legitimately be dictated by the civil power. Matters of conscience were not amenable to legal injunction. In contrast, Ainsworth's slightly earlier interest in rabbinic discussions of pre-Israelite Genesis society tapped a radically different argument, since, according to his interpretation, at that period of history there was no distinction between political and religious authority, just as there was none within the Ancient Church now. Tying together discipline, order, and morality, Ainsworth explained in his notes on Gen. 6 that the word 'corruption' meant sexual licence in the domestic estate, theft of property in the political estate, and idolatry in the ecclesiastical estate. He praised Noah for resisting this sinfulness and highlighted rabbinical discussions of the Noahide Law that referred to the setting up of courts of justice within the community as one of the seven injunctions God gave to Noah.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁹ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. F4v.

ultimate sentence of that court was of course banishment from partaking in communion and indeed participating in the community at all.

Ainsworth showed that from the earliest times there was a divine precedent for purifying the church by banishing those who fell short. After God discovered Abel's murder, he passed sentence on Cain in Gen. 4:11-12. The following contains Ainsworth's translation of the accused's response: 'And Kain sayd, unto Jehovah: my iniquitie *is* greater, then may be forgiven. Behold, thou hast driven me out *this* day, from the face of the earth; and from thy face, shal I be hid'.⁸⁰ In the annotations that followed, Ainsworth explained that to be hidden from God's face 'meaneth a fearfull banishment, from the face or presence of God in his church'.⁸¹ The opposite logic also applied in his view—to appear before God's face was to worship him in a public place as part of a congregation.⁸²

Ainsworth was at pains to emphasise that God's treatment of Cain was by no means exceptional in the ancient world. Reaching for historical parallels, the author of the *Annotations* cited several classical references to the banishment and treatment of outlaws that had committed heinous crimes. Ainsworth directed the reader to Dionysius of Halicarnassus's observations on the practice of allowing any individual to kill a man 'cursed for any wicked fact'—such a figure was declared *homo sacer* (literally, 'sacred man') by Roman Law, and he could be killed by anyone, though not ritually sacrificed.⁸³ Such an individual was cast out, which for Ainsworth meant exclusion from the community as well as from the church. Similarly, Julius Caesar's account of the Gallic Wars and Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* furnished Ainsworth with more classical examples of this practice. The former offered a

⁸⁰ Ibid., unfol., [sig. D3v]-sig. D4.

⁸¹ Ibid., sig. E2-sig. E2v.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., sig. E2v. See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, vol. 1, trans. E. Cary (Cambridge MA, 1937), pp. 532-33; G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: The Omnibus* (Stanford, 2017), Book 1, pp. 5-159.

description of the treatment of those who disobeyed the druidic priesthood in France, which Ainsworth paraphrased thus:

such as obeyed not their preists the *Druydes*, were forbidden the sacrifices, (their divine worship:) and those so forbidden, were reputed amongst the most wicked, al men shunned them, and would not converse or talk with them, fearing to be defiled even by leight communication with them, no benefit of law was allowed them, nor any honour doen unto them.⁸⁴

Noah Dauber has demonstrated recently that classical examples such as Caesar’s discussion of the Gallic druids were often cited by sixteenth-century legal humanists as proof that the ancient practice of shunning individuals was understood to blend together civil religion and criminal prosecution by declaring these people *homo sacer*.⁸⁵ It is conceivable that this early modern humanist juridical literature provided Ainsworth with material for his annotations on this part of Genesis.

This passage in the *Annotations* on Cain’s treatment and the concept of *homo sacer* raises several themes relevant to Ainsworth’s separatist thought: the importance of discipline in defining membership of the congregation, the exclusion from communion of those deemed unrighteous, and the reprobate’s ostracization from godly conversation.⁸⁶ Read in light of Ainsworth’s contextualising historical notes, the case of Cain’s punishment becomes a paradigm example for all nations of the need to protect the community with severe discipline. ‘Cast out from Gods presence and Church’, Cain was ‘the first cursed man in the world’ according to Ainsworth.⁸⁷ By relating Cain’s banishment to a Roman legal concept—*homo sacer*—Ainsworth showed how the Separatist practice of exclusion derived from holy scripture could be understood using a piece of juridical vocabulary. More importantly, an argument taken

⁸⁴ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. E2v. Here he paraphrases from J. Caesar, *The Gallic Wars*, trans. W. McDevitte and W. Bohn (New York, 1869), p. 130.

⁸⁵ N. Dauber, ‘The sacred in the civil law: the *Homo Sacer* and *Sacratae Leges* of the legal humanists’, *HEI* 50/1 (2024), p. 130.

⁸⁶ Morgan, *Roger Williams*, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁷ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. E2.

from Roman Law also offered a means of demonstrating that congregational discipline was a universally recognised practice. For Ainsworth, Cain's expulsion was the paradigm example of discipline being enacted because he was utterly cast out. The problem in early-seventeenth-century Amsterdam was that efforts to use banishment as a form of corrective discipline were hamstrung by the fact that the guilty party could join a rival church, and thus did not need to seek reconciliation with their former congregation through repentance.⁸⁸

Several generations after Cain in Genesis's sacred history, Ainsworth found another instance where God had intervened to smite the sinful by banishing them from his church. Gen. 11 narrates how, in the beginning, all of Creation spoke the same language—for Ainsworth this was a pure form of Hebrew, which communicated God's truth.⁸⁹ However, as a consequence of mankind's ambition, which was symbolised in the erection of the Tower of Babel, God scattered the peoples of the earth and confused their tongues so that the nations could no longer communicate. According to Ainsworth, only the Genesis Patriarchs and their descendants retained the old Hebrew, until the Babylonian Captivity that is.⁹⁰ After this catastrophe, no one spoke this language naturally. Though Ainsworth did think that it could now be learned by Christians thanks to the Pentecostal spirit and he distinguished the original language from a later, mixed form of Hebrew.⁹¹ Indeed, one of Ainsworth's main aims in writing the *Annotations* and producing a distinctively literal re-translation of *Bereshit* was to recover this pristine language, the shared possession of which he felt was vital to binding together a Separatist community. Ainsworth's description of the punishment of the 'generation of the division' by God emphasised this point—the Almighty had, he wrote, 'dissolved their

⁸⁸ Sprunger, *Dutch Puritans*, p. 59.

⁸⁹ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. I4-sig. I4v].

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*; R. Lewis, *Language, mind and nature: artificial languages in England from Bacon to Locke* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 117-28.

communion' by confounding their tongues.⁹² In doing this, moreover, Ainsworth thought that God had condemned them to eternal damnation. His source for this conclusion was the Babylonian *Talmud*, which stated—in the book entitled 'Sanhedrin'—that the generation of the dispersion had no place in the kingdom to come.⁹³

Ainsworth's commentary on the fate of the Tower of Babel's builders once again highlighted his point that the membership of a disciplined and visible Christian community needed to be cleansed of reprobates. In following Jewish sources, Ainsworth interpreted the Tower itself as a symbol of sinful idolatry. He attributed this suggestion to the *Jerusalem Thargum*, an Aramaic translation and paraphrase of the Torah.⁹⁴ Ainsworth also noted the rabbinic suggestion that the Tower had been used for false worship and the storage of weapons—using a place of adoration as an armoury subverted religious custom (and was subsequently forbidden by Jewish law)—and that is why it betrayed the builders' guilty consciences.⁹⁵ Repeating a commonplace, Ainsworth noted that the punishment God exacted upon them—the confusion of their tongues—was the inverse of the talent that God gave to the Apostles whom he sent out to evangelise and build up the church: the gift of tongues.⁹⁶ In both the building up of a church and the dissolution of a congregation, Ainsworth contended that it was the holy spirit that brought together the saints and dispersed the sinners.

There is a tension here in Ainsworth's emphasis on the importance of retrieving the holy language as a contribution to binding a religious and political community together on the one hand, and the inspiration of the spirit on the other. Whilst the latter supposedly inspired every individual member to walk with God and their godly neighbours, the former required

⁹² Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. K.

⁹³ A. Even-Israel, trans., *Babylonian Talmud* (Jerusalem, 2017), Tractate Sanhedrin, vol. 2, s. 109a.

⁹⁴ J. Etheridge, trans., *Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch; with the fragments of the Jerusalem Targum: From The Chaldee* (1862), p. 662.

⁹⁵ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. I4v.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. K.

exegetical skills born of an elite education and a particular immersion in Hebrew and classical sources (as well as contemporary Reformed Bible commentaries). Such abilities were the exclusive reserve of congregational leaders like Ainsworth who had received a university education. In the preface to the *Annotations* Ainsworth opined that ‘though some things [in scripture] are breif, some things dark and hard to be understood; yet many things are by a litle direction, made easy to the prudent’.⁹⁷ As the teacher and then pastor of the Ancient Church, Ainsworth framed his duty as the congregation’s exegete in terms of leading his flock in retrieving the ancient language of the Church of Jacob and in their struggles to maintain the purity of their community. In doing so he laid claim to a particular kind of religious authority, but this did not forestall similar struggles from haunting his own congregation.

⁹⁷ Ibid., sig. †††.

Religious Authority in the *Annotations* and the Ancient Church

Though united in their animus towards the “corrupted” Church of England, the members of the Ancient Church perpetually fell to arguing amongst themselves. At the turn of the seventeenth century, a petty dispute about the penchant for fine clothing displayed by the wife of Ainsworth’s predecessor as leader of the Ancient Church (Francis Johnson) snowballed into a row over where religious authority lay within the congregation. Disputing the meaning of the phrase ‘Tell it unto the Church’ (Matthew 17:18), Johnson and his supporters contended that the power to excommunicate belonged only to the Elders and Pastors of a congregation. In contrast, Ainsworth and his followers argued that the authority inhered within the congregation as a whole. This was a significant disagreement and the congregation split into factions that vied to push each other out.⁹⁸ Lurking behind this dispute were wider fears about popular church government and accusations of anabaptism hurled by the Ancient Church’s detractors amongst Amsterdam’s exiled English community and by ministers within the Dutch Reformed Church. The matter came to a head in December 1610 when Johnson departed the Ancient Church and moved from Amsterdam to Emden.

Unfortunately, this was not the last contention about the authority to loose and bind that split Ainsworth’s congregation. In the years preceding Ainsworth’s death, his church was gripped by further arguments about whether or not it was acceptable to have private communion with a godly Puritan outside of the congregation, and whether or not to allow such an individual to join the church.⁹⁹ Moreover, a constant source of tension were the different opinions within the congregation regarding its relationship to the English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, and to the godly in England. Whilst some members urged an intolerant exclusivism and would not countenance any church that indulged in non-scriptural

⁹⁸ Moody, “A Man of a Thousand”, p. 201.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

‘corruptions’—including the Amsterdam English Reformed Church’s supposedly apostatic practices of reciting the Lord’s Prayer, and worshipping in an old nunnery building—more liberal congregants advocated for shared communion.¹⁰⁰ Ainsworth, who had endeavoured to avoid taking sides on these questions of discipline and membership, ultimately found the wrangles intolerable and he abandoned the group prior to his return to England and his demise.

Ainsworth’s remarks on the authority to punish (e.g. excommunicate) in the Church of Jacob serve to show that his *Annotations* were not insulated from contemporary debates over religious authority and the boundaries of the congregation that preoccupied him as a leader of a separatist church. Indeed, at several points throughout *Annotations* there are instances where Ainsworth reflects on the nature of that kind of religious authority exercised in the first age of mankind. Since he held that the authority to bind and loose lay within the covenanted congregation as a whole, Ainsworth cast the Patriarchs as the stewards of their Church who declared God’s teaching rather than as priests wielding an arbitrary authority. The role of the Patriarchs was pedagogical for Ainsworth; their responsibility was to demonstrate fidelity to the covenant that bound their community together and served as its rule. Moreover, they were also God’s instruments in bringing the wayward in their congregation to repent by acting as the announcers of divine sanctions.

A particularly explicit example of this use of Genesis by Ainsworth can be found in the notes on Chapter 42 to Chapter 45, which recounts Joseph’s reunification with his brothers when they arrive at Pharaoh’s court as refugees escaping famine. In the *Annotations*, Ainsworth made several observations that draw out the divine nature of Joseph’s authority and the purpose for which he wields it. Explaining why the Patriarch accused his brothers of spying in Gen. 42:9, Ainsworth wrote that ‘Joseph dealeth with his brethren in syn, as God doeth with his

¹⁰⁰ Moody, ‘Ainsworth, Henry’, *ODNB*.

children: who often estrangeth himself from them, dealeth roughly, & counteth them unto him *as his enemies*'.¹⁰¹ Here Ainsworth was speaking directly to the reader, as his forceful choice of language suggests. Not only might the word 'brethren' have readily been applied to the congregation of the Ancient Church, but Ainsworth casts Joseph's actions as an example of a general principle: the act of sinning leads sinners to be dealt with 'roughly', indeed God 'estrangeth himself from them'. In other words, the malfeasant is banished until they redeem themselves and repent. For Joseph's brothers, this comes about in Gen. 42:17 and 42:21 where, according to Ainsworth: 'God by tribulation, calleth the Patriarchs to repentance for their synns' and 'Thus by afflictions they are brought to acknowledge syn committed about 13. yeres before (i.e., selling Joseph into slavery), which their conscience did now accuse them of'. As the authority figure in this example, Joseph serves as God's cipher and delivers the divine punishment to his brothers, but the sentence does not originate in him. As Ainsworth put it in his note on Gen. 44:16, 'This was the end, why God by Joseph brought this temptation (i.e., the silver cup in Benjamin's sack)]; upon them, that they might see their former synns, and repent'.¹⁰² In the same way, excommunication from the Ancient Church was a congregational decision in accordance with God's Law, which was only delivered by its leaders.

Whilst he was writing the *Annotations* and thinking about religious authority within his own congregation, Ainsworth was concerned to forestall any readings of certain passages in Genesis that might be used to promote alternative conceptions of ministerial jurisdiction and thus challenge Separatist ecclesiology. An especially notable instance of this is his exegesis on the much-controverted Gen. 14:18-20, which narrates the Patriarch Abraham's encounter with the mysterious priestly and kingly figure of Melchizedek (whom Ainsworth, like Willet, concluded was Noah's son Sem).

¹⁰¹ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. Ffv.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, sig. Gg.

Richard Muller has contrasted Ainsworth's approach to this passage with Andrew Willet's method of exegesis.¹⁰³ Though the two exegetes reached the same conclusion regarding Melchizedek's lineage, Muller rightly points out that their emphases in their respective comments on the verses could hardly have been more different. Whereas Willet seized on Melchizedek's gifting of bread and wine to Abraham as an opportunity to lambast the popish doctrine of transubstantiation and Catholic views on the sacramental authority of the priesthood, Ainsworth refused this 'eucharistic gambit' and focussed instead on Melchizedek's pacifism and his divine authority.¹⁰⁴ But this difference in Willet and Ainsworth's approaches to Gen. 14:18-20 surely also reflects the contrasting priorities preoccupying the two divines whilst they were writing and the polemical contexts that moulded their works. Indeed, it demonstrates how different approaches to the use of Genesis for thinking about religious authority could be in early modern England. For example, one might contrast Lancelot Andrewes' emphasis on Enosh's quasi-sacramental authority, which was analysed in Chapter Two of this thesis, with Ainsworth's view of the minister as teacher. However these confessional pressures are not considered in Muller's brief discussion of the *Annotations*' 'social context'.¹⁰⁵

According to Ainsworth and his Jewish sources, Melchizedek's authority was manifested in his blessing of Abraham and his pedagogical role—an interpretation that was readily applicable to Ainsworth's own office in the Ancient Church. Ainsworth translated Gen. 14:18-20 as follows:

And Melchisedek, king of Salem; brought-forth bread and wine: and he a Priest, of God most-hye. And he blessed him, and sayd: Blessed *be* Abram, of God most-hye; possessor, of heavens and earth. And blessed, *be* God most-hye; who hath delivered thy enemies, into thy hand: and he gave him the tenth, of al.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Muller, *After Calvin*, pp. 169-74.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁰⁶ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. L2v.

He began his discussion of the passage by identifying Melchisedek as Sem and by citing a comprehensive list of Hebrew and Aramaic authorities who agreed with him.¹⁰⁷ His annotations also introduced the reader to a covenantal interpretation of Melchisedek as a prefiguring of Christ, a reading which he justified by cross-referencing Gen. 14:18 with Hebrews 7, as well as several other verses.¹⁰⁸ Noting that the New Testament epistle to the Hebrews describes Melchisedek as ‘king of Salem’, Ainsworth confirmed that this name and title connoted ‘justice’ and ‘peace’.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Ainsworth repeatedly drew attention to Melchisedek’s pacifism. He insisted that Melchisedek ‘hath nothing to do with the warrs of the nine kings [which Abraham fought in], but governed his realm in peace’, moreover, peace ‘was the summ and end of Christs administration, (whom Melchisedek prefigured)’.¹¹⁰

Ainsworth’s emphasis on Melchisedek’s peaceful style of ruling was pointed given the theological squabbles within the Ancient Church and the Netherlands more broadly. Moreover, his typological reading, which connected Melchizedek with Christ, granted the former a directly ordained authority that existed outside of any constitutional structure. Melchizedek’s combined role as a priest before the formation of the Aaronic priesthood and as a king before the founding of Israel provided Ainsworth with a model of a universal religious and political authority grounded directly upon God’s divine command, which was not predicated on the existence of a national church or the higher authority of a monarch or bishop, but rather the Almighty’s calling alone.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., sig. L3v. See also Etheridge, *Jerusalem Targum*, p. 199; J. Schreier, trans., *The Sefaria Midrash Rabbah* (New York, 2022), Bereshit Rabbah, Ch. 43—via Sefaria, accessed 1 January 2026, https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.43?lang=en; G. Friedlander, trans., *Pirḳê De Rabbi Eliezer* (1916), p. 53; Even-Israel, *Babylonian Talmud*, ‘Nedarim’, Ch. 3, s. 32, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, sig. L3v.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., sig. L4; Schreier, *Midrash*, Eikhah Rabbah, Ch. 1—via Sefaria, accessed 1 January 2026, https://www.sefaria.org/Eikhah_Rabbah.1?lang=bi.

¹¹⁰ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. L4].

One possible explanation for the distinctive gloss on Abraham's cryptic encounter with Melchizedek given in Ainsworth's *Annotations* is the peculiar situation of the Ancient Church in early-seventeenth-century Holland. Ainsworth's praising of Melchizedek's pacifism as a ruler can be read as a recommendation for peaceful and non-interfering rule by a magistrate in the contemporary, something that he and his fellow Separatists hoped for in Amsterdam since they had not received it in England. Unlike Willet, who was concerned about the threat of Catholicism to the Church of England and the overweening claims to authority made by its priests in relation to the sacrament of the Eucharist, Ainsworth was preoccupied with the ongoing liberty of his Ancient Church and the rival Reformed Churches' calls for it to be regulated more closely by the magistrate. His discussion of Melchizedek as the archetype of both a church leader and a magistrate thus tends towards the view that as a king he was unobtrusive, and as a cleric his authority rested in the divine priesthood communicated by the spirit, rather than actions during his meeting with Abraham like the presentation of bread and wine. Indeed, when Ainsworth did discuss the Lord's Supper elsewhere, he made clear that it was strictly a commemorative act, and that participation in it was a marker of one's standing as a member of the true Church. The anecdotal evidence of Ainsworth's time as leader of the Ancient Church suggests that he attempted to channel a Melchizedek-esque pacifism. However, neither this irenicism nor his claim to be God's divine instrument prevented fellow congregants from disputing Ainsworth's authority and ultimately forcing him out.

The Legacy of the *Annotations*

According to the Pilgrim Father William Bradford, Ainsworth was ‘a man of a Thousand’ and ‘the times and place in which hee [Ainsworth] lived were not worthy of such a man’.¹¹¹ To the New England congregationalist Roger Williams, he was ‘most despised (whilst living) and now much honoured’, since he ‘had scare his Peere amongst a thousand Academicians for the Scripture Originalls’.¹¹² But whilst his friends and followers lauded his character and his abilities in the wake of his passing, his detractors accused him of hypocrisy, indecision, and weak leadership.¹¹³

What was undisputed, however, was Ainsworth’s learning and the scholarly quality of works such as his *Annotations*. Evidence of the text’s popularity can be gauged, for example, by references to it in mid-seventeenth-century catalogues and works on Genesis.¹¹⁴ Praise for Ainsworth’s erudite exegesis was offered by a range of prominent near-contemporaries.¹¹⁵ The intelligencer Samuel Hartlib wrote that ‘Commentarii should bee written as Ainsworth explaining only the Words phrases et sense’, and ‘I wish Ainsworth had done all summaries upon the whole Bibel as hee hase done upon the 5. bookes of Moses’.¹¹⁶ Thirty years after the *Annotations*’ publication, the lay scholar and Member of Parliament—turned Civil War Army Colonel—Edward Leigh, praised Ainsworth for having ‘done well on the Pentateuch’.¹¹⁷ A few years later, the natural philosopher and Anglican cleric John Wilkins

¹¹¹ W. Bradford, ‘A Dialogue, or the sume of a Conference between som younge men borne in New England and sundery Ancient men that came out of Holland and old England, Anno Domini 1648’, in *Plymouth Church Records, 1620-1859*, vol. 1 (Boston, 1920), p. 136.

¹¹² R. Williams, *The Bloudy Tenent* (1644), p. 174.

¹¹³ Moody, “‘A Man of a Thousand’”, p. 200.

¹¹⁴ E.g., W. Crowe, *A collection, or catalogue of our English writers on the Old and New Testament* (1663), p. 2; R. Fehrenbach, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and early Stuart Book-Lists* (Binghampton, 1992-2020), *PLRE* 259:95, Ad150:5, Ad153:21, Ad154:24; J. Mayer, *A commentary upon the whole Old Testament* (1653), ‘The Epistle Dedicatorie’, unfol., [sig. A4v].

¹¹⁵ Axon and Axon, ‘The Puritan Commentator’, p. 51.

¹¹⁶ HP 29/3/13B; HP 29/3/12A. See also J. Bennett and S. Mandelbrote, *The garden, the ark, the tower, the temple: biblical metaphors of knowledge in early modern Europe* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 174-5.

¹¹⁷ E. Leigh, *A treatise of divinity, consisting of three bookes* (1646), pp. 47-8.

identified Ainsworth's *Annotations* as a particularly useful guide to Genesis.¹¹⁸ Finally, the Cambridge antiquary John Worthington applauded 'Mr. Ainsworth, whose excellent Annotations upon the Pentateuch, &c., sufficiently discover his great learning, and his most exact observation of the proper idioms of the holy text with every iota and tittle of which he seems to be as much acquainted as any of the Masoreths [ancient Jewish Bible scholars]'.¹¹⁹

Amongst these illustrious mid-seventeenth-century figures who praised Ainsworth's *Annotations* and other commentaries there was—broadly speaking—a shared interest in a godly national Church, which relied upon a healthy preaching ministry. Though they were descendants of a different Protestant ecclesiological strand to Ainsworth (they were conformist rather than separatist), the disestablishment of the Church of England in the mid-seventeenth century produced an environment where thinking about how a religious community might be formed and perpetuated in the absence of a legal constitution was required. As well as the *Annotations*' obvious scholarly value, this context is a suggestive reason for why readers of Genesis in mid-seventeenth-century England enjoyed turning to Ainsworth's *Annotations*.

¹¹⁸ J. Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, or, A discourse concerning the gift of preaching* (1651), p. 43.

¹¹⁹ Axon and Axon, 'The Puritan Commentator', p. 51.

Chapter 5 — ‘it is not to be doubted, but that every chief Family...had their Priests and publick worship’: Genesis, Ecclesiastical Authority, and the Visible Church, c.1606-c.1637

According to William Crowe’s catalogue, the publication of new Genesis commentaries, lectures, and sermons declined during the Caroline era (c.1625-1640). Yet interest in using the Bible’s first book to reflect on the nature of the Church and religious authority did not abate in this period.¹ Though tighter press controls and self-censorship may have caused certain godly ministers interested in commenting on Genesis to stay their pens (or, at least—as Chapter Six will exemplify—to avoid seeking publication until the end of the Personal Rule), interpretations of the Bible’s opening book still played a role in shaping conceptions of the visible church and the religious authority of the magistrate and the clergy.²

This chapter contends that an important way in which Genesis’s sacred history was used in this period was to legitimise a vision of an embodied, decorous, and sacramental Protestant national church against Catholic and Presbyterian alternatives; this was a visibly embodied institution governed by the monarch, and by a hierarchical clergy wielding a *iure divino* religious authority tied to the orchestration of ritual ceremony and religious instruction, whose origin could be traced back to the Creation itself. However, this vision of the church did not arise spontaneously when Charles I was crowned. Indeed, Chapter Five illustrates this point through connecting readings of Genesis by clergy supportive of the Caroline Church to earlier Jacobean interpretations of the Bible’s opening book. A significant conclusion from this

¹ W. Crowe, *A collection, or catalogue of our English writers on the Old and New Testament* (1662), pp. 1-12. A notable exception is A. Ross, *An exposition on the fourteene first chapters of Genesis* (1626).

² HP, 29/2/44A. See also A. Milton, ‘Licensing, Censorship, and Religious Orthodoxy in Early Stuart England’, *HJ* 41/3 (1998), p. 645; C. Clegg, *Press censorship in Caroline England* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 131-5; P. Lake, *The boxmaker’s revenge: ‘orthodoxy’, ‘heterodoxy’ and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2009), p. 404.

diachronic approach is that the use of these interpretations of Genesis to defend Laud's policies represented an offshoot, but not an inevitable consequence of older Jacobean lines of argument.

It will be suggested here that this continuity in ecclesiologicaly orientated interpretations of Genesis's sacred history was related to the emergence of a much studied movement within the Church of England during the late-Elizabethan and Jacobean period, which was committed to restoring the beauty, wealth, and independent authority of 'God's house' by recalibrating its government, worship, and doctrine.³ Sometimes referred to by historians like Peter Lake as 'Avant-garde conformists', the churchmen who championed this cause at the turn of the seventeenth century—whose number included Lancelot Andrewes—contended for a return to a more sacramentally-orientated piety, a reverence for sacred spaces, and a greater respect for the sanctity of the clergy and for ecclesiastical property.⁴

When pushed to the extreme, these recommendations for ecclesiastical reform constituted an attack on the established Church's Reformed identity and unsurprisingly some of those who pursued these reforms sought to distance the Church of England from continental Reformed Protestantism. Thanks to foreign policy developments in the 1610s and 1620s—foremostly King James VI & I's desire to secure a marriage between his heir Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta—Andrewes and his acolytes (amongst whom were John Buckeridge and William Laud) gained influence due to their willingness to narrow the gap between the Church of England and Rome.⁵ By the 1630s, the realisation of an ecclesiological programme whose seeds were sown in the 1590s was possible under the newly appointed Archbishop of

³ K. Fincham, 'Episcopal Government, 1603-40', in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. K. Fincham (Basingstoke, 1993), pp. 77.

⁴ P. Lake, 'Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and avant-garde conformity at the court of James I', in *The Mental World Of The Jacobean Court*, ed. L. Peck (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 113-33; A. Milton, *England's second Reformation: the battle for the Church of England 1625-1662* (Cambridge, 2021), p. 35.

⁵ K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, *Altars restored the changing face of English religious worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford, 2007), p. 125.

Canterbury—Laud.⁶ It is not insignificant that both Andrewes and Buckeridge (two of the latter’s sermons are discussed in this chapter) exercised a notable influence over Laud. As Peter Lake has shown recently, Andrewes’s political theology made a deep impression on the leaders of the Caroline Church.⁷ Meanwhile, Buckeridge was Laud’s tutor at St John’s College, Oxford, and together the two divines curated a printed compilation of Andrewes’ performances—the *XCVI Sermons*—which would remain the standard edition of the influential prelate’s work through several iterations until Peter McCullough’s modern edition in 2005.⁸ These connections, theological as well as personal, place Andrewes and Buckeridge’s ecclesiological suggestive readings of Genesis within the intellectual foundations of the Caroline Church and underline the significance of several sources examined below.

It is important to acknowledge though that there were other divines within the Caroline Church who thought that a Protestant Church of England could and should be decorous and sacramental, but who were suspicious of Laud’s reforms because they believed that his policies compromised the Church of England’s identity as a firmly Protestant opponent of the “popish Antichrist”.⁹ Hence, when certain Caroline clergy used Genesis to defend the reforms that took place under Laud they drew upon, but also creatively intensified, pre-existing arguments for ecclesiastical authority that had emerged in response to concerns about the dilapidated state of the Church at the end of the Tudor period. Indeed, it will be argued here that interpretations of the church and religious authority in Genesis, which appeared to lend credence to ‘avant-garde’ ecclesiological values, were nonetheless explicitly Protestant with regards to the origins of the church and the magistrate’s religious authority.

⁶ P. Lake, *On Laudianism: Piety, Polemic and Politics During the Personal Rule of Charles I* (Cambridge, 2023), pp. 45-118.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸ L. Andrewes, *Lancelot Andrewes: Selected sermons and lectures*, ed. P. McCullough (Oxford, 2005), p. xii.

⁹ S. Hampton, *Grace and conformity: the Reformed Conformist Tradition and the early Stuart Church of England* (Oxford, 2021), p. 2.

Appealing to Genesis's account of the essential role played by religion in the origins of human society had a two-fold benefit. On the one hand, it enabled Jacobean and Caroline conformist divines to confute Catholic claims grounded in the Gospel that religious authority was founded upon Christ's commission to St Peter. By exploring the religious obligations of natural law and claiming a high degree of continuity between Old Testament ecclesiology grounded in this moral law and their church's teaching, and by insisting that Christ had not revealed a new, higher ethical code to mankind, these clergy were able to deny the Catholic Church's claim to a superior, revealed authority.¹⁰ On the other hand, it allowed these same clergy to counter Presbyterian claims that scriptural revelation alone was the guide to the right arrangement of the Church, because (according to their interpretation) Genesis described the period before the giving of the Mosaic Law when natural law as well as revelation dictated practices of worship. Combining the languages of Genesis sacred history and natural law enabled certain Church of England clergy to steer between two opposing ecclesiological views and to promote a visible, national church wherein prince and priest exercised distinct forms of religious authority.

The following chapter will discuss several works produced by different English divines across the first four decades of the seventeenth century. Significantly, some of the authors considered here, who deployed Genesis in the context of debates about the Church in the late-Jacobean and Caroline periods, echoed ideas promulgated earlier in the late-sixteenth century by Lancelot Andrewes, whose interpretations of Genesis were the subject of Chapter Two. These observable patterns in how Genesis was read over time by certain early modern English Church divines lend support to Lake and McCullough's arguments that the ideological origins of the 1630s movement that attempted to remodel the Church of England should be sought

¹⁰ S. Mortimer, 'Kingship and the 'Apostolic Church,' 1620-1650', *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 13/2 (2011), p. 230; Idem., *Reformation, Resistance, and Reason of State (1517-1625)* (Oxford, 2021), p. 63.

earlier, in the 1590s.¹¹ In fact, it appears that the vision for the established Church that emerges from this chapter's analysis of certain late-Jacobean and Caroline interpretations of the time before the Law was an outgrowth of an earlier use of Genesis to justify the renewal of the Church, a usage that was open ended enough to be radicalised subsequently. This claim is supported by Chapter Five's consideration of the historical sources that the commentators discussed below drew upon, which in one case included an obscure medieval letter issued by a Church council that contended against sacrilege and featured a history of religion in Genesis.

The materials discussed in Chapter Five include two court sermons, a polemical treatise, and, firstly, a set of canons drawn up in Convocation. Given the distinct genres that these sources belong to and the different contexts in which they were produced, each work is considered separately, and they will be discussed in chronological order. Yet, importantly, overarching patterns will be discerned between them. The discussions of Genesis in the earlier works will be shown to have focussed primarily on the *loci* of sacred authority within the community, and to have exploited the language of patriarchalism prevalent in Jacobean political discourse in order to emphasise the fatherly roles of prince and priest.¹² Indeed, the arguments for clerical authority being divinely ordained that are discussed below bear a close resemblance to patriarchalist claims about monarchical sovereignty then in circulation, since both relied upon Genesis's supposed account of God bestowing authority, or dominion, upon Adam and his heirs, in their respective capacities as priests and princes.¹³ As was highlighted in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the Bible's opening book's emphasis on patriarchal rule over families and tribes made it a highly useful text for those seeking to explain the possession

¹¹ Lake, *On Laudianism*, pp. 45-118; P. McCullough, "'Avant-Garde Conformity' in the 1590s", in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity c.1520-1662*, ed. A. Milton (Oxford, 2017), pp. 380-94.

¹² J. Sommerville, 'Richard Hooker, Hadrian Saravia, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings', *HPT* 4/2 (1983), pp. 229-45.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

of a national religious authority in terms of hereditary kings and a hierarchy of priests, rather than in terms of consent, constitutions, and representative bodies.

Later on in Chapter Five, several works dating from the late-Jacobean and Caroline periods that discuss Genesis will be shown to contain more detailed discussions of the practice of religion in the first age of mankind, and what this might imply for rites within the contemporary Church. Several sermons and tracts written by John Buckeridge and John Pocklington can be demonstrated to have made claims about what religion looked like according to natural law in the time of Adam and his descendants. Using Genesis twinned with natural law to legitimise a conspicuously public form of worship that incorporated the entire community inevitably elevated the authority of the clergy as the individuals who held the exclusive power to co-ordinate such acts of communal adoration. Taken together, then, the discussions of Genesis canvassed in this chapter bear out the claim that the Bible's opening book enjoyed a prominent role in early-seventeenth-century clerical visions of the Church, since—according to certain divines at least—it provided evidence that a visible, revered, and well-endowed Church and clergy were a natural (and necessary) component of any community.

The proposed Canons of 1606

That certain early-Jacobean clergy advocated for a vision of an embodied, visible and sacramental Protestant national church grounded in Genesis's sacred history can be deduced from the proposed Canons of 1606 (hereafter referred to as 'the Canons') that were passed by both Houses of Convocation; it is a curiously understudied text described by Gerald Bray as advocating 'an extreme form of royal supremacy' based on the Old Testament.¹⁴ Developed under the supervision of Archbishop Richard Bancroft and Convocation's Prolocutor Dean John Overall, the Canons were simultaneously a response to Puritan campaigning around the Hampton Court Conference and the near-catastrophic Gunpowder Plot.¹⁵ Contemporaneous with the writing of the Canons, the failed Catholic conspiracy to annihilate the king and his parliament spurred the formulation of an Oath of Allegiance designed to counter justifications of resistance and claims about papal deposing power—ideas that had been infamously articulated in Robert Parson's *Conference about the next Succession* (1595) and Nicholas Sanders' earlier *De visibili Monarchia* (1571) respectively. Reflecting the intention of the Oath, the proposed Canons outlined a distinctly Protestant argument for non-resistance and the divine origins of both civil and sacerdotal authority, via a series of commentaries and draft ecclesiastical laws rooted in interpretations of sacred history.¹⁶

The form that the Canons took was unusual in that they relied heavily on exegesis and sacred history to make claims about the origins of civil and ecclesiastical authority, rather than elaborating theological doctrines. Unlike the 1604 Canons, which contained dogmatic

¹⁴ G. Bray, 'Canon Law and the Church of England', in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Vol. 1: Reformation and Identity c.1520-1662*, ed. A. Milton (Oxford, 2017), p. 175.

¹⁵ For Bancroft's supervisory role, see G. Bray, ed., *Records of Convocation. VIII, Canterbury, 1603-1700* (Cambridge, 2024), p. 91, 106.

¹⁶ J. Overall, *Bishop Overall's Convocation Book* (Oxford, 1844), pp. 6-7.

statements that were designed to put an end to interminable theological wrangling within the church about topics like soteriology, and which received royal assent, the proposed Canons of 1606 evince a desire by the Church of England's senior clergy to use biblical narratives in order to elaborate a particular ecclesiological vision and to ground the identity of the church in a specific reading of sacred history.

It is difficult to ascertain the precise authorship of the Canons due to the fact that the text's history is complex. As late as 1690 a printed version of the Canons appeared under the title *Bishop Overall's Convocation Book*; this text supposedly reproduced the contents of a manuscript that was itself a copy of Overall's original manuscript dating from 1606. This source was supplemented by an additional manuscript signed by Bancroft that had then been passed down to successive Archbishops of Canterbury, including Laud.¹⁷ However, the presence of Bancroft's signature on one of the parent manuscripts, coupled with the wider circumstances in which the Canons were produced, does allow us to surmise with confidence that their contents was a Bancroftian response to the challenges posed by Puritan campaigners for reform on the one hand, and the Catholic threat on the other. Indeed, the Canons' strident assertions about the divine origins of kingship, the visibility of the church, and the sacerdotal authority of the clergy reflect Bancroft's anti-Puritan theology, which was suspicious of both the claims of the papacy and Puritan visions of a godly Reformed church. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the composition of Convocation would have been weighted towards the cathedral chapters and to the bishops and their subaltern officers.¹⁸ The proposed Canons, then, were an expression of the clerical hierarchy's interests. The insertion of the Latin phrase 'Placet eis' [it pleases them] in the original manuscript under each Canon confirms that the text's content met with the approval of Bancroft. That he also approved Overall as

¹⁷ J. Overall, *Bishop OVERALL's 1606 Convocation – Book* (1690), sig. A3-sig. A3v.

¹⁸ T. Lathbury, *A history of the convocation of the Church of England from the earliest period to the year 1742* (London, 1853), pp. 114-15.

Prolocutor for the Convocation indicates that he exercised considerable influence over proceedings.

While the scarcity of marginal citations and in text references makes it difficult to determine the sources that the Canons' authors drew upon, evidently the gathered clergy had access to a variety of patristic, Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed commentaries. But though a variety of sources were used to determine particular points of exegesis, it is clear that as a whole the Canons conformed to a contemporary fashion for using interpretations of Genesis's sacred history to underpin patriarchalist ecclesiological and political discourse that was popular amongst supporters of the Jacobean regime, and which we have already encountered in earlier chapters. For example, there are parallels between the Canons' use of Genesis and texts like Adrian de Saravia's *On the Authority to Command, and Christian Obedience* (1593) and Andrewes's lectures, which were discussed in Chapter Two. In all these works, Genesis's sacred history provides a scriptural basis for claiming that civil and religious authority is divinely bestowed and that hierarchy and subjugation are innate to Creation. Indeed, the Canons made the latter argument so forcefully that King James VI & I felt unable to grant royal assent, because the text's argument for the doctrine of non-resistance risked embarrassing his foreign policy.

According to a letter written by James VI & I to the future Archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot (who was then the Dean of Winchester Cathedral), the king had invited the clergy then met in Convocation to consider 'how far a Christian and a protestant king may concur to assist his neighbours to shake off their obedience to their once sovereign, upon the account of oppression, tyranny, or what else you like to name it'. The proposed Canons constituted the gathered divines' answer to the king's question.¹⁹ The context behind James' enquiry was of

¹⁹ G. Bray, ed., *The Anglican Canons, 1529-1947* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 483.

course the urgent foreign policy issue surrounding England's diplomatic relations with Catholic Spain and the Protestant United Provinces, who had recently been at war, but who would soon establish a twelve-year peace agreement with the signing of the Treaty of Antwerp (1609). James's diplomatic strategy in the early years of his reign involved balancing efforts to improve relations with the Spanish with displaying leadership as a prominent Protestant monarch in a confessionally divided Europe.²⁰ Remarking on this 'thorny issue' in the letter, James informed Abbot that 'All my neighbours call on me to concur in the treaty between Holland and Spain; and the honour of the nation will not suffer the Hollanders to be abandoned'.²¹ Previously, under James's cousin Queen Elizabeth I, England had supplied the Dutch with money, men, and munitions to fight the Spanish forces. However, in answering the king's enquiry the gathered clergy were accused of straying 'too deep in what all kings reserve among the *arcana imperii* [state secrets]' by suggesting that any 'settled' government, no matter how it had been established, had God's blessing and was irresistible. James, who was evidently perturbed by what the implications of this argument for 'owning the Hollanders' might be with regards to his own position in the hypothetical event of a successful Spanish invasion of England, refused to ratify the Canons. These draft laws were preserved only in manuscript form and remained unpublished for over eighty years.²² As a consequence of the context in which they were composed, intellectual historians have tended to allude only briefly to the Canons within studies of Jacobean political thought, and then only during discussions about patriarchalist theories of divine right sovereignty and non-resistance.²³ However, the proposed Canons also

²⁰ S. Adams, 'Spain or the Netherlands? The Dilemmas of Early Stuart Foreign Policy', in *Before the English Civil War: essays on early Stuart politics and government*, ed. H. Tomlinson (Basingstoke, 1983), pp. 86-90.

²¹ Bray, *The Anglican Canons, 1529-1947*, p. 483

²² G. Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, vol. 2 (London, 1734), pp. 212-3.

²³ J. Figgis, *The divine right of kings* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 139-40; L. Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 32.

contain hitherto unexplored arguments regarding the nature of the church and of religious authority, arguments that relied heavily upon Genesis and natural law.

The proposed Canons insisted that a visible church had existed since the Creation, one which was defined as a body comprising the entire community, which was instituted by Christ (that is, God-the-Son) at the beginning of time, and which from its inception had been led by a priestly caste. As Canon IV put it,

If therefore any Man shall affirm, that the Son of God having from the beginning a Church upon Earth, did leave them till the Flood without Priests, and Priestly Authority to govern and instruct them in those ways of their Salvation, and in the right manner of the worship and service of God ; or that they might teach them any other Doctrine in that behalf, than that, which they had received from God himself, he doth greatly Erre.²⁴

According to this passage, priestly authority had always been essential to the visible church, and this authority manifested itself in both teaching and the co-ordination of public worship.

Later, in the explanatory text accompanying Canon VII, this clerical duty was detailed further:

Noah himself was both a Prince and a Priest; he built Altars, offered Sacrifices, and taught the Church, after the Flood 350. Years, all that which he had learnt from his Fathers, concerning the Creation of the World, the Fall of Man, and of his Restitution by Christ, and generally, all that did concern necessarily, either civil Societies and Government, or Ecclesiastical Assemblies and Authority, not omitting the very Ceremonies.²⁵

The construal of Noah's priestly office in terms of building Altars, offering Sacrifices, ecclesiastical pedagogy, and the performance of ceremonies further implied a conception of the church as embodied, public, and ritualised, with its priesthood exercising a distinctive, sacerdotal authority. Moreover, by describing the priestly role in terms of pedagogical and ceremonial responsibilities, the proposed Canons avoided contemporary Catholic arguments

²⁴ Overall, *Convocation – Book*, p. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

that tied clerical authority tightly to the performance of sacrifices, which, according to post-Tridentine dogma, must take the form of the Roman Mass.²⁶

Simultaneously though, the proposed Canons also implicitly refuted the godly notion of the earthly Church as an invisible body of elect saints, and they denied that it was ever legitimate to separate from the established Church. In relation to this point, the proposed Canons' suggestion that Adam exercised the priestly office by virtue of being the head of his family is highly significant. By drawing the connection between priesthood and patriarchy, the Canons embedded the church in Genesis within the family and—by extension—the entire community. This conception of the church contrasts sharply with godly notions of a true religious community as a holy clique. The Canons even went as far as suggesting that those families in the time of Genesis who fell away from true religion into idolatry had still had 'their Priests and publick worship'.²⁷ In other words, the Canons argued that there were certain aspects of religion that were natural to all mankind (that is, known without divine revelation). Without relying on revelation, early humanity had known that religion must involve public worship and the presence of a priest. Whilst the Canons acknowledged that this naturalistic religion was often 'mingled with some such Superstition and Idolatry, as offended God', it nonetheless demonstrated that nature as well as revelation taught that a church must be made visible through acts of public worship, wherein the priest was a central figure—Cain as well as Abel had made a sacrifice after all.²⁸

This conception of the church and of worship directly challenged the godly conviction that scripture alone was authoritative and that those who faithfully followed God's revealed truth were marked out as belonging to the true church. Hooker had of course made a similar

²⁶ S. Mortimer, 'Sacrifice and the limits of sovereignty 1589–1613', *HEI* 49/8 (2023), pp. 1302-15.

²⁷ Overall, *Convocation – Book*, p. 88.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

argument in the *Laws*, but whereas he had argued that certain indifferent features of religion derived from natural reason were customary and therefore mutable, the Canons of 1606 pointed to the church in Genesis as a universal exemplar to be followed in all places and ages. Moreover, throughout the proposed Canons' discussion of religion in Genesis society, it consistently alluded to public worship, sacrifices, and the priesthood as the outward signifiers of all religions. This was a polemical claim given that for many Reformed Protestants, preaching of God's Word and individual reflection on the scriptures were equally significant features of faith. The proposed Canons deliberately tied legitimate priestly authority closely to the sanctifying of offerings and public rituals, as well as teaching, so as to emphasise the need for an embodied (and endowed) earthly Church.

The proposed Canons were also clear about the origins of this clerical authority. According to the text, ecclesiastical authority was granted at the beginning by the 'supernatural doctrine of the Gospel' to those in the church who ruled and governed it, and who taught their flock how to worship God through prayer, preaching, and sacrifices.²⁹ Importantly, the Canons avoided the Catholic suggestion that this ecclesiastical authority was bestowed upon St Peter by Christ during his earthly ministry in first-century Palestine. Instead, the Canons emphasised Christ's participation in the eternal trinity, and his role at the Creation in instituting God's catholic church. Genesis thus enabled the clergy in Convocation to argue that their authority was as old as Creation itself, rather than dating to a particular point in human history. This move relied upon an implied continuity between the religion of the Old Testament, and indeed all human societies, with Christian communities—whilst simultaneously stressing the perfection of the latter of course. Moreover, the proposed Canons' argument for continuity between religion in Old Testament societies and Christian communities required playing down the significance of the example of any one particular church, and highlighting instead the

²⁹ Overall, *Convocation – Book*, p. 5.

practices common to them all. At several points in the text, one can find comments such as the following that re-enforce this argument: ‘we have spoken hitherto but of one particular Church, and of the Succession of it in the Lines of Seth (Adam’s third son) and Sem (one of Noah’s sons): yet there have been other particular Churches in all Ages, which were built upon the said Rock and promised Seed’.³⁰

The significance of this claim that the boundaries of the Church were not constrained to the Ancient Israelites from Abraham’s time onwards for the Canons’ assertions about religious authority was that it enabled a connecting line to be drawn between the church of Genesis and the established Church. The natural religion practised by the first people, which according to the Canons featured public worship, sacrifices, and priests—the necessity of all of which was known by natural law—could be reconciled and indeed assimilated into the superior (supposedly revealed) ceremonies of the established Church. In other words, Genesis provided a universal ecclesiastical pattern for an mistakeably Protestant, yet visible, sacramental church.

Emphasising this point, the proposed Canons insisted that ‘from the Creation of Mankind, during the times aforesaid, there hath always been One Universal or Catholick Church: which began in Adam, and afterward (as his Posterity multiplied, both before and after the Flood) was dispersed over the face of the whole Earth’.³¹ Central to the configuration of this universal church was the priest, according to the Canons, whose authority was divinely ordained. This spiritual authority was, as we have already seen, granted by Christ in the beginning for the ruling and governing of the church. Not content with implying that some form of hierarchy within a religious community was *iure divino*, the preamble also added that Christ bestowed a specific type of spiritual authority, which it termed ‘Ecclesiastical’. This

³⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

³¹ Ibid., p. 87.

‘Ecclesiastical’ authority, which was another kind of ‘Power, Superiority, and Authority’, was for the ‘teaching, and instructing of his [Christ’s] People in the Mysteries hid from Nature, concerning their Salvation through the Seed of the Woman; and for the better direction and government of them in the Service of God, touching their Duty towards God, and their Neighbours’.³² Notably absent from this description of priestly duties are details regarding forms of worship. Given that the early-Jacobean Church was riven by disputes over the form that worship should take, the Canons’ silence may represent a pragmatic decision on the part of Convocation. Regardless, the deliberate distinction of divinely ordained ‘ecclesiastical authority’ as a sub-species of spiritual authority was crucial for explaining the respective powers of princes and priests in early-seventeenth-century England, which were intended to be complementary rather than conflicting.

According to the Convocation Book, ecclesiastical authority—which also included directing ‘the Manner of the Worship of God’—in the period between Creation and the Flood, had resided with the Patriarchs, though this was not expressly documented in scripture:

it is not to be doubted, but that, first Adam for his time, and afterward the Heads of every Family of the Faithful, were not only civil Governours over their Kindred, but likewise had the Power and Execution of the Priestly Office; and that they were themselves instructed and taught from God, as they afterward did instruct, and teach such as were under them in the said Mysteries of Man’s Restitution, through the promised Seed, by Faith, and in the right Worship and Service of the true God.³³

The *Convocation Book* then explained that Noah was the ‘chief Governour’ of the whole world, with the authority to ‘lawfully’ distribute these offices among his three sons. In the margin of the *Convocation Book* a litany of earlier Genesis commentators from across the three major confessions are cited—including the Catholic Benedict Pereria, Martin Luther, and the Reformed preacher Nicholas Gibbons—to indicate the universal consent on this specific point

³² Ibid., p. 5.

³³ Ibid., p. 6.

of exegesis.³⁴ As a result of Noah bestowing his power in this way, from this point onwards Christ's universal 'catholick' church was manifested in different 'particular' churches under the leadership of different heads of families.³⁵ Christ remained, however, the sole (though invisible) 'monarch' or 'rock' of the church universal.³⁶

This argument about early ecclesiastical history was a direct riposte to the papal claim of supremacy across all territories in matters spiritual. The proposed Canons acknowledged that 'it is true, that Adam and Noah, for their times, were (under Christ) the chief Governours'.³⁷ Yet, when Noah 'distributed the whole World among his three Sons, and their Issue; he did not appoint any one of them to be the Ruler of the said Catholick Church; but left the Government of every particular Family or Church unto their chief Heads, Princes and Priests; and of the whole to the Son of God, and sole Monarch of it; who only was able to undertake such a charge'.³⁸ According to the logic of the 1606 Canons, the Church of England, under the universal headship of Christ and the earthly headship of the monarch, was an example of a 'particular' church that could trace its descent back to the dispersal of Noah's children after the Flood. There could be no claim of suzerainty by a foreign power (e.g. the Pope) over the Church of England, since the age of the Patriarchal Church was over and only Christ retained that universal authority.

However, within the Church of England there was an important distinction to be made between the authority of the monarch as head, and the authority of the clergy, which the proposed Canons related back to developments in Genesis's sacred history. According to the proposed Canons, whereas in the beginning the Patriarchs had jointly exercised civil and

³⁴ Ibid., p. 7; B. Pereira, *Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesin* (Lyon, 1594), p. 268; N. Gibbons, *Questions and disputations concerning the holy Scripture* (1602), pp. 401-9; M. Luther, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 2, trans. H. Cole and J. Lenker (Minneapolis, 1910), pp. 327-9.

³⁵ Overall, *Convocation – Book*, p. 88.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 87.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

³⁸ Ibid.

spiritual authority, in the time of Jacob and his sons the priestly office and the ecclesiastical authority that inhered in it was bestowed upon Levi and his descendants, whereas Judah inherited the sceptre of civil power. Naturally, given the Catholic arguments they were opposing, the authors of the proposed Canons were keen to emphasise that the separation of the princely and priestly offices at the end of Genesis amongst Jacob's sons, and later between Moses and Aaron, did not mean that the latter enjoyed any kind of superiority over the former: 'we doubt not, but that the Priests and Levites in the Old Testament, were reckon'd amongst the rest of such, as were subject to their Princes, Judges, and Kings'.³⁹ However, the Canons' authors did want to insist that both princes and priests were required for the maintenance of religion in any community.

What we have said, either of the Authority of Kings, or of the practice of it in Causes Ecclesiastical...we would not have it extended so far, as if we imagined that in matters of Religion Kings might then lawfully command, and do what they list. In the separation of the Priesthood from the Regal Principality (the same having been formerly in one Person) they were then so, by God, distinguished, as in some things, appertaining to the Office of Kings, no Priest, as he was a Priest, had any Authority to intermeddle; as in some other things, appertaining to the Office of Priests, no King, as he was a King, might lawfully be an Actor: both of them having their bounds and limits appointed unto them by God.⁴⁰

The message proposed here in Canon XX was clear: following the pattern of the church after Genesis, England's King and clergy must work together and exercise their respective varieties of religious authority, with the latter advising the former by force of words alone.

Genesis provided the Canons' authors with a means of grounding their conception of the visible church in sacred history, and of tracing their divinely ordained authority back to the Creation. Their insistence that ecclesiastical authority was *iure divino* had significant constitutional implications in Jacobean England since the claim implied that that authority was a possession of princes and priests granted directly by God, and that it was not limited by the

³⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

constitution. Indeed, Genesis's sacred history appealed to the clergy in Convocation as a precedent for explaining religious authority in Jacobean England precisely because it legitimised an arrangement that made no mention of Parliament.

This discovery about the use of Genesis's sacred history by early-Jacobean clergy who were keen to resist Parliament's claims to religious authority, offers an insightful contrast to Alexandra Gajda's findings regarding the use of ancient English history by Elizabethan antiquaries who were intent on asserting the antiquity of the Royal Supremacy, and, relatedly, of Parliament.⁴¹ Gajda has demonstrated that in creating a history of the pre-Reformation English church, various legal scholars evoked 'a related myth: not just of princely authority over religion but of kings-in-parliament through the ages exercising jurisdiction over the national Church'.⁴² Like the readings of England's ancient constitution by members of the Society of Antiquaries, the Convocation's interpretation of Genesis represented a claim to religious authority.

During this period there was a fierce struggle between Parliament and their godly supporters on one side, and the senior clergy in Convocation on the other, over which body held the constitutional trump card in religious matters. Moreover, the issuing of Canons in Convocation was also a function of the king's prerogative. Parliament's attempts to control the gathered clergy's ecclesiastical lawmaking was therefore an attack on James' independent authority.⁴³ The use of Genesis in the proposed Canons to ground an account of the historical origins of divine civil and spiritual authority was thus an intervention in this broader constitutional debate about religious authority—which was discussed at length in Chapter

⁴¹ A. Gajda, 'The Elizabethan Church and the antiquity of parliament', in *Writing the history of parliament in Tudor and early Stuart England*, eds. P. Cavill and A. Gajda (Manchester, 2018), pp. 77-105.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴³ M. Winship, *Godly republicanism: Puritans, pilgrims, and a city on a hill* (Cambridge MA, 2012), p. 71.

Two—that enabled the clergy in Convocation to deny any notion of the Church being subject to ‘King-in-Parliament’ or popular representation.⁴⁴

But Genesis was also attractive to the gathered clergy because it offered a way of thinking about a national church free from papal oversight. And in the early 1600s the Catholic threat meant that answering the claims of the papacy to religious authority was a primary priority, especially in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot. Matters came to a head with the Oath of Allegiance controversy in 1606, when James I demanded that English Catholics swear loyalty to him as their temporal prince and denounce papal deposing power as ‘impious and heretical’.⁴⁵ The antagonistic response of the papacy to the Oath occasioned a Court Sermon by Bishop John Buckeridge that directly addressed the question of civil and spiritual authority. Buckeridge’s interpretation of Genesis, which featured a similar gloss to that provided by the ill-fated Canons, was crucial to his arguments concerning the nature of the church and religious authority, and it is to this we turn next.

⁴⁴ Gajda, ‘The Elizabethan Church’, p. 78.

⁴⁵ K. Fincham and P. Lake, ‘The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I’, in *The early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. K. Fincham (Basingstoke, 1993), p. 29; W. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 80.

John Buckeridge's Hampton Court Sermon on Romans 13:5 (1606)

This section draws attention to a Court Sermon that Buckeridge delivered before King James I, in which he reflected upon Genesis's sacred history in order to derive prescriptive conclusions about religious authority. It was performed at Hampton Court Palace on 23 September 1606, the day after Pope Paul V had condemned James I's Oath of Allegiance and forbidden England's Catholics from swearing it. This immediate context is reflected in the fact that Buckeridge took the standard pericope for asserting obedience to earthly monarchs as his scriptural foundation: Romans 13:5.⁴⁶ Performed less than a year after the failed Gunpowder Plot and amid concerns about the allegiance of English Catholics to the king, it was fitting that Buckeridge's sermon took Paul's injunction to submit to Caesar—for the sake of conscience as well as the fear of earthly punishment—as its subject. Yet alongside defending the Royal Supremacy he also took the opportunity to develop his thoughts about religious authority more broadly and the sermon contains a discussion of Genesis's sacred history that outlines to his royal audience the respective duties of 'prince and priest' in religious matters. Whilst he was clear that the king has the 'supremacy' in both civil and ecclesiastical matters, he also maintained that both prince and priests are needed to 'feede and rule the church'.⁴⁷ Throughout the sermon it is clear that Buckeridge is pushing back against criticisms of the established Church offered by Catholics and Presbyterians, who denied the king's claim to supremacy over it (albeit from markedly different perspectives). Hence there are clear parallels between both the content and the context of the proposed Canons of 1606 and Buckeridge's Hampton Court sermon.

⁴⁶ J. Buckeridge, *A sermon preached at Hampton Court before the Kings Majestie, on Tuesday the 23. of September, anno 1606* (1606).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. F2v.

Genesis is crucial to Buckeridge's argument in his sermon because it provides evidence of what the law of nature teaches about religious authority and obedience. One of the arguments he makes in favour of submitting 'to the powers that be' is that submission is itself a principle of God's divine plan, it is part of the natural order of things established at the Creation. Cutting against a commonplace view at the time—inherited from Saint Augustine—that subjection to earthly powers was a consequence of original sin, Buckeridge argued that '*Peccatum servitutem fecit, Natura subjectionem induxit*: Sinne brought in tyrannie and slaverie...But order of superioritie and subjection is the instinct of purest nature'.⁴⁸ Drawing a comparison between humanity and the hierarchy of the angels, Buckeridge observed that superiority and subjection were inherent in the state of innocence, not only between man and the other creatures but also between man and woman. Moreover, he speculated that had they lived in Paradise, 'till they had bene father and sonne, there should have *bene patria potestas* [fatherly power]: and being many families, there must necessarily have been *Regia potestas* [kingly power]: Else the best and most happy life must have beene without the greatest happinesse of life, and that is Order.'⁴⁹ The suggestion that kingly power was conceptually distinct from fatherly power but that both arose from the same natural principal of order and subjection was an explicit nod to the patriarchal theories of kingship that were circulating at the Jacobean Court in the early-seventeenth century, and which were present in the proposed Canons of 1606 too as we have just seen.⁵⁰ Buckeridge, then, was presenting a reading of kingship in Genesis's society that mirrored James' own vision of divine monarchy.

Critical to this view of monarchy was the claim that the king was responsible for spiritual, as well as civil matters. So too was the suggestion that this truth was revealed in

⁴⁸ Ibid., sig. C2v-sig. C3. For the opposing view and its Augustinian origins see S. Mortimer, 'Christian Time and the Commonwealth in Early Modern Political Thought', in *Time, History, and Political Thought*, ed. John Robertson (Cambridge, 2023), p. 89.

⁴⁹ Buckeridge, *Hampton Court*, sig. C3.

⁵⁰ Overall, *Convocation – Book*, pp. 2-3.

nature and not only by God's revelation. Interestingly, on this point Buckeridge referenced Aristotle's *Politics*—a work more often associated with Catholic natural law theorists than Protestant supporters of divine right sovereignty—and highlighted that according to the Greek philosopher, the responsibility of managing public sacrifices celebrated collectively by ancient gentile communities lay with the king, not the priests.⁵¹ One possible near contemporary source for this reading of Aristotle, which Buckeridge may have consulted, is the Tudor academic and Oxford scholar John Case's *Sphaera Civitatis* (1588).⁵² Designed as a student guide to Aristotle's *Politics*, but which was only loosely based on it, Case's *Sphaera* aimed to show that the church could not be entirely separated from the commonwealth. Indeed, Case held that both the magistrate and an educated, endowed priestly caste had a role to play in maintaining a visible, ceremonial, and edifying church.⁵³ These themes would have appealed to Buckeridge, who was keen to insist in his Court sermon that the king and the clergy had a joint responsibility over the commonwealth's religion. In order to make this argument, however, Buckeridge had to explain the developments that had taken place between the time of Genesis and the contemporary with regards to religious authority.

Buckeridge stated that in the time of the 'Law of nature' before the Mosaic Law was given and the Gospel was promulgated (i.e. the period described by Genesis) 'it can be no question, but causes Civil and Ecclesiasticall belonged both to one man, since the calling of King and Priest was united in one man'.⁵⁴ This was true amongst all peoples, observed Buckeridge, not just the Israelites. The crucial rider to this claim was that, although the magisterial and priestly offices were separated in the time of Moses and Aaron, this division

⁵¹ Buckeridge, *Hampton Court*, sig. C2; Aristotle, *Politics* (Oxford, 2020), l. 1322b17.

⁵² R. Serjeantson, 'Theology and the Arts Course in Tudor Oxford: An Unknown Treatise on Church Government by John Case', in *Collected Wisdom of the Early Modern Scholar*, eds. G. Manning and A. Marie Roos (Cham, 2023), pp. 26-30.

⁵³ S. Mortimer, 'Natural Law and the Elizabethan Commonwealth – Spiritual and Civil?', in *Illuminating Elizabethan Political Thought*, eds. A. Gajda and R. Rapple (Manchester, 2026), [Forthcoming].

⁵⁴ Buckeridge, *Hampton Court*, sig. C2.

did not extinguish the magistrate's pre-existing religious authority: natural law still imposed upon the monarch a duty to care for the spiritual health of his subjects, thereby sustaining his ecclesiastical superiority. For Buckridge, this continuity over time was re-affirmed in the Ten Commandments that Moses caused to be written on tablets of stone, and they were the laws of nature that Christ did not overthrow when he came to earth. He stated this last point explicitly: 'The Gospel doth not take away the precepts of nature, and the morall Law, but perfect them: The comission of Kings granted in the Law, standeth good to the worlds end'.⁵⁵

In an early-Jacobean context, however, a key question was what were the ongoing spiritual duties of the monarch and what was reserved for the clergy? Put another way, how distant from the religious arrangements in Genesis was the contemporary established Church? Buckeridge identified four areas in which the king had a role to play in religious matters: reformation of the church and the eradication of idolatry, the calling of councils and synods, the promulgation of Church laws and edicts, and the hearing of pleas.⁵⁶ Together, these were the duties of the king's Royal Supremacy. However, what he could not do was preach, nor could he administer the sacraments, nor could the monarch commission others to do likewise, since this was 'an authoritie derived from God by the imposition of hands' that ensured the hierarchy within the church was maintained.⁵⁷ Thus, Buckeridge drew a line in the sand separating the religious authority of the prince from that of the priest. Tellingly, in this framework there was no room for the third party—parliament.

Buckeridge, then, simultaneously suggested continuities with the time of Genesis and established an important difference between the earliest part of sacred history and the present. And the purpose of this argument was to defend the constitution of the Jacobean Church and

⁵⁵ Ibid., sig. D3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., sig. E-sig. F2v.

⁵⁷ Ibid., unfol., [sig. D4].

the Royal Supremacy in the face of criticisms by both Catholics and Presbyterians. He derided the latter party by pointing out that at the beginning of the Reformation they had called upon their prince to reform the Church, and had relied upon his ‘sword’, before then casting him off once they ‘grew *potent* and strong, and able to stand of themselves’.⁵⁸ Rejecting their stance throughout his sermon, Buckeridge repeatedly contended that at no point in time had kings lost their role in ecclesiastical matters, since this was mandated by the law of nature. All that changed in the time of Moses and Aaron was that the office of the priesthood was separated from that of the king, to which it remained subordinate in most senses. Genesis provided the evidence for Buckeridge to establish the first part of this argument. Keen to deny papal claims to apostolic authority, he dismissed the relevance of the primitive church described in the Book of Acts, for ‘The times were different, and all things have their time’.⁵⁹ Instead, Buckeridge emphasised the continuity between the Old and New Testament, and established a pattern of kingly authority in the Church reaching back to the earliest part of mankind’s history. In another Court Sermon delivered at the opposite end of James’ reign, Buckeridge would apply this argument about Genesis’s natural religion and the king’s divinely ordained religious authority in order to defend specific forms of worship within church.

⁵⁸ Ibid., sig. E.

⁵⁹ Ibid., unfol., [sig. D4-sig. D4v].

Forms of worship and ecclesiastical authority in late-Jacobean and Caroline interpretations of Genesis

On Passion Sunday in 1618, Buckeridge delivered another Court Sermon before James in his capacity as the Bishop of Rochester—this time at Whitehall—on the subject of kneeling at communion and on other forms of prostration in church.⁶⁰ This sermon was printed alongside an extended discourse by Buckeridge on kneeling at communion that explored the subject of bodily reverence in depth. On the occasion of his Whitehall sermon, Buckeridge chose to expound upon Psalm 95:6, ‘O Come, let us worship and bow down before the Lord who made us’. When quoted from the Authorised Version as it was in Buckeridge’s sermon, this was a favourite passage of scripture amongst those keen to defend bowing and kneeling in church, and one that lent itself to making a complimentary comparison between the Ancient Israelite monarch David and King James. Revealingly, the Geneva Bible had rendered Psalm 95:6 as ‘Come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our maker’.

Drawing directly on the Genesis-inspired, patriarchalist arguments for the king’s religious authority that he had made years before in his Hampton Court sermon and that the proposed Canons of 1606 had also espoused, Buckeridge argued here that a notable demonstration of God-given monarchical power was the royal calling of the people to worship, which had begun in the time of Adam.⁶¹ Not only was visible and public worship owed by each individual to their Creator and Redeemer, thought Buckeridge, but it also functioned to demonstrate social order and reverence for authority. Ever since Adam’s time, he remarked, human societies had been like great families, which were themselves formed of lots of individual families ruled over by fathers.⁶² Just as the Genesis Patriarchs had commanded their relatives and offspring to worship God, now the king did so in England. The Whitehall sermon

⁶⁰ J. Buckeridge, *A sermon preached before His Majestie at Whitehall, March 22. 1617* (1618).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*

was a direct repudiation of both Catholic and Presbyterian critics of the established Church, since it insisted that only the king had the divinely ordained power to compel an individual to worship and to punish recusancy, unlike a ‘Popes Tribunal’ or ‘peoples Consistorie’.⁶³

In 1618, the significance of contending against Roman Catholicism and militant Reformed Protestantism using Genesis was heightened by the beginnings of the Thirty Years War. Indeed, this international context contributed to a power shift within the Church, as Andrewes, Neile, Laud and their allies (including Buckeridge) gained influence at Court and began to promote their ecclesiological agenda more assertively.⁶⁴ Their political influence was aided by the deteriorating situation in Europe. Inspired by the Book of Revelation, many English Protestants, including the Archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot, interpreted the conflict as an apocalyptic struggle against the papal Antichrist that England was obliged to intervene in—particularly so as to support the claims of James’ Protestant son-in-law to the throne of Bohemia. Yet the king rejected this perspective, and he sought a diplomatic solution in the form of the Spanish Match instead.⁶⁵ Those clergy at Court who insisted on distancing the established Church from militant continental Reformed Protestantism, and who pedalled a softer line in public *vis-à-vis* the errors of the Church of Rome, found themselves in favour and able to attract royal support for their ecclesiological programme as a result. That Buckeridge and his fellow travellers were emboldened by these political developments is reflected in the increasingly confident tone of their Court sermons and other writings in the late-Jacobean and early-Caroline periods.

Seizing his opportunity to preach before the king on 22 March 1617, Buckeridge offered a defence of kneeling in church that drew upon Genesis’s sacred history. Kneeling and other

⁶³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶⁴ A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: the Roman and Protestant churches in English Protestant thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 110-125.

⁶⁵ Fincham and Lake, ‘The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I’, pp. 33-4.

forms of genuflection, particularly during the administering of the sacrament, was a much-controverted bodily act of worship in the post-Reformation Church. According to the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, kneeling was a reverent and humbling form of worship before God.⁶⁶ Moreover, the 1604 Canons insisted that students in Oxford and Cambridge University colleges ought to receive communion at least four times a year ‘kneeling reverently and decently upon their Knees’.⁶⁷ However, according to the godly, the act of kneeling at communion or bowing at the name of Jesus was a form of idolatry reminiscent of the Roman Church. That this opinion concerned the ecclesiastical authorities is reflected in the fact that several editions of the Book of Common Prayer featured the so-called ‘Black Rubric’, which clarified that the act of kneeling during communion in no way constituted adoration of the host or implied the real presence.⁶⁸ For Buckeridge and other like-minded clergy though, bodily reverence expressed through acts such as kneeling or prostrating oneself was a necessary part of the sacrifice that every individual offered up to God their Creator and Redeemer to whom they owed everything.⁶⁹

Beyond this theological point, Buckeridge also thought that kneeling at communion brought the entire community together in a collective act of supplication, with every subject called (by the king wielding the sword of justice and the priests offering their holy words) to offer up their whole body in a uniform moment of worship.⁷⁰ This ideal manifested a vision of an embodied earthly church characterised by a homogenous, outward worship, and Buckeridge turned to Genesis in order to legitimise it. The ‘call is to all’ as Buckeridge put it, every member of the community belonged to the visible church because they are called to worship God as

⁶⁶ J. Booty, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book* (Charlottesville, 1976), p. 259.

⁶⁷ Bray, *Anglican Canons*, p. 295.

⁶⁸ Booty, *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, p. vii.

⁶⁹ Buckeridge, *Whitehall*, pp. 38-9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

‘the whole multitude of the people’.⁷¹ There was no room here for godly conceptions of the church as a purified body of the elect and indeed Buckeridge made it clear that he had the Puritans in his sights when he attacked separation, and forms of worship that relied on sermon hearing and catechising alone. Whilst hearing the Word preached must be a part of adoration, he maintained, each individual must offer up their whole body to God and employ all their senses in worship. The implication of this aesthetic point was the need for an emphasis on holy spaces, and Buckeridge was clear that being called to worship meant attending God’s house in person in order to offer a living sacrifice.⁷²

In a now familiar move, Buckeridge drew a connection between the natural religion he found in Genesis and the practices documented in the New Testament in order to defend the practice of kneeling. By grounding certain elements of worship in natural law, Buckeridge was able to argue that these practices held for humankind in all ages and that Christ had not abrogated them when he was incarnate on earth. Buckeridge aligned his belief in the need to kneel at communion with the ‘universall custom of the purer Church’, which was to show bodily adoration.⁷³ So as to make his case for the universality of the practice, Buckeridge looked to Genesis and cited the example of Abraham in Gen. 17: ‘Then Abram fell on his face’.⁷⁴ This Patriarch, ‘the father of the faithfull in the law of nature’ according to Buckeridge, provided evidence that bowing, kneeling, or prostrating during worship was a natural element of all human religion, since he had no express command from God to do so other than his own natural reason and Christ’s spirit within him.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁷² Ibid., p. 3, 6-7.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 13.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Buckeridge then highlighted how, in the time of the Gospel, ‘The wisemen from the East used prostration, by the light of nature’ too.⁷⁶ By associating bodily reverence during worship with natural religion, and evincing continuity between the Old and New Testament, Buckeridge constructed a case for the normativity of the action in the contemporary church. He put the claim succinctly: ‘And the Law of Nature, and the Moral Law touch not Ceremonies: so Prostration or kneeling is a duetie’.⁷⁷ The unspoken point here of course was that Christ had abrogated the ceremonial laws, but not the moral ones, hence he had not ended the duty of kneeling during worship. Though Buckeridge had made the same general point about continuity between the Old and New Testaments in his 1606 Court Sermon, it seems that here the argument is made somewhat more forcefully. This may well reflect the heightened sense of confidence he and other members of the Durham House set felt in voicing their opinions on forms of worship and other ecclesiological matters towards the end of James’ reign, when the political tide was evidently turning in their favour.⁷⁸

We have seen then that as well as using Genesis to legitimise the practice of kneeling during worship, Buckeridge also relied upon the earliest sacred history to explain the act’s wider significance for the church’s corporate worship and for religious authority. In doing so, Buckeridge was reiterating general principles concerning religious authority he found in Genesis that were identified earlier in this chapter and applying them to a particular ecclesiological issue. Drawing directly from his chosen pericope—Psalm 95:6—Buckeridge framed this ancient call to worship and to bow down to God as the command of a divinely appointed king, a leader whom the English divine emphasised (in a thoroughly Protestant fashion) was next only to God, beholden neither to popes nor consistories, and with power over

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁸ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, p. 471.

civil and spiritual matters.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Buckeridge informed his royal audience that in calling their people to bow down and worship kings exercise their fatherly power, which had existed since the time of Adam.⁸⁰ In invoking the Jacobean discourse of patriarchal kingship during his sermon and in underlining the king's role in calling his subjects to worship with their bodies as well as their souls, Buckeridge not only supported the Royal Supremacy but also clarified how an embodied public church could unite the entire community through a uniform act of worship. Thus, far from narrowly focusing on the act of kneeling, Buckeridge's Whitehall sermon communicated a vision of the earthly church and of religious authority that was rooted in Genesis.

Less than two decades later, but after Buckeridge's death, the practice of kneeling at communion and bowing at the name of Jesus was famously a bone of contention between Archbishop Laud's supporters and their opponents in the Church of England.⁸¹ Moreover, as we have already seen, the insistence that kneeling was part of the divine service owed to God that could be traced back to Genesis, rather than being merely an indifferent ceremonial nicety, was bound up with a set of controverted assumptions about the importance of a visibly embodied church, of a full-bodied style of worship, and of endowing the Church with offerings.

Another, related practice that came under renewed scrutiny in this period was altar worship and this too was tied to a particular understanding of the church as a visible and embodied institution, and of a clerical authority rooted in ceremonial worship. In one of the most strident defences of the Caroline Church's altar policy—the English clergyman John Pocklington's lengthy treatise *Altare Christianum* (1637)—these wider ecclesiological

⁷⁹ Buckeridge, *Whitehall*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸¹ Lake, *On Laudianism*, p. 153.

implications were drawn out in a chapter that relied heavily upon Genesis and the language of natural law.

John Pocklington's *Altare Christianum* (1637)

As is well known, the re-positioning of altars in church chancels was one of the most tangible aspects of the reforms that manifested the Caroline Church's drive towards a recovery of the 'beauty of holiness' under Laud.⁸² Perhaps equally well known, moreover, is the dispute in relation to this altar policy that took place between Bishop John Williams of Lincoln and Pocklington, whom Milton aptly describes as one of the Archbishop's 'clerical rottweilers'.⁸³ In a delayed response to Williams' criticism of the vicar of Grantham for elevating his parish church's altar in accordance with Laud's policy, Pocklington penned a lengthy animadversion entitled *Altare Christianum* (1673), which took the form of a survey of altar practice across sacred and ecclesiastical history.⁸⁴ For Milton, the arguments made in Pocklington's learned, yet belligerent tract represent some of the most hardline defences of the Caroline Church.⁸⁵

Altare Christianum serves as a useful example of how certain early-seventeenth-century glosses on Genesis could be intensified by a Caroline divine so as to legitimise an embodied and sacramental church, whose buildings and clergy were well funded and protected from secular depredation. Pocklington's discussion of altar worship in Genesis constituted a plea for a visible embodied church, wherein the making of offerings to God and his ministers by each worshipper formed a quintessential part of worship. Steering clear of contemporary Catholic arguments that tied priestly authority to the performance of the sacrifice of the Mass, Pocklington was nonetheless able to make a case against sacrilege and for the need to sustain the embodied church and its clergy, which centred on offerings made at the altar.⁸⁶ In other words, he deployed a particular interpretation of Genesis not only to defend the Caroline

⁸² Lake, *On Laudianism*, pp. 179-218.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 216-18; A. Milton, 'The Creation of Laudianism: a new approach', in *Politics, religion and popularity in early Stuart Britain: essays in honour of Conrad Russell*, eds. T. Cogswell, R. Cust, and P. Lake (Cambridge, 2011), p. 179.

⁸⁴ Lake, *On Laudianism*, pp. 5-7.

⁸⁵ Milton, 'The Creation of Laudianism', p. 181.

⁸⁶ Mortimer, 'Sacrifice and the limits of sovereignty', pp. 1302-15.

Church's altar policy, but also to underwrite a broader clerical claim to authority grounded upon the need for an embodied and endowed church.⁸⁷

In making his case, Pocklington not only drew upon the Bible's opening book but also several patristic and medieval Genesis commentaries. By referencing these resources, Pocklington was able to explain how the ecclesiological principles of altar worship and the making of offerings contained in Genesis translated into a contemporary argument for a well funded clergy. One medieval source in particular, a letter issued with conciliar authority at the Council of Aachen (836 CE) to warn King Pepin of Francia about the threat of sacrilege, which contained an exposition on Genesis that is discussed below, provided Pocklington with material to refute Williams' assault on the Caroline Church's altar policy and to assert the need for an embodied and endowed established Church.⁸⁸

Williams had argued that the Laudian altar policy ran contrary to the statutes of England's Reformation. Citing the Act of Uniformity (1559), the Edwardian Prayer Book (1552), and other sixteenth-century English precedents, he repeatedly denied that there were any prior rulings in favour of altar wise placement in the Church of England's history. He also argued that the policy contravened the orthodoxy of the Reformed faith, that it defied the conventions of Christian ecclesiastical history, and that it smacked of Jewish ceremonialism.⁸⁹ In Chapter XXII of *Altare Christianum*, Pocklington tackled the bishop's argument by disputing William's suggestion that one of the reasons the word 'altar' had entered the Christian lexicon was that it 'came into the church in a kynde of complyinge and phrase with the people of the Jewes'.⁹⁰ Relatedly, he also refuted William's claim that the communion table, in

⁸⁷ P. Lake, 'The Laudians and the Argument from Authority', in *Court, country and culture: essays on early modern British history in honor of Perez Zagorin*, eds. B. Young Kunze, D. Brautigam, and P. Zagorin (Rochester, 1992), p. 167; Idem., *On Laudianism*, p. 197.

⁸⁸ *MGH*, Conc. 2.2, pp. 724-37.

⁸⁹ BL Additional MS 35331, ff. 54v-55v.

⁹⁰ J. Pocklington, *Altare Christianum: or, The dead vicars plea* (1637), p. 113.

contrast, was a far more ancient term that had its first example in the Last Supper—according to Williams, Christ had instituted the sacrament upon a table and had abrogated the Jewish Ceremonial Laws regarding altar sacrifices.⁹¹ Pocklington flatly denied William’s argument, and he turned to Genesis’s sacred history and a medieval interpretation of it to prove his point.

Beginning his case by citing the Church Father Saint Ambrose’s treatise on the sacraments, Pocklington subverted William’s argument by suggesting that the altar rituals of the Jewish church had been inherited from an earlier, pre-Abrahamic Christian Church described in Genesis.⁹² To argue (as Williams had) that the Caroline Church was emulating Jewish practices was therefore to say nothing more than that it was conforming to the most venerable of Christian traditions, which had their beginning in the universal church of the Patriarchs. Citing Ambrose’s discussion of the Eucharist, Pocklington wrote ‘Christians are more ancient than Jewes, so are the mysteries of their Religion, their Sacraments, Sacrifices, Altars more ancient, than any of these among the Jewes’.⁹³ Here, Pocklington was repeating a more general comment he had made about pre-Mosaic sacred history in his introduction:

Whether the Church of God before Moses was called Christian, I will not dispute: but sure I am, that it had the same Christ that we have, for their Saviour, and we are assured out of St. Ambrose, that it was *Populus Christianus*, it was a Christian Church, if it were a Church at all, which no Christian can doubt of.⁹⁴

The rendering of *Populus Christianus* as ‘Christian Church’ is a telling and surely deliberate translation. One might translate the Latin phrase alternatively as ‘Christian people’ or even ‘nation’, yet Pocklington elected to render it ‘Christian Church’ despite the Latin word ‘*ecclesia*’ not appearing in the original. His decision to interpret the phrase as ‘Christian Church’ placed emphasis on the presence of a visible institution in the earliest era of sacred

⁹¹ BL Additional MS 35331, ff. 54v–55v.

⁹² Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 123; Ambrose, *On the Mysteries and the Treatise on the Sacraments*, trans. T. Thompson (New York, 1919), pp. 64–5.

⁹³ Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 123.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

history. The claim that there was a continuous church since the Creation was a common place of Christian ecclesiastical history, it can be found in works as venerable as the Church Father Eusebius' *Church History*, for example. But Pocklington deployed this suggestion in order to portray a tradition of altar worship reaching back to the earliest sacred history that was universal and therefore obligatory in all times and places.⁹⁵ According to this argument, no individual could opt out of the Church's public worship at the altar either. By virtue of being a reasoning member of the commonwealth, you were obliged to participate in the national church's collective worship.

Next, Pocklington addressed the question of when the use of altars for worship began. Here he drew upon a homily by Saint Gregory on Matthew 20:1-16, which had explained the parable of the workers in the vineyard, to compare the ages of sacred history to the hours in a day. Pocklington admitted that in the beginning before the third hour, between the ages of Adam and Noah, 'Religion...was without an Altar'.⁹⁶ However, having been preserved during the Flood, Noah disembarked the ark and immediately built an altar and made a sacrifice to thank God for his deliverance. This is the moment when the practice of altar worship began, according to Pocklington, rather than with Cain and Abel's sacrifices. He then found subsequent evidence of the practice at the sixth hour, in the time of Abraham, who built altars at Moreh and Bethel. Moreover, Pocklington described the moment that Abraham encountered Melchizedek as the point when the Christian Church 'was...in the prime'.⁹⁷ Melchizedek's gifts of bread and wine had previously been highlighted by Ambrose as proof that the sacraments of the Church are both older and more excellent than those 'of the synagogue'.⁹⁸ Lastly, the

⁹⁵ Eusebius of Caesaria, *The history of the Church*, trans. J. Scott (Berkeley, 2019), pp. 56-7.

⁹⁶ Pocklington, *Altare*, pp. 123-4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁹⁸ Ambrose, *On the Mysteries*, p. 65.

blessing that Abraham received from God for his willingness to sacrifice Isaac on an altar was yet further proof for Pocklington of the legitimacy of altar worship.

In order for Pocklington to argue that altar worship had begun before the Jewish church was formed, he needed to explain how the Patriarchs had known to erect altars without Mosaic revelation and the Law. Williams had suggested that the Jews had built altars according to a ceremonial law revealed to them by God through Moses, which had later been abrogated by Christ. Thus, argued Williams, in emulating the Jews, Laud and his supporters were reviving a defunct injunction.⁹⁹ To counter this argument, Pocklington claimed that ‘The children of God, by the light of nature infused into them, without any direction or speciall command; or rather by inspiration of Christs blessed Spirit, who delighted to walk with the sonnes of men, erected Altars’.¹⁰⁰ In other words, Pocklington suggested that altar worship was a universal feature of religion according to natural law, which was acknowledged by humankind throughout the ages. And since Christ had not overturned the natural (moral) law when he came to earth, but only the ceremonial law, it remained a legitimate and a necessary part of worship. Indeed, Pocklington made his argument plain:

For what the Patriarchs and people of the Jewes practised by the law of nature, or the rule of right reason, or by inspiration of Gods Spirit many hundred yeares before the Ceremoniall, or Leviticall Law was given, are not to be ranked among Judaicall Ceremonies, which were fulfilled in our Saviour Christ, and were by him taken away, and nailed to his Crosse.¹⁰¹

Pocklington was able to legitimise the current Church’s policy by insisting that altar worship was a feature of natural religion and was therefore as old as Creation.

But Pocklington was also able to position public ceremonial worship and the giving of offerings at the heart of religion and thereby to underline the need for a visibly embodied church

⁹⁹ BL Additional MS 35331, ff. 54v–55v.

¹⁰⁰ Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

in the community. Furthermore, in emphasising the importance of offerings Pocklington generated arguments for maintaining the clergy and respecting their authority. That this was a conscious decision on his part is indicated by the following passage in *Altare Christianum*:

He [Williams] which saies, Altars crept into the Church by a kind of complying with the people of the Jewes, may with as good reason say, that the orders of Archbishops, Bishops, Priest and Deacons, with their severall offices and degrees, with their attyre, habits, and vestments, together with oblations, tythes, glebe lands, and maintenance, crept into the Christian Church by a kinde of complying with the Jewes, and are therefore alike, and altogether to bee cast out of the Church, as Judaicall Ceremonies.¹⁰²

From Pocklington's perspective, then, William's refutation of the Caroline Church's altar policy was the thin end of the wedge. If the practice fell, then it would precipitate the collapse of order and respect for clerical authority. The author of *Altare Christianum* reached this conclusion because (according to his argument) the claim that every individual knew by nature to offer oblations to their Creator, which Genesis proved, underpinned the principle that all God's creatures owe him a debt to be repaid through the giving over of earthly things to the divine. In early modern England, this maxim was frequently invoked to legitimise practices such as tithe collection, and the endowment of churches and university colleges where students trained to enter the ministry.¹⁰³ In opposing Williams, Pocklington was also contributing to an ongoing clerical campaign against the sacrilegious practice of impropriating Church land, and of curbing the secular powers of the bishops.

Proving the antiquity of altar veneration using Genesis's sacred history was a critical move for Pocklington, whereby he aimed to show that the Caroline Church was complying with the practices of all ages, rather than mimicking "Jewish" ceremonialism. Moreover, his Genesis-inspired defence of altar worship was tightly bound up with a more general defence of clerical authority in the church and realm, an authority that (he felt) was present in the Creation

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 128-9.

¹⁰³ M. Dzelzainis, "Undoubted Realities": Clarendon on Sacrilege', *HJ* 33/3 (1990), p. 521.

when Christ first built his ‘catholick’ church. Here, a conciliar letter penned at the Council of Aachen centuries before proved a fertile resource for Pocklington, since it explained the close relationship between altars, sacrifices, and the need for an embodied church, using Genesis’s sacred history. Pocklington likely encountered the council’s letter, hitherto preserved in several manuscripts, in the French Jesuit scholar Jacques Sirmond’s three volume printed catalogue of ancient Church councils held during the reign of the Frankish dynasty: *Concilia antiqua Galliae* (1629).¹⁰⁴

In 836 CE, the assembled clergy at Aachen had composed a letter to the Frankish King Pepin and issued it with conciliar authority. In the missive, the clerics interpreted Genesis’s sacred history in order to justify the holding of ecclesiastical property, and to show how respect for it aided the flourishing of religion in a kingdom. The letter was composed during a time of civil unrest when church property was being ravaged by the king’s marauding forces.¹⁰⁵ Key to the gathered clergy’s argument was the claim that true religion began with the offering of a sacrifice by Abel, a practice of sacrificing to God that developed over time into the giving of material property to the Church—Pocklington recapitulated this historical argument in *Altare Christianum*.¹⁰⁶ The history of religion taught, according to the Council, that the giving of gifts pleased God, whereas the pillaging of the Church brought suffering.¹⁰⁷ This argument for a connection between altars, sacrifices, property, and clerical authority was highly useful to Pocklington. Moreover, he compared Williams and other likeminded clerics who opposed the Laudian altar policy to heterodox troublemakers at the Aachen Council, whom he described as those ‘Factors for the Synagogue of Satan that would not be pleased neither with Priests, Altars,

¹⁰⁴ J. Sirmond, *Concilia antiqua Galliae*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1629), pp. 596-610.

¹⁰⁵ E. Meehan, ‘The rulership of Pippin I of Aquitaine’, *Early Medieval Europe* (2025), pp. 20-1; M. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850* (Washington, 2011), pp. 343-4; F. Veronese, ‘Jonas of Orléans’, in *Great Christian Jurists and Legal Collections in the First Millennium*, ed. P. Reynolds (Cambridge, 2019), p. 416.

¹⁰⁶ Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 124; *MGH*, Conc. 2.2, p. 733.

¹⁰⁷ Moore, *Sacred Kingdom*, p. 344.

Oblations, Sacrifices’, who ‘by the carefull Spyes, and witty Agents, at times buzd into the Kings eares’.¹⁰⁸ The analogy was hardly a subtle one: Pocklington was presenting Williams not only as a threat to sacred altars but the entire order of the church and therefore the kingdom. Moreover, in pinning the Caroline Church’s altar policy to a gloss on Genesis produced by a medieval Church council, as well as his own reading of the scriptures, Pocklington was able to show how a set of principles about worship and the authority of the church, which were available in Genesis, had been actualised at a specific moment in the medieval history of the Church and could be so again in the face of the sacrilegious forces unleashed after the Reformation.

¹⁰⁸ Pocklington, *Altare*, p. 123.

Genesis and the embodied national church

This chapter has charted the continuous use of Genesis by Jacobean and Caroline clergy for promoting a particular vision of the national Church. Rendered visible and embodied by an emphasis on public worship, awe-inspiring ceremony, and a sacramentally-focussed worship, the church that emerges in the sources discussed above was also hierarchical and governed by a collaboration between prince and priest. Genesis, it has been argued, provided a scriptural basis for all of these ecclesiological features through its description of Adam's dominion, and early acts of Patriarchal worship that were seemingly characterised by sacrificial offerings, altar building, and genuflection. Moreover, because the Bible's opening book could be interpreted as a universal history, the expositors discussed in this chapter were able to make normative claims about religious practice by invoking the language of nature and natural law. As a result, Genesis could be used to defend the arrangement of the contemporary church by linking specific features of the latter, such as priestly hierarchy and the making of offerings, to the natural religion known to all peoples. It could also be used to argue that no-one could legitimately separate from the established Church, since nature taught that collaborating in public worship under the direction of the monarch and the clergy was a human obligation. Indeed, the clergy's authority derived from their role in co-ordinating ritual ceremony and educating the laity. According to the sources canvassed in this chapter, these were duties that were supposedly carried out by the Patriarchs in the first age.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, many of these themes—including an anxiety about sacrilege and the importance of sacramental worship—appeared in the discussion of Lancelot Andrewes' Genesis lectures contained in Chapter Two. This chapter began in the early-Jacobean period, and its discussion of the proposed Canons of 1606 and Buckeridge's Hampton Court sermon drew out the contemporary context that shaped these texts' discussion of Genesis; the concerns about religious authority and the nature of the Church that the authors of these

two sources responded to were also matters of grave concern to Andrewes. However, by the end of the chapter the focus had moved forward to the late 1630s. And while the chapter's central argument is that there was continuity in how Genesis was used to think about ecclesiastical authority and the visible church in this period, there was also an intensification and a development of this usage in order to underpin the reforms enacted in the Caroline church.

The reaction against this reformation at the time and then afterwards in the tumultuous mid-seventeenth century, is the subject of the remaining two chapters in this thesis. In an era when the Caroline church and eventually the established Church itself was dismantled, Genesis still had a role to play for thinking about the nature of religious community and authority. Indeed, its description of the period in sacred history prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law lent itself to an era in which England's clergy found themselves pondering what it might mean to construct a church in the absence of a settled legal framework.

Chapter 6 — ‘Hee who will follow Christ...must impart all his holy meditations to as many as hee can’: The preaching Church in George Walker’s *The History of the Creation*, c.1638-c.1641

Described by the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud as ‘a disorderly and peevish man’, George Walker (c.1583-1651) was the parish minister of St John the Evangelist, near Watling Street in London, throughout the late-Jacobean and Caroline periods. However, he was suspended for a time in the late 1630s while imprisoned and then under house arrest, for seditious preaching.¹ A highly learned clergyman with an abrasive, ‘pugilistic’ style, Walker began preaching in the early 1630s a series of sermons on Genesis’s opening chapters for the benefit of his congregation.² Subsequently, Walker responded to ‘the importunity of some of my best affected hearers’ by developing his notes from these sermons into a ‘Treatise’.³ Yet, Walker felt that at the time he had ‘no hope to get it licensed for the Presse’, and hence he only shared ‘severall written copies of it unto divers of [his congregation]’.⁴ The provocative godly minister had good reasons for keeping his powder dry. Indeed, as Chapter Six will demonstrate, Walker’s ‘Treatise’ not only contained criticisms of the Caroline regime but also a vision of a godly national church built around the preaching of the Gospel derived from Genesis. When he later had the opportunity to publish this work, Walker entered the public debate about the reform of England’s Church after the fall of Laud.

Once the Long Parliament was called in November 1640, Walker’s circumstances rapidly improved. Not only was he released from his confinement with the charges against him

¹ D. Como, ‘Walker, George (bap. 1582?, d. 1651), Church of England clergyman’, *ODNB*; W. Laud, *The history of the troubles and tryal of the Most Reverend Father in God and blessed martyr, William Laud*, ed. H. Wharton (1695), p. 535.

² G. Walker, *The history of the creation as it is written by Moses in the first and second chapters of Genesis* (1641), sig. A2v. On Walker’s personality, see E. Vernon, *London presbyterians and the British revolutions, 1638–64* (Manchester, 2021), p. 79.

³ Walker, *history*, sig. A2v.

⁴ *Ibid.*; A. Milton, ‘Licensing, Censorship, and Religious Orthodoxy in Early Stuart England’, *HJ* 41/3 (1998), pp. 625-51.

declared illegal, but his treatise on Genesis was licensed ‘to passe by the Presse into the publik view of the world’, under the title *The History of the Creation* (1641).⁵ This treatise on Genesis was published amidst a flurry of Walker’s works by the London printer John Bartlet, and some of Walker’s writings—including his Genesis sermons and the dedication in the *history*—appeared in multiple texts.⁶ This duplication suggests a rush to print *en-masse* in an attempt to re-establish Walker’s tarnished reputation and to intervene in the frenetic debates over religious reform then taking place in and around Parliament.

This chapter will argue that Walker’s reflections on the church throughout his reading of Genesis’s opening chapters not merely enabled him to criticise the ecclesiastical authorities in the early 1630s—as historians have previously noted—but it also allowed him to ground his vision of a Protestant church, which was centred on the right preaching of the Word and which aligned with the example of the continental Reformed Churches, in Genesis. After Laud’s fall and with the widespread petitioning of the Long Parliament for religious reform, the possibility of realising this ecclesiastical ideal was considerably greater when *The history of creation* was printed than it had been nearly a decade earlier.⁷ Thus, the published versions of Walker’s Genesis sermons read more positively in this later, more propitious context.

In 1643, the reversal of Walker’s fortunes was completed when he was nominated for the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Whilst his persecutor Laud, who Walker claimed had ‘most proudly affirmed...*That I should never come in a Pulpit to preach any more*’, was standing trial for treason, Walker had the opportunity to shape the future of England’s religious landscape.⁸ He did so through his contributions to the Assembly’s debates as well as via other

⁵ Walker, *history*, sig. A3; Como, ‘Walker, George’, *ODNB*.

⁶ See fn. 29.

⁷ A. Milton, *England's second Reformation: the battle for the Church of England 1625-1662* (Cambridge, 2021), pp. 68-100.

⁸ G. Walker, *A sermon preached before the honourable House of Commons at their late solempne monethly fast Januarie 29th, 1644* (1645), ‘The EPISTLE’, unfol., [p. 2].

subsequent activities, including delivering a fiery fast sermon before Parliament on 29 January 1645, in which he decried his treatment by the recently executed Laud, that ‘proud persecuting *Prelate of CANTERBURIE*’, and prayed that God would swiftly

cut downe these cursed Brambles, and...ridde these three Kingdomes of them...not onely the great Faction of the Antichristian Papists, Atheists, and Malignants, banded together, and wageing open Warre against us, but also all the Sects of Anabaptists, Antinomians, Libertines, and Schismaticall Separatists, who by opposing the Reformation, and union of our Church, with the rest of the best Reformed Churches, both in Doctrine and Discipline, according to the written Word of God, do act strongly for Antichrist.⁹

The language in this passage echoed that of the recently issued *Solemn League and Covenant* with the latter’s references to the Word of God and ‘the best Reformed Churches’, and one can read in Walker’s words a description of the two-fronts that he spent his career fighting on—against the Papists and crypto-Papists on one side, and against the heterodox on the other.¹⁰

In a bid to resist both threats, Walker advocated for Presbyterian church government at a parish level after the abolition of episcopacy. He led the first London classis alongside William Gouge in 1646 and he was employed there as a ‘trier’ to test the godly standing and theological acumen of newly elected church elders.¹¹ Elliot Vernon highlights that whilst the London classis movement was fatally undermined by long-term financial weakness and a lack of support from the magistrate, it was nonetheless characterised by a ‘commitment to Reformed ideals of pastoral care’, which was driven forward with modest success by ‘the collective dedication of the London presbyterian laity and clergy to the cause of further Reformation’.¹² Central to the movement’s model of a church was the right preaching of the Word by learned

⁹ Walker, *A Sermon*, ‘The EPISTLE’, unfol., [p. 3].

¹⁰ Anon., *A solemn league and covenant for reformation and defence of religion* (1643), p. (5).

¹¹ C. Van Dixhoorn, ‘Introduction’, in *The minutes and papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652*, vol. 1, eds. C. Van Dixhoorn and D. Wright (Oxford, 2012), p. 142; Como, ‘Walker George’, *ODNB*; Vernon, *London presbyterians*, pp. 103-4, 171.

¹² Vernon, *London presbyterians*, p. 169.

ministers. The threat of heresy was counteracted by the policing of scriptural interpretation through sermons and lectures, in the absence of the old episcopal disciplinary structures.

Walker's *History* was itself an attempt to shape his congregation's understanding of what Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 suggested about the church. He found scriptural inspiration for his conception of a church as a community of the godly in those opening books of Genesis and his ideal church's boundaries were defined by its members' adherence to the scripturally derived doctrines their ministers preached, rather than by territorial borders or membership of a particular political community. This vision of religious community was cosmopolitan by implication, and it suited both the underground godly community in the 1630s, who were increasingly alienated from England's established Church, and the later moment in the early 1640s when Reformed Protestants across the British Isles pursued the propagation of the Gospel at home and across the Atlantic in order to counter popery and quash heresy—a project encapsulated by the wording of the *Solemn League and Covenant* (1643).

This context perhaps explains why Walker's sermons focussed on Gen. 1-2. At that point in sacred history, the church was not a national entity encompassing a particular tribe in the way that it did under the leadership of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Walker was not engaging with Genesis in order to promote the Church of England as the New Israel, then.¹³ Instead, he was envisioning a Reformed Church united around the right preaching of the Word—delivered through ministerial sermons and lay-funded lectureships, where authority was exercised through control over the interpretation of scriptures. Furthermore, Walker's choice of scripture enabled him to avoid discussions of acts of worship, or the leadership displayed by the Patriarchs, which are described later in Genesis, and which could be used to derive contrary conclusions about religious authority. As opposed to the other expositors discussed earlier in

¹³ A. Guibbory, *Christian identity, Jews, and Israel in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 89-120.

this thesis, like Andrewes, Willet, or Pocklington, Walker (not unlike another keen Hebraist, Henry Ainsworth) interpreted the origins of a church in Genesis that did not presume support from the magistrate. The context that informed this ecclesiastical model was Walker's experience of the 1630s.

Previously, historians have discussed Walker primarily in relation to two contexts. On the one hand they have noted his criticism of the pre-Civil War established Church, especially its policy regarding the Sabbath.¹⁴ On the other hand, scholars have highlighted Walker's attempts to define and to police the boundaries of English Reformed Calvinist orthodoxy in London's pre-Civil War godly society.¹⁵ Almost immediately after attaining his benefice in London, the precocious and undoubtedly educated Walker engaged in a contentious dispute with the respected London Puritan divine Anthony Wooton—Walker (unsuccessfully) accused him of holding heterodox Socinian views on the doctrine of justification.¹⁶ Later on, Walker attacked the London minister William Chibald and the nonconformist William Bradshaw for similar reasons.¹⁷ This 'doctrinal attack dog of quite outstanding tenacity and viciousness' also debated opponents of a very different sort when he engaged in informal conferences with two Roman Catholics, which were later printed.¹⁸ His opponents were a priest named Sylvester Norris and the Jesuit John Percy (*alias* Fisher). Walker's habitual concern to define and maintain theological orthodoxy, particularly within the London godly community, points to the brittleness of his conception of authority within the church. Whilst his vision of the church was

¹⁴ K. Parker, *The English Sabbath: a study of doctrine and discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 202.

¹⁵ P. Lake, *The boxmaker's revenge: 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy' and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 200-1, 221-46.

¹⁶ P. Lake and D. Como, "'Orthodoxy' and Its Discontents: Dispute Settlement and the Production of 'Consensus' in the London (Puritan) 'Underground'", *Journal of British Studies* 39/1 (2000), pp. 38-48; S. Mortimer, *Reason and religion in the English revolution: the challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 50-3.

¹⁷ Como, 'Walker, George', *ODNB*.

¹⁸ G. Walker, *The Summe of a Disputation* (1624); Idem., *Fishers folly unfolded: or, The vaunting Jesuites vanity* (1624). For this description of Walker, see Lake, *The boxmaker's revenge*, p. 200.

flexible in that it was not restricted to a particular geographical area, the integrity of the congregation relied upon the successful enforcement and policing of doctrinal orthodoxy by bellicose ministers such as himself, so that anyone who strayed from the flock might be disciplined and encouraged to repent rather than causing a schism.

Building on Tom Webster's discussion of Walker in relation to the Caroline godly clergy's networks and systems of self-discipline, the chapter will examine how this London minister's writing on Genesis promoted ideas about the national church, which centred around ministerial preaching, lecturing, and discipline, at a time when such activities were being countered by the Church of England's authorities through the withholding of licenses.¹⁹ Bound up with his focus on the preaching ministry was the issue of funding, and here too Walker can be shown to have found evidence in Genesis for the normalcy of ministerial payment during a period in which the issues of tithes, appropriation, and impropriation proved deeply contentious.²⁰

Importantly though, Walker's *History* also needs to be contextualised in the period after Laud's fall. The work's dedications suggest that Walker was seeking to strengthen his relationships with several prominent Puritan-leaning peers, thereby complementing the extensive network of lay and clerical contacts he had already cultivated earlier in his career. In the context of the 1640s there was a realistic possibility that, with this support, the ideas about the church that Walker had canvassed through his pre-Civil War discussion of Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 might now come to fruition.

¹⁹ T. Webster, *Godly clergy in early Stuart England: the Caroline Puritan movement, c. 1620-1643* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 30.

²⁰ G. Toomer, *John Selden: a life in scholarship*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 2009), pp. 257-310; J. Maltby, 'Sacilege and the Sacred in England's Second Reformation, 1640-1660', in *Contesting Orthodoxies in the History of Christianity: Essays in Honour of Diarmaid MacCulloch*, eds. A. Ryrie, A. Null, and E. Gebarowski-Shafer (Woodbridge, 2021), p. 202.

Equally, however, debates within and beyond the Westminster Assembly revealed that Genesis, which had proven effective as a resource for godly criticisms of the pre-Civil War church, might also serve as a tool with which radicals could undermine the idea of a national church and a formal ministry.²¹ Already by the end of the 1630s Walker had established himself as a ‘heresy hunter’ and as a ‘staunch defender’ of an intolerant, narrow form of Puritan Calvinist orthodoxy.²² In the 1640s onwards he would find himself at the forefront of an increasingly difficult battle against radical theological and ecclesiological ideas. During debates in the Westminster Assembly, Walker argued stridently for uniformity and denounced toleration. In a debate on Parliament’s authority to punish heresy, for example, Walker commented brusquely that ‘To prove them Heritiques & blasphemers is as easy as to stand up or sit downe’.²³ His definition of heterodoxy was extremely broad since he ‘blurred the distinction between a given error and its logical conclusion’, as Chad Van Dixhoorn put it.²⁴ In other words, for Walker there was no discernible difference between holding to a heterodox theological or doctrinal theory—such as anti-Trinitarianism—and causing an extreme consequence in practice, such as encouraging the collapse of social order. Without careful policing, a notoriously ambiguous and open-ended scriptural text like Genesis was ripe for such dangerous interpretation.

By the end of this chapter, then, the discussion of Walker’s reading of Genesis will have taken us into a new era, one in which the gradual collapse of England’s Reformation settlement opened the door for new, exciting, and dangerous invocations of Genesis. It would be up to Walker and other like-minded ministers to try to control that development in the use of the

²¹ C. Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (London, 1994), p. 41.

²² Van Dixhoorn and Wright, *The Minutes and Papers*, vol. 1, p. 22, 142; Webster, *Godly clergy*, p. 30; Lake, *The boxmaker’s revenge*, p. 409.

²³ C. Van Dixhoorn and D. Wright, eds., *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652*, 3. *Vols, II: Minutes, Sessions 45-119, 155-198 (1643-1644)* (Oxford, 2012), p. 148.

²⁴ Van Dixhoorn and Wright, *The Minutes and Papers*, vol. 1, p. 142.

Bible's opening book for thinking about religious community and authority. This chapter will begin, however, by expanding on several contextual and biographical details that provide important clues as to Walker's theological principles, which informed his ecclesiology and his reading of Genesis.

From the Caroline godly clergy to the Westminster Assembly: Situating Walker's *The History of the Creation*

Walker's dedication in the *History* appeared in another publication, *The doctrine of the weekly Sabbath* (1641). The twice deployed dedication narrated Walker's persecution at the hands of the pre-Civil War Church authorities for expounding on passages in Genesis in relation to the Sabbath, and documented his relief at the action taken by the Long Parliament to end his captivity, both corporeal and literary.²⁵ The dedication, then, was relevant to the subject of *The doctrine of the weekly Sabbath*, yet it offered little guidance to the contents of the *History*. Nevertheless, it does provide a useful point of departure for understanding Walker's theological commitments and hence what he was doing during his sermons on Genesis, especially when it is combined with a broader survey of the London minister's early career and his social context.

Throughout the 1630s, Walker was reprimanded on several occasions for refusing to cease preaching about the Sabbath in relation to Gen. 2:2-3 and other related passages of scripture.²⁶ On the first occasion, in 1633, a group of London Puritan ministers issued a petition on Walker's behalf in a bid to exonerate him. Given Walker's previous run-ins with several members of the city's godly community, the petition's wording was surprisingly—even preposterously—generous. These clergymen were evidently circling the wagons around one of their own when they labelled Walker a 'man of honest and peaceable life and conversation', though they were closer to the mark in describing him as 'a zealous maintainer of the doctrine and discipline established in the church of England and a strong opponent of all sects, schisms and heresies and one who hath reduced many opposites to a peaceable conformity in the church'.²⁷ Walker's insistence upon the authority of scripture alone in relation to the doctrine

²⁵ Walker, *history*, sig. A2-sig. A3v.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A3.

²⁷ Lake, *The boxmaker's revenge*, p. 286.

of the Sabbath exemplified his godly zealotry, but his rejection of any other sources of authority led Laud to accuse him of ‘seditious’ sermonising.²⁸

Walker later claimed that when he had preached about Genesis in the early 1630s to his congregation, he had (rather conveniently) reached Gen. 2:2-3—a key verse in relation to the Sabbath—at exactly the time when King Charles I had ordered that the *Book of Sports* be re-issued in 1633.²⁹ The *Book of Sports*, which contained instructions as to what secular recreational activities were permitted on Sundays and holy days in England, flew in the face of Walker’s view that ‘the Lord’s day ought to be spent solely in the public and private duties of religion’.³⁰ Walker’s obstinacy in preaching against these instructions led to him being charged with re-offending several years later in Star Chamber and he was incarcerated in London’s Gatehouse for several months.³¹ Whilst in prison he became seriously ill and was eventually released on the condition that he remain under house arrest; he lived with his brother outside of London for a time.³² Walker’s health seems to have been persistently temperamental though, his parish’s records note that amongst the annual outgoings were payments to cover the ‘hiring of a reader and preachers in times when the incumbent is sick and weak, which some years hath amounted to above ten pounds’.³³

Later, during his trial, Laud repeated his claim that Walker’s sermons had contained ‘factious and seditious doctrine’ and thus that his imprisonment had been justified.³⁴ At the base of this accusation was Walker’s insistence on the authority of scripture, which is displayed throughout the *History*, and which undergirded his conviction that ‘the publike preaching,

²⁸ Walker, *history*, sig. A3.

²⁹ Ibid., sig. A2v; G. Walker, *The doctrine of the weekly Sabbath* (Amsterdam, 1638), sig. A2.

³⁰ P. Lake, *On Laudianism: Piety, Polemic and Politics During the Personal Rule of Charles I* (Cambridge, 2023), p. 235.

³¹ Walker, *A Sermon*, ‘The EPISTLE’, unfol., [2].

³² Como, ‘Walker, George’, *ODNB*.

³³ T. Dale, ed., *The Inhabitants of London in 1638* (London, 1931), p. 78.

³⁴ Laud, *The history of the troubles*, p. 535.

reading and hearing of the word' ought to be at the centre of the Church's worship.³⁵ Such an opinion threatened the Church's hierarchy because it provided an alternative, divine source of authority to appeal to in debates over worship and matters of doctrine, such as the Sabbath. Walker was delighted when the *Book of Sports* was later ordered to be burned. He applauded Parliament for its 'godly Zeale for the sanctifying of the *Lords day*, and for the honouring of the name of the *Sabbath* (which appeared most evidently to us all, who of late were present at the time when that scandalous libel, intituled, *Sunday no Sabbath* [a work written by John Pocklington], was most accurately and judiciously sifted and examined by your Honours, and justly censured and condemned to the fire)'.³⁶ Incidentally, it was in this context that Walker re-issued his *The doctrine of the weekly Sabbath*.³⁷ The work had originally been printed in Amsterdam in 1638. The House of Lords Journal records that during a debate on 1 December 1641, 'Mr. Walker's *Treatise of the Sabbath*' was one of a number of books mentioned that had previously been printed overseas, seized by customs officials when they arrived in England, and censored by Laud's High Commission.³⁸ However, the Bishop of Exeter (Joseph Hall) reported to the chamber that, upon recent review by an appointed committee, Walker's work had been found 'fit to be delivered to the Owners, and to be sold by the Stationers, as good and vendible'.³⁹ This is yet more evidence that the wind was now blowing in the London minister's favour.

But even in the dark days of the 1630s, there is evidence that Walker had godly support. Walker began building his ecclesiastical network whilst studying at St John's College, Cambridge under Christopher Foster. After graduating MA in 1611, he spent time at the

³⁵ Walker, *history*, sig. A2v.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A3; J. Pocklington, *Sunday no Sabbath* (1636). See also B. Capp, *England's Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and its Enemies in the Interregnum, 1649-1660* (Oxford, 2013), p. 8.

³⁷ Walker, *The doctrine of the weekly Sabbath* (1641).

³⁸ See Como, 'Walker, George', *ODNB*.

³⁹ *LJ*, vol. 4, p. 457.

prominent godly minister Alexander Richardson's informal seminary in Barking, Essex, before inheriting Foster's benefice, which was St John the Evangelist near Watling Street in London.⁴⁰ The living was a valuable peculiar under the direct authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury (when Walker was inducted in 1614, this was the increasingly marginalised George Abbot). In 1638, Walker's benefice generated a healthy net income of £67 9s. 4d. through a combination of tithes, the renting of a glebe property, and other fees.⁴¹

Seven years after he took up the post at St John the Evangelist, Walker was rewarded for his reputation as an excellent logician, linguist, and divine by being incorporated B.D. at Oxford University.⁴² Two years previously, he had been appointed as a chaplain to the well-respected Bishop of Ely, Nicholas Felton, which suggests that he had connections in the ecclesiastical establishment as well as amongst the godly intelligentsia. Indeed, it was only with the rise of Laud and his allies to the leadership of the Church of England that Walker began to encounter serious adversity from the ecclesiastical authorities.⁴³ However, the fact that Walker's parish was a Canterbury peculiar may have left him particularly exposed at this point. Especially if the Metropolitan sent 'catchers' to infiltrate the congregation, who, Walker complained, were 'employed to entrap me in my words that they might have something wherof to accuse me'.⁴⁴ And accuse Walker they did. When he was arraigned for the third time on the 14 November 1638, Walker was charged with having 'uttered and delivered in a Sermon...divers thinges tending to publique faction, and disobedience to Authority'.⁴⁵ Laud described Walker to King Charles I as 'a seditious fellow...a preacher of factious and mutinous doctrine and the greatest troubler of London'.⁴⁶ The Archbishop further alleged that Walker had

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 30; Como, 'Walker, George', *ODNB*.

⁴¹ Dale, *Inhabitants of London in 1638*, p. 78.

⁴² Como, 'Walker, George', *ODNB*.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Walker, *history*, sig. A3.

⁴⁵ Bodl. MS Bankes 23, f. 27r.

⁴⁶ Como, 'Walker, George', *ODNB*.

preached that ‘wee must not too much fear great men kings and potentates’ and that he had taught ‘inferiors to examine and dispute the commands of their superiors’.⁴⁷ At his trial, Laud had defended his charging of Walker by claiming that ‘his Sermon was viewed, and many factious Passages, and of [a] high Nature, [were] found in it’.⁴⁸

Walker’s early biography not only reveals his godly connections that (partially) shielded him, but it also indicates something about his ecclesiological commitments. Whilst he was critical of the pre-Civil War church authorities, his good relations with the Bishop of Ely suggests that he could serve within an episcopal framework. Indeed, discussions of specific forms of church-government do not feature explicitly in Walker’s Genesis treatise, and there is no reason why his vision of a national church built around a preaching ministry and a copious supply of lay-funded lectureships was irreconcilable with a system of church government led by a hierarchy of bishops. Of course, in 1646, after the *History* was published, the matter was rendered nugatory by Parliament. Walker became a keen advocate of Presbyterian Church-Government—at least at a local level—thereafter.⁴⁹ He penned an anonymous defence of the new discipline entitled *A Modell of the Government of the Church under the Gospell* (1646).⁵⁰

Further clues as to the kind of national church that Walker was striving for are provided by a series of social connections that he developed during his pre-Civil War career. Walker cultivated relationships with prominent intellectual figures including the intelligencer Samuel Hartlib and the Scottish Calvinist John Dury. Van Dixhoorn has even suggested that it was Walker’s involvement with the so-called ‘Hartlib Circle’ that earned him an invitation to join the Westminster Assembly in 1643. Dury, meanwhile, who at various points in the mid-seventeenth century courted the English godly clergy as part of his projecting for a pan-

⁴⁷ Bodl. MS Bankes 44, f. 13r.

⁴⁸ Laud, *The history of the troubles*, p. 237.

⁴⁹ Milton, *Second Reformation*, p. 240.

⁵⁰ Como, ‘Walker, George’, *ODNB*; Anon., *A Modell of the Government of the Church under the Gospell* (London, 1646).

Protestant union, elicited money and a pledge of support from Walker for the publication of a trans-national Protestant practical divinity manual, which was intended to aid in the drawing together of the various Reformed and Lutheran churches.⁵¹ Walker also supported a petition calling for a missionary campaign led by English colonists amongst the indigenous peoples of North America.⁵² Evidently, Walker took seriously the idea that evangelising and improving biblical literacy amongst the laity was crucial to the church. Indeed, towards the end of his life Walker made provision for the creation of several godly lectureships across England.⁵³

Based on this record, it is hardly surprising that in 1644 Walker swore to the principles contained in the *Solemn League and Covenant*, with its promise to ‘endeavour...the Reformation of Religion in the Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*, Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and government, according to the word of God, and the Example of the best Reformed Churches’.⁵⁴ The *Solemn League and Covenant*’s carefully chosen wording betrayed the fact that there was tension surrounding the Covenant, and especially the extent to which the constitution of England’s Church ought to be changed so as to emulate its Scottish cousin’s *iure divino* attitude towards Presbyterian government.⁵⁵ Later in this chapter it will be suggested that Genesis provided Walker with a way around this problem.

However, reforming the established Church would require influential support closer to home too, and the dedication printed alongside Walker’s works in 1641 indicates where he felt that patronage might come from. Walker dedicated his *History* to the ‘Honourable Lords Committees In The Upper House Of The High Court Of Parliament’.⁵⁶ But he addressed it

⁵¹ Webster, *Godly clergy*, p. 260; A. Milton, ‘The Unchanged Peacemaker’? John Drury and the politics of irenicism in England, 1628-1643’, in *Samuel Hartlib and universal reformation: studies in intellectual communication*, eds. M. Greengrass, M. Leslie, and T. Raylor (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 95-117.

⁵² Webster, *Godly clergy*, p. 233.

⁵³ Como, ‘Walker, George’, *ODNB*.

⁵⁴ Anon., *A solemn league and covenant*, p. (5).

⁵⁵ Vernon, *London presbyterians*, pp. 76-7.

⁵⁶ Walker, *history*, sig. A2.

especially to several lay members—including the Earl of Bedford, the Earl of Warwick, and Viscount Saye and Sele—who had distinguished themselves in recent times as dissident, godly peers, who belonged to the ‘Junto’ that had brought about the end of Charles I’s Personal Rule.⁵⁷ Contemporaneously, Walker dedicated his *God made visible in His workes* (1641) to ‘The Right Worshipfull My Much Honoured friends Sir Thomas Barrington, Sir Gilbert Gerard, Sir William Massam, and Sir Martin Lumley’.⁵⁸ These Puritan-leaning peers and MPs had provided Walker with support during adverse times and in due course advanced his career by helping to dismiss the charges previously levelled against him by Laud.⁵⁹

Furthermore, these peers encouraged Parliament to enact the kinds of religious reforms that Walker favoured, such as promoting preaching through removing so-called ‘scandalous ministers’ and replacing them with godly divines. Relatedly, the Long Parliament investigated how to overturn the Court of Exchequer’s earlier ruling regarding the curtailing of Feoffees for Impropriation. In the 1620s, the Feoffees had been set up to promote godly preaching clergy by purchasing church livings when they became vacant. However, during Charles I’s Personal Rule these activities had been legislated against with Laud’s support as part of a wider drive to restrain preaching and lecturing.⁶⁰ With the convening of the Long Parliament, efforts were made to undo this suppression and in the following years a substantial amount of funds seized by the crown were returned to the Feoffees.⁶¹ The House of Commons journal records that, on 31 December 1640, a motion was passed to direct the ‘Committee concerning preaching Ministers, to consider of the Decree, made in the Exchequer, concerning the Impropriations; and to think of some fit Way, for the Reversing of the said Decree; and likewise to think of

⁵⁷ J. Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* (London, 2007), pp. 147-152.

⁵⁸ G. Walker, *God made visible in His workes* (1641), sig. ¶3.

⁵⁹ Como, ‘Walker, George’, *ODNB*; Van Dixhoorn and Wright, *Minutes and Papers*, vol. 1, p. 108.

⁶⁰ J. Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 126-71.

⁶¹ I. Calder, ‘A Seventeenth Century Attempt to Purify the Anglican Church’, *The American Historical Review* 53/3 (1948), pp. 760-75.

some fit Course, how to settle that good Work of the Feoffees, for the Propagation of Religion and Piety.’⁶² Such an appropriation of church wealth would have delighted Walker. In his dedications to the various parliamentary figures, he emphasised the importance of publicly preaching ‘Gods pure word’ and he attempted to garner their support in rebuilding his reputation.⁶³ That Walker placed the preaching ministry at the heart of his vision for the church will now be shown through examining his reading of Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 in the *History*.

⁶² *CJ*, vol. 2, p. 61.

⁶³ Walker, *history*, sig. A2v; Idem., *God made visible*, sig. ¶3v.

Made by God alone: The limits of obedience, and godly rule, in Walker's commentary on Gen. 1:26

Walker's *History* contains an extensive discussion of Gen. 1-2 and an essay on divine providence, prefaced by a short sermon on the sixth line in Psalm 135—a verse which was pertinent to a discussion of God's works of creation.⁶⁴ Walker's sermons on Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 are arranged into broadly chronological chapters in the *History*, though the exposition of individual verses does not necessarily follow the order in which they appear in the scriptures. Despite the focus on the Sabbath in the dedication, which was accounted for earlier in Chapter Six, Walker's *History* actually offered conventional Reformed readings of key verses across Gen. 1-2 with accompanying discussions of the theological doctrines that could be elicited from these scriptures. Walker's exegetical methodology, which was entirely standard, assumed that the scriptures were self-authenticating; that is, he insisted that 'the right understanding of the Scriptures' emerged 'plainly in the very text it selfe', or 'by other places and testimonies which are more full and plaine, compared with the obscurer texts'.⁶⁵ Rarely did Walker cite an external authority, such as a Church Father or a more recent commentator.⁶⁶ Throughout the *History*, emphasis is placed on recovering the singular meaning and authority of the scriptures themselves, despite the fact that Walker was of course offering his own interpretation of them. Crucially, however, there are occasions throughout the text where Walker developed his reading of the scriptures in order to explore issues relating to the church that had a contemporary resonance. Whilst Walker's treatise began life as a series of sermons, and its contents reflect the conventions of that genre (by focussing on edification and exhortation), his commentary on Genesis's opening chapters was laced with loaded remarks about the nature of godly rule, the

⁶⁴ Psalm 135:6—'Whatsoever pleased the Lord, that did hee in heaven and in earth, in the sea, and in all the depths'.

⁶⁵ Walker, *history*, p. 241.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

importance of preaching, and society's duty to maintain God's ministers. Each of these topics will now be handled in this section and those that follow.

Whilst discussing the creation of mankind as it is narrated in Gen. 1:26, Walker emphasised the orthodox theological point that God alone (acting as the Holy Trinity) had been responsible for creating Adam and Eve—in other words, no assistance from the angels or other celestial beings had been necessary.⁶⁷ From this common-place exegetical deduction, Walker derived several conclusions. First, he remarked on the implications of this lesson for mankind's earthly conduct. Since mankind owes its creation to God alone, Walker noted that 'whatsoever service wee are able to performe either with our soules or bodies, it is wholly due to God'. He continued, 'wee must not thinke it enough to keepe our selves to God, and to serve him in *spirit* onely, but wee must serve and worship him with our bodies also'.⁶⁸ On its own, this was not a controversial observation. The bodily worship of God was considered an essential element in right religion by all (except by certain Protestant heresiarchs like Casper Schwenckfeld and his followers in Silesia). However, Walker then considered an implication of this axiom—that mankind was made by God alone—for contemporary society.

Specifically, Walker proceeded to use the doctrine to deduce a more topical principle regarding the relationship between subjects and monarchs:

as Kings, and Rulers, and wise Magistrates...bee *Saviours* of our bodily lives from death and other dangers, and...procure safety, peace and well being to us; and in this respect and for these causes wee doe owe love, honour, and service to them in, and under God; yet in no case may wee in things which tend not to the honour, but dishonour of God, and are contrary to his Word and Will, and offensive to his Majesty, obey, serve and honour them.⁶⁹

That the king was next to God in authority and that he was deserving of his subjects' loyalty up to the point where his command contradicted the law was entirely conventional in Caroline

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 178.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 178-9.

England's political thought.⁷⁰ However, Walker's commentary described a sharp binary between those things which tended to the honour and dishonour of God; he left no room for indifferent actions or things neither condoned nor prohibited. Either an action was warranted by God's 'holy and infallible Word', or it was condemned, and absolute obedience to the former was required.⁷¹ Walker's 'wise Magistrates' are unmistakably godly kings who command their subjects to do only that which God has ordained. If a monarch exceeds this regulative principle contained in scripture, warned Walker, the subject should not obey for fear of offending God. Repeating his point immediately, Walker reminded his congregation that 'All Potentates, Kings and Rulers, because they are men and have no power but from God, must not looke that any should serve and obey them rather then God, or in things which they command contrary to God's commandements'.⁷² It was presumably passages like this that Laud considered 'seditious preaching'.

Evidently then, Walker's sermon on Gen. 1:26 was informed by a godly political theology whose tenets had subversive potential in the 1630s. Whilst Walker framed an individual's obedience to their monarch in terms of loyalty and godly duty, he also indicated that non-scriptural forms of authority ought to be resisted. For example, there was no room for the monarch to plead for *adiaphora* (matters indifferent) in the church—a concept that Laud and his supporters, and indeed conformists in general, relied upon when justifying non-scriptural aspects of the liturgy or the beautifying of sacred spaces.⁷³ Walker was keen to restrict the monarch's room for manoeuvre in religious matters by binding it to scriptural precedent, since the one who takes 'naturall reason for his guide in the way to heaven, may easily be

⁷⁰ G. Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven, 1996), p. 105.

⁷¹ Walker, *history*, p. 178.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁷³ Lake, 'The Laudians and the Argument from Authority', in *Court, country and culture: essays on early modern British history in honor of Perez Zagorin*, eds. B. Young Kunze, D. Brautigam, P. Zagorin (New York, 1992), pp. 149-76.

carried aside, and fall into the crooked wayes of error, which lead unto hell'.⁷⁴ In foreboding biblical tones he warned that

[Potentates] must remember that they are Gods creatures and handi-worke, and ought to employ all their power and authority to the honour of God. If otherwise they abuse the *talents*, which God hath lent them; let them know, that God will one day call them to a *reckoning*, and give them the reward of evill, unfaithfull, and unprofitable servants, even eternall destruction and torment in Hell, where shall be howling, and wayling, and gnashing of teeth.⁷⁵

The question of what royal actions did and did not redound to God's honour was of course a divisive one in this period, as was the related issue of what customs scripture did and did not condone in church and commonwealth. Yet here and elsewhere in the *History*, Walker gave advice on godly rule deriving from Genesis that his audience could not fail to interpret as criticism of the current regime. Two examples in particular stand out in Walker's sermons: corporal punishment and godly marriage.

With regards to the first of these, in the same sermon on Gen. 1:26 and whilst still discussing the doctrinal commonplace that mankind owes its creation to God alone, Walker remarked as follows:

Whoever offers wrong and injury to any of mankind by cutting, mangling, or any way defacing their image, and deforming their bodies; by afflicting or some way corrupting their soules; or by taking away their lives and naturall being, without speciall warrant and commandement from God; they are notoriously injurious to God himselfe; they scorne, despise, mis-use and deface Gods Workmanship; they provoke God to wrath and jealousy, and he surely will be avenged on such doings. And here wee have matter, as of dread and terrour to all cruell Tyrants and unmercifull men; so of hope and comfort to all who suffer injury and wrong at their hands.⁷⁶

The reference here to 'cruell Tyrants and unmercifull men', who do injury to individuals' bodies and souls and are therefore deserving of God's wrath, was laden with meaning for a godly audience that was cognisant of the persecution that Puritan martyrs had suffered in recent years.

The most famous example was surely the brutal treatment that the Puritan pamphleteers John

⁷⁴ Walker, *history*, p. 194.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Bastwick, Henry Burton, and William Prynne received at the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities they had criticised, in 1637.⁷⁷ Readers of Walker's printed *History* in 1641 would surely have made this connection, even if Walker could not have been referencing this particular case when he first gave the sermon—whether he edited this passage between 1638 and 1641 in light of this infamous occurrence is another question of course. Several years later, Laud's rough treatment of Walker, and of the three mutilated martyrs, was brought as evidence by the prosecution at the Archbishop's trial.⁷⁸ Elsewhere in the *History* Walker referred to the 'cruell persecutors, and mangling tyrants', who inflict 'wounds, stripes, and...deformities' on the elect faithful, a punishment worse than the sickness he had endured whilst in custody.⁷⁹

Walker continued his barbed commentary on the authorities through a discourse on the topic of godly marriage. In a lengthy discussion—occasioned by two verses concerning the creation of Eve (Gen. 2:21-22)—Walker advised his unmarried (male) auditors 'to bee wary and circumspect in the choice of their wives'.⁸⁰ He instructed them to consider whether 'they [their future spouse] bee virtuously and piously affected, and have a desire to live in the feare of God, and to build up a godly family, to have a speciall eye and respect of true religion'.⁸¹ He contrasted this good example with occasions when men 'for carnall, worldly and politike respects, yoke themselves with wives of a contrary disposition and religion, daughters of a strange God, and vassals of Antichrist'.⁸² When it is remembered that in 1625 Charles I had married Henrietta Maria, a French, Roman Catholic princess, for reasons of state, the subversiveness of Walker's commentary becomes clear—he was directly criticising his monarch, whom he had described in the dedication as 'our most gracious Sovereigne Lord and

⁷⁷ T. Webster, 'Religion in Early Stuart England, 1603-1642', in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, ed. Barry Coward (Oxford, 2000), p. 260.

⁷⁸ Anon., *Articles of the Commons assembled in Parliament in maintenance of their accusation against William Laud Archbishop of Canterbury* (1643), p. (3); Laud, *The History of the troubles*, p. 237.

⁷⁹ Walker, *history*, sig. A3; *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 209.

King'.⁸³ Moreover, Walker's references to Antichrist could not have been interpreted by his godly congregation in the early 1630s as anything other than anti-popery, a discourse which also targeted those within the established church who took a softer line regarding the errors of the Roman Church.⁸⁴

Whether he was alluding to the mutilation of godly martyrs or to inappropriate royal marriages, Walker was consistent in drawing attention to the authority of scripture and using it to criticise the contemporary authorities. Moreover, his sermons also offered comfort to his godly congregation in dark times, 'when iniquity aboundeth...[and] the godly [are] persecuted and oppressed'.⁸⁵ Reflecting on contemporary affairs, and possibly alluding to Laud's ecclesiastical innovations, Walker reminded his godly audience that 'If wee see just cause to feare great changes in Church or State, let us flie to God for helpe, strength, courage, and patience, and betake our selves to his protection'.⁸⁶ Yet Walker's insistence on the authority of scripture also enabled him to generate a positive, alternative vision for the church. The remainder of Chapter Six will focus on Walker's theories about the church as expressed through his Genesis sermons. Whilst his aspirations may have seemed wishful in the early 1630s under Laud's regime, they aligned with the campaigns for reform that were prevalent when the *History* was eventually published early in the following decade.

⁸³ Ibid., sig. A3v.

⁸⁴ Milton, *England's Second Reformation*, p. 39; P. Lake, 'Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice', in *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, eds. R. Cust and A. Hughes (London, 1989), pp. 86-122.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 294.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 101.

Imparting ‘holy meditations’: Walker on human sociability, dominion, and preaching in Gen. 2

Walker’s *History* meditates on the earliest period of sacred history narrated in Genesis, which took place before the Fall. This part of the Bible’s opening book describes the creation of humanity in God’s image, mankind’s original state of innocence, and the establishment of the natural order and of the relationship between humans and God through the latter’s divine commands—before sin entered the world. Walker was able to use verses from this part of Genesis to criticise the contemporary authorities, by contrasting their actions—such as ungodly marriage, bodily mutilation, and other unscriptural acts—with the divine instructions supposedly issued when the world was still in a state of created perfection. More than that though, Walker could ground his own positive conclusions about how the church ought to be on the basis of direct revelation from God, given at a time before any human traditions were established or corruption took root. In particular, the *History* showed how verses from Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 could support an emphasis on preaching, as the necessary means to communicate God’s Word and to restore and sustain the godly life for which humanity was originally created.

Since language and naming (Gen. 2:19-20) originated prior to sin, for Walker, preaching aligned with God’s original design for human communication and community.⁸⁷ Walker interpreted Genesis’s early chapters as meaning that natural sociability and communication were divinely ordained, thus framing preaching and godly conversation as natural, as well as Christian, acts. Since the *History* did not extend beyond Chapter 2, Walker—unlike the expositors already discussed in this thesis—was not led to comment on the naturalness (or not) of performing other aspects of religious practice, such as sacrifices, which later episodes in Genesis, like the story of Cain and Abel, invited reflection upon. Thus, Walker maintained his

⁸⁷ R. Lewis, *Language, mind and nature: artificial languages in England from Bacon to Locke* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 111-28.

audience's focus on an interpretation of the church in Genesis that was characterised by preaching.

Whilst meditating on the fact that Adam could not find a suitable companion amongst the birds and beasts he had named, Walker concluded from Gen. 2:19-20 that mankind was created innately sociable, since only other human beings were worthy companions for a human made in God's image.⁸⁸ In fact, he went even further by claiming that

God made man a *sociable creature*, to delight in humane society, and hath given him a mouth and tongue to speake his minde to others, who can with reason hear and understand him. Hee who will follow Christ must not looke on his owne things, but on the things of others; and must impart all his holy meditations to as many as hee can, if hee hath any in him.⁸⁹

Here, Walker blended an exegesis of Gen. 2:19–20 with a jointly scholastic, Aristotelian, and Ciceronian theme: mankind's natural sociability and the role of language in uniting individuals into a community.⁹⁰ In this instance, however, Walker also gave language's unifying function an evangelical twist. He suggested that a Christian must 'impart...holy meditations to as many as hee can', and he grounded this imperative in the natural human capacity for speech. This view justified his own sermonising, supported the Puritan commitment to preaching God's Word, and affirmed the value of godly conversation more broadly. Moreover, by associating the Christian duty to evangelise with an innate human disposition towards socialising and communicating, Walker implicitly portrayed those who sought to suppress preaching as not only unchristian, but unnatural too.

Meanwhile, emphasising human sociability also enabled Walker to criticise two stock enemies of the godly. On the one hand, he lambasted 'degenerate' courtiers and other nobles who set their 'delight on dogs, horses, hawkes, and hounds more than...the company of men',

⁸⁸ Walker, *history*, p. 195.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics* (Oxford, 2020), ll. 1253a; M. Cicero, *On the Orator, Books I & II*, trans. E. Sutton and H. Rackham (London, 1942), p. 25.

and on the other he denounced ‘the beastly dotage of many Romish Saints, and...Monkes, and Anachorites...who count it an high point of perfection to live in caves, and dennes, and cottages in the wilderness remote from all humane society’.⁹¹ Walker’s insistence on the naturalness of godly conversation and evangelising was simultaneously a rebuke to aristocratic moral degeneracy and Catholic counsels of perfection regarding monastic vows.⁹²

Elsewhere in the *History*, Walker returned to the importance of preaching the Gospel whilst discussing Gen. 1:28-30. He reflected on the import of God granting the ‘Sons of *Adam*’ dominion over the earth, beginning with the statement that ‘it is Gods will revealed from the beginning, and his ordinance and law given in the creation, that the Earth and every part of it should bee free for any man to possesse and inhabit it, untill it bee fully replenished with so many men as are able to subdue it by eating up the fruit thereof’.⁹³ Walker seems to have spent considerable time explaining this concept to his congregation, in order to uncover all of its doctrinal implications.⁹⁴ There was one particular question and ‘case of conscience’ that arose from Gen. 1:28-30 and the idea of dominion that Walker was especially keen to address, however: ‘whether it bee lawfull, to send people, and to plant colonies in the vast countries of the west-Indies, which are not replenished’.⁹⁵ Earlier it was noted that Walker lent his support to a petition calling for an English missionary project in North America.⁹⁶ Unsurprisingly, therefore, he was keen to find justification for preaching and the planting of colonies using Genesis, and specifically by deploying the concept of dominion.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Walker, *history*, p. 195.

⁹² S. Mortimer, ‘Counsels of Perfection and Reformation Political Thought’, *HJ* 62/2 (2019), p. 311.

⁹³ Walker, *history*, pp. 222-23.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-33.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁹⁶ Webster, *Godly clergy*, p. 233.

⁹⁷ I am grateful to Prof. Gabriel Glickman for directing me to a later deployment of this argument, in S. Sewall and E. Rawson, *The Revolution in New England Justified* (Boston, 1691), p. 13.

Walker began by reminding his congregation that God had instructed Adam and his sons to replenish and subdue the earth. It followed from this, he argued, that any land currently unoccupied and replenished (according to Walker at least)—such as the West Indies—could legitimately be planted according to natural law, that is, ‘the law, which God gave in the creation’.⁹⁸ The idea that so-called vacant land could be occupied by the ‘first taker’ can of course be traced to discussions of *occupatio* [occupation] in Roman Law, and there was an analogous notion embedded within the Common Law argument that ‘if there be a new and uninhabited country found out by English subjects, as the law is the birthright of every subject, so wherever they go, they carry their law with them, and therefore such new found country is to be governed by the laws of England’.⁹⁹ Both theories rested on the assumption that land which belongs to no-one becomes the property of the ‘first taker’ according to natural reason.¹⁰⁰ Regardless of which juridical well-spring he was drawing from, Walker explained that subduing land required bringing it ‘under culture and tillage’; this notion that agricultural productivity denoted ownership, that use generated property rights, was a widely attested legal common-place.¹⁰¹ No land that had been subdued and replenished in this way, thought Walker, could be legitimately taken from its inhabitants. The only exception to this rule was if God had provided a special ‘*commission and warrant*’, and Walker cited the example of the Israelites invading the land of the Canaanites as an example here.¹⁰² Walker’s blending of legal and theological discourses here once again reminds us of the two disciplines’ interdependence in early modern intellectual culture.

⁹⁸ Walker, *history*, p. 223.

⁹⁹ Justinian, *The Digest of Justinian*, vol. 4, ed. A. Watson (Philadelphia, 2011), Book. 41, Ch. 1, Art. 3; E. Coke, *The Reports of Sir Edward Coke*, vol. 4, eds. J. Thomas and J. Fraser (1826), p. 30.

¹⁰⁰ Justinian, *Digest*, vol. 4, Book. 41, Ch. 1, Art. 3.

¹⁰¹ Walker, *history*, p. 223.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

If there was an argument for plantation rooted in natural law, Walker felt that there was an even stronger claim to be made for those ‘true Christians’ who ‘bring the Gospell of salvation and word of life among them’.¹⁰³ By ‘a second right of Christ’, said Walker, godly colonists had the right to subdue and replenish the land in the New World they claimed, and a duty to ‘endeavour to convert them [indigenous peoples] to Christ by the preaching of the Gospell, and to make them partakers of the blessing in him the promised seed’.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Walker contended that these missionaries ‘deserve to bee received with all honour of those savages who come by this meanes to *owe themselves to them*’.¹⁰⁵ According to Walker, then, in a Christian context the concept of dominion was bound up with preaching—to replenish the earth was a spiritual, as well as an agricultural and biological injunction.¹⁰⁶

This argument for colonisation and preaching is in keeping with the expansionist vision of the godly Protestant church that Walker promotes throughout the *History*. Moreover, that conception of the church was shared by the godly peers to whom Walker dedicated his work, and this particular passage may have been written with his dedicatees in mind. Jeremy Fradkin notes that the Earl of Warwick and his allies in Parliament—Saye & Sele, Brooke, Sir Gilbert Gerrard, and several others—had pursued a ‘militant confessional program of English colonization’ across the Atlantic in the decades prior to the Civil Wars.¹⁰⁷ Through the Providence Island Company (hereafter P.I.C.), Warwick and the others sought to profit from the labour of African and indigenous slaves on their sugar plantations in the West Indies, whilst simultaneously advancing ‘evangelical imperatives’ in the shadow of nearby Spanish Catholic territories.¹⁰⁸ Crucially, the activities of the P.I.C. and other godly ventures overseas operated

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ See the discussion of ‘planting’ in the forthcoming work by A. Ryrie, *The World's Reformation: How Protestantism Became a Global Religion* (New Haven, 2026).

¹⁰⁷ J. Fradkin, ‘Profitable settlements: the earl of Warwick and toleration in the English Atlantic, 1643–8’, *Historical Research* 96/274 (2023), p. 489.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 493.

beyond the reach of Charles' Personal Rule. Indeed, colonies in Bermuda and New England even provided sanctuaries for Protestant nonconformists, who could aid in the expansion of Reformed Protestantism whilst evading Laud's clutches—Warwick regarded non-conformity as a natural by-product of godly zeal rather than as an existential threat to the English church.¹⁰⁹ Walker's justification of planting colonies and of preaching overseas on the basis of his reading of Gen. 1 can thus be read as supporting Warwick's initiative. Arguably, it could also be said that his vision for a preaching church, which did not rely upon the magistrate's leadership and was not tied to a particular national community, was being enacted in the New World thanks to the support and investment of several godly grandees.

By appealing to the authority of scripture alone and through drawing on two specific passages in Genesis (1:26 and 1:28-30), Walker provided his congregation with a thoroughgoing justification of preaching as an essential component of religious communities and Christian duty. Given the timing of Walker's original delivery, his comments could not help but be a reflection on the restraints on preaching, and on the related practice of lecturing then being imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities through the withholding of licences. However, when read in the context of the *History's* publication Walker's suggestions about preaching read as recommendations, as do the comments on the payment of ministers that are discussed in the following section.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 491.

‘the quit-rent which God requires’: Tithes, sacrilege, and the maintenance of the ministry in *The history of the creation*

Godly arguments for the propagation of the Gospel via a preaching-oriented church were necessarily accompanied by justifications for the maintenance of preachers and ministers, and Walker’s *History* exemplified this logic. Building on his assertion that preachers have been needed since the creation of humanity, and following an extended discussion of dominion and its various forms in relation to Gen. 1:28–30, Walker directed his congregation’s attention to a scripturally-derived argument in defence of tithes, drawn from the same passage and from the underlying doctrinal principle it implied regarding God’s absolute sovereignty over mankind.¹¹⁰ In this section, Walker’s Genesis-inspired case for the compulsory payment of tithes is elaborated in relation to the debates over methods (and even the propriety) of maintaining the ministry in the 1630s and 1640s.

Historians have noted an important shift in the tenor of discussions over tithes between the 1630s and the early part of the 1640s, one which saw increasingly vocal concerns over the scourge of sacrilege (the lay impropriation of church property for what ministers took to be nefarious ends) raised by ministers across the Church’s political spectrum, not just those clergy allied with Laud.¹¹¹ Hence, the ways in which Walker’s discussion of tithes could be construed also shifted between the point at which they were first uttered and when they were printed. In the early 1630s, Walker would surely have been dismayed by the Court of Exchequer’s move to close down the Feoffees for Impropriations, a lay godly initiative that sought to appropriate church wealth ‘for the benefit of another religious activity’—namely, the maintenance of godly preachers.¹¹² The criticism of impropriation in his sermons was certainly not directed at the

¹¹⁰ Walker, *history*, p. 231.

¹¹¹ A. Milton, ‘Sacrilege and compromise: court divines and the king’s conscience, 1642–1649’, in *The Experience of Revolution in Stuart Britain and Ireland*, eds. D. Smith and M. Braddick (Cambridge, 2011), p. 136; Maltby, ‘Sacrilege and the Sacred’, p. 195.

¹¹² Maltby, ‘Sacrilege and the Sacred’, p. 207.

Feoffees, then, but rather at those amongst the gentry, and even the crown, who sought to line their own pockets through the opportunistic sale of church lands.¹¹³ Somewhat ironically, Laud and his supporters within the Church were also exercised by the issue of sacrilege and they too made strong claims about ecclesiastical patrimonial authority, as was discussed in Chapter 5.

During the 1640s, however, anti-clerical elements within the parliamentary alliance sought to eradicate the system of tithes and to replace it with a stipendiary model or to abolish the compulsory maintenance of the ministry entirely.¹¹⁴ As Judith Maltby and Anthony Milton have both recently shown, objections to this sacrilegious proposal came as much from godly clergy like Walker as they did from the exiled episcopalians who had once been their foes.¹¹⁵ The *History's* arguments in favour of compulsory tithes were still relevant in the 1640s then, and indeed they continued to be in the 1650s when the Cromwellian church retained the system of tithes at a national level in the teeth of fierce opposition.¹¹⁶

Walker began his argument for compulsory tithes by pointing out that whilst human beings enjoy dominion over the earth, they nonetheless owe everything they have to God's 'great *mercy, bounty and fatherly indulgence*'.¹¹⁷ Therefore, he reasoned, mankind perpetually owe God a 'quit-rent'.¹¹⁸ The term 'quit-rent' originally referred to a small, fixed payment made by a tenant to a landlord *in lieu* of services or labour otherwise owed, and it derived from medieval systems of copyhold and manorial land tenure. Walker resorted to this term, and several others derived from feudal discourse, whilst discussing the concept of tithes:

We have also a strong argument to prove this from the quit-rent which God requires, and men are bound to pay to God, and to whom hee assignes it in testimony of their homage, and that they possesse nothing, but of his gift as tenants at will, that is, the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Milton, *England's second Reformation*, p. 298.

¹¹⁵ Maltby, 'Sacrilege and the Sacred', p. 206; Milton, *England's Second Reformation*, pp. 298-99.

¹¹⁶ Alec Ryrie, 'The Myth of the Church of England', in *Contesting Orthodoxies in the History of Christianity: Essays in Honour of Diarmaid MacCulloch*, eds. A. Ryrie, A. Null, and E. Gebarowski-Shafer (Woodbridge, 2021), p. 170.

¹¹⁷ Walker, *history*, p. 232.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 231.

tythes of the fruite of the Land, and of the Cattell, and of all increase, all are the Lords quit-rent, and were paid to God by all the faithfull, even to his Priests and Ministers who Minister before him.¹¹⁹

Here, Walker described mankind's relationship to God using the analogy of a feudal landowner and a vassal tenant. Since everything humanity enjoys is a free gift given by the possessor of Creation, Walker points out that God requires a sign of homage from humanity. Indeed, he compared God to a landlord and deduced that it is 'justice in God...to cast men out of those houses and lands, and to deprive them of all their increase and revenues, for which they refuse to pay their due homage tythe and quit-rent to him, and to his Ministers and Servants'.¹²⁰

This employment of feudal discourse enabled Walker to render the abstract idea of mankind's debt to God tangible to his congregation, and by explaining the necessity of tithe payment with the aid of that same discourse, Walker was also able to pin his otherwise cosmopolitan conception of a Reformed church to a local, national context. Just as an English vassal owes quit-rent to stay in rightful possession of their land, so too does a Christian owe spiritual dues to God—such as faith, repentance, and obedience. Walker then explicitly drew out the point that this debt to God was partly remitted through '*tythes* of the fruite of the Land, and of the Cattell, and of all increase', which are paid to 'his [God's] Priests and Ministers'. This description directly described the ecclesiastical levy then in operation in England, which charged parishioners ten percent of their annual produce or income as a tithe. The proceeds from this instrument were (supposed to be) used to maintain the Church and its ministry, thereby furthering God's glory.

In the same part of this sermon, Walker lamented how God's gifts to mankind were not being used for the good of his Church. He warned his audience that we 'doe daily forfeit by not using them [God's bounty] aright, but abusing them, and neglecting to pay a tenth at least

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 232.

for our quit-rent to God...for the necessity of his Church and the maintenance of his truth'.¹²¹ The reference here to the 'maintenance of his truth' was a direct nod to the insufficient funding of godly preachers and lecturers. He laboured this point explicitly: 'I feare, and justly suspect, that if we examine our selves, few will bee found among us not deeply guilty...for sacrilegious detaining of tythes and due maintenance, which God hath separated to himselfe for the upholding of his publike worship, and the preaching of his word, and continuing of a learned and faithfull laborious ministry in his Church'.¹²² Walker laboured the point through his repeated references to sacrilege and the non-payment of tithes in his commentary on this part of Genesis. Through using feudal legal discourse as a hermeneutic for unpacking this verse, Walker not only interpreted scripture but also enacted a juridical recovery of the divine authority of tithes.

The clergy traditionally defended the collection of tithes and challenged the lay impropriation of church property using the divine revelations contained in scripture. Their opponents on this issue, who famously included the jurist and member of Parliament John Selden, denied that tithes were a divinely instituted practice. On the contrary, in his *History of Tithes* (1618), Selden deployed his historical and philological expertise to demonstrate that tithes were originally based on human, civil custom, and that consequently the magistrate might alter or abolish them whenever they wished.¹²³ In contrast, Walker's move to ground the concept of tithes in the most early period of sacred history allowed him to deny that any lay authority, such as Parliament, could impropriate or deny tithes. It is worth noting that Walker chose not to pitch his argument for tithing on the earliest scriptural event that was standardly invoked: Abraham's payment of a tithe to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20). This is possibly because the mysterious figure of Melchizedek, who was variously identified as a high king or priest,

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Toomer, *John Selden*, pp. 257-310; Milton, *England's Second Reformation*, p. 298.

was hardly a helpful archetype for Walker's ideal of the godly preacher. Incidentally, Selden would later deny the legitimacy of the comparison between Abraham's payment to Melchizedek and the contemporary tithe system in England.¹²⁴

In the years that followed the publication of Walker's Genesis sermons, the debate over tithes intensified. The system's opponents argued that tithes were a remnant of Jewish Ceremonial Law, and that as such they had been abrogated by Christ's new covenant with mankind. Therefore, they claimed, only voluntary contributions ought to be allowed now.¹²⁵ Ordained ministers, like Walker, fiercely opposed these arguments and maintained the necessity and legitimacy of tithe collection despite the fact that the local legal structures (e.g. church courts) that had previously enforced the payment of tithes were in abeyance.¹²⁶ Although, as Alec Ryrie has noted, the Cromwellian Church was 'a much looser and more permissive structure than loyalists to the Covenants [like Walker] wanted', it was nevertheless a national church. Compulsory tithes were continued as a means of funding parishes, there was a system of Triers, Ejectors and Trustees, and its doctrines and worship were stipulated—somewhat loosely—by national laws.¹²⁷ Walker's justification of tithes based upon a reading of Genesis remained relevant throughout the mid-seventeenth century, then.

¹²⁴ Toomer, *John Selden*, p. 258; Walker, *history*, p. 231.

¹²⁵ Milton, *England's second Reformation*, pp. 295-303.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹²⁷ Ryrie, 'The Myth of the Church of England', p. 170.

Genesis, the Church, and authority in Walker's *The history of the creation*

Through a close reading of Walker's *History*, this chapter has identified two key themes regarding the church and the minister's role that underlay Walker's reading of Genesis: namely, the centrality of preaching and the maintenance of a parochial system of tithes to fund the national ministry. Both arguments were underpinned by Walker's commitment to scripture as the sole religious authority. However, depending on whether one reads Walker's augmented sermons on Genesis in the context of their delivery (early 1630s) or the context of their publication (1641), his underlying commentary on the church appears in a different light. When he first delivered the sermons, Walker's emphasis on the preaching ministry and the authority of scripture alone was a direct rebuke to an ecclesiastical regime that was curtailing preaching and lecturing, and that rested its doctrine and practices on a combination of appeals to scripture, and non-scriptural forms of authority such as natural reason and tradition. However, by 1641 Walker's newly printed reading of Genesis served a different function: *The history of creation* was now a contribution to a lively public debate about the established Church's contested future. In this final section of Chapter Six, the discussion focusses on that latter context, and its argument relates Walker's conclusions about the church derived from Genesis to his desire to restrain heterodoxy, a threat that he had resisted throughout his career but which grew exponentially during the 1640s.

In the dedication attached to *The history of creation*, Walker referred to his parish congregation as 'mine owne peculiar flocke'.¹²⁸ A somewhat curious turn of phrase, it transpires that here Walker was engaging in some humorous word-play for the enjoyment of his readers; after all, he was clearly punning on the fact—already noted above—that St John the Evangelist was a peculiar of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Furthermore, Walker's playful

¹²⁸ Walker, *history*, sig. A2v.

pun takes on an added layer of significance if one contrasts the evident loyalty of at least some of his congregants with the treatment he had previously endured at the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities. The expression ‘Mine own peculiar flock’ has a genuinely affectionate ring to it and is reminiscent of a term of endearment, it suggests a warm relationship between minister and ministered. But the phrase also surely evinces Walker cocking a snook at his doomed ordinary, Archbishop Laud, who had sorely wished that this particular ‘flock’ were less enamoured with their troublesome minister than they were.

Paronomasia aside, Walker’s singular expression also invites reflection on his thoughts about the church at a local and a national level, in the context of England’s mid-seventeenth-century debates concerning ecclesiology. On the one hand, Walker was clearly able to work within the parochial and diocesan system. It was noted earlier that at the beginning of his career, he cultivated a working relationship with the Bishop of Ely, and he served the same London parish for almost all his career. Except for absences caused by illness, by imprisonment, and by nomination to the Westminster Assembly, Walker cared for his ‘flock’ from 1614 until his death in 1651—a remarkable thirty-seven or so years. Moreover, Walker’s defence of compulsory tithes and his emphasis on the importance of preaching indicates that he envisioned the church as a national as well as a local entity too. Whether it was governed by bishops or by a system of ministers and lay elders (Walker eventually favoured the latter), he was primarily concerned with ensuring discipline and with promoting orthodox doctrine.

On the other hand, though, Walker was also keen to supplement the parish system by promoting lay investment in lectureships. In his will, Walker bequeathed land in his birthplace of Hawkshead, Lancashire, to fund a perpetual lectureship there.¹²⁹ This reflects that fact that towards the end of his life, Walker was particularly concerned to establish lectureships in those

¹²⁹ Como, ‘Walker, George’, *ODNB*.

regions ‘most barren and destitute of meanes to maintayne the preaching of the Gospell’.¹³⁰ This initiative, which prefigured later plans for the propagation of the Gospel at the end of the 1640s and under the Humble Proposals (1651), was made possible by the dramatic improvement in his circumstances which occurred after the calling of the Long Parliament, a turn of events that is narrated by Walker’s will.

Comprised of two parts—Walker’s original testament, which dates to around the time of his captivity and illness in 1638, and a ‘Codicill’ added approximately twelve years later—the will initially describes the impoverished circumstances Walker endured whilst close to death in the late 1630s: ‘for my worldlie goodes and earthlie substance I have none proper to my selfe my poore benefice being taken from mee and my Livelyhood wasted by the charges of my Close Imprisonment’.¹³¹ Yet the codicil subsequently narrates Walker’s liberation, his recovery from ill-health, and his enjoyment of ‘Twelve yeares more’, which gave him ‘health strength and abilitie to exercise my publique ministrey over mine owne flock and to bee serviceable in the more Common and publique affaires of the Church in the meane tyme blessing mee with some addition to my outward estate’.¹³² Walker’s recovery meant he could go on to greater things, which included encouraging ‘divers godlie and well affected persons to contribute good large sum[m]es of money toward the purchasing of perpetuities, out of howses and Lands for the mainteynance of preachers for ever’.¹³³ In other words, in the 1640s Walker was able to realise some of his ambitions for the church that he had outlined in his Genesis sermons.

Walker’s will also provides an insight into the anxieties that lay beneath his project of establishing lay-funded lectureships, and they were the same fears that had pursued him

¹³⁰ TNA PROB 11/220/164, f. 128v.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, f. 127r.

¹³² *Ibid.*, ff. 127r-128v.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, f. 128r.

throughout his career. Written at a time when he was gravely ill, the original testament began with an unusually detailed statement of the author's doctrinal beliefs concerning salvation and regeneration through election. Although brief, formulaic expressions of doctrinal commitment were a common feature of early modern wills after the Reformation, Walker's theological digression was unusual in its length.¹³⁴ Moreover, whilst Walker was asserting the doctrine of free justification by grace alone in some detail, he warned against a belief in 'the righteousness of our owne workes as Papists teach nor by the Act of our owne faith accepted for righteousness to Justificac[i]on as the Socinian heretiques teach'.¹³⁵ It seems that even at death's door in 1638, Walker refused to climb down off his theological soapbox. However, the events of the 1640s would prove that Walker's concerns over soteriological heterodoxy were justified, and that a national system of lectureships was needed more than ever.

The breakdown of the so-called 'Calvinist consensus' in England's mid-seventeenth century has been repeatedly discussed in the historiography.¹³⁶ For clergy of Walker's ilk, this theological travesty was proof of the need for a well-funded, disciplined, and formally trained ministry, which was highly skilled in disputation and the art of preaching. During debates in the Westminster Assembly, Walker characteristically pressed his fellow divines to take a hardline against those who promoted heretical views, and he insisted upon the need for uniformity within the national church.¹³⁷ His position was entirely aligned with the views he had expressed early in his career when he had gone after Wotton, Chibald, and Bradshaw. More significantly for this chapter, his stance is also consistent with his sentiments about the church expressed in his pre-Civil War Genesis sermons. If Walker's *History* was read in the context in

¹³⁴ J. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae', *JEH* 40/1 (1989), p. 19; E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (London, 1992), pp. 505-23.

¹³⁵ TNA PROB 11/220/164, f. 127r.

¹³⁶ E.g., Vernon, *London Presbyterians*, pp. 242-3; A. Ollerton, *Crisis of Calvinism in revolutionary England, 1640-1660: Arminian theologies of predestination and grace* (Woodbridge, 2023).

¹³⁷ Van Dixhoorn and Wright, *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly*, vol. 2, p. 148.

which it was printed, then, its establishment of preaching and tithes on the authority of Genesis's scripture no longer functioned as critique, but as a proposal for a church founded upon the earliest sacred history of all that gained considerable traction in the mid-seventeenth century.

Genesis and the godly church

In Walker's hands, the first two chapters of Genesis became a means of simultaneously criticising the persecuting pre-Civil War authorities and of promoting godly ideals of a church built around a tithe-funded preaching ministry. Far from being a set of anodyne sermons that were later augmented by their author, the *History* was a polemical text, and Walker was prudent to withhold his notes from the print licencing authorities during the 1630s. When the *History* emerged in print in 1641, it joined the chorus of voices calling for a renewed reformation in the Church and contesting a range of alternative future models of religious community derived from 'the Word of God' and the example of the 'best Reformed churches'.¹³⁸

Looked at from a longer-term perspective, Walker's interest in Genesis as a critical resource that was also useful for justifying a national church centred around a godly preaching ministry echoes another work already discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis: Andrew Willet's *Hexapla in Genesin* (1605). A brief reflection on this common pattern of interpretation and its implications for understanding Genesis's multifaceted role in early-seventeenth-century godly ecclesiological thought will serve as a conclusion to this chapter.

First, it ought to be noted that nowhere in the *History* does Walker explicitly cite Willet. Indeed, as part of his strategy of presenting scripture as an absolute authority in and of itself, he rarely cites any external authority at all. Secondly, the two men were writing in distinct contexts. Yet, there are obvious similarities between the circumstances in which they invoked Genesis. Both Willet and Walker conformed to the established church but strove to reform it from within, both belonged to the godly community but were able to work with (some of) the bishops, and both envisaged the church in terms of a body of well-supported preaching

¹³⁸ Webster, *Godly clergy*, p. 233.

ministers. We are talking about a shared pattern of interpretation, then, as opposed to a conscious intellectual tradition.

Indeed interestingly, Willet and Walker used different parts of Genesis in order to ground their similar godly visions of the Church in early sacred history. Whereas Willet pitched his argument on the example of the Old Testament Patriarchs, Walker delved deep into pre-Lapsarian history. A possible explanation for this difference is that in the 1630s, Walker, unlike Willet, could not hope to appeal to the king, nor his courtiers, nor his most senior prelates to act as ‘honourable fathers’ and to enact reformation like the Patriarchs had once done. So Walker turned instead to two principles derived from the very earliest moments of human history: the idea that God had created mankind with an ability and a duty to impart their ‘holy meditations’ to one another, and the idea that because mankind was created by God alone, they owed him ‘quit-rent’. Using these ideas Walker justified preaching and tithes and placed the responsibility on godly individuals—those ‘who will follow Christ’—to enact both. This more self-sufficient argument was appropriate for a minister serving in a hostile church, who could not rely upon the ecclesiastical hierarchy to support his endeavours. But it also suited the subsequent period when that hierarchy was entirely dissolved without a clear replacement. Walker’s industriousness in the 1640s reflects his sense that a church was a community of godly individuals that was defined by a shared commitment to doctrinal orthodoxy, rather than by national boundaries, and which was held together by its preaching ministry and a supplement of lectureships, rather than by the magistrate’s spiritual example. Walker found in Genesis the origins of just such a church, and, as the final chapter will show, he was not alone.

Chapter 7 — ‘the societie of the faithfull professors and sincere sacrificers’: John Ley’s annotations on Genesis and the Church during the Civil Wars, c.1645

When the Long Parliament opened, John Ley (1583-1663) was a veteran prebend and the sub-dean of Chester Cathedral. He soon became president of Sion College and the thirteenth delegate called to the Westminster Assembly of Divines.¹ Additionally, he was invited by the chair of Parliament’s grand committee for religion (John White II MP) to contribute towards a new set of Bible annotations.² The *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament* (1645) was originally intended to accompany a re-issued Authorised Version as a new set of biblical ‘spectacles’, in the form of edifying marginal notes.³ However, due to the text’s size, upon completion it was published separately; the *Annotations* was subsequently revised and expanded for two later editions printed in 1651 and 1657.⁴ In contributing to this Civil War-era biblical project, the Warwickshire born and Oxford educated Ley collaborated with ‘several...celebrated Puritans’ as well as other conformists, including John Downham, Daniel Featly, Thomas Gattaker, William Gouge, Adam Pemberton, John Reading, and Francis Taylor.⁵ The group divided the Bible between them; it was decided that Ley would be responsible for the annotations on Genesis, as well as several other books.⁶

Until now, Ley has chiefly been remembered for his lengthy career in Cheshire as a Church of England minister, before and during the Personal Rule. In their study on gentry

¹ R. Greaves, ‘Ley [Leigh], John (1584-1662)’, *ODNB*; S. Roberts, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1640-1660 [Volume I]: Introductory Survey and Committees* (Woodbridge, 2023), p. 663.

² Anon., *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament* (1651), unfol., ‘THE PREFACE’; C. Burgess, *No Sacrilege Nor Sinne To Aliene or Purchase the Lands of Bishops or Others, Whose Offices are Abolished* (1659), pp. 87–8.

³ D. Lampros, ‘A New Set of Spectacles: The “Assembly’s Annotations”, 1645-1657’, *Renaissance and Reformation* 19/4 (1995), p. 44.

⁴ Anon., *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament* (1645), unfol., ‘THE PREFACE’.

⁵ B. Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, vol. 3 (London, 1813), p. 211, fn. †; R. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603-1689* (Boston, 2014), p. 122.

⁶ D. Neal, *The history of the Puritans, or Protestant nonconformist*, vol. 3 (London, 1736), p. 492.

culture in Cheshire on the eve of the Civil War, Richard Cust and Peter Lake describe Ley as an ‘archetypal moderate Puritan’.⁷ Their evidence for using this label is that Ley defined his religious politics in opposition to popery and anti-Puritanism on the one hand, and Puritan non-conformity on the other. A prominent figure in studies of the county’s early-seventeenth-century history, Ley campaigned against the region’s persistent Catholic recusancy and urged further reformation in the Church both locally and nationally. He opposed the Caroline Church’s ecclesiological reforms in a series of polemics concerned with Sabbath doctrine and altar policy, but he also colluded with his diocesan bishop to smooth over relations between the local ecclesiastical authorities and non-conforming preachers. Ley earned a reputation as a conforming godly saint bent on fostering a united front against the popish threat, albeit one who was also ardent for further reformation within the national church.⁸

Balancing godly zeal with political pragmatism, Ley adopted a Janus-like strategy in order to navigate the local and national religious politics of the pre-Civil War era. Indeed, Cust and Lake have shown that Ley engaged in polemical self-fashioning in his printed writings from this period, and he identified his position with a fictional ‘moderate centre’. This move relied upon Ley simultaneously ‘playing up the popish threat’ as well as the errors of Caroline Church reform, whilst occasionally soft pedalling his more radical views regarding the shared order of presbyters and bishops, regarding Sabbath observance, and regarding what he perceived to be the overly harsh treatment of zealous, if occasionally non-conforming, godly preachers.⁹

As a result of his careful manoeuvring, by the end of the Personal Rule Ley had cultivated and maintained friendships both with godly prelates and London’s Puritan

⁷ R. Cust and P. Lake, *Gentry culture and the politics of religion: Cheshire on the eve of civil war* (Manchester, 2021), p. 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-9; J. Ley, *Sunday a Sabbath, or, A preparative Discourse for discussion of Sabbatary doubts* (1641); *Idem.*, *A Letter (against the Erection of an Altar)*, (1641).

⁹ Cust and Lake, *Gentry culture*, p. 295.

network.¹⁰ Keen to avoid accusations of holding to Presbyterian ideas and of being a schismatic, Ley responded to the Root and Branch Petition (1640) by advocating for a national Church settlement centred upon a reduced form of episcopacy, a conciliatory solution akin to that promulgated contemporaneously by several ‘godly’ bishops (including, allegedly, Ley’s friend and correspondent Archbishop James Ussher).¹¹ At the same time, however, Ley was also vocally critical of Convocation, the infamous *et cetera* oath it issued in 1640 regarding the upholding of ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the other proposed Canons that threatened to set Laud’s reforms in stone.¹² Significantly, a number of Puritans who, like Ley, opposed the *et cetera* oath, later confessed that it was this specific issue that led them to consult Presbyterian authors and (in Anthony Milton’s words) to ‘think more searchingly about episcopacy’.¹³

During the Personal Rule, Ley’s ideological position can be fruitfully contrasted—as Cust and Lake have shown—with the stance taken by another prominent Cheshire figure, a gentleman-extraordinary of the Privy Chamber named Sir Thomas Aston, whose overtly anti-Puritan campaigns during the 1630s have previously been interpreted as a defence of the Caroline ecclesiastical *status quo* under Laud (by Lake and Cust), or, at the least, of unmodified episcopacy and of conformity to the Book of Common Prayer (by Judith Maltby and John Morrill).¹⁴ In contrast to Aston, Ley comprehensively repudiated the Caroline Church’s reforms and demanded further godly reformation, though he stopped short of demanding the abolition of episcopacy at this point.

¹⁰ Greaves, ‘Ley [Leigh], John’, *ODNB*.

¹¹ Cust and Lake, *Gentry Culture*, pp. 229-46, 289, 295; A. Milton, *England's second Reformation: the battle for the Church of England 1625-1662* (Cambridge, 2021), p. 119; J. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630-1660: county government and society during the English revolution* (London, 1974), p. 20.

¹² Milton, *England's Second Reformation*, pp. 94-6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁴ C.f., Cust and Lake, *Cheshire gentry*, p. 287, 313; J. Maltby, *Prayer book and people in Elizabethan and early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 130-80; Morrill, *Cheshire 1630-1660*, pp. 45-51.

However, by the time that the *Annotations* were printed Ley had moved both geographically and ideologically. Now living in London, he announced to the Westminster Assembly of Divines on 26 January 1644 that he regretted dedicating several of his early works to ‘bishops with glorious titles’.¹⁵ At that point he was also the President of Sion College, an institution that was then a stronghold of Presbyterianism in the capital.¹⁶ Moreover, Ley was also a prominent member of the Assembly, and, through his duties in the First Committee—wherein he was responsible for managing applications for vacant livings—he became immersed in the national debate over the future of England’s Church.¹⁷

How Ley’s ‘moderate Puritan’ stance evolved in the 1640s when he moved to London has received less scholarly attention, in comparison to his earlier activities in the North-West. Chad Van Dixhoorn has observed that ‘though some brought an episcopal-Presbyterianism to the Assembly at the outset, the creature eventually died’. Meanwhile, other divines arrived who were ‘against episcopacy but not for anything else in particular’. In both cases, gradually, the Presbyterian caucus within the Assembly ‘won them to a man’.¹⁸ Regardless of precisely which of these two categories Ley belonged to in the beginning, Van Dixhoorn’s analysis aptly describes the kind of ideological migration that ‘moderate Puritans’ of his stripe underwent when confronted with the fluid context of Civil War religious politics and, more specifically, with the failure of successive projects to prevent the gradual erosion of episcopacy. The question of what ecclesiological arrangement might replace it were bequeathed to Ley and his godly compatriots by events.

¹⁵ J. Lightfoot, *John Lightfoot's Journals of the Westminster Assembly*, ed. C. Van Dixhoorn (Oxford, 2023), p. 251.

¹⁶ R. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord: politics and religion in the Westminster Assembly and the ‘grand debate’* (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 228; E. Vernon, *London presbyterians and the British revolutions, 1638–64* (Manchester, 2021), p. 5.

¹⁷ Paul, *The assembly of the Lord*, p. 157, 182, 555.

¹⁸ C. Van Dixhoorn, ‘Unity and Disunity at the Westminster Assembly (1643—1649): A Commemorative Essay’, *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 79/2 (2001), p. 105.

The rest of this chapter contends that Ley's commentary on Genesis in the *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament* (1645), and the reflections on the nature of the church and religious authority therein contained, is a hitherto unstudied, yet important source for understanding how the veteran godly minister and 'moderate Puritan' responded to this question about the future of England's Church in the mid-1640s, and the religious politics that accompanied it. It will be suggested that Genesis, which, in Ley's words, narrates how in the time before Moses 'the Church was ordered without a written Law', was uniquely useful to him for thinking about the nature of the church and religious authority in this context.¹⁹ Here, Ley will be shown to have read off a set of general principles for the church in all ages from the Bible's opening book, which offered a means of uniting those divines who were concerned to preserve a godly national church in England that was free from tyrannical prelates and schismatic radicals. These axioms emphasised that the church was a body of individuals bound by a covenant to adhere to godly doctrine, to display a solemn outward worship, and to respect some form of church hierarchy.

Ley was writing in the midst of the Civil Wars, and he had sided firmly with Parliament as several explicit asides scattered throughout his annotations made plain. In his annotations on Genesis, he wrote of the 'sad condition of three Kingdomes at once all involved in most bloody and wofull confusion'.²⁰ For Ley, this sorry episode was a punishment for insufficient reformation; he commented that it was the result of 'Churches and States which rather professe

¹⁹ Anon., *Annotations*, XLIX, Col. 2, V 1.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, X, Col. 7, V. 25.

* The 1645 edition of the *Annotations*, which is cited throughout this chapter unless otherwise stated, was not paginated in the original printed text. However, the text was arranged in two vertical columns per page. Therefore, where necessary, each reference below to Ley's annotations on Genesis in the *Annotations* contains the chapter numbers for the section on Genesis provided in Roman numerals, followed by a column number (where Col. 1 is taken to be the column in which the chapter heading appears, and Col. 2. is either immediately to the right on the same page, or on the reverse—Cols. 3, 4, 5, etc. then follow on) and then a verse number.

the forme then practise the power of Evangelicall piety'.²¹ Moreover, Ley felt that the wars, 'may preach and presse the dutie of repentance and reall reformation with more precise caution against spirituall relapses'.²² Ley also bewailed the fact that 'the Kingdome loseth many loyall subjects, the Church many Christian Protestants'.²³ Furthermore, he prayed that 'the result of this rage redound to the ruine of the Antichristian combination, who first kindled, & have ever since fomented these fearfull combustions...the Popish party'.²⁴ Elsewhere, Ley denounced the 'parasites of secular princes'—this was possibly a barb aimed at the recently executed Laud and other Court prelates—who belonged to this anti-Christian faction, whilst he also proudly announced that 'All the creatures in heaven and on earth...are unto God, and under God that made them, as a great Hoste and Armie of souldiers under a Generall...and the weakest kinde of all...will make a puissant Army, and will prevaile against the proudest Tyrant'.²⁵ Ley's belligerent rhetoric here was reminiscent of a fast sermon on the themes of war and tyranny, which he had delivered before Parliament on 26 April 1643.²⁶ In that performance, which was subsequently printed under the title *The fury of warre, and folly of sinne* (1643), Ley exhorted the Protestant godly across the three kingdoms to set aside their differences and to unite in a just war against popery, so as to defend liberty and true religion.²⁷ This concern to knit together godly brethren also ran throughout Ley's annotations on Genesis.

Puissant or not, however, by 1645 there were growing divisions among the parliamentary alliance that were largely occasioned by ecclesiological disagreements—as the following section explains—and in his annotations Ley sought to bridge these divides through generating a mutually agreeable conception of the church based upon a reading of Genesis. For

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., I, Col. 3, V. 1; Ibid., II, Col. 1, V. 1.

²⁶ J. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English civil wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969), p. 69.

²⁷ J. Ley, *The fury of warre, and folly of sinne, (as an incentive to it) declared and applyed: for caution and remedy against the mischiefe and misery of both* (1643), pp. 32-3.

Ley, the foremost virtue of the conception of the church that emerges from his reading of Genesis was that it was not tied to any particular geographical area and therefore it could potentially unify the godly in all countries. Ley sought to use this non-geographical feature of the pre-Mosaic church to establish an ecclesiological common ground amongst the godly in the contemporary, a task which was urgent given that the Anglo-Scottish alliance founded upon the *Solemn League and Covenant* (1643) was fraying at the edges by the time the *Annotations* was first issued—a problem that was exacerbated by notable victories over the royalists on the battlefield at Marston Moor (in July 1644) and Naseby (in June 1645). Stressing this point in the midst of his annotations, Ley bemoaned how ‘we are subdivided into many factions in the State, and snipt out into many schismes in the Church: and what hatefull and horrid hostilities are reciprocated betwixt those who are brethren by Nature, Nation, and profession of Religion!’.²⁸ Urgently seeking a means of uniting godly individuals across the kingdoms, Ley derived a general vision of the church as a godly, covenanted community in his annotations that both Scottish and English readers could in theory accept, but he left room for the English Church to differ in some details from its sister Kirk north of the border by aligning it with ‘the word of God’, and not just with one of ‘the best Reformed churches’.²⁹ However, whether Ley’s irenic aims were actually possible given the Scots’ desire to see the English Church held to the standard set out in the *Solemn League and Covenant* is another question.

Additionally, Ley’s annotations on Genesis can be shown to have done more than simply generate general principles for a godly church that happened to be agreeable to both English and Scottish divines who adhered to the *Solemn League and Covenant*. Indeed, parts of Ley’s exegesis on Genesis in the *Annotations*, which are discussed in the latter half of this chapter, can be shown to have responded to two specific and related issues pertaining to

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Anon., *A solemn league and covenant for reformation and defence of religion* (1643), p. (6)v.

religious authority that actuated much of the period's religio-political debates: the role of the ordained clergy and of the magistrate (that is, the Crown-in-Parliament) in maintaining true religion.

Furthermore, how Ley used passages from Genesis to reflect on these pressing matters in the mid-1640s reveals a great deal about his ideological adaptation to the changes in England's religious and political landscape that were brought about by the outbreak of the Civil Wars. Whereas the Ley discussed in studies of pre-war Cheshire by Morrill, Maltby, Cust and Lake was compelled to fashion a 'moderate Puritan' identity by campaigning for further reform within the existing Church of England whilst distancing himself from Presbyterianism, the Ley who authored the Genesis annotations during his participation in the Westminster Assembly's debates contended for a continuation of the national church in the face of the growing threat of independency and in the absence of the pre-war Church settlement. Turning to the example of a church ordered 'without a written law', Ley can be shown to have used Genesis to stake out a claim for maintaining ministerial authority and status that was tied to the clergy's duty to interpret God's Word and to administer the Lord's Supper dutifully.

But whilst he was keen to limit lay intrusion into the clerical sphere, Ley's annotations also betray a desire to encourage respect for authority in general, and to promote the harmonious governance of the national church by magistrate and minister. Ley espoused these positions in the Assembly too, as part of the Presbyterian majority that confronted the Congregationalists. Various annotations by Ley on Genesis discussed below are shown to communicate his concerns on this issue through pejorative references to 'anabaptism', and through discussions of the Patriarchs' political duties.

There are significant resemblances between Ley's use of specific passages from the Bible's opening book for thinking about the nature of the church and religious authority, and

their use by individuals examined in earlier chapters of this thesis. Specifically, there are similarities with Andrew Willet and George Walker's interpretations of Genesis, who both shared Ley's desire to erect a godly national church. Observing similarities in these different individuals' use of Genesis is significant since it demonstrates continuities in how the Bible's opening book could be appealed to across the first half of the seventeenth century by godly clergy operating within discrete contexts. Thus, this chapter picks up one of the thesis's main strands at a later point in time by demonstrating how Genesis continued to be used to promote a godly vision of the national Church and of religious authority in the tumultuous years of the Civil Wars, a period that witnessed the *de facto* abolition of the very established Church that 'moderate Puritans' had contended for using the Bible's opening book for over half a century.

When ‘the Church was ordered without a written Law’: Placing Ley’s annotations within the religious politics of 1645

The minutes of the Westminster Assembly reveal that the *Annotations* were published no later than mid-September 1645. On 16 September, the gathered divines debated whether the printed text contained ‘some things...against the covenant & the votes of the Assembly’.³⁰ Six days later, Ley’s fellow delegate Herbert Palmer provided an update on the *Annotations* and reported that ‘the stationers desired that some animadversions may be made suddenly, and they promised to sell noe more till tomorrow’.³¹ By 25 September, Ley himself was in a position to reassure the Assembly that a suitable ‘Antidote prepared against the particulars complained of in the Annotations’ was in production.³²

The substance of the Assembly’s complaints is revealed in a brief ‘Advertisement’, which was hastily inserted into the first edition of the *Annotations* immediately after the preface, between 22-25 September 1645. The Advertisement sought to clarify the meaning of the new annotations on several verses and to show that their author may not ‘be thought to assert episcopacy with some prejudice to the *Truth*, and to the *Reformation of Church-Government* now in hand’.³³ Intriguingly, these annotations had all been composed by the recently deceased clergyman and biblicist Daniel Featley, who had never assented to the *Solemn League and Covenant* in its entirety, nor fully renounced episcopacy in his lifetime.³⁴ It seems unlikely then that Featley would have felt entirely comfortable with the Advertisement’s denunciation of ‘prelatical potentates’, and its claim that ‘The foundation of such a *Prelacy* is rotten’ and unscriptural.³⁵

³⁰ C. Van Dixhoorn and D. Wright, eds., *The minutes and papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652. Volume III, Minutes, sessions 199-603 (1644-1646)* (Oxford, 2012), p. 665.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 667.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 668.

³³ Anon., *Annotations*, sig. ¶.

³⁴ Neal, *History of the Puritans*, III, pp. 492-3; G. Salazar, *Calvinist Conformity in Post-Reformation England: The Theology and Career of Daniel Featley* (Oxford, 2022), p. 216.

³⁵ Anon., *Annotations*, sig. ¶; Salazar, *Calvinist Conformity*, pp. 223-27.

The posthumous attempt to clarify Featley's annotations in an explicitly anti-episcopal direction indicates the pressure felt by Ley and the other authors to conform their work to the majority Presbyterian opinion in the Assembly, given that the London Presbyterian movement had a stranglehold on press licences and the Stationer's Company at that moment.³⁶ On the look out for signs of dissent, one way for the Presbyterians to exert control was through scrutinizing printed works like the *Annotations* in the Assembly and encouraging their authors to assert Presbyterian positions *vis-à-vis* the national church.³⁷

Secondly, the last-minute clarifications that were made in response to the Assembly's criticisms of Featley's annotations demonstrate the ambiguous status of the *Annotations* as a quasi-official confessional document. It is important to remember that the 'Westminster Annotations' (as they have previously been referred to in the historiography) were initiated by Parliament. Indeed, the Non-Conformist divine Richard Baxter later noted that the Assembly did not commission the work, nor did they review or approve it, hence the *Annotations* 'cannot, upon any Account, be said to be theirs [the Westminster Assembly's]'.³⁸ Like the Assembly itself, which was technically a committee convened by Parliament—though many of its members preferred to regard it as a Synod—the *Annotations* were a political instrument for 'the perfecting of the reformation of' the Church.³⁹ Ranked alongside the provision of preaching, faithful biblical translations and accompanying expositions or annotations were considered to confer 'great benefit' on the people, since 'There are some things which are hard to be understood' in the scriptures.⁴⁰ As such, biblical annotations were a crucial ingredient in the ongoing cause of religious reformation and Ley's comments on Genesis must be read as a contribution to Parliament's efforts to reform the Church in the mid-1640s. Indeed, how Ley

³⁶ Vernon, *London Presbyterians*, p. 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ E. Calamy, *An Abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of his life and times* (1713), p. 86.

³⁹ J. White, *A speech of Mr John White* (1641), sig. B2v.

⁴⁰ Anon., *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. B3].

used Genesis to think about what the magistrate's role ought to be in reforming the Church will be discussed towards the end of this chapter. Evidently though, Ley also thought that the ordained clergy had their own particular role to play too in furthering England's reformation, which in part pertained to exercising an authority over scripture. Much earlier in his career, Ley wrote a defence of marginal annotations entitled *An Apology in Defence of the Geneva Notes on the Bible* (1612) at a time when England's monarch regarded them as a clerically engineered threat to his authority. Nonetheless, Ley and the other authors of the preface to the *Annotations* were keen to place their work within a venerable tradition of English biblical translation and commentary they constructed that stretched back to the earliest days of the Reformation and beyond.⁴¹

In commissioning a set of annotations to be read alongside the Authorised Version, White II's committee could be seen as trying to bridge the divide between the official Bible of the Church and the popular Geneva Bible.⁴² Certainly, the authors of the *Annotations* legitimised the committee's project by claiming that when it had originally launched the annotations initiative, the parliamentary committee for religion was responding to popular demand for such a product, which had previously led to 'divers of the Stationers and Printers of London' being 'induced to Petition the Committee of the Honourable House of Commons, for [a] Licence to Print the Geneva Notes upon the Bible, or that some Notes might be fitted to the new [Authorised] Translation'—James VI & I had of course famously prevented all but a few, brief textual notes from accompanying the Authorised Version when it was first published in 1611.⁴³

⁴¹ J. Ley, *An Apology in Defence of the Geneva Notes on the Bible* (1612); Anon., *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. B2-sig. C2].

⁴² Lampros, 'A New Set of Spectacles', p. 38.

⁴³ Anon., *Annotations*, unfol., [sig. B4]; M. Betteridge, 'The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and Its Annotations', *SCJ* 14/1 (1983), p. 47.

However, in producing their comments the authors of the *Annotations* were also exercising a particular kind of authority as semi-official exegetes, and they were appealing to a particular kind of Protestant identity. This was reflected in the *Annotations*' authors' choice of acknowledgements regarding the sources they drew upon when compiling the work. Though the authors collectively acknowledged the sixteenth-century English annotations that had been penned by several Marian exiles for the Geneva Bible as an influence upon their project, they also acknowledged a debt to the recently translated annotations of the Reformed Italian Giovanni Diodati (1643) and the Dutch *Statenvertaling* (1637).⁴⁴ The *Annotations* can thus be placed alongside other continental Reformed efforts to strengthen confessional orthodoxy in a time of religious war through producing authoritative biblical commentaries that took advantage of recent philological scholarship, which, as Dirk van Miert has shown, was being produced by continental Reformed scholars as well as their confessional rivals, to underpin doctrine.⁴⁵ After all, the *Annotations* were intended to be used by students and ministers and they served as a guide not only to scriptural meaning but also correct theology, which clergy could then preach to their congregations.

Aside from a general concern to align the English Church with the cause of international Reformed Protestantism, Ley and his fellow annotators' had a more particular desire to woo the Scottish Presbyterians, who were represented at the Westminster Assembly and whose forces were crucial to the Parliamentary war effort. The annotators' intention was announced early on in the preface that preceded the *Annotations*, which spoke fulsomely of the 'superabundant measure of Sacred and secular blessings, above other Nations' enjoyed in

⁴⁴ Anon., *Annotations*, 'The Preface', unfol.; Anon., *Annotations* (1651), 'An advertisement upon a certain clause in an Epistle prefixed before the Annotations of Mr. Diodati on the Bible', unfol.; J. Diodati, *Pious and Learned Annotations Upon the Holy Bible*, trans. R. G. (1651), 'To the Reader', unfol.; Anon., *Statenvertaling* (Leiden, 1637).

⁴⁵ D. van Miert, 'Making the States' Translation (1637): Orthodox Calvinist Biblical Criticism in the Dutch Republic', *Harvard Theological Review* 110/3 (2017), pp. 440-63.

Britain, thanks to the propagation of the Gospel—the ‘power and puritie of the meanes of Grace’—since the beginning of the Reformation.⁴⁶ The preface also expressed gratitude for the ‘long tranquillitie of Church and State...as (untill of late) have been continued to us’.⁴⁷ However, this somewhat sanitised reading of the kingdoms’ post-Reformation history was immediately qualified by the remark that this peace had not been ‘equally either pure or quiet in * both Kingdoms of great Britaine’. And a Latin scholion, indicated by an inline asterisk, drew the reader’s attention to the Scottish Kirk—in contrast to the Church of England—as being uniquely praiseworthy because ‘*unitatem cum puritate doctrina retinuerit*’ [it has maintained unity together with doctrinal purity].⁴⁸

By returning to Genesis and emphasising how the first church had been defined by its members’ shared zeal for godliness and its leaders’ distinguishing knowledge of God’s Word, Ley offered a model that all godly minded individuals intent on further reform within the national church could rally around. His interpretation of the nature of the church in Genesis constituted a positive response to the ambiguous state of England’s church in the mid-1640s. By the time that the *Annotations* were published in 1645 godly petitioning campaigns, which garnered significant support in Parliament, had severely wounded episcopal power. Indeed, an act of Parliament that would be passed in the following year, which authorised the sale of bishops’ lands in order to service a loan to the Scottish Covenanter army, seemingly confirmed the abolition of the pre-war established Church.⁴⁹ However, in reality, the sale of bishops’ lands remained a lever in negotiations with the King—in fact, unlike the Presbyterians, the Independent army grandees showed themselves to be willing to take a moderate line on

⁴⁶ Anon., *Annotations*, ‘The Preface’, unfol.; M. Braddick, ‘War and Politics in England and Wales, 1642–1646’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*, ed. M. Braddick (Oxford, 2015), p. 105.

⁴⁷ Anon., *Annotations*, ‘The Preface’, unfol.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Milton, *England's second Reformation*, p. 240.

episcopacy in return for significant concessions to Parliament.⁵⁰ Hence, the future contours of the Church remained mutable and contested.

But as the possibility of establishing a national settlement on the principle of reduced episcopacy diminished, Ley committed himself to ‘the *Reformation of Church-Government* now in hand’ and to helping to establish a Presbyterian national Church of England, which was allied to the Scottish Kirk, and that retained a definite hierarchical structure.⁵¹ During debates in the Assembly, Ley contended for preaching elders (ordained ministers) alone as having the authority to preach and exercise authority, as opposed to ruling elders (lay leaders elected by a congregation)—an indication of his desire to retain a formal hierarchy within the Church and preserve the distinction accorded to the ordained.⁵² Indeed, Ley engaged in a public dispute with the prominent congregationalist John Saltmarsh on this very matter.⁵³ Confronted by the growing phenomenon of gathered churches and the growth of religious sects in the mid-1640s, Ley was conscious of the need to show that religion and politics were always intertwined in a ‘societie of...faithfull professors and sincere sacrificers’.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ C.f., *The propositions presented to His Majestie at Newcastle* (Edinburgh, 1646); *The Heads of the Proposals* (1647).

⁵¹ Anon., *Annotations*, ‘An Advertisement’, unfol.

⁵² Greaves, ‘Ley [Leigh], John’, *ODNB*; C. Van Dixhoorn and D. Wright, eds., *The minutes and papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652. Volume II, Minutes, sessions 45-119, 155-198 (1643-1644)* (Oxford, 2012), p. 356.

⁵³ J. Ley, *The New Quere and Determination upon it, by Mr. Saltmarsh* (1646); Idem., *An After-reckoning with Mr. Saltmarsh* (1646).

⁵⁴ Anon., *Annotations*, IV, Col. 5, V. 11.

‘the societie of the faithfull professors and sincere sacrificers’: Genesis’s true church and the godly alliance during the Civil Wars

Echoing many Protestant commentators on Genesis before him, Ley observed near the beginning of his annotations that recording the earliest history of the church was Moses’s ‘principall purpose’ when he wrote the first book of the Pentateuch.⁵⁵ Unsurprisingly, therefore, what Genesis revealed about the founding principles of the true church was a prominent theme throughout Ley’s annotations. Importantly, the axioms that Ley drew from various scriptural passages contained in the Bible’s opening book had a direct appeal in contemporary debates about the contours of the national Church in the mid-1640s. Furthermore, Ley’s reading of the nature of the church in Genesis offered a means of building bridges between the English and Scottish Presbyterians by emphasising how, like ‘the church before the Law’, a religious community could be defined in terms of a covenantal promise to share in doctrine, solemn worship and discipline, rather than in terms of a homogenous form of ecclesiastical government.

One can find a clear expression of this godly ideal of the church amidst Ley’s annotations on the story of Cain and Abel, an episode which is narrated at the beginning of Gen. 4. In one of his annotations, Ley informed the reader that since the beginning the church had been ‘the societie of the faithfull professors and sincere sacrificers’.⁵⁶ In this revealing turn of phrase Ley identified the church’s membership with those godly individuals who were moved by the ‘inward operations of Gods Spirit’, and who sincerely professed their inner faith in outward signs of worship—these were the spiritual descendants of Abel, as opposed to Cain.⁵⁷ Hence, Ley felt able to claim that ‘true Religion is preserved in the persons of the

⁵⁵ Ibid., XI, Col. 2, V. 10.

⁵⁶ Ibid., IV, Col. 5, V. 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid., VI, Col. 1, V. 3.

godly'.⁵⁸ Underneath this statement was an unspoken assumption about who was actually a member of the true church. Rather than the church's earthly congregation extending to all the subjects of the commonwealth as the Elizabethan Settlement had implied and its defenders—such as Richard Hooker—had argued, Ley was of the godly opinion that the true church was comprised of the elect alone, who distinguished themselves from the rest of the earthly congregation as a 'holy race' thanks to their pious conversation, zeal for God's Word, and inward faith expressed through outward acts of piety.⁵⁹

According to Ley, in the time of Enosh described at the end of Gen. 4 it was Adam's descendants through Seth who constituted this saintly brethren, and the rest of the scriptures charted their church's persistence throughout sacred history in the face of persecution. Ley interpreted Gen. 4:26: '*then begann men to call upon the Lord*' in line with earlier Reformed expositors, such as John Calvin and Willet, while also adding an emphasis of his own. Ley explained that

in the time of Enosh men began, not to set up the profession of a Monasticall life (as some Papists would have it) or some speciall Sect of professions called *Enoshei*, or by contraction *Essena* or *Essai* (as some others); or that then men first began to call upon God by the Name *Jehovah*; (whereas before they called upon him by the Name *Elohim*, or *Adonai*) but then God moved mens hearts more sincerely to separate from the profane society of the wicked, (such as were the posteritie of Cain) to serve God, not as before in private families onely, but in more publique societies, and that in a more solemne manner, and with more zeale and boldnesse then in former times.⁶⁰

Ley's recapitulation of the standard Reformed interpretation of Gen 4:26 and his rejection of alternative Catholic interpretations of the verse allowed him to frame congregational membership in terms of adherence to the Word, and to espouse the importance of a visible, public, and yet solemn godly church. Like Willet and Calvin, Ley denied Enosh a special role in leading his family to call upon God so as to defuse a Catholic reading of the verse that

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, XXVIII, Col. 3, V. 19.

⁵⁹ Anon., *Annotations*, IV, Col. 2, V. 3. See P. Lake, 'Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635', *Past & Present* 114 (1987), p. 39 for a discussion of this ecclesiological distinction.

⁶⁰ Anon., *Annotations*, IV, Col. 7, V. 26.

pointed to Adam's grand-son as an archetypal priest figure with a special, higher knowledge of God's expectations. Later in his annotations, Ley made several references to a work entitled *De ecclesia ante legem* [Of the Church before the Law] (1626) by Jacques Boulduc and it seems that this work was one of the Catholic commentaries on Gen. 4:26 that Ley was opposing when he denied that in Enosh's time a 'speciall Sect...called...*Essena* or *Essai*' was set up as a priestly caste.⁶¹ Boulduc was a French Capuchin monk and his work *De ecclesia ante legem* examined pre-Mosaic sacred history with the aim of showing how antecedents for the Catholic Church's order, ritual, and ministry could be found before the giving of the Law.⁶² Ley had a clear motivation for dispelling Boulduc's reading of this verse.

Furthermore, Ley's exegesis on Gen. 4:26 also emphasised that the true church is comprised of 'publique societies', not just 'private families'. In making this distinction, Ley highlighted the need for a national, official public church as opposed to merely private gatherings—a point that reinforced the Presbyterian critique of the so-called 'gathered churches', which were strictly voluntary associations. But in his exegesis here Ley also drew out the limitations of arguments in favour of patriarchal authority over a religious community by suggesting that its leaders must also actively demonstrate godly zeal. Whilst Ley felt that authority within the church was natural, he wanted to make it clear that it was not merely inherited but rather it had to be earned; the church and its ministers must be visibly godly.

In the mid-1640s, this scriptural conception of the church, which Ley found in Genesis, would have been agreeable to English Presbyterian readers who favoured a godly, national organisation, and their Scottish allies too. After all, the *Solemn League and Covenant* had called for the English Church to be reformed in line with scripture, as well as the example of the 'best reformed churches', and it was the divine revelation contained in the former—interpreted of

⁶¹ Ibid., XLIX, Col. 9, V. 10; Ibid., L, Col. 2, V. 2.

⁶² J. Boulduc, *De Ecclesia ante legem* (Lyon, 1626) unfol., [sig. IVv].

course by the godly clergy of the latter—that alone was a source of religious authority.⁶³ Ley stated his point about the scriptural definition of the true church explicitly when he included the following remark in his annotations on the story of Noah’s Ark: ‘if we take the Arke for a type of figure of the Church...it may point us to a duty of importance in our Christian practise, viz. that none must be admitted into the Church, or excommunicated out of it, but for causes, and in a manner warrantable by the Word of God’.⁶⁴ This kind of typological argument reinforced Ley’s concern for a pure church—a congregation of visible saints, separated from the ungodly.

Repeated acts of covenanting in Genesis, between the Patriarchs and God or amongst earthly individuals, provided Ley with a means of crystallising this conception of the church as a godly community in his annotations. Moreover, his deliberate reference to ‘Covenanters’ in the midst of his exegesis was surely intended to draw the reader’s attention back to the present and to the need for the godly to maintain a united front against a common, ‘popish’ enemy. For instance, whilst analysing Genesis’s account of God’s covenant with Abraham and the animal sacrifice that the latter made in acknowledgement of this agreement, Ley explained how the Patriarch’s symmetrical arrangement of the offerings on the altar symbolised the correspondence and harmony of the parties engaged in an act of covenanting: ‘The creatures were divided, and the parts so placed that the parties covenanting might passe betwixt them...the meaning whereof was, that as part answered to part (for they were so to be laid that the parts might be answerable to each other) so the minds of the Covenanters should be set in a mutuall correspondence’.⁶⁵ The sentiment behind this analysis would not have been lost on Ley’s contemporary readers.

⁶³ Anon., *A solemn league*, p. (6).

⁶⁴ Anon., *Annotations*, VIII, Col. 4, V. 16.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, XV, Col. 2, V. 10.

However, if Ley wanted to use a discussion of the early covenants in Genesis to remind his readers of the common bonds between the godly parties allied during the Civil Wars, he also regarded these episodes as an opportunity to re-assert the distinction between friend and foe, or, in other words, to define the boundaries of the true national church. Covenant breakers, he remarked, who continue in their ‘contumacie’, deserve ‘to be cut off from all communion of the Saints both on earth, and in heaven’.⁶⁶ Here, the pejorative label ‘Covenant breaker’ was a general term for miscreants in the community who acted in immoral ways. But it was also surely a more specific euphemism for all those in the present who threatened the reformation demanded by the *Solemn League and Covenant*, either through their defence of tyrannical prelacy, or through their separation from the national church. As if to confirm this point, Ley airily noted during a discussion of Isaac’s troubles with the Philistines that ‘The hatred of the Religious, and breaking covenant with them by the wicked, is very ancient’.⁶⁷ Here, events in Genesis and in the contemporary were once more drawn tightly together in Ley’s annotations.

In summary, Genesis provided Ley with scriptural evidence that since the beginning the true church had been defined by its visibly godly, covenanted membership, by each individual’s shared commitment to following God’s Word, and by a solemn form of worship. Together, these principles formed a broad framework upon which to found a vision for England’s Church in the mid-1640s that he believed ought to meet with approval across Reformed Protestant Europe, and most especially amongst the Scottish Covenanters. However, Ley also wanted to show that Genesis—and the vision of the church he derived from it—could be used more specifically to engage with Civil War-era debates about the authority of England’s ministers and their distinctive role in maintaining the kingdom’s true church.

⁶⁶ Ibid., XVII, Col. 3, V. 14.

⁶⁷ Ibid., XXVI, Col. 2, V. 15.

‘a chiefe member of the Church...might...give good documents, and instructions’: The Patriarchs’ ministerial authority

Referred to by R. S. Paul and other scholars as the ‘Grand Debate’, the Westminster Assembly’s disputations over the nature of ecclesiastical authority and the relationship between church and state were some of the lengthiest and most controversial in the institution’s entire history.⁶⁸ As well as the divisive question of church-government, the ‘Grand Debate’ also raised the related issues of the nature of ministerial authority, and to what extent it was susceptible to oversight by Parliament.⁶⁹ These matters carried high stakes, since as the war progressed they were increasingly a cause of division between the Scottish Covenanters loyal to the fiercely independent Kirk and their English Parliamentary allies. Moreover, ministers like Ley were also concerned by the dual threat to clerical authority that came from the arguments of the Erastian lawyers in Parliament and the congregational equality manifested in the newly emerging ‘gathered’ churches. This combination of claims for lay oversight in ecclesiastical affairs and the undermining of the minister’s traditional status as a leader in the church demanded a response from clergy concerned to protect their existing privileges. Ironically, only a few years earlier ministers like Ley had been fiercely critical of prelatical tyranny, now though they were compelled to justify their own place within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In Ley’s annotations, one can find these tensions emerging in the discussion of episodes in Genesis when religious authority is displayed through certain practices. Specifically, Ley’s comments on examples of sacrifice, on preaching, and on Melchizedek’s presentation of bread and wine to Abraham reveal his desire to distance ministerial authority from altar worship and the legacy of the Caroline Church on the one hand, but on the other hand to insist on the value

⁶⁸ Paul, *The assembly of the Lord*, *passim*.

⁶⁹ C. Van Dixhoorn, ‘Politics and religion in the Westminster assembly and the ‘grand debate’’, in *Insular Christianity: Alternative models of the Church in Britain and Ireland, c.1570–c.1700*, eds. R. Armstrong and T. Ó hAnnracháin (Manchester, 2013), pp. 144-5.

of the minister as a preacher of God's Word and as the administrator of the Eucharist. In relation to the latter points, Ley used his Genesis annotations as an opportunity to argue for the continuation of tithes payments and the maintaining of the ministry on the grounds that ministers possessed a peculiar authority to interpret the scriptures and to conduct godly worship. Hence, Ley's annotations can be shown to have responded to pressing contemporary questions about ministerial authority in a way that would have appealed to Presbyterian clergy (Scottish as well as English) who were concerned by the possible erosion of their status, but who wished to avoid the suggestion that 'New Presbyter' was 'but Old Priest writ Large', as the republican poet John Milton memorably claimed.⁷⁰

An exegetical challenge that Ley had to overcome when compiling his annotations on Genesis was the recurrence of altar building scattered throughout it. As Chapter Five demonstrated, the verses that featured altar worship were used in the 1630s as justification for a ceremonial and sacramental ecclesiology, wherein the authority of the clergy was tied closely to their role as the co-ordinators of public rituals that all the kingdom's subjects were obliged to participate in. Ley's annotations reveal a concern to distance the reader from such interpretations by arguing that whilst the making of altars, the performance of sacrifices, and the dedication of physical spaces to worship was undoubtedly a feature of religion in Genesis, they were not essential to contemporary religion. In stressing this point, Ley continued his campaign of repudiating the Caroline Church, which had recently been demolished.

One way in which he did this was by emphasising that a 'church' was first and foremostly a gathering of godly individuals, and only secondarily a physical space. As the previous section outlined, Ley was keen to generate a conception of the church from Genesis that emphasised the unity of the godly as a covenanted people, rather than the entire community

⁷⁰ J. Milton, 'On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament', in *Poems, &C. Upon Several Occasions* (1673), p. 69.

convening at a particular place to engage in public worship. Analysing Jacob's words, Ley wrote: 'By *Gods house* then we are not to understand a Church, (for there were no such houses in those dayes) nor a place of any great capacitie or receipt; but a place of worship; which place might be an Altar...as the principall part of it'.⁷¹ Whilst he did not deny that Jacob had built altars as places of worship, and whilst he admitted that since Adam's time sacrifices had been offered on them, he explained to the reader that 'the principall part of mans devotion to God consist in his heart, yet there must be some evidence of it by externall service, whereby it may appeare to others that we account God worthy of open worship, and his mercies and favours worthy of monuments of remembrance'.⁷² However, outward actions could take many forms and a living sacrifice need not involve an altar or a priest.

Ley handled the instances of a 'grove' being set aside for worship by Jacob in a similar fashion. He described it as 'a place by him set apart for performance of the exercises of pietie, prayer, and sacrifice'.⁷³ By widening the range of possible actions that might constitute a living sacrifice to God, and by denying that the presence of an altar was necessary for such acts, Ley presented a different interpretation of forms of worship in Genesis to that offered by defenders of the Caroline Church. This can be seen clearly in his treatment of the story of Cain and Abel's worship, for example, which disarmed the episode of any suggestion that a priest might be needed as a mediator between the believer and God:

Cain brought] It is not said to whom or what; whether to Adam as the Priest of the Family, or to the place (which, it is like, was certain) where the Sacrifices were to be offered up unto God; for though in after-time the Father of the Family was the Priest to the Church in his house, and in his stead the first-born had the Priest-hood as a part of his birth-right; yet it may be at this time indifferently supposed, either that both brought their sacrifice to their Father on earth to be offered to their Father in heaven, or that each of them did by himselfe offer up his own oblation.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Anon., *Annotations*, XXIII, Col. 4, V. 22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, XII, Col. 2, V. 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, XXI, Col. 5, V. 33.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, Col. 2, V. 3.

By speculating that in the time of Genesis offerings could be made individually, not necessarily via the priesthood, Ley rejected the kind of gloss put on this passage by divines like Lancelot Andrewes who had wanted to insist on this biblical episode as the oldest instance of public oblations overseen by a priest.⁷⁵ According to Ley, in the time of Genesis anyone could perform sacrifices both in public and in private. In turning the spotlight away from altar worship and sacrificial offerings in early sacred history, Ley was consciously repudiating the associated ideas of the church and of religious authority that defined the Caroline Church. Instead, he emphasised the importance of a godly gathering, who shared a commitment to outwardly expressing their faith in God, and in so doing he worked out a different way to assert ministerial authority.

By insisting that God's revealed Word alone was the authority that defined membership of the church (as opposed to reason or tradition), Ley staked out a claim for the religious authority of ministers like himself as learned interpreters of scripture, who also possessed a calling to preach as long as they enjoyed a godly reputation. This argument was prescient at the time of the *Annotations*' publication since the London Presbyterian movement was using its control over print media, and its influence in institutions such as Sion College and the Westminster Assembly, in order to promote a vision of a new Presbyterian national church aligned with the Scottish Kirk, wherein the gathered clergy would wield considerable independent authority as interpreters of revelation.⁷⁶ But the Presbyterians faced stiff opposition from a dissenting minority within the Assembly who argued for a looser, alternative system of independent congregations, and from Independents in Parliament who were concerned by possible clerical overreach. Ley, however, it is suggested here, was preoccupied

⁷⁵ See Chapter Two, p. 93.

⁷⁶ Vernon, *London Presbyterians*, p. 126.

with asserting the interpretative authority of the ministry when he penned his Genesis annotations.

In his annotations on Genesis, Ley was careful to insist that the church's boundaries and hierarchical structure had always been guaranteed by ministers (whom he identified with the Patriarchs in early sacred history) that acted as guardians of revealed knowledge and who had the duty of communicating God's Word by preaching. These observations about the nature of religious authority within the Genesis church spoke directly to growing Presbyterian concerns about lay infringement on the office of the minister and the dissenting tendency to flatten the congregational hierarchy. Indeed, Ley wanted to claim that learned ministers with a calling that authorised them to evangelise were fundamental to the church, and that they possessed a particular kind of authority rooted in learning, godliness, and a father-like or even patriarchal duty to instruct their flock.

For Presbyterians like Ley, who aimed to retain a national church system and defend clerical authority in the face of the Independents and a growing radical opposition, the religious authority exercised by the Patriarchs provided an attractive historical model. Ley signalled this at the beginning of his verse-by-verse exposition during his summary discussion of Genesis's content, the context in which Moses supposedly wrote the text, and the authority by which he wrote it. As well as following the convention of establishing the *bona fides* of the Pentateuch's author as divinely inspired, Ley concluded that Moses wrote Genesis in the capacity of a 'publique person, inspired and instructed by God for that purpose'.⁷⁷ Commentators on Genesis, both Jewish and Christian, had long debated whether Moses wrote Genesis whilst working as a shepherd in Midian, or later, whilst leading the Israelites. Ley favoured the latter answer and a clue as to why lies in his choice use of the phrase 'publique person'. As a defender

⁷⁷ Anon., *Annotations*, 'The Argument', sig. a.

of the authority of ordained ministers alone to preach in church, Ley harboured a concern about ‘private persons’ pronouncing on holy matters. It was important therefore that he cast Moses and his Patriarchal forefathers in a position of public authority, as if they were ministers appointed by God.

The theme of religious authority is a prominent one throughout Ley’s annotations on Genesis, and it reflects his concern to construct a church that featured strong discipline and order in accordance with his reading of the scriptures. Early on in his annotations he noted that ‘the Image of God in man consisteth...in authoritie and government of the creatures, in which respect are Governours chiefly called Gods’ and ‘though here be no mention of Dominion among mankind over one another, but only over the other creatures, yet it is most like that Parents should have authoritie over their children’.⁷⁸ As if to summarise his point, Ley used Gen. 2’s mention of the two trees in Eden to conclude that ‘so farre is God from allowing man to live lawlesse in any state, that he would have him be under law in the state of Innocencie’.⁷⁹ By insisting that paternal authority could be traced back to before the Fall, Ley set up a theme that persisted through his annotations—the divine *imprimatur* for the Patriarchs’ father-like ministerial authority over his family and tribe, which was perpetuated throughout the ages.

Ley repeatedly explained in his annotations that in the age of Genesis

The birthright contained a fatherly preminence over the brethren, the Office of the Priesthood, before the Law written, and a double portion of the fathers estate...but for the Priesthood it was otherwise before the Law of Moses then afterward, for before Moses time the Priesthood was not limited to the elder brother, for Abel offered sacrifice as well as Caine, and the father of the family while he lived was ordinarily the Priest, and when he died his eldest sonne succeeded in that office, as well as in the government of the family.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid., I, Cols.10-11, V. 26.

⁷⁹ Ibid., II, Cols.3-4. V. 9.

⁸⁰ Ibid., XXV, Col. 4, V. 31.

His point here of course was to highlight that the manner in which the office of the priest or minister is bestowed was mutable, indeed it had changed throughout sacred history between the times of the Patriarchs, of Moses, and of Christ. However, Ley also wanted to emphasise that there were important continuities to be noted in the nature of that office and thus the basis of its authority. For instance, whilst discussing the Patriarch Abraham, Ley observed that ‘That which is here said of Abraham, should be done by every father of a family; who is so religiously to order his household, as to make it like unto a Church’.⁸¹ Once again drawing the time of Genesis and the present close together, Ley compared the role of fathers as heads of households with the duty of a minister to lead their congregation. Abraham was an archetype in this regard, as Ley highlighted: ‘This [God’s] Judgement was the more meet to be revealed unto Abraham, as to a chiefe member of the Church, and might and would thence give good documents, and instructions to his Church.’⁸² There was a strongly paternalistic aspect to Abraham and the other Patriarchs’ role as the spiritual leaders of their families, which appealed to Ley for several (not mutually exclusive) reasons.

First, the image of true ministry as paternal was reminiscent of the ideal of the godly household and a conception of the church as a family, one which was ruled over by spiritual elders and pastors—rather than a hierarchy of bishops—who were obligated by God’s covenant to provide direction to their flock. Amidst the upheaval of the Civil Wars and the collapse of traditional ecclesiastical disciplinary structures, family worship and divinely ordered domestic life became increasingly important as the building blocks upon which a godly community could be raised at a local level, and then nationally through the classis system and synods.

Another way to interpret Ley’s interest in patriarchal discourse in relation to ministerial authority is to see it as an attempt to reclaim that language from the Caroline divines, who had

⁸¹ Ibid., XVIII, Col. 2, V. 19.

⁸² Ibid.

previously used Genesis to articulate a strongly hierarchical vision of the Church on the basis of paternal authority—as was discussed in Chapter Five. For Ley, Adam’s spiritual headship, which passed down to his descendants genealogically, was expressed in his capacity as a godly father or elder rather than as a king or high priest. As Ley put it in his annotations, ‘For in the line of Eber continued the language spoken by Adam, the true Religion and worship of God’.⁸³ The Patriarchs’ authority stemmed from their distinctive ability to instruct their families in God’s Word. By describing the continuation of the true church in terms of the preservation of the original Hebrew language, Ley cast spiritual authority as a form of knowledge passed down the generations through the office of the priesthood. Whilst ministers no longer inherited their station from their fathers as, according to Ley, they had in the time of Genesis, their authority was still tied to their role as interpreters and preachers of scripture. Moreover, maintaining a reputation for godly living was of paramount importance. Indeed, Ley warned in his annotations about ‘Preachers, who preach others into the Church, and live themselves out of it’.⁸⁴

Right preaching of the Word by an authorised minister was one of the markers of the true Church according to Reformed orthodoxy, and the correct administration of the Lord’s Supper was the other. While he was annotating Gen. 14:18-20, Ley took advantage of Melchizedek’s presentation of bread and wine to the Patriarch Abraham as an opportunity to insist on the importance of ministers as administrators of the Lord’s Supper, and to argue that this function justified the funding of the ministry through tithes.

At one point in his annotations on Gen. 14, wherein Abraham encounters the mysterious priest Melchizedek and pays him a tithe, Ley stated that

the payment of tithe is ancients than the Leviticall Law...they are not abolished by the Gospel, but may be continued as an Evangelicall revenue for the maintenance of

⁸³ Ibid., X, Col. 5, V. 21.

⁸⁴ Ibid., VI, Col. 4. V. 18.

those, who exhibit Sacramentall bread, and wine (the materials of Melchizedeks beneficence) to the people, and blesse them in the Name of God, as Melchizedek did Abraham.⁸⁵

According to Ley's exegesis, the practice of tithing predated the Mosaic Law and the Levitical system established later on in the Pentateuch. As such, it belonged to the natural religion of the Patriarchs as opposed to the Jewish Ceremonial Law and hence was not abolished under the Gospel. Hence, Christians were still bound—or at least justified—in maintaining tithes. This was an important argument in the mid-seventeenth century when radical voices were challenging the right of the clergy to collect tithes. By drawing a typological connection between the payment Melchizedek received from Abraham and the practice of tithe payments in Christian churches, Ley was able to position ministers such as himself as the spiritual successors of Melchizedek's priesthood.

Ley complained bitterly in the same passage about those who aimed at abolishing tithes, denouncing 'the irreligion of many Christians, who shew little reverence or respect, if not much uncharitableness, or contempt toward the Ministers of the Gospel' and he later cited the example in Genesis of Joseph, who in his capacity as a prophet exercising godly authority allowed Pharaoh's priests to retain their allowance during the years of famine in Egypt.⁸⁶ This reflection on Gen. 47:22 implied a respect for ministerial authority in the present as we have seen on several occasions throughout this thesis. Ley's opinion, which he expressed through his annotations, that there was a need for the ministry to be maintained so that the clergy might exhibit the Lord's Supper for the convened godly, reflected genuine concerns about protecting the sacrament from profane individuals and, relatedly, about the erosion of the status of God's ministers that was manifesting in attacks on tithes.⁸⁷ But Ley's interpretation also revealed the

⁸⁵ Ibid., XIV, Col. 3, V. 20.

⁸⁶ Ibid., XLVII, Col. 4, V. 22.

⁸⁷ A. Hunt, 'The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 161 (1998), p. 63.

author's willingness to use the publication of the *Annotations* to advance his own economic interests.

Ley was able to make ample use of passages throughout Genesis in order to underpin ministerial authority, with a particular emphasis on their role in interpreting God's Word and exhibiting the Lord's Supper. The model of the authoritative godly minister that emerges from his annotations is one that was distanced from the Caroline Church's emphasis on ritual, but it also featured a clear emphasis on the distinct status of the clergy and their fatherly role in maintaining good discipline and order within the church. In this aspect, Ley's annotations underscored his arguments about preaching (as opposed to lay or 'ruling') elders in the church, which he made contemporaneously in the Assembly. But Ley's use of Genesis to reflect upon paternalistic leadership of the church also applied (albeit in a different way) to the magistrate. How Ley understood the role of the magistrate to compliment that of the minister in helping to uphold a godly religious community, through his reading of Genesis's sacred history, is the subject of this chapter's final section.

‘This and such like Texts doe not onely justifie the use of the Magistrates sword as lawfull, but require it’: Religious Authority and Political Duty in Ley’s annotations

At one point in Ley’s annotations on Genesis, whilst commenting on the story of Noah, he referred to the threat of Anabaptism. In a mid-1640s English context, an allusion to the radical early-sixteenth-century German Protestant sect usually served as a placeholder for a bundle of subversive ideas, including the position that Christians could not in good conscience hold political office. To Presbyterians like Ley this suggestion betokened chaos—for them the separation of political duty from Christianity threatened not only theological truth but also political stability. According to their opposing view, whilst the church and the state were distinct in their functions, the civil magistrate shared in the church’s purpose to serve the glory of God under Christ’s kingship by upholding true religion. To the Covenanters and their English allies, the unity of church and state in religion was therefore essential to maintaining the national covenant and the magistrate had a crucial role to play in punishing crimes and sinful acts. Subjects, meanwhile, had a duty ordained by God to respect the authorities above them. To the Presbyterian party, the rise of the Independents and the New Model Army during the Civil Wars, with their inclination towards gathered churches that lacked higher ecclesiastical supervision, threatened to dissolve the partnership of minister and magistrate.

However, in 1645 there was also tension within the Presbyterian faction regarding the role of the magistrate in relation to a Reformed national church. Whilst the Scots contended for a high degree of autonomy for the Kirk, many English Presbyterians were open to a national church under the authority of the King-in-Parliament.⁸⁸ To complicate matters further, it is important to recall that at the time of the *Annotations*’ publication, most of the parliamentary party still claimed to be at war so as to rescue Charles Stuart from his ‘evil counsellors’, as opposed to later on in the conflict when the New Model Army and their Independent supporters

⁸⁸ Van Dixhoorn, ‘Politics and religion in the Westminster assembly’, pp. 129-48.

in Westminster vowed to bring ‘that man of blood’ to heel once and for all.⁸⁹ English Presbyterians such as Ley inclined to the former attitude and anticipated that any future church settlement would necessarily involve the King-in-Parliament.

In his annotations on Genesis IX, the chapter that narrates (amongst other things) God’s injunctions to Noah after the latter survived the Flood, Ley sought to reassure his English and Scottish Presbyterian readers by emphasising that a collaboration between a national church and the civil magistrate had existed since the time of the Patriarchs, and in so doing Ley aimed to refute the radicals who sought to establish independent churches within the community. Ley wanted to make it clear that political duty and true religion could not be separated. Indeed, he used the Bible’s opening book to remind his readers of the magistrate’s duty in enforcing religious uniformity and godliness. He glossed over the thorny question of church and state relations that was causing so much strife between the Presbyterian parties. Instead, he focussed on what united them, a shared desire to see a godly, covenanted national church that was maintained by both magisterial coercion and ministerial discipline.

Ley found the opportunity to explore these themes in his annotations on the story of Noah and his family after the Flood. Beginning with the pericope ‘And surely your blood of your lives will I require’ (Gen. 9:5 according to the Authorised Version quoted in the *Annotations*), Ley digressed into a broader discussion of the magistrate’s right to punish crimes, including the carrying out of capital punishment. He wrote that

It is questioned by some whether murder or any other crime were punished otherwise then by excommunication, (or casting out of the society of men,) whether sacred or civil, before the flood; but especially whether death were inflicted on any offender before Noah his returne to Land againe... If it be said, we find neither any ordinance or example of the inflicting of capitall punishment on any offender before that of this Chapter: It may be answered, that many things might be in use before the flood, though not recorded in the fore-going Chapters...and though there were no such politicall power as was exercised after the flood, when Nimrod had raised himselfe to the height of Monarchy, whose ambition and tyranny hath beene followed ever since in many

⁸⁹ P. Crawford, “Charles Stuart, that man of blood”, *Parergon* 32/3 (2015), p. 43.

parts of the world, yet it seemes there was an oeconomicall or domesticall power of life and death in particular families.⁹⁰

The purpose of this passage was to demonstrate from Genesis scripture that punitive justice—the right to punish sin with death—is divinely grounded, and is not merely a human institution. Ley contended that there was no centralised political authority before the Flood and the first reign of tyranny under Nimrod, but that there was a patriarchal, domestic authority over life and death within particular families. Ley’s contention implied that punitive justice was part of God’s created moral order, rather than being a symptom of tyranny and merely an aspect of a fallen politics.

Ley’s assertions were intended to counter the view that Christians cannot legitimately exercise coercive violence, an argument rooted in the claim that political coercion had been a feature of the old Law that was overturned by the Gospel. Ley made it clear who his target was here, by concluding his comments on the verse with the remark that ‘The Anabaptists (who deny the legall and military use of the sword, yet sometimes use it against those who favour not their fancies...will have the Texts for punishing offenders to be taken not preceptively but prophetically’.⁹¹ In his annotations on Gen. 9:5, Ley insisted that the verse be treated preceptively, rather than as a prediction—he attributed the latter interpretation to the ‘Anabaptists’. In other words, Ley thought that the passage did not prophesy that those who commit murder will themselves be killed—if this were the intention of the verse then it would mean the scripture was evidently false, noted Ley, since history is littered with examples of unpunished murderers—but rather it insisted that the magistrate, who is God’s minister of justice with the sole authority to wield the sword of justice, is obliged to punish sin according to divine law. As Ley put it in his annotations, ‘this and such like Texts doe not onely justifie the use of the Magistrates sword as lawfull, but require it’.

⁹⁰ Anon., *Annotations*, IX, Col. 4, V. 6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Col. 5, V. 6.

Stressing that the magistrate's sword of justice is a divine ordinance had a strong political payoff in the midst of the First Civil War—it justified the King-in-Parliament's authority to punish both civil rebellion and religious disorder. Ley had an obvious interest in promoting coercive enforcement by the magistrate regarding religious, as well as civil, crimes. As an adherent of the *Solemn League and Covenant*, a document whose signatories had pledged 'to endeavour the extirpation of Popery...Superstition, Heresie, Schisme, Prophanenesse, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound Doctrine', Ley needed to assert the magistrate's right to punish heresy within a godly commonwealth.⁹² Moreover, as part of the Presbyterian majority within the Assembly, Ley was keen to bolster arguments in favour of maintaining a covenanted national church. As he pointed out in his annotations on Gen. 9, God's covenant with Noah and his family after the Flood was 'generall for the kinds and individuals or particular creatures; and perpetuall for time, comprehending both the present stock and future increase throughout all generations'.⁹³ Ley noted here that contrary to the Anabaptist argument against infant baptism, which hinged on the point that babies could not reason, the 'Seale of the Covenant' applied to creatures that have not the use of reason', as well as adult humans of sound mind.⁹⁴ In other words, a covenanted national church was not a body that individuals could opt out of, since by law they were inducted into it at birth. This argument would have appealed to both English and Scottish Presbyterian divines in the Assembly and elsewhere.

In pointing to the right of the Patriarch to punish his family members in the time before the Law, Ley used the concept of paternal authority to justify the magistrates' role of maintaining true religion in the commonwealth through the use of the sword. In so doing, he underlined the role that the magistrate must play alongside the minister in upholding a godly

⁹² Anon., *A solemn league*, p. (7).

⁹³ Anon., *Annotations*, IX, Col. 5, V. 10.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

national church and drew out the evidence in Genesis that such authority was divinely ordained. Rather than engaging with divisive questions about church and state relations that were driving a wedge between the Scottish and English Presbyterians, Ley once again found a way to seek to unite his readers against the threat posed to the national church through eliding civil and spiritual crimes, the punishment of which belonged to the magistrate.

Ley's Genesis annotations and the godly bishops in the Interregnum

John Ley's extensive commentary on Genesis, which formed the first chapter of the *Annotations*, illustrate how the Bible's opening book could be used by a Westminster Divine during the First Civil War to generate a godly vision of a national church, an institution that was jointly maintained by ministers with disciplinary powers and a magistrate with a coercive authority. In the context of 1645, such a conception of the church and of religious authority could provide a unifying model for English and Scottish Presbyterians, who were increasingly divided on ecclesiological questions. A church defined as a 'societie of the faithfull professors and sincere sacrificers' that emphasised its members' shared commitment to godly doctrine and solemn worship offered a viable alternative to both the pre-war established Church and the heterodoxy threatened by independent congregations. Ultimately, however, Ley and the rest of the Presbyterian movement failed in their aim of reforming the national church, and during the Interregnum it was only possible to establish churches run on Presbyterian principles at a local level since they lacked the support of Cromwell's regime.⁹⁵

Yet, the second (1651) and third (1657) editions of the *Annotations* testify to the ongoing popularity of the work. Moreover, their production also reveals a persistent attempt by clergy who shared an interest in re-building England's national church to use exegesis on Genesis to support this project. In 1655, a work responding to the *Annotations* was printed that was entitled *Choice observations and explanations upon the Old Testament...which are additionals to the large annotations made by some of the Assembly of Divines*.⁹⁶ Authored by the soon-to-be deceased Bishop of Ardagh (John Richardson) and reviewed by the Archbishop of Armagh (James Ussher) and the Puritan minister Thomas Gataker, the title-page of *Choice Observations* revealed that Richardson had 'had a considerable hand in' the enlarged 1651

⁹⁵ Vernon, *London Presbyterians*, pp. 168-94.

⁹⁶ J. Richardson, *Choice observations and explanations upon the Old Testament* (1655).

edition of the *Annotations*, as had Gataker's brother-in-law Francis Tayler.⁹⁷ Gataker, who had advocated for reduced episcopacy in the early 1640s, had corresponded with Ussher about Richardson's annotations.⁹⁸ Richardson paid especial attention to Genesis in this work and *Choice observations* was intended as an additional commentary that dealt with issues not raised in the *Annotations*. Ussher complimented Richardson for filling in what the 'Great' *Annotations* had missed, particularly in regard to Genesis. He disclosed to Richardson that 'I finde therein [meaning in Richardson's annotations] divers things of moment, which I meet not withal in others'.⁹⁹

It is interesting to note that *Choice Observations* was produced by a bishop, and endorsed by an Archbishop and by Gataker, who had called for limited episcopacy in the early 1640s. Despite their rank, 'godly bishops' such as Ussher and Richardson enjoyed 'a revival of public esteem' according to Milton during the Interregnum amongst Presbyterians, who sought to align themselves with the Calvinist orthodoxy of the established Church before Laud's reign.¹⁰⁰ The contemporaneous production of the re-issued *Annotations* and Richardson's *Choice Observations* indicates a persistent interest in re-examining Genesis amongst ministers committed to a godly, national church. As does the publication of a flurry of lesser works on Genesis that originated as lectures, sermons, or notes penned by godly ministers during the same period.¹⁰¹ Ley's annotations on Genesis belong firmly within this moment, and by placing them into the context of the mid-1640s it is possible to see how a 'moderate Puritan' responded

⁹⁷ Ibid., titlepage; Neal, *The history of the Puritans*, vol. 3, pp. 491-2.

⁹⁸ Richardson, *Choice observations*, 'Mr. Gataker's EPISTLE to the Bishop of Armagh', unfol.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 'To my REVEREND and LEARNED Brother, Doctor Richardson', unfol.

¹⁰⁰ Milton, *England's Second Reformation*, p. 374.

¹⁰¹ A. Jackson, *A help for the understanding of the Holy Scripture* (1643); B. Needler, *Expository Notes, with practical observations; towards the opening of the five first chapters of the first book of Moses called Genesis* (1655); J. Trapp, *A clavis to the Bible; or A new comment upon the Pentateuch* (1650); H. Walker, *Bereshit, the creation of the world being an exposition on the Hebrew in the first chapter of Genesis* (1649); W. Whately, *Prototypes, or, The primarie precedent presidents out of the booke of Genesis* (1640); J. White, *A commentary upon the three first chapters of the first book of Moses called Genesis* (1656).

to the collapse of the pre-war Church and the rise of radical ecclesiological alternatives by turning to the beginning of the Bible.

Conclusion — ‘An excellent Resemblance of the state of the Church’

To the ordinary cultivated student of civilization the genesis of a Church is of little interest

— T. S. Eliot¹

Chapter Seven’s discussion of John Ley’s annotations on Genesis and English Presbyterian attempts to remodel the established church along the lines of holy scripture (as they interpreted it) has brought us to the mid-seventeenth century, and what John Morrill called ‘the last of the Wars of Religion’.² As we noted in the Introduction, revisionists like Morrill have underlined the religious dimension of the deeply rooted ideological differences that divided contending factions in the English Civil War. England’s Reformation and the enacting of the Royal Supremacy had posed ecclesiological questions, regarding the nature of the church and the relationship between the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities, which remained central to the nation’s religious politics in the mid-seventeenth century.³ This thesis’s study of late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart lectures, sermons, and commentaries on Genesis, and their authors’ interventions in these aforementioned ecclesiological discussions, has illustrated how notions of the role of religion at the origins of human society derived from early sacred history underpinned conflicting religious ideologies that divided the church and ultimately pushed England towards civil war.

Now, in the Conclusion, we will consider whether these competing ecclesiological perspectives derived from Genesis survived the conflict and remained as a distinctive discourse within late-seventeenth century England’s religious politics. This focus will complete the thesis’s objective of sketching out aspects of an English language of sacral politics grounded

¹ T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London, 1928), p. 15.

² J. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 68.

³ C. Prior, ‘Religion, Political Thought and the English Civil War’, *History Compass* 11/1 (2013), pp. 24-5.

in Genesis that emphasised divinely imposed duties in a thoroughly Protestant fashion. As the following discussion will show, this discourse contrasted with the non-scriptural language of natural jurisprudence that is often discussed in relation to seventeenth-century works of English political thought.⁴

Certain seventeenth-century political thinkers, including Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, contended that societal conflict could never be resolved and peace secured until civil authority was conditional upon something other than the upholding of godly rule, since it was unlikely that an agreement would ever be reached by confessional factions as to what constituted true religion. The solution for Hobbes and Locke was to define political power in a manner that was neutral in respect of ecclesiological differences.⁵ Some modern scholars have identified their abandonment of a classically Protestant conception of politics, defined in terms of godly (as well as civil) duties, as a paradigmatic, secularising shift in the history of early modern English political thought.⁶ It is true that in Hobbes' case, he radically reduced the independent power of the church and its clergy by granting the sovereign exclusive authority to proclaim on theological matters, while Locke sought to separate politics from religion in his account of the natural origins of society.⁷ Given the focus of this thesis, these theorists' epoch-making theoretical move invites a question about the fate of the Genesis inspired sacral discourse examined throughout the foregoing chapters, which insisted that the church and worship were fundamental to binding together a godly community.

⁴ M. Goldie, 'The Ancient Constitution and the Languages of Political Thought', *HJ* 62/1 (2019), pp. 5-6.

⁵ A. Brett, 'Political Thought', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750: Volume II: Cultures and Power*, ed. H. Scott (Oxford, 2015), p. 32.

⁶ E.g., Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Volume 2 The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 352.

⁷ J. Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, 2007), p. 219; S. Mortimer, 'Religion and Enlightenment', in *A Companion to Intellectual History*, eds. R. Whatmore and B. Young (Oxford, 2016), pp. 498-500.

The rest of the Conclusion will begin by exploring this question, through considering late-seventeenth century evidence of an ongoing concern regarding worship's role in the origins of human society in two contrasting interventions by divines preoccupied with the idea of the church and its relationship to the civil authority. In doing so, the following discussion suggests that the two (godly and conformist) theological perspectives on the church in Genesis, which recur throughout this thesis, persisted after the Restoration and underpinned rival Anglican and Non-Conformist ecclesiologies. This willingness to continue to rely upon Genesis's sacred history as a source of divine revelation on ecclesiological matters suggests that the advancements in contextualist biblical criticism made during this period, which were briefly discussed in the Introduction, did not preclude Restoration divines from drawing inferences about the nature of the church and religious authority from the Bible's opening book.

Prior to his suspension as a Non-Juror after the Glorious Revolution, the Archbishop of Canterbury William Sancroft granted the ill-fated Canons of 1606—which were discussed at length in Chapter Five of this thesis—what appears at first sight to be a curious afterlife, when he had them published under the title of *Bishop Overall's convocation-book* (1690).⁸ However, this thesis's central argument clarifies why the Archbishop may have wished to promulgate the draft Jacobean Canons in the early 1690s, and why debates about Genesis and ecclesiology continued well beyond the mid-seventeenth century.

Early modern Protestant English divines considered worship (and sometimes sacrifice) as essential to the foundations of human society, and they used Genesis's sacred history in different ways to generate a discourse of sacred politics that emphasised divinely imposed duties on magistrate and minister. Chapter Two and Chapter Five outlined a recurring pattern of interpretation of the church in Genesis amongst certain conformist English Protestants that

⁸ J. Overall, *Bishop OVERALL's 1606 Convocation – Book, MDCVI. Concerning the GOVERNMENT OF God's CATHOLICK CHURCH, AND THE KINGDOMS OF THE Whole WORLD* (1690).

stressed the duty of individuals to worship publicly in a manner coordinated by a hierarchical clergy, and that articulated a sacerdotal vision of a church jointly led by the king and his priests, rather than by the King-in-Parliament. Sancroft's publication of the Canons of 1606 can be seen as a continuation of this use of Genesis in the context of debates about ecclesiastical and civil authority immediately following the Glorious Revolution.

As we saw in Chapter Five, Genesis's account of the patriarchal church was interpreted in the proposed Canons as proof that a divinely ordained ecclesiastical authority, which was chiefly manifested in the priest-led public worshipping practices of a hierarchically ordered visible church, united a community long before any political constitution later established in law. The Canons articulated a non-constitutional vision of religious authority grounded in Genesis, thus they offered the Archbishop arguments he could deploy to criticise the Convention Parliament's constitutionalist attacks on ecclesiastical authority and the Anglican Church of England's independence, and thereby undermine the post-revolutionary settlement in church and state.⁹ As late as 1690, then, interpretations of the church in Genesis were still important to a Church of England clergyman keen to assert his ecclesiastical authority, and the priority of his church over Parliament.

But this thesis has also detected another pattern of interpretation of the church in Genesis espoused by English Reformed divines, and this trend also continued into the late-seventeenth century. Two years before Sancroft published *Overall's convocation-book*, the Non-Conformist preacher and author of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)—John Bunyan—had died suddenly and left behind an unfinished work entitled *Exposition on the Ten First Chapters of Genesis*.¹⁰ Published posthumously as part of a folio of his works in 1692, Bunyan's lengthy

⁹ J. Overall, *Bishop Overall's Convocation Book* (Oxford, 1844), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ J. Bunyan, *The miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, vol. 12, ed. W. Owens (Oxford, 1994), pp. 95-278. I would like to thank Matthew Leech-Gerrard for bringing this work on Genesis to my attention.

albeit incomplete commentary on Gen.1-11 emphasised the typological link between the church in Genesis and in the contemporary era, particularly as that connection manifested in the eternal persecution of the true church.¹¹ Bunyan located the origins of the cosmological divide between the godly and the Antichrist in the story of Cain and Abel, an opposition which he transposed onto the division in his own context betwixt godly Non-Conformists and the persecuting Anglican authorities under Sancroft.¹² Bunyan's comparison between the patriarchal church and the oppressed godly in the present is a familiar one that we have seen being made by earlier godly commentators on Genesis in Chapter One, Chapter Three, Chapter Four, Chapter Six, and Chapter Seven. Central to this intensely Reformed reading of Genesis was an emphasis on the church's divinely revealed nature and the godly duty of all its members to enact God's will on earth according to scripture, like the Patriarchs had done thousands of years ago, even if this meant—as it did for Bunyan—separating from the established church, while appealing to the godly magistrate for support.

This thesis's findings enable us to recognise that both Sancroft and Bunyan were applying distinct, well-established interpretations of the patriarchal church to the religious politics of their present. Indeed, their contrasting, Genesis-informed visions of the church and its relationship with the civil power broadly correspond to the two recurring godly and conformist theological perspectives that have been repeatedly encountered throughout this thesis. Together, then, these texts constitute clear evidence of continuity in the application of Genesis to ecclesiological debates after the English Civil Wars. Moreover, they evince a persistent Protestant clerical discourse based on Genesis's sacred history during the Restoration, which stressed the importance of religion and worship at the origins of society and the divinely decreed duty of the magistrate and minister to uphold it. This 'language' contrasts

¹¹ M. Gleghorn, 'Creation, fall, and redemption: John Bunyan's interpretation of Genesis 1-3' (Ph.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2018), pp. 178-9.

¹² Bunyan, *The miscellaneous Works*, p. xlv.

with those more often discussed in histories of seventeenth-century English political thought, which attempted to isolate politics from theology.¹³

However, having pointed to evidence of discursive continuities beyond our chronological scope, it is also important to recognise that the mid-seventeenth century ushered in new approaches to thinking about ecclesiology using the Bible's opening book, making it a fascinating caesura at which to conclude the main body of the thesis. The experience of the Civil War stimulated radical new approaches to thinking about religion (and a host of other topics too) through the Bible's opening book. Moreover, printed works on Genesis in this period were authored by lay writers as well as clergy, the class who have been the subject of this thesis. Indeed, one of the most disruptive interpretations of Genesis in the post-war period was produced by a poet and polemicist, John Milton.¹⁴ The scholarship on Milton is of course voluminous, and it would not be feasible to attempt a detailed discussion of his engagement with Genesis here. However, it is important to note that not only did Milton refer to commentaries on Genesis when writing, but he turned to the Bible's opening book while reflecting on religion and the Civil War-era.¹⁵

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton explored his radical soteriology, with its emphasis on the free exercise of individual reason in attaining salvation, through an epic re-telling of Gen.3. As Blair Worden has noted, Milton's vehement anti-clericalism and his antipathy to the trappings of the institutional, visible church stemmed from a theological conviction that the restoration of the image of God in humanity was dependent upon the liberation of the individual from religious,

¹³ J. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 88-9.

¹⁴ A. Barnaby, 'The Politics of Garden Spaces: Andrew Marvell and the Anxieties of Public Speech', *Studies in Philology* 97/3 (2000), p. 352; D. Kasa, *The Politics of Grace in Early Modern Literature* (Stanford, 2024), pp. 109-36; R. Lewis, *Language, mind and nature: artificial languages in England from Bacon to Locke* (Cambridge, 2007); W. Poole, *Milton and the Idea of the Fall* (Cambridge, 2005).

¹⁵ A. Williams, 'Commentaries on Genesis as a Basis for Hexaemeral Material in the Literature of the Late Renaissance', *Studies in Philology* 34/2 (1937), pp. 191-208; Idem., 'Milton and the Renaissance Commentaries on Genesis', *Modern Philology* 37/3 (1940), pp. 263-78.

as well as political, tyranny.¹⁶ To Milton, as to the divines discussed throughout this thesis, ‘politics was a supremely religious activity...in which the achievement of a perfect state would fulfil a divine instinct in man’.¹⁷ Yet, the republican poet’s reading of Genesis came freighted with assumptions about individual faith and private worship that overturned the ecclesiological principles dissected throughout this thesis’s study of late-Elizabethan and early-Stuart England’s religious politics. In contrast to the divines whose works have been discussed in previous chapters, Milton did not focus on what Genesis’s sacred history revealed about organised worship.

Milton’s poem offers one (admittedly notable) example which proves a point that historians have long acknowledged: the Book of Genesis captivated the mid-seventeenth century imagination.¹⁸ The febrile atmosphere caused by civil conflict encouraged people to re-evaluate the foundations of their lives and their society, and the beginning of the Bible was indisputably the text they looked to for guidance on first principles. This attitude was neatly captured by the ironmonger turned preacher and pamphleteer Henry Walker in a dedication to the Rump Parliament: ‘*Me thinks Englands Reformation at this time, resembles much the world in the first daies Creation*’.¹⁹ References to Genesis appeared in works across every domain of human knowledge, from theology and geography to literature and politics.²⁰ Similarly, Genesis’s universal relevance was reflected by the fact that sources like the ones considered in

¹⁶ B. Worden, ‘Milton’s republicanism and the tyranny of heaven’, in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, eds. M. Viroli and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1991), p. 230.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ E.g., C. Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (London, 1994), p. 41.

¹⁹ H. Walker, *Bereshit, the creation of the world being an exposition on the Hebrew in the first chapter of Genesis* (1649), sig. A2.

²⁰ E.g., J. Ballor, M. Gaetano, and D. Sytsma, eds., *Beyond Dordt and De Auxiliis: The Dynamics of Protestant and Catholic Soteriology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2019), *passim*; E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 143-73; B. McManus, ‘Eve’s Dowry’: Genesis and the Pamphlet Controversy about Women’, in *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. M. Burke (New York, 2000), pp. 193-206; W. Poole, ‘The Genesis Narrative in the Circle of Robert Hooke and Francis Lodwicke’, in *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*, eds. A. Hessayon and N. Keene (Aldershot, 2017), pp. 41-57; C. Tilbury, ‘The Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: An English Reformation Subject for Church Decoration’, *JEH* 63/2 (2012), pp. 274-305.

this thesis touched on a remarkable range of topics in the course of their exploration of the Bible's opening book, not just ecclesiology.

The sources examined throughout this thesis evince the fact that Bible's opening book was a touch-stone for a wide-variety of contemporary topics. Likewise, Philip Almond's wide-ranging survey of both theological and lay authors demonstrates how Genesis served as a foundational text in seventeenth-century discussions about such disparate topics as the essentialism of the sexes, the origins of property, marriage, and soteriology.²¹ Another popular theme in seventeenth-century England's intellectual culture was the condition of public discourse, and this too could be related back to the Genesis story. For instance, the poet and satirist Andrew Marvell wrote about the declension from Adam's perfect conversation with Creation in Eden to the confusion of tongues at Babel and how this narrative perfectly analogised the collapse of England's political conversation, and of authority, during the Civil Wars. Moreover, Genesis prompted Marvel and other writers to contemplate the possibility of recovering linguistic, and indeed religious certainty, individually, if not collectively.²²

Somewhat relatedly, the post-Civil War period witnessed the emergence of a genre of works focussed on natural theology and apologetics (as opposed to dogmatic exegesis), which debated 'The Philosophy of Adam' and the extent to which Genesis encouraged the acquisition of natural, certain knowledge through experimental science.²³ There was also an interest in moral theology and natural ethics as a basis for discussions regarding individual obligation to the community. Here, Gen.1:27's injunction that man is made in the image of God was often adduced as an affirmation of man's natural reason. Furthermore, it provided a pericope for an examination of an individual's moral capability and for reflection on the possibility of

²¹ P. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, 1999).

²² Barnaby, 'The Politics of Garden Spaces', pp. 341-2; W. Chernaik, *The Poet's Time: Politics and Religion in the work of Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 120-1.

²³ S. Mandelbrote, 'Early Modern Natural Theologies', in *The Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology*, J. Hedley Brooke, R. Re Manning, and F. Watts (Oxford, 2013), pp. 75-6.

establishing a set of universally agreeable, rational ethical precepts in the wake of a confessionally divisive civil conflict.²⁴ These and other themes are acknowledged in the sources discussed throughout this thesis, but they have not been the subject of our attention. Indeed, this thesis has focussed on a less discussed aspect of Genesis that nonetheless made the book self-evidently important to early modern English clergy up to and during the Civil War—its history of the beginnings of the church at the origins of human society.

The fact that the sources compiled in this thesis were all produced by English clergymen does of course mean that the conceptions of the church and religious authority considered here were the products of a geographically and chronologically limited set of contexts. Indeed, we have seen that although the commentators discussed in this thesis inherited an older European tradition of Genesis commentary, there were particular facets of the late-Tudor and early-Stuart religious landscape that made applying interpretations of Genesis's description of the patriarchal church to it peculiarly appealing, specifically when thinking through questions about religious authority, the church, and its complex relationship to civil authority. One possible avenue for fruitful further research might be to examine whether (and if so, how) Genesis was used to think about these questions in other geographies where the relationships between church and commonwealth were configured differently. After all, we have seen throughout this thesis that what made Genesis so interesting for late-Tudor and early-Stuart divines in England was that it described a period when the distinction between the religious and political spheres was blurred, when religious and civil authority were merged. Each of the divines discussed in this thesis had an interest in exploiting this characteristic of the society and the church described in the Bible's opening book for their different ecclesiological agendas.

²⁴ E.g., R. Greene, 'Synderesis, the Spark of Conscience, in the English Renaissance', *JHI* 52/2 (1991), p. 217.

In the late-Tudor and early-Stuart periods, clergymen from across the ideological spectrum turned to Genesis when considering what defined the church and how religious authority related to civil power. That they did so reveals something previously unnoted about how early modern conceptions of the role of worship in the origins of human society informed ecclesiological debates. Yet, the sheer range of conflicting opinions on the nature of the church and religious authority that resulted demonstrates just how rich and conflicted this contribution could be. Ultimately, though, all the aforementioned divines were agreed on one point at least. As Bunyan put it, Genesis bore ‘An excellent Resemblance of the state of the Church’.²⁵

²⁵ Bunyan, *miscellaneous*, p. 291.

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