

# Post-Restoration Reformed Anglicans

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## Abstract

The ejection of many of the Puritans from the Church of England in 1662 was not the end of the story for Puritanism, for Reformed theology, or for the gospel in the established church. This article looks at a common tendentious reading of church history and by examining the lives and teachings of three significant Anglicans in the later Stuart period—Edward Reynolds, William Gurnall, and Thomas Horton—shows that it results in a skewed perception of the evidence, leading to an underappreciation of the ministries of such people and a false understanding of the ecclesiastical challenges of those times.

## Keywords

*Restoration, Reformed theology, Calvinism, Arminianism, Anglicanism, predestination, perseverance, original sin, atonement*

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**W**hen Charles II came to the throne and restored the British monarchy in 1660, it ushered in a period of dramatic religious change. Some historians speak of the post-Restoration eclipse or the “overthrow of Calvinism.”<sup>1</sup> J. I. Packer says that after the Restoration,

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 13–36.

“Calvinism had the status only of an oddity maintained by nonconformists.”<sup>2</sup> It is true that the great ejection of 1662 was a tragedy,<sup>3</sup> yet scholars are increasingly coming to see the idea that it was the death of Reformed divinity in the national church as a misrepresentation. As Stephen Hampton has convincingly demonstrated, after the great ejection in 1662 the Reformed may not have been in the majority, but they remained nonetheless an extremely significant group within the Church of England.<sup>4</sup> That church had, after all, decided to continue holding to the clearly Protestant and Reformed statement of faith in the Thirty-Nine Articles.<sup>5</sup> Conscious of standing within a much wider European Reformed tradition, those who held to Reformed distinctives under and after Charles II were also keen to demonstrate that they were the heirs of a respectable homegrown branch of that movement. They kept the flame of Reformed theology burning even before the Evangelical Revivals of the eighteenth century gave that theological tradition a significant boost.

Many post-Restoration Reformed Anglicans epitomized what Hampton calls “Reformed divinity, but with Restoration curlicues.”<sup>6</sup> That is, some of them were content to hold to Reformed theology without rejecting all the ornamental twists associated with aspects of the neo-Laudian agenda. They sometimes had a devotion to episcopacy as if it were absolutely necessary for the church (of its *esse* not merely its *bene esse*); they wanted to actively suppress nonconformity, and they were rather fond of High Church stage props like robes, candles, elaborate church architecture, and furnishings.<sup>7</sup> This makes some of the Reformed Anglicanism of this period a peculiar and eccentric phenomenon at times within the wider intellectual movement but still recognizably Reformed in terms of its soteriology and other major doctrinal commitments. However, not every Reformed Anglican was like this; some of them were also thoroughgoing Evangelicals before that name became associated with the revivals of the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> James I. Packer, “Arminianisms,” in *Honouring the People of God: Collected Shorter Works of J. I. Packer* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 4:289.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Gatiss, *The Tragedy of 1662: The Ejection and Persecution of the Puritans* (London: Latimer Trust, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 269.

<sup>5</sup> On how even nonconformists like Owen were happy to stand by the doctrine of the Articles, see Lee Gatiss, “Owen and the Church of England,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of John Owen*, ed. John W. Tweeddale and Crawford Gribben (Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 2022), 170–96.

<sup>6</sup> Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> See Nicholas Tyacke, “Arminianism and the Theology of the Restoration Church,” in *Aspects of English Protestantism, c. 1530–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 334, and Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 24.

Too often when writing about the Evangelical Revival, historians have ignored the vibrancy of the conforming Reformed tradition as it continued to exist in the latter half of the seventeenth century. J. C. Ryle (1816–1900), for instance, informed his readers that before the Evangelical Revival, everything in the Church of England was natural theology and cold moral essays in the pulpit, and sermons were “utterly devoid of anything likely to awaken, convert, or save souls,” with nothing of the weighty Reformation doctrines for which our martyred Reformers had gone to the stake.<sup>8</sup> George Balleine (1873–1966), in his enduringly influential yet tendentious history of the Evangelical party in the church, calls this “the Glacial Epoch in our Church History ... only the cautious and the colourless remained ... [with] a dreary, drab-coloured faith, devoid of power or beauty.”<sup>9</sup> But is this characterization of the late Stuart and early Georgian church really fair? Is it correct to say, as David Bebbington does, that “the doctrine of justification by faith had well-nigh disappeared” and that there is scant evidence of a link between the Reformed tradition of the seventeenth century and the Evangelicals of the eighteenth?<sup>10</sup>

Hampton’s revisionist account of this period has led to a reassessment. He identifies at least twelve bishops, six deans, and several senior divinity professors with decidedly Reformed credentials in this period, not to mention several of the greatest scientific minds, one of the most celebrated preachers, two eminent patristic scholars, and some influential ecclesiastical courtiers.<sup>11</sup> More recently, Jake Griesel claims that even Hampton has significantly *underestimated* “the strength and numbers of conforming Reformed divines between the Restoration and the evangelical revivals (1660–c. 1730).”<sup>12</sup> Regarding the Reformed accounts of election and justification at this time, no less a Calvinist than John Owen (1616–1683) could claim in 1674 that it was “maintained by the most learned of the dignified clergy at this day.”<sup>13</sup> Owen thought that most leading Anglicans

<sup>8</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* (1885; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), 14.

<sup>9</sup> George R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911), 10–11. On how Balleine’s own personal theological priorities shaped his *History* and his divergent trajectory away from his Evangelical roots; see Andrew Atherstone, “George Reginald Balleine: Historian of Anglican Evangelicalism,” *Journal of Anglican Studies* 20.1 (October 2013): 1–30.

<sup>10</sup> David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 36.

<sup>11</sup> Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Jake Griesel, “John Edwards of Cambridge (1637–1716): A Reassessment of His Position within the Later Stuart Church of England” (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 2019), iii.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Goold, ed., *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1851), 2:304.

were sound on justification by faith alone, and he used this fact to defend himself and others from those who attacked dissenters from the Act of Uniformity (1662). The people Owen was speaking about, and those like them in the national church, worked hard to fortify a Reformed reading of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer, especially on justification, the Trinity, and predestination; and in Convocation (their national gathering) they fiercely resisted the latitudinarian liberalism of bishops like Gilbert Burnet, who sought to legitimize Arminianism with studiously ambiguous readings of the Articles.<sup>14</sup>

After the ejection of most of the Puritans from the Church of England in 1662, various theological problems arose within the dissenting community. They themselves were divided into various competing groups. A stress on “the Bible alone” to the exclusion and denigration of systematic and historical theology led to a great many Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist churches being fatally infected with Socinianism or Unitarianism in the century after the great ejection. As Michael Watts says in his classic study of the Dissenters in this period, “their neo-Arminianism predisposed them to look more favourably than their Calvinist brethren on liberal trends in theology.”<sup>15</sup> This tendency was due in no small part to greatly weakened ministerial subscription to articles of faith, which was sometimes resolutely nonexistent. Many dissenting nonconformist ministers and churches considered confessions of faith, even basic ones committing them to orthodox Trinitarianism, to be anathema. They were too closely associated with those persecuting Anglicans who imposed their Articles and Prayer Book on the established church and did not fit their *nuda Scriptura* hermeneutic.<sup>16</sup>

A drift toward Arianism or Socinianism was also evident within the Church of England in this period to some extent. However, because subscription to the standards or formularies of the faith was legally compulsory for clergy, the Church of England tended to resist Unitarianism more easily. Trinitarian faith was front and center in Article 1 of the Thirty-Nine Articles, for example, was preached in the *Homilies* or official sermons of the Church, and was baked into every service in the Book of Common Prayer. As Catherine LaCugna has rightly affirmed, “The liturgy far more than theology kept alive in Christian consciousness the trinitarian structure of Christian faith.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 28–31.

<sup>15</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 376.

<sup>16</sup> *Nuda Scriptura* or *solo Scriptura*, as opposed to the magisterial Reformers’ view of *sola Scriptura*, embraces a radical individualism that rejects the use of creeds, confessions, and tradition, preferring private judgment derived from personal Bible study alone.

<sup>17</sup> Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 210. Herbert John

The Church of England may have excluded many Puritans and been taken over by a more Arminianizing sort of crowd who held some of the levers of power. But it was not completely lost, and certainly at the official level it retained its Reformed soteriology as well as Trinitarianism. As Philip Dixon says, “The sheer rhythm of the Liturgy familiarized churchgoers with belief in the Trinity,”<sup>18</sup> and the same must surely be said of the constant repetition of, to take another example, Reformed ideas in the Collects (or brief weekly prayers) too,<sup>19</sup> not to mention the doctrine inculcated by the Prayer Book’s Communion service.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, many within the bounds of the national church retained a great sympathy for the Reformed theology of its Reformation confession and liturgy, which would later prove to be a force for the church’s renewal and revival. But that is what it was—a revival—not the imposition of an outside influence on the Church but the reinvigoration of a tradition that was very much alive.

To illustrate this thesis, we will look in this article at three exemplars of post-Restoration Reformed Anglicanism. We will meet Edward Reynolds, a Westminster Divine who was elevated to the episcopacy in the Restoration Church. We will encounter William Gurnall, a Puritan parish minister who was not ejected in 1662. And we will look at the career of Thomas Horton, a leading Puritan divine ejected in 1662 who later conformed and led the largest Reformed Anglican Church in the City of London. Finally, we will briefly touch on the polemical work of John Edwards, a man with an impeccable Puritan heritage, who joined the Restoration Church of England and tenaciously defended and promoted its Reformed credentials, providing leading Evangelicals of later generations, such as George Whitefield and Augustus Toplady, with the intellectual and theological arguments they needed to sustain their membership in the established church as thoroughgoing Calvinists. My hope is that by refamiliarizing ourselves with the ministries of such people, we will improve our understanding of the church in this period and increase our appreciation for those who publicly held the Reformed constitutional line during a difficult period when they were in many ways out of favor.

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MacLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 334.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 215–16.

<sup>19</sup> James A. Devereux, “Reformed Doctrine in the Collects of the First Book of Common Prayer,” *Harvard Theological Review* 58.1 (1965): 49–68.

<sup>20</sup> Lee Gatiss, *Light after Darkness: How the Protestant Reformers Regained, Retold, and Relied on the Gospel of Grace* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2019), 97–131.

## I. *The Reconciling Bishop: Reynolds*

Edward Reynolds (1599–1676) was born in Southampton, on the south coast of England, and educated at Merton College, Oxford, where he was noted for his skill in Greek. In 1622 he was appointed preacher at Lincoln's Inn before becoming a minister in Northamptonshire. His moderation was noted, particularly in *A Sermon Touching the Peace and Edification of the Church*, in which he made a distinction between fundamental doctrines and things indifferent, urging that in cases of heresy, idolatry, and tyranny we must of course contend for the faith (Jude 3), but that in other matters people should “be willing to silence and smother our private judgements, to relinquish our particular liberties and interests, to question and mistrust ... our singular conceits and fancies, than to be in any such thing stiffe and peremptory against the quiet of Gods Church.”<sup>21</sup>

He noted the many factions within Roman Catholicism and urged Protestants to “let such a Spirit of Peace and Meeknesse shew it self in our Lives, Doctrines, and Writings ... that they may never have advantage with the same breath to speak both truly and reproachfully against us.”<sup>22</sup> Humility was vital for maintaining the unity of the Spirit, and “Peace may in this case be preserved by moderating the fervour of our zeal against those that are otherwise minded.”<sup>23</sup> He concluded,

Lastly, so long as there is sound agreement in *Fundamentall Truths*, and in the *Simplicity of the Gospell*, wee ought rather to deny our wits, and to *silence our disputes* in matters meerly *Notionall* and *Curious*, which have no necessary influence into Faith and Godly living, than by spending our precious houres in such impertinent Contentions; for gain of a small Truth to shipwrack a great deal of Love; and while wee perplex the mindes of men with Abstruse and Thornie *Questions*, wee take off their thoughts from more necessary and spirituall employments.<sup>24</sup>

Reynolds was, moreover, a man of such firm Reformed convictions that he was invited to preach before the House of Commons in 1642 and to become a member of the Westminster Assembly in 1643. He signed the *Solemn League and Covenant*, a treaty for the preservation of the Reformed religion, in 1644. He had a hand in the composition of the Westminster Standards. In 1648, he was made Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and Vice Chancellor

<sup>21</sup> Edward Reynolds, *A Sermon Touching the Peace and Edification of the Church* (London, 1638), 7–8, 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 24; cf. Article 34 of the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563).



**EDWARD REYNOLDS**

1599-1676



of the University until a change in precarious political circumstances saw him replaced by the rising star of Independency, Owen. During the 1650s, he preached again to Parliament several times. After the death of Oliver Cromwell, he increasingly preached for peace, moderation, and an accommodation with Charles Stuart and the Episcopalians gathering around him. As the Restoration drew near, he was made a royal chaplain and pushed for a moderate settlement that would be acceptable to both Presbyterians and Episcopalians. In autumn 1660, the king made him Bishop of Norwich as part of an overture to “reconcilers” such as him in the hope of restoring peace to the church.<sup>25</sup> Some questioned whether his acceptance of this position was down to his covetous and political wife, Mary,<sup>26</sup> but Ian Atherton is surely right to assert that

Reynolds’ decision ... was in keeping with his character, his moves towards reconciliation in 1659–60, his advocacy of reduced episcopacy in the Worcester House declaration, and his long-standing call for unity within the church and conformity to its discipline and worship.<sup>27</sup>

As a bishop, Reynolds attempted to put into practice the reduced, Reformed model of episcopacy that had been outlined by Archbishop Ussher<sup>28</sup> and that he himself had advocated, even ordaining some dissenters to enable them to minister within the Church of England. He made an enduring contribution to the renewed edition of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662, which included his “Prayer of General Thanksgiving.”<sup>29</sup> Reynolds was a prolific author, so we can note in his many books what his major doctrinal commitments were. We cannot demonstrate Reynolds’s Reformed convictions on every subject, but we will sample some of his work on some key issues. For example, the continuance of the doctrine of justification *sola fide* in this period has been questioned by some, as we have seen. According to Reynolds, we are declared righteous by God because of the imputation of

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Baxter was invited to become Bishop of Hereford and Edmund Calamy to be Bishop of Lichfield as part of the same attempt, though both turned down the offers. There were rumors that Owen was also offered a bishopric in the 1660s.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London, 1691), 3:1085.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Atherton, “Reynolds, Edward (1599–1676),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter, *ODNB*], ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46:530.

<sup>28</sup> See Wallace Benn, “Ussher on Bishops: A Reforming Ecclesiology” in *Preachers, Pastors, and Ambassadors: Puritan Wisdom for Today’s Church*, ed. Lee Gatiss (London: Latimer Trust, 2011), 97–122.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Neil and J. M. Willoughby, *The Tutorial Prayer Book* (London: Harrison Trust, 1913), 147.



the active and passive righteousness of Christ to us by faith, which unites us to Christ only by grace and favor.<sup>30</sup>

Nay though wee could fulfill the whole Law perfectly, yet from the guilt of sinnes formerly contracted wee could no other way bee justified, than by laying hold by faith on the satisfaction and sufferings of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

When it came to understanding more about those “sufferings of Christ,” he advocated and defended the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement.<sup>32</sup>

The need for justification arises because of humanity’s sin, on which subject Reynolds held to the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. He wrote, “All men, and every part of man [is] shut up under the guilt and power of this sinne ... so is there sinne in every faculty of man.”<sup>33</sup> He writes that “First, in a wicked man, who is totally in the state of sinne, there is a Totall and absolute impossibility and impotency to doe any thing that is good.”<sup>34</sup> Reynolds also affirms the sinfulness of concupiscence along with the Thirty-Nine Articles (Article 9), which state that “concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.” This must be affirmed, he says, against what he calls “our new Pelagians.” These people

expressely contrary to the doctrine of *S. Paul*, and the Articles of the Church of England, with the Harmony of other Reformed Churches, deny the sinfulness of originall concupiscence, or that it *alwayes* lusteth against the spirit.<sup>35</sup>

What he terms “a broode of sinfull men” holds this opinion, noting in the margin works by Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Durand, Thomas Aquinas, and Robert Bellarmine. He is concerned throughout to counter those who, even in his own day, are “reviling the doctrine of the Reformed Divines” on this doctrine.<sup>36</sup>

He particularly laid into the Remonstrant theologian Simon Episcopius (1583–1643), who had led the Arminian party at the Synod of Dort

<sup>30</sup> Edward Reynolds, *An Explication of the Hundreth and Tenth Psalme* (London, 1632), 675.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 439–40.

<sup>33</sup> Edward Reynolds, *Three Treatises of the Vanity of the Creature: The Sinfulness of Sinne; The Life of Christ* (London, 1631), 136.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 236–37.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 156. Original sin remains in those who are regenerate, he affirms, against his opponents and in harmony with Article 9 (p. 160).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–99.

(1618–1619). Reynolds writes of Episcopius and his “wicked wordes” about the ability of natural man:

Absurd is the Doctrine of the Socinians, & some others, That unregenerate men by a meere naturall perception, without any divine superinfus’d light (they are the words of Episcopius, and they are wicked wordes) may understand the whole Law, even all things requisite unto faith & godlines.<sup>37</sup>

Aquinas had taught that original sin was not *purely* a privation (a taking away) but *also* a certain corrupt habit in us.<sup>38</sup> But Jacobus Arminius disagreed, saying that the “absence of original righteousness, only, is original sin itself.”<sup>39</sup> According to the *Confessio Remonstrantium* (1621), which Episcopius drafted, it is “proper or actual sins” that “obscure our mind concerning spiritual matters,” “blind us,” and “finally deprave our will more and more by the habit of sinning.” It is not original sin that does this.<sup>40</sup> On the Reformed side, the Canons of Dort therefore asserted that humankind suffered privation in the fall, which itself also produced in us both “horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment” and impure affections.<sup>41</sup> They say, “All men are conceived in sin. They are born children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil [*propensi ad malum*], dead in sin, and servants of sin.”<sup>42</sup> A generation later, Reynolds was firmly on the side of the Reformed here, writing of

*universall corruption* which hath in it *Two great evils*. First, A generall *defect* of all righteousness and holinesse in which wee were at first created; and secondly, an inherent *Deordination*, pravitie, evill disposition, disease, propension to all mischief, Antipathy, and aversation from all good.<sup>43</sup>

Reynolds, then, was clearly a Calvinist conformist, keen to be seen as in harmony with other Reformed divines.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 118, citing Episcopius, Arminius on Romans 7, and the Remonstrant declaration of faith.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, 82. Cf. James Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius*, trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (London, 1825; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), 2:492.

<sup>39</sup> Arminius, *Works*, 2:79. “Arminius, in his doctrine of original sin, stresses deprivation more than depravation.” Keith D. Stanglin and Thomas H. McCall, *Jacob Arminius: Theologian of Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 149. Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 339.

<sup>40</sup> Mark Ellis, *The Arminian Confession of 1621* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2005), 65 (§7.5).

<sup>41</sup> Canons of Dort 3/4.1. The text of the Canons is taken from W. Robert Godfrey, *Saving the Reformation: The Pastoral Theology of the Canons of Dort* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2019).

<sup>42</sup> Canons of Dort 3/4.3.

<sup>43</sup> Reynolds, *Three Treatises*, 135.

## II. *The Compassionate Continuer: Gurnall*

William Gurnall (1616–1679) was born the same year as Owen and was educated in Cambridge at that bastion of puritanism, Emmanuel College, for seven years. He became rector of Lavenham in Suffolk from at least 1644 until he died in 1679, through a period when Presbyterians were in the ascendancy, then the Congregationalists, and then the restoration of the Church of England. He was a well-known Puritan throughout all of this in a part of the country that was steadfastly committed to Reformation theology and practice. Some of the brightest and best Puritan ministers lived within 20 miles of him, including Owen and several members of the Westminster Assembly.

In 1656, Gurnall preached a sermon “at Stowe-Market in Suffolk ... before the Election of Parliament-men for the same County.” We can observe something of his underlying political and religious commitments from this sermon. “No sins lie heavier on Gods stomack, and make him more heart-sick,” he said, “then theirs who stand in high and publick place of Rule and Government.”<sup>44</sup> He spoke against Anabaptists who despise magistracy and order, and confessed that at present “’tis a blustering time ... England is now in travel [travail], and calls you to her labour; take heed that the ghost of your ruined Nation doth not haunt you to your graves, for denying your help,” despite “some unhappy disappointments in former Assemblies.”<sup>45</sup> It did not matter, he claimed, “what kinde of Government a people live under, as what kinde of Governors,” so whether England was a republic or a monarchy, it required godly members of Parliament.<sup>46</sup> Since most in attendance had undertaken in the *Solemn League and Covenant* (1643) to reform both church and state,

consider the solemn Obligation that lies upon us, by a National Covenant, (famous through the Christian world, and we infamous for the breach of it,) to promote, and procure with our utmost endeavours the Reformation of the Land. God hath, I beleeve, most of your hands to shew for this, and darest thou who hast bound thy selfe in such a Covenant, give thy voice for an unworthy man to sit in Parliament ...?<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> William Gurnall, *The Magistrates Portraiture Drawn from the Word* (London, 1656), 4; cf. “Consider the greatest hopes our enemies have is to ruine us by our own Councils: The time hath been, the plot was to blow up our Parliaments, now they labour to blow us up by our Parliaments; to make our Parliaments, I mean, blow us up by their destructive Councils, and a Nation cannot die of a worse death, then to be ruined by their Saviours” (p. 28).

<sup>45</sup> Gurnall, *Magistrates*, 12–13.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Gurnall stood against “Popery” and sects such as the Anabaptists, Seekers, and Quakers because “these errors are forerunners of *Popery*.”<sup>48</sup> But at such a turbulent time, what England needed was “men of Healing spirits,” so that

If you can find any that have more compassion towards this divided Nation then others, especially whose bowels work more tenderly over Gods people in the Land, and their unbrotherly contentions, who are for expedients, how to compromise those differences, those are the men fit for such a time as this.<sup>49</sup>

Ministers and magistrates must work together to find a way forward: “Indeed they are the two legges on which a Church and State stand. He that would saw off the one, cannot mean well to the other; an *Anti-ministerial* spirit, is an *Anti-magistratical* spirit; the Pulpit guards the throne.”<sup>50</sup>

This helps make sense of the fact that in 1662, Gurnall decided not to leave the Church of England or be ejected from it. He was ordained presbyter by Bishop Edward Reynolds two days before the great ejection in August 1662, an act that would have required him to renounce the *Solemn League and Covenant* and declare his allegiance to King Charles. For this he was lambasted by some, including the author of a scurrilous tract with a scathing title: *Covenant-renouncers, desperate-apostates*: “Neither is Mr. Gurnal alone in these horrible defilements, hateful to the Soul of God & his Saints,” it claimed, “but he is compassed about with a *Cloud of Witnesses*, (even in the County where himself liveth, as well as elsewhere) men of the same order of *Antichristian Priesthood*, and Brethren in the said iniquity with himself.”<sup>51</sup> As J. C. Ryle wrote in his brief nineteenth-century biography of Gurnall,

Whatever opinions we may hold about Gurnall’s conformity, we must all allow that the course he took was not likely to make him a favourite with either of the two great religious parties into which England at that time was divided. ... He was a Puritan in doctrine, and yet he steadfastly adhered to the Church of England. He was a minister of the Church of England, and yet a thorough Puritan both in preaching and practice. In fact, he was just the man to be disliked and slighted by both sides.<sup>52</sup>

Ryle says he even checked Gurnall’s handwriting on the subscription document to assure himself that Gurnall really did sign it.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps because

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>51</sup> *Covenant-Renouncers, Desperate-Apostates* ([London], 1665), 6.

<sup>52</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Lee Gatiss (London: Lost Coin, 2015), 112.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 143.

both of them shared a Puritan background, Gurnall felt he could trust Bishop Reynolds (and vice versa) and was happy to be episcopally ordained by him and stay in his diocese. Perhaps Reynolds even asked him to stay so that his diocese was not emptied of good Reformed and Evangelical clergy after 1662 and even allowed him a degree of latitude in applying the new requirements of conformity, turning a blind eye to Gurnall's Puritan scruples about certain things in the liturgy. All this cannot have been easy because even Gurnall's father-in-law, another Puritan, seceded and left the Church of England. It must have been a relationally painful time.

Gurnall died in 1679, leaving at least eight children. Three of them married clergymen, and another was himself ordained, so Gurnall's legacy lived on in the Church of England for many decades. His funeral sermon was preached by the Bible commentator William Burkitt (1650–1703) from the nearby church of Dedham in Essex, which had a strong Puritan tradition. Gurnall is best remembered, however, for his magnum opus, *The Christian in Compleat Armour* (1655–1662), which is an extended look over three volumes at Ephesians 6:10–20. One volume was dedicated to Lady Mary Vere, Baroness of Tilbury, a prominent Anglican patroness of the Puritans, who was “strongly associated with the international Calvinist cause”<sup>54</sup> and whose funeral sermon Gurnall would himself preach in 1672.<sup>55</sup> That Gurnall was asked to preach on that occasion is a clear indication of his stature within the Reformed constituency. It is clear from the sermon that Gurnall associated most with the Reformed tradition, praising Archbishop Ussher and John Dod, for example.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, he was very clear that “the testimony on which the Saints Faith relies, is the infallible Word of God” and stated that we “rejoyce only in Christ Jesus, as the sole entire object of our trust.”<sup>57</sup>

*The Christian in Compleat Armour* is a work not of polemical but of practical divinity, of “spiritual consolation and exhortation,” as J. M. Blatchly puts it.<sup>58</sup> Yet we can still observe something of Gurnall's doctrinal commitments within it to confirm his Reformed connections and credentials. For example,

<sup>54</sup> Jacqueline Eales, “Mary, Lady Vere (1581–1671),” *ODNB* 56:310.

<sup>55</sup> William Gurnall, *The Christians Labour and Reward* (London, 1672). A poem by Anthony Withers printed at the end of the sermon claimed that Lady Vere was herself the epitome of Gurnall's *Christian in Compleat Armour*: “Gurnall display thy magazine, Here thy whole Armour may be seen.”

<sup>56</sup> Gurnall, *Christians Labour*, 114, 135–36; see David Field, “‘Decalogue’ Dod and His Seventeenth Century Bestseller,” in *Preachers, Pastors, and Ambassadors: Puritan Wisdom for Today's Church*, ed. Lee Gatiss (London: Latimer Trust, 2011), 149–204.

<sup>57</sup> Gurnall, *Christians Labour*, 60, 16.

<sup>58</sup> J. M. Blatchly, “Gurnall, William (bap. 1616, d. 1679),” *ODNB* 24:271.

on the doctrine of sin, which we have previously examined with regard to Reynolds, Gurnall too held to a Reformed account. “The state of unregeneracy is a state of impotency,” he affirmed. “The Spirit findes sinners in as helpless a condition, as unable to repent, or believe on Christ for salvation, as they were of themselves to purchase it.”<sup>59</sup>

A person in a Christlesse, gracelesse state is naked and unarm’d, and so unfit to fight Christs battels against sin and Satan .... A soule out of Christ is naked and destitute of all armour to defend him against sin and Satan .... The Christlesse state is a state of impotency.”<sup>60</sup>

He even speaks of “forlorne soules bound with the chaines of their lusts, and the irresistible decree of God for their damnation.”<sup>61</sup> This view he contrasted with the Arminian account:

The faithful servants of Christ tell sinners from the Word, that man in his natural state is corrupt and rotten, that nothing of the old frame will serve, and there must needs be all new; but in comes an Arminian and blows up the sinners pride, and tells him he is not so weak or wicked as the other represents him, if thou wilt thou mayest repent and beleieve, or at least by exerting thy natural abilities, oblige God to superadde what thou hast not. This is the Workman that will please proud man best.<sup>62</sup>

He had a Reformed view of election and the *ordo salutis*, and a particular burden to relate this to the doctrine of the saints’ perseverance or preservation.

God having brought his counsel thus far towards its issue, surely will raise all the power he hath, rather then be disappointed of his glory, within a few steps of home; I mean, his whole design in the believers salvation. ... God loves his Saints as the purchase of his Sons blood; they cost him dear, and that which is so hardly got, shall not be easily lost. He that was willing to expend his Sons blood to gain them, will not deny his power to keep them.<sup>63</sup>

Indeed, “God can never forsake the Christian,” he wrote, “O what admirable security hath the great God given his children in this particular!”<sup>64</sup> This doctrine had become something of a hot topic at the time. The Arminian minister John Goodwin (1594–1665) published a book on it, which was ably

<sup>59</sup> William Gurnall, *The Christian in Compleat Armour*, 3rd ed. (London, 1658), 21.

<sup>60</sup> Gurnall, *Armour*, 52, 55; cf. *Christians Labour*, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Gurnall, *Armour*, 215.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–30; cf. the discussion of election on page 127.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

answered by Owen in *The Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance Explained and Confirmed* only the year before Gurnall published the first edition of *The Christian in Compleat Armour* (1655). And Gurnall was not slow to take sides with the Reformed. "Let us see whether Satan be able to pluck the Christian away, and step betwixt him and home," he said with some warmth,

Away then with that doctrine, which saith, one may be a Saint today, and none tomorrow; now a *Peter*, anon a *Judas*; O what unsavoury stuffe is this! a principle it is that at once crosseth the main design of God in the Gospel-Covenant, reflects sadly on the honour of Christ, and wounds the Saints comfort to the heart.<sup>65</sup>

On what grounds did he oppose what he saw as the opposing Arminian scheme? First, he said,

It is derogatory to Gods design in the Gospel-Covenant, which we finde plainly to be this, that his children might be put into a state sure and safe from miscarrying at last, which by the first Covenant man was not.

Second, if the saints may finally fall, then

it reflects sadly on Christs honour, both as he is intrusted with the Saints salvation, and also as he is interested in it ... Now how well do they consult with Christs honour, that say his sheepe may die in a ditch of final apostasy notwithstanding all this? ... The life of his own glory is bound up in the eternal life of his Saints.

He reasons passionately that "Christ and his members make one Christ: now is it possible a piece of Christ can be found at last-burning in hell? can Christ be a cripple Christ? can this member drop off and that?" This emotive language expressed a theological impossibility for Gurnall.

Third,

He did not dash the generous wine of Gods Word with the water of mans conceits. No, he gave them pure Gospel. Truly, this principle of Saints falling from grace gives a sad dash to the sweet wine of the Promises; the soul-reviving comfort that sparkles in them, ariseth from the sure conveyance with which they are in Christ made over to believers to have and to hold for ever .... This, this indeed is wine that makes glad the heart of a Saint; though he may be whipt in the house when he sins, yet he shall not be turned out of doores.

So, to weak believers Gurnall pleads,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 377.



Be of good cheer, poor soule ... Your eternal safety is provided for. ... When you heare Christ is turn'd out of heaven, or himself to be willing to sell his inheritance there, then, poore Christian, feare thy coming thither and not till then.

Saints must guard against “a carelesse security, and presumptuous boldnesse,” but they must not doubt God’s promises.<sup>66</sup>

Gurnall criticizes those who bend and change to keep their preferments, saying “the Christian must stand fixt to his principles, and not change his habit, but freely shew what Country-man he is by his holy constancy in the truth.”<sup>67</sup> He did not maintain his pastorate in “this apostatizing age”<sup>68</sup> by jettisoning the convictions about Reformed truths that he had held throughout his preaching and writing career. There was no contortion of his basic principles, though, as he confessed, “These have been trying times as ever came to *England*. It has required more care and courage to keep sincerity then formerly.”<sup>69</sup> After 1662, Gurnall was far from the only one to find the most expeditious and compassionate course, in the midst of the great contentions of the time, to be one that worked *with* the new political establishment rather than against it—however uncomfortable that might make him personally.

### III. *The Re-Joining Professor: Horton*

Like Gurnall, Dr. Thomas Horton (1605–1673) was educated at the staunchly Puritan Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was appointed by the civil war parliament to ordain ministers in London and worked for the establishment of Presbyterian church government. In 1647, he was made president of Queens’ College, Cambridge, and in 1651 was chosen as vice chancellor of the University at the same time as Owen was taking on that role in Oxford. When Charles II returned to the throne, Horton had to step down as president of Queens’ College because his predecessor was still alive, and under the terms of a 1660 act, good royalists were allowed to have their old jobs back. Reynolds’s son also fell afoul of this act, being ejected from his Oxford fellowship, but he was immediately able to take up another post in Worcester Cathedral.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 377–80.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 363.

<sup>70</sup> Ian Atherton, “Reynolds, Edward (1630–1698),” *ODNB* 46:531.

Arthur Barham, the staunchly Presbyterian minister of Saint Helen's Bishopsgate, did not conform in 1662. Samuel Lee and Peter Sterry, both sometime lecturers at Saint Helen's, were also forced to give up preaching.<sup>71</sup> However, after a few years' interregnum, in June 1666, Horton came back into the ministry and was appointed rector of Saint Helen's. A few months later, the great fire of London swept through the city and destroyed most of the churches, including Saint Paul's Cathedral. But Saint Helen's was miraculously unscathed. Horton was described by one of his former students as

a pious and learned man, a hard student [i.e., he studied hard], a sound divine, a good textuary; very well skilled in the original languages, very well accomplished for the work of a Minister, and very conscientious in the discharge of it.<sup>72</sup>

According to another observer, "Dr Horton ... hath a very great congregation of half-conformists, in whom he hath much interest. He is a man of very good learning, and a constant, laborious preacher [i.e., he labored hard on his sermons]."<sup>73</sup> Richard Kidder, who sometimes officiated at Saint Helen's after Horton died, reported that he

found many of his communicants "kneeled not at the sacrament, but were otherwise very devout and regular." The practice had been indulged by their previous minister, Dr Horton. The communions were "very great ... and great sums of money given to the poor at those times," and considering "the mischief of dismissing such a number of Communicants and sending them to the Non-Conformists," Kidder decided to continue to give the sacrament to those who refused to kneel, and risk being suspended for it.<sup>74</sup>

This was a large, wealthy church with a history of half-conformity.<sup>75</sup>

Horton was a senior Reformed figure with a history of training young preachers for the ministry in Cambridge and a reputation for sound teaching. Can we establish his Reformed credentials from his sermons so as to add to the number of clearly Reformed ministers working in the post-Restoration church? Yes, we can. Let us examine his sermons on Romans 8, published

<sup>71</sup> Gatiss, *Tragedy of 1662*, 9, 30, 32.

<sup>72</sup> John Wallis, "To the Reader," in Thomas Horton, *One Hundred Select Sermons* (London, 1679).

<sup>73</sup> See John Edmund Cox, ed., *The Annals of St. Helen's Bishopsgate London* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), 316.

<sup>74</sup> T. Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 68, quoting Kidder's *Life*, edited by A. E. Robinson (1924), 19.

<sup>75</sup> It may still be described thus today (I was associate minister there, 2004–2009).

posthumously in 1674. Horton was very clearly opposed to the Arminian doctrine of predestination on the basis of foreseen faith. So on Romans 8:30 he preached against this “doctrine of Pelagians” that is “opposite to this present *Truth and Text* which we have here before us, where it is not said, *That whom he called, he did predestinate; But whom he predestinated, them he called.*”<sup>76</sup> A little later, speaking on the same verse, he adds:

Predestination is limited and confined to a certain number of persons. Therefore we read in Scripture of *two* sorts of Vessels which are prepared; of *Wrath, and of Mercy*. And this serves to meet with the *contrary Opinion* of some persons; who teach, that upon such and such conditions, of *Faith, and Perseverance, &c.* God does elect and make *choice of all*, when as God yet knows that such and such person will never come up to those conditions, as having purposed in Himself not to *bestow such conditions as these upon them* .... Secondly, we have here also the *Doctrine of final Perseverance*; That God’s Children they cannot *fall from Grace*, or be excluded from the *kingdome of Heaven*. This Point is very clear in this Scripture.<sup>77</sup>

Horton’s account of the atonement and justification is equally clear. “Christ has satisfied *the justice of the Father* for all his elect people by dying for them.” Moreover, he has

*imputed his righteousness* to us, and freed us from condemnation; so likewise not only the *Active Obedience* of Christ’s life, but the *integrity of our Nature in Christ’s Person* being imputed to us who by Faith are set unto him, covers our disobedience and the relicts of Corruption yet remaining in the best of us. And so being justified, we cannot therefore be condemned.<sup>78</sup>

Christ paid the debt we owed by enduring the penalty and doing what the law required us to do. Christ’s suffering

was of the whole Anger and Wrath of God, exprest in all particulars. There was no punishment for kind, which we should have suffer’d, but the same was personally suffer’d by Christ both in Body and Soul.

He speaks of “the Eternity of our punishment” that Christ has answered—the punishment that was not only the injustice of Pilate or the malice of the Jews but God’s own heavy wrath and indignation.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, he holds to the Reformed doctrine of irresistible grace:

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<sup>76</sup> Thomas Horton, *Forty Six Sermons upon the Whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans* (London, 1674), 503.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 507.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 54; cf. 527.

It is not in our own power to hinder our own Conversion neither, where God is minded and purposed to *effect* it. ... *Those who are predestinated, they are called*; that is, they are efficaciously, and infallibly, and against all opposition: The *Grace of Conversion* it is such as cannot be *resisted*.<sup>80</sup>

On Romans 8:1, Horton taught that Christ “hath offered and laid down a sufficient ransome and price for the *redemption of all*: but *in* Christ; so those only who are elect and true believers, have actual and efficacious redemption, because those alone are *in* him.”<sup>81</sup> On Romans 8:32, Horton wonders who the “all” are for whom Christ died. To say it means all people, “would make it *too large*.” It is sufficient for all, but

as to particular application, and special intention, so it respects only *all Believers*, and so all the Scripture still expresses it to us; He made his Soul an offering for his *Seed*, He shed his Blood for his *Church*, He laid down his life for his *Sheep*, He saved his *people* from their Sins.

The verse must be understood in context:

This *us* it plainly refers to such persons as he had mentioned *before*, whom he had *fore-known*, and *predestinated*, and *called*, and *justified*, and was *for*; which is not all men at *large* and *in general*, but only a set number of persons *in particular*.<sup>82</sup>

Christ died for the apostle, for the Romans, for eminent saints, and for weaker Christians.<sup>83</sup> This is a Reformed doctrine of particular redemption. His Reformed doctrine undergirded Horton’s call to ministers to preach the gospel promiscuously to all.<sup>84</sup>

## Conclusion

Forty-five years after the great ejection, John Edwards of Cambridge (1637–1716), who has been styled “a kind of J. I. Packer in his day,”<sup>85</sup> wrote,

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 501.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 502. It may be a testimony to Horton, or to the tradition of theology passed down by him at Saint Helen’s, that when John Wesley preached a theology quite at variance from this in his own sermon on Romans 8:32 at Saint Helen’s some years later, he was told quite firmly, “Sir, you must preach here no more.” See Lee Gatiss, *Cornerstones of Salvation: Foundations and Debates in the Reformed Tradition* (Welwyn Garden City: EP Books, 2017), 202–29.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth Stewart, “The Points of Calvinism: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 26.2 (Autumn 2008): 196.

That which we now call Calvinism, is to be found in the writings of the ancient fathers of the Church, and is the very doctrine which the first reformers of our own Church professed, and maintained, and which is contained in our Articles, Homilies and liturgy, and which our Archbishops and Bishops, and the whole body of our English clergy have generally asserted and vindicated.<sup>86</sup>

Edwards, the son of a leading London Puritan, thus testified to the enduring vitality of the conforming Reformed tradition within the Church of England, many decades after the Restoration. He was far from a lone voice in this regard, even at the turn of the eighteenth century. As he testified, “I am not left alone, I do not, like *Athanasius*, encounter the whole World, no nor the whole Clergy.”<sup>87</sup> In turn, his work would be picked up and cherished by the *next* generation of Calvinists within Anglicanism, including the great Evangelical Revival preacher George Whitefield (1714–1770). Edwards’s work was on Whitefield’s list of the most important volumes of divinity, alongside other classic Reformed works by Matthew Henry, Thomas Boston, John Pearson, Owen, and John Bunyan.<sup>88</sup> Edwards was one of the most influential shapers of English Calvinism, according to Dewey Wallace,<sup>89</sup> though few have ever heard of him or those like Reynolds, Gurnall, and Horton on whose shoulders he stood.<sup>90</sup>

The picture that some have (even some Evangelicals), that after 1662 the Church of England was a wasteland for the gospel and for Reformed theology, is very much at odds with the evidence in this article. The “good people” did not all leave. The baton was handed on, with some difficulty perhaps, but nevertheless successfully, after the restoration of the monarchy. This helps us better understand the Church of England in that period—it was not entirely devoid of a gospel witness—and gives us a clearer picture of what the eighteenth-century revivals were: a revivification of a tradition that had been marginalized but not euthanized after the Cromwellian chaos. Traditions can be passed down and preserved, even in the absence of “big name” celebrity endorsements, dramatic revivals, and access to the great and the good at the center of power—lessons we would do well to remember in our own turbulent days.

<sup>86</sup> John Edwards, *Veritas Redux: Evangelical Truths Restored* (London, 1707), xix.

<sup>87</sup> John Edwards, *The Preacher: The Second Part* (London, 1706), xii.

<sup>88</sup> *Works of the Reverend. George Whitefield* (London, 1771), 3:497–98, 4:306–7, and 1:575, where he recommends Edwards to Wesley. For Edwards’s influence, cf. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), 1:405.

<sup>89</sup> Dewey Wallace, *The Shapers of English Calvinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 205–42.

<sup>90</sup> On the Reformed Anglican tradition up to and including the Evangelical Revival, see Lee Gatiss, *The True Profession of the Gospel: Augustus Toplady and Reclaiming Our Reformed Foundations* (London: Latimer Trust, 2010), 8–51.