

The Pentateuch and the immortality of the soul in England and the Dutch Republic: the confessionalization of a claim

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In *The Divine Legation of Moses* (1738-1742), the English cleric William Warburton (1698-1779) famously set out to demonstrate the divine origins of Jewish religion in response to the challenge posed by the ‘deist’ claim that there were no eternal promises in the Pentateuch.¹ Warburton’s tactic was bizarre and counterintuitive. He began by conceding the deist reading, arguing that there were indeed no promises of a future life in the Mosaic dispensation. However, for Warburton this actually distinguished the Israelites from all other ancient peoples, and the fact that their nation flourished even without this doctrine was evidence of the divine nature of the Mosaic laws. Warburton was especially concerned with countering John Toland and William Coward, both of whom had claimed that Moses never mentioned the immortality of the soul. Toland had done so to support the assertion that Moses was an impostor, and Coward as part of his materialist denial of the immortality of the soul.² The idea that this claim about immortality and Moses represented a specifically deist or even ‘Spinozist’ reading of the Old Testament has persisted in recent scholarship.³ But while deists certainly made these claims, they were not the first, nor the only, interpreters of the Old Testament to do so. The few studies that refer to the history of Warburton’s argument tend to jump from Spinoza to Toland to Warburton, or from John Spencer and John Marsham to Toland and Warburton.⁴ However, as I show in this chapter, the claim was an ancient one, with patristic precedent. While it was rendered toxic by association with religious radicalism in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, its roots lie not in the innovations of radical outsiders, but in debates over typological exegesis and covenant theology.

When early modern churchmen responded to attacks on the immortality of the soul, they defended the doctrine in part by drawing on a repertoire of Old Testament passages that were said to support it. Genesis 2:7, for example, seemed to imply that when Adam was created, the formation of his body was different from that of his soul. Several Psalms suggested that the principal and most noble part of humanity was the immortal, rational

¹ William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated*, 2 vols. (London, 1738), 1:6-7.

² Ibid., 415; John Toland, ‘Origines Judaicae’, in *Dissertationes Duae, Adeisidaemon et Origines Judaicae* (The Hague, 1709), 156-7; William Coward, *Second Thoughts Concerning Human Soul* (London, 1702), 264-6.

³ Paolo Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time: The History of the Earth and the History of Nations*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, 1984), 238; Frank E. Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA., 1992), 185-6; Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian* (Cambridge, MA., 1998), 96; Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford, 2001), 611.

⁴ Rossi, *Dark Abyss*, 237; John Gascoigne, ‘The Wisdom of the Egyptians and the Secularisation of History in the Age of Newton’, in *The Uses of Antiquity: The Scientific Revolution and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Stephen Gaukroger (Dordrecht, 1991), 203.

33 soul (e.g., Psalm 19:7). Ecclesiastes 12:7 implied that the soul could be separated from
34 the body and returned to God upon bodily death. Another oft-repeated argument revolved
35 around Exodus 3:6 and Matthew 22:32. Responding to the Sadducees’s denial of the
36 resurrection, Christ pointed out that if God was called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and
37 Jacob in Exodus, and if God is the ‘God of the living’, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
38 must be in some sense still living. For those who found themselves desperately defending
39 the immortal soul, therefore, the Old Testament could be a powerful aide.⁵ Yet the
40 tendency of historians to focus on these defensive, vernacular works, at the expense of
41 scholarly, Latinate approaches to the matter, has hidden the fact that this view of the Old
42 Testament was not unanimously held. This was because it was rather difficult to argue
43 that the Old Testament, and the Pentateuch in particular, unambiguously described future
44 rewards and punishments, to say nothing of the immortality of the soul. Appended to
45 obedience to the ten commandments, for example, were not promises of eternal life in
46 heaven, but guarantees of health, many offspring, and long life on earth. This is, after all,
47 the view of modern Old Testament scholars, and the lack of a standard Jewish answer
48 until the post-Exile era—when the Pharisees triumphed over the Sadducees on the
49 question of the resurrection—meant that arguments for both sides were available in
50 Jewish writings.⁶ Thus, while Maimonides listed the resurrection of the body as one of
51 the thirteen principles of Jewish faith, Joseph Albo denied that the resurrection and the
52 immortality of the soul were fundamental to Jewish law.⁷

53 Throughout the early modern period the claim that the Pentateuch contained no
54 explicit mention of eternal life became divisive only within the bounds of inter-
55 confessional polemic. My discussion here will sketch out the fortunes of this claim in
56 England and the Dutch Republic. I approach the topic through a comparison of the
57 positions offered by leading early modern scholars in these national contexts, focusing
58 especially on the Dutch Arminian theologian Simon Episcopius (1583-1643) and the
59 eminent English Hebraist John Lightfoot (1602-1675). Both scholars presented
60 arguments on the matter in university disputations in the 1610s and 1650s respectively,
61 and both altered their claims in works published in other contexts. As we will see, in the
62 sixteenth century the issue became confessionalized, and this lasted well into the
63 seventeenth century, but the differences between the opposing parties were not as great
64 as their representatives implied. The intellectual context in which the issue was discussed
65 (confessional polemic, disputation, works on covenant theology, or texts debating the
66 immortality of the soul) impacted how the matter was treated. What proved important
67 were approaches to typology, as well as the relative threat of Socinianism and
68 Anabaptism, which was more or less at the forefront in different contexts. In this sense
69 the chapter has benefited from recent work which has made space for discussion of the
70 confessional aspects of early modern scholarship without the usual assumptions of

⁵ For a representative English example, see Thomas Wadsworth, *Antipsychothanasia, Or, The Immortality of the Soul Explained and Proved by Scripture and Reason* (London, 1670).

⁶ Casey Deryl Elledge, *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism, 200 BCE-CE 200* (Oxford, 2017); Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (London, 1974); Louis Finkelstein, ‘The Beginnings of the Jewish Doctrine of Immortality’, in *Freedom and Reason: Studies in Philosophy and Jewish Culture in Memory of Morris Raphael Cohen*, ed. Salo Baron (Glencoe, IL, 1951), 354-72.

⁷ Steven Nadler, *Spinoza’s Heresy: Immortality and the Jewish Mind* (Oxford, 2001), chap. 3.

71 religiously-motivated suppression of erudition.⁸ But first it is necessary to discuss how
72 the issue became more difficult to navigate in the sixteenth century, and for that we must
73 turn to those infamous early modern offenders, the Anabaptists and Socinians.

74

75 **The confessionalization of a claim**

76

77 Warburton's claim that the Mosaic dispensation contained no promises of future rewards
78 and punishments was aired over thirteen hundred years earlier, when Augustine of Hippo
79 came head to head with the fourth century Manichaean Faustus of Mileve. When Faustus
80 attacked the Old Testament scriptures in c. 400AD, he maintained that they contained no
81 hint of eternal life and offered no more than a poor and fleshly inheritance. Augustine
82 responded by conceding that the promises of the Old Testament were indeed temporal.
83 However, these promises were 'figures' of eternal life.⁹ While the 'carnal people' thought
84 only of temporal blessings on earth, the spiritual and holy men who lived in these times
85 (namely, the patriarchs and the prophets) understood from these temporal promises to
86 expect a future state.¹⁰ Augustine's answer to Faustus became a standard dogmatic line
87 in scholastic theology, where the issue was discussed under the broader question of the
88 differences between the Old and New Testaments. Aquinas, for example, when
89 discussing whether the old law was distinct from the new, claimed that the former
90 contained only temporal promises while the latter offered spiritual and eternal ones.
91 However, he acknowledged, some biblical Hebrews, guided by the Holy Spirit,
92 nevertheless looked to a future and eternal state.¹¹ Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, and later
93 medieval thinkers argued in much the same vein.¹² The claim also enjoyed the continued
94 support of early Reformers. For Luther, in the Old Testament God was 'promissor
95 bonorum temporalium'. The prophets understood the 'spiritual' meaning of the promises,
96 but the people understood them only carnally.¹³ Melancthon, too, when discussing the
97 differences between the Old and New Testaments, saw that the former promised 'material

⁸ Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford, 2009); Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (Oxford, 2017); *Confessionalisation and Erudition in Early Modern Europe: An Episode in the History of the Humanities*, eds. Nicholas Hardy and Dmitri Levitin (Oxford, 2019).

⁹ Augustine, 'Contra Faustum', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Richard Sother, 14 vols. (New York, 2007), 4:1-2. See also Augustine, 'Expositions on the Book of Psalms', in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I*, 8:73:3.

¹⁰ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 4:2; 6:9. For typology in patristic writings, see Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers* (London, 1960); James S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge, MA., 1969).

¹¹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 107, a. 1. See also Aquinas, *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Hebraeos lectura*, 8-2:392; 8-2:401.

¹² Peter Lombard, *Libri IV Sententiarum*, III d. 40 c.3: 'diversa sunt promissa: ibi terrena, hic caelestia promittit'; Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences*, III d. 40 a. un. q. 1 ad 5. For a discussion of some of these issues in late medieval writings, see Preus, *Shadow to Promise*, esp. 123-4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 158-60.

98 things' like wealth and the land of Canaan, while the latter promised eternal life 'more
99 clearly'.¹⁴

100 It was in the context of mounting fears of Anabaptism in the later sixteenth century
101 that the suggestion that the Old Testament contained only temporal promises took on a
102 more toxic sheen. When Huldrych Zwingli wrote in opposition to the Anabaptist notion
103 of baptism by faith, he drew attention to similarities between circumcision and baptism
104 to support the practice of infant baptism. Anabaptists rejected the argument and
105 maintained that Christians should not cite the Old Testament as a directive for their
106 conduct. Only the New Testament was binding.¹⁵ The Reformed response was decisive.
107 Zwingli's 1527 refutation of the Anabaptists argued that the difference between the Old
108 and New Testaments was not one of content, but instead one between *umbra* and *lux*
109 *clarius lucet*.¹⁶ In response, Anabaptists argued that circumcision and baptism could not
110 be compared because the covenants connected to them were different. The clear
111 divergence between the old and new covenants was that the former contained only
112 temporal promises.¹⁷ They were countered in the early 1530s by Bullinger, who wrote on
113 the unity of the Testaments.¹⁸ And after John Calvin's first debates with the Anabaptists
114 over the Old Testament in 1536-1538, during his first period in Geneva, he added an
115 entirely new section to the second edition of *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (1539) on
116 the similarity between the Testaments.¹⁹ Here Calvin mocked the Anabaptists, who 'think
117 of the people of Israel just as they would do some herd of swine, absurdly imagining that
118 the Lord gorged them with temporal blessings here, and gave them no hope of a blessed
119 immortality'.²⁰ To Calvin, the differences between the promises offered in the Old and
120 New Testaments lay 'only in respect of clearness of manifestation'.²¹ The law and the
121 prophets provided the Jews with the hope of immortality, as Romans 1:2 made clear, and
122 it did so through temporal promises, which were 'types' of eternity.²² In his
123 *Psychopannychia* (1542), which aimed to refute the 'thousands' of Anabaptists who
124 denied the soul's immortality, Calvin marshalled scores of biblical passages which
125 purportedly revealed the immortality of the soul as a doctrine contained in both the Old
126 and New Testaments.²³ But in all this Calvin still acknowledged that the Old Testament
127 patriarchs saw the light of immortality only 'from afar, as if under a cloud or shadow'.²⁴

¹⁴ Kenneth Hagen, 'From Testament to Covenant in the Early Sixteenth Century', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 3 (1972), 1-24, at 14.

¹⁵ Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, trans. Trevor Johnson (London and New York, 1996), 51-6.

¹⁶ Hagan, 'Covenant', 20.

¹⁷ J. Wayne Baker, 'Church, State, and Dissent: The Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531-1536', *Church History* 57 (1988), 144; William Klassen, *Covenant and Community: The Life, Writings, and Hermeneutics of Pilgram Marpeck* (Grand Rapids, 1968), 126, 556.

¹⁸ Heinrich Bullinger, *De Testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno* (1534).

¹⁹ Anthony G. Baxter, 'John Calvin's Use and Hermeneutics of the Old Testament' (Ph.D. Diss., University of Sheffield, 1987), 104-5. The section in question (Book 4, Chapter 16) was successively expanded in new editions until 1559.

²⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA., 2008), 2.10.1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.9.4.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.10.2, 2.10.3.

²³ John Calvin, *Psychopannychia* (Strasbourg, 1542).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 339: 'Quia enim, veluti sub nube & umbra, eminus lucem prospiciebant'. Translation are mine unless otherwise noted.

128 The language used by all these writers was typological. Although Protestant
129 reformers critiqued allegorical readings of scripture and rejected the *quadriga*, they did
130 not discard the typological idea that the law, through shadows and ‘types’, prefigured the
131 coming of Christ and the gospel.²⁵ This principle was, after all, ‘woven into the fabric of
132 the New Testament’.²⁶ Calvin, like later covenant theologians, ascribed the same doctrine
133 to the Mosaic covenant as he did to the covenant of grace revealed in the gospel. In other
134 words, Christ was the theme of the Old Testament.²⁷ For Calvin, although many of the
135 types in the Old Testament were accessible to the biblical Hebrews, much was ‘unlocked’
136 only by the arrival of Christ.²⁸ But when it came to the types of eternal life in the old
137 covenant, the hidden promise of a future state was understood and expected of ‘all who
138 consented to the covenant’.²⁹ As Augustine and others had already argued, ‘in the earthly
139 possession which the Israelites enjoyed, they beheld, as in a mirror, the future inheritance
140 which they believed to be reserved for them in heaven’.³⁰

141 Already we can see at least two questions in play. (1) Did the Old Testament
142 explicitly promise eternal life and future rewards and punishments? (2) Regardless of any
143 explicit promises, did the biblical Hebrews *believe* in a future state? As we have seen, it
144 was common for theologians to answer ‘no’ to the first question. Some preferred to
145 distinguish between the Pentateuch and the rest of the Old Testament, and suggested a
146 gradual revelation of the doctrine. This amounted to the claim that while the Mosaic
147 dispensation was silent on the issue, the Psalms and the writings of the prophets showed
148 that later Hebrews possessed more information than their earliest ancestors. This had
149 patristic precedent: Eusebius and Cyril of Alexandria had both argued that David was the
150 first to teach the promise of a future life, while Moses handed down nothing on these
151 things.³¹ Although the issue became cloudier in the sixteenth century, it was difficult to
152 argue against such texts as 2 Tim. 1:10, which explained that Christians were saved by
153 grace, and that this truth was revealed only through Christ, ‘who abolished death and
154 brought life and immortality to light through the gospel’.³² This critical verse suggested
155 that humanity’s prospects of eternal life were not clearly known until the advent of Christ.
156 Hebrews 8:6 similarly suggested that the new covenant in Christ was ‘established upon
157 better promises’ than the old.

158 When it came to whether or not the biblical Hebrews believed in or expected future
159 rewards and punishments, things were more difficult to establish. However, Hebrews

²⁵ Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, 2003), 2:469-82.

²⁶ Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 130.

²⁷ J.V. Fesko, ‘Calvin and Witsius on the Mosaic Covenant’, in *The Law is Not of Faith*, ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J.V. Fesko, and David van Drunen (Phillipsburg, 2009), 25-43.

²⁸ Douglas Judisch, ‘A Translation and Edition of the *Sacrorum Parallelorum Liber Primus* of Franciscus Junius: A Study in Sixteenth Century Hermeneutics’, 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of St Andrews, 1979), 1:139-141. For Calvin’s approach to typology more generally, see Richard Muller, ‘The Hermeneutic of Promise and Fulfillment in Calvin’s Exegesis of the Old Testament Prophecies of the Kingdom’, in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David C. Steinmetz (Durham and London, 1990), 68-82.

²⁹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.10.23.

³⁰ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 2.11.1.

³¹ Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos* 1.6. PG 23:80; Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Psalms* 1. PG 69:720.

³² All biblical citations are from the Authorised Version.

160 11:13 suggested that the patriarchs ‘died in faith, not having received the promises, but
161 having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them’. Many, then, answered ‘yes’ to
162 the second question, though with caveats about the ‘carnal’ Hebrews and those who did
163 not consent to the covenant. Therefore, while it was a common assertion amongst
164 defenders of the immortal soul that both the Old and New Testaments equally
165 demonstrated a future state and the soul’s immortality, many theologians disagreed.

166 When Socinians published extensively on these issues in the late sixteenth and early
167 seventeenth centuries, they again raised the profile of these questions and made them
168 considerably more controversial. Today Socinians are mostly associated with
169 antitrinitarianism, but an often overlooked yet similarly dangerous aspect of Socinian
170 thought was their mortalism.³³ Many Socinians seem to have been convinced of the soul’s
171 natural mortality by the mortalist undertones they found in their reading of the Old
172 Testament. Lelio Socinus, who was influenced by the Italian Anabaptist and mortalist
173 Camillo Renato (c.1500-1575), emphasized the resurrection—not the immortality of the
174 soul—in his only surviving work on eschatology.³⁴ His nephew, Fausto Socinus (1539-
175 1604), argued at more length about the problematic nature of post-Reformation
176 eschatology, which jettisoned purgatory but wrongly held onto the immortal soul. When
177 he left Italy and resettled in Poland in 1579, Socinus joined the Polish Brethren, who were
178 at the time located primarily in Raków. In a surviving epitome of a Colloquium held there
179 in 1601, Socinus cited 2 Tim. 1:10 to argue that it was only through Jesus Christ that
180 immortality was made known.³⁵ In *Pro Racoviensibus responsio* (1581), a response to
181 Jacobus Palaeologus’s *Defensio verae Sententiae de magistratu politico* (1580), Socinus
182 claimed that the old and new covenants differed markedly from each other, and cited
183 Hebrews 8:6 in support. There was no mention of the promise of eternal life in the old
184 covenant; at most the law contained a shadow of future goods.³⁶ Likewise, in a letter to
185 the antitrinitarian Erasmus Johannes (c.1540-1596) written in 1590, Socinus claimed that

³³ Major studies of Socinianism mention mortalism in passing: Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge, 2010); John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1951). Two key exceptions are the work of George H. Williams, cited below, and Stephen Snobelen, ‘Isaac Newton, Socinianism and “The One Supreme God”’, in *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Martin Mulsow and Jan Rohls (Leiden, 2005), 241-98; Stephen Snobelen, ‘Socinianism, Heresy and John Locke’s *Reasonableness of Christianity*’, *Enlightenment and Dissent* 20 (2001), 88-125.

³⁴ George Williams, ‘Socinianism and Deism: From Eschatological Elitism to Universal Immortality?’, *Historical Reflections* 2 (1975), 265-90, at 277-8. For Lelio Socinus and Renato, see George H. Williams, ‘Camillo Renato (c. 1500?-1575)’, in *Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus*, ed. John A. Tedeschi (Firenze, 1965), 103-183.

³⁵ ‘Epitome of a Colloquium Held in Raków in the Year 1601’, in George H. Williams (ed. and trans.), *The Polish Brethren: Documentation of the History and Thought of Unitarianism in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Diaspora, 1601-1685* (Montana, 1980), 101-4. This text was reproduced in Jan Hoornbeck, *Socinianismus confutatus*, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1644), 3:505-22.

³⁶ Fausto Socinus, *Ad Iac. Palaeologi librum, cui titulus est, defensio verae sententiae de magistratu politico, &c. Pro Racoviensibus responsio* (Amsterdam, 1656), 107: ‘[I]d evidenter demonstrate, quod in Veteris Foederis promissis nulla aeternae vitae sit mentio’; *ibid.*: ‘Umbram enim habens Lex futurarum bonorum’. His biblical citations for the Mosaic law are Ex. 23, Lev. 26, Deut. 27-8: see *ibid.*, 108.

186 Ezekiel 18 was not a reference to eternal life because the writer was not aware of a future
187 state.³⁷

188 When Socinus died in 1604, an authoritative systematization of Socinian thought was
189 offered by Johann Völkel (c.1565-1618), who was baptized into the Socinian church in
190 1585 after studying theology at Wittenberg. Völkel's *De vera religione* (1630) argued at
191 length about the lack of explicit notice of eternal life in the Old Testament. He claimed
192 that the promises of the Mosaic religion were only temporal, and cited Hebrews 8:6 to
193 support his contention that the promise of eternal life was not in the old covenant.³⁸ Moses
194 enumerated promises for obedience, but never mentioned eternal life as one of them.³⁹
195 Instead, the promises were earthly, transient, and momentary (*terrena, fluxa,*
196 *momentaneaue*).⁴⁰ Important to Völkel were instances of Jews who did not believe in
197 future rewards and punishments. The obvious example was that of the Sadducees, who
198 were especially notable because they claimed to draw their beliefs only from the Mosaic
199 law.⁴¹ No one before Christ ventured to suppose that the law contained eternal life.⁴² Yet
200 there was nothing stopping the Hebrews from developing an expectation of a future life
201 from the light of nature. Indeed, even the gentiles were able to grasp the hope of
202 immortality through reason alone.⁴³

203 Throughout the sixteenth century, therefore, the claim that the promises of the Old
204 Testament were temporal rather than eternal was increasingly confessionalized. By the
205 early seventeenth century it was strongly associated with the spectre of religious
206 heterodoxy, whether Anabaptist or Socinian. This is despite the fact that the so-called
207 religious 'radicals' were in fact not saying anything on the matter that was too dissimilar
208 from their Reformed rivals, as we will see in more detail below.

209

210 **Arminianism and Hebraism in the Dutch Republic**

211

212 Socinian approaches to Old Testament promises were particularly influential on
213 Arminian theologians in the Dutch Republic.⁴⁴ Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) argued

³⁷ Fausto Socinus, *Fausti Socini Senensis opera omnia in duos tomos distincta*, 2 vols. (Irenopoli, 1656), 1:437-8.

³⁸ Johann Völkel, *De vera religione* (Raków, 1650), 2/19:31-2: 'Promissa porro Mosaicae religionis, omnia hujus vitae commoda omnemque terrenam felicitatem continebant'; *ibid.*, 3/11:56: '[A]pparet, promissionem [vitae sempiternae] istam in prisco illo foedere factam minime fuisse'.

³⁹ *Ibid.*: 'Aliter enim nec novum Testamentum melius, nec in melioribus promissis constitutum esse, jure dici potuisset. Rem autem plane, ut dicimus, ita se habere, inde perspicuum est, quod Moses de industria dataque opera antiqui illius foederis promissa enumerans, nullam vitae sempiternae mentionem facit'.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ The classic references are Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, 18.2 and Josephus, *Bel. Jud.*, 2.8.14.

⁴² Völkel, *De vera religione*, 3/11: 62: 'Ex quorum numero hoc, quo de agimus, nequaquam esse hinc patet, quod antequam Christus illud explicaret, nemo unquam extitit; qui vel suspicari auderet, tale quid illo comprehend'.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3/11: 63: 'Nihil enim prohibet, quo minus etiam illa a quopiam sperentur, quorum nulla ei sit facta promissio: cum externas quoque gentes quandam immortalitatis spem animis suis concepisse compertissimum sit...Tanta enim est humani ingenii capacitas atque solertia, ut cum homines natura immortalitatis sint apperentissimi...'

⁴⁴ For the influence of Socinians on Arminians more generally, see Kęstutis Daugirdas, 'The Biblical Hermeneutics of Socinians and Remonstrants in the Seventeenth Century', in *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe: Jacobus Arminius (1559/60-1609)*, ed. Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, Keith D. Stanglin, and

214 that the commands and promises of the Mosaic law were carnal and corporeal, and
215 directed at an earthly inheritance.⁴⁵ However, this did not mean that the patriarchs were
216 exempt from eternal life, or that they did not expect it; on the contrary, they received in
217 faith the promises made in Genesis 3:15 concerning the descendants of Eve.⁴⁶ These ideas
218 were extended by Arminius's student, Simon Episcopius, who was the most influential
219 Remonstrant of the 1610s. Episcopius attended the University of Leiden from 1600,
220 receiving his MA in 1606.⁴⁷ Statutes required students to study philosophy, catechesis,
221 and Latin, but Episcopius also studied Hebrew and Greek, which were considered the
222 cornerstones of the theology curriculum.⁴⁸ Episcopius attended the lectures of Arminius
223 as well as those of Arminius's Reformed rival Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641). By the
224 time Episcopius returned to Leiden in 1610 after a brief period studying Hebrew in
225 Franeker, his status amongst Arminians had grown considerably, even as Arminianism
226 itself became increasingly controversial.⁴⁹ After Arminius's death, his follower Conrad
227 Vorstius (1569-1622) was appointed his successor, but Contra-Remonstrants issued such
228 protests that the Curators of Leiden University instead hired moderate representatives
229 from both sides: Jean Polyander and Episcopius.⁵⁰ Episcopius remained in Leiden until
230 he was fired after the Reformed success at the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619), after which
231 he lectured at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam from 1628 until his death.

232 In his capacity as theology professor at Leiden, Episcopius taught in public and
233 private disputations, which were compiled and printed after his death.⁵¹ It was here that
234 Episcopius's 'Socinian' leanings first became particularly apparent, and this was grist to
235 the mill of his Reformed opponents, one of whom prompted an official investigation into
236 his teaching on account of the claims that were made in a public practice disputation (as
237 opposed to a public disputation *pro gradu*) under Episcopius's moderation. The
238 disputation in question took place on 7 May 1616, and saw one Peter Geesteranus
239 defending theses 'De convenientia & discrimine veteris & Novi Testamenti', with
240 Episcopius as *praeses*.⁵² Although this was not the case in all university contexts, Keith

Marijke Tolsma (Leiden, 2009), 89-113; Carl O. Bangs, 'Arminius and Socinianism', in *Socinianism and its Role in the Culture of the XVIth to XVIIIth centuries*, ed. Lech Szczucki (Warsaw-Lódź, 1983), 81-4.

⁴⁵ Jacobus Arminius, 'Disputationes Publicae de Nonnullis Religionis Christianae capitibus, ab ipso compositae', in *Opera theologica* (Leiden, 1629), 271: 'Discrimen inter Legem quatenus per Mosem data est, & Vetus Testamentum appellatur, & Evangelium qua Novi Testamenti nomine venit, tertium est in materia mandatorum & promissionum. Promissiones enim in V.T. pleraeque corporales fuerunt & terrenam haereditatem veteri homini convenientem, spondentes'.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 272.

⁴⁷ Mark A. Ellis, *Simon Episcopius' Doctrine of Original Sin* (New York, 2006), 32.

⁴⁸ Keith Stanglin, *Arminius on the Assurance of Salvation: The Context, Roots, and Shape of the Leiden Debate, 1603-1609* (Leiden, 2007), 36-7; F.G.M. Broeyer, 'Theological Education at the Dutch Universities in the Seventeenth Century: Four Professors on their Ideal of the Curriculum', *Dutch Review of Church History* 85 (2005), 115-32, at 118-9.

⁴⁹ Ellis, *Episcopius' Doctrine*, 33-4.

⁵⁰ Peter T. van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn L'Empereur (1591-1648)*, trans. J.C. Grayson (Leiden, 1989), 22.

⁵¹ Simon Episcopius, 'Disputationes Theologicae Tripartitae, Olim in Leydensi, tum publice, tum privatim duobus Collegiis habitae', in *Opera theologica*, ed. Stephanus Curcellaeus, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1650), 2/2:386-460.

⁵² Simon Episcopius, 'Disputationes theologiae, Publice olim in Academia Leydensi habitae', in *Opera theologica*, 2/2:401-3.

241 Stanglin has argued that private and public theological disputations in Leiden were nearly
242 always written by professors in this period.⁵³ While we lack the original argumentation
243 of Episcopius's disputations, the theses survive, and in this disputation the agreements
244 between the law and gospel were covered before the differences. A key distinction lay 'in
245 speciali materia' of the promises. The promises of the law concerned temporal and earthly
246 happiness, and these certainly prefigured heavenly beatitudes.⁵⁴ Yet the gospel introduced
247 a better hope (*melior spes*), and great promises that the law was ignorant of (*lex omnem*
248 *ignoraverit*). These included the absolute remission of sins, the gift of the holy spirit, and
249 the awaited eternal life in heaven.⁵⁵ For this Episcopius cited the laws laid out in Lev. 26
250 and Deut. 27–8, as well as the typological ideas presented in 2 Tim. 1:20 and Heb. 10:1.
251 The Israelites 'firmly believed in the divine promises, which contained types and shadows
252 of heavenly things'.⁵⁶ But whether they had a clear understanding of what the types and
253 shadows actually signified was something that Episcopius for the time being left for
254 others to investigate.⁵⁷

255 We can see here a similarity to Socinian ideas. Kęstutis Daugirdas, writing about
256 Episcopius's reading more generally, has shown that Episcopius read a number of
257 Socinian works after being made professor at Leiden, including Völkel's *De vera*
258 *religione*.⁵⁸ Episcopius had also already been accused of Socinianism while at Franeker.⁵⁹
259 Now his 1616 disputation unsettled one particular attendee: Festus Hommius (1576-
260 1642), a Reformed minister in Leiden. After becoming aware of the theses, Hommius
261 warned the Burgomasters of Leiden and the Curators of the university that Episcopius
262 was spreading Socinianism amongst the students.⁶⁰ An investigation was called, and a
263 few days later, on 9 May, Episcopius and Hommius were summoned to the city hall.
264 Hommius declared that what was particularly at issue was the fifth thesis, 'in speciali
265 materia promissorum', and its suggestion that the promises of the New Testament were

⁵³ Keith Stanglin, *The Missing Public Disputations of Jacobus Arminius: Introduction, Text, and Notes* (Leiden, 2010), 13, 43-100. In Leiden this was less likely to be the case for *disputationes publicae pro gradu*. See also Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang, 'From Oral Disputation to Written Text: The Transformation of the Dissertation in Early Modern Europe', *History of Universities* 19 (2004), 129–87.

⁵⁴ Episcopius, *Opera*, 2/2: 401: 'Legis enim promissiones beatitudinem coelestem praefigurantes, temporales & terrena felicitate fuerunt'.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2/2:401: '*Evangelium* vero melioris spei introductio vocatur: Heb. 7.19. & 8.6. promissa continere dicitur maxima & pretiosa, 2 Pet. 1.4. plenariam nimirum peccatorum remissionem (cum lex omnem ignoraverit:) Luc. 1.77. Act. 13.38. *Spiritus S. copiosam donationem*, Joh. 4.23. *vitamque aeternam* aliquando in coelo degendam, 2 Tim 1.10'.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 'Deinde qua crediderunt firmiter promissis divinis, quae typos & umbras rerum coelestium continebant'.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 'An vero fides haec in omnibus & singulis (Prophetas enim & alios nonnullus excipi volumus) conjunctam sibi habuerit notitiam & scientiam claram atque apertam typorum & umbrarum, quod videlicet typi atque umbrae essent rerum earum quae nobis nunc apparent, & in Christo postmodum evenerunt, disquiri permittimus'.

⁵⁸ Daugirdas, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', 100, 108ff; Kęstutis Daugirdas, *Die Anfänge des Sozinianismus: Genese und Eindringen des historisch-ethischen Religionsmodells in den universitären Diskurs der Evangelischen in Europa* (Göttingen, 2016), 450-63.

⁵⁹ Daugirdas, *Sozinianismus*, 441-3.

⁶⁰ The episode has recently been described in Daugirdas, *Sozinianismus*, 450-6. Key primary sources include Jacobus Trigland, *Ontrouwe des valschen Waerschouwers* (Amsterdam, 1616); Philipp van Limborch, *Historia vitae Episcopii* (Amsterdam, 1701), 55-78; Gerard Brandt, *Historie der reformatie en andere kerkelyke geschiedenissen in en ontrent de Nederlanden*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1674), 2:25.

266 better than those of the Old. Episcopius responded by pointing out that these were the
267 very words of scripture in Heb. 8:6. The promises of eternal life were in some ways
268 present in the old covenant, but they were veiled by shadows.⁶¹ In any case, the arguments
269 had been borrowed from propositions of Arminius.⁶² Hommius then asserted that what
270 was more suspicious was the claim that these types were not understood by all the
271 believers described in the Old Testament. Episcopius denied that this claim was ever
272 made, reading from the theses themselves that ‘all the faithful who were under the Old
273 Testament, had indeed some knowledge of the types and shadows; but that it was obscure
274 and but small’. This was indeed in the theses, but Episcopius’s next claim, that the
275 prophets had ‘clear and naked perceptions of them’, was not made as explicitly there.⁶³
276 Thanks to the intervention of the Curators, the investigation ended without a fierce
277 conflict, but Hommius afterwards continued to study the theses closely. When they met
278 again, Episcopius claimed that he had studied Socinian books and therefore knew that
279 there was no Socinianism in his theses; after all, he asserted, Socinians believed that the
280 Old Testament did not contain even images of eternal life. Hommius sarcastically
281 responded by claiming that he certainly did not know Socinian writings as well as
282 Episcopius seemed to. The Curators eventually released the two, exhorting them to live
283 in mutual charity for the sake of the university’s reputation. But the next day,
284 unbeknownst to Episcopius, they invited Hommius privately to present his proofs for the
285 Socinianism of Episcopius’s teachings, and soon after a number of polemics appeared
286 that accused Episcopius of the heresy.⁶⁴

287 The fact that this same question on the relationship between the Testaments had been
288 disputed several times in Leiden in the preceding years allows us to see where Episcopius
289 followed or deviated from his earlier colleagues. From 1596-1609, disputations at the
290 Leiden theology faculty were organized in a series that aimed to take students through
291 the key elements of theology over one to three years. Six of these series or cycles took
292 place in these years under the moderation of the theology professors.⁶⁵ In the first
293 repetition, a student under the supervision of Lucas Trelcatius defended theses ‘De
294 similitudine et discrimine veteris et novi testamenti’ on 9 December 1598.⁶⁶ The student
295 was none other than Hommius himself, and the fact that Hommius had disputed the topic
296 during his studies probably suggests that he later considered himself well-prepared for an
297 altercation with Episcopius on the issue. In the disputation the theses offered the same
298 line of argument that Hommius was to take nearly two decades later: both the Old and
299 New Testaments promised the same things: one spirit of adoption, one faith, and the
300 inheritance and hope of eternal life (*haereditas, et spes vitae aeternae*).⁶⁷ The
301 Anabaptists, not the Socinians, were the explicit foil here; they erred by saying that the

⁶¹ Brandt, *Historie*, 2:236.

⁶² Daugirdas, *Sozinianismus*, 452.

⁶³ Brandt, *Historie*, 2:236.

⁶⁴ Daugirdas, *Sozinianismus*, 453-6.

⁶⁵ Stanglin, *Public Disputations*, 14-17.

⁶⁶ *Disputationum Theologicarum repetitarum...de veteris et novi testamenti similitudine & discrimine* (Leiden, 1598). It also appears in a later collection of the first repetition, *Compendium theologiae thesibus in academia Lugduno-Bat.* (Leiden, 1611), 137-42.

⁶⁷ *Compendium theologiae*, 138.

302 hope of the fathers in the Old Testament was limited to earthly goods only.⁶⁸ The Old
303 Testament used obscure language for this doctrine. The heavenly inheritance was offered
304 under the guise of earthly goods, such as the land of Canaan; compared to the onerous
305 and obscure types of the Old Testament, the New Testament delivered the doctrine more
306 plainly.⁶⁹ Yet it was nevertheless clear that the patriarchs aspired to eternal beatitudes,
307 and for this a number of supporting verses were offered.⁷⁰

308 The issue was discussed again in the third repetition of the cycle, when Gomarus
309 presided over a disputation on 28 May 1603, ‘De Legis & Euangelii, hujusque diversorum
310 statuum comparatione’.⁷¹ As was typical, the disputation declared that the law was the
311 doctrine of works while the gospel was the doctrine of faith.⁷² It then claimed that in the
312 Old Testament God promised eternal life for perfect obedience.⁷³ Importantly, the
313 patriarchs recognized the heavenly promises that were hidden under earthly ones.⁷⁴ The
314 law and the gospel had ‘the same target and end, namely eternal life’.⁷⁵ This last phrase
315 also appeared in a disputation moderated by Arminius under the fourth repetition, on 19
316 October 1605, ‘De Legis & Euangelij Comparatione’.⁷⁶ Although the theses
317 acknowledged, like those in 1598 and 1603, that eternal life was in some ways promised
318 in both the law and the gospel, it also argued that the promises in the Old Testament were
319 chiefly fleshy (*carnalis*), and about an earthly inheritance, which suited the ‘old man’
320 (Heb. 10:1).⁷⁷ The promises in the gospels, meanwhile, were spiritual, and about a
321 heavenly inheritance.⁷⁸ In another disputation on the same topic under Arminius on 19
322 March 1608, the same arguments were offered.⁷⁹ As a theology student, Episcopius would
323 have likely attended some of these disputations, and perhaps even participated as an
324 opponent. As might be expected, he was influenced by Arminius’s arguments. He copied
325 nearly all of the comparisons that Arminius had made between the law and the gospel; at
326 times the wording was identical. But while Arminius was strategically silent about the

⁶⁸ Ibid.: ‘Errat itaque impurus ille Seruetus cum Anabaptistis qui spem Patrum in V. T. solis terrenis bonis limitatam afferuit’.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 139.

⁷¹ The question did not appear in the second repetition (according to the list provided in Stanglin, *Public Disputations*, 591-2), but this cycle was far shorter than the others: it ran only from 1601-1602 and included only 24 disputations (the first repetition, meanwhile, included 63).

⁷² Franciscus Gomarus, *Disputationum theologiarum decima-septima, de Legis & Euangelii, hujusque diversorum statuum comparatione* (Leiden, 1603), sigs R2^v, R3^r. Petrus Clignetius was the respondent. For a list of topics in the original cycle, see Donald Sinnema and Henk van den Belt, ‘The *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (1625) as a Disputation Cycle,’ *Church History and Religious Culture* 92 (2012), Appendix A.

⁷³ Ibid., sig. R2^v: ‘Prior promittit vitam aeternam, sub conditione legis implendae: posterior proponit salute gratis, per gratiam Dei, sola fide accipiendam’.

⁷⁴ Ibid., sig. R3^v.

⁷⁵ Ibid.: ‘fuit et est idem scopus, et finis, nempe vita aeterna’.

⁷⁶ *Syntagma disputationum theologiarum, in Academia Lugduno-Batava quarto Repetitarum* (Rotterdam, 1615), 188-97; Arminius, *Opera*, 270-274.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 270-1.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 270: ‘mandata enim ejus pleraque carnalia fuerunt, continentia Chirographum contrarium nobis: promissiones vero plæræque corporales, & terrenam hæreditatem, veteri homini convenientem, spondentes: Euangelium vero spiritualia & promissionem hæreditatis cœlestis’.

⁷⁹ This disputation was not published in the seventeenth century, but can be found in Stanglin, *Public Disputations*, 233-43.

327 actual beliefs of the Hebrews and their understanding of the types, Episcopius hinted that
328 the question was up for debate.

329 The theses Hommius defended in 1598 suggest a genuine interpretative disagreement
330 with Episcopius on the question. But why, if Episcopius said not much more than
331 Arminius on the subject, did he suddenly elicit such anger from Hommius in 1616? The
332 context of the Remonstrant disputes provides an answer. While the Dutch Republic was
333 accustomed to religious diversity and was fairly tolerant, Calvinism had gained a
334 stronghold in the northern provinces through the immigration of Reformed French
335 refugees and the arrival of Calvinist books.⁸⁰ The conflict between Gomarus and
336 Arminius in the early seventeenth century was not confined to academic theologians, but
337 was played out in poems, plays, and vicious pamphlets.⁸¹ From 1608-1618 their
338 difference of opinion developed into virtual civil war.⁸² The years surrounding the
339 contested disputation were particularly busy for Hommius, a key Contra-Remonstrant
340 leader at the time. He had been attacked by the polemicist Bernardus Dwinglo in three
341 pamphlets in 1616, and in the same year was one of the scribes at the ‘secret synod’ of
342 Contra-Remonstrants.⁸³ In 1615, along with two others, Hommius published *The Further*
343 *Advice Concerning the Conference at Delft* (*Naerder advijs over de conferentie tot Delff*
344 *gehouden*), which examined Remonstrant pleas for toleration and ultimately rejected
345 them, partly because the Remonstrants requested not just toleration, but also to be allowed
346 to preach and publish their views. Moreover, it was made clear that the Remonstrants had
347 no good answers as to whether or not they differed from their opponents on more than
348 just the Five Articles of Remonstrance (1610).

349 That this is what was at stake for Hommius is supported by his *Specimen*
350 *controversiarum Belgicarum*, published in 1618 in expectation of the Synod of Dordt, in
351 which he argued that the ‘so-called major issue of predestination served as a smokescreen
352 meant to conceal the promotion of some version of Socinian theology’.⁸⁴ The *Specimen*
353 listed 37 articles of faith, specifying for each where the Remonstrants departed from
354 orthodoxy and citing specific passages in Remonstrant works. Considering the passion
355 with which Hommius pursued Episcopius in 1616, it is unsurprising to see at that Article
356 XXV, ‘De abrogatione Legis Ceremonialis & de Convenientia V. & N. Testamenti’,

⁸⁰ Henry Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration* (New York, 1967), 24-9, 86-110; Peter Y. De Jong, ‘Rise of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands’, in *Crisis in the Reformed Churches: Essays in the Commemoration of the Great Synod of Dort, 1618-1619*, ed. Peter Y. De John (Grand Rapids, 1968), 9; W. Stanford Reid, ‘The Transmission of Sixteenth Century Calvinism’, in *John Calvin, His Influence in the Western World*, ed. W. Stanford Reid and Paul Woolley (Grand Rapids, 1982), 50.

⁸¹ Freya Sierhuis, *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics and the Stage in the Dutch Republic* (Oxford, 2015), esp. chap. 2.

⁸² van Rooden, *Theology*, 21.

⁸³ Christine Kooi, *Liberty and Religion: Church and State in Leiden’s Reformation, 1572-1620* (Leiden, 2000), 146; Erik A. de Boer, ‘De Causa Ecclesiae Campensis or: How Four Local Ministers Ended up on the National Agenda’, in *More than Luther: The Reformation and the Rise of Pluralism in Europe*, ed. Karla Apperloo-Boersma and Herman J. Selderhuis (Göttingen, 2019), 317-18.

⁸⁴ Aza Goudriaan, ‘The Synod of Dordt on Arminian Anthropology’, in *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619)*, ed. Aza Goudriaan and Fred van Lieburg (Leiden, 2010), 81. This is Goudriaan’s translation; the original is Festus Hommius, *Specimen controversiarum Belgicarum* (Leiden, 1618), sig. **2^{r-v}: ‘non tantum merito suspicentur, sed omnino etiam arbitrentur, plausibilem illam de Praedestinatione controversiam, quinque illis Articulis expressam, prophasin tantum esse, sub qua Socinianismum (aliquantulum forte interpolatum aut incrustatum) in Reformatas hasce Ecclesias introducere conentur’.

357 Hommius complained that, ‘contra hunc Articulum’, the Remonstrants claimed that in
358 the Old Testament there were no promises of eternal life.⁸⁵ Naturally, he cited
359 Episcopius’s 1616 disputation, but he also included references to Arminius’s disputations
360 and a number of passages from Episcopius’s other disputations.⁸⁶ For example, in a
361 private disputation under Episcopius ‘De Foedere Veteri’, it was argued that the promises
362 in this covenant were carnal, temporal, and for the present life, even if eternal life was
363 figured therein.⁸⁷ Hommius also cited similar passages from two Remonstrants who had
364 done damage to their reputations by reissuing Socinian works: *De officio hominis*
365 *Christiani*, published by Heinrich Welsing in 1610, and *De auctoritate sanctae*
366 *scripturae*, published by Vorstius in 1611.⁸⁸ It seems likely that the Hommius/Episcopius
367 controversy, then, was not merely about Episcopius’s claims about the Old Testament *per*
368 *se*, but rather Hommius’s search for evidence that the Remonstrants were espousing
369 opinions that went beyond the five points of the Remonstrance.

370 Episcopius, convinced that Festus had misquoted him, replied in *Optima Fides Festi*
371 *Hommii* (1618) and charged Hommius with citing his private and public disputations as
372 they were copied down by divinity students, which would inevitably be inaccurate.
373 Episcopius listed several articles with misquotations, including Article XXV. He pointed
374 out that while Hommius quoted him as saying ‘Promissa vero omnia V.T. sunt carnalia
375 & temporalia’, what he actually said was ‘Promissa vero omnia FERRE sunt carnalia &
376 temporalia’.⁸⁹ This defence, however, fell on deaf ears. When followers of Gomarus
377 called the Synod of Dordt, which ultimately condemned Remonstrant positions,
378 Hommius’s book set the terms of the discussion.⁹⁰ While the issue did not make it into
379 the Canons of Dordt, ‘De Veteri et Novo Testamento’ was one of the disputations in
380 *Synopsis purioris theologiae* (1625), a new cycle of disputations which aimed to be a
381 unified Reformed voice after Dordt.⁹¹ Here it was argued that the Law, like the gospel,
382 promised eternal life, even if it was ‘put forth as something to be viewed in terms of
383 earthly benefits’.⁹² André Rivet, the *praeses*, was clear that the idea that the Israelites
384 were like swine who lived for earthly pleasures without hope of immortality was to be
385 rejected.⁹³ This was no doubt a reference to the passage in Calvin’s *Institutes* cited above.

⁸⁵ Hommius, *Specimen*, 96.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 96-8.

⁸⁷ Episcopius, *Opera*, 2:450. Hommius also cited two further public disputations: ‘De veteri foedere’ and ‘De promisso justificationis’, at *Opera*, 2:420 and 435.

⁸⁸ Hommius, *Specimen*, 96-8. For Vorstius’s Socinian sympathies, see Daugirdas, ‘Biblical Hermeneutics’, 94-5.

⁸⁹ Simon Episcopius, *Optima fides Festi Hommii* (Leiden, 1618), sig. A4^r. Hommius had indeed misquoted the theses. But note that both were talking here about one of Episcopius’s private disputations, rather than the 1616 public disputation: see Episcopius, *Opera*, 2:450.

⁹⁰ Goudriaan, ‘Synod of Dordt’.

⁹¹ Dolf te Velde (ed.), *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae/Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation: Volume 1: Disputations 1-23*, trans. Riemer A. Faber (Leiden, 2014), 574-602. For the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, see Sinnema and Belt, ‘*Synopsis*’, as well as Keith Stanglin, ‘How Much Purer is the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (1625)? A Comparison of Leiden Disputations before and after Dordt’, *Church History and Religious Culture* 98 (2018), 195-224.

⁹² te Velde, *Synopsis*, 585, 587. It was also asserted in the disputation ‘De Evangelio’ that the Law offered the promise of eternal life no less than the gospel, but with the difference that the Law had the condition of perfect righteousness. See *ibid.*, 573.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 591.

386 A later theology disputation ‘De foedere’ at Leiden in 1647, under the great Hebraist
387 Constantijn L’Empereur (1591-1648), offered similar arguments. When it came to the
388 substance of the promised goods, both Testaments were in agreement: both offered
389 justification, resurrection, and eternal life.⁹⁴ Daniel 12:2 (‘And many of them that sleep
390 in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and
391 everlasting contempt’) was called on for support. The church under the Old Testament
392 was guided by earthly goods to a heavenly inheritance.⁹⁵ Yet God’s people under the Old
393 Testament expected resurrection and eternal life, as Genesis 17:7 made clear (‘And I will
394 establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations
395 for an everlasting covenant...’).⁹⁶ Although L’Empereur was a leading Hebraist, the
396 disputation did not draw on his deeper knowledge of Hebrew. This is perhaps
397 unsurprising for, as Peter Van Rooden has argued, L’Empereur’s published disputations
398 in general cited Hebrew words in a wholly traditional manner.⁹⁷ L’Empereur saw himself
399 as a theologian first and foremost, and the disputations themselves were held in the
400 theology faculty while he was professor of theology. The above Reformed and Arminian
401 professors did not draw on their Hebrew skills when addressing this question either,
402 assuming that the theses can be taken as representative of the now lost argumentation of
403 the disputations. When L’Empereur briefly addressed the issue in his edition of *Middot*
404 (1630), his arguments were unchanged: ‘Abraham with Isaac and Jacob accepted the
405 promises about the land of Canaan in such a way that they expected a heavenly
406 inheritance because of them, even though that was hidden in shadow’.⁹⁸ Early modern
407 Christian Hebraists hailed from a number of confessions, and confessional allegiances
408 often stimulated exegetical and theological conclusions. L’Empereur was a key Reformed
409 leader in the Dutch Republic, and in this case his confessional loyalties held sway.

410 The power gained by Contra-Remonstrants after Dordt probably prompted the exiled
411 Arminians, including Episcopius, to choose their words carefully in their confession of
412 1621. When treating the Old Testament and eternal life in Chapter 8.9, all that was
413 claimed was that God opened the door of salvation ‘and the way of immortality to them
414 [all sinners], even as it was prefigured many ages before under various types, figures and
415 shadows of the Old Testament’.⁹⁹ Despite this relative silence, the idea that the Old
416 Testament did not explicitly promise eternal life remained widespread amongst Arminian
417 theologians. The Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), another Remonstrant well

⁹⁴ ‘De foedere’, in *Disputationes Theologicae Octodecim* (Leiden, 1648), 73: ‘Deinde in substantia ipsa sive promissis bonis, omnino duo illa Testamenta congruunt. Haec autem bona pertinent ad iustitiam; vel resurrectionem; ac, quae eam consequitur, vitam aeternam’.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 77: ‘sub V.T. Ecclesia adhuc puerilis, adminiculo & typo terrenorum beneficiorum ad coelestem haereditatem ceu manu ducebatur’.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75: ‘Ad secundum vero quod attinet: resurrectionem & vitam aeternam sibi promissam [Dan 12:2] expectarunt [Hebr 11:35] V. T. confoederati, ut vel Abrahami solum exemplum demonstrat. Nam illud foedus, Ero Deus tuus [Gen 17:7], ita describitur ab ipso Deo [Exodus 3:6], quod post mortem ipsam duret...Et promissionem foederis de terra Canaan [Gen 15:7], ita acceperunt veteres, Abrahamus, Isaac, Iacob, David, &c. ut vi illius promissionis vitam aeternam expectarent’.

⁹⁷ van Rooden, *Theology*, 214-5.

⁹⁸ Cited in *ibid.*, 151.

⁹⁹ Mark A. Ellis (ed.), *The Arminian Confession of 1621* (Oregon, 2005), 72-3: ‘Deus...ostium salutis aeternae, viam que immortalitatis pandere ipsis voluerit: prout id ipsum multis ante seculis sub variis typis, figuris, & umbris veteris Testamenti’.

418 familiar with Socinian works, held similar views to Episcopius on the matter.¹⁰⁰ In *De*
419 *veritate religionis Christianae* (1627) Grotius claimed that in the Mosaic Covenant,
420 Moses promised nothing to the Jews besides good in this life, fruitful land, plentiful
421 storehouses, victory over enemies, and a long and healthy life. ‘All, beyond this, is either
422 hidden in mysterious darkness, or discoverable only by learned disquisition and abstruse
423 reasoning’. This was why the Sadducees, who followed only the laws of Moses, denied
424 future rewards and punishments.¹⁰¹ In a letter to Gerardus Vossius in late 1620, Grotius
425 argued that in the law of Moses, mention of eternal life was only made through
426 shadows.¹⁰² When Christ rebutted the Sadducees in Matthew 22:32, he did so ‘not with
427 direct words, but with inferences’.¹⁰³ However, like Episcopius, Grotius acknowledged
428 that this did not apply to the rest of the Old Testament—the writings of the prophets were
429 a different case altogether.¹⁰⁴

430 Episcopius himself was more forceful in his posthumously published *Institutiones*
431 *theologicae* (1678), based on the lectures he delivered at the Remonstrant Seminary from
432 1634 onwards. Here Episcopius was clear that there was no promise of eternal life in the
433 laws of Moses, nor any indication of an eternal reward.¹⁰⁵ He claimed that his views on
434 the matter had been drawn from ‘the writings of the Rabbis’ (*‘ex scriptis rabbinorum’*),
435 but unfortunately cited no particular works.¹⁰⁶ Episcopius further argued that this
436 conclusion was confirmed by the New Testament, because when Christ defended the
437 resurrection of the dead against the Sadducees he did so not from the law but from God’s
438 general promise that he would be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.¹⁰⁷ Moreover,
439 the disagreement amongst the Jews concerning a future state suggested that the law
440 provided nothing clear about eternal life. The Sadducees, for example, were certain that
441 a future state was not promised in the laws of Moses but had crept in through the
442 Kabala.¹⁰⁸ Episcopius’s stronger stance in these lectures makes sense in light of their
443 location—a confessional seminary, rather than public disputations at the Leiden theology

¹⁰⁰ For Grotius and Socinianism, see Jan-Paul Heering, *Hugo Grotius as Apologist for the Christian Religion: A Study of his Work De veritate religionis christianae (1640)* (Leiden, 2004).

¹⁰¹ Hugo Grotius, *De veritate religionis Christianae* (1627), 2:10. The translation is Spencer Madan (trans.), *An English Translation of the Six Books of Hugo Grotius, on the Truth of Christianity* (London, 1814), 53.

¹⁰² Hugo Grotius to Gerardus J. Vossius, Nov/Dec 1620, in *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen (The Hague, 1936), 2:37-8: ‘In Mosis lege...aeternae vitae non fieri mentionem nisi per umbras’.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*: ‘Christi auctoritate, qui Sadducaeos non verbis directis, sed ratiocinando refellit’.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*: ‘In Mosis lege (non dico in veteri Testamento: nam de prophetis, praesertim posterioribus, res longe alia est) aeternae vitae non fieri mentionem nisi per umbras’.

¹⁰⁵ Simon Episcopius, *Institutes theologicae: privatis lectionibus Amstelodami traditae*, in *Opera Theologica*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1650), 1:52: ‘in tota lege Mosaica nullum vitae aeternae praemium, ac ne aeterni quidem praemii indicium vel vestigium extat’.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 53: ‘Quod et Servator noster non obscure innuit, cum resurrectionem mortuorum colligit Mat. Xxii. non ex promisso aliquo legi addito sed ex generali tantum illo promisso Dei, quo se Deum Abrahami, Isaaci, et Jacobi futurum sponderat: quae tamen illa collectio magis nititur cognitione intentionis divinae sub generalibus istis verbis occultatae aut comprehensae, de qua Christo certo constabat, quam necessaria consequentia, sive verborum vi ac virtute manifesta, qualis nunc et in verbis Novi Testamenti, ubi vita aeterna et resurrectio mortuorum proram et puppim faciunt totius religionis Christianae, et tam clare ac diserte promittuntur ut ne hiscere quidem contra quis possit’.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

444 faculty, which we should remember were open to the public—and the context: a period
445 of relative freedom for Arminianism, as compared to the highly charged 1610s.

446 Before we move to the fortunes of this debate in England, it is worth making a further
447 brief comparison to the similar arguments that were offered by members of the Jewish
448 community in Amsterdam in the first half of the seventeenth century. This community
449 was composed largely of *conversos* from the Iberian Peninsula, Jews forced to convert to
450 Christianity by the Inquisition in the late fifteenth century, who were then able to revert
451 to Judaism in more tolerant Amsterdam.¹⁰⁹ The Jewish community was not cut off from
452 its Christian neighbours, and so when in 1624 the Portuguese-born *converso* Uriel da
453 Costa (c.1583/4-1640) argued that the Mosaic law made no mention of immortality or
454 future rewards and punishments he drew the attention of Jews and Christians alike.¹¹⁰ For
455 da Costa, the law repeatedly said ‘do good so that it go well with thee and with your
456 children after thee’.¹¹¹ More dangerously, da Costa used this argument to undermine the
457 doctrine of the soul’s immortality. For example, da Costa maintained that Genesis 3:19
458 (‘...for dust thou art, and unto dust thou return’) revealed that man was created mortal
459 and subject to death.¹¹² In contrast with many of the writers discussed above, da Costa
460 was not interested in the differences between the Old and New Testaments, and given his
461 re-conversion to Judaism upon his arrival in Hamburg in 1614, this is not particularly
462 surprising. Instead, Da Costa wanted to identify discrepancies between the Torah and the
463 Oral Tradition, the latter of which he viewed as a corrupt fable. Before emigrating with
464 his family, da Costa studied Canon Law at Coimbra intermittently between 1600 and
465 1608, served as secretary to the archbishopric of Coimbra, acted as treasurer to the church
466 of São Martinho de Cedofeita, and took minor orders, receiving the tonsure.¹¹³ While da
467 Costa may have come to his views about the scriptures and immortality by taking
468 seriously some claims about the Old Testament made in passing by his rivals in the 1610s
469 and early 20s, he needed to look no further than the classics of Christian theology for
470 claims about the Pentateuch and immortality, texts to which he had ready access as a
471 *converso*.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Much has been written on the history of Jewish communities in the Dutch Republic. In English, see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Indiana, 1997); Daniel M. Swetschinski, *Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-century Amsterdam* (Liverpool, 2004); and the essays in *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Leiden, 2008).

¹¹⁰ Uriel da Costa, ‘Exame das tradições phariseas’, in *Uriel da Costa: Examination of Pharisaic Traditions*, ed. and trans. H.P. Salomon and I.S.D. Sassoon (Leiden, 1993), 316. For responses to da Costa, see Sina Rauschenbach, ‘Mediating Jewish Knowledge: Menasseh ben Israel and the Christian *Respublica litteraria*’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 102 (2012), 561-88. For interaction between the Jewish community and its Christian neighbours, see Yosef Kaplan, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden, 2000), 30-7.

¹¹¹ Da Costa, *Exame*, 330.

¹¹² Da Costa, *Exame*, 313.

¹¹³ H.P. Salomon and I.S.D. Sassoon, “Introduction”, in *Uriel da Costa*, 4-7. While da Costa claimed that all he knew of Judaism came only from the scriptures, it is now clear that he and his mother were ‘Marranos’, Jews who continued to practice Judaism in secret after their forced conversion to Christianity. I.S. Revah, *Uriel da Costa et Les Marranes de Porto* (Paris, 2004), esp. 513-29.

¹¹⁴ Da Costa first aired his claims publicly while living in Hamburg in a 1616 broadside (now lost) that he sent to the leaders of the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish congregation in Venice. When the celebrated preacher and scholar Leon Modena rebutted da Costa’s theses in *Magen ve-sina* (‘Shield and Buckler’), he

472 For the most part the above debates took place in theological mode, even though the
473 question of immortality—and the immortality of the soul in particular—had been
474 discussed at length in philosophy after the Fifth Lateran Council in the early sixteenth
475 century. In contrast to the theologians discussed above, da Costa was disputing
476 specifically about the immortality of the soul rather than the theological question of the
477 difference between the Testaments or covenants. Da Costa knew that in discussions of
478 the former a philosophical perspective was called for, even if he thought that scripture
479 offered more important and compelling proofs.¹¹⁵ The question of the soul’s immortality
480 was, after all, absent from theological discussions of the differences between the
481 Testaments; the unstated assumption was that if the Hebrews did not believe in the
482 immortal soul or in future rewards and punishments, then they were in the wrong.
483 However, for da Costa, the law’s silence on the issue proved that the Hebrews believed
484 in the mortality of the soul, and were right to do so. Da Costa argued that philosophy
485 could not demonstrate the soul’s immortality. He noted that while Aristotle posited an
486 incorporeal soul, he affirmed that it could not exist without a body. Although one of da
487 Costa’s opponents, Samuel da Silva, attacked his skill in philosophy, da Costa defended
488 himself by pointing out that the two of them had attended Coimbra together, and that da
489 Costa still had his lecture notes with him. As he proudly declared, ‘I study Aristotle
490 too!’¹¹⁶ After facing excommunication and several years of public condemnation, da
491 Costa wrote an autobiography, *Exemplar humanae vitae*, before shooting himself in 1640.
492 Tellingly, when an anonymous ‘eminent citizen’ discovered the *Exemplar*, they sent it to
493 none other than Episcopius, whose nephew Philipp van Limborch (1633-1712) published
494 it in 1687.¹¹⁷ Although Episcopius continually affirmed the immortality of the soul, the
495 ‘citizen’ clearly recognized similarities between the two men’s approaches to the issue.¹¹⁸

496 What all this suggests is more openness on this issue outside of Reformed orthodoxy.
497 The Reformed insistence of the presence of eternal life in the Old Testament makes sense
498 in light of the increased tendency in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century for
499 Reformed theologians to claim that the types of the Old Testament were so clear that the
500 patriarchs and Hebrew people understood them. For example, Franciscus Junius,
501 Arminius’s predecessor in the Leiden theology chair, was clear about the intelligibility of

advocated for the necessity of the Oral Tradition by asking ‘where [in the Laws of Moses] do we find clearly set out the survival of the soul, posthumous reward and punishment, paradise and Gehenna, resurrection, etc.?’ As has been argued, this concession was further fodder for da Costa, who had not included discussion of immortality in his original broadside but went on to make it a key focus of his larger treatise. See Salomon and Sassoon, ‘Introduction’, 28.

¹¹⁵ Da Costa, *Exame*, 346.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 362-5.

¹¹⁷ The *Exemplar* was first printed as an appendix to Philipp van Limborch’s *De veritate religionis Christianae amica collatio cum Erudito Judaeo* (Amsterdam, 1687). It was published in Dutch at the same time, reprinted in Latin in Basel in 1740, and translated into English as *The Remarkable Life of Uriel Acosta* (London, 1740). For the *Exemplar* being sent to Episcopius, see the introduction to *Remarkable Life*, 94. Notably, Van Limborch also argued that the Old Testament did not mention an afterlife, and promised only earthly rewards: see Peter van Rooden and J. W. Wesselius, ‘The Early Enlightenment and Judaism: The ‘Civil Dispute’ between Philippus Van Limborch and Isaac Orobio De Castro (1687)’, *Studia Rosenthaliana* 21 (1987), 140-53.

¹¹⁸ For Episcopius on the immortality of the soul, see Ellis, *Episcopius’ Doctrine*, 113, 153-5; Episcopius, *Institutes Theologicae*, chap. 5.

502 Old Testament types. For Arminius, meanwhile, the Jews were not able to understand
503 anything specific about Christ from the types.¹¹⁹ The Reformed position on the
504 Pentateuch and immortality was nevertheless forged in the fires of intra-confessional
505 polemic. As we have seen, Calvin was willing to acknowledge that the message of eternal
506 life in the Old Testament was far from explicit. When later in the century the famous
507 Dutch covenant theologian Herman Witsius (1636-1708) was even more concerned with
508 the Socinians, he argued that God promised eternal life through his first covenant with
509 Adam. It is not surprising, Witsius claimed, that we find no explicit mention of this in the
510 Old Testament, for Moses only ‘sparingly’ described the terms of the covenant, as it was
511 soon to be replaced by another.¹²⁰

512

513 **Socinianism, mortalism, and Hebraism in England**

514

515 In 1552, the Forty-Two Articles of the English Church already addressed the Anabaptist
516 threat by explicitly maintaining that the Old Testament was not contrary to the New, for
517 in both eternal life was offered to humankind. It was wrong, therefore, to suggest that ‘the
518 old Fathers did look only for transitory promises’. This formulation was retained in the
519 Thirty-Nine Articles. Nonetheless, the claim that eternal life was not in the Pentateuch
520 nevertheless proved influential in England, where Anabaptism, Socinianism, and
521 Arminianism also gained ground partly as a result of migration and close commercial ties
522 with the Low Countries.¹²¹ Socinianism arrived in England through a number of channels,
523 but particularly through the *Racovian Catechism*, based on Socinus’s manuscripts and
524 compiled by Völkel and others. It was printed in Raków in 1605 and in England in 1609.
525 To the question of whether promises of eternal life were contained in the laws of Moses,
526 the text answered ‘no’. But did this mean that the Hebrews did not believe in the doctrine?
527 Well, nothing stopped them from hoping for eternal life, considering how desirable it
528 was.¹²² The German Socinian Joachim Stegmann (1595-1633) advanced similar ideas in
529 his *Brevis disquisitio* (1633), which was translated into English by John Biddle (1615-
530 62) and published in London in 1653.¹²³ As suggested above, the claim that the Old
531 Testament did not contain promises of eternal life was useful for supporting mortalism,
532 which had been available in England at least since the publications of William Tyndale
533 and John Frith in the 1520s and 30s.¹²⁴ The mortalist work of General Baptists,
534 Muggletonians and other mid-century mortalist sects were important in spreading these
535 ideas in the 1640s and 50s.¹²⁵ Moreover, the claim that the Old Testament contained no

¹¹⁹ Hardy, *Criticism and Confession*, 129-30.

¹²⁰ Herman Witsius, *The Oeconomy of the Covenants, between God and Man* [1677], trans. anon., 2 vols. (New York, 1804), 1:82-6.

¹²¹ McLachlan, *Socinianism*, 30.

¹²² *The Racovian Catechisme* (Amsterdam, 1652), 113.

¹²³ Bryan Ball, *The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley* (Cambridge, 2008), 78-80.

¹²⁴ For early English mortalism, see Norman T. Burns, *Christian Mortalism from Tyndale to Milton* (Cambridge, MA., 1972), ch. 1.

¹²⁵ The Baptist George Hammon published several mortalist works in the 1650s, which claimed that the immortal soul was not in the Old Testament, including *A Discovery of the Latitude of the Loss of the Earthly Paradise by Original Sin* (London, 1655). The second edition of Richard Overton’s mortalist tract *Man*

536 explicit mention of eternal rewards and punishments was relatively easy to find in
537 writings on covenant theology and theological works that did not expressly counter
538 Anabaptism or Socinianism.¹²⁶ However, in more polemical contexts tensions were high.
539 The biblical commentator Henry Hammond (1605-1660), who had Arminian sympathies
540 but was concerned with responding to the threat posed by *Brevis disquisitio*, argued that
541 not only the resurrection but also the immortality of the soul could be proved ‘by the
542 testimony of the Law’.¹²⁷ The Reformed clergyman Francis Roberts (1609-1675), citing
543 the Racovian Catechism, attacked the ‘vanity of the Socinian Error’ that eternal life was
544 never promised under the Old Testament.¹²⁸ In Cambridge in the 1650s, as in Oxford,
545 Reformed orthodoxy was briefly re-established.¹²⁹ It was in this context that the issue was
546 first disputed in Cambridge in 1655, in an anti-Socinian disputation under the moderation
547 of John Lightfoot.

548 Lightfoot matriculated from Christ’s College, Cambridge in 1617, and proceeded to
549 BA in 1621 and MA in 1624.¹³⁰ According to the cleric George Bright (d. 1696), while
550 at Cambridge Lightfoot excelled in Greek and Latin, but ‘neglected’ his Hebrew.¹³¹ This
551 was soon rectified when in 1626 Lightfoot became chaplain to Sir Rowland Cotton, a
552 keen Hebraist who encouraged Lightfoot to rapidly improve his language skills.¹³² A few
553 years later, while working closely with the collections at Sion College in London,
554 Lightfoot wrote his first study of Talmudic and Jewish customs, *Erubhin, or, Miscellanies*
555 *Christian and Judaicall* (1629). In the 1640s Lightfoot served in the Westminster
556 Assembly of Divines, where his by now immense Rabbinical knowledge proved useful
557 on numerous occasions.¹³³ From at least 1653, Lightfoot was involved in the production
558 of Brian Walton’s Polyglot, perusing drafts and providing Walton with lexicons and
559 manuscripts.¹³⁴ Lightfoot was also involved in, among other projects, the preparation of
560 Matthew Poole’s *Synopsis Criticorum*.¹³⁵ He was appointed master of Catharine Hall,

Wholly Mortal appeared in the same year. See also John Reeve and Lodowick Muggleton, *A Transcendent Spiritual Treatise* (London, 1652) and John Reeve, *A Divine Looking Glass* (London, 1656), both of which cited several Old Testament passages to argue for the mortality of the soul.

¹²⁶ See, for example, John Ball, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (London, 1645), 10; John Bisco, *The Glorious Mystery of Gods Mercy: Or, A Precious Cordiall for Fainting Soules* (London, 1647), 192; Herbert Thorndike, *An Epilogue to the Tragedy of the Church of England* (London, 1659), 81.

¹²⁷ Henry Hammond, *Annotations on the New Testament* (London, 1653), 107.

¹²⁸ Francis Roberts, *Mysterium & Medulla Bibliorum* (London, 1657), 843, see also 884-5, 1130. Similar concerns and arguments were raised in Thomas Blake, *Vindiciae foederis* (London, 1658), 219-221 and Anthony Burgess, *A Treatise of Original Sin* (London, 1658), 452-3.

¹²⁹ Nicholas Tyacke, ‘Religious Controversy’, in *History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford, 1997), 597.

¹³⁰ The fullest biographical account of Lightfoot is John Pitman’s ‘Preface to the Octavo Edition’, in *The Whole Works of Rev. John Lightfoot*, ed. John Pitman, 13 vols. (London, 1825), 1:v-cvi. Lightfoot was one of the most eminent Hebraists and rabbinical scholars in the seventeenth century, but he has been remarkably understudied.

¹³¹ George Bright, ‘Some Account of the Life of the Reverend and Most Learned John Lightfoot’, 43-62 in *Whole Works*, 1: 45.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 46-7.

¹³³ Chad Van Dixhoorn, ‘Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652’ (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2005); Chad Van Dixhoorn (ed.), *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 2012), vol. 1.

¹³⁴ ‘Letters to and from Dr. Lightfoot’, in *Whole Works*, 13:348-364.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 439-43.

561 Cambridge in 1643, and was made Vice-Chancellor of the university in 1654. By this
562 time Cambridge University Library held a considerable array of Hebraica.¹³⁶ In the 1660s
563 in particular, Cambridge was a hub for a group of Hebraists working on a Latin translation
564 of the Mishnah.¹³⁷ As Lightfoot's notebooks show, he read over both Talmuds often.¹³⁸
565 During this period Lightfoot published the multi-volume *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*
566 (1648-1671), which as we will see discussed the beliefs of the biblical Hebrews at great
567 length. As a Christian Hebraist, Lightfoot was interested in Jewish texts for their ability
568 to aid Christian exegesis. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was not studying them
569 with a view to converting the Jews: for Lightfoot the Jews would not ultimately be
570 converted.¹³⁹ Lightfoot was also concerned with countering heterodox sects, and in his
571 work he censured Millennialists, Anabaptists, Arians, and Socinians, denouncing popery,
572 Quakerism, and Socinianism in particular as heresies.¹⁴⁰

573 In 1655, on account of the illness of his colleague John Arrowsmith (1602-1659),
574 Lightfoot served as moderator to a divinity disputation that addressed whether 'Vita
575 aeterna promissa fuit sub Veteri Testamento'. While the theses and argumentation have
576 unfortunately not survived, Lightfoot's Latin determination on the question has. Here
577 Lightfoot was concerned with combatting the implications that Socinians had drawn from
578 these debates.¹⁴¹ A second question disputed alongside this was also directed against a
579 key Socinian doctrine: 'Status Integritatis fuit status Immortalitatis'.¹⁴² For Lightfoot, by
580 maintaining that eternal life was not promised under the Old Testament, Socinians were
581 'Sadducising'.¹⁴³ The respondent, Theophilus Dillingham (1613-1678), later Master of
582 Clare Hall and Archdeacon of Bedford, composed 32 lines of verse relating to the
583 question.¹⁴⁴ Serving as opponents to the disputation were other heavy-weight scholars,
584 including Ralph Cudworth, Regius Professor of Hebrew and Master of Clare Hall,
585 Cambridge at the time.¹⁴⁵ Cudworth was a well-suited opponent: he had Arminian
586 sympathies, and had read Episcopius's works by the following decade at the latest.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁶ Stefan C. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library: A Description and Introduction* (Cambridge, 1997), 7-15.

¹³⁷ David S. Katz, 'The Abendana Brothers and the Christian Hebraists of Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 40 (1989), 28-52.

¹³⁸ John Strype, 'An Appendix or Collection of Some More Memorials of the Life of the Excellent Dr. John Lightfoot, Most of Them Taken from Original Letters, or MSS. of His Own', in *The Works of the Reverend and Learned John Lightfoot D.D.*, ed. George Bright, 2 vols. (London, 1684), 1:xiii.

¹³⁹ Jace R. Broadhurst, *What is the Literal Sense?: Considering the Hermeneutic of John Lightfoot* (Eugene, OR., 2012), 11; Chaim Eliezer Schertz, 'Christian Hebraism in 17th-Century England as Reflected in the Works of John Lightfoot' (Ph.D., diss., New York University, 1983).

¹⁴⁰ Schertz, 'Christian Hebraism', 35. Lightfoot, 'Creed of the Sadducees', in *Whole Works*, 7:286-7: 'The great heresy abroad, in one part, is Popery... The great heresy abroad, in another party, is Socinianism... And I must be excused, if I take Quakerism to be a directful heresy'.

¹⁴¹ John Lightfoot, 'Determinatio', in *Whole Works*, 5:402.

¹⁴² For the Socinian idea that Adam was created mortal, see Mario Biagioni, *The Radical Reformation and the Making of Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2016), 65-9; Mark A. Herzer, 'Adam's Reward: Heaven or Earth?', in *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*, ed. Michael A.G. Haykin and Mark Jones (Göttingen, 2011), 162-82.

¹⁴³ Lightfoot, 'Determinatio', 405.

¹⁴⁴ Theophilus Dillingham, *Status integritatis fuit status immortalitatis* (Cambridge, 1655).

¹⁴⁵ John Hall, *Cambridge Act and Tripos Verses, 1565-1894* (Cambridge, 2009), 151.

¹⁴⁶ Dmitri Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science* (Cambridge, 2015), 511-12. Cudworth would come to explain that the meaning of 2 Tim. 1:10 was that while the Jews believed in the immortal

587 Referring to the arguments submitted in confirmation of the question by the respondent,
588 and those in rebuttal offered by Cudworth and others, Lightfoot suggested that the latter
589 had the more difficult task. This was because the promise of eternal life shone throughout
590 the whole Old Testament. Lightfoot structured his *determinatio* around three main
591 Socinian claims. The first was that there was no mention of eternal life in the Old
592 Testament, especially in the law. Here Lightfoot specifically cited the arguments of
593 Völkel. Lightfoot conceded that eternal life was more clearly revealed under the New
594 Testament, but this did not mean that the promise was not clearly revealed in the Old.
595 Immortality was offered under the Jewish covenant, just more obscurely and as if in a
596 dull whisper (*obscurius et quasi languidiore susurro*). The Jews were, in any case, still
597 able to recognise the promise. The key difference between the Old and New Testaments
598 was that in the latter it was revealed that eternal life was also available to the gentiles.¹⁴⁷

599 The second Socinian claim was that in the New Testament the revelation of
600 immortality was ascribed only to the gospel. In response, Lightfoot cited 1 Peter 1:10-12
601 and Heb. 8:8-9. The former suggested that the prophets foretold of the grace that would
602 come to them through Christ, and the latter that the Jews of the Old Testament were
603 expectant of a new covenant. It was true, Lightfoot argued, that the final and most noble
604 disclosure (*summa et nobilissima detectio*) of eternal life was reserved for Christ, but if
605 the Jews studied the prophets closely, and had the help of the spirit, they could have
606 grasped the hope of a future state. Finally, the Socinians claimed that the disciples did not
607 recognise the death and resurrection of Christ as a foreshadowing of eternal life, and this
608 suggested the Jews had no knowledge of the promise. In response, Lightfoot
609 distinguished between the time of the law of Moses (which extended to the death of
610 Malachi), and the time of the Pharisees. In the latter, the Jews were more interested in the
611 vanities of the Pharisees, and so lost touch with true tradition, and this explained why the
612 disciples, educated under the Pharisees, were ignorant of Christ's death and resurrection.
613 But this did not mean that the same was true of the Hebrews under Moses.¹⁴⁸ It was absurd
614 to think that God had guided the Israelites for three and a half thousand years, and yet
615 revealed nothing of eternal life.¹⁴⁹

616 Like Episcopius, Lightfoot was more cautious on this issue in a pedagogical and
617 polemical context than he was elsewhere. In his sermons and commentaries, Lightfoot
618 was less reticent to acknowledge that the revelation of eternal life in the Old Testament
619 was, in fact, severely limited. For example, in a sermon on Exodus 20:12, 'The Blessings
620 of Long Life', Lightfoot claimed that Christ proved the resurrection to the Sadducees in
621 Matthew only 'by an obscure collection or deduction' from the laws of Moses. Christ
622 would never have done this 'had there been plain and evident proof'.¹⁵⁰ In fact, the
623 promises given to Israel in the law were 'promises temporal, or of things concerning this

soul, they wrongly believed in the transmigration of souls: Ralph Cudworth, *True Intellectual System* (London, 1678), 568.

¹⁴⁷ Lightfoot, 'Determinatio', 406–9, 411.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 407-13.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 405: 'Quam absurdum et monstro simile sit, cogitare Deum, per ter millenos et quingentos pluresque annos, ecclesiam sub vera eaque severa religione exercuisse, nulla interim vitae aeternae exhibita vel promissione vel mentione?'

¹⁵⁰ John Lightfoot, 'The Blessings of Long Life', in *Whole Works*, 7:393.

624 life'. This was clear from Exodus 20:12, as well as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28,
625 which only referred to 'temporal and bodily things'.¹⁵¹ Lightfoot was, apparently, now
626 'Sadducising' himself. Although he cited Hebrews 8:8-9 in his *Determinatio*, Lightfoot
627 now cited Hebrews 8:6, which maintained that the gospel was established on better
628 promises. And, he argued, '[i]f the promises of the law had been heavenly promises, there
629 could not have been "better promises"'.¹⁵²

630 In a curious one-page document, *Promissiones Divinia, quae Judaicae*
631 *Ecclesiae...Breviter Collectae ex Prophetis* (undated), Lightfoot listed several promises,
632 but again all were temporal.¹⁵³ In the laws of Moses there was '[n]o mention of eternal
633 life, joys of heaven, salvation, or everlasting glory', and this is the reason that the
634 Sadducees denied the world to come.¹⁵⁴ In *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*, much of
635 Lightfoot's discussion of this question centred around the origins and beliefs of the
636 Sadducees. Lightfoot offered two main accounts of their origins. The first held that Zadoc
637 birthed the Sadducean heresy when he misinterpreted the teachings of his master,
638 Antigonus Socheus, mistakenly thinking that he had taught that there were no future
639 rewards or punishments.¹⁵⁵ This account was drawn from Maimonides.¹⁵⁶ But after
640 reading more of the work of the second century Rabbi Nathan, Lightfoot decided that the
641 Sadducean sect did not arise until long after Zadoc's death.¹⁵⁷ The heresy itself had been
642 around long before this, in the days of Ezra, and stemmed from a misreading of Ezekiel
643 3:7.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the Sadducee's denial of a future state, based on the claim that 'Moses
644 was of the same opinion', was in some ways understandable, as Moses only 'obscurely'
645 gestured towards this article of faith.¹⁵⁹

646 Why was eternal life not revealed in the Pentateuch? Lightfoot's view was that God
647 was content to delay its full revelation because he had actually already given the Hebrews
648 heavenly promises, long before the laws of Moses. In fact, they were promised to Adam
649 on his first day, at around 3pm. For this Lightfoot leaned on Moses's reference to 'the
650 cool of the day' in Genesis 3:8, and Paul's claim in Titus 1:2 that eternal life was promised
651 before the world began.¹⁶⁰ To Lightfoot, the Old Testament was composed of numerous
652 'types and shadows', and for the most part the Jews misunderstood the meaning of the
653 types.¹⁶¹ However, the knowledge that God revealed to Adam enabled the Hebrews to

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 7:392.

¹⁵² Ibid., 7:393.

¹⁵³ John Lightfoot, 'Promissiones Divinia, quae Judaicae Ecclesiae...Breviter Collectae ex Prophetis', in *Whole Works*, 2:444.

¹⁵⁴ Lightfoot, 'Long Life', 7:392.

¹⁵⁵ John Lightfoot, 'Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae', in *Whole Works*, 11:74.

¹⁵⁶ The source is Maimonides, *Pirkei Avot*, 1.3.

¹⁵⁷ Lightfoot, 'Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae', in *Whole Works*, 8:486-8. The source is *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, chap. 5.

¹⁵⁸ Lightfoot, 'Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae', 8:490.

¹⁵⁹ John Lightfoot, 'A Sermon preached at Hertford Assize, March 27, 1699', in *Whole Works*, 6:250.

¹⁶⁰ Lightfoot, 'Long Life', 7:395-6; John Lightfoot, 'A Sermon preached upon Exodus, xx.11', in *Whole Works*, 7:378-9; John Lightfoot, 'Harmony and Chronicle of the Old Testament', in *Whole Works*, 2:74.

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of Lightfoot's views on typology and allegory, see Broadhurst, *Literal Sense*, 160-195. Lightfoot never clearly explained his understanding of typology, so his views must be gathered from the ways in which 'type' and 'figure' are used throughout his work. He justifies typological interpretations only on the grounds that 'he found a correspondence': see *ibid.*, 188.

654 understand that the temporal promises of the law pointed to things eternal. Earthly
655 promises were used because the Israelite church was in its infancy, and therefore found it
656 easier to be sensible of earthly things than of spiritual things.¹⁶² By explaining the
657 revelation of eternal life in this way, Lightfoot's emphasis in his published work on the
658 temporal rewards of the Pentateuch was not in contradiction to his more reserved claims
659 in his *determinatio*. Moses mentioned only temporal promises, but this did not mean that
660 the Hebrews had no knowledge of future rewards and punishments. This was, after all,
661 an analogous position to that adopted in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647),
662 which Lightfoot was involved in composing.¹⁶³ But even if Lightfoot's views as presented
663 in his determination were not wholly inconsistent with what he claimed in other contexts,
664 it is nevertheless clear that when Lightfoot specifically addressed Socinianism he took a
665 more cautious stance, even citing different biblical passages as evidence in different
666 contexts.

667 The continued importance of the question to English theological pedagogy over the
668 next few decades is evident from the fact that in 1671 another Cambridge disputation
669 addressed whether eternal life was known under the Mosaic law.¹⁶⁴ Oxford disputations
670 also addressed the issue in 1669, 1671, and 1674.¹⁶⁵ While the theses and argumentation
671 of these disputations have not survived, it is likely that they were stimulated by the
672 *Harmonia Apostolica* (1669) by the theologian George Bull (1634-1710). Bull's book,
673 which boasted the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Canterbury Gilbert Sheldon,¹⁶⁶ noted
674 that there was much doubt about whether the Old Testament contained any promises of
675 eternal life.¹⁶⁷ Bull began by distinguishing between the covenant at Mount Sinai, and the
676 writings of Moses, the hagiographers, and the prophets. While there was no 'clear or
677 eloquent promise of eternal life', there were at best *indications* of a future life in Psalms,
678 Daniel, and Ezekiel.¹⁶⁸ We know that Bull was in general influenced by Grotius and
679 Episcopius.¹⁶⁹ One modern commentator has suggested that Bull's claims about the
680 immortality and the Pentateuch meant that Bull had 'wittingly or not, imported into
681 England, and disseminated, some of the key propositions of Socinian doctrines'.¹⁷⁰
682 However, as a comparison with Lightfoot's views (and those offered by other theologians
683 above) suggests, one did not have to be a Socinian to argue that the Pentateuch did not
684 explicitly contain eternal promises. In one of his defences, Bull claimed that 'if this be
685 Socinianism, Sadduceeism, or blasphemy, then (I shudder as I write the words) have the

¹⁶² Lightfoot, 'Long Life', 7:397-8.

¹⁶³ *The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines... Concerning a Confession of Faith* (London, 1646), 15-17, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Hall, *Act and Tripos Verses*, 165: 'Vita aeterna innotuit Judaeis sub lege Mosaica'.

¹⁶⁵ Bod. MS NEP/supra/Reg Qb [Register of Congregation 1659-69], fol. 176^r; NEP/supra/Reg Bd [Register of Congregation, 1669-80], fols. 203^r, 43^v.

¹⁶⁶ However, this was granted only after Bull had failed to get the approval of the Reformed Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Robert Saye in the mid-1660s; see Tyacke, 'Religious Controversy', 606-7.

¹⁶⁷ George Bull, *Harmonia Apostolica* (London, 1670), 215-16: 'Primo quaeritur an in V. Testamento nullum omnino exstet vitae aeternae promissum? De eo enim a nonnullis dubitatur'.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 'clarum ac disertum aeternae vitae promissum'.

¹⁶⁹ See Robert Nelson, *The Life of George Bull* (London, 1713), *passim*; Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford, 2008), 68-9.

¹⁷⁰ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 75-6.

686 inspired writers of the New Testament... put Socinianism, Sadduceeism and blasphemy
687 before us in many passages'.¹⁷¹ Again like Lightfoot, Bull was clear that the absence of
688 eternal life in the Mosaic Law did not mean that the Jews did not believe in immortality.
689 On the contrary, God ensured that the Jews would not 'remain in the letter of the law' by
690 providing a 'tradition' of a future state, handed down from the patriarchs, that would
691 'flourish even under the law', and be 'explained and confirmed by the preaching of the
692 prophets'. Clearly, then, 'the existence of the soul after the death of the body was believed
693 by the oldest of the Jews'.¹⁷²

694 On this matter Bull influenced leading figures such as John Tillotson, Sheldon's
695 successor as Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁷³ As Tillotson put it: '[t]he Promises and
696 Threatnings of the Law were only of temporal good and evil things'.¹⁷⁴ But this did not
697 mean that the Jews did not expect a future state: on the contrary, the light of nature
698 'suggested [it] to them', albeit in 'a wavering and uncertain' way.¹⁷⁵ Similar sentiments
699 appeared in the work of scholars such as Humphrey Hody. Hody claimed that the doctrine
700 of the immortal soul was not a necessary article of faith amongst the Jews, and this was
701 demonstrated by the Sadducees, who despite their denial of this doctrine were admitted
702 as 'true Israelites', and played important roles in the temple.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, Jeremy Taylor
703 argued that the promises of the Mosaic law were only of temporal blessings in this life,
704 and that whatever spiritual blessings were promised within these were kept obscure and
705 dark, and were understood by very few. This explained why the Sadducees, 'a
706 considerable Sect in that Church', denied a future state.¹⁷⁷ These views were in line with
707 recent developments in scholarship. John Marsham and John Spencer had concluded that
708 the Hebrews were philosophically primitive and had derived their rites from the
709 Egyptians.¹⁷⁸ As is often overlooked, both also claimed that the Hebrews did not fully
710 understand immortality. Spencer, for one, claimed that the mystery of immortality was
711 declared obscurely to the Hebrews, and under the veil of earthly things; it was left for the
712 Messiah to bring forth life and immortality clearly.¹⁷⁹ Marsham was more forceful about
713 Hebrew ignorance: 'post-mortem conditions little troubled them'.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷¹ George Bull, *Examen Censuæ*, trans. various (Oxford, 1843), 206-7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 213-4.

¹⁷³ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 61-3.

¹⁷⁴ John Tillotson, *Several Discourses of Death and Judgement, and a Future State*, 9 vols. (London, 1697), 4:115-6, 125.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 125. See also John Tillotson, 'Sermon I. Of the Nature of Faith in General', in *Sermons*, ed. Ralph Barker, 12 vols. (London, 1703), 12:2.

¹⁷⁶ Humphrey Hody, *The Resurrection of the (Same) Body Asserted* (London, 1694), 54, 89, 93-4.

¹⁷⁷ Jeremy Taylor, *Antiquitates christianae, or, The History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus* (London, 1675), xlvi-xlviii. See also Richard Kidder, *The Christian Sufferer Supported* (London, 1680), 45, 73.

¹⁷⁸ See now Dmitri Levitin, 'John Spencer's *De Legibus Hebraeorum* (1683-85) and "Enlightened" Sacred History: A New Interpretation', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 76 (2013), 49-92.

¹⁷⁹ John Spencer, *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus* (The Hague, 1686), 1:16: 'Mosis erat rerum coelestium umbras tantum & lineas quasdam obscuriores describere: vitam & immortalitatem in clarem lucem proferre, opus erat soli Messiae reservatum'.

¹⁸⁰ John Marsham, *Chronicus canon Aegyptiacus, Ebraicus, Graecus et disquisitiones* (London, 1672), 217: 'De statu post Mortem illi minus erant solliciti'. This translation is Dmitri Levitin's in *Ancient Wisdom*, 163.

714 For Spencer and Marsham, Hebraic primitiveness highlighted ‘God’s need to operate
715 in historical time through divine condescension’.¹⁸¹ Yet for the physician William
716 Coward, Hebraic primitiveness instead meant that the Hebrews were not contaminated
717 by heathen philosophy, and therefore should in fact be trusted. When Coward published
718 mortalist and materialist views about the human soul in the early 1700s, he argued that
719 ‘the generality of the Jews, nay, I may say universally, were of the Opinion, That Man
720 would die and never live again, especially the Sadduce[e]s’.¹⁸² Like da Costa, Coward
721 was interested first and foremost in disputing the immortality of the soul, so he also
722 brought a philosophical perspective to bear on the question. Yet it was Coward’s claims
723 about the biblical Hebrews that incensed his old Oxford friend William Nicholls, who
724 responded in volume five of his *Conference with a Theist* (1703). Here Nicholls spent
725 many pages arguing that the immortality of the soul and the existence of future rewards
726 and punishments were key parts of Jewish dogma. Notably, Nicholl’s arguments came
727 not from the Pentateuch, but from Samuel (the account of the witch of Endor), Maccabees
728 (the account of the mother and her sons who died for their faith) and later Jewish writers
729 like Maimonides and Rabbi Levi.¹⁸³ In a polemical atmosphere where mortalists like
730 Coward were drawing on scholarship about the Old Testament to undermine the
731 immortality of the soul, theologians like Nicholls were careful to defend the ‘orthodoxy’
732 of ancient Hebrew belief.

733

734 **Conclusion**

735

736 We can draw three broad implications from the story told in this chapter. The first is that
737 the centrality of typological argument to this issue demonstrates that typology remained
738 important to theologians and exegetes long after the Reformation. Even Socinians relied
739 heavily on typological interpretation when they addressed the matter. Different ideas
740 about the clarity of Old Testament types were central to how theologians answered the
741 question of Hebrew belief. While we now know that Protestant exegetes typically
742 ‘smuggled’ a rich variety of interpretive strategies into the literal sense, studies of the
743 steady persistence of typology in post-Reformation exegesis are lacking.¹⁸⁴ By tracing
744 the fortunes of a particular typological interpretation in sixteenth and seventeenth century
745 Protestant exegesis, this essay begins to fill this gap. Further insights into the survival of
746 typology into the eighteenth century could be gathered by studying the extensive debate
747 over Warburton’s *Divine Legation*, in which typology remained central.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Dmitri Levitin, ‘From Sacred History to the History of Religion: Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity in European Historiography from Reformation to “Enlightenment”’, *The Historical Journal* 55, (2012), 1139.

¹⁸² Coward, *Second Thoughts*, 395.

¹⁸³ William Nicholls, *Conference with a Theist, Part V* (London, 1703), 228-41.

¹⁸⁴ For useful overviews about the wealth of hermeneutic strategies used by Protestants, see the contributions in Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700* (Oxford, 2015), Part II. Hardy, *Criticism*, emphasises the continued important of typology throughout.

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, Robert Lowth, *A Letter to the Author of The Divine Legation* (Oxford, 1765).

748 Secondly, although it had patristic and even Calvinist precedent, the spectres of
749 heterodoxy and the religious ‘other’ made the claim about the Old Testament and eternal
750 life far more pressing. The claim was made more controversial through its newfound
751 association with Anabaptism and Socinianism in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth
752 centuries, even if its Arminian adoption helped it to return to the mainstream in England
753 in the later seventeenth century. But closer inspection reveals that scholars and
754 theologians on both sides were largely in agreement about the main question. The
755 difference between the views presented by Calvin, Völkel, Gomarus, Arminius,
756 Episcopius, Hommius, Lightfoot, and Bull was, on balance, not all that great. They all
757 agreed, though some more strongly than others, that the Pentateuch did not *explicitly*
758 promise eternal life. The difference between the old and new covenants was a constant
759 theme of the New Testament, so it was difficult to maintain that they were the same in
760 every respect. The related assertion that the Hebrews had no knowledge or belief in a
761 future state was undoubtedly more contentious, but a hard stance on this is relatively
762 difficult to find. Even for Völkel, the obscurity of the types notwithstanding, the
763 Hebrews found the truth about immortality through the light of nature. Even Toland,
764 though he was clear that Moses did not teach the immortality of the soul, did not claim
765 that the Hebrews themselves had no knowledge of a future state. In this sense, Toland’s
766 claim about Moses and immortality was not heterodox *per se*—and it was certainly not
767 simply a ‘deist’ claim. It was the anti-clerical uses to which Toland put the idea that
768 caught Warburton’s eye. Coward, on the other hand, was adamant that the Hebrews did
769 not believe in the immortality of the soul, and this idea, alongside the materialist
770 conclusions he drew from it, in some senses made him the more dangerous of the two.
771 What this suggests is that the dangers lay primarily in the uses to which claims about the
772 Old Testament and eternal life were put, and the theological systems within which such
773 claims were implanted.

774 Finally, although da Costa, Coward, and Toland were definitely heterodox, and
775 certainly used the Pentateuch’s supposed lack of eternal promises for heterodox ends, the
776 basic idea did not originate with them. As has been argued in other contexts, deist
777 arguments were often recycled from orthodox scholarship.¹⁸⁶ This is demonstrably the
778 case for Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, who in ‘A Letter, occasioned by one of
779 Archbishop Tillotson’s Sermons’ followed on from Tillotson’s suggestions regarding
780 Hebrew belief in eternal life with a discussion of how the immortality of the soul did not
781 prevail among the Jews until they became ‘acquainted’ with Greek philosophy.¹⁸⁷ Yet
782 this story cannot be reduced to a teleological narrative in which religious heterodoxy
783 stimulated innovative scholarship while ‘orthodox’ scholars merely towed the outdated

¹⁸⁶ For some examples of this argument, see Jonathan Sheehan, ‘Sacred and Profane: Idolatry, Antiquarianism and the Polemics of Distinction in the Seventeenth Century’, *Past & Present* 192 (2006), 35-66; Richard Serjeantson, ‘David Hume’s *Natural History of Religion* (1757) and the End of Modern Eusebianism’, in *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy*, ed. Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson (Leiden, 2012), 267-95.

¹⁸⁷ Viscount Bolingbroke, ‘A Letter, Occasioned by One of Archbishop Tillotson’s Sermons’, in *The Works of Lord Bolingbroke*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1841), 3:526-7. Bolingbroke was referring to the sermons collected in John Tillotson, *Sermons sur diverses matières importantes*, ed. J. Barbeyrac (Amsterdam, 1718).

784 party line. While talk of ‘self-defeating scholarship’ has become increasingly common,
785 we cannot assume that deism was the telos of the story. Warburton’s unconventional but
786 highly influential scholarly response to deism suggests that claims such as this which
787 acquired radical, anti-clerical meaning, could also later be defused.