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EARLY STUART POLEMICAL HERMENEUTICS:
ANDREW WILLET'S 1611 ROMANS HEXAPLA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

DARREN M. POLLOCK

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

MAY 2016

To Ashley,
Charlotte,
and Mom & Dad

Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

-Romans 5:1

“Thou that ‘ere while didst such strong Reasons frame,
As yet, great *Willet*, art the *Popelings* Shame:
Now by thy Sickness, and by Death hast made
Strong Arguments to prove that Man’s a Shade:
Thy Life did shew thy deep Divinity,
Death only taught us thy Humanity.”

-inscription from Andrew Willet’s gravestone

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Soli Deo Gloria!

D.M.P.

Feast Day of St. Lawrence of Rome

Pasadena, CA

ABSTRACT

Andrew Willet, a Cambridge-educated minister, began his writing career as a popular anti-Catholic polemicist (best known for the influential *Synopsis Papismi*) during Elizabeth I's reign. Early in the seventeenth century he shifted genres, writing a series of biblical commentaries using a distinctive six-fold method and earning a reputation as one of the country's best textual scholars. Willet suggested that the change to exegesis was a move from religious controversy to more irenic waters, and many scholars have taken him at his word, writing of his abandonment of polemics. An analysis of his 1611 hexapla commentary on Romans, however, reveals a distinct polemical lens, indicating that he did not so much abandon religious controversy as transfer it to a different genre. Interpreting Romans using this polemical hermeneutic served to sharpen Willet's distinctions and clarify his presentation of Reformed doctrine against a negative Roman Catholic relief. While many English Protestants of his day similarly read Scripture through an anti-Catholic framework, Willet's background in polemics, his textual skill, and his encyclopedic knowledge of the history of exegesis set him apart as an exemplar of this interpretive approach to the biblical text.

Contrary to some depictions of early Stuart anti-Catholicism as being primarily politically motivated, Willet's appears firmly rooted in a doctrinal concern to magnify God's grace and eliminate all suggestion of human merit in salvation. This exegetically-derived concern, combined with his set of finely-honed humanist and scholastic interpretive tools, ensured that his hermeneutic does not impose alien concepts upon the text. His hermeneutic, rather, focuses his exposition and guides his collation of different scriptures, providing a structure for eliciting the epistle's central lessons. Additionally,

we see how polemical context shapes the formulation of doctrine. Willet's Reformed theology is similar to that of the continental Reformed, but different responses are required to the different challenges posed in each setting.

This study of Willet's Romans hexapla focuses on his criticism of the Vulgate, grammatical and rhetorical analysis, causality-based arguments, and appropriation of ancient heretics and Church Fathers, showing how these serve to sharpen his interpretation and support his aim of presenting Protestantism as the true and "catholic" church.

**CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION:
ANDREW WILLET, ROMANS, AND POST-REFORMATION POLEMICS**

1. Purpose and Scope of this Study

Church of England divine and polymath Andrew Willet (1561/2-1621) began his prolific writing career as one of the Protestant world's preeminent anti-Catholic polemicists. His magisterial and influential *Synopsis Papismi*, which went through four editions in his lifetime and extended to well over a thousand pages, critiqued every element of Roman Catholic dogma in painstaking detail. Also one of England's most skilled textual critics, he shifted genres and engaged in biblical commentary work for the latter decades of his life. Willet's exegetical work has not received adequate attention, and I intend in this dissertation to contribute to that discussion, looking particularly at how Willet's background as a leading religious controversialist informed and directed his later efforts in biblical commentary. I will argue that Willet's turn to biblical exposition represented not an abandonment of polemics, but the application of a polemical hermeneutic to a different genre.

I am focusing my attention on Willet's 1611 Romans hexapla.¹ This epistle was at the heart of the theological tension between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Willet held that it taught "the two chiefe points of Christian religion," which also happened to be two major points of contention with the "Roman foe": justification and election.² He later uses these same doctrines to articulate marks of "true religion":

This is a true marke and touchstone whereby to discern true religion from false: for that religion, which onely giveth honour unto God, and denieth all power unto

¹ Andrew Willet, *Hexapla: That is, A Six-fold Commentarie upon the most Divine Epistle of the holy Apostle S. Paul to the Romanes: wherein according to the Authors former method sixe things are observed in every Chapter* (Cambridge: Leonard Greene, 1611).

² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 8.

man, to helpe toward salvation, and so stoppeth mans mouth, and taketh from him all ostentation and vaine glorie, that is the true religion: whereas on the contrarie, that which giveth unto man matter of ostentation and rejoycing, is to be suspected of falshood, and hypocrisie: such is the doctrine of Poperie, which ascribeth much unto mans freewill and merits.³

We see in this brief passage both the importance of Romans to Willet (and to post-Reformation religious controversy generally), and a glimpse at how Willet's polemical hermeneutic focuses and frames his interpretation of the epistle. Indeed, he is drawn to Romans largely *because of* these themes, but his opposition to "papism" also directs the way that he elicits and frames this Doctrine; had he viewed Socinianism, for instance, as the greatest threat to the Church of England, surely he would not have defined "true religion" without reference to *Christ*. But since Rome's Christology and trinitarian views were not particularly problematic, Willet can assume orthodoxy on these doctrines and focus his interpretation on the more contested matters.

Two decades ago Anthony Milton observed that "the greater proportion of printed religious literature [from England] of the period 1600-40 remains wholly unstudied," and, particularly, "the vast majority of anti-papal controversial works composed during this period have been almost entirely neglected by historians."⁴ While the situation is better today than it was twenty years ago, there remains much work to be done in early Stuart polemics. And while a Romans commentary does not strictly belong to the controversial genre, it can be particularly instructive to consider how the polemical needs of the period informed other genres. Thus, I hope to contribute to the developing body of scholarly literature on the history of exegesis, early seventeenth-century anti-papism, and the

³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 177 (eliciting a Doctrine from v. 3:19).

⁴ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6-7.

hermeneutical function of polemics.

Considering the extensive body of work produced by the prolific Willet and the relative lack of scholarly focus that he has received, I will necessarily have to limit my scope primarily to issues pertaining to the Romans hexapla (which itself has material enough for several dissertations!). Thus, I will refer to the rest of his work only as it serves to clarify an issue from his interpretation of Romans, and I cannot dwell long on many of the interesting ancillary questions and debates about Willet (e.g. whether he wrote the 1599 *A Christian Letter*,⁵ the degree to which he allowed political resistance, why he was not included among the King James Bible translators, the circumstances surrounding his imprisonment for opposing the Spanish Match, whether his poetry has any literary merit, and so forth).

2. State of the Question

2.1 Scholarship on Willet

The widely varying designations of Andrew Willet in modern secondary literature give testimony to the diversity of his abilities and the value of further examination of his work and its impact on seventeenth-century thought. He has been described in recent years both as a “noted moderate puritan divine” and as a “radical Protestant,”⁶ as “a well-known English Calvinist clergyman and writer,” a “Jacobean textual scholar,” and a

⁵ An anonymous tract critical of Richard Hooker; see footnotes 15-16 in this chapter.

⁶ J. F. Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians, and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London,” *The Historical Journal* 41, no. 4 (December 1998): 954; Neil D. Graves, “Pedagogy or Gerontagogy: The Education of the Miltonic Deity,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 358.

“Calvinist controversialist.”⁷ His vast literary output has led him to be entitled “a prodigy of learning and industry” and “that tireless commentator Andrew Willet,”⁸ and in other fields he has been designated as the author of “the first book on the conversion of Jews to be printed in England,”⁹ “one of the very few explicit resistance theorists to be found in Jacobean England,” “England’s first religious emblem writer,” and even—through a curiously-myopic focus on those few emblems—as “the English poet Andrew Willet.”¹⁰

⁷ Lee Piepho, “Making the Impossible Dream: Latin, Print, and the Marriage of Frederick V and the Princess Elizabeth,” *Reformation* 14 (2009): 134; Joseph Marshall, “Recycling and Originality in the Pamphlet Wars: Republishing Jacobean Texts in the 1640s,” *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 12, no. 1 (2000): 73; J. Sears McGee, “A ‘Carkass’ of ‘Mere Dead Paper’: The Polemical Career of Francis Rous, Puritan MP,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (September 2009): 355.

⁸ Rosemary Freeman, “George Herbert and the Emblem Books,” *The Review of English Studies* 17, no. 66 (April 1941): 151; Eugene D. Hill, “The First Elizabethan Tragedy: A Contextual Reading of ‘Cambises’,” *Studies in Philology* 89, no. 4 (Autumn 1992): 420. Other modern writers who describe Willet as among the most learned scholars of his day include: James Brodrick, *St. Robert Bellarmine: Saint & Scholar* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1961), 81; Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethans* (London: Hambleton and London, 2003), 201; and Philip B. Secor, *Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism* (Kent, UK: Burns and Oates, 1999), 317. Other recent writers who have made reference to Willet’s industry and prolific literary output include: Robert H. West, *Milton and the Angels* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1955), 49; C. A. Patrides, “The ‘Protevangelium’ in Renaissance Theology and *Paradise Lost*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1963): 22; Heather Hirschfeld, *The End of Satisfaction: Drama and Repentance in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 34; Kevin Killeen, *Biblical Scholarship, Science and Politics in Early Modern England: Thomas Browne and the Thorny Place of Knowledge* (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009), 77; James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 167; and David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press*, vol. 1, *Printing and the Book Trade in Cambridge, 1534-1698* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 124. McKitterick notes that his remarkable productivity stands out even within his era, describing him as “one of the more prolific theological authors of a generation not noticeable for its reticence.” Patrides quips, borrowing a phrase from Arthur Dent, that Willet’s “prolixity might have given us cause to complain were it not that his output is often ‘the plainemans [path]-way to Heaven.’”

⁹ Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, 143; so also *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, vol. 2, *Religion and Politics in 17th Century England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 272.

¹⁰ Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 10; Peter M. Daly and Paola Valeri-Tomaszuk, “Andrew Willet, England’s First Religious Emblem Writer,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 10, no. 2 (1986): 181; Anne Lake Prescott, “The 2011 Josephine Waters Bennett Lecture: From the Sheephook to the Scepter: The Ambiguities of David’s Rise to the Throne,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 8. McKitterick explains why Willet achieved notoriety as a theologian and not as a poet, describing the verses in his emblem book as “an inauspicious beginning to the printing of English poetry in Cambridge” (McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, 124).

While Willet is frequently cast in a supporting role in a wide range of secondary literature, currently the only extended, monograph treatment of his thought is a 1998 master's thesis by Peter Van Kleeck, which presents a basic overview of his hermeneutical approach. Randall Pederson's 2009 essay on the *Synopsis Papismi* mainly summarizes Willet's arguments, generally clearly and accurately, focusing on the doctrines of Scripture and predestination. Pederson's own commentary is fairly minimal, though he contextualizes Willet's thought well in his footnotes. Anthony Milton, who wrote the Willet entry in the most recent edition of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, employs him as his primary window into the state of the late Tudor to early Stuart era Church of England in his excellent 1995 book *Catholic and Reformed*. Milton recounts Willet's efforts to spur further church reforms in the early years of the Jacobean period by constantly warning of the papist threat, diverting attention away from the more radical Reformed voices, and supporting the episcopacy sufficiently to demonstrate his loyalty to the crown, yet not so strongly as to alienate his presbyterian continental Reformed brethren. Viewing the same conflict from the Roman Catholic side, Stefania Tutino likewise has Willet as her representative anti-Catholic Protestant, calling his *Synopsis Papismi* "a book of great importance in English religious history between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," in her 2007 book *Law and Conscience*.¹¹

It is a testament to his polemical acumen (and perhaps, as one of Bellarmine's

¹¹ Van Kleeck, "Hermeneutics and Theology in the Seventeenth Century"; Pederson, "Andrew Willet and the *Synopsis Papismi*"; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*; Tutino, *Law and Conscience : Catholicism in Early Modern England, 1570-1625* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 92. Cf. also Tutino's earlier essay, "'Makyng Recusancy Deathe Outrighte'? Thomas Pounce, Andrew Willet and the Catholic Question in Early Jacobean England," *Recusant History* 27, no. 1 (May 2004): 31-50. Anthony Milton, "Andrew Willet," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

biographers has put it, his “rather pompous” nature¹²) that Willet has been identified as an arch opponent of both Roman Catholic and Protestant foes. Conal Condren names Willet as the famous Church of England divine Richard Hooker’s “principal enemy,” and Diarmaid MacCulloch adds that, despite Hooker’s much greater renown today, Willet was in their age the more popular author.¹³ Willet was openly critical of Hooker—accusing him of a variety of heterodox opinions ranging from weakening Christ’s divinity and challenging the *sola Scriptura* principle, to causing schism, treating Rome as a true Christian church, and introducing elements of works-righteousness into his theology¹⁴—but his most common link to Hooker is his disputed, though widely assumed, authorship of *A Christian Letter*,¹⁵ an anonymous 1599 open letter to Hooker.¹⁶ Turning to Catholic

¹²Brodrick, *St. Robert Bellarmine*, 81-82. I will mention one example to show that Brodrick’s description is not (at least entirely) motivated by a partisan distaste for one of Bellarmine’s sharper critics. In the “Directions to the Reader” prefacing the Genesis hexapla, where one might expect a self-effacing statement in which the author takes responsibility for any errors, Willet writes: “In the reading of this booke I would premonish the Reader to take these directions, that he would first with his penne mende the faults, which are very many, escaped in my absense, through the oversight of the Printer” (Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesis, that is a Sixfold Commentarie Upon Genesis* [Cambridge: John Legat, 1605], sig.¶4r). The printer, John Legat, for his part noted in the errata that “some places [in Willet’s manuscript] were not very legible” (sig.Tt1r). Cf. McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, 124.

¹³Conal Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 163; Diarmaid MacCulloch, “Richard Hooker’s Reputation,” in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. Torrance Kirby (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2008), 574. MacCulloch notes that there were forty-eight pre-1640 editions of Willet’s works, to Hooker’s twenty (p. 574n38). An observation by Stanford Lehmberg illustrates how radical the shift in the respective popularity of Willet and Hooker has been since that time. Describing the works found in the *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1475-1640*, Lehmberg writes: “A number of famous books are found alongside many lesser, ephemeral works. The theological writings include the monumental *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* by Richard Hooker, who was a prebendary at Salisbury, together with such things as obscure Biblical commentaries by Andrew Willet, a scholarly prebendary of Ely” (Stanford E. Lehmberg, *The Reformation of Cathedrals: Cathedrals in English Society, 1485-1603* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988], 242-243). How backwards this assessment would have seemed four hundred years ago!

¹⁴See John E. Booty, introduction to *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Attack and Response*, by Richard Hooker, ed. John E. Booty, vol. 4 of *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982), xxii; cf. Andrew Willet, *Ecclesia Triumphans: that is, the Joy of the English Church, for the happie Coronation of the most vertuous and pious Prince, James* (Cambridge: John Legat, 1603), 25-26.

¹⁵ [Andrew Willet?], *A Christian Letter of certain English Protestants, unfained favourers of the present state of Religion, authorised and professed in England: unto that Reverend and learned man, Mr.*

foes, Gregory Dodds puts Willet first in a list of writers “associating Erasmus with heretical belief,” and presents him as the “most direct refutation” of Erasmian soteriology in early modern England.¹⁷ Several other modern authors also make use of Willet as a representative early seventeenth-century anti-Catholic polemicist, with most attention, naturally, given to his *Synopsis Papismi*.¹⁸ Peter Marshall makes frequent reference to Willet in the context of the protestantization of England and the gradual acceptance of the term “Protestant.” S. J. Barnett cites Willet as one for whom antipopery was the “main

R.Hoo. requiring resolution in certaine matters of doctrine (which seeme to overthrow the foundation of Christian Religion, and of the church among us) expreslie contained in his five books of Ecclesiasticall Pollicie (n.p., 1599).

¹⁶Booty calls Willet the “most persistent and intriguing” suggestion as the letter’s author (p. xix) and devotes a section of his introduction to the Letter in the collected works of Hooker to developing the Willet theory (Booty, introduction to *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, xix-xxv). MacCulloch states that “we can be reasonably certain that it was either exclusively or mainly the work of Andrew Willett.” W. Brown Patterson considers Willet “most likely” the principal author, Secor names Willet as “a prime candidate,” and Anthony Milton writes that the anonymous authors “may well have included Willet himself.” Milton, however, seems not quite as convinced as some others, writing elsewhere that Willet in *Ecclesia Triumphans* and *Antilogie* “had joined the authors of *A Christian Letter*” in condemning Hooker. MacCulloch, “Richard Hooker’s Reputation,” 574; W. Brown Patterson, “Elizabethan Theological Polemics,” in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. Torrance Kirby (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2008), 116-117; Secor, *Richard Hooker*, 317-318; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 17, 128. Peter White is among those who are more skeptical, questioning whether “the man who wrote the scholarly *Synopsis Papismi*... could have written *A Christian Letter*.” Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 129n26.

¹⁷ Gregory D. Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus: the Erasmian Legacy and Religious Change in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 91, 117. On Erasmian theology and exegesis of Romans, see also John B. Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* 2 (January 1971): 1-35; Albert Rabil, Jr., *Erasmus and the New Testament: the Mind of a Christian Humanist* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972), 115-182; Greta Grace Kroeker, *Erasmus in the Footsteps of Paul: A Pauline Theologian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 29-40; Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 145-154; Laurel Carrington, “Erasmus’s Readings of Romans 3,4, and 5,” in *Reformation Readings of Romans*, ed. Kathy Ehrensperger and R. Ward Holder (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 10-20; Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 49-50.

¹⁸ Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi, That is, A Generall View of Papistrie: Wherein the Whole Myserie of Iniquitie, and Summe of Anti-Christian Doctrine is set downe, which is maintained this day by the Synagogue of Rome, against the Church of Christ* (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Man, 1592; the Widdow Orwin for Thomas Man, 1594; Felix Kyngston for Thomas Man, 1600; fourth edition, 1613; John Haviland, 1634).

vocation of the Church of England,” and Felicity Heal mentions him in an essay on the use of history in early modern religious polemics in England.¹⁹ Daniel Swift, Gillian Woods, Jason Rosenblatt, John Curran, Heather Hirschfeld, and James Shapiro each draw on Willet’s polemics in order to contextualize anti-Catholic themes in Shakespeare’s plays.²⁰ J. F. Merritt, Ian Archer, and J. Sears McGee all more narrowly cite Willet’s list of Protestant charitable giving in London as his response to Roman Catholic charges of lax Protestant philanthropy.²¹

Willet served as a chaplain and tutor to Prince Henry and penned treatises to celebrate James’s ascension to the throne and Elizabeth Stuart’s marriage to Frederick V, Elector Palatine.²² This association with the Jacobean court has made him a fitting source also for those writing about early seventeenth-century English politics. Nevada Levi DeLapp’s well-argued study of the Reformed use of King David in a variety of sixteenth-

¹⁹ Peter Marshall, “The Naming of Protestant England,” *Past and Present*, no. 214 (2002): 87-128; S. J. Barnett, “Where Was Your Church before Luther? Claims for the Antiquity of Protestantism Examined,” *Church History* 68, no. 1 (March 1999): 14-41; Felicity Heal, “Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Past,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, no. 1-2 (March 2005): 109-132.

²⁰ Daniel Swift, *Shakespeare’s Common Prayers: The Book of Common Prayer and the Elizabethan Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Gillian Woods, *Shakespeare’s Unreformed Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jason P. Rosenblatt, “Aspects of the Incest Problem in Hamlet,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 349-364; John E. Curran, Jr., *Hamlet, Protestantism, and the Mourning of Contingency: Not to Be* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); Hirschfeld, *The End of Satisfaction*; Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*. Additionally, Elizabeth Heale uses Willet in an essay on Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* as anti-Catholic polemic. Elizabeth Heale, “Spenser’s Malengine, Missionary Priests, and the Means of Justice,” *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 41, no. 162 (May 1990): 171-184.

²¹ Merritt, “Church-Building in Jacobean London”; Ian W. Archer, “The Charity of Early Modern Londoners,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 223-244; McGee, “The Polemical Career of Francis Rous.” N.B. J. F. (Julia) Merritt is the wife of Anthony Milton. He honors her in the acknowledgments to *Catholic and Reformed* with a delightful pun: “My old Roman Catholic schoolteachers may take heart from the reflection of this most unrepentant of lapsed Catholics that the salvation of this book and of its author has been achieved by Merritt of Good Works” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, xv).

²² Willet, *Ecclesia Triumphans*; Andrew Willet, *A Treatise of Salomons Mariage* (London: F. K. for Thomas Man, 1613; Latin version in 1612).

and seventeenth-century political contexts engages ably with Willet's political theory. DeLapp devotes a full chapter to Willet's exegesis of the David and Saul narrative in the First and Second Samuel hexaplas, showing how his connection between David and King James served both to ingratiate himself to James and to use the idealized model of David as a way to urge James to pursue further reforms.²³ Arthur Williamson and Lee Piepho each describe Willet's advocacy of unions between northern European Protestant nations.²⁴ Stephen Bondos-Greene, recounting the 1609 election of the new master of Christ's College, mentions Willet as one of King James's final four candidates for leading the school, and Joseph Marshall writes of the continued political impact that Willet had in the 1640s (two decades after his death) through the republication of some of his anti-papal pamphlets.²⁵ Two essays, both from 1986, describe Willet's importance to the history of English emblem writing. Peter Daly and Paola Valeri-Tomaszuk's essay on Willet portrays him as the creator of effective—if not particularly literary—emblems, while Huston Diehl focuses specifically on their anti-Catholic emphasis. Daly has also produced an annotated version of Willet's emblems.²⁶

²³ Nevada Levi DeLapp, *The Reformed David(s) and the Question of Resistance to Tyranny: Reading the Bible in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). Cf. also James Doelman, *King James I and the Religious Culture of England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 75; Jane Rickard, *Writing the Monarch in Jacobean England: Jonson, Donne, Shakespeare and the Works of King James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 33.

²⁴ Arthur H. Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire: The Dynamic of Early Modern British Expansion," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, no. 1-2 (March 2005): 227-256; Piepho, "Making the Impossible Dream."

²⁵ Stephen A. Bondos-Greene, "The End of an Era: Cambridge Puritanism and the Christ's College Election of 1609," *The Historical Journal* 25, no. 1 (March 1982): 203; Marshall, "Republicating Jacobean Texts in the 1640s," 72-76.

²⁶ Daly and Valeri-Tomaszuk, "Andrew Willet"; Huston Diehl, "Graven Images: Protestant Emblem Books in England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 49-66; Peter M. Daly, ed., *The English Emblem Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 245-323, 463-499. Other authors who have addressed Willet's emblem writing include: Irma Tramer, "Studien zu den Anfängen der puritanischen Emblemliteratur in England: Andrew Willet-George Wither," (inaugural-dissertation,

If Willet's emblem writing wanted for poetic polish, his commentary work has been cited frequently in connection with many of the great poets of his day. Since a 1939 essay by Grant McColley, it has become quite common for John Milton scholars to make use of Willet's Genesis hexapla as an interpretive aid for reading *Paradise Lost*.²⁷ While it is uncertain whether Willet's exegetical work directly influenced Milton,²⁸ Willet has proven valuable as a near-contemporary (dying five days before Milton entered his teen years) for contextualizing Milton's biblical references. Additionally, a lengthy section on angels in *Synopsis Papismi*²⁹ has aided the interpretation of Milton's angelology. Of these Milton scholars, Joad Raymond provides the most extensive treatment, assigning to Willet a full chapter, which he structures around Willet's threefold division of Roman Catholic angelology errors.³⁰ Alastair Fowler, in the introduction to his edition of

University of Basel, 1934); Josef Lederer, "John Donne and the Emblematic Practice," *The Review of English Studies* 22, no. 87 (July 1946): 182-200; Prescott, "The Ambiguities of David's Rise to the Throne"; Freeman, "George Herbert and the Emblem Books."

²⁷ Grant McColley, "Paradise Lost," *The Harvard Theological Review* 32, no. 3 (July 1939): 181-235. McColley expanded these references in his book from the following year, Grant McColley, *Paradise Lost: An Account of Its Growth and Major Origins, with a Discussion of Milton's Use of Sources and Literary Patterns* (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1940).

²⁸ We do know that they had at least one common acquaintance. Henry Yelverton (1566-1629), counsel to Christ's College and a friend of the Milton family, is praised in the epistle dedicatory of the second printing of the 1 Samuel hexapla (Harris Francis Fletcher, *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, vol. 2, *The Cambridge University Period 1625-32* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961], 6; Andrew Willet, *An Harmonie Upon the First Booke of Samuel*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1614], ¶13v).

Neil Graves suggests that Milton drew on Willet as a source, listing him (along with Diodati and Rivetus) as Protestants "whom Milton is known to have acknowledged and drawn from in his prose writing," (Graves, "The Education of the Miltonic Deity," 358). Rosenblatt expresses doubt that Willet influenced Milton, at least with regard to one key element of *Paradise Lost*: "Willet is hardly likely to have influenced Milton, since, aside from rejecting this interpretation, he confuses the function of each angel, failing to connect Raphael with Abraham" (Jason P. Rosenblatt, "Celestial Entertainment in Eden: Book V of *Paradise Lost*," *The Harvard Theological Review* 62, no. 4 [October 1969]: 417).

²⁹ See Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 385-397.

³⁰ That being: the hierarchies and degrees of angels, their ministry and office, and worship and invocation directed to them (Joad Raymond, *Milton's Angels: The Early-Modern Imagination* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010]).

Paradise Lost, writes that for the notes he has drawn “extensively on Calvin’s *Commentary upon Genesis* and on Willet, *Hexapla* (1608)—the latter not for its originality but precisely because it “invaluably summarizes a range of contemporary and earlier interpretations.”³¹ The evidence is stronger that John Donne drew on Willet as a source for his own sermons. One modern editor, Peter McCullough, has concluded that Donne “definitely or very probably” made unattributed use of “Andrew Willet’s several variorum commentaries on Old Testament books,” in addition to commentaries by Vermigli and Calvin. Another of Donne’s recent editors, David Colclough, highlights Donne’s use of Pererius and Willet. Anthony Raspa lists Willet and Thomas Tymme (who translated Calvin’s Genesis commentary from Latin) as the two English divines “prominent in the immediate background” of Donne’s *Essayes in Divinity*, even claiming that *Essayes* bears such a resemblance to Willet’s method that they “might have more aptly borne the title of *Hexapla in Genesim et Exodum*.”³²

Willet’s Old Testament exegesis has received (limited) attention also from biblical scholars studying the history of Genesis interpretation. The *Hexapla in Genesim*, which Raymond calls “one of the weightiest commentaries produced in English,” and

³¹ Alastair Fowler, ed., *Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed., ed. (London: Longman, 1998), 10-11. Other instances of Willet’s Genesis hexapla informing Milton scholarship include: Robert H. West, “Milton’s Angelological Heresies,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14, no. 1 (January 1953): 116-123; Robert H. West, *Milton and the Angels*; Patrides, “The ‘Protevangelium’ in Renaissance Theology,” 19-30; J. M. Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968); Rosenblatt, “Celestial Entertainment in Eden”; John Leonard, *Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1990); David Gay, “Milton’s Samson and the Figure of the Old Testament Giant,” *Literature and Theology* 9, no. 4 (December 1995): 355-369; Graves, “The Education of the Miltonic Deity.”

³² *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne 1: Sermons Preached at the Jacobean Courts, 1615-1619*, ed. Peter McCullough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), xl; *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne 3: Sermons Preached at the Court of Charles I*, ed. David Colclough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), xlv; John Donne, *Essayes in Divinity*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), xxiii-xxiv.

which David Daiches lauds as “the most impressive work on the purely textual side that any scholar had yet produced,”³³ features prominently in books by Arnold Williams and Philip Almond. Williams’s *The Common Expositor* (a title borrowed from Milton’s *Tetrachordon*) surveys Genesis commentaries published between 1527 and 1633, citing Willet’s work regularly as one of only a few Genesis commentaries composed in English during that span. Almond narrows his focus to seventeenth-century perspectives on Adam and Eve, also turning to Willet as one of his main sources.³⁴ Additionally, Mark Elliott’s study of Leviticus interpretation from the patristic period to the modern day engages throughout with Willet’s posthumously-published Leviticus hexapla.³⁵

As Willet was as prolific a father as he was an author (siring eighteen children), and because he was devoted to parish ministry in addition to his writing efforts, he is also cited frequently in essays dealing with the more localized issues of seventeenth-century family and church life. Describing the “ideal parish minister” in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, Neal Enssle draws on the account from Thomas Fuller (who in turn had taken most of his material from Peter Smith) of the rigid discipline of Willet’s daily life. Leonard Grant and Alexandra Walsham have cited Willet as an example of, respectively, an early modern pastor who stressed the importance of

³³ Raymond, *Milton’s Angels*, 317; David Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible: An Account of the Development and Sources of the English Bible of 1611 with Special Reference to the Hebrew Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941), 157. Killeen seems less enamored with Willet’s exegesis of Genesis, pointing out a variety of “digressions [that] take their place within the annotations on the flimsiest of pretexts, [and] extensive marginalia motivated by only the thinnest threads of relevance...[and] far in excess of any direct exegetical relevance” (Killeen, *Biblical Scholarship*, 77-78).

³⁴ Arnold Williams, *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis, 1527-1633* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948); Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

³⁵ Mark W. Elliott, *Engaging Leviticus: Reading Leviticus Theologically with Its Past Interpreters* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012); Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Leviticum*, finished by Peter Smith (London: by Aug. Mathewes for Robert Milbourne, 1631).

catechesis with his congregation, and one in a hereditary dynasty of ministers.³⁶ With regard to family life, Robert Schnucker has used Willet's prodigious progeny as a case study of a pastor who clearly lived out the opposition to birth control common among Puritan clergy, and Rosenblatt and Robert Hole have drawn from Willet's Leviticus hexapla in essays about early modern views on incestuous marriages.³⁷

Despite the rudiments of a Willet renaissance—twenty-one of the sources I have cited thus far, including DeLapp, Raymond, Tutino, Dodds, and Pederson, are from the last decade—insufficient attention has been given to Willet's impressive exegetical efforts that he engaged in over his final decades; treatment of his New Testament interpretation and of his general methodological approach are especially sparse. Richard Muller cites Willet's exegetical work periodically throughout the "Holy Scripture" volume of *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, noting the comprehensive nature of his commentaries in drawing together a variety of genres (from *locus* method to vestigial tropology), but the scope of that work necessarily limits the attention that can be given specifically to Willet. Muller also offers a brief, but instructive, insight into Willet's method by way of his investigation in the Genesis hexapla into the identity of

³⁶ Neal Enssle, "Patterns of Godly Life: The Ideal Parish Minister in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Thought," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 3-28; Thomas Fuller, ed. *Abel Redivivus: or The dead yet speaking. The Lives and Deaths of the Moderne Divines* (London: by Tho. Brudenell for John Stafford, 1651), 565-577; Peter Smith, "The Life and Death of Andrew Willet, Doctor of Divinitie," prefaced to Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, 5th ed. (London: John Haviland, 1634); Leonard T. Grant, "Puritan Catechizing," *Journal of Presbyterian History (1962-1985)* 46, no. 2 (June 1968): 107-127; Alexandra Walsham, "The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age, and Religious Change in England, c. 1500-1700," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 21 (2011): 93-121.

³⁷ Robert V. Schnucker, "Elizabethan Birth Control and Puritan Attitudes," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5, no. 4 (Spring 1975): 655-667; Rosenblatt, "Incest Problem in Hamlet"; Robert Hole, "Incest, Consanguinity and a Monstrous Birth in Rural England, January 1600," *Social History* 25, no. 2 (May 2000): 183-199.

Melchizedek.³⁸ Van Kleeck's thesis provides a useful summary of Willet's hermeneutical approach and some commentary on Willet's work on Romans, though with limited interpretation.³⁹

2.2 Scholarship on Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Romans Interpretation

Considering the history of Romans interpretation more broadly, a good deal of literature explores sixteenth-century perspectives, while little has been written about seventeenth-century commentary.⁴⁰ Mark Reasoner's *Romans in Full Circle* provides a helpful overview of certain periods, though his circle is not large enough to contain anyone between Calvin and Barth. The collection of essays in *Reading Romans Through the Centuries* likewise skips over the seventeenth century, though with smaller leaps that visit Wesley, Hodge, and the excommunicated nineteenth-century South African Anglican bishop John William Colenso en route from Calvin to Barth. The essays in this volume on Chrysostom, Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin are useful for our purposes, given the influence of each of these theologians on Willet's interpretation of Romans. The collection *Reformation Readings of Romans* and T. H. L. Parker's *Commentaries on Romans 1532-1542* both narrow their scope so as to end prior to the seventeenth

³⁸ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*; Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 169-174.

³⁹ Van Kleeck, "Hermeneutics and Theology in the Seventeenth Century." Van Kleeck addresses Willet's exegesis of Romans 1:32, 5:12, 8:3, 10:21, 11:6, 11:31, chapter 13, and 16:25-27.

⁴⁰ A brief overview of the history of the exegesis of Romans can be found in C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 30-44. Cranfield, however, skips from Calvin to the eighteenth century. On sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exegesis broadly considered, see Richard A. Muller, "Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries," in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 123-152. Muller cites Willet's work as an example of "the more technical commentaries of the early seventeenth century" (p. 144).

century.⁴¹ Charles Raith II's recent book compares Thomas's and Calvin's readings of the first half of Romans,⁴² and a wide range of essays (many also focusing on Calvin) have considered sixteenth century exegesis of pericopes in Romans.⁴³ David H.

Kranendonk's brief *Teaching Predestination* devotes a chapter to Elnathan Parr's 1618

⁴¹ Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*; Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen, eds., *Reading Romans Through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005); Kathy Ehrensperger and R. Ward Holder, eds., *Reformation Readings of Romans* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008); T. H. L. Parker, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans 1532-1542* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986). Other essays treating sixteenth century Romans commentaries include Akira Demura, "Two Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans: Calvin and Oecolampadius," in *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex: Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser and Brian G. Armstrong (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 1997), 165-188; Annie Noblesse-Rocher, "Jacques Sadolet et Jean Calvin, Commentateurs de l'Épître aux Romains," in *Calvinus sacrarum literarum interpres: Papers of the International Congress on Calvin Research*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Göttingen, Ger.: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 190-208; Timothy J. Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon's 1522 Annotations on Romans and the Lutheran Origins of Rhetorical Criticism," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, ed. Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 118-140; Joel Kok, "The Influence of Martin Bucer on John Calvin's Interpretation of Romans: A Comparative Case Study" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1993); Joe Mock, "Bullinger and Romans," *Reformed Theological Review* 69, no. 1 (April 2010): 34-47; Frank A. James III, "Romans Commentary: Justification and Sanctification," in *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, and Frank A. James III (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2009), 304-317; Marvin W. Anderson, "Peter Martyr on Romans," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26, no. 4 (Nov. 1973): 401-420.

⁴² Charles Raith II, *Aquinas and Calvin on Romans: God's Justification and Our Participation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴³ See, for example, Charles D. Raith II, "Abraham and the Reformation: Romans 4 and the Theological Interpretation of Aquinas and Calvin," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 283-300; David C. Steinmetz, "Calvin and the Divided Self of Romans 7," in *Augustine, the Harvest, and Theology (1300-1650): Essays dedicated to Heiko Augustinus Oberman*, ed. Kenneth Hagen (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1990), 300-313; Richard A. Muller, "'Scimus enim quod lex spiritualis est': Melanchthon and Calvin on the Interpretation of Romans 7:14-23," in *Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) and the Commentary*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert and M. Patrick Graham (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 216-237; William N. W. Pass III, "A Reexamination of Calvin's Approach to Romans 8:17," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170 (January-March 2013): 69-81; John B. Payne, "Erasmus on Romans 9:6-24," in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David Steinmetz (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 119-135; Daniel Shute, "And All Israel Shall Be Saved: Peter Martyr and John Calvin on the Jews According to Romans, Chapters 9, 10 and 11," in *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations: Semper Reformanda*, ed. Frank A. James III (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2004), 159-176; Jean-Claude Margolin, "The Epistle to the Romans (Chapter 11) According to the Versions and/or Commentaries of Valla, Colet, Lefevre, and Erasmus," in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David Steinmetz (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 136-166; David Starling, "The Analogy of Faith in the Theology of Luther and Calvin," *The Reformed Theological Review* 72 no. 1 (April 2013): 5-19; Richard A. Muller, "Calvin, Beza, and the Exegetical History of Romans 13:1-7," in *The Identity of Geneva: the Christian Commonwealth, 1564-1864*, ed. John B. Roney and Martin I. Klauber (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 39-56.

exposition of Romans 8-11, which includes some comments on Parr's use of Willet.⁴⁴

Additionally, John Duff's recent dissertation on seventeenth-century English interpretations of the new heavens and earth engages helpfully with Willet's exegesis of Romans 8.⁴⁵

2.3 Scholarship on Post-Reformation Polemics

A growing body of strong scholarship addresses the polemics of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, especially within the English context. Milton's *Catholic and Reformed*, besides giving Willet the spotlight he deserves, is the standard survey of Protestant-Catholic relations in England from 1600 to the Civil War. Tutino's *Law and Conscience* is, if less comprehensive in scope, equal in quality. Walsham and Tavad, like Tutino, focus on the experience of Roman Catholics living in Protestant England. Dewey Wallace's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, while brief, provides a helpful overview of Puritan polemics and acknowledges that these polemics frequently overlapped with other genres, as commentary, catechesis, and devotional literature. Frances Dolan considers seventeenth-century anti-Catholic polemic with special attention given to its use of misogynistic rhetoric. The role of printing technologies in religious polemics is explored by Jesse Lander. Nicholas Tyacke and Lori Anne Ferrell each consider intra-Protestant polemics, with Tyacke recounting the rise of English Arminianism through the early seventeenth century and Ferrell focusing on the rhetoric of anti-Calvinist preachers against conforming Puritans in the battle for the

⁴⁴ David H. Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination: Elnathan Parr and Pastoral Ministry in Early Stuart England* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011).

⁴⁵ John H. Duff, "'A Knot Worth Unloosing': The Interpretation of the New Heavens and Earth in Seventeenth-Century England" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2014).

English church's *via media* position.⁴⁶

2.4 Statement of the Problem

At the close of the preface to the 1607 *Loidoromastix*, his second treatise against fellow Church of England divine Richard Parkes on the issue of Limbo, the great controversialist Andrew Willet suggests that he intends to shift genres and focus on biblical commentary. This reflection comes at the end of a response (which Willet was able to append to the introduction of *Loidoromastix* due to a printer's delay) to a recent anti-Protestant polemical work by the Roman Catholic Richard Broughton.⁴⁷ In his project of using Protestants to refute Protestants, Broughton had exploited some of the internecine debates that Willet had engaged in when not writing his anti-papist works.

⁴⁶ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*; Tutino, *Law and Conscience*; Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 1993); George H. Tavard, *The Seventeenth Century: A Study in Recusant Thought* (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1978); Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., "Polemical Divinity and Doctrinal Controversy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Jesse M. Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1987); Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603-1625* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

Cf. also discussions of early modern polemics in Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church*; Peter Marshall, "John Calvin and the English Catholics, c. 1565-1640," *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 4 (2010): 849-870; Patterson, "Elizabethan Theological Polemics"; Heal, "Appropriating History"; Condren, *The Language of Politics*; Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 55-76, 93-115; Graham Windsor, "The Controversy Between Roman Catholics and Anglicans from Elizabeth to the Revolution" (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 1967); Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology & Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Arthur F. Marotti, ed., *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth Century Essays* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1987); Anthony Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: the Career and Writings of Peter Heylyn* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007); Joshua Rodda, "Evidence of Things Seen: Univocation, Visibility and Reassurance in Post-Reformation Polemic," *Perichoresis* 13, no. 1 (June 2015): 57-74.

⁴⁷ Andrew Willet, *Loidoromastix: that is, A Scourge for a Rayler* (Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1607); [Richard Broughton], *The First Part of Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion and Recusancy* ([England: English secret press], 1607).

Recognizing through this the great potential damage wrought by Protestant infighting, Willet remarks: “I wish, if it may bee, and if mine enemies would *permit*, to write rather commentaries of Scripture (which course I am now entred into) then Demosthenes or Tullies Philippics.”⁴⁸ Willet suggests in a dedicatory epistle to Archbishop of Canterbury Richard Bancroft in the Exodus hexapla (1608) that it was Bancroft himself who had suggested this shift to biblical commentary, and it is possible that the archbishop—given his many Roman Catholic friends⁴⁹—had hoped that Willet would ease up on the anti-papist focus of his writings.⁵⁰ Willet’s own intention at this point, however, seems to have been to set aside open contention with other Church of England divines (thus ending the stream of ammunition such debates provided to the Roman enemy) and to shift the genre of his anti-papist work from “polemics” proper to polemically-focused biblical exegesis. In the dedicatory epistle to Prince Henry preceding the second half of his 1610 Daniel hexapla, however, Willet expands his claim of leaving behind polemics in a way that seems to include an intention to cease targeting Roman Catholics as well:

I have heretofore exercised my penne in handling of controversies against the common adversarie, and as I was provoked, have written also in mine owne defence, both against forren enemies, and some domesticall: But now, those

⁴⁸ Willet, *Loidoromastix*, sig. ¶¶¶¶¶3v. Willet’s reference is to the two great polemicists of ancient Greece and Rome, Demosthenes (whose polemics against Philip II of Macedon gave rise to the eponymous synonym “philippic”) and (Marcus Tullis) Cicero, whose own philippics attacked Mark Antony. Cf. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, s.vv. “Demosthenes,” “Cicero.”

⁴⁹ See Patrick Collinson, “Richard Bancroft, Robert Cecil and the Jesuits: the bishop and his Catholic friends,” in *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 173-192.

⁵⁰ Willet writes in the dedication to Bancroft: “These my labours, as your Grace was my great encourager first to undertake them, so it is meet that you should with the first reape the fruit of them” (Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum* [London: by Felix Kyngston for Thomas Man, 1608], sig.A6v).

occasions beeing if not altogether removed, yet somewhat intermitted, I have propounded unto my selfe this course in the explaining of Scripture.⁵¹

Despite this assertion, Willet's subsequent writing maintains its distinctly anti-Catholic focus. While he does indeed largely avoid further open conflict with other Church of England divines, his suggestion that he has moved on from combatting "the common adversarie" is not supported by his actual work. He continues in this same Daniel hexapla his old practice of referring to Jesuits as "Judasites" and to the Pope as "Antichrist."⁵² In 1613 he would publish a revised and expanded edition of *Synopsis Papismi*, with additional anti-Catholic material appended. And in the Romans hexapla of 1611 he consistently frames his interpretation against Roman doctrine.

Several scholars have given much weight to Willet's claim to have moved away from religious controversy, leading them to characterize his midlife shift to commentary as a turn away from polemics and towards more irenic pursuits. Milton tells of the aftermath of Willet's Limbo debates, writing that Parkes "disappeared into the obscurity from whence he came, while Willet (possibly with Bancroft's encouragement) vowed to abandon religious controversy altogether and to concentrate instead on scriptural commentary, which he continued to publish at a phenomenal rate throughout James' reign."⁵³ Milton hedges his own statement somewhat by writing only that Willet "vowed

⁵¹ Willet, *Hexapla in Danielelem*, sig.R4v (before page 197). Willet's statement seems to imply a general movement away from all polemics, and his mention of his new "course" of commentary work supports this reading. However, if "those occasions" that have been "somewhat intermitted" are taken more narrowly to refer only to the additional provocations that necessitated his response, the statement can also be read to express the cessation of all polemics *besides* those directed toward "the common adversarie." The continued anti-Catholic polemical focus of Willet's commentary work and the reissuing of additional editions of the *Synopsis Papismi* would support this reading.

⁵² E.g. Willet, *Hexapla in Danielelem*, 440. Considering the Pope to be Antichrist, as we shall see later, was far from a fringe view among English Protestants. Emphasizing this, however, is a curious way of abandoning polemics.

⁵³ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 25.

to” move on from religious controversy, but his phrasing (“altogether”) suggests that Willet also had his *anti-papist* work in mind, whereas the context implies only “domesticall contentions” among English Protestants.⁵⁴ Milton’s lack of any further comment here suggests, too, that Willet in fact carried out this plan. Pederson qualifies his account of Willet’s move to commenting on Scripture, though his wording implies that Willet spent his final years out of the public eye, and he makes the context of the shift more of politics than of polemics: “From 1607 onwards Willet retired to the life of a private commentator, based largely on the suggestion of Richard Bancroft (1544-1610); Willet complied but only in part; for the rest of his life his commentaries were used as a springboard for political comment, however nuanced and subtle.”⁵⁵ While some of Willet’s political comments could accurately be considered “subtle” (Pederson gives the example of his “modest, highly qualified endorsement of resistance theory”⁵⁶), the background of Willet’s own account of his genre shift concerns doctrinal *polemics*, and the polemical elements of his commentaries are anything but subtle. Peter Van Kleeck’s thesis on Willet’s hermeneutics alludes to, but does not in any detail expound upon the polemical element in his exegetical work.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Willet uses this phrase, “domesticall contentions,” in both *Loidoromastix* and the *Exodus hexapla*. Willet, *Loidoromastix*, sig.¶¶¶¶¶3r; Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum*, sig.A6v.

⁵⁵ Randall J. Pederson, “Andrew Willet and the *Synopsis Papismi*,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 1 (2009): 125.

⁵⁶ Pederson, “Andrew Willet and the *Synopsis Papismi*,” 125n33.

⁵⁷ Peter Van Kleeck, “Hermeneutics and Theology in the Seventeenth Century: the Contribution of Andrew Willet” (ThM thesis, Calvin Theological Seminary, 1998). For instance, Van Kleeck describes Willet’s Controversies category as “the primary vehicle to weave a polemic based on his exegesis against the papacy or Ubiquitarians, separatists and Judaism, but Willet also includes attacks upon the Manichees and Nestorians . . . and any doctrinal system opposed to that espoused by the Church of England” (pp. 35-36). Besides overstating Willet’s dogmatic commitment to all Church of England theology, this assessment fails to connect Willet’s references to Judaism and the older heresies to his polemic against Roman Catholicism; his concern was not so much with refuting Manicheism and Nestorianism as with

Other interpretations of Willet’s move to biblical commentary have more obvious shortcomings. Robert Smith’s curious comment that “Willet favored a noncontroversial approach” seems to stem from a misunderstanding about the nature of this shift,⁵⁸ which he later refers to as “a retreat into non-controversial safety.”⁵⁹ Smith describes Willet accurately as “a specialist in theological disagreements between Protestants and Catholics,” and writes that “the accession of King James sparked Willet’s desire to see the completion of England’s reform,” which sentiment Willet expressed in *Ecclesia Triumphans*. But then Smith claims that Willet’s career as a commentator was motivated by polity-induced disappointment: “As the king’s commitment to Anglican episcopacy became apparent, Willet turned his energies to biblical exegesis.”⁶⁰ This statement makes Willet’s supposed frustration with the episcopal form of church government—rather than the damage done by intra-Protestant quarrels—the motivation for his focus on commentary. But even if his personal associations with the more radical presbyterians indicate that he too had once desired this form of church polity for the English church, he had moved on to open advocacy of episcopal government long before James came to the throne.⁶¹ Granted, Willet opposed the notion of *iure divino* episcopal rule and his support

demonstrating that modern Roman Catholics repeated the errors of these earlier widely-condemned heresies. Van Kleeck also understates the polemical focus of the other five hexapla sections.

⁵⁸ Robert O. Smith, *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 79. His subsequent comment that Willet favored the principle of *adiaphora* among Protestants might also explain his characterization of Willet as “noncontroversial,” but even if this is the case, his unmodified use of the term is misleading, as it ignores his earlier controversies with fellow Protestants and fails to exclude his current Roman Catholic foes.

⁵⁹ Smith, *The Roots of Christian Zionism*, 218n48.

⁶⁰ Smith, *The Roots of Christian Zionism*, 79.

⁶¹ Cf. Tutino’s counter-depiction of Willet as an example of “how a sincere adherence to episcopalianism in the terms James made central could coexist with discordant opinions to those of the sovereign on the question of how to confront the Catholic problem” (Stefania Tutino, *Law and Conscience:*

for the bishops was contingent upon their doctrinal orthodoxy,⁶² but there is no suggestion that James's continuation of episcopal polity itself either demoralized Willet or drove him to focus on biblical commentary.

Leticia Álvarez-Recio represents Willet in a nearly opposite fashion, making him a representative of an English Protestantism the highest concern of which was ecclesiastical uniformity, all in support of a strange contention that anti-Catholic works in Willet's period were no longer driven by theological concerns. This argument Álvarez-Recio expresses by claiming:

Anti-Catholic literature of the second half of the reign of Elizabeth I takes a somewhat different tack by comparison with the works of previous years. The most notable example of this is the abandonment of theological polemics. Mention of the Word of God is only made when it is needed in order to justify the imperial theory of sovereignty, and with it the power of Elizabeth in relation to the Pope. Given the bellicose state of the international situation, it is not surprising that anti-Catholic authors replaced doctrinal elements with descriptions of Catholic aggression in order to encourage a collective act of rejection.⁶³

In advancing this argument Álvarez-Recio ignores a large body of anti-Catholic literature from this period that focuses overwhelmingly on doctrinal issues, not the least of which are the first three editions of *Synopsis Papismi*.⁶⁴ Willet's exegetical efforts (granted, all

Catholicism in Early Modern England, 1570-1625 [Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007], 117-118). Cf. also Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1990), 299-300. On Willet's personal ties to English presbyterians, see Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 14, 25.

⁶² Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 16, 25.

⁶³ Leticia Álvarez-Recio, *Fighting the Antichrist: A Cultural History of Anti-Catholicism in Tudor England*, trans. Bradley L. Drew (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 114-115. Alison Shell's review in *Huntington Library Quarterly* rightly calls into question this supposition: "Again, Álvarez-Recio's startling statement that the second half of Elizabeth's reign saw the 'abandonment of theological polemics ... mention of the Word of God is only made when it is needed in order to justify the imperial theory of sovereignty' (114-15) is so counterintuitive that it needs more careful contextualization for the reader to be convinced"(Alison Shell, review of *Fighting the Antichrist*, by Leticia Álvarez-Recio, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 75, no. 4 [Winter 2012]: 602).

⁶⁴ Álvarez-Recio's statement might be explained by her narrow focus on plays and pamphlets, but she also claims that "only one text has been found that deals extensively with the argument between tradition and Scripture, a recurring theme in the anti-Catholic texts of other times. This is *A Comparison*

but the 1602 *Catholicon* on Jude falling narrowly outside of the time frame Álvarez-Recio highlights) directly contradict the notion of an abandonment of theological polemics, these commentaries being—quite literally—the “Word of God” used in theologically focused anti-Catholic polemics. Álvarez-Recio does mention Willet but, again, paints him as a strict conformist whose primary concerns were political. She writes that the “criticism of Catholicism allows it to be linked with other groups that were considered sectarian within Anglican discourse, as they inhibited religious uniformity. Willet points out the importance of fighting against these groups—‘Brownists, Anabaptists, Papists’—which, according to the author, made peace in the Kingdom difficult.” Thus far, this note is defensible, although her interpretation of Willet’s linking of these various groups in *A Catholicon* seems to project King James’s heightened concern for peace through uniform doctrine onto Willet. However, she continues:

the fact that Protestant authorities equated the Catholic menace with that posed by Puritanism or by separatist groups indicates an advance in the policies of the Elizabethan government, which kept itself in the exact middle between all these currents. This explains the abandonment of religious polemic or of the ideological struggles that could only slow down the process of conformity.⁶⁵

The conclusions that Álvarez-Recio draws from Willet’s connection between the schismatic tendency of the papists and the separatist nature of the Brownists and Anabaptists misrepresent Willet’s conception of unity and schism.⁶⁶ Willet’s opposition to these groups is not simply because of their separatist tendencies; they have separated

between the Auncient Fayth of the Romans and the Romish Religion (1595) by Francis Bunny,” (Álvarez-Recio, *Fighting the Antichrist*, 199n49).

⁶⁵ Álvarez-Recio, *Fighting the Antichrist*, 203n91.

⁶⁶ Cf. my arguments in VI.2.3, VII.3.1, and VII.3.2. On later seventeenth-century understandings of unity and schism, see Sungho Lee, “All Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ: John Owen’s Conceptions of Christian Unity and Schism” (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2007).

themselves, Willet would argue, by their heretical doctrine. This focus on doctrinal *orthodoxy*, rather than on either doctrinal or institutional *uniformity*, is evident throughout Willet's work, and will be demonstrated throughout the chapters that follow in this dissertation. To address only the immediate context of Álvarez-Recio's citation of Willet, however, it should be noted that he is commenting on a verse about sects (Jude v. 19) and is writing from a defensive position, against the Rhemist charge of the Protestants being schismatic for breaking with the Roman communion. Willet rebuts that "the protestants then leaving the society of the false & corrupt Romane Church" simply follow the pattern set by Noah leaving the sinful world for the ark, Lot moving out of Sodom, and Jesus rejecting the traditions of the Pharisees. Immediately preceding the passage that Álvarez-Recio quotes, Willet writes: "and they are the true Catholike Church, which retaine the truth, and professe the right faith, how small soever their number is."⁶⁷

Anabaptists to Willet were nothing like the nonconforming Puritans, the one being doctrinally heretical, and the other a group that should be treated with a policy of "brotherly connivence."⁶⁸ The suggestion, then, that Willet opposes all separatists, regardless of their theology, because of his concern for conformity in the English church exactly reverses his priorities.

These misconceptions about Willet's work and the arc of his writing career reflect a broader misunderstanding of the role of biblical exegesis in early seventeenth-century polemics and, correspondingly, an insufficient understanding of the role that polemics

⁶⁷ Andrew Willet, *A Catholicon, that is, A generall preservative or remedie against the Pseudocatholike religion, gathered out of the Catholike epistle of S. Jude...* (Cambridge: John Legat, 1602), 125-128.

⁶⁸ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, 12. Cf. also Charles W. A. Prior, *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78.

had in shaping and focusing scripture interpretation.

2.5 Summary of the State of the Question

While numerous studies have recognized Willet's influence on fields ranging from Genesis scholarship to seventeenth-century poetry to early Stuart era politics, rarely has this earlier scholarship focused on him as to treat any of his works in depth or to consider his place more broadly within the early seventeenth-century religious landscape. Despite playing a significant role in recent decades in fine works by historians such as Milton, Tutino, and DeLapp, significant aspects of Willet's theology and exegesis remain unexplored or underexplored. The lack of a comprehensive study of Willet has contributed to various misrepresentations of his thought. Several recent works have missed the nuances of his political orientation, presenting him as either an unyielding conformist or—conversely—as a radical presbyterian. More to the point of this present study, a consensus has emerged that Willet's mid-career shift to biblical commentary represented not only a shift in genre, but a move away from polemics entirely. This view, as expressed to different degrees by Milton, Pederson, and Van Kleeck, tends to underestimate the polemical aspect of Willet's exegetical work. The neglect of exegetically-based polemics has, in turn, led others such as Álvarez-Recio to conceive of the anti-Catholic polemics of Willet's era as more politically than theologically motivated, suggesting a polemical dogmatism that was untheological and non-exegetical. This dissertation seeks to address some of these deficiencies in Willet scholarship, and to clarify the integral connection between scriptural exegesis and theological polemics in the early Stuart period.

3. Statement of the Thesis

In this dissertation I will argue that, far from being a retreat from religious controversy, Andrew Willet’s biblical commentary work maintained a significant element of anti-Catholic polemics, only expressed in a different genre. This polemical hermeneutic did not impose rigid doctrinal concerns upon his exegesis, but rather served as an organizing principle and as a means by which to clarify the presentation of traditional Reformed readings in relief against a body of theology (which itself had developed polemically since the Reformation) that Willet believed threatened the gospel of grace. I focus on Willet’s hexapla commentary on Romans because of the importance of this epistle to the development of Protestant theology and because Willet identified it as the epistle that “beateth downe all both old and newe heresies,” and which functions as a “catechisme and introduction to Christian religion.”⁶⁹ Paul’s letter thus provides ample opportunity for Willet to identify what is distinctive about Reformed theology—or rather, as Willet would have it, the particular ways in which papist dogma has diverged from the true line of Christian belief running from the Fathers through to the Reformed church of the seventeenth century.

Willet’s exegesis of Romans highlights many of the polemical issues that had long been contended between Protestants and Roman Catholics, including the authentic versions of Scripture, Scripture’s attributes (including its perspicuity and the authority to interpret it), and principles of interpretation (including when and how to employ the *analogia fidei* and *analogia scriptura*), as well as doctrines like justification,

⁶⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24, i.

predestination, the assurance of salvation, and the place of good works.⁷⁰ Willet's exegesis reveals also the impact that different polemical contexts have on Scripture interpretation—as he is opposing different foes and addressing different issues, Willet's early Stuart era exegetical work looks different from that of his Reformed forebears and his continental counterparts, despite their broad doctrinal harmony.

A close investigation into Willet's exegetical method, moreover, helps to see how an identifiable hermeneutical lens is consistent with a disciplined reading that is faithful to the text. His polemical focus does not corrupt his exegesis or impose upon it meanings that are alien to the text itself; rather, his polemical hermeneutic serves to focus his attention, govern his distinctions, organize his observations, and frame positive doctrinal statements against the sharp relief of erroneous readings. His exceptional skill as a textual critic, his fidelity to the scriptural record, and his methodological rigor (as employed in his unique hexapla format and making use of refined tools from humanist and scholastic traditions) ensure that his polemical hermeneutic directs, and does not substitute for, his careful exegetical efforts.

4. Willet's Life and Context

Since Willet is, in the words of Daly and Valeri-Tomaszuk, “today little known and less often read,”⁷¹ a brief introduction to his life and context is necessary. While their “today” is now thirty years in the past—and three decades, moreover, that have seen a definite surge of scholarly interest in Willet—it would be hard to argue that he has

⁷⁰ Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 2:108-119.

⁷¹ Daly and Valeri-Tomaszuk, “Andrew Willet,” 181.

returned to a level of notoriety in which his reputation precedes him.

4.1 Biographical Sketch of Willet

Andrew Willet was born in 1562, or possibly at the very end of 1561, in “that little Citie of Ely in Cambridge-shire.”⁷² His father, Thomas Willet, was also a pastor, and had in his younger years been a schoolmaster and subalmoner [involved in the distribution of alms] to Richard Coxe. When Queen Mary came to the throne upon the death of Edward VI in 1553, Coxe went into exile and Thomas lost his job. He and his wife were protected during Mary’s persecution, but struggled and were forced to spend a lot of time apart. DeLapp suggests that this period of family history contributed to the younger Willet’s fierce opposition to Catholicism.⁷³ When Coxe returned from exile and was made Bishop of Ely, he rewarded Thomas Willet’s earlier service with a prebendal stall in his church, and later added his own congregations in Thurkiston (in Leicestershire) and in Barley (Hertfordshire).⁷⁴

Andrew was a devoted student, finding his studies “the most voluptuous” way to spend his time. He eschewed recreation as an “impediment to his studies,” to the point of worrying his parents, and Smith indicates that he “became the sole delight and solace of his Teacher” (which may say more about the poor teacher than about Willet’s academic

⁷² Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.a2r. The uncertainty about his birth year is because Peter Smith did not give his date of birth in his biography, but noted that he was fifty-nine at the time of his death on December 4, 1621. Thus, he was born either in 1562 or in the last three weeks of the previous year. Smith’s biographical preface provides the vast majority of information that we have about Willet’s life. I give an overview of additional biographical material—all of which draws heavily on Smith—in a following section (I.2.3) on Willet’s legacy.

⁷³ Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.av; DeLapp, *The Reformed David(s)*, 102.

⁷⁴ Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.av.

gifts).⁷⁵ At the age of fourteen (“or thereabouts”), Willet was sent to the University of Cambridge, under the care of his Godfather and namesake, Andrew Perne, who was the Master of Peter-house. He soon transferred, for reasons unknown, to Christ’s College, where he became acquainted with other future luminaries of the Church of England, as George Downname and William Perkins.⁷⁶

After thirteen years at Cambridge, Andrew was given the prebendal stall at Ely upon his father’s resignation, and around that time he married the daughter of King’s College Provost Roger Goad.⁷⁷ Together he and his wife Jacobine had eighteen children, thirteen of whom survived him, and he actually enjoyed being a father: “so children, which to many are occasions of great trouble, to him were but the subjects of his delight and recreation.” Smith makes a cryptic reference to one son who fell away, perhaps with a grievous sin. Jacobine’s domestic heroism enabled Andrew to engage in his study and ministry “without any the least distraction,” but he made time to recreate by playing the organ and singing, playing with his children, engaging in various “delights” (“not unlawfull or uncomely”), and splitting wood.⁷⁸

Soon after his father’s death in 1598, Andrew Willet took over the parsonage of

⁷⁵ Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.a2v.

⁷⁶ Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.a3r. On the University of Cambridge during this period, see Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations between the English Universities and English Society* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959).

⁷⁷ Peter Smith describes their union in romantic terms, writing that Willet “betook himselfe to the societie of a wife, which was worthily commended unto him” (Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.a3v).

⁷⁸ Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.a3v; the account of the son who fell away is given on pp. sig.b2v-b3r. Smith notes that Willet sought to “order his house, like to a little Commonwealth: Hee had his lawes and ordinances set up in tables, directing his family in their severall offices and duties, both oeconomically and morall: to these hee annexed some penall comminations for offenders,” though except for particularly heinous cases, these punishments were “verie rarely put in execution” (p. sig.b2v); in other words, he was “the fun dad.”

the same church in Barley that Thomas had led for twenty-seven years, and Andrew kept that position until his death.⁷⁹ While continuing to preach regularly, Willet took the Doctor of Divinity degree from Cambridge in 1601, and around this time he also served as one of the chaplains to King James's son Prince Henry.⁸⁰ Despite being one of England's best Hebraists, Willet was not selected as one of the fifty-four (or forty-seven, depending on the account) scholars appointed in 1604 to translate the King James Bible—an unexplained omission glaring enough to be mentioned in several accounts of the origins of that bible.⁸¹ In his church and community Willet was known for his generosity, paying for the majority of the university expenses for two sons of his friends, setting up a trust for the poor of Barley and overpaying the poor for goods and services, advocating for poorer pastors, and petitioning to have a local hospital built.⁸²

In February of 1618 Willet was punished with a month of house arrest (under the custody of one Dr. White) for his opposition to the proposed “Spanish Match” between Prince Charles and the Roman Catholic Spanish Infanta Maria Anna. Willet's open

⁷⁹ Arthur Howard Frere and Walter Howard Frere, *A Sketch of the Parochial History of Barley, Herts; Together with some account of The Life and Death of Andrew Willet, Parson there 1598-1621* (London: George Reynolds, 1890), 23, 26.

⁸⁰ Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.bv; Milton, “Andrew Willet,” 26. DeLapp notes that Willet was one of twenty-four chaplains to Prince Henry, making it difficult to know precisely how close their relationship might have been (DeLapp, *The Reformed David(s)*, 104n22).

⁸¹ The two most gifted English linguists left off of the translation team were Willet and Hugh Broughton. Several scholars have cited Broughton's brash personality as the likely reason for his exclusion, but Willet's absence is more baffling. Daiches suggests that it may have been connected to Willet's opposition to the Spanish Match, though this would have entailed a good deal of foresight on James's part, seeing as that controversy would not fully bloom for a decade (Daiches, *The King James Version of the Bible*, 158n16). Daiches adds that Willet was “perhaps the best textual critic of his day.” Cf. also S. L. Greenslade, “English Versions of the Bible, 1525-1611,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 165; Olga S. Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators* (London: McFarland, 1982), 8-9; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 437.

⁸² Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.b3r-b4v.

opposition to the union was expressed in the context of trying to persuade James's subjects to provide him with more funds so that James would not view the proposed Match as an economic necessity.⁸³

A riding accident in November of 1621 led to Willet's death at the age of fifty-nine. Returning home from business in London, his horse stumbled and fell, causing Willet to break his right leg. Having been taken to a local inn, he was seen by an orthopedic surgeon ("Bone-setter"), who advised ten days of rest before continuing home. He worked and preached from his sickbed, and on the tenth day of his convalescence he awoke early, discussed the subject of death and the heavenly fellowship of the saints, and sang a hymn that he had composed and some psalms. Then, having fallen into a brief trance, he was roused for his final words—which, as Smith reports them, were: "Let me alone, I shall doe well; Lord Iesu-----." Upon his death, his body was taken back to Barley, where he was interred in the chancel of his church.⁸⁴

4.2 Willet's Sources and Hexapla Method

Willet the man was known in his time as a "living library,"⁸⁵ and this breadth of

⁸³ An entry in the Calendar of State Papers from March 6, 1618 indicates that "Dr. Willett [is] still in prison, for sounding people in Norfolk and Suffolk as to what they would give in Parliament, to prevent a Spanish match." The following line reports that "a Spanish monk [was] delivered over to the Sheriffs, and [is] likely to be burnt"—which rather puts Willet's own "ordeal" in perspective (Mary Anne Everett Green, ed. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I. 1611-1618* [London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1858], 525); see also pp. 505, 521-522. Cf. also *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. N. E. McClure, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), 140-141; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 58; Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution*, 11n36. On the controversy around the Spanish Match, see Thomas Cogswell, "England and the Spanish Match," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (New York: Longman Inc., 1989), 107-133.

⁸⁴ Smith, "The Life and Death of Andrew Willet," sig.c2v-c4v.

⁸⁵ Joseph Alden, *Anecdotes of the Puritans* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1849), 69.

learning is manifested in his encyclopedic use of a wide range of sources in his commentaries. Among these copious citations, Augustine, Chrysostom, and Origen predominate the Church Fathers, and Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Gorran (1232-1295), and Nicholas of Lyra the medieval theologians.⁸⁶ He appears to get many of these interpretations directly from the sources, but also receives some through secondary means, as when he relays selected readings of Augustine via Vermigli.⁸⁷ From his own Protestant heritage, he cites David Pareus (1548-1622), Vermigli, Calvin, and Beza regularly, and others such as Beza's colleague and successor Faius [Antoine de La Faye, 1540-1615], Bucer, Robert Rollock (1555-1599), and the Reformed Zurich pastor Rudolf Gwalther (1519-1586) more sporadically.⁸⁸ Willet's theology is solidly Reformed, while not slavishly deferential to any one particular Reformed exegete; Raymond's description of him as "independently minded, though fiercely anti-Catholic" is accurate.⁸⁹ In the

⁸⁶ Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, vol. 103 of *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001); Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, vol. 104 of *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2002); John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, trans. J. B. Morris and W. H. Simcox, in vol. 11 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912); Nicholas Gorranus, *In Omnes Divi Pauli Epistolas Enarratio: Selectis S. Scripturae, Conciliorum Et SS. Patrum intertexta ubique autoritatibus : Opus omnibus Ecclesiae Pastoribus ... perutile Continens Epistolas Ad Romanos, Corinthios, Galatas, Ephesios, Philippenses, & Colossenses*, vol. 1 (Lugduni: Anisson, Posuel & Rigaud, 1692). Cf. VII.2.1.

⁸⁷ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 128, 204.

⁸⁸ David Pareus, *In Divinam ad Romanos S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolam Commentarius* (Frankfort: Johannis Lancelloti, 1608); Peter Martyr Vermigli, *In Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Rom...* (Basil: Petrum Pernam, 1560); Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Most learned and fruitfull commentaries...vpon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Romanes...*, trans. by H. B. (London: John Daye, 1568); John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, ed. and trans. John Owen (1849; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003); John Calvin, *Commentarii in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos* (Strasbourg, 1540); Theodore Beza, *Annotationes majores in novum Domini nostri Christi Testamentum* (Geneva, 1594); L. Tomson, trans., *The New Testament*, with Beza notes (Geneva, 1576); Antoine de La Faye, *In D. Pauli Apostoli Epistolam ad Romanos* (Geneva: Sumptibus Petri & Jacobi Chouet, 1608); Martin Bucer, *Metaphrasis et Enarratio in Epist. D. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos* (Basil: Peter Pernam, 1562); Robert Rollock, *Analysis Dialectica...in...Romanos* (Edinburgh: Robertus Walde-grave, 1594); Rudolf Gwalther, *In Divi Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Omnes* (Tiguri [Zürich]: In Officina Froschoviana, 1589).

⁸⁹ Raymond, *Milton's Angels*, 48-49.

prefaces to several of his commentaries Willet mentions that he is drawing from a deep pool of previous commentators that includes both Protestants and Roman Catholics—always clarifying regarding the latter that he is adopting Jerome’s principle for reading Origen of taking the best and leaving the worst.⁹⁰ The “Directions to the Reader” in the Genesis hexapla acknowledge a debt to Pererius (1536-1610), who took “great paines” in his interpretation, though with a number of historical inaccuracies and “not a few errors for doctrine.”⁹¹ In the Romans hexapla, Willet makes frequent appeal to Erasmus for his linguistic expertise, while often rejecting his theology.⁹² Additionally, he engages with Tolet (Francisco de Toledo; 1532-1596), Bellarmine (1542-1621), Pererius (Benedict Pereira), Thomas Stapleton (1535-1598), Cajetan (1469-1534), and the head Rhemist annotator Gregory Martin (d. 1582). As we will see, an instance of his agreement with one of these modern Romanists often serves to highlight the error of another.⁹³ Willet also occasionally cites pagan authors (often through secondary sources), as when he quotes such figures as Pythagoras, Draco, Plutarch, and Cicero to argue that the Ten

⁹⁰ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin*, sig.¶4r; Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum*, sig.A6v.

⁹¹ Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin*, sig.¶4r; Benedict Pererius, *Commentarii et Disputationes in Genesim* (Rome: Georgius Ferrarius, 1589). Cf. also Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum*, sig.A6v: “we do not refuse the learned observations of Caietanus, [Benito Arias] Montanus, Vatablus, with others of their side.”

⁹² Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrases des Erasmi Roerodami In epistolas Pauli apostoli ad Rومانos Corinthios & Galatas* (Basil: Joan. Frobenius, 1520); Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians*, ed. Robert Dick Sider, trans. John Barton Payne, Albert Rabil, and Warren Sylvester Smith, vol. 42 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* 42 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); Desiderius Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, ed. Robert Dick Sider, vol. 56 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

⁹³ Francisco Tolet, *Commentarii et Annotationes in Epistolam B. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos* (Rome: Paulini Arnolfini Lucensis, 1602); Thomas Stapleton, *Antidota Apostolica Contra Nostri Temporis Haereses...In Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos* (Antwerp: Ioannem Keerbergium, 1595); Benedict Pererius, *Disputationes super Epistola beati Pauli ad Romanos* (Lyon: Horatii Cardon, 1604); Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, *In omnes D. Pauli et aliorum apostolorum epistolas commentarii ...: tomus quintus* (Lyon: sumptibus Iacobi & Petri Prost, 1639). See VII.3.1.

Commandments can be discovered through natural law.⁹⁴

Willet introduced his distinctive hexapla commentary method in his 1605 *Hexapla in Genesin* which, extending the connection to Origen beyond the title alone, compares the original Hebrew with six different translations (the Septuagint; Chaldean; two Latin bibles, of Jerome and Tremellius; and two English bibles, the Great Bible and the Geneva Bible). This six-fold comparison of translations is given priority on the title page over what would come to be associated with Willet's hexapla method: "Together with a sixfold use of every chapter," in which he 1) summarizes the scope and argument of the chapter, 2) presents the text, noting variations between manuscripts and translations, 3) considers various questions generally of a linguistic or historical nature, 4) elicits doctrines from the text, 5) engages in controversies to show where others—mainly Roman Catholics—have misinterpreted the text, and 6) offers moral observations on the chapter.⁹⁵ His subsequent commentaries drop the concern for comparing the text with precisely six translations, thus applying the title solely to his six-fold use of the text itself. The 1608 *Hexapla in Exodum*, for instance, indicates the comparison of *ten* various readings, even though three of these—the "Hebrew original," and the Hebrew texts given by Santes Pagnino (1470-1536) and Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598)—were used also in the Genesis hexapla, but not counted because they were not translations. Had he desired to continue to depict his textual work as a comparison between six different translations, he surely could have presented his sources in such a way as to give that impression. In the Romans hexapla, for which his textual sources naturally differ

⁹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 118-119.

⁹⁵ On Willet's hexapla method, cf. also Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:446, 515-516; Van Kleeck, "Hermeneutics and Theology in the Seventeenth Century," 24-38; Muller, *After Calvin*, 50.

somewhat from those used in his Old Testament commentaries, Willet compares eight different readings: “Vatablus,”⁹⁶ the Vulgate, Beza, the Syriac, Tremellius, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the (textus receptus) Greek.⁹⁷

The logic of the hexapla method is addressed more fully in the “Directions to the Reader” prefacing the Exodus hexapla. There Willet explains that two things need to be considered when reading Scripture: the sense and understanding, and the use and profit of that understanding. The hexapla approach, he writes, divides each of these into three parts. Tending to the basic understanding of a text are the argument (which gives the coherence of the chapter), the consideration of the various readings (which helps in determining the true literal sense), and questions to remove doubts about the passage. Likewise, three points apply to the use and profit of the text: the doctrines confirm what is true, the controversies confute what is false, and the moral observations aid in removing vice and cultivating righteousness.⁹⁸ In his application of this hexapla method Willet makes use of a wide range of humanist and scholastic exegetical tools, including a consistent philological concern, the eliciting of theological *loci* from the text, and a broadly disputational arrangement of his arguments.

⁹⁶ The “Vatable Bible” refers to a series of bible editions published by Stephanus and his successors in the mid-sixteenth century that contained annotations purportedly from lecture notes by a student of François Vatable (d. 1547). While Vatable himself likely had little to do with these bibles, attaching his reputable name to them could serve to increase their marketability and to deflect potential criticism; see Josef Eskhult, “Latin Bible versions in the age of Reformation and Post-Reformation: on the development of new Latin versions of the Old Testament in Hebrew and on the Vulgate as revised and evaluated among Protestants,” *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* (2006): 64n82; Dick Wursten, “François Vatable, So Much More Than a ‘Name,’” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 73, no. 3 (2011): 557-559; Alice Philena Hubbard, “The Bible of Vatable,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 66, no. 2 (June 1947): 200; Cf. John L. Thompson, “Calvin’s Exegetical Legacy: His Reception and Transmission of Text and Tradition,” in *The Legacy of John Calvin” Papers Presented at the 12th Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, April 22-24, 1999*, ed. David Foxgrover (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Studies Society, 2000), 41-45.

⁹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, sig.¶4r.

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum*, sig.A7r.

4.3 Willet's Legacy

While, again, generally unknown today by non-specialists, Willet continued to have an impact in the years following his death in 1621. Bishop Joseph Hall (1574-1656) in a 1624 sermon listed Willet among twenty-one “great lights” in the English church’s recent history.⁹⁹ In 1634 a fifth edition of *Synopsis Papismi* was released, which Peter Smith writes was “by especiall recommendation from his Royall Majestie,” Charles I. If Smith is to be trusted on this point, it is curious that *Synopsis Papismi* would be reprinted by royal decree during a decade when “vigorously anti-papal language and arguments were not simply censured, but were also censored.”¹⁰⁰ Augustus Toplady—best known as the author of the hymn “Rock of Ages”—would comment over a century later on how it might indeed not have been expected for one so solidly Reformed (though with “not a grain of Puritanism mingled...with his conformity”) to have his major work republished in the middle of Charles’s reign, concluding: “So uncorrupt in doctrine did the bishops, the Universities, the clergy, and the people, generally, continue, even under the malignant aspect of the Laudean planet!”¹⁰¹ It is perhaps more plausible that issuing a new edition of *Synopsis Papismi* was a politically expedient move for Charles, Willet being both popular with those having Puritan leanings and a strong supporter of the episcopacy and the sovereign’s leadership of the church.¹⁰² This same fifth edition was “one of the best

⁹⁹ Joseph Hall, *Noah's Dove: Bringing an Olive of Peace to the Tossed Arke of Christs Church* (London: by John Haviland for Hanna Barret, 1624).

¹⁰⁰ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 66.

¹⁰¹ *The Works of Augustus Toplady* (1794; Repr. London: J. Chidley, 1837), 220, 258.

¹⁰² Cf. Joseph Marshall’s speculation on why *King James His Judgment* was printed in 1642, seventeen years after James’s death and twenty-one after Willet’s: “Willet would seem to be a useful authority for the royalists and episcopalians to cite, as a reformer, opposed to James’s negotiations with the Catholics and with Spain, who nevertheless remained in conformity with the Church of England” (Marshall, “Republishing Jacobean Texts in the 1640s,” 73); Andrew Willet, *King James His Judgment by*

used” anti-Catholic works by the English minister Thomas Hall (1610-1665; no relation to Joseph), who had a “heavily marked” copy in his library.¹⁰³ Philip Benedict, to illustrate how in 1670 Calvin was not considered the *sole* Reformed authority, relays the reading list that a Scottish divinity student had reported to his home presbytery: Calvin’s *Institutes*, the *Theological System* of Marcus Friedrich Wendelin (1584-1652), catechisms by Pareus and Ursinus, Willet’s *Synopsis Papismi*, and the *Course* of Johannes Scharpius (1572-1648)—“a mixture,” Benedict comments, “of famous and now obscure authors active between the middle of the sixteenth century and the middle of the seventeenth” century.¹⁰⁴ As late as the end of the eighteenth century, Toplady continued to heap praise on Willet, referring to *Synopsis Papismi* as an “inestimable book... which is one of the very best batteries that were ever raised for the demolition of Popery,” and calling Willet “that profound and indefatigable divine.”¹⁰⁵ Willet’s relevance extends even later into the nineteenth century, as a new ten-volume edition of the *Synopsis*, edited by John Cumming, was published in 1852.¹⁰⁶

Willet appears also in multiple biographical anthologies of important figures from the English church written in the decades following his death, each generating most of their material from Peter Smith’s 1634 account. He is among the lives of 139 “Learned

way of counsell and advice to all His loving Subjects, extracted out of His own Speeches by Doctor Willet concerning Politique government in England and Scotland (London: Thomas Cooke, 1642).

¹⁰³ Denise Thomas, “Religious Polemic, Print Culture and Pastoral Ministry: Thomas Hall BD (1610-1665) and the Promotion of Presbyterian Orthodoxy in the English Revolution” (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2011), 92.

¹⁰⁴ Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 297.

¹⁰⁵ *The Works of Augustus Toplady*, 220.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi*, ed. John Cumming, 10 vols. (London: The British Society for Promoting the Religious Principles of the Reformation, 1852).

Men and Famous Divines” dating back to the patristic period that Samuel Clark memorializes in his 1650 *Marrow of Ecclesiastical Historie*. In 1651 the historian Thomas Fuller included Willet among 107 important sixteenth- and seventeenth-century church leaders from all over Europe (almost all Protestants, but also including Erasmus) in his assemblage of biographies in *Abel Redevivus*.¹⁰⁷ Clement Barksdale in 1670 honored Willet as one of his ten “excellent men” in recent English history.¹⁰⁸ And the non-conformist Benjamin Brook (1776-1848) included Willet in his 1813 *Lives of the Puritans*—“those divines who distinguished themselves in the cause of religious liberty.”¹⁰⁹

Nor was Willet’s seventeenth-century impact limited to England. His work was known on the continent through Latin translations,¹¹⁰ and important figures in American church history valued his writings, as well. William Brewster, who came to America on the Mayflower in 1620, had works by Willet in his library—indicating that books by Willet were likely aboard the Mayflower—and Increase Mather partly patterned his views on Jewish conversion after Willet’s model.¹¹¹ Increase’s son Cotton Mather was

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Clark, *The Marrow of Ecclesiastical Historie, contained in the Lives of the Fathers, and other Learned Men, and Famous Divines, which have Flourished in the Church since Christ’s Time, to this present Age* (London: by William Du-gard, 1650); Fuller, ed., *Abel Redevivus*.

¹⁰⁸ Clement Barksdale, *A Remembrancer of Excellent Men* (London: for John Martyn, 1670). This was reprinted in 1677 with the better-known title, *The Lives of Ten Excellent Men*.

¹⁰⁹ Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, vol. 2 (London: for James Black, 1813), 284-288. Cf. also the 1890 Howard Frere, *A Sketch of the Parochial History of Barley, Herts; Together with some account of The Life and Death of Andrew Willet, Parson there 1598-1621*.

¹¹⁰ Anthony Milton, “The Church of England and the Palatinate, 1566-1642,” in *The Reception of Continental Reformation in Britain*, ed. Polly Ha and Patrick Collinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 147; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 400; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:102.

¹¹¹ McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press*, vol. 1, 231; Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, 167-170. Mather diverged from Willet, however, in expecting a return of the Jews to their ancestral homeland. This difference can be explained partly by Mather’s chiliasm (which eschatological interpretation Willet had rejected). Cf. Richard W. Cogley, “The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the

impressed by Willet's skill in refuting Roman Catholic doctrine.¹¹² A 1723 record of the holdings in Harvard College—the institution the elder Mather had earlier led—lists Willet as one of the four Genesis commentaries in English, and the influential Virginian William Byrd II had a copy of Willet as one of the three English Genesis commentaries in his own collection.¹¹³ Apart from his writing, Willet's influence in America was also felt through his progeny, as his fourth son Thomas served as the first mayor of New York City.¹¹⁴

5. Polemical Context

Many factors contributed to the complex religious landscape of post-Reformation Europe and particularly of late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Issues raised at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) in Italy and in the writings of such Counter Reformation figures as Robert Bellarmine shifted the focus of the defense required by Protestants.¹¹⁵ In 1582 English Catholics in exile in France published the Rheims New Testament, featuring strongly anti-Protestant notes that would help shape Protestant polemical responses in England for decades to come.¹¹⁶ In the 1590s Protestant England was at war

Restoration of Israel in the 'Judeo-Centric' Strand of Puritan Millenarianism," *Church History* 72, no. 2 (June 2003): 304. On Willet's rejection of chiliasm, see Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 227-228. See also VI.4.

¹¹² Pederson, "Andrew Willet and the *Synopsis Papismi*," 122.

¹¹³ Williams, *The Common Expositor*, 32.

¹¹⁴ Robert C. Ritchie, "Thomas Willet," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:109-111.

¹¹⁶ [Martin, Gregory, trans.], *The New Testament of Jesus Christ, translated faithfully into English, out of the authentical Latin, according to the best corrected copies of the same, diligently conferred with the Greeke and other editions in diver languages: With Arguments of bookes and chapters, Annotations,*

with Catholic Spain. Jesuit missionary activity in England led both to fears of Protestants converting (as in the notorious case of Benjamin Carier) and to concerns that the rift between Jesuits and secular Roman clergy could lead to greater tolerance for moderate recusants in exchange for their condemnation of the Jesuit faction.¹¹⁷ The building of a new Jesuit college in La Flèche, France, in 1604 (two years before its most famous student, René Descartes, would enroll) threatened to generate more popish missionaries, though Willet's references to the new college in the Romans hexapla are all to condemn the lavish expense.¹¹⁸ The 1605 Gunpowder Plot, in which a handful of zealous papists attempted to blow up James and his parliament, heightened tensions for years.¹¹⁹ Four years later, in 1609, Chelsea College, an institution intended to train English Protestants for anti-Catholic polemics, was founded with James's blessing.¹²⁰ James himself, however, while expressing a personal Protestant faith, had many Roman Catholic ties, including a Catholic mother (Mary, Queen of Scots) and a wife (Anne of Denmark) with strong Catholic inclinations.¹²¹ James's own issue with Roman Catholics was primarily

and other necessarie helpes, for the better understanding of the text, and specially for the discoverie of the Corruptions of divers late translations, and for clearing the Controversies in religion, of these daies: in the English Colledge of Rhemes (Rheims: John Fogny, 1582); hereafter referred to as Martin, *New Testament*.

¹¹⁷ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 38, 53; Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 97.

¹¹⁸ Willet condemns the "sumptuous" building of the Jesuit college there, which he writes cost 100 thousand crowns, in multiple places in the Romans hexapla (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 741, 730), with at least one veiled condemnation. Writing of an evil rich man named Narcissus, Willet notes that he was "exceedingly rich, worth tenne millions, that is, an 100. hundred thousand pounds," (p. 725). This subtle connection draws La Flèche into the narrative of the "craftie and wicked fellow," by expressing his wealth in terms of the cost of the Jesuit college—so vast was his wealth, he was worth a hundred sumptuous Jesuit college buildings!

¹¹⁹ Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 43; Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, 10.

¹²⁰ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 32-33.

¹²¹ On the Catholic women in James's life, see Frances E. Dolan, "The Command of Mary: Marian Devotion, Henrietta Maria's Confessions, and Catholic Motherhood," in *Whores of Babylon*, 95-156.

political, so that the threat posed by Jesuits was essentially the same as that posed by presbyterians. While James's religious concerns occasionally overlapped with those of one like Willet, James put a higher value on peace and order than on doctrinal orthodoxy.¹²²

Willet's relationship with King James was complicated, as most relationships involving a house arrest tend to be. James seems to have admired Willet's theology and learning,¹²³ and Willet served as one of Henry's tutors, and would have preached at times for the court. At James's ascension to the English throne, Willet wrote a treatise, *Ecclesia Triumphans*, celebrating the occasion. The omission the following year of Willet from the King James Bible translation team is indeed strange, though we do not know that it was James himself who did not want Willet. It can be difficult to determine much from the sycophantic genre of dedicatory epistles, but Willet did seem to have a genuine respect for James's leadership and personal theological views (even if Henry was the more

¹²² Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 46-47, 56, 21-22. On the political situation in early Stuart England, see also Arnold Hunt, "Laurence Chaderton and the Hampton Court Conference," in *Belief and Practice in Reformation England*, ed. Susan Wabuda and Caroline Litzenberger (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1998), 207-228; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I," *Journal of British Studies* 24, no. 2 (April 1985): 169-207; Ralph Houlbrooke, ed. *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and Government* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); Maurice Lee Jr., *Great Britain's Solomon: James VI and I in His Three Kingdoms* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Stuart E. Prall, *Church and State in Tudor and Stuart England* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1993); Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Leo F. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509-1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); John Spurr, *The Post-Reformation: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 1603-1714* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2006). Arthur F. Marotti, ed., *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (Hampshire, UK: Macmillan Press, 1999); Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, eds., *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006); Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, eds. *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642* (New York: Longman Inc., 1989); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1993); Nicholas Tyacke, "The Puritan Paradigm of English Politics, 1558-1642," *The Historical Journal* 53, no. 3 (September 2010), 527-550.

¹²³ Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution*, 10.

Reformed Stuart).¹²⁴ One can, however, detect an undertone in some of Willet's letters of distrust of James's commitment to Reformed theology. In his dedicatory letter before *An Antilogie*, Willet at times gets rather forceful in his expectations of James (suggesting that he censor books "too much declining to poperie," thanking him in advance for preserving a state of religion free of papist influence, and telling him that the angels are counting on him, with a reminder that princes stand on slippery places), all while claiming "not to prescribe a course, but only to give [his] simple advice."¹²⁵

5.1 Willet's Background as a Polemicist

Willet's reputation as a preeminent anti-Catholic controversialist was built on the "hugely popular" *Synopsis Papismi*, "a book of great importance in English religious history between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."¹²⁶ The *Synopsis* was published in four different editions during Willet's lifetime (1592, 1594, 1600, and 1613), in addition to two reprints (1603 and 1614), the 1634 reprint with the appended biography, and the ten-volume 1852 reissue. The work grew from a modest 626 pages in 1592 to 1,218 in 1613 (not including the appended works). The first edition is divided into three books (or "centuries," so called as each contains a hundred or more popish errors), subdivided into a total of twenty controversies. Book 1 addresses the doctrine of Scripture and ecclesiological matters; Book 2 deals with angels, departed saints, Christ's mediation, and the sacraments; and Book 3 concerns the additional Roman Catholic rites,

¹²⁴ Cf. DeLapp, *The Reformed David(s)*, 100.

¹²⁵ Willet, *An Antilogie*, sig.**r, sig.*3r, sig.**2r, sig.*2r, sig.*4v. Several authors have notices this element in Willet's dedicatory letters to James, including: DeLapp, *The Reformed David(s)*, 108, 114, 118; Rickard, *Writing the Monarch in Jacobean England*, 33; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 20-21,24.

¹²⁶ Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 53; Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 92.

the “benefits of redemption” (predestination, vocation, and justification), Christology, and Christ’s return.¹²⁷ Willet regrouped the controversies in 1594, with some modifications to the final four, into the structure it would maintain through the rest of the editions. The first sixteen controversies are the same, though all of the individual sacraments and rites are treated together as Book 3. The next three controversies are modified (the state of pre-fall humanity; original sin; and redemption, consisting of predestination, God’s grace, free will, justification, and good works) and make up a new Book 4. And the twentieth controversy—now consisting of Christ’s natures and return—alone makes up a fifth Book.¹²⁸ To commemorate the Papal Jubilee in 1600 Willet added two additional jubilee-related controversies as a second part of the final Book.¹²⁹

The year after the initial appearance of the *Synopsis*, Willet published a sequel (or “a necessarie supplement or fit appertinance”) entitled *Tetrastylon Papisticum*—these “four pillars” of papism being 1) “Intemperate Rayling, with shamefull slanders and untruths,” 2) “Blasphemies, opinions contrary to Scripture, Heresies, ridiculous and absurd positions,” 3) “Loose Arguments, weake solutions, and subtle and sophisticall

¹²⁷ In more detail, Book 1: 1) scripture, 2) church, 3) general councils, 4) the Pope, 5) clergy, 6) monks and friars, 7) the civil magistrate; Book 2: 8) angels, 9) the saints departed, 10) the mediation of Christ, 11) sacraments in general, 12) baptism, 13) the Lord’s Supper; Book 3: 14) penance, 15) matrimony, 16) confirmation, holy orders, and extreme unction, 17) predestination, vocation, and justification, 18) Christ’s humanity, 19) Christ’s divinity, and 20) Christ’s coming in judgment.

¹²⁸ Notice that, while Protestants tended to accept Roman Catholic Christology as basically orthodox, Willet did object to certain Roman (and especially Rhemist) Christological formulations. His criticisms in the twentieth book of *Synopsis Papismi* (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1594], 1027-1058) charge Rome with claiming to oppose the Ubiquitarians while committing a similar error, holding that Jesus did not truly grow in wisdom and understanding, misrepresenting the manner of his birth, denying that he suffered in his soul, teaching Christ’s literal descent to hell, denying that Christ is God “of himself” (αὐτόθεος), claiming that Jesus is our Mediator only in his human nature, supposing that he had to merit his own glorification, and maintaining a variety of false opinions concerning his return.

¹²⁹ On the *Synopsis Papismi*, see Pederson, “Andrew Willet”; Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 92-104; Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*.

Distinctions,” and 4) “Papists Contradictions amongst themselves.”¹³⁰ *Tetrastylon* went through three printings by itself, in 1593, 1596, and 1599, plus an additional three, in 1613, 1614, and 1634, as an appendix to *Synopsis Papismi*.¹³¹

Willet’s first foray into published biblical exegesis was his 1602 commentary on Jude, entitled *A Catholicon*. The title was a multilayered pun, with two layers being obvious connections (using one of the “catholic” epistles to refute Roman “Catholic” doctrine), and a third layer referring to a cure-all or panacea—at the time a fairly new use of the word in English.¹³² All of these layers are conveyed in the sub-title: “*that is, A generall preservative or remedie against the Pseudocatholike religion, gathered out of the Catholike epistle of S. Jude.*” In the “catholic catholicon for (pseudo) Catholicism” that follows, dedicated to the bishop of Ely Martin Heaton, Willet through 217 pages discerns from Jude’s twenty-five verses over fifty “popish errors, and as many corruptions of manners.” While not following the “hexapla” method that he would introduce in the Genesis commentary three years later, Willet does present a (somewhat different) six-fold approach in the preface:

I have throughout observed this course. 1. To note the doctrine. 2. Then followeth the probation by testimonie of Scripture. 3. Then the demonstration by example. 4. After that, the illustration or exornation [embellishment] by some similitude or

¹³⁰ Andrew Willet, *Tetrastylon Papisticum* (London: Robert Robertson for Thomas Man, 1593). These summaries are taken from the individual sections headings; the phrasing differs somewhat on the title page. From the 1599 printing on, Willet changed the title to *Tetrastylon Papismi* to parallel the phrasing of his principal work.

¹³¹ Tutino mistakenly claims that *Tetrastylon* first appeared in the 1613 conjunction with *Synopsis*. Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 102-103, 105.

¹³² Originally from the Greek καθολικόν (cf. Latin *catholicum*), the word was used in French in the sixteenth century. The earliest English use in a physical sense (“an electuary supposed to be capable of evacuating all humours; a universal remedy or prophylactic; panacea”) listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from Miles Smith’s preface to the King James Bible (postdating Willet’s work by nine years), and the earliest instance of a figurative use listed is by William Gouge in 1631 (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “catholicon”, accessed December 18, 2015, <http://www.oed.com>).

comparison, likewise out of the Scripture. 5. Next the Aitiologia or confirmation by declaring the cause or reason. 6. Lastly, is adjoynd the application.¹³³

Following this explanation he adds that, as Paul's practice was to note both doctrines and moral uses, so Willet will apply Paul's words to refute papist doctrine and to expose their ethical shortcomings. Despite some variations, significant elements of his later exegetical approach are evident here: a focus on the number six, an interest in causality, an affirmation of the *analogia scriptura*, and—significantly—an explicitly polemical hermeneutical framework.

The year of James's accession saw multiple polemical works from Willet's pen. In addition to the reprinting of the 1600 third edition of *Synopsis Papismi*, Willet published both *A Retection, or Discoverie of a False Detection* and *An Antilogie or Counterplea to an Apologcall (he should have said) Apologeticall Epistle* in 1603.¹³⁴ *A Retection* was Willet's response to the Roman Catholic pamphleteer Philip Woodward's anonymously published *A Detection* from the previous year. The works of John Baxter and John Hull not being worthy of refutation and Jewell, Foxe and Fulke all being deceased, *A Detection* had focused on Willet and Matthew Sutcliffe, as "the two principall men of our time, that imploy their forces, in assalting the impregnable fort of Gods Church."¹³⁵ Woodward, whose antipathy for Willet and Sutcliffe was matched only by his fondness for alliteration, called Willet's work "a fardle of fables, far fuller of lies

¹³³ Willet, *A Catholicon*, sig.C1v.

¹³⁴ Andrew Willet, *A Retection, or Discoverie of a False Detection* (London: Felix Kyngston for Thomas Man, 1603); Andrew Willet, *An Antilogie or Counterplea to an Apologcall Epistle published by a Favorite of the Romane Separation, and (as is supposed) one of the Ignatian Faction* (London: for Thomas Man, 1603).

¹³⁵ [Philip Woodward], *A Detection of Divers Notable Untruthes, Contradictions, Corruptions, and Falsifications...* (n.p., 1602), sig.†2v. On Woodward, see G. H. Russell, "Philip Woodward: Elizabethan Pamphleteer and Translator," *The Library* 4 (1949): 14-24.

then of leaves,” referring to Willet himself as “a Protestant *Pigmie*...[who] with pretended sincerity, and terrible titles, laboured to fright timerous creatures, as it were, with the sighte of his white sheete, and fearfull flashing firebox.”¹³⁶ Willet’s response refutes “the Libeller” point by point (or “slaunder” by “slaunder”), defending his own arguments in *Synopsis Papismi* and *Tetrastylon Papismi*.¹³⁷ Willet’s target in *An Antilogie* was Richard Broughton’s *An Apologcall Epistle* (1601) to the Queen’s privy council, a letter that had referenced Willet multiple times, though in a less *ad hominem* manner than *A Detection*.¹³⁸ In this epistle (signed “R. B.”), Broughton appealed to the council’s influence with the Queen in his efforts to demonstrate the superiority of Roman Catholic theology and piety, hoping to convince them that a return to Catholicism would lead to the greatest peace for England and that—at the very least—Catholics in the kingdom should be granted greater toleration. The full title of Willet’s response to this letter returns Broughton’s charge of Protestants being schismatic: the semi-anonymous author of the *Epistle* is one of the “*Romane Separation*” and likely from the “*Ignatian [Jesuit] Faction*.” This emphasis on the “Catholics” as a *sect*, together with a minimizing of the significance of Protestant divisions, an affirmation of the analogy of faith, and a claim on the Fathers, previews many of the themes that will characterize his later biblical commentary work.¹³⁹ As with many of his polemical works, Willet also plays around

¹³⁶ [Woodward], *A Detection*, 117-118.

¹³⁷ For his part, Sutcliffe had responded in 1602 by reprinting the work on which Woodward had focused his attack, appending to it a refutation of the accusations levied against him in *A Detection*: Matthew Sutcliffe, *A Challenge Concerning the Romish Church, her doctrine & practices*, 2nd ed. (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1602).

¹³⁸ [Richard Broughton], *An Apologcall Epistle: Directed to the right honroable Lords, and others of her Majesties privie Counsell* (Antwerp, 1601).

¹³⁹ See, for example, Willet, *An Antilogie*, 18, sig.A3r, 263.

with the title of the work that he is refuting. His own title promises an “antilogy” that will contradict the content of Broughton’s “apology” (with the final section providing “an Antilogicall rescript to an Apologicall Epistle”). The rest of Willet’s title also offers Broughton editorial advice on his word choice—“(he should have said) Apologeticall”—and throughout the book he frequently modifies the original title in a more negative direction, referring to it as an “Alogicall” epistle. As mentioned earlier, Willet would again in 1607 confute a (similarly anonymous) work by Broughton, *The First Part of Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion*.

Though Willet reserved most of his polemical energy for refuting Roman Catholic literature, he did engage also in selected disputes with fellow Protestants whom he felt had edged too close to papist dogma. He, again, may have written (or at least had a hand in the composition of) the 1599 *A Christian Letter*, which accused Richard Hooker’s *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* of breaking with Church of England orthodoxy on such central matters as the authority of Scripture, predestination, and the importance of preaching.¹⁴⁰ Willet’s authorship of two later works directed at a fellow Church of England minister is certain (even though the first was published anonymously). His *Limbomastix* (1604) and *Loidoromastix* (1607) each deal with the issue of Limbo and Christ’s descent to hell, taking a strong stance against the doctrine of Purgatory, as well as Protestant interpretations that could suggest the Romish doctrine. *Limbomastix* refutes both Bellarmine and the Oxford-trained Richard Parkes, who had recently published a

¹⁴⁰ The letter can be found in Booty, ed., *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Attack and Response*, 1-80.

brief anonymous treatise on the subject.¹⁴¹ *Loidoromastix*¹⁴² answers Parkes's lengthy refutation of *Limbomastix* (whereas Parkes's initial effort was under sixty pages, his defense of his first work extends to over five hundred pages). Each of the latter two works bears the author's name and is dedicated to Archbishop Bancroft.¹⁴³

Two years after the first printing of the Romans hexapla, Willet dedicated to the new mayor of London, Thomas Myddelton, a twenty-four page account of the charitable deeds performed by Protestants in and around London over the past sixty years—a sum of a million deeds (“or thereabout”).¹⁴⁴ The catalog is introduced polemically, as evidence against the Romanist contention that Protestants (“professors of the Gospell”) are “barren and fruitlesse of good workes.” Willet holds that the charitable works that he

¹⁴¹ [Andrew Willet], *Limbomastix: That is, A Canvise of Limbus Patrum, showing by evident places of Scripture, invincible reasons, and pregnant testimonies of some ancient writers, that Christ descended not in soule to Hell, to deliver the Fathers from thence* (London: Thomas Man, 1604); Andrew Willet, *Loidoromastix: That is, A Scourge for a Rayler; Containing a Full and Sufficient Answer unto the Unchristian raylings, slaunders, untruths, and other injurious Imputations, vented of late by one Richard Parkes master of Arts, against the author of Limbomastix* (Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1607); [Richard Parkes], *A Briefe Answere unto Certaine Objections and Reasons against the descension of Christ into hell, lately sent in writing unto a Gentleman in the Countrey* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1604); Richard Parkes, *An Apologie: of Three Testimonies of holy Scripture, concerning the Article of our Creed, [He Descended Into Hell]: First impugned by certaine Objections sent in writing by a Minister unto a Gentleman in the Countrey: and lately seconded by a Printed Pamphlet, masking under the name of Limbo-mastix* (London: George Eld, 1607).

¹⁴² The title derives from the Greek words λοιδορέω (abuse, revile) and μάστιξ (whip, scourge) (*Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon* [1968]).

¹⁴³ Cf. Hirschfeld, *The End of Satisfaction*, 52-53, 59, 174n82. On contemporary debate on Christ's descent, see Dewey D. Wallace Jr., “Puritan and Anglican: The Interpretation of Christ's Descent Into Hell in Elizabethan Theology,” *Archive for Reformation History* 69 (1978): 248-287; Jay J. Shim, “The Interpretation of Christ's Descent into Hades in the Early Seventeenth Century,” in *Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation in the Reformed Tradition: Essays in Honor of James A. DeJong*, ed. Arie C. Leder and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 157-184; Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity: The Construction of a Confessional Identity in the 17th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 114-130, 167-168. Wallace addresses the exchange between Willet and Parkes on pp. 277-279. Cf. also VII.2.1 and VII.3.2.

¹⁴⁴ Andrew Willet, “A Catalogue of such Charitable Workes, as have been done in the times of the Gospell within the space of 60.yeers, under the happie raignes of King Edward, Queene Elizabeth, King James our Gracious Sovereigne, appended to Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (London: Felix Kyngston for Thomas Man, 1613), 1220.

recounts exceed those performed during the hundreds of years prior to the protestantization of England in number, greatness, quality, and end. While the papist deeds were done with pride and to purchase merit, these recent deeds “only serve as testimonies of our faith.” Willet takes care in his dedication to Lord Mayor Myddelton not to substitute one variety of merit for another:

I doe here present unto you of your owne, a catalogue of such good workes, as have been done since the times of the Gospell, especially in this honourable City: but what said I? (of your owne) nay of our owne we can have no good thing...I here then offer unto your view, such worthie acts, as God hath stirred up the worshipfull citizens of your body to be instruments of.¹⁴⁵

6. Method and Overview of Chapters

6.1 Sources and Method

The present study began with a close reading and annotation of Willet’s *Hexapla upon Romanes*, with the intention of focusing on his characteristic six-fold approach to the biblical text. I wondered, specifically, how his method had developed and whether his unique view into the texts gave him insights that other exegetes had missed—whether, for instance, his discipline of eliciting both doctrines and moral uses from each chapter yielded interesting doctrines from the chapters that he designates as dealing with exhortation (chs. 12-16) or less-obvious morals from the chapters that primarily concern doctrine (chs. 1-11). What I found to be more interesting was the way that so much of Willet’s material—not just in the debates dealt with in the Controversies sections, but also among the Doctrines, Questions, and Moral Observations—was formulated and

¹⁴⁵ Willet, “A Catalogue of Such Charitable Workes,” 1220, 1219. Cf. Merritt, “Church-Building in Jacobean London”; Archer, “The Charity of Early Modern Londoners”; McGee, “The Polemical Career of Francis Rous.”

expressed against a polemical (generally anti-Catholic) background. While virtually all Protestant biblical commentary in England during this period shares this characteristic to some extent, Willet's background as one of the most incisive and popular religious controversialists in England at the turn of the seventeenth century, combined with his own precise division of his arguments, made his polemical hermeneutic both exceptional and exemplary.¹⁴⁶ He thus stands as an optimal window for understanding the polemical lens that characterizes much of the exegesis of his era.

The primary document for the dissertation is, naturally, Willet's Romans hexapla. This was published twice, in 1611 and 1620. As there were very few changes made between the two editions, I only mention the year when there is a variant reading. I have made use of many of Willet's other writings, particularly the *Synopsis Papismi*, which features his polemics in full bloom. As the *Synopsis* underwent significant modification through its several editions, I of course note the edition when I cite that work. Additionally, I compare several of Willet's interpretations with those of other contemporary exegetes who worked on Romans, such as Thomas Wilson, Elnathan Parr, and William Cowper.¹⁴⁷ I also cross reference many of Willet's own citations,

¹⁴⁶ On the "exceptional" side, cf. Muller's comment on the distinction between Willet's and Ainsworth's readings of the account of Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine in Genesis 14. Whereas Willet "devotes almost his entire energy to a refutation of Roman Catholic exegesis," Ainsworth "not only fails to mention the polemic with Rome, he also utterly refuses to accept the obvious gambit of a eucharistic connotation for the text," (Muller, *After Calvin*, 172). While many English Protestants shared Willet's hostility toward Roman Catholic exegesis, Willet's lens toward this was particularly sharply focused.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Wilson, *A Commentarie upon the most Divine Epistle of S. Paul to the Romanes* (London: W. Iaggard, 1614); Elnathan Parr, *A Plaine Exposition Upon the whole 8.9.10.11. Chapters of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans* (London: by George Purslowe for Samuel Man, 1618); William Cowper, *Three Heavenly Treatises upon the Eight Chapter to the Romanes* (London: Thomas Snodham for William Firebrand and John Budge, 1609). Cf. also: John Hooper, *Certaine godly, and most necessarie annotations upon the thirteenth chapter to the Romanes* (London, 1583); William Sclater, *A Key to the Key of Scripture: or An Exposition with Notes, upon the Epistle to the Romanes; the three first Chapters* (London: by T. S. for George Norton, 1611); Edward Elton, *The complaint of a sanctified sinner answered:*

particularly when his presentation of the source seems skewed or otherwise uncharitable. While there is less secondary literature on Willet to engage with than there is on other better-known figures, I have tried to identify every substantial use of him that I could find in modern scholarship, and I interact with these sources when I feel that they call for correction, clarification, or a counterargument.

Finally, a few points concerning style and language. Some doctrines appear in multiple places; this is not a work in systematic theology, but a study of method and hermeneutics. As different doctrines appear in different contexts in the biblical texts themselves, and as Willet treats them variously in different sections, so I come around to certain doctrines in different places (for instance, justification as it pertains to language concerns; justification as it pertains to causality; to the Pelagian heresy, and so forth). Where possible, I quote Scripture in Willet’s translation. If I don’t have access to that through one of his commentaries, I generally quote the Geneva Bible, which served as the template for Willet’s own translation work. When referring to one of the six hexapla sections, I capitalize the title, so as to distinguish between, say, the Doctrines section and “doctrine” generally. Without strong objection to the commonly-used label “moderate Puritan” (so long as it is carefully defined to avoid all of the attendant ambiguities of the term), I prefer not to describe Willet in this way, largely because, as the word “Puritan” was used in his day almost exclusively as a term of abuse, he found the “scandalous” term objectionable. I instead refer to his positions as “Protestant” (another erstwhile pejorative which Willet nonetheless accepted) or—particularly when necessary for

or An explanation of the seventh chapter of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans delivered in divers sermons (London, 1618); Thomas Ingmethorpe, *A sermon upon the words of Saint Paul, Let everie soule be subiect unto the higher powers* (London, 1619); Christopher Hampton, *The Threefold State of Man Upon Earth* (Dublin, 1620); Willem Teellinck, *Pauls complaint against his naturall corruption...Set forth in two sermons upon the 24 verse of the 7. chapter of his epistle to the Romanes* (London, 1621); David Dickson, *Exposition of All St. Pauls Epistles* (London: by R. I. for Francis Eglesfield, 1659).

distinguishing his interpretation from other Protestant strains—“Reformed.”

Unfortunately, for the sake of clarity, I cannot consistently extend the same courtesy to Willet’s Roman Catholic foes. Since Willet rejected his opponents’ use of the title “Catholic” for themselves and argued that Protestants were the true catholic Christians, or Reformed Catholics, I cannot use this title regularly without causing undue confusion. I frequently refer to this group as “Roman Catholic,” but as this gets somewhat cumbersome when repeated too many times, I also make use of Willet’s own (pejorative) terms “papist” and “popish.”¹⁴⁸

6.2 Overview of Chapters

Already in this first chapter we have been introduced to Willet’s life and early polemical writings, we have placed him within his early Stuart context, and we have summarized the body of secondary literature on him—which, while not unsubstantial, has rarely made him the focus of the investigation. Within this body of secondary scholarship, we have identified some interpretations that mischaracterize both Willet and his context in subtle and more blatant ways. The chapters that follow delve into his *Romans hexapla*, considering his use of linguistic, philosophical, and historical arguments, and how these elements function together within his anti-Catholic hermeneutical framework.

The first two chapters that follow deal with textual and language issues that Willet identifies in his effort to show that Roman Catholic doctrine depends on errors in the

¹⁴⁸ On the challenges of “religious taxonomy” and identifying historical religious groups, see Thomas H. Clancy, “Papist-Protestant-Puritan: English Religious Taxonomy 1565-1665,” *Recusant History* 13, no. 4 (October 1976): 227-253. Cf. also Marshall, “The Naming of Protestant England.”

Vulgate and misinterpretation of Paul's rhetorical usage. Chapter 2 ("Textual and Translation Issues") surveys the development of early modern textual criticism before looking at arguments that Willet frames against Vulgate renderings, which differ from the *textus receptus* Greek due to either manuscript variation or misleading translations. This gives us a window through which to compare contested Protestant and Roman Catholic understandings of such issues as the relationship between the intellect and the will, the assurance of salvation, and the nature and function of the Mosaic law. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the particular problem posed by Paul's use of the Septuagint translation in Romans.

Chapter 3 ("Grammar and Rhetoric") focuses on Willet's extensive use of arguments based on grammar (particularly related to conjunctions and prepositions) and rhetorical devices. Spending a fair amount of time on the issue of original sin and Willet's advocacy of Augustine's theological and grammatical approach, the chapter also deals with language issues related to union with Christ, faith, and merit. The chapter highlights Willet's careful attention to textual details and the relationships between different scriptural pericopes, even as he frames these matters in opposition to Roman Catholic doctrinal distinctives.

The following two chapters consider arguments based on causality, as Willet employs the familiar Aristotelian fourfold division to claim that Roman Catholics have misidentified the multiple causes of an effect, confused effects for causes, or attributed principal efficiency to a subordinate efficiency. Chapter 4 ("Confusion of Causes") discusses the early modern assumption of the compatibility of primary and secondary causes in achieving an effect, and explores how Willet uses this concept to argue that

Roman Catholic exegetes had wrongly structured the causes of various effects in Romans, leading to mistaken notions of faith and merit, and of God's agency in human affairs.

Chapter 5 ("Confusion of Cause and Effect") shifts the focus to confusion of cause and effect, based on the shared assumption between Willet and his foes that an effect cannot precede its cause. Willet employs this reasoning primarily to argue against the Roman Catholic notion of double justification (which confuses the effect of sanctification with a second form of justification, which is one of its causes) and those who base predestination on God's foreknowledge of human faith (which concept leads to circular reasoning).

The final two body chapters look at Willet's polemical use of tradition, examining first his correlation of Roman Catholic interpretations of Romans with ancient heresies, and then his efforts to prove that Protestants, by their agreement with early church orthodoxy and their concurrence with one another on major doctrines, are the truly "catholic" ecclesiastical body. Chapter 6 ("The Polemical Use of Heresies") details how Willet attempted through their interpretations of Romans to connect modern Roman Catholics to a range of early church heresies, from Pelagianism (the most common accusation) to Marcionism, Donatism, and pagan rites. The chapter also considers the common theme among early modern Protestants of the papacy being a manifestation of Antichrist, Willet's use of anti-Jesuit puns, and the complex relationship to Judaism, including its polemical utility against the Roman church.

Chapter 7 ("Catholicity and the Polemical Use of the Fathers") turns from Willet's alignment of Roman Catholicism with ancient heterodoxy to his more positive

attempt to portray Protestants as the heirs of the church's earliest orthodox tradition.

Having considered Willet's measured affirmation of the patristic heritage and his use of Augustine, Chrysostom, and Origen to counter Roman Catholic interpretations, the chapter moves on to his efforts to depict Rome as fractured and schismatic, and Protestant divisions as relatively minor, all in order to present Protestantism as the true and catholic Christian tradition.

CHAPTER II. TEXTUAL AND TRANSLATION ISSUES

1. Introduction

As a highly skilled linguist, Andrew Willet drew heavily on his nuanced understanding of Greek and Hebrew, grammatical conventions, and rhetorical devices in his commentary work, employing these tools as needed to combat various “heretical” interpretations. The next two chapters will consider Willet’s polemical use of textual and linguistic arguments in the Romans hexapla, looking first at manuscript and translation issues in the Vulgate, and then focusing on the theological weight of prepositions and conjunctions and the way in which identifying figurative language in Romans can determine how Paul’s meaning is taken.

The interconfessional battle over which Christian tradition best expressed central scriptural teachings extended beneath questions of interpretation to fundamental disagreements over authority, concerning both the basis of the authority to interpret the Bible, and which manuscript tradition offered the authoritative framework for resolving theological disputes. This chapter considers textual and translation issues that divided Protestants and Roman Catholics, focusing on Willet’s advocacy of the *textus receptus* and original biblical languages, and the role that this played in his polemical hermeneutics. Seemingly minor textual variants and nuances of translation, when extrapolated and developed, could affect significant doctrinal matters such as certainty and assurance, the nature and role of the Law, and the effects of sin and redemption on the human faculties. We will concentrate on Willet’s criticism of the Latin Vulgate—the guiding text for post-Reformation Roman Catholic exegesis—but will also consider how discrepancies between the Hebrew of the Masoretic text and the Greek of the Septuagint

factored into the debate over authoritative manuscript traditions. Given the Protestant emphasis on Scripture as the sole authoritative norm for church doctrine, it was especially important to establish the best possible text; since the Church rested on a foundation of God's word given through perspicuous and self-authenticating scriptures, the Reformed claim to represent the truly "Catholic" church depended upon the corroboration of Reformed doctrinal emphases with an authentic text tradition. While Willet's determination to demonstrate the superiority of the *textus receptus* and Masoretic text over the Vulgate occasionally leads him to circular arguments based on an *a priori* assumption of the superiority of original languages, his arguments against Roman Catholic interpretations that were grounded in Vulgate variants form a significant component of his polemical exegetical method.

2. Early Textual Criticism

Though still in the "precritical" exegetical tradition, Willet and his peers were far from *uncritical* in their approach to the biblical text.¹ Faced with inconsistencies both within individual and between different manuscript traditions, the seventeenth-century exegete was equipped with a solid set of humanist tools for considering these problems and arguing for a favored reading. While the conclusions drawn from these textual analyses do not always comport with the findings of later text-critical scholarship, and while these early debates were as often based on theological usefulness as on quality of manuscript evidence, still it is instructive to consider how these text- and manuscript-

¹ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:251: "It would be a mistake...to view the seventeenth-century orthodox theory of inspiration as utterly opposed to the results of a more critical and textual exegesis or as incapable of accommodation to the various problems of authorship and composition raised by the critical approach."

based arguments factored into Protestant orthodox polemics.

The practice of textual criticism is—at least in a rudimentary form—almost as old as written language itself, beginning among the Greeks several centuries before Christ.² As early as the second century CE, critical tools were applied to biblical texts by the Theodotians, a heretical sect that had been excommunicated by Pope Victor, and the following century saw Origen compiling six different translations in his *Hexapla* and commenting on textual variants. Jerome in the fourth century showed even greater skill as a text critic than Origen had, and his contributions in this regard were recognized and appreciated later by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.³ Despite knowledge of Greek in the Latin West being “at a low ebb,” there were various attempts in the Middle Ages to correct the text of the Vulgate New Testament using Greek manuscripts.⁴ Cassiodorus in the sixth century and Theodulf in the ninth century used basic text-critical methods to clean up biblical texts, and in the twelfth century the Cistercians and Andrew of St. Victor further developed the art.⁵ Roger Bacon and others in the following century noticed that many errors had slipped into the Paris bibles because the copying had been done not by bible experts but by commercial scribes.⁶ He proceeded to address the “widely recognized problems with the text of the Vulgate,” showing a preference for

² Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 149.

³ Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 150-153; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:421-425, 427. Frans Van Liere, *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 83-84.

⁴ Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 154. Van Liere adds that the study of Greek lagged behind Hebrew studies in the Middle Ages (Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 102-103).

⁵ Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 98-99.

⁶ Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 98.

older manuscripts, original languages, and readings appearing in a plurality of manuscripts.⁷ Still, medieval critical tools were limited, making it difficult to determine the best readings, and so “most medieval textual critics were content to show the diversity of the textual tradition rather than deciding on one reading.”⁸

The humanist learning of the Renaissance period brought tremendous advances to the textual criticism of the Bible. In the fifteenth century Italian scholars like Giannozzo Manetti, Aurelio Brandolini, and—most eminently—Lorenzo Valla furthered the project of correcting errors in the current Vulgate text.⁹ A watershed moment came in the early sixteenth century, when the revolutionary printing technology developed the prior century was used to produce the first printed New Testaments in Greek—first as one of the languages in the 1514 Complutensian Polyglot, and then in Erasmus’s famous edition two years later—making available to all with the requisite language skills a necessary tool for critiquing the Vulgate translation.¹⁰ By the end of the sixteenth century, Stephanus’s 1550 revised version had become the standard Greek New Testament used in England. These early Greek New Testaments were, however, based on relatively late

⁷ Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, “Introduction and Overview,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 62; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:30. Bacon was able to identify the older manuscripts by looking for bibles that did not have a gloss but included canon tables (Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 99).

⁸ Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 102.

⁹ Erika Rummel, “The Renaissance Humanists,” in Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, 287-290; cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:427.

¹⁰ Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 96, 98. Though the Complutensian Polyglot was the first to be printed, various logistical delays made Erasmus’s edition the first to be published and made widely-available. Many of the errors in Erasmus’s 1516 text are likely attributable to his rushing it to publication in an attempt to precede the release of the Complutensian Polyglot (Timothy George, *Reading Scripture with the Reformers* [Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011], 88-89).

manuscripts¹¹—a point seized upon by Roman Catholic apologists for the Vulgate’s superiority. Still, a high level of textual work in sixteenth-century biblical studies was made possible by Renaissance humanist resources and techniques, including a much-improved knowledge of ancient Greek, and tools for comparing manuscripts with one another and against citations in the Church Fathers.¹² Yet as we consider the arguments proffered for different text-critical choices, we find that—contrary to claims like those of Erasmus that such decisions could be an entirely neutral enterprise¹³—text criticism and translation are always, to some degree, intertwined with interpretation.¹⁴

3. Faulting the Vulgate

Willet attributes many of the theological errors of Roman Catholic exegetes to their reliance on a flawed Vulgate text of Romans. This being an even more basic

¹¹ Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 104, 106.

¹² Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 155.

¹³ Rummel, “The Renaissance Humanists,” 291. Willet, like Erasmus, tends to distinguish between translation and interpretation and to suggest that the two can be kept separate. For example, after giving his translation of the opening words of Romans 3:26 (“Through the patience of God...”), he notes the rendering given by Tremellius (“By the space which God gave us by his long suffering...”), commenting, “but this is interpreted, rather than translated” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 145). This professed possibility of neutrality in the work of translation and textual decisions had, naturally, great polemical value.

¹⁴ This, combined with the sacred nature of the scriptures, has ensured that—from its earliest stages—textual criticism of biblical manuscripts has been a consistently controversial endeavor. From Jerome in the fourth century being accused of corrupting God’s word to Valla being attacked as a heretic in the fifteenth (George, *Reading Scripture with the Reformers*, 60n23, 58-59), to Renaissance humanists being criticized as challenging the principle of inspiration (Rummel, “The Renaissance Humanists,” 280-281), to John Owen’s attack on Brian Walton’s *London Polyglot* in the later seventeenth century (Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 107n1), to questions about the orthodoxy of John Mill, Johann Albrecht Bengel, and Richard Bentley in the eighteenth century (Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 108, 112-113; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:142), efforts to restore Scripture to its earliest form have always been met with resistance. On Valla’s textual work, see George, *Reading Scripture with the Reformers*, 57-61. On Bentley’s revision of the Greek New Testament, see David S. Katz, *God’s Last Words: Reading the English Bible from the Reformation to Fundamentalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 185-204.

problem than misinterpreted or wrongly collated texts, nearly every section of the Romans hexapla contains a variation of the refrain “which the vulgar Latine corruptly translatheth,” “they which follow the Latine translation here doe thinke,” or “the vulgar Latine giveth occasion of this question,”¹⁵ indicating that Willet believed that Roman Catholic biblical interpreters were doomed to commit certain mistakes simply because of their faulty source material.¹⁶

Sixteen years before Willet’s birth, the Council of Trent had in its fourth session declared the Vulgate the “authentic” version of Scripture and the basis for Roman Catholic teaching.¹⁷ While some Catholics considered Jerome’s work to be divinely inspired and as free from fault as the Hebrew and Greek original autographs themselves¹⁸—with some claiming even that the Latin represented an *improvement* over and completion of the original material¹⁹—the council stopped short of stating that the Latin translation was above reproach, claiming it only as the standard for theological

¹⁵ These examples are drawn from Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 19, 362 and 259.

¹⁶ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:430, on Protestant translation and annotation “render[ing] the text of Scripture itself a weapon against Rome.” Harrison cites Willet as an example of the Protestant judgment that the Vulgate translation was “degenerate” (Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 96).

¹⁷ Guy Bedouelle, “Biblical Interpretation in the Catholic Reformation,” in Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, 432; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:371, 376; David Steinmetz, “The Council of Trent,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 235.

¹⁸ Cf. Rummel, “The Renaissance Humanists,” 281, 288. Willet himself, while like many of his peers dubious that Jerome was solely responsible for the Vulgate translation, uses Jerome’s own words against those who held the Vulgate to be inspired: “saith he, *Aliud est vatem esse, aliud interpretem*: It is one thing to bee a Prophet, another to bee an interpreter” (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1600], 19).

¹⁹ Steinmetz, “The Council of Trent,” 237. As a finished piece of furniture is superior to its raw materials, Steinmetz adds (making the argument of these particular Vulgate apologists more extreme than that of those who merely claimed that the Vulgate text was less-corrupted than the extant Hebrew and Greek manuscripts). Steinmetz also notes that Roman Catholic humanist scholars tended still to prefer the Hebrew and Greek originals (p. 236).

discourse.²⁰ Thus, the Vulgate served as the basis two decades following the final Tridentine session for the translation of the New Testament into English at Rheims, France—an effort motivated by the perceived need for English Roman Catholic preachers to have their own English text to use to rebut “Protestant distortions” in earlier English bibles.²¹ This would be the only sixteenth-century English New Testament translated (primarily) from the Vulgate.²²

The Rheims New Testament was first published in 1582, having been commissioned by (future Cardinal) William Allen, the president of the English College at Douay (of which the college at Rheims was an extension). The translation had taken four years, and was principally the work of Gregory Martin. As it was intended largely as a counter to the Geneva Bible (with its distinctly Protestant notes), the Rheims translation was graced by sharply anti-Protestant annotations.²³ By taking aim at the Rheims translation and annotations in the Romans hexapla, Willet was following in the footsteps of several English Protestants who had criticized the work in the prior decades, including John Prime, Edward Bulkey, George Wither, Thomas Cartwright, and—most

²⁰ Bedouelle, “Biblical Interpretation in the Catholic Reformation,” 432.

²¹ Lee W. Gibbs, “Biblical Interpretation in England,” in Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, 390-391; David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 358.

²² J. Keith Elliot, “The Text of the New Testament,” in Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, 249. Despite the professed dependence on the Vulgate, Martin and his team of translators did reference Greek manuscripts (to ascertain, for example, where definite articles should be used), and also borrowed material from earlier Protestant English translations (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 362, 364). Thus, ironically, the aggressively anti-Protestant Rheims New Testament borrowed language from Protestant English bibles, and the staunchly Protestant King James Version, in turn, lifted phrasings from the Rheims.

²³ Cf. Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 358-364; Alexandra Walsham, “Unclasping the Book? Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Vernacular Bible,” *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 2 (April 2003): 143; Cameron A. Mackenzie, “The Catholic Character of the Rheims New Testament,” in *The Battle for the Bible in England, 1557-1582* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 187-210.

significantly—the redoubtable William Fulke (to whom Willet often refers his readers).²⁴

Roman Catholic and Protestant exegetes held many beliefs about the textual basis of Scripture in common, with their dispute over the more authentic textual tradition boiling down to a disagreement over the level of corruption of the later Greek manuscripts.²⁵ Each side acknowledged that the New Testament was originally penned in Greek and conceded that an error-free Greek original would, were there an extant copy, be the optimal basis for theological debate.²⁶ Both recognized the value of text-critical tools, though Roman Catholics believed that Jerome had already applied these

²⁴ Fulke was well-regarded in Protestant circles for his detailed refutation of the Rhemist annotations. In Thomas Fuller’s unbiased words: “Now the Romanists, seeing they could no longer blindfold their laity from the Scriptures, resolved to fit them with false spectacles, and set forth the Rhemish translation, which by Doctor Fulke was learnedly confuted, though he never attained any great preferment in the church” (Thomas Fuller, *The Worthies of England*, ed. John Freeman [London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1952], 364). Joseph Hall referred to Fulke as “that profound, ready and resolute doctor, the hammer of heretics, the champion of truth” (Richard Bauckham, “William Fulke,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 131). Weigle describes Fulke as “eminently fair to his opponents, but singularly devoid of worldly wisdom,” due to his unwittingly increasing the circulation and influence of the Rheims translation through his reproduction of its text in his refutation (Luther A. Weigle, *The English New Testament from Tyndale to the Revised Standard Version* [New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949], 53-54); cf. Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 366-367.

William Fulke, *A Defense of the sincere and true Translations of the holie Scriptures into the English tong, against the manifolde cavils, frivolous quarels, and impudent slaunders of Gregorie Martin, one of the readers of Popish divinitie in the trayterous Seminarie of Rhemes* (London: Henrie Bynneman, 1583); William Fulke, *The Text of the New Testament of Jesus Christ, Translated out of the Vulgar Latine by the Papists of the traiterous Seminarie at Rhemes* (London: the Deputies of Christopher Barker, 1589); John Prime, *A Fruitefull and Briefe Discourse in two bookes: the one of nature, the other of grace, with convenient aunswer to the enemies of Grace, upon incident occasions offered by the late Rhemists notes in their new translation of the new Testament, & others* (London: Thomas Vautrollier for George Bishop, 1583); Edward Bulkey, *An Answere to ten frivolous and foolish reasons, set downe by the Rhemish Jesuits and Papists in their Preface before the new Testament by them lately translated into English, which have mooved them to forsake the originall fountaine of the Greeke, wherein the Spirit of God did indite the Gospell, and the holie Apostles did write it, to follow the streame of the Latin translation, translated we know not when nor by whom* (London: George Bishop, 1588); George Wither, *A View of the Marginal Notes of the Popish Testament, translated into English by the English fugitive Papists resiant at Rhemes in France* (London: by Edm. Bollifant for Thomas Woodcocke, 1588); Thomas Cartwright, *The Answere to the Preface of the Rhemish Testament* (Edinburgh: Robert Walde-grave, 1602).

²⁵ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:426.

²⁶ E.g. Martin, *New Testament*, sig.biiii, v; Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 17, 19. Muller notes that at the beginning of the sixteenth century both Protestant and Roman Catholic biblical scholars showed a preference for the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Old Testament texts over any translations (Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:396-397). There were small variations to this general rule, as the minority view that Mark was originally penned in Latin. Cf., e.g., F. C. Burkitt, “Was the Gospel of Mark

sufficiently in establishing the Vulgate text in the fourth century.²⁷ Roman Catholics and Protestants alike recognized some (minimal) degree of error in their own favored text tradition. While Martin concedes scattered flaws in the current Vulgate text, he adds that these have already been identified by the theologians at Trent so that they may be “thoroughly mended.” Willet, similarly, admits that there are imperfections in the *textus receptus* Greek, though he maintains its priority by adding that “for one scape in the Greeke, it is an easie matter to shew twentie in the Latine.”²⁸ Willet also demonstrates an awareness that Stephanus does not always represent the best Greek manuscripts. Countering Bellarmine’s argument for the Vulgate’s superiority from its reading “serving the Lord” (*Domino servientes*) at Romans 12:11, where the *textus receptus* has the curious reading “serving the time” (τῷ καιρῷ δουλεύοντες), Willet argues that “the best Greeke copies have also κυρίῳ, serving the Lord, as appeareth in the Syriake translation” [Stephanus notes this possibility in the margin], and he dismisses the confusion between καιρῷ and κυρίῳ as an understandable scribal error, rather than as evidence of a major

Written in Latin?,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 29, no. 116 (July 1928): 375-381. Burkitt concludes that the old theory is not entirely implausible, though he finds the recent argument proposed by P. L. Couchoud unconvincing.

²⁷ E.g. Martin, *New Testament*, sig.biii, r. Gregory Martin adds in the preface, though, that—while the Vulgate is the basis for the Rhemish translation—the translators are not binding themselves “to the pointes of any one copie, print, or edition of the vulgar Latin, in places of no controversie, but folow the pointing most agreable to the Greeke and to the fathers commentaries.” While the renderings carrying theological weight should be viewed as substantially without error, Martin acknowledged the possibility of minor clerical errors in the chain of transmission, noting that the Rhemish translators occasionally opt for a marginal reading from the Latin, “when by the Greeke of the fathers we see it as a manifest fault of the writers [i.e. scribes] heretofore, that mistooke one word for an other” (p. sig.ciiii, v.). Cf. Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 359.

²⁸ Martin, *New Testament*, sig.c, v. Many of these corrections would come in the 1592 Sixto-Clementine edition (Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 103); Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 19.

flaw in the received Greek text.²⁹ Willet's acknowledgment of minor errors in the available texts runs counter to Van Kleeck's overstated claim regarding Willet's position on the inerrancy of the present state of the scriptural text. Van Kleeck writes: "Indeed, if the text is in fact God's Word, then any modification to the text, no matter how subjectively insignificant, must be investigated...If the text were errant [i.e. corrupted], it would not qualify as God's Word...If the *apographa* was untrustworthy in the minutest sense, the integrity of the whole...would be in question."³⁰ Willet, while assuming the basic integrity of the *textus receptus*, does not hang the reliability of the entire text on the absolute absence of corruptions, but rather argues that these corruptions are insignificant, and vastly outnumbered by the corruptions in the Latin.

Naturally, however, each side noted the other's acknowledgement of errors in their favored manuscript tradition and used that acknowledgement against them. Martin, for instance, gives Beza's use of the Vulgate as one of his ten reasons for using the Vulgate at the basis for his own translation, and he claims that the Protestants' assertion of the superiority of the Greek text is contradicted in practice by their frequent appeal to the Latin: "the prooffe is more pregnant out of the Adversaries them selves. They forsake the Greeke text as corrupted, and translate according to the vulgar Latin," except when they need the Greek text to support one of their own interpretations. Willet, likewise, refers several times to Bellarmine's acknowledgment of faults in the Vulgate and relays how Mirandola in the fifteenth century advised Leo X that the Latin needed to be checked against the original languages, concluding that Roman Catholics have "their

²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 551-552; Cf. Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 187; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:420.

³⁰ Van Kleeck, "Hermeneutics and Theology in the 17th Century," 49-50.

owne testimonies against them.”³¹

Martin’s reasoning for the translators’ dependence on the Vulgate centers on its antiquity and the assumption of willful corruption of the Greek text. Three of his ten arguments for the Vulgate rely specifically on the approval of generations of theologians: it is ancient, having been in use for over 1300 years, it was commended by Augustine, and it was met with approval by many other Latin Fathers. Additionally, because of its antiquity, it predates the Reformation controversies, and this neutral context adds to its credibility: it shows the “least partialitie, as being without al respect of controversies and contentions.”³² He reiterates this impartiality later in the preface, defending the Vulgate against the Protestant charge that its language was biased toward Roman Catholic dogma. A translation made over a millennium before the Reformation, he argues, is far less likely to be skewed by bias than one made in the midst of the sixteenth-century controversies. He argues further that the Greek text of the New Testament supports Roman Catholic theology to a greater degree even than the Latin; if—he adds with a note of jest—the Vulgate is as Protestants charge a “Papistical” text, then the Greek is more so, and “consequently the holy Scripture of the new Testament is Papistical...[and thus] Papistrie is very auncient.”³³

But “simple artificers” among the Protestants had, he argued, in their “false

³¹ Martin, *New Testament*, sig.biiiv-biiir; Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 19-21.

³² Martin, *New Testament*, sig.biiir.

³³ Martin, *New Testament*, sig.ciir-ciiv. Cf. Rummel’s observation that Catholic apologists “took note...of the instances in which the revisions and emendations proposed by humanist editors supported the Reformers’ doctrine and accused them of having inspired or certainly facilitated Reformation thought” (Rummel, “The Renaissance Humanists,” 281). Especially when evaluating an opponent’s exegetical decisions, the polemicists were well aware of the interplay between theological controversy and textual emendation.

translations” demonstrated “intolerable liberty and licence” in altering the “accustomed” language that had been “used by the Apostles and all antiquitie,” and he accuses them of meddling with the accepted text by “corrupting both the letter and the sense by false translation, adding, detracting, altering, transposing, pointing, and all other guileful meanes.”³⁴ The received Greek text, moreover, he held to have been long ago altered to corroborate the twisted theologies of the likes of Marcion and the Nestorians: “because most of the auncient Heretikes were Grecians, & therefore the Scriptures in Greeke were more corrupted by them, as the auncient fathers often complaine.”³⁵ This argument for the corruption of Greek texts parallels the occasional Roman Catholic assertion of the time that the Hebrew of Old Testament manuscripts had been deliberately corrupted by the Jews sometime after the translation of the Vulgate.³⁶ Willet mentions the theory of intentional Jewish corruption of the MT and, like virtually all Protestant orthodox Hebrew scholars, dismisses the possibility: “[the Jews] were faithfull keepers of the

³⁴ Martin, *New Testament*, sig.bv. Cf. also similar arguments that Martin develops further in another polemical work published the same year as the Rheims New Testament, the title of which also summarizes the thesis, method, and state of the problem: Gregory Martin, *A Discoverie of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the Heretikes of our daies, specially the English Sectaries, and of their foule dealing herein, by partial & false translations to the advantage of their heresies, in their English Bibles used and authorised since the time of the Schisme* (Rheims: John Fogny, 1582).

³⁵ Martin, *New Testament*, sig.biiiv. Cf. the counterargument offered in the eighteenth century by Jakob Wettstein, who suggested “the quite untenable theory” that the earlier Greek manuscripts had been corrupted by *Latin* versions, so that the *later* Greek manuscripts were actually preferable (Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 113-114).

³⁶ Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 470; Katz, *God’s Last Words*, 75; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:416; Jace R. Broadhurst, *What is the Literal Sense? Considering the Hermeneutic of John Lightfoot* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 79-80, 88-89. As one example, cf. Martin’s argument regarding the MT reading of Jeremiah 11:19: “They wil say, the first Hebrue word cannot be as S. Hierom translateth, and as it is in the Greeke, and as al antiquitie readeth: but it must signifie, Let us destroy. They say truly, according to the Hebrue word which now is. But is it not evident thereby, that the Hebrue word now is not the same which the Septuaginta translated into Greeke, and S. Hierom into Latin? and consequently the Hebrue is altered and corrupted from the original copie which they had: perhaps by the Jewes (as some other places) to obscure this prophecie also of Christs Passion, and their crucifying of him upon the Crosse” (Martin, *A Discoverie of the Manifold Corruptions*, 269-270).

Scriptures, preserving them from falsitie and corruption, and are to this day, though they understand them not.”³⁷

Responding to the Roman Catholic appeal to the antiquity and long-established use of the Vulgate, Willet in the *Synopsis Papismi* rejects the argument by challenging the catholicity of the Roman church: “there were other Churches besides the Latine all this while, as amongst the Greekes famous congregations and Churches.” Since other legitimate ecclesiastical bodies had been using a *Greek* New Testament for at least as long as the Roman church had been relying on the Latin, the mere endurance of the Vulgate in the West was no good argument for preferring it to the original languages. A long-standing failure to correct a faulty text, besides, was not evidence for that text’s authenticity, but an indictment on the church for its negligence.³⁸

Despite his awareness that the fundamental disagreement with Rome concerning the authoritative version of Scripture had to do with the relative level of corruption between the Hebrew/Greek and Latin manuscripts, Willet structures his apology for the Hebrew and Greek rhetorically around statements asserting the superiority of originals over translations. In the Romans hexapla, for example, he uses Paul’s quotation from Psalm 19 in Romans 10:18 as an occasion to criticize those who claim the authority of the Latin over the Hebrew, illustrating his point by likening their preference to the “preposterous” notion of putting a river before the spring that feeds it.³⁹ While he does

³⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 147.

³⁸ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 17.

³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 482-483. See more on this quotation from Psalm 19 in section II.4 below, on the challenge posed to Protestants by Paul’s use of the LXX. Willet’s river/spring metaphor borrows (and even sanitizes somewhat) a popular image used by Renaissance humanists, who “often compared the original text to a clear source and translations and corrupt transcriptions to polluted runnels” (Rummel, “The Renaissance Humanists,” 289).

appeal at times to the agreement of Greek passages with the old Syriac translation and citations in the Fathers,⁴⁰ Willet's arguments for the priority of the extant Greek manuscripts tend to be circular, relying less on textual evidence than on ideological and theological factors. He avoids addressing possible corruptions in the Greek, for instance, when he asserts in the *Synopsis Papismi* that "the Greeke ought to be preferred (being the same tongue wherein the Apostles and the Evangelists wrote) to be the onely authentike copie."⁴¹ But few defenders of the Vulgate would have disputed that the New Testament was written in Greek, dissenting from Willet rather over whether a pristine Greek text still existed. Similarly, two pages later Willet counters Bellarmine's claim that the Latin New Testament was less corrupted than the Greek by asking, "How can the trueth of the Latine be tried, but by the Greeke, out of which it was translated? which being more ancient, must first bee beleevved."⁴² Here again his argument relies not on reasons why the current Greek text can be trusted (a point he assumes), but on the general priority of the original language over the translation. We see this circularity again on the following page, where he argues: "There are many and great errors in the vulgar translation, and contrarie to the originall: Ergo, it is not authentike."⁴³ Without access to a *true* "original," his argument assumes that differences between the current copies of the Vulgate and the Greek New Testament demonstrate that the Vulgate is the version that has strayed from the Greek autograph. Van Kleeck also seems to neglect the debate over which manuscript tradition was less corrupted in his assessment of Willet's preference for the scriptural text

⁴⁰ E.g. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 19.

⁴¹ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 17.

⁴² Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 19.

⁴³ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 20.

as found in the Greek commentaries: “Also, in that the Latin commentaries are one more translation away from the Greek, it is not surprising that Willet finds the best reading in the Greek commentaries rather than the Latin.”⁴⁴ Willet indeed favors the linguistic and semantic observations of the Greek Fathers, but their linguistic advantages with the Greek would have little bearing on the Roman Catholic argument that the Greek texts had been corrupted.

Willet also bases some of his textual arguments on theological criteria or apologetic utility (a standard, of course, not unique to him).⁴⁵ This is perhaps less circular than his arguments for the Greek text that assume *a priori* the superiority of the current Greek manuscripts, since harmony with an author’s broader theological perspective is indeed a sound method for textual criticism and interpretation,⁴⁶ but some of his arguments here, too, appear to equate his premise with his conclusion. On the absence of a reference to the Son in the Vulgate version of Psalm 2:12, for instance, Willet writes: “And thus an evident place against the Jewes for the second person in Trinitie, is obscured and overthrowne, by the corrupt Latin text.”⁴⁷ His criticism of the Latin here is not based on a contradiction with another part of the text, but on the loss of one of the

⁴⁴ Van Kleeck, “Hermeneutics and Theology in the 17th Century,” 94.

⁴⁵ Medieval scholars, for example, used theological criteria as part of their method for discerning the best reading, which sometimes led them to reject a particularly difficult, while still “correct,” text (Van Liere, *Introduction to the Medieval Bible*, 100). Cf. Bengel’s nearly opposite approach in the eighteenth century, in which he systematically preferred the more difficult reading, under the premise that a scribe would be more likely to seek to correct a difficult reading than to muddy up a clear one (Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 112).

⁴⁶ The fair assumption here being that writers tend to be more or less consistent in their thought. Cf. Reformed use of the *analogia fidei*.

⁴⁷ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 20. While most of the English bibles read “kiss the Son” here, because of some obscurity in the Hebrew the Vulgate reads “*adprehendite disciplinam*” (“embrace discipline”), following the LXX’s “δράξασθε παιδείας” (note the etymological connection between παιδεία—education or discipline—and παῖς—child).

useful trinitarian *dicta probantia*.⁴⁸ Erasmus scholar Gregory D. Dodds, similarly, notes “Willet’s a priori reasoning” and the “rather circular” nature of Willet’s rejection of Erasmus’s textual work on Romans 9:5, which he criticized for weakening the scriptural evidence for Christ’s divinity.⁴⁹

Having acknowledged these weaknesses in Willet’s arguments for the priority of the *textus receptus* Greek over the Vulgate, we will proceed not by focusing on the textual basis of his arguments, but on the theological ramifications of the textual differences between the different manuscript traditions and on Willet’s polemical use of these variations. We can divide his Vulgate-oriented polemics into those stemming from textual variants and those related to translation issues.

3.1 Vulgate: Textual Variants

The study of the origin of textual variants in the Bible is interesting in its own right, even apart from theological considerations.⁵⁰ In Romans manuscripts alone we find multiple instances of errors—due to mistaken hearing (e.g. εἰ δὲ/ ἰδε in 2:17), mistaken

⁴⁸ Cf. the concurrent debate over the textual basis of the “Johannine comma”: see, for example, Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:141-145; William Orme, *Memoir of the Controversy Respecting the Three Heavenly Witnesses, 1 John v. 7* (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1830); Joseph M. Levine, “Erasmus and the Problem of the Johannine Comma,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, no. 4 (Oct. 1997): 573-596.

⁴⁹ Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, 144. Cf. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 434. Willet objects to Erasmus’s suggestion in his annotations on this verse that an acceptable grammatical reading could separate “God” from “Christ”: “Then after a period, there would follow ‘God [be] blessed forever,’ so that this would be an expression of thanks as a result of the contemplation of love towards the human race so great that God wished God the Son to assume a human body for our sake” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 242). Although Erasmus accepts also the grammatical legitimacy of the reading Willet prefers (“Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever”) and adds that other parts of Scripture make it “clearer than day” that Christ is God (p. 243)—a disclaimer that Willet acknowledges—these are insufficient to keep Willet from accusing Erasmus of having “given occasion to these newfangled Dogmatists [i.e. the heretics Eniedinus and Socinus].”

⁵⁰ See the chapter on the causes of New Testament manuscript errors in Metzger’s classic study, where he provides examples of accidental and intentional alterations generated by such factors as faulty

seeing (e.g. ἈΛΛΑ/ ἌΜΑ in 6:5), or expansion based on logical extrapolation or comparison with parallel biblical texts (e.g. the expansion of Paul’s citation of four of the Ten Commandments in 13:9, or the added logical converse in 14:6 about those who do not observe particular feast days)—that provide insight into the history of the scribal transmission of these texts but have minimal theological effect.⁵¹ Our focus here, though, will be on the variants that, whether generated intentionally or through a scribal error, impact to some degree the theological ramifications of a passage.

3.1.1 Romans 1:31/32 and “non intellexerunt”

Despite his vigorous disapproval of Erasmian soteriology, in textual matters Willet often found an ally in Erasmus, whose work on the Greek New Testament was so pivotal in establishing the Stephanus text that served as the standard Greek in Willet’s England. Such was the case, for instance, in the disputed text of Romans 1:31/32 (the verse that Willet and Geneva number as verse 31 is subdivided in most other versions, including the 1551 Stephanus).⁵² Erasmus had pointed out that the better Greek manuscripts of Romans lacked the Vulgate’s mitigating phrase *non intellexerunt* (“they

hearing or seeing, accidental engrafting of marginal notes, harmonization or conflation of different passages, the addition of natural complements, attempts at geographic or historical correction, and doctrinal issues (Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 186-206).

⁵¹ On these examples, see: (2:17)—Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 100; Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 83-84; (6:5)—Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 187; Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 176; (13:9)—Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 198; (14:6)—Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 624, 633; Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 373-376.

⁵² The Rhemist text, with my brackets added around the disputed words, reads: “Who whereas they knew the justice of God, [did not understand] that they which doe such things, are worthe of death: not only they that doe them, but they also that consent to the doers” (Martin, *New Testament*, 384).

did not understand”), which could alter the meaning of the passage.⁵³ While stating that he (in perhaps a slight play on words) “certainly [did] not quite understand” how these added words came into the text, he suggests that they were introduced to “fill out the meaning” of Paul’s words.

But the Greek manuscripts now extant, with large consensus, suggest that Paul’s meaning was very different, namely, that to approve of the evil deeds of others is more serious than to fall into sin yourself, for the latter is very often due either to chance or to weakness; the former either to a most pernicious flattery or to a most deplorable malice.⁵⁴

Willet, citing Erasmus among others, follows this line of critique, arguing that the added words, with their appeal to ignorance, “quite invert the sense of the text, [making] it a lesse thing to consent unto evil doers, and approve them, then to commit evill.”⁵⁵ The confused Vulgate rendering is further muddled by the muted translation of *συνευδοκοῦσιν* as *consentiunt*, as opposed to the stronger *patrocinantur* (Beza) or *applaudunt* (Piscator).⁵⁶ The Vulgate’s translation follows the minimized culpability communicated by the added *non intellexerunt*—it is worse to commit than to *consent* to sin; but the order of severity expressed in the Greek text agrees with an approval stronger than “a bare consent unto evill”—to fall into sin (perhaps by weakness) is a less severe offence than to *delight* in others’ evil acts.⁵⁷

Several of Willet’s text-critical principles are displayed in his arguments against

⁵³ “Could” because the order of severity would be maintained if the added words were taken as a negative question: “Did they not understand?”

⁵⁴ Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 67.

⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 84.

⁵⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 85.

⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 97.

“the corrupt reading of the vulgar Latine translation” of this verse in the Controversies section of chapter 1. From manuscript evidence, he counters Bellarmine’s appeal to the presence of the clause in “some Greeke copies” with the assertion that “the most, and the most auncient have [it] not,” and the agreement of the Syriac text. Resolving the discrepancy between the interpretations of the older Latin and Greek commentaries, he again shows a preference for the (native Greek-speaking) Greek Fathers: “the Greeke authors and commentaries are more to be respected in this case, for the finding out of the best reading in the Greeke, then the Latine writers.” And from internal evidence he argues that the Vulgate reading introduces a contradiction into the text: “the understanding is in the judgement of the minde, not in the practise: and therefore to know a thing, and yet not to know or understand it, includes a contradiction.” It would be impossible to “know” God’s justice without “understanding” its consequences for sinners.⁵⁸

Other Protestant commentaries on this verse, both prior to Willet and by his contemporaries, tend to interpret it in line with Willet’s emphasis, though without drawing on the Vulgate’s textual variance. Calvin associates approving of the sins of others with a dangerous lack of shame, adding that “he who is ashamed is as yet healable.”⁵⁹ Thomas Wilson writes of celebrating others’ sins as “an high pitch and degree of sinne,” and argues that “sinnes against our knowledge” are the ones that are “chiefely to be avoyded,” as these “give greatest wounds to our conscience, and so most

⁵⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 97.

⁵⁹ Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 83.

trouble the peace of our owne hearts.”⁶⁰ And in an explication of Romans 1-3 published the same year as Willet’s Romans hexapla, William Sclater draws a distinction between simple and willful ignorance, applying the more pernicious directly to the Roman Catholic church’s encouragement of sin:

Wherein how farre they of Rome have ingaged themselves, those many dispensations by them granted for murther, even of the Lord’s annointed, for marriages within the degrees prohibited, &c. are abundant witnesses. Things that heathen by light of nature detested are allowed by them as commendable, yea in some cases meritorious, and worthy of canonization.⁶¹

While not mentioning the textual or translation issues with the Vulgate, Sclater’s amplification of the Protestant reading of this passage manages to exceed the polemical virulence of Willet’s text-based critique by accusing the Catholic church directly of the passage’s more sinister sin.

3.1.2 Assurance of Salvation in Romans 5:1 and 7:25

Two of Willet’s textual critiques of the Vulgate have a bearing on the believer’s assurance of salvation, one stemming from an altered vowel and the other from the substitution of a cognate word. In each of these cases, too, Willet’s readings follow Erasmus’s textual work. Seeking to correct the Vulgate text of Romans 5:1, which reads *pacem habeamus ad Deum* (“let us have peace toward God”), Erasmus had argued (incorrectly) that the majority of Greek codices had the indicative form ἔχομεν (“we have”) instead of the hortatory subjunctive ἔχωμεν (“let us have”).⁶² What is more, had

⁶⁰ Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 109-110.

⁶¹ Sclater, *A Key to the Key of Scripture*, 171.

⁶² In fact, “the vast majority” of Greek manuscripts contain the ἔχομεν reading that is the basis for the Vulgate translation, though “most modern commentators” agree with Erasmus and Willet that the less

Paul's purpose here been primarily to exhort believers to maintain peace with God, Erasmus holds, he would have used a different hortatory subjunctive, τηρῶμεν ("let us keep"), that would have described our responsibility more accurately. But Paul's use of the indicative mood shows that he is "not warning those who are justified, but he is expressing joy in their felicity."⁶³ Still, Erasmus presents his preferred reading with less than full certainty, even remarking himself that he has argued his position "without... absolutely condemning the other reading." Nor does the indicative ἔχομεν remove completely the hortatory element in Paul's words: "there is no need, then, of a verb in the imperative for his exhortation, but the situation itself exhorts us" to live out our peace with God through obedience to his commandments. While affirming that our peace with God is the "result not of [our] own merit,"⁶⁴ he adds that "it is a familiar figure of speech...[to] say something is being done that (we wish to have understood) ought to be done."⁶⁵ Thus, Erasmus makes a case for reading ἔχομεν while stopping short of drawing the conclusions from the indicative mood that we will see in Willet.

Addressing "what peace the Apostle meaneth" in the Questions section of chapter 5, Willet identifies two classes of misreadings of this verse that stem from the hortatory

frequently attested ἔχομεν is the original reading, being more consistent with Paul's meaning in the passage at large (editors' note in Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 128n3).

⁶³ Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 127.

⁶⁴ The Payne/Rabil/Smith translation of this passage in Erasmus's paraphrase of Romans is somewhat misleading in rendering *reconciliati sumus deo patri* ("we have been reconciled with God the Father") with the active "we have made our peace with God the Father," suggesting a greater human role in effecting peace with God than is present in Erasmus's words here. See Erasmus, *Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians*, ed. Robert Dick Sider, trans. John Barton Payne, Albert Rabil, and Warren Sylvester Smith, vol. 42 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 32; *Paraphrases des Erasmi Roerodami In epistolas Pauli apostoli ad Rhomanos Corinthios & Galatas* (Basil: Joan. Froben., 1520), 59.

⁶⁵ Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 128.

ἔχωμεν variant. Oecumenius and those following him read the verse “in the imperative, *habeamus*, let us have,” and interpret it as an injunction for believers to maintain peace with other believers, especially in those situations where Jews and Gentiles were divided by the Mosaic Law. This argument Willet dismisses on the grounds that Paul was not among those contending about the Law and yet he includes himself by using the first person plural; were he chiding others for an unnecessary division he would have used a second person imperative.⁶⁶ Others, as Origen, Chrysostom and Theodoret, read the passage (correctly) as a reference to peace with God, but take the imperative to function as a warning to the reader not to lose God’s favor.⁶⁷ This is the understanding implied, too, by the dismissal of the Protestant interpretation in the Rhemist annotations, where Martin asserts that this verse “maketh nothing for the vaine securitie and infallible certaintie which our Adversaries say, every man ought to have upon his presumed justification by faith, that him self is in Gods favour, and sure to be saved.”⁶⁸ Willet counters both of these views by arguing that the immediate context of Romans 5:1-2 supports the confidence expressed in the indicative reading. As it immediately follows Paul’s opening declaration that we are justified by faith, the “peace” should be read as the “peace of conscience” that we have as the first fruit of our having been declared righteous: “it is not an exhortation, but a continuation rather of the former doctrine of justification.” The words following, likewise, support Paul’s use of the indicative. He gives “through Jesus Christ” (not our own effort) as the efficient cause of this peace, confidently declares our access to God that we can only have with an already-

⁶⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 236.

⁶⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 236.

⁶⁸ Martin, *New Testament*, 394.

accomplished peace, and describes our “standing” in God’s grace, which communicates “the certaintie which we have thereof by faith...being sure by the Lords assistance never to fall away from thence.”⁶⁹ In the Controversies section, Willet reiterates this conclusion, arguing there (against Pererius) that our “integritie of life” is not a cause, but rather the confirmation of, our peace with God.⁷⁰ Our “peace of conscience is the worke of our true justice, that is, Christ,” but it is “confirmed and ratified unto us by good life.”⁷¹ In continuity with the mainstream of Reformed orthodox thought on the relationship between a godly life and the assurance of salvation, Willet fully grounds assurance objectively in Christ, while allowing a confirming role for good works.⁷²

A subtle textual variant similarly impacts whether Romans 7:25 can be used to

⁶⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 237-238. Through a series of distinctions, Willet narrows down the precise nature of the peace that Paul declares that we have. First, citing Calvin, he distinguishes between “peace of conscience” and a “carnall stupiditie” that naively ignores God’s justice. This peace is, further, not an external peace—which Satan and human corruption may “interrupt”—but rather “the inward peace of conscience [which] Satan himselfe cannot deprive us of.” He then subdivides this inner peace, explaining that the peace we are promised in this life is not from such battles as the tension between flesh and spirit, but from fear of God’s judgment. And even our experience of this assurance may waver through seasons of doubt, though never as to be rendered ultimately null; God’s gift of inner peace ensures “that we fall not upon the rockes, to make a shipwracke of our faith, and a good conscience.”

⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 265-266. Drawing on 2 Peter 1:9, Willet describes the confirming role of good works here in terms paralleling, in a way, the “sign and seal” function of the sacraments: a righteous life “declareth...unto us our peace,” and our good works make our election sure not “in it selfe, which dependeth on the purpose of God, but it is made sure unto us.”

⁷¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 265-266.

⁷² On the assurance of salvation in Reformed theology, see Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 244-276. Willet offers further evidence against those (such as M. Charles Bell and R. T. Kendall) who supposed a contradiction between objective (Christ-based) and subjective (good works as the effect of grace in the believer’s life) evidences for assurance (cf. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 247-250). Kendall claims, for instance, that in Perkins’s system, “The doing of good works, while not the ground of faith, is the ground of assurance” (R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979], 75). In Willet this is explicitly not the case, and a comparison he offers could be used in defense of his Cambridge classmate: “the peace of conscience wrought in us by faith, is confirmed and ratified unto us by good life, even as good workes are testimonies of our faith, and in that sense are said by S. James, c.2. to justifie” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 266). Good works, as Willet presents them, are no more the ground of assurance (or peace of conscience) than they are the ground of faith, yet in each case they give *witness* to the work of Christ, who is the ground of both graces.

support assurance of salvation. To Paul’s question, “Who shall deliver me out of this bodie of death?,” the Vulgate, with such Church Fathers as Origen and Augustine, answers “the grace of God” (*gratia dei*—the Latin equivalent of χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ). “But,” Willet counters with a bit of an overstatement, “all the Greeke copies have ἐυχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ].”⁷³ As an utterance of thanksgiving, Paul’s conclusion expresses a “certaine hope of the inheritance to come.”⁷⁴ Paul’s query in 7:24 functions rhetorically as a sigh, as to “sheweth his desire to be delivered,” so the expected response is not the entity that can effect his deliverance, but an expression of gratitude that the longed-for deliverance is guaranteed.⁷⁵ Though this deliverance (namely, the continued work of sanctification and the resurrection of the body) is as yet unfulfilled, “yet hee giveth thanks for it, as enjoying the same in hope.”⁷⁶ A few pages later, as part of a larger discussion of “that

⁷³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 333. For the sake of simplicity, I am writing ἐυχαριστῶ with a *sigma-tau*, rather than with the ligature *stigma*, which Willet uses. Metzger lists multiple manuscripts that read χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, ἢ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, or ἢ χάρις κυρίου (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart, Ger.: United Bible Societies, 1994], 455). There is no reason that Willet would not have been aware, at least, of a variant of the first reading, as Erasmus writes in the *Annotations* that Lorenzo Valla “points out that in some manuscripts χάρις τῷ θεῷ was written” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 195). If this was the only Greek variant that Willet knew of, though, it is possible that he would have included this among “all the Greeke copies [that] have ἐυχαριστῶ,” since the meaning would be basically the same (“I thank God,” versus “thanks to God”). The Valla variant would better explain the source behind the Vulgate version, as the only difference between these two readings is the case of θεός—the dative τῷ θεῷ (“to God”) or the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ (“of God”).

⁷⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 334. Erasmus concurs with this reading, as well, stating that “with these words, he gives thanks—now freed—to God” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 196). Kroeker describes Erasmus’s comments on this verse, as they developed through multiple editions, as becoming increasingly similar to the interpretations of Augustine, Luther, and Melancthon (Kroeker, *Erasmus in the Footsteps of Paul*, 71-72).

⁷⁵ Cf. the description of the source material behind the Vulgate’s rendering in Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 455: “Two Western readings...pedantically provide a direct answer to the question τίς με ῥύσεται; in ver. 24.”

⁷⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 333-334. Willet differs here from Calvin, who reads Paul’s thanksgiving as referring not to a further, future deliverance, but to benefits already received. The central issue to Calvin was not Paul’s “thank you in advance” gratitude for the fullness of his future salvation, but rather his contentment with his current blessings, *even though* they represent only the first fruits. The Apostle renders thanks to God “lest any should think that in his complaint [i.e. v. 24] he perversely murmured against God...It does not become the saints, while examining their own defects, to forget what

famous question, whether S. Paul do speake in his owne person, or of an other here in this 7. chapter,” Willet clarifies further the issue at stake. Arguing that Paul is speaking as himself (against those, as Tolet, who held that he wrote the seventh chapter in the voice of “a man not yet delivered or freed from his sinne”), Willet asserts that the more reliable manuscripts do not respond to the question in 7:24 with a merely hypothetical answer (i.e. “it is God’s grace that delivers”), but with an outburst of thanksgiving for *actually granting* the deliverance that he so desired. The word of thanks speaks to the Apostle’s condition, as “one not in the state of grace, cannot give thanks unto God.”⁷⁷ The difference to Willet, then, between the cognate words χάρις and εὐχαριστῶ was the difference between an individual’s salvation as a hypothetical future reality and that salvation as an accomplished fact. Willet’s exposition of this variant highlights the divergence between the contemporary Protestant and Roman Catholic understandings of the relationship between hope and certainty. Whereas Catholic thought presented hope as requiring further confirmation and thus falling short of assurance,⁷⁸ to Willet, Paul’s expression of thanksgiving for his *future* deliverance demonstrates a confidence that his salvation is “a certaine hope,” and that he is already able to enjoy “the same in hope.”

they have already received from God.” Despite not yet enjoying the “promised glory of heaven,” yet Paul has reason to take joy in God’s present blessings (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 273-274). Willet does not mention Calvin’s comments on this verse, but cites Vermigli, Rollock, Osiander, Theophylact, and Pareus as some who wrongly attribute Paul’s thanksgiving to his previous attainments (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 333-334).

⁷⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 338.

⁷⁸ As expressed, for example, in the distinction made in the Rhemist marginal note on the reference to hope in Romans 5:4, which claims that Christians “do not vaunt themselves of the certaintie of their salvation, but glorie in the hope thereof onely, which hope is insinuated here to be given in our justification, & is afterward to be confirmed by probation in tribulation” (Martin, *New Testament*, 393).

3.1.3 Romans 13:1 and the Status Quo

Lastly, we will consider a textual variant in Romans 13:1. Though the problematic reading that Willet disputes appears only in “a minority of Latin manuscripts,”⁷⁹ still Willet’s arguments concerning the ramifications of the faulty reading are interesting and worth mentioning. “The *vulgar Latine*,” writes Willet, “readeth, *The things which are, are ordained of God*,” adding that the same reading is found in Anselm and the interlinear gloss.⁸⁰ This reading (“*Quae autem sunt a Deo, ordinata sunt*”), Willet claims, contains a “double error,” in that it lacks an explicit reference back to the “powers” from the first part of the verse and “the word *ordinata*, ordained, is put in the neuter, which in the Greeke is in the feminine, answering unto *powers*.”⁸¹ The “double error” that Willet decries is perhaps better viewed as two aspects of a single issue: if “ordained” is put in the feminine (*ordinatae*), then the reference back to (the feminine) “powers” earlier in the

⁷⁹ Editorial comment in Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 348-349n12. Erasmus himself also supports the more important part of Willet’s reading: “Again, in my copy, in old type, and in the codex of Constance, the reading is *ordinatae*, not *ordinata*, so that the latter appears to be a corruption of the copyists” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 347). It is not difficult to imagine how these variants might have entered into the text, given the single-letter difference between the neuter *ordinata* and the feminine *ordinatae*, and the similar forms of the Greek ἐξουσία (powers) and οὐσα (being).

⁸⁰ Cf. the neuter *ordinata* variant in a recent printing of the ordinary gloss (*Bibliorum Sacrorum Cum Glossa Ordinaria, tomus sextus* [Venice, 1601], 163-164). The most recent editions of the Vulgate, though, generally contained the feminine *ordinatae* reading—a point Willet doubtlessly was aware of. The multiple printings of the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate, starting in 1592, all contain *ordinatae*. Cf. *Biblia Sacra: Vulgatae Editionis* (Rome: Apostolica Vaticana, 1592). Christophe Plantin’s 1580 Latin bible used the Louvain Vulgate as the basis for the text, but included variants in the margins. Thus, at Romans 13:1 he gives “*quae autem sunt, à Deo ordinata sunt*” in the main text, but adds “*ordinatae* 2 MS. G.S.” in the margin (*Biblia Sacra* [Antwerp: Christophori Plantini, 1580]). The Rheims New Testament reads “...there is no power but of God. And those that are, are of God ordeined,” which properly connects God’s ordination to the aforementioned powers (Martin, *New Testament*, 414). Some in the early seventeenth century, though, maintained the *ordinata* reading. Pererius, writing in 1604, has *ordinata*, without making any specific comment on this phrase (Pererius, *Disputationes super Epistola beati Pauli ad Romanos*, 637). Pareus is unusual in combining a reference to the powers with the *ordinata* form: “*qua sunt potestates, sunt à Deo ordinata*,” though in his exposition he gives “*quae vero potestates sunt, a Deo sunt ordinatae*,” which is the same form that Bucer had given (Pareus, *In Divinam ad Romanos*, 1287-1288; Bucer, *Metaphrasis et Enarratio in Epist. D. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos*, 572).

⁸¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 582.

verse is understood. With the neuter form *ordinata*, however, the pronoun *quae*, which can be either a neuter or feminine plural, is also read as a neuter (“the things”), rather than as a feminine relative pronoun (“which [powers]”).

While many exegetes either glossed over the *ordinata* variant as an obvious scribal error (as Erasmus) or chose not to mention it at all (like Calvin),⁸² Willet takes the time to explain how the erroneous reading becomes a blessing of the status quo, limiting our warrant for working against the broken elements of a fallen world. Willet cites Tolet’s agreement on this point and, indeed, his entire argument appears to be drawn directly from Tolet’s Romans commentary.⁸³ Tolet and Willet each explain how the unlimited breadth of the “things which are” would imply that such blights as “warre, sicknes, [and] povertie” were *ordained* by God, making it unlawful to labor to ameliorate these conditions.⁸⁴ This is not, however, to deny that all of the “things which are” are, in some manner, “of God.” Willet goes on to distinguish between things that are simply “of God” and those that are “by speciall precept” ordained by God; such things as disease and war may indeed be “of God” (as punishments for human sin) while not being “ordained by precept and commandement.” Being “disposed of in the world by Gods providence” but not by God’s *ordinance*, it is yet “lawfull to resist” these undesirable

⁸² Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 347; Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 479. Erasmus simply notes that “the reading is *ordinatae*, not *ordinata*, so that the latter appears to be a corruption of the copyists.”

⁸³ Cf. Toleti, *Commentarii et Annotationes in Epistolam B. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos*, 649-650. Tolet’s fourth annotation on chapter 13 focuses specifically on this textual issue. He notes Anselm’s error, the feminine form in the Greek text, and the theological dangers of a reading that would suggest that *whatsoever* comes from God is ordained by God (“*Quaecumque autem sunt a Deo, ordinata sunt*”).

⁸⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 582.

states.⁸⁵

Concerning those (civil governing) powers that are in fact said to be *ordained* by God, Willet maintains an intentionality in God when these magistrates are corrupt, but denies that God's "ordaining" of the powers necessarily implies a *hierarchy* of governing authority. The standard Roman Catholic explanation of evil rulers, in light of Paul's challenging words in Romans 13, was that these tyrannical rulers were not so much *ordained* by God as *permitted* by God to maintain their misused power.⁸⁶ Revisiting many of the arguments against the notion of God's "bare permission" of evil that he had presented in Romans 1, Willet does not attempt to explain away the universality of the divine sanction that Paul seems to grant to *all* civil governors, asserting that God's will ordains even corrupt rulers (generally as a punishment—as though to say “you get the ruler you deserve”).⁸⁷ Yet while Willet objects to those who so abstracted God's ordaining of power as to remove God's will entirely from the establishment of unfit

⁸⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 583. Calvin makes a similar point in relation to Romans 13:1 about the lawfulness of resisting those things that come from God as punishments: “powers are from God, not as pestilence, and famine, and wars, and other visitations for sin, are said to be from him...it is lawful to repel wars and to seek remedies for other evils...for the punishment which God inflicts on men for their sins, we cannot properly call ordinations” (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 479)

⁸⁶ For example, the Rhemish annotations cite Chrysostom's distinction between power *itself* as God's ordinance and those who abuse their power, who do so only by God's permission. Following a list of examples of those who had abused their power, the notes on Romans 13:1 concludes: “al which things God permitted them, by the abuse of their power to accomplish, but they were out of the compasse of his causing and ordinance” (Martin, *New Testament*, 415). As we shall see later (V.2.4), Willet included evil rulers within the scope of God's ordination, while attempting to make God “neither an actor nor a permitter of evill, as it is evill” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 582).

⁸⁷ Cf. my section on the causality of sin (V.2.4). While the direct context of Paul's teaching in Romans 13 involves civil magistrates, the general principles espoused by Willet and many Protestants met a special challenge when applied to the worldly power wielded by Satan. Willet addresses this issue at a couple places within the chapter 13 Questions. First he asserts that Satan is called “the Prince of this world” because he is “Gods minister in the world, and used for the punishment of worldly men.” The power that he exerts is not his own, but “is graunted unto him.” Later, though, when addressing whether it is lawful to *resist* Satan as a ministering power under God, Willet relays Gorrhan's answer, which seems to separate God's intention more distinctly from Satan's manner of exercising his power (though, presumably, still without severing entirely God's permission from the divine will): “the power of Sathan...[is] a power of permission, not of comission: or rather it is not so much a power which the devill exerciseth, as an abuse

rulers, he disagrees also with those who took Paul’s words here to mean “that there is an order and certain degrees in government, some...superiour to others.”⁸⁸ Rather, God’s ordaining of powers “hath reference unto Gods institution, not to the distinction and order of degrees in the powers.” This clarification was occasioned by the thirteenth century Pope Boniface VIII’s use of this passage to argue for the supremacy of papal over civil power.⁸⁹

Willet’s objection to the *ordinata* reading in Romans 13 highlights one aspect of a highly nuanced interpretation of God’s ordination and exercise of power. God’s ordination, as a direct expression of his will, pertains here to his establishment of civil rulers (even those who rule tyrannically), greatly limiting the sanction for resisting abused civil power.⁹⁰ Other undesirable states—war, famine, disease, and the like—are governed by God’s *providence*, but *not* his ordination, making it lawful to resist or ameliorate these conditions. Last of all, the notion of God’s bare *permission*, if defined as distinct from any sort of positive willing, does not free God from responsibility for any evil that is allowed, but rather implicates him *all the more*, as One who *could* have but

of power, and therefore we are to resist him” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 581, 584). The many distinctions involved serve, if nothing else, to illustrate the challenge of avoiding contradiction in *any* attempt to reconcile God’s sovereignty with the problem of evil.

⁸⁸ This sense of a hierarchical *ordering* could certainly be implied by the Greek τεταγμένα. Cf. Edward Leigh, *Critica Sacra In Two Parts...The Second Philological and Theological Observations Upon All the Greek Words of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (London: Abraham Miller and Roger Daniel, 1662), 258 (pt. 2); *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1900), s.v. “τάσσω.” The notion of ordering the powers, as opposed to merely instating them, is reflected in the text of some Latin translations, as, for example, a 1564 Latin bible published in Basil: “...*quae sunt Potestates, sunt à Deo ordine distributae*” (*Biblia Veteris ac Novi Testamenti* [Basil: Thomam Guarinum, 1564], 115).

⁸⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 583. Willet, as we discuss elsewhere, viewed the relationship between ecclesial and state power not hierarchically, but as a matter of diverse functions (see III.3.4.1).

⁹⁰ Willet’s allowances for resisting civil power are extremely limited, making it morally acceptable for a private citizen to defend himself against a king acting illegally in order to protect one’s life, the chastity of his wife, or the freedom of his children (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 593).

refused to stop something that was opposed to his will. Each of these positions Willet opposes to a Roman Catholic doctrine or text, as a means of clarifying and defining what he takes to be Paul's true message.

3.2 Vulgate: Translation Issues

On occasion, Willet points out places where the vulgar Latin “well-translateth” a particular verse;⁹¹ even these instances, however, tend to be less a good will commendation of the Latin translation than an opportunity to demonstrate that a faulty Roman Catholic interpretation ran afoul of even the preferred Catholic text.⁹² The great majority of Willet's references to the work of translation in the Vulgate are critical of its rendering of the Greek or Hebrew. Having considered problems stemming primarily from textual variants, we will now look at some of the more significant theological errors that Willet argued were drawn from or supported by poor translation of a portion of Romans into Latin.⁹³

⁹¹ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 75, 352, 481, 540. Cf. Van Kleeck, “Hermeneutics and Theology in the 17th Century,” 51.

⁹² Cf. III.2.3, where we discuss Willet's claim that the Vulgate itself argues against a Roman Catholic argument for the invocation of saints.

⁹³ Some of Willet's criticisms of Vulgate renderings are more a matter of emphasis than of great theological misrepresentation. On a few occasions, for instance, Willet objects to the Latin representation of Greek prefixes. For example, the Vulgate translates ὑπερνικῶμεν in Romans 8:37 with the muted “*superamus*.” Where Beza reads “*plusquam victores sumus*” and most English translations have the familiar “we are more than conquerors,” the “vulgar Latine readeth onely *superamus*, wee overcome.” Since νικᾶν alone means “to conquer/overcome,” Willet reasons, the ὑπερ- prefix must modify the meaning in some way. While he approves of the sense of overcoming with “great facilitie,” the best meaning, he argues, speaks to the *mindset* of those overcoming: “the Saints are not onely not broken and terrified with their manifold sufferings, but doe also glorie and rejoyce in their tribulation.” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 386-387). Erasmus, interestingly, accepts the Vulgate's *superamus*, but objects strongly to its rendering of διὰ with the genitive causally as *propter* (because of) instead of as *per* (through), on the grounds that our overcoming “because of” Christ implies an element of our own power effecting the victory: “if you read ‘because of him,’ you spoil his argument” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 236-237). Similarly—though with less warrant—Willet claims in his translation of Romans 16 that the Greek συνεργούς in verse 3 should be translated not with “*adiutores*” (“helpers”), as the Vulgate (and Beza and

3.2.1 Translating νοῦς: Mind, Understanding, and Will

Of the five instances in Romans where Paul uses a form of the word νοῦς, only once (7:25) does the Vulgate render it as “mind” (*mens*); the other four places are translated as “sense” (*sensus*)—representing to Willet (and other Greek scholars, as Erasmus) a confusion of faculty and function, and a narrowing of Paul’s true meaning.⁹⁴ Commenting on Romans 1:28, where Paul says that God gave the Gentiles up to a reprobate “νοῦς,” Willet explains that this corrupted mind does not know up from down, being “voide of all judgement,” and he indicates the wide scope of the Apostle’s meaning: “the word is νοῦς, which signifieth the verie judgement and understanding, both theoreticall, and practicall, they erre both in their judgement and conscience.”⁹⁵ He illustrates this mental inversion of good and evil with Lyra’s example of a corrupted sense of taste mistaking sweet for bitter. Sinners are delivered over to a reprobate mind, Willet argues, “by diverse degrees,” so that the malfunction is “growne into a habit.” Following Faius, he explains this progression as a movement from a lustful heart to vile affections, and “last of all to a reprobate sense, to such an evill habit, that they could doe

Erasmus) read, but with “*fellow helpers*”—a translation only found in the Geneva among sixteenth and seventeenth century English bibles. In his comments on the verse, Willet states that Paul’s reference to “*fellow helpers*” (including lay people—yea, verily—“even a woman”) demonstrates Paul’s humility. But the same is communicated by the word “*helpers*” alone (which word already includes the literal sense of συναργούς as “*fellow workers*” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 717, 720).

⁹⁴ Romans 7:25 is the only place in Romans where νοῦς is juxtaposed with the “*flesh*,” making “*mind*” a far more natural translation than “*sense*.” The Greek reads: “...ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῦ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ, τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας,” which is translated in the Vulgate as: “...*ego ipse mente servio legi Dei carne autem legi peccati*.” Similarly, of Paul’s five uses of forms of νοῦς in 1 Corinthians, the two that are translated as *mens* in the Vulgate are where νοῦς is juxtaposed with πνεῦμά (“*spirit*”). The Rheims New Testament follows the Vulgate, as expected, in each instance in Romans, except for 12:2, where it has “*mind*” where the Vulgate has “*sensus*” (see Martin, *New Testament*, 412).

⁹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 79. Erasmus similarly argues for translating νοῦν as *mentem* instead of *sensum*, though his explanation does not broach the theological implications of each term: “The word here is not αἴσθησις ‘sense,’ such as seeing and hearing, but νοῦς, that is, ‘mind’ (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 59-60).

nothing but evil.” So even if the Latin “reprobate sense” represents an *aspect*—perhaps even the highest and most depraved level—of the mind’s reprobation, it is still an unacceptable limitation of the full scope of Paul’s meaning. He concludes his discussion of this question by reiterating the breadth of the reprobate mind’s depravity. Drawing on Tolet’s distinction, Willet explains that the mind in this condition can err in two different ways—either in its judgment of right and wrong, or in the affections moving one to act in a way that “the judgement condemneth.”⁹⁶ His conception of the “mind” thus comprises both the judgment *and* the affections, and he understands sin to infect both the intellect and the will.⁹⁷

Willet again addresses the Vulgate’s mistranslation of νοῦς in Romans 12:2, and there he explains the attendant theological problems more explicitly. There Paul writes of our transformation “by the newness of the mind (νοῦς).” This qualification distinguishes this particular transformation, Willet notes, from that of the body, though the same renewal is alternately referred to elsewhere in Romans as a newness of life (6:4; from the effect) or of spirit (7:6; from its author).⁹⁸ While he again objects to the Vulgate’s translation as “sense”—a *function* of the mind—he warns also of an overly physical

⁹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 79.

⁹⁷ While Willet tends to take νοῦς as comprising both the mind’s judgment and its affections, he is careful to distinguish between and is particular about sin’s effect on each faculty. He rejects, for instance, Melancthon’s suggestion that the adjective ἄκακος in Romans 16:18 describes those who are “weake in their affections.” These easily-deceived people are “weake rather in judgement, then affection.” His larger issue with this term, however, is against the Vulgate’s translating it to mean “innocent.” Were these people truly “innocent,” they would not so easily be deceived by divisive hypocrites. They are said, thus, to be “simple,” “not as innocent, for they are laden with sinnes, but as ignorant” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 730).

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 539. The reference to newness of mind, he adds, is with respect to “the subject and place.” Willet thus describes Paul’s varying terminology for this newness using the logic of multiple causality: the “newness of the Spirit” refers to its efficient cause, the “newness of life” to its final, and the “newness of mind” to the material and formal causes. Cf. chapter 4, which details Willet’s (more explicit) use of explanation though multiple causality.

reading, which (presumably) would treat the “mind” as merely an aspect of the body. The mind is renewed not in the “substance thereof, but onely in the condition and qualitie.”⁹⁹ Its “substance” excepted, though, here again Willet takes “mind” comprehensively and disputes interpretations that would unduly limit its reference. Haymo, who had followed Origen in taking “mind” to mean only the *understanding*, is “too particular: by the minde rather is understood all the faculties of the soule, the intellectuall part, and the will, where this renovation must take beginning.” Gorrhan follows the Vulgate’s rendering and narrows the scope in a different direction.¹⁰⁰ Taking “newness of sense” as a call to reform one’s *affections*, his reading supports a widespread reductionistic understanding of the basis of and damage wrought by sin: “and hereupon that common error was grounded, that sin had the seat & place in the affections, whereas the very mind hath need to be renewed.”¹⁰¹ Gorrhan’s reading of “affections” from “sense” might seem odd, but as James M. Estes notes in his annotations to Erasmus’s letters, “Both *sensus* and *affectus* can refer to mental as well as emotional states, so the meaning ranges from ‘thought,’ ‘idea,’ to ‘feelings’ and ‘emotions.’”¹⁰²

Willet’s criticisms of the interpretations of Haymo and Gorrhan reveal several

⁹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 539.

¹⁰⁰ Despite his disapproval of Gorrhan’s reliance on the Vulgate translation here, Willet earlier on the same page cites positively Gorrhan’s pithy summary of the pattern of human sin and redemption—in which we are formed, deformed, reformed, informed, conformed, and transformed—showing again how Willet can find both fault and value in a source, even within the interpretation of a single verse (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 539).

¹⁰¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 539-540.

¹⁰² Estes’s note was occasioned by Erasmus’s comment in a 1530 letter to Pieter Gillis in which he explains his preference for *sensus* or *affectus* as a Latin rendering of φρόνημα in Romans 8:27 (instead of the Vulgate’s *desiderit* “desires”)—a choice criticized by Lefèvre as unworthy words to use of the Spirit, being rather “appropriate to the flesh—coarse, physical words for the coarse and lowest part of ourselves” (*The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 2204 to 2356, August 1529-July 1530*, trans. Alexander Dalzell, vol. 16 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015], 152n34, 152-153).

interesting aspects of his understanding of the mind, sin, and redemption. First, where the traditional Aristotelian “faculty psychology” (to which many Protestants, as Calvin, adhered) conceived of the mind and the heart as the two faculties of the soul—with the intellect belonging to the mind and the will and affections to the heart¹⁰³—Willet extends the meaning of “mind” here as to make it virtually synonymous with the “soul”; the “mind” in Romans 12:2, he argues, is the overarching entity that includes *both* the intellect *and the will*.¹⁰⁴ Secondly, Willet gives a certain priority to the will in the process of redemption by identifying it as the place “where this renovation must take beginning.” We must hold this assertion together, however, with his statement in the Controversies section of chapter 12 that appears to give priority to the understanding: “if he perceive not, nor knowe them, hee cannot choose to doe them: for there is nothing in the election of the will, which is not first in the conception of the understanding.”¹⁰⁵ The resolution to this apparent contradiction most likely mirrors that of a similar tension in Calvin. Muller argues that Calvin gives a *temporal* priority to the understanding (in that the will does not blindly flail at its object), but a *causal* priority to the will (in that mere comprehension of

¹⁰³ Richard A. Muller, “*Fides* and *Cognitio* in Relation to the Problem of the Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 25, no. 2 (Nov. 1990): 212, 219.

¹⁰⁴ Assessing similarities and differences between different conceptions of these faculties is complicated by a certain fluidity in the use of these terms. For instance, Calvin acknowledged that the “heart,” as used in Scripture, could also *include* the mind, and, “as Stuermann suggested, ‘heart’ is frequently used by Calvin as a synonym for ‘soul,’ but also, particularly when juxtaposed with ‘mind’ (*mens*), the term refers to ‘the seat of the emotions’ or ‘the whole range of human affections,’ or indeed, the faculty that reaches out toward known objects, which is to say, the will” (Muller, “*Fides* and *Cognitio*,” 218, 217). In Willet’s own usage in the Romans hexapla, too, we see some terminological flexibility due to his affinity for synecdoche (cf. III.3.1): the “mind” can, by synecdoche, represent “all the regenerate part both in the mind and body” (p. 334); similarly, the “body” can by synecdoche stand for the “whole man both bodie and soule” (p. 536); and, for good measure, the “soul” can represent a human being holistically, including the body (p. 578). Thus, given Willet’s wide-ranging use of these terms, and since Calvin can occasionally take the “heart” to be synonymous with the soul, the affections, or the will, then we must be careful not to assume too great a difference between his and Willet’s understanding of these faculties simply from Willet’s making “mind” synonymous with “soul.”

¹⁰⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 570.

Christ's work is not of itself salvific).¹⁰⁶ This appears to be Willet's intent, as well, especially given his context of attempting to refute the Roman Catholic conception of faith (as Willet presents it) as either a mindless assent to Church dogma or as an academic mental exercise. Here we see a high level of congruity between Calvin's and Willet's understandings of faith, in that each viewed it as an activity of the *entire* human being (however the constituent parts of a person's soul might be arranged).¹⁰⁷ And thirdly, Willet seeks to correct the "common error" of thinking that sin is rooted merely in the affections, rather than in the "very mind." On this point too, though, there is some ambiguity in his terminology. As we have seen, in the context of Romans 1:28 Willet claimed that the errant affections that are drawn to that which the intellect knows to be wrong are an aspect of the *mind's* reprobation. In his discussion of Paul's chapter 7 meditation on sin, Willet maintained that "the will bringeth forth sinne, and that belongeth to the rationall part; the bodie doth but execute the edict of the reason and will."¹⁰⁸ Taken together, Willet's meaning is clear: the seat of sin is not in the flesh, but deeper, more centrally, in the mind (and principally in the will). His meaning, however, is somewhat obscured by the different ways that he writes of the "affections": associating them with the activity of the *will* in 1:28 (as Calvin often would do),¹⁰⁹ and suggesting their connection with the *flesh* in 12:2; if one were to claim that the seat of sin was "the affections"—defined as the *will*—then Willet would have no reason to object.

Just as sin infects and redemption renews *both* the will and the understanding, so

¹⁰⁶ Muller, "Fides and Cognition," 221.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Muller, "Fides and Cognition," 220.

¹⁰⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 329.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Muller, "Fides and Cognition," 217, 220.

Willet insists that *faith* intimately involves each faculty.¹¹⁰ He presents this argument frequently against Bellarmine’s articulation of the nature of justifying faith as stated in book one of *De Justificatione* (in volume 4 of *Disputationes*), selectively quoting Bellarmine to make the Roman Catholic position appear self-contradictory. In the context of Romans 10:10, Willet, citing Bellarmine’s sixth chapter, claims that “the Romanists (as namely *Bellarmino*) doe affirme, that faith onely hath the seate in the intellectuall part...and so they hold faith to be an act onely of the understanding.”¹¹¹ Then, commenting on Romans 14:2 and citing Bellarmine’s fifth chapter, Willet states his view as being the exact opposite: “*Bellarmino*... will have faith to be...an assenting onely of the will, not a knowledge... and therefore [Roman Catholics] say to *beleewe* is nothing else but to give assent unto the doctrine of the Church,¹¹² although one understand not what it is.”¹¹³ Bellarmine thus, as Willet presents him, teaches a doctrine of justifying faith that is at once “an act onely of the understanding” and “an assenting onely of the will,” without any understanding, leading him in *Synopsis Papismi* to accuse Bellarmine

¹¹⁰ Cf. Pitkins’s description of Calvin’s understanding of “faith as knowledge” impacting the entire person holistically, and not the intellectual part alone (Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See*, 23).

¹¹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 479. Willet also references here the Rhemish annotation on 2 Corinthians 13 (verse 5), which states that we cannot *know* that we are in a state of grace, but that we can know that we have *faith*, “because it is an act of the understanding” (Martin, *New Testament*, 493).

¹¹² There is a fairly striking parallel between Willet’s unfair depiction of Bellarmine’s view of faith and the unfair depiction of the Protestant scholastic view of faith given by Rogers and McKim. They argue that “Scholasticism defined faith first as an act of assent by the mind to the deposit of truths in Scripture and only secondarily as a relationship of personal trust in Christ wrought by the Holy Spirit” (Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* [New York: Harper & Row, 1979], 186). The two accusations differ primarily in the object of the assent, whether church dogma or scriptural doctrine. Willet’s arguments here and elsewhere reflect an approach that bears no resemblance to the Rogers-McKim caricature.

¹¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 659. Cf. Willet’s interpretation in *Synopsis Papismi* of Bellarmine’s words: “*Bellarmino* saith, *fidem non esse notitiam, sed assensum*, that faith is no knowledge, but a bare assent of the minde, without knowledge or understanding of that whereunto it assenteth” (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1600], 873). We will look at the context of Bellarmine’s statement below.

of inconsistent thought (“*Bellarmino* forgetteth his owne argument used before”) and Roman Catholics of destroying *both* the affective/volitional and the intellectual aspects of faith: “As before they spoyled faith of the better part thereof, which is a stable and certaine perswasion of the heart: so now also they rob it of the other part, which is an evidence and light of spiritual knowledge.”¹¹⁴

Willet’s representation of the Cardinal’s teaching on faith is not entirely fair, however, and he seems to use Bellarmine’s isolated comments here primarily as a foil for framing his own emphases.¹¹⁵ Given the mystery of faith and human epistemic limits, Bellarmine posits two different kinds of knowing—a basic apprehension (*apprehensio*) that *precedes* faith, and a fuller understanding (*intellectus*) that emerges *from* faith, in the classic Anselmian “faith seeking understanding” fashion.¹¹⁶ Thus, for Willet to claim that Bellarmine divorces faith *entirely* from understanding is inaccurate. Bellarmine cites with approval Augustine’s definition of faith as *thinking* with assent: “*credere, nihil esse aliud, nisi cum assensu cogitare.*” Indeed, part of faith’s superiority to knowledge is that one can have knowledge without belief, but belief always entails knowledge (“*multi*

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 873, 874.

¹¹⁵ In taking Bellarmine’s statements out of context, Willet makes himself guilty of the same accusation he had levied against Richard Broughton in the “Further Advertisements to the Reader” prefixed to *Loidoromastix* in 1607: “Such depraving and wresting of sentences, sheweth a badde cause, and a worse mind in those that use such beggerly shifts” (Willet, *Loidoromastix*, sig. ¶¶¶¶¶2v). Surely it is easier to recognize such “beggerly shifts” when the target is one’s own work.

¹¹⁶ Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationum...de Controversiis Christianae Fidei*, vol. 4 (Ingolstadt: Adam Sartorius, 1601), 948. Mere apprehension, he writes, is not the same as, but precedes faith: “*apprehensio non est fides, sed aliquid fidam praecedens.*” And, drawing on Augustine’s disciple Saint Prosper, he puts understanding after faith: “*ex fide intellectus existat...fides intellectum praecedit.*” For more on Bellarmine’s understanding of justification, see John A. Peltz, “*Fides Justificans* According to Saint Robert Bellarmine” (master’s thesis, Marquette University, 1969).

cogitant, qui non credunt...sed nullus credit, qui non cogitet).¹¹⁷ The better part of faith, according to Bellarmine, is not the mind's basic understanding, but the *assent* that follows.¹¹⁸ While this is not, as Willet claims, a “bare assent,” the intellect is not capable in spiritual matters of attaining the level of clarity that it normally requires in order to assent. Fortunately, faith does not *need* this normal level of clarity¹¹⁹ because it is able to bypass what would otherwise be an impossibility by making the intellect assent to truths that it does not (fully) understand (“*quod intellectum faciat iis assentiri, quae non intelligit*”).¹²⁰ This is why Bellarmine contrasts faith with knowledge and states, somewhat provocatively, that faith is determined more by ignorance than by knowledge (“*melius per ignorantiam, quam per notitiam definitur*”).¹²¹ Protestants also, of course, acknowledged that faith transcended human understanding. So neither Protestants nor Catholics made *understanding* the basis of faith—the disagreement centered on what in fact *was*. For Bellarmine, *assent* was the core of faith, while for Calvin, for instance—

¹¹⁷ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 946. There is a certain parallel between Willet's claim that Bellarmine makes faith to be merely an assent (independent of knowledge) and the Roman Catholic charge of the Protestant doctrine of justification making it merely a “legal fiction” that does nothing to transform the believer. Bellarmine explicitly says that belief cannot exist *without* knowledge (even if the deeper understanding follows faith), just as Willet and others on the Protestant side affirmed that justification could not exist *without* good works and a sanctified life (which follow upon and in no way cause the justification). Cf. my section V.2.

¹¹⁸ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 947 (“*Fidem justificantem non tam esse notitiam, quàm assensum*”).

¹¹⁹ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 948 (“*distincta autem & perspicua non necessario requiritur ad fidem*”).

¹²⁰ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 941. Adapting Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 10:5, faith *captures* the intellect and makes it believe what it does not understand (“*B. Paulus per fidem dicit, intellectum captivum duci in obsequium Christi, quia cogitur credere, quod non intelligit*,” p. 945). To be fair to Willet's critique of Bellarmine, there is a kind of circularity to the idea that faith is thinking with assent *and* that which drives the intellect *to* assent.

¹²¹ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 949.

according to Leith—faith was “more in certainty than in comprehension.”¹²²

Willet also misrepresents Bellarmine in stating that he makes faith “an assenting onely of the will,” whereas Bellarmine considers *assensus* to be an activity not of the will, but of the *intellect* (“*quod intellectu, faciat iis assentiri*”). Willet’s insertion of the will into his portrayal of Bellarmine’s doctrine of faith heightens the perceived inconsistency in Bellarmine’s thought, but also reveals one of the true differences between Willet’s and Bellarmine’s understandings of justifying faith. While Willet’s charge that Bellarmine makes faith a blind and “bare assent of the minde, without knowledge or understanding of that whereunto it assenteth” twists Bellarmine’s meaning, his assertion that Bellarmine’s faith “onely hath the seate in the intellectual part” is accurate. Bellarmine places faith, even—and especially—in its assenting function, solely in the intellect.¹²³ Faith’s home in the intellect alone gives it a surer footing: “To believe,” he explains, “cannot for any reason be distorted to confidence (*fiduciam*). For we are not confident that God exists, but we declare it with certainty and we assent to it.”¹²⁴ Notice that both Roman Catholics and Protestants were concerned with protecting the *certainty* of faith; the nature of that faith, however, was understood differently. Whereas Willet and the Reformed wrote of faith as confirming the certainty of our good estate with God, here Bellarmine affirms the certainty of faith as propositional beliefs

¹²² Cited in Muller, “Fides and Cognito,” 209. Cf. Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See*, 29; Muller, *Fides and Cognito*, 217.

¹²³ “Faith is not confidence/trust (*fiducia*),” he writes, “but something pertaining to the intellect”; again, “faith is a matter of the intellect and, as a result, in no way pertains to trust, which is a matter of the will”; and he adds as an exegetical note on Romans 4:21, “the Greek *πληροφωρηθεις* properly means ‘having been completely convinced’ or ‘having certainty’ each of which pertains to the intellect” (Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 942, 946, 944).

¹²⁴ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 942 (“*neq; potest ulla ratione ipsum credere, detorqueri ad fiduciam. Non enim confidimus Deus esse, sed certo indicamus & assentimur.*”).

about God. *Fiducia* connotes to Bellarmine something *less* than full certainty—so to bring the will, with its fiducial function, into the concept of faith impinges upon the certainty of what we believe. His absolute statement, though, that faith “in no way pertains” (“*nullo modo pertinere*”) to *fiduciam*, is meant more to distinguish the two than to remove all causal connection between them, as he affirms that this confidence *arises from* faith: “*fiducia ex fide quidem oritur, sed non potest idem esse cum fide.*”¹²⁵ Still, while many Protestants considered this “trust in the promises of God”¹²⁶ to be of the very essence of justifying faith, Bellarmine considered moving this effect *of* faith into its *definition* to be a dangerous subjectivization of faith’s foundation.¹²⁷

Calvin, interestingly, had made a similar move between his first and second editions of the *Institutes*, adjusting his definition of *fides* away from *fiducia* and towards *cognitio*. As Barbara Pitkin argues, by 1539 Calvin “will not equate *fiducia* and *fides*. In this verse [“*Perquem habemus audaciam, et aditum in fiducia, per fidem eius,*” Eph. 3:12],¹²⁸ confidence is derived from faith; the link between the two is so close that Calvin acknowledges that ‘the word faith is often used for *fiducia*.’”¹²⁹ While the two concepts

¹²⁵ Bellarmine, *Disputationum*, vol. 4, 945. Bellarmine treats *fiducia* as more a function of hope than of faith, and its connection to faith thus parallels the relationship between faith and hope. In his *Ample Declaration of the Christian Doctrine*, an English translation of which was published in 1605 in Douay, Bellarmine distinguishes thus between faith and hope: “For as by Faith we beleeve in God, so by Hope, wee trust or hope in God.” The function of faith is “to illuminate and elevete the understanding to beleeve firmly all that God by his Church revealeth unto us” (i.e. doctrine), whereas hope is concerned with our “eternall felicitie.” Hope is grounded in God’s goodness and mercy, though the promises that are the object of our hope are conditional upon our performance of “workes conformable to the dignitie received” (Robert Bellarmine, *Ample Declaration of the Christian Doctrine*, trans. Richard Hadock [Doway: Laurence Kellam, 1605], 250-253).

¹²⁶ Steinmetz’s definition of *fiducia* (David Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002], 33).

¹²⁷ Cf. Peltz, “Fides Justificans,” 15-17, 32.

¹²⁸ “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

¹²⁹ Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See*, 30.

remained intimately linked (so that “faith inevitably leads to *fiducia*”), in Calvin’s developing theology, faith was “no longer synonymous with trust.”¹³⁰ Certainly differences remain between Calvin’s and Bellarmine’s conceptions of faith—including *fiducia* retaining a more central position *within* Calvin’s notion of *fides*—but the comparison serves to show that Calvin, too, had distinguished between *fides* and *fiducia*, and in a manner not radically different from Bellarmine’s distinction.

Willet himself distinguishes between a general and a special faith, the second of which is salvific. He writes:

There is a generall faith, as to beleeeve the word of God, and the heavenly doctrine therein contained, unto the which three things are required, a knowledge, and assenting, and a full perswasion. . . There is a speciall and particular faith, which is an assurance of remission of sinnes in Christ, which is that which we call justifying faith: and beside those three things before concurring in a generall faith, there is required in justifying faith confidence beside and firme assurance, contrary whereunto is diffidence and distrust.¹³¹

Bellarmino’s conception of faith, then, corresponds to what Willet terms “general faith,” and the fiducial element of having a “firm assurance” of forgiveness of sins in Christ, while not exhaustively encompassing the fullness of faith’s essence, is the distinguishing factor that for Willet characterizes a salvific, justifying faith.¹³²

The Vulgate’s erroneous translation of *voï* as “(in the) sense” in Romans 14:5 combines with the poor translation of *πληροφορείσθω* in the same verse as “abound,” instead of as “be persuaded,” to falsely suggest a relativity to Christian truth. Whereas Paul is here writing of a kind of confidence in which believers are “persuaded in their

¹³⁰ Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See*, 31, 30.

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 660.

¹³² Calvin, similarly, in 1539 “says that confidence of the heart is the principal element in faith” (Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Can See*, 30).

own minds,” the Vulgate’s wording teaches that all should “abound in their own sense”—a reading taken by “the Libertines” to mean that “every man should be left unto himself for the choice of his religion.”¹³³ Willet is careful not to say that this *is* the Roman Catholic teaching, but that certain “Libertines” had *taken* the misleading Vulgate translation to mean this; he thereby shields himself from the accusation in the annotations to the Rheims New Testament of Protestants twisting this Catholic teaching.¹³⁴

The abound/sense reading, Willet notes, had led to myriad misinterpretations, from Jerome’s and Hugo’s emphasis on one’s *intentions* in acts of worship (so that the particulars of your obedience matter less than your performing these deeds with your heart abounding “in faith”), to Haymo’s exhortation that we also “abound in good works,” which application is derived from a word not found in the original.¹³⁵ Even if applied not to matters of great doctrinal moment but only to adiaphora (as implied by the Rhemist annotations), the injunction for each to “abound in his own sense” cannot but

¹³³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 632. Erasmus rendered this phrase “*unicuique sua mens satisfaciatur* ‘let his mind satisfy each,’” and was critical of the connotations of the Vulgate’s expression, though drawing a different association than did Willet: “In any case [the expression] *abundare in suo sensu* describes a person of inflexible mind and obstinate will” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 373n1, 373).

¹³⁴ Martin, *New Testament*, 418: “The Apostle doth not give freedom, as the Churches enemies would have it, that every man may doe or thinke what he list [please]. but in this matter of Iudaical observation of daies and meates, & that for a time onely, til the Christian religion should be perfectly established, he would have no restraine made, but that every one should be borne withal in his owne sense.”

¹³⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 632-633. The application of this verse as referring to one’s *intentions* is false because “it is not a good intention that maketh a good action” (p. 633)—not because one’s intentions do not *matter*. Willet clarifies this point in the Doctrines section of this chapter, where he explains that the heathen *still sin* (though “goodly sinnes”) when they obey God’s commandments, since they have “not this full perswasion and assurance of faith, that therein they pleased God.” Their (“good”) actions are thus sinful, “not by the substance of the works, but the fault of the worker” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 656). There is a certain parallel here to the elements in the sacraments, which are “not more holy in their nature, but in respect of the present use” (p. 661). “Good works,” in other words, require *both* the objective sanction of God’s word (against the Libertine conception) *and* the intention of performing these works “in faith” (against the deeds of the otherwise obedient heathen).

lead to “horrible confusion.”¹³⁶ The more accurate translation makes clear that Paul is not referring to the human mind as the active agent effecting the certainty of faith (as implied by “sense”), but as the *location* where that persuasion—defined and effected by God’s word—takes place: “Wherefore the meaning is, that everie one should be fully perswaded in his owne mind, that that which he doth...be not against the word of God.”¹³⁷

3.2.2 *The Goodness of the Law in Romans 5:20*

Many of Willet’s references to the Law in the Romans hexapla are critical of those who attribute to it too much power in effecting salvation—a Pharisaic legalism that he associates with Pelagius and many strains of modern Roman Catholicism.¹³⁸ He was, however, no antinomian, and like many Reformed he distinguished between Law and gospel (with the Law, when properly used, serving the gospel’s ends), but without pitting them in absolute opposition.¹³⁹ We see this aspect of Willet’s view of the Law in his defense of its inherent goodness in Romans 5:20, against Marcion, the Manichees, and the negative sense implied by the Vulgate translation.¹⁴⁰ Much of the disagreement over

¹³⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 632. On controversies in Willet’s era involving adiaphora (namely the vestarian and Admonition controversies), see Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 46-48; Brett Usher, “The Fortunes of English Puritanism: An Elizabethan Perspective,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 100-102; Donald Joseph McGinn, *The Admonition Controversy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1949).

¹³⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 633.

¹³⁸ On the inability of the Law to justify, see for example Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 7, 57, 122, 163-164, 171, 207, 326, and 337. On Willet’s connecting Roman Catholics to the Pelagian heresy, see VI.2.1.

¹³⁹ Various instances of Willet discussing the importance of distinguishing between the Law and the gospel or the Law and faith may be found in Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 26, 183, 209, 460, 464, and 635.

¹⁴⁰ Other examples of Willet praising the goodness of the Law may be found on pp. 165, 174, 207, 262, 275, 325, 331, 337, 339, 342, and 456 of Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*.

the interpretation of verse 5:20 is tied to varied understandings of the prefix παρ(α)- in παρεισῆλθεν, which word Willet translates as “entred thereupon”: “Moreover, the law entred thereupon, that the offence should encrease.”¹⁴¹ Given the inherently challenging nature of this verse—with its apparent implication of the Law as sin’s willing accomplice (Marcion, unsurprisingly, seized upon this verse to impugn the Law)¹⁴²—the *manner* of the Law’s entry is significant for parsing how exactly it functions in Paul’s argument. The Vulgate’s “*subintravit*,” to Willet, connoted too furtive an entrance, almost in the sense of criminal trespassing: “it entred in by the way: as though it had entred in secretly.” This characterization of the Law as a kind of stealthy stowaway played into the hands of the Law’s denigrators. Those who affirmed the Law’s goodness, too, were led astray in their interpretations when they took this verse to speak of a secret entry (whether deriving that interpretation from the Vulgate or elsewhere). Gorrhan referred the aspect of secrecy to the Law’s being given to a single race deep in the desert, and Chrysostom and Tolet each took the Law’s merely *slipping* in “to shew that the use thereof was but for a time” (whereas, Willet rebuts, that was true only of the *ceremonial* law, and not of the “perpetuall use” of the law revealing sin).¹⁴³ Willet seeks to correct

¹⁴¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 262. Joseph Caryl’s 1658 Greek grammar gives several options: “Bring compounded [παρά] *diminisheth*; as παράσημος ῥήτωρ, *a corrupted Orator*. It signifieth also *comparison*; as παραβάλλω *to compare*. Also *contrary*; as παράνομος *unjust or against the Law*. Also *nigh*; as παρακολουθῶ, *to follow neer*” (Joseph Caryl, *An English-Greek Grammar* [London: n.p., 1658], 55). Of these, the Vulgate follows one of the negative senses (as in the example of the *corrupted* orator or the *unjust* law), while Willet takes the prefix to mean something like the last definition—*nigh*, *near*, or *alongside*.

¹⁴² Willet, *Hexapla of Romanes*, 262. Origen, Willet adds, sought to defend the Mosaic Law against Marcion’s defaming remarks, while accepting the premise that the reference to the “law” in Romans 5:20 was negatively charged. Origen thus claimed that the “law” in this verse referred not to the written Law, but to the law of nature, or to the law of the “members,” which entered secretly “under the pretext and colour of the law of nature.”

¹⁴³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 262. Cf. Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 405 (Homily X).

these misreadings, explaining that the Law was not the proper cause of sin’s increase, but that “sinne entred *occasionaliter*, by occasion only of the law,” and reading the prefixed $\pi\alpha\rho(\alpha)$ - not with any negative connotation, but simply to mean “beside,” so as to read Paul as saying that the Law was given “beside that naturall corruption and deprivation of nature in Adam...it came upon, or was added unto that naturall disease.”¹⁴⁴

Erasmus—whose manuscript and translation work often helps establish the basis for Willet’s text-based arguments—actually disapproves of the Vulgate’s rendering of $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\sigma\tilde{\eta}\lambda\theta\epsilon\nu$ in 5:20 in the *opposite* direction of Willet, claiming that the Latin does not sufficiently convey the negative sense of the Greek term. Reading the Vulgate’s *lex autem subintravit* as a simple, neutral entrance (“the Law, however, entered in”), he proposes the more clandestine alternative “*ceterum lex obiter subiit* (‘but the Law stole in by the way’),” justifying this choice by commenting on the Greek compound: “ $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\sigma\tilde{\eta}\lambda\theta\epsilon\nu$, that is to say, ‘crept in by the way’—because of the Greek preposition, which is added usually with a derogatory sense.”¹⁴⁵

In the Question following his discussion of this translation issue, as well as in his treatment of this verse in the Doctrines, Controversies, and Moral Uses sections, Willet continues to emphasize the Law’s goodness and stresses God’s intentionality even in its function of revealing and magnifying sin. Having made his case for the Law’s having come in not subversively but “beside” sin, Willet proceeds to explain three ways in which the Law can be considered: according to its nature (in itself “holy, spirituall, and good”), its recipients, and its author. The latter two perspectives reveal the (properly) causal

¹⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 262. Willet’s minimizing the impact of the prefix $\pi\alpha\rho(\alpha)$ - here is rather different from his exaggerated emphasis on the nuanced meaning conveyed by prefixes elsewhere (cf. n89).

¹⁴⁵ Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 172.

connection between the Law and sin's increase, as expressed in verse 5:20. Regarding the Law's impact on human hearts, "this particle *iva*, that, may be [taken] *causally*, because by the law properly sinne is manifested, and revealed." Likewise, "in respect of [God's] counsell the lawe may be understood *causally* to encrease sinne, in regard of a further ende" (i.e. the increase of grace).¹⁴⁶ Willet affirms God's causality in this verse more so than, for example, Chrysostom, who had argued:

the particule 'that' again does not assign the cause, but the result. For the purpose of its being given was not 'in order that' it might abound, for it was given to diminish and destroy the offence. But it resulted the opposite way, not owing to the nature of the Law, but owing to the listlessness of those who received it.¹⁴⁷

Chrysostom, like Willet, emphasizes the inherent goodness of the Law, but is more wary of connecting God causally to the "increase" of sin.¹⁴⁸ Willet emphasizes God's direction also in the Moral Observations, where he comments that God sometimes "seemeth to leave his children to themselves" in their sin, that they might better comprehend grace.¹⁴⁹ God's good intention in using the Law to expose the depth of human sinfulness is masked when the Latin translation suggests that this function is somehow incidental, or apart from God's willing.¹⁵⁰

In the Doctrines section Willet distinguishes between the Law's "proper" and its

¹⁴⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 262-263.

¹⁴⁷ Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 404 (Homily X).

¹⁴⁸ Cf. also Thomas Wilson, who—like Chrysostom—distances sin's increase from God's purposive willing. To the question, "Was this the purpose of God in giving the Law to encrease our guiltinesse?," he answers: "No, not so; the Apostle doth not note the intention of God, with what purpose he gave it, but the event that did follow the giving of the Law, that thereby our offence did more abound" (Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 335).

¹⁴⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 284.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Willet's arguments for attributing the "hardened hearts" of Romans 1 to more than God's "bare permission," discussed in IV.3.3.

“more principall” end: “the proper use of the lawe” is to reveal sin, “but we must not rest in this use of the law, there is a second and more principall end”—that of grace abounding all the more.¹⁵¹ So while others (as Chrysostom and Thomas Wilson) considered the Law’s increasing and exposing of sin to be an *improper* end, to Willet this was its *proper* (if not its *principal*) purpose.¹⁵² When he comes to the Controversies section, Willet emphasizes a middle course between Pelagian and Manichean heretics, “the one giving too much, the other too little to the law.” He continues his defense of the Law’s goodness against the first group, who used “these and such like places, against the law, as though it were evill,” noting that Paul himself will just two chapters later (7:12) affirm that of itself the Law is holy. The Manicheans, Willet explains, failed to

¹⁵¹ Willet elsewhere affirms other traditional “uses of the Law,” including the “third use” of directing a righteous life, that do not pertain to the immediate context of Romans 5. For example, in a Question centered on Romans 3:20, he writes: “So then there are two other speciall uses and benefits of the law, beside the revealing of sinne; the one that concerning faith, it is a Schoolemaster to bring us to Christ; and touching manners and life, it sheweth us the way wherein we should walke, *Mart*” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 165). Note that Willet cites Vermigli and not Calvin (who is often seen now as the exemplar for the Reformed *triplex usus legis*) when presenting the Law’s functions here, further supporting the now well-established fact that Calvin was not viewed in the seventeenth century as the sole standard for Reformed doctrine. On the uses of the Law in Vermigli, see e.g. Jason Zuidema, *Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562) and the Outward Instruments of Divine Grace* (Göttingen, Ger.: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 121.

We do see, however, that Willet—likely because of his consistent polemical concern with Roman Catholic Semipelagian tendencies—leans toward a Lutheran emphasis on the convicting function of the Law (which he in essence subdivides based on Paul’s progression in Romans 5:20 into revealing sin and magnifying grace), over Calvin’s emphasis on the “third use.” (see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vol., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 20 of *The Library of Christian Classics* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960], 360; 2.7.12: “The third and principal use, which pertains more closely to the proper purpose of the law, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns”). Cf. the Lutheran *Formula of Concord* (1577), I.vi on “The Third Function of the Law”; “Uses of the Law” in David M. Whitford, ed., *T&T Clark Companion to Reformation Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 457; John E. Witte Jr. and Thomas C. Arthur. “The Three Uses of the Law: A Protestant Source of the Purposes of Criminal Punishment?” *Journal of Law & Religion* 10, no. 2 (1993-1994): 434-440.

¹⁵² Again cf. Chrysostom, who juxtaposes the Law and grace in his exposition. Whereas Willet reads Paul as saying that the increase of grace was the “more principall end” of the Law, Chrysostom writes: “Now the Law gave countless commands. Now since they transgressed them all, transgression became more abundant. Do you see what a great difference there is between grace and the Law? For the one became an addition to the condemnation, but the other, a further abundance of gifts” (Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 404 [Homily X]).

distinguish between the Law’s proper effects and those that it manifested through human weakness.¹⁵³ To the other extreme, the Pelagians attributed too much to the Law, “for they held that the law was sufficient to salvation,” making sin merely an affliction of the understanding and neglecting its impact on the will. Willet considered the Pelagian perspective, as we shall consider in depth in chapter 6, to be a precursor to a virulent strain of Roman Catholic legalism: “the Popish schoolemen differed not much from this opinion.”¹⁵⁴

3.2.3 Other Misleading Vulgate Renderings

We conclude this section on misleading Vulgate translations with a further sampling of errors of some theological weight that Willet addresses. As we saw in the previous section on textual variants, Willet was concerned that several faulty renderings in the Vulgate could undermine God’s gift of certainty and assurance. This concern is apparent also in its errors of translation. In 8:18 the Apostle Paul declares in hope: “For I count (λογίζομαι) that the afflictions of this present time, are not answerable to the glorie which shall be revealed unto us.” Following Erasmus’s lead,¹⁵⁵ Willet rejects the Vulgate’s *existimo* (which Willet translates as “I think”),¹⁵⁶ taking it to represent a lower

¹⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 282.

¹⁵⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 282-283.

¹⁵⁵ Erasmus, whom Willet cites positively here, elaborates on this translation issue more extensively. Rejecting *existimo* (“suppose”) as “too weak” since it is frequently associated with doubt, he translates the Greek as *reputo* (“consider”). Drawing on his extensive familiarity with Greek literature, he comments, “I have never found λογίζεσθαι used in the sense of *existimare*, which the Greeks express by οἶεσθαι (to suppose), ἠγεῖσθαι (to deem), δοκεῖν (to seem), νομίζειν (to hold, consider as).” Similarly, he denies that *existimare* can be used to represent a “fixed opinion.” Yet Paul is not deciding here whether to believe, but pondering the ramifications of what he knows to be true (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 214-215).

¹⁵⁶ So also the Rheims New Testament. Beza’s Latin offers as an alternative *perpendere*.

degree of certainty than “count.” The Greek, however, “signifieth not an opinion, which is uncertaine, but a due value and estimation of the thing.”¹⁵⁷ Paul’s confidence in the all-surpassing splendor of the coming age demands a verb stronger than “to think.” The Apostle’s assurance of his own salvation is similarly weakened, in Willet’s judgment, by the Vulgate’s “not so fit” translation of *ταλαίπωπος* in 7:24 as “unhappy” (*infelix*). For Paul to consider himself *infelix* in his battle against sin, Willet reasons, would communicate a tone of despair, as though doubting whether anyone could in fact rescue him from his body of death. But Paul’s exclamation is not a cry of despair, but an expression of hope and desire; it is the cry of one “wearied with continuall combates,” who has labored valiantly “like a champion,” but who needs assistance to defeat a foe in the course of a lengthy battle. Willet thus renders *ταλαίπωπος* not as “unhappy,” but as “wretched,” the better to communicate that Paul’s anguish stems not from doubt, but from “the greatnesse of this combate.”¹⁵⁸

In his discussion in the chapter 8 Questions section of “how the wisdom of the flesh, is enmitie against God,” Willet (following Faius) explains how translating *ἔχθρα* with the concrete “enemy” instead of the abstract “enmity” fails to express the radical

¹⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 363.

¹⁵⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 332. Erasmus translates *ταλαίπωπος* as “*miser*,” though without commenting in his annotations on his reasons for diverging from the Vulgate. Beza similarly reads *miser*. Calvin also opts for *miser* in his translation of this text, though he does not share Willet’s wariness about *infelix* suggesting despair, writing in his Romans commentary, “[Paul] teaches us that we are not only to struggle with our flesh, but also with continual groaning to bewail within ourselves and before God our unhappy condition (*nostram infelicitatem*).” Calvin does, however (like Willet), emphasize that Paul’s question does not imply doubt: “But he asks not by whom he was to be delivered, as one in doubt, like unbelievers, who understand not that there is but one real deliverer: but it is the voice of one panting and almost fainting, because he does not find immediate help, as he longs for” (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 272; Calvini, *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, 134).

nature of the flesh's opposition to God.¹⁵⁹ The wisdom of the flesh, writes Willet, "the Apostle saith, is enmitie, not an enemie, as the Latin readeth."¹⁶⁰ After presenting a grammatical analysis similar to Erasmus's (the word is feminine, whereas "enemy" here would be in the neuter, and the accent is on the first syllable, making the word a noun and not an adjective)¹⁶¹ and denying that Paul is by metalepsis taking the "substantive for the adjective,"¹⁶² Willet arrives at his central theological point: flesh and spirit are divided by "irreconcilable enmitie." *Enemies* may be reconciled (as were Esau and Jacob, Willet reminds us), but *enmity* is—by definition—always in opposition; an enemy may become a friend, but enmity cannot become friendship without fundamentally twisting the language. In establishing an eternal, irreconcilable enmity between flesh and spirit, however, Willet needs to clarify in the following Question what Paul means by "flesh," lest his interpretation suggest a Gnostic dualism. "Neither with the Manichees," Willet clarifies, "must we understand the substance of the flesh." Paul is not suggesting that the

¹⁵⁹ While some editions of the Vulgate (e.g. *Biblia Veteris ac Novi Testamenti*, Basil 1564) translate ἔχθρα with the abstract noun *inimicitia* ("enmity"), others—as the influential Clementine version—read *inimica*, which can be taken simply as an adjective ("is hostile to God"), but which the Rheims translators take as a feminine noun and translate as "an enemie" (though, as a nod to the other Latin variant, with "enmitie" in the margin; Martin, *New Testament*, 400). Willet, perhaps because of the Rhemish rendering, understands the Latin *inimica* to mean "an enemy."

¹⁶⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 355.

¹⁶¹ Erasmus also prefers *inimicitia* to *inimica*, though his preference is almost purely based on grammar and parallel structure: "In addition, the discourse is more neatly ordered if one abstract [i.e. death, mentioned in the prior verse] corresponds to another [hostility]." Unlike Willet, though, he sees little difference in the meanings connoted by *inimica* and *inimicitia*: "Now it is not strange if some Latin writers in the course of exposition say 'wisdom is "hostile" to God'; for both readings give almost the same sense, except that 'hostility' is more effective, and better fits Paul's expression" (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 205). Cf. Rabil's observation that Erasmus's criticism of the Vulgate tended to "become tempered with the passage of time," moving from comments prior to 1520 about the untrustworthiness of its translator to criticism in the 1520s focused more on the "awkwardness of his language" than on the content (Rabil, Jr., *Erasmus and the New Testament*, 122).

¹⁶² Paul is, as the literal wording suggests, referring to the abstract noun "hostility," and "not by the figure *Metalepsis*, taking it for the concrete, *enmitie* for *enemie*, the substantive for the adjective, as *Pareus*" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 355). Cf. my discussion of Willet's arguments involving rhetorical devices (III.3).

physical and spiritual realms are eternally and necessarily at war, but is by “flesh” referring only to the “pravitie and corruption of the flesh,” and indeed, more broadly, “of our nature.”¹⁶³

While Romans 13 has traditionally served as the locus for discussions of resisting corrupt power—and indeed it is there that Willet’s restrained allowances for self-defense have led him to be categorized among (moderate) resistance theorists, and where Pareus’s somewhat stronger resistance theory created a stir in England¹⁶⁴—already in chapter 12 Willet broaches the issue of self-defense. Commenting on “how we should not avenge our selves, but leave it unto God,” he notes that the Vulgate translates ἐκδικοῦντες in 12:19 as “*defendentes, defending*...which is better translated, *vindicantes, avenging*, as *Chrysostomes* interpreter; or *ulciscentes, taking revenge*, as *Origens* interpreter.”¹⁶⁵ The Vulgate’s prohibition of all “defense,” Willet holds, is too broad, as it rules out the possibility even of legitimate self-preservation: “defence is sometime just, but all revenge is very unjust.”¹⁶⁶

Pererius, Willet observes, seeks to defend the Vulgate’s “*defendentes*,” not by approving the meaning carried by the word’s basic sense, but by seeking to show that *defendere* has been used before to mean *ulcisci*. In response, Willet concedes some degree of potential overlap between the two words, but denies that they can be used

¹⁶³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 355.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁵ The Rheims New Testament here diverges from the Latin to read “Not revenging yourselves” (Martin, *New Testament*, 413).

¹⁶⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 563. Willet mentions that this was also the opinion of Tolet.

interchangeably.¹⁶⁷ Others, as Haymo, have read the Vulgate's injunction against "defending" oneself in the more natural sense of the word, taking Paul to mean that Christians facing persecution should follow the example of Christ keeping silent before Pilate. Willet (seeming to assume a one-to-one correlation between Greek and Latin words) takes this opportunity to criticize a perceived inconsistency in the Vulgate's translation method, since it renders both ἐκδικοῦντες and ἀπολογία (the word Paul uses to describe his own "defense" in 2 Timothy 4:16) with the same Latin word.¹⁶⁸ Nor does Christ's command in the Sermon on the Mount to "turn the other cheek" support this reading. Christ's words there, Willet writes (in agreement with Augustine's interpretation) "must not be understood according to the strict letter," but rather should be taken as referring to one's state of mind—Christians ought to be "armed with patience to suffer wrong." To defend oneself, especially by seeking the magistrate's protection, is not prohibited so long as this comes not from a desire for revenge (as Paul in Acts 23 sought only protection for himself, and not punishment for those pursuing him).¹⁶⁹ To seek the magistrate's aid "with a malevolent minde" is (as Calvin also teaches) no better than seeking vengeance directly. Likewise, to "give place unto [God's] wrath" does not mean

¹⁶⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 563.

¹⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 563-564: "...neither doth the Latin interpreter keepe the propertie of the word, who els-where translath another Greeke word ἀπολογία, defence, 2.Tim.4.16."

¹⁶⁹ The Vulgate's wording, which suggests that we should be passive when in danger and leave our defense in God's hands, also calls to mind Moses's experience in Exodus 14:14-15, when he tells the people to stand firm because God will fight for them, and God responds by telling them to move forward through the Red Sea. In his Moral Observations on this event in his Exodus hexapla, Willet writes: "As prayer is necessarie and faithfull invocation, so also from prayer we must go forward unto action: we must so depend upon God by prayer for his protection, as that we must also carefully use the meanes, which God hath appointed for our preservation" (Willet, *Hexapla on Exodus*, 208). While Willet does not make this connection in the context of the Romans hexapla, focusing instead on the distinction between defense (sometimes acceptable) and revenge (never acceptable), he is clearly opposed to the kind of "pious passivity" that the Vulgate's wording could promote.

that we can desire for God to do our dirty work and inflict vengeance upon our enemies in our stead. We are to pray earnestly for our enemies' conversion and then "leave them to Gods justice."¹⁷⁰

In the opening verse of Romans 14, as Paul transitions to addressing dietary laws and the weak and strong in faith, he warns against engaging in διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν, which Willet translates as "controversies of disputation." The Roman Catholic translations, Willet argues, err by internalizing what Paul clearly describes as external disputes: "The vulgar Latine readeth, as the Rhemists also translate, *not in disputations of cogitations*: but the word is διαλογισμῶν, which signifieth not cogitations, but disputations."¹⁷¹ Willet includes Erasmus (who translates the phrase "*ad diiudicationes disceptationum*") among those who have read the verse as referring to inward thoughts ("*Erasmus readeth, ad diiudicationes, &c. for the judging of the thoughts*"),¹⁷² even though in his annotations Erasmus explicitly states that Paul is *not* referring to thoughts.¹⁷³ Willet's confusion here likely comes from the similarity between the two Greek words διακρίσεις and διαλογισμῶν.¹⁷⁴ Since Erasmus translates διαλογισμῶν with the same word that the Vulgate uses to translate διακρίσεις, Willet seems to attach to

¹⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 564-565.

¹⁷¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 626. Cf. Beza's "*certamina disputationum*."

¹⁷² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 626.

¹⁷³ Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 367: "I find it strange that the Translator preferred to say 'of thoughts' rather than 'of disputes.' Perhaps he did not read διαλογισμῶν but λογισμῶν."

¹⁷⁴ Littleton's Latin dictionary (1678), for example, defines *discepto*—the lexical verbal form of the word Erasmus uses for διαλογισμῶν—as "to debate, reason, or dispute, to judge of a thing, to try a cause" and gives διακρίνομαι (a different form of διακρίσεις) as a Greek equivalent. It defines *dijudicatio* (falsely as a verb) as "to judge between two, to discern" and gives διάκρισις as a Greek equivalent. Thus, according to Littleton, both of the Latin words that Erasmus uses to translate διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν are acceptable equivalents for the first Greek word alone.

Erasmus the Vulgate's "*cogitationum*" as well, even though he does not use this word. Paul is referring not to the judging of *thoughts*, Willet (as Erasmus) maintains, but to unedifying *outward* disputes. Willet adds, though, that not *all* disputes are unedifying. Some debate and discussion is necessary—it is only the “vaine janglings and brabbles which breed contention” that Paul forbids.¹⁷⁵

4. The Problem of Septuagint Variants

While Willet could attribute most textual variants and translation issues in the Vulgate to human error in composition or transmission, the Apostle Paul's regular use of the Septuagint in places where it diverged from the Hebrew reading (and especially in cases where it agreed with the Vulgate's rendering) presented original language apologists with a special challenge.¹⁷⁶ Protestants insisting that discrepancies between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint represented human translation errors thus faced, in

¹⁷⁵ Paul's warning, thus, does not support the opinion of the “Mahumetanes [Muslims], which can indure no disputations at all” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 626-627).

¹⁷⁶ E. Earle Ellis noted in 1957 that “the priority of the LXX in Pauline quotations has long been recognised. As early a writer as Henry Owen noted the fact and ascribed it to the desire of early Christian missionaries to use a translation acceptable to Hellenistic Jews.” Ellis's acknowledgment of the long history of recognizing Paul's preference for the LXX is correct, though he could have extended the history well before Owens's 1789 work. By Ellis's count, Paul cited the Old Testament 93 times in his letters, of which 51 are “in absolute or virtual agreement with the LXX, twenty-two of these at variance with the Hebrew.” Four passages take the Hebrew over the LXX, and 38 diverge from both (E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957], 11-12). D. Moody Smith's tally varies slightly from Ellis's, listing 106 citations. Smith adds that “the exact count may vary slightly [since] only when there is an introductory formula can one be absolutely certain that Paul intends to quote the OT and is not simply falling into its language. The Epistle to the Romans, in Smith's table, accounts for 55 of Paul's Old Testament citations; 36 of these he labels as following the LXX either closely or verbatim (of which 13 are also in virtual agreement with the MT), one (Romans 11:35) follows the MT over the LXX, and eighteen follow neither version (D. Moody Smith, “The Pauline Literature,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson [Cambridge University Press, 1988], 272, 268-270). As with the Vulgate, there was not a single, uniform Septuagint text, and so Ellis (pp. 16-20) discusses the difficulty of ascertaining which LXX manuscript traditions lie behind Paul's various citations, and Smith (p. 273) suggests that “probably it is better to conclude that Paul's usage is septuaginal than to say that he uses the LXX, since the latter comes to us only through christian hands in manuscripts no earlier than the fourth century.”

Muller's words, "the problem of an authoritative, inspired text containing quotations from a less-than-authoritative, uninspired version of the Bible."¹⁷⁷ Willet expresses this dilemma clearly in the Controversies section of chapter 10, where the LXX background of Romans 10:18 forces him into a defensive position as he tries to demonstrate "That the Hebrew text is more authentically, then the vulgar Latine translation." Given the agreement of Paul, the LXX and the Vulgate against the Hebrew of Psalm 19:4 [LXX and Vulgate 18:5], Willet states the problem thus:

Whereas the Apostle saith, *their sound is gone through the earth*, according to the *Septuagint*: and so the Latine translator readeth: and yet in the Hebrew text, Psalm. 19. the word is *cavam*, *their line*: hereupon and by occasion of the like places, our adversaries doe commend the vulgar Latine as more authentically, and freer from corruption, then the Hebrew.¹⁷⁸

Willet does not specify which "adversaries" are advancing an argument based on Paul's use of readings that agree with the Latin Old Testament. It makes a compelling case for the Vulgate, though, so we can assume that Willet is presenting the Roman Catholic reasoning fairly.¹⁷⁹ Acknowledging that the LXX seems to be the default text for Paul's Old Testament citations, Willet generally offers a standard Protestant orthodox

¹⁷⁷ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:433. Many Reformed exegetes took pains to try to explain Paul's citations as deriving from loose translations of Hebrew passages, rather than from clearer reference points in the Septuagint. Consider Henry Knapp on John Owen's explanation of the origin of Hebrews 1:5b: "In his zeal to distinguish the apostle's citations from the LXX translation, Owen, along with Robert Rollock and Francis Junius, identifies the quotation...as coming from 1 Chronicles 22:10, as opposed to the majority of commentators who connect it with 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1 Chronicles 17:13." By this maneuver, "Owen is able to claim that the author of the epistle was not using the LXX, but was citing the Hebrew freely..." (Henry Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God: John Owen and Seventeenth-Century Exegetical Methodology" [PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2002], 202).

¹⁷⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 482.

¹⁷⁹ Martin, in *A Discoverie of the Manifold Corruptions* (pp. 160-161), makes related LXX-based arguments in favor of Vulgate readings. For instance, on the Protestant hesitancy (claiming semantic ambiguity) to render עָקֵב (*eqeb*) in Psalm 119:112 as "reward," Martin queries: "Alas my masters, are not the Seventie Greeke interpreters sufficient to determine the ambiguity of this word?" He adds, even more snarkily: "...if the Septuaginta do here so translate it in Greeke, and S. Hierom in his Latin translation according to the Hebrue, and the auncient fathers in their commentaries: what upstart new Maisters are you that set al these to schoole againe, and teach the world a new translation?"

explanation that Paul uses this translation when its sense (if not its words) is consistent with the original Hebrew, because it was a popular, long-established version.¹⁸⁰ We might compare the situation to a modern preacher choosing to use the King James Version with an older congregation, opting for familiarity over more contemporary or precise phrasings. Paul's adherence to the LXX, though, is not absolute, as he departs from the Greek translation when it either makes superfluous additions or strays from the sense of the Hebrew.¹⁸¹ Willet describes Paul's process in these instances as being similar to that of the Septuagint translators—just as the LXX occasionally takes the sense of Scripture over its words, so Paul occasionally (though with the added authority of the Holy Spirit's inspiration) takes the sense of Scripture over the LXX's words.¹⁸² Willet's strongest criticism of a Septuagint rendering is precipitated, though, not by a citation by the Apostle, but by a Septuagint-based misinterpretation of Paul by Origen. Seeking to

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:428, and especially Edward Leigh's arguments, expressed on p. 432. Cf. also Broadhurst, *What is the Literal Sense?*, 103-105, on John Lightfoot's perspective on the apostles' use of the LXX. Lightfoot viewed the LXX translation more negatively than did Willet, believing it to be in places deliberately mistranslated by the Jews (vs. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 157: "It is not like[ly] that the Jewes could all conspire to corrupt the Greeke text, who otherwise are found to have beene alwaies most carefull to preserve the Scriptures uncorrupted"), and he emphasizes that Paul used the translation "out of pure necessity" in his mission to Graecophone Gentiles. Willet also mentions the Gentiles in his explanation of Paul's use of the LXX, claiming that "it would have given offence to the Gentiles, if [the Septuagint] had been refused" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 497). His more common explanation, though, is the standard Protestant orthodox point that the LXX was a long-accepted translation (e.g. pp. 152, 427, 497). On Paul's use of the Septuagint, see also: Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*; James Barr, "Paul and the LXX: A Note on Some Recent Work," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 45, no. 2 (October 1994): 593-601; Smith, "The Pauline Literature."

¹⁸¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 682-683. Willet argues, for instance, that Paul omits the LXX addition (from Deuteronomy 30:14) of the word being "in thy hands" in Romans 10:8, as the introduction of words would distract from his emphasis on justification by faith alone (this against Vermigli, who "thinketh [that the LXX addition did] nothing to hinder, but to helpe the Apostles meaning": Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 461). Later in chapter 10, Willet mentions also that Paul "followeth the Hebrew originall, leaving the vulgar translation," at 10:15 (p. 465).

¹⁸² Cf. "the Septuagint in their translation tooke that libertie, not alwayes to render the words, but the sense" of Scripture, with "[Paul] followeth the sense of the Scripture, rather then the words of the interpreters" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 497, 682).

explain the nature of Paul's "mystery" in Romans 11:25, Origen was "farre wide" in claiming that it referred to angels inciting Israel to idolatry out of envy at God's keeping Israel as his own and assigning the other nations to angels. This "strange speculation" of Origen's, Willet explains, was "grounded upon the erroneous translation of the Septuagint, Deut.32.8," where national borders are said to be set not according to the number of the children of Israel (per the Hebrew), but according to the number of the "Angels of God."¹⁸³ Such a mistranslation would be dangerously appealing to Origen, as one whose interpretations were often marred by his "runn[ing] to his usuall speculations of Angells,"¹⁸⁴ tainting his reading not only of the Deuteronomy passage itself, but of an unrelated passage in Romans.

4.1 Maintaining the Sense of the Hebrew

Since, however, Willet's primary textual concern was not to debunk the Septuagint, but to assert the superiority of the original languages over all translations (especially the Vulgate), his focus when addressing Paul's LXX citations is to show that the Apostle's accommodation to the familiar wording of the uninspired translation does not fundamentally alter the sense of the Hebrew original. Indeed, he often takes great pains seeking to demonstrate a semantic consonance between a Hebrew word and its

¹⁸³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 509. The Vulgate does not follow the LXX here, reading "juxta numerum filiorum Israël."

¹⁸⁴ This particular phrase comes from Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 722. Willet does, though, seem to affirm *some* kind of a role for national "guardian angels," with one of his arguments against Origen's interpretation stating that "not evil Angels but the good are appointed over nations to be ministring spirits for their good," (p. 509). This statement alone does not necessarily imply that particular angels are assigned to particular nations, and could be read as a general guardianship of good angels over all nations. Willet's reference to these angels being "appointed," though, seems to keep the question of national guardians open. Cf. Joad Raymond's use of *Synopsis Papismi* to juxtapose Willet's dubiety regarding the biblical basis of national angel guardianship with other Protestants (as Calvin) who affirmed the notion (Raymond, *Milton's Angels*, 56-61, 232-235).

variant LXX equivalent. Returning to Paul's use of Psalm 19:4 in Romans 10:18, for instance, Willet, after surveying selected theories as to why the LXX differs from the Hebrew, states, "But I rather thinke that the Apostle refuseth not the Septuagint, whose translation was so well knowne, because they retain the sense of the place, though they exactly render not the words," and proceeds to show how "sound" and "line" can convey the same basic idea in the present context. If taken to refer to the heavens (per the psalm's opening line), then the Hebrew and Septuagint concur because "[the heavens'] line and workmanship, was as it were their voice," and if taken as a reference to the apostles (as implied by Paul's application in Romans), then the two words are linked because "their prophesies of their sound, and voice, [were] as a line, and rule of doctrine to the church."¹⁸⁵ The two concepts are even joined together, Willet continues, in Isaiah 28:10, where the prophet connects "precept upon precept" with "line upon line."¹⁸⁶ Still, his concluding argument here for the priority of the Hebrew—Paul's use of the Greek notwithstanding—reverts to a dogmatic, argument-ending judgment of the "very preposterous course" of granting a translation a higher status than the original.¹⁸⁷

Elsewhere Willet attempts to reconcile the sense of the Hebrew with Paul's use of the Septuagint by suggesting secondary word meanings, or by arguing that the sense is maintained through metaphorical usage or through a cause-and-effect relationship between two principles (similar rhetorical analyses, it is worth noting, to those he uses to

¹⁸⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 482-483. Regarding the application to the apostles, Willet describes "line" as meaning something similar to "canon."

¹⁸⁶ Forms of the Hebrew "line" (קַו, *kav*) are used in each verse, and Willet takes "precept" (צַו, *tsav*) to mean the same as the apostles' "sound" (i.e. their *teaching*).

¹⁸⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 483.

charge various Roman Catholic commentators with *confusing* Paul's true meaning).¹⁸⁸ On the apparent discrepancy between the Hebrew אמונה (*emunah*, defined by Willet as "truth") and the Septuagint's πίστις ("faith") in Habakkuk 2:4, Willet simply explains that the Hebrew word "signifieth not onely *truth*, *integritie*, but *faith*." Paul, besides, has some prophetic flexibility in drawing on this passage in Romans 1:17, as he is "speaking by the same spirit, that the Prophets spake by."¹⁸⁹

As with the line/sound variant in Psalm 19:4, Willet has little interest in speculation as to the origin of the discrepancy between the Hebrew's "make haste" and the LXX's "be ashamed" in Isaiah 28:16, which Paul quotes in Romans 9:33.¹⁹⁰ Here, though, the Latin issue is removed, since—while Paul follows the Septuagint—the Vulgate ("*non festinet*") translates the Hebrew expression in Isaiah. Again Willet seeks to demonstrate a connection between the Hebrew and Greek works, explaining (following Tolet) that the LXX is stating "properly" what the Hebrew expresses by metaphor, then adding "or rather they put the consequent for the antecedent, and the effect for the cause," since one who is rash and "makes haste" tends to end up confounded and ashamed.¹⁹¹ Willet uses the same "consequent for the antecedent" explanation for the more closely-related pair of "delivered" (from מלט, *malat*) and "saved" (from σώζω) in Joel 2:32,

¹⁸⁸ Cf. section V.2.

¹⁸⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 56.

¹⁹⁰ Willet mentions and quickly moves past a suggestion by Beza. For modern linguistic and theological discussions of Paul's Old Testament citations in Romans 9:33, see Dietrich-Alex Koch, "The Quotations of Isaiah 8,14 and 28,16 in Romans 9,33 and 1 Peter 2,6.8 as Test Case for Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 101, no. 2 (2010): 223-240; Dane Ortlund, "The Insanity of Faith: Paul's Theological Use of Isaiah in Romans 9:33," *Trinity Journal* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 269-288.

¹⁹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 431. Clarifying what Isaiah meant by "making haste," Willet cites Vermigli's application of the term to those who fail to wait patiently for God to fulfill his promises. We might think, for instance, of Abraham's attempt to generate progeny through Hagar.

which Paul references in Romans 10:13. While these two words are similar enough in meaning to be read (in some contexts) synonymously, Willet distinguishes them causally, making the two “in effect...all one”: the LXX, he explains, “doe put the consequent for the antecedent: for he that is delivered, shall consequently be saved.”¹⁹²

On Paul’s citation in Romans 3:4 of Psalm 51:4 (LXX and Vulgate 50:6), which speaks in the Hebrew of God being “blameless” when he judges and in the Septuagint of God “overcoming” when he is judged (νικήσης ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε), Willet again insists that there is harmony between the Hebrew and Septuagint versions. Here, however, it is not a simple matter of two different words conveying the same sense; here the LXX also shifts (in the most natural reading) from the active (“when thou judge”) to the passive (“when thou art judged”) voice, and Paul applies this verse to a situation that implies a very particular kind of “judgment.” Thus, Willet not only attempts to show a basic consonance between being “blameless” and “overcoming,” but also has to deal with the altered voice, and aims to present a reading that respects each context.¹⁹³ He first rejects interpretations by Augustine and Gregory, who—taking the passive κρίνεσθαί as a reference to *Christ* being blameless and overcoming the judgment “of Pilate and the Jewes”—wrest the meaning too far from David’s sense. Since David was humbly confessing his *own* sin, reading this as Christ triumphing over unwarranted judgment would make it so that “there should be small coherence in Davids words.” Willet likewise rejects the interpretation of Calvin and Pareus that God overcomes the grumblings of men

¹⁹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 463.

¹⁹³ The separate issue of Paul’s appropriation of Old Testament passages into his own (sometimes very different) context and situation is, of course, the subject of its own field of inquiry, and is a much broader matter than can be dealt with here. On this issue, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*; Smith, “The Pauline Literature.”

against all of his judgments against sin, because “in this sense it should not seeme to be much pertinent to S. Pauls purpose,” since Paul is writing of God keeping his promises in spite of human unfaithfulness.¹⁹⁴

The reading that Willet deems best able to account both for David’s context and Paul’s application takes the judging as a reference to God’s promise to *forgive* sins: “it is more agreeable to the Apostles purpose, to understand this of Gods promise made to David, by Nathan, that his sinne was forgiven him, then of the judgement there inflicted.” God is “blameless” and “overcomes” in this gracious judgment, not offending any principles of justice.¹⁹⁵ Regarding the passive construction, Willet reviews suggestions for how God’s *being judged* could make sense in David’s and in Paul’s context, but adds that the Greek form “may as well be in the meane [middle] voice as in the passive,” giving it an active sense. His rendering the clause actively in his translation shows that he prefers taking κρίνεσθαι as a middle form.¹⁹⁶

Willet returns to the unsatisfactory Calvin/Pareus interpretation in a concluding thought on the LXX “[keeping] the sense of the originall.” One who is “pure and

¹⁹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 152. Calvin had argued that “the sense is, So far is it that the truth of God is destroyed by our falsehood and unfaithfulness, that it thereby shines forth and appears more evident, according to the testimony of David, who says, that as he was sinner, God was a just and righteous Judge in whatever he determined respecting him, and that he would overcome all the calumnies of the ungodly who murmured against his righteousness.” He denies as “too strained” the argument that the reference is to God’s promises and not to his judgments (the position that Willet will assume), and claims that the objection that immediately follows in Romans demonstrates that “Paul has quoted this passage according to the proper and real meaning of David” (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 116-117). Willet treats Calvin and Pareus together here, although Calvin takes κρίνεσθαι passively (“*vincas quum judicaris*,” p. 114), and Pareus translates it actively (“*vincas quando judicas*,” having noted that some take it passively, he writes “*sed rectius media voce & activè*.”: Pareus, *In Divinam ad Romanos*, 249-250, 257).

¹⁹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 152.

¹⁹⁶ Calvin, as we see him quoted below, acknowledges this grammatical possibility but reads Paul as using the verb passively. Among modern commentators, Sanday and Headlam agree with Calvin: “κρίνεσθαι: probably not mid. (‘to enter upon trial,’ ‘go to law,’ lit. ‘get judgment for oneself’) as Mey. Go. Va. Lid., but pass. as in ver. 7 (so Vulg. Weiss Kautzsch, &c.)” (William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 9th ed. [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1904], 72).

blamelesse, overcommeth in right judgement,” and—restating the proposal he had rejected earlier—“God beeing pure and free from the accusations of the wicked, therein overcommeth their murmurings, against his judgements, *Pareus*.” While this interpretation failed, in Willet’s judgment, to account sufficiently for Paul’s purpose in citing the psalm in Romans 3:4, it *could* serve to demonstrate how the words “blameless” and “overcome” could communicate a common message.¹⁹⁷ This distinction that Willet makes is somewhat ironic, since Calvin unapologetically states here that (so far as the change in voice is concerned), the Septuagint translators have clearly altered the meaning of the Hebrew: “Though the word κρίνεσθαι, may be taken actively as well as passively, yet the Greek translators, I have no doubt, rendered it passively, contrary to the meaning of the Prophet.”¹⁹⁸ So Willet cites an interpretation (that he disagrees is the proper reading of Romans 3:4) to illustrate that the Hebrew (“blameless”) and LXX (“overcome”) versions of Psalm 51:4 convey the same sense, while Calvin uses the same interpretation to demonstrate that (regarding the shift in voice) the LXX reads *contrary* to the Hebrew meaning!

In his disagreement with Calvin on the proper reading of this verse we again notice Willet’s independent mind, seen here through differing approaches to reading the Old Testament in the New and different judgments on the Septuagint. Calvin and Willet

¹⁹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 152-153. In this correlation—one who is blameless overcoming because of his innocence—this word pairing would also fit within Willet’s “consequent for the antecedent” scheme.

¹⁹⁸ Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 117. Calvin’s nineteenth century translator and editor John Owen mildly chides Calvin in a note on this comment (pp. 117-118n1), insisting that, whenever grammatically possible, the Septuagint should be read as agreeing with the Hebrew: “Whenever there is a material agreement between the Greek and the Hebrew, we ought not to make it otherwise. If the verb κρίνεσθαι, as admitted by most critics, may be taken actively, and be thus made to agree with the Hebrew, what reason can there be to take it in another sense? ... The parallelism of the Hebrew requires κρίνεσθαι to be a verb in the middle voice, and to have an active meaning.” Owen thus agrees with Willet here over Calvin.

each show a concern for maintaining a common sense between David's original meaning and Paul's appropriation of the psalm. But each context contains a mix of words of judgment and of mercy, and Calvin and Willet collate those messages differently in their efforts to distill a univocal message from the prophetic words. In Nathan's confrontation with David that precipitates Psalm 51, the prophet speaks words of temporal punishment (2 Samuel 12:10-11, 14), but also, following David's confession of guilt, pronounces God's forgiveness (2 Samuel 12:13). Similarly, Romans 3:4 is bookended by contrasting questions, each of which is met by a strong *μη γένοιτο*—will the peoples' faithlessness nullify God's faithfulness? Absolutely not! So is God unjust to inflict wrath? Absolutely not! Calvin takes David's acknowledgement of God's righteous judgment against sin as the primary referent and applies this to Paul's words (focusing on the objection concerning condemnation following Romans 3:4, rather than the message of hope that precedes it), while Willet takes God's faithfulness to his faith-challenged people in Romans 3 as the basic sense and reads this back into David's situation, so as to make the judgment refer not to David's punishment, but to God's gracious words of forgiveness.

Calvin also is bolder in acknowledging a different sense between the Hebrew of the Masoretic text and the Greek of the Septuagint. While Willet could be highly critical of the LXX translation, at points where Paul cites an LXX variant instead of the MT reading, Willet's emphasis on the MT's primacy over all translations required that the LXX and MT carry the same sense; any significant variation in meaning at these points could be interpreted as Paul indirectly sanctioning a Vulgate Old Testament reading over the Hebrew text. Thus, while Willet holds that Paul only quotes from the LXX when its sense is consistent with that of the Hebrew, and then only because it was the more

familiar version in many of his churches, Calvin states that the LXX here is “contrary to the meaning” of the Hebrew and that Paul opts for the structure in the Greek translation because it “answered his purpose here even better” than the Hebrew would have.¹⁹⁹

4.2 Romans 11:8 and the Derivation of *κατανύξις*

Paul’s Old Testament citation in Romans 11:8 is cobbled together from at least two sources, with some divergence from the wording of both the MT and the LXX. The first clause is commonly accepted to be from Isaiah 29:10, with the key word (*κατανύξις*, “compunction”) following the Septuagint over the Hebrew’s “slumber” (תַּרְדֵּמָה, *tardemah*), and Willet attributes the second clause to Isaiah 6:9.²⁰⁰ He begins his discussion of this citation by distinguishing between and rejecting the proposals of Origen and Erasmus. Origen, unable to find Paul’s precise words in the Old Testament, had suggested that Paul was here stating in his *own* words the prophet’s basic sense. “But if it were so,” Willet replies—despite his own acknowledgement later that Paul’s words do not follow exactly either the Hebrew or the LXX—“the Apostle would not have set this sentence before, *As it is written*, if it were not so written, as it is here alleadged.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 117.

²⁰⁰ Calvin’s nineteenth century editor John Owen noted that the second clause could be from either Isaiah 6:9 or Deuteronomy 29:4 (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 418n1). D. Moody Smith lists Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4 as the two source texts (Smith, “The Pauline Literature,” 269). Willet dismisses the possibility of Deuteronomy 29:4, claiming that “there is great difference between these two testimonies”—i.e. not giving eyes to see, versus giving eyes not to see (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 495).

²⁰¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 493. Willet notes the divergence between the wordings of the different texts on the following page: “But there is some difference both between the translation of the Septuagint, and the Hebrew, and between S. Pauls citation, and the Septuagint, and between S. Pauls allegation, and the originall.” Despite his claim not to be able to find Paul’s source text, Origen quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 as an example of the kind of prophetic message that Paul is summarizing. Since the content of the message is not Paul’s own, Origen sees no issue with the prefatory “as it is written”: “Here then the Apostle seems to have presented the meaning of Isaiah in his own words but to have added, ‘as it is

Erasmus, while correctly offering Isaiah 6:9 as a source text, neglected to account for Paul's first clause—in Isaiah 6:9 “there is no mention made of the *spirit of slumber* or *compunction*.”²⁰² Willet thus prefers the composite theory, as argued by Pareus and Tolet. We will focus on Willet's analysis of the first clause of Romans 11:8, as it offers insight into his method of translating and interpreting LXX passages cited in the New Testament.

One of the key issues in interpreting the phrase πνεῦμα κατανύξεως is the derivation of the word κατανύξις; as Willet attests, “much adoe is made about the signification of this word.”²⁰³ Two main possibilities are offered: Chrysostom, Theophylact and Oecumenius take the word as deriving from κατανύσσω (as is κατενύγησαν in Acts 2:27), “signifying *pricking* or *compunction*,” while others—as Beza and Tolet—read it as a form of κατανυσάζω (cf. νύξ, “night”), meaning “*slumber*.”²⁰⁴ Willet's own interpretive move is interesting, as he sides morphologically with the Chrysostom camp, while maintaining—through a more circuitous path—the other sense of the term. In so doing, he attempts to balance an etymologic integrity with his conviction that Paul's use of the LXX does not deviate from the sense of the Hebrew. Deferring to those commentators closest linguistically to the Romans text, Willet maintains that “the word κατανύξις, signifieth *compunction*, as...the Greeke interpreters, *Chrysostom, Origen, Theophylact, Oecumenius*, who best knew the proper signification

written,’ because he was saying the meaning of the prophet” (Origen, *Commentary on Romans, Books 6-10*, 161 [8.8.4]).

²⁰² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 494. Erasmus's annotators rightly note a close association between the proposals by Erasmus and Origen, while arguing that Deuteronomy 29:4—not Isaiah 6:9—is the source text for Paul's second clause (editors' note in Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 297n3).

²⁰³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 494.

²⁰⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 494. Cf. Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 486-487 (Homily XIX).

of the Greeke word, do interpret.” Given his evident desire to keep Paul’s meaning as close as possible to that of the Hebrew (as seen in his opting to *translate* Paul’s words “God hath given them the spirit of slumber”), Willet’s easiest move would have been to adopt Beza’s reasonable explanation that *κατανύξις* is derived from a word that simply means “slumber.” Instead, he argues that, while the word itself means “compunction,” Paul *uses* it in such a way as to *mean* “slumber.” “Yet in sense,” Willet avers, “it is all one, as if he should have said the spirit of slumber.” Osiander and Pareus each explain this connection with examples of attempting to rouse a sleeping person by pricking him, but Willet reverses the order and explains the connection as “a metaphoricall speech” depicting how one who is pricked with grief loses awareness of all else, falling into a kind of “spirituall *giddines* or slumber.”²⁰⁵ Willet’s identification of this rhetorical move takes him beyond merely reconciling the LXX to the Hebrew, leading him to translate Paul’s words not according to the literal sense, but by the metaphorical meaning (which happens to be the literal sense of the Hebrew version of the cited passage).²⁰⁶

5. Conclusion

While not yet engaging in interpretive work at all resembling the *historical* criticism of nineteenth-century biblical scholarship, early seventeenth-century exegesis made extensive use of a variety of *text*-critical tools in an effort to establish the best

²⁰⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 494-495. In his typical causal language, Willet explains that Pareus interprets the relationship between compunction and slumber as “the effect [being] put for the cause,” whereas Willet himself explains it as “the cause beeing taken for the effect.” (pp. 494, 486). Willet’s association of the word with grief is similar to the understanding of Erasmus, who explains that it “is used when one is bitten and stung by grief” (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 297).

²⁰⁶ This cross-referencing is an instance of the *analogia scripturae* influencing Willet’s interpretation and translation, and Willet himself appeals to this principle in the following Question, as part of his exposition of what it means for God to send the spirit of slumber: “we should compare one Scripture with an other, and interpret one by an other” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 497).

possible text. This critical work is especially evident in commentaries that engaged in some degree of polemical exegesis, since different text traditions could be used to support opposing theological views. In this chapter we have seen how Willet sought to discredit various (primarily) Roman Catholic interpretations by arguing that the scriptural basis for these readings was corrupted by textual errors or faulty translations in the Vulgate text of Romans. Relying on a mix of his own linguistic expertise corroborated by textual notes from other Greek and Hebrew scholars, a variety of humanist critical methods, and the assumption that the superiority of original languages trumped any plausible corruption in the *textus receptus*, Willet argues that the Vulgate offers invalid support for a variety of flawed teachings, ranging from a skewed understanding of the impact of sin and the effects of grace that was caused partly by too narrow a conception of $\nu\omicron\tilde{\upsilon}\varsigma$, to a severe weakening of the assurance of salvation, to an overly negative view of the Law, to a restricted warrant for resisting sinful elements in society.

While often presenting a fair picture of his opponents' views, and even—as with his extensive use of Erasmus's textual work—making positive use of their exegetical contributions, Willet also at times quotes these opponents rather selectively in order to bring into relief elements of their thought that he found theologically troublesome or logically unsound. His polemical lens often served to hone and sharpen his own interpretations, but it could also lead him into some ambiguous positions, since in refuting false readings that erred in many different directions, he sometimes drew on refutations from other writers whose views were not identical to his own. In his frequent (though more irenic) deviation from important first- and second-generation Reformers, we see Willet's independent mind and his fidelity to the scriptural text; his Reformed

forerunners and colleagues were valuable resources to him, though he followed none of them slavishly.

Given the Protestant emphasis on Scripture as the norm for establishing church doctrine, in his efforts to present the Reformed as making up the truly “catholic” church Willet had to demonstrate that Protestants were relying on a scriptural text tradition that accurately represented the language and thought of the original autographs. From here, he had to show that his exegesis of the texts was a faithful reading and that it agreed with the main line of the church’s historical interpretation. A later chapter will address Willet’s polemical use of tradition (both his negative use of heretics and his positive use of the Church Fathers), but already here we have seen how Willet draws extensively on the Church Fathers in textual and linguistic matters, and how he tends to defer to the native Greek-speaking Fathers on these questions. The next chapter will continue to focus on language, moving from manuscript and general translation concerns in the Vulgate to the narrower issue of translating and interpreting prepositions and conjunctions, and the challenge of properly identifying where Paul is using rhetorical devices. We will continue to see how Willet’s polemical hermeneutic functions to frame and nuance his exegesis of Romans and his articulation of the Reformed catholic faith.

CHAPTER III. GRAMMAR AND RHETORIC

1. Introduction

Different interpretations were bound to spawn from divergent manuscript traditions and varying translations. But opposing readings of Romans emerged also when Protestant and Roman Catholic exegetes agreed on the proper wording of a passage. These conflicting interpretations, moreover, were only rarely caused by radically different technical approaches to the text. In the present chapter, we will notice that Willet and his opponents were frequently using similar tools and methods in defense of their theological perspectives, arriving at different conclusions not due to textual variants or to different methodologies, but by applying their exegetical tools differently and by reading Romans through different hermeneutical frameworks. All generally agreed, for instance, that Paul made use of the tropes of a trained rhetorician, yet disagreed over where and in what manner he used this figurative speech.

Willet's emphasis on sometimes relatively minor linguistic and grammatical elements of Romans evidences, too, a strong fidelity to the text. Each doctrine and moral use is rooted solidly in a close reading of the Apostle's words, and Willet—while staunchly in the Reformed camp—is not afraid to disagree with his Reformed forebears (though in language more irenic than what he used against his ideological enemies) when he believes they have misconstrued Paul's words.¹ This fidelity is heightened by the polemical situation; no exegetical move can be facilely assumed, as his defensive posture forces engagement with and careful refutation of other proposed readings (in clear

¹ Cf. the discussion of Willet's carefully-phrased disagreements with other Reformed exegetes in section VII.3.2, where we consider Willet's concern to demonstrate that Roman Catholic doctrine was more fragmented than Protestant doctrine.

continuity with the objections and *sed contra* of the medieval quaestio method).² An awareness of this polemical background is essential for understanding how Willet parses the Romans text, how he draws from and interprets the exegetical tradition, and why certain issues concern him more than others, as well as for how we assess degrees of continuity between his and other periods.³

2. Conjunctions and Prepositions

Conjunctions and prepositions—those unassuming little words that glue together the more glamorous parts of a language—can be notoriously difficult to translate. Yet in certain circumstances the chosen rendering can significantly influence the meaning, or at least the logical progression, of a passage. In one famous instance (the ἐφ’ ᾧ in Romans 5) exegetes historically were divided even as to whether an important construction functioned as a conjunction or a relative clause (composed of a preposition and a relative pronoun). Andrew Willet, always thorough and ever precise, addresses the translation of prepositions and conjunctions throughout his Romans hexapla—both in cases where the basic meaning of the passage hinges in some way on these words and in those where the difference is more a matter of semantics.⁴ This section will consider a few of the places where Willet bases an argument of some theological weight at least partly on the

² Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:502; Muller, *After Calvin*, 78. Willet’s format shows both the newer influence of the locus method and remnants of the older quaestio method.

³ Among modern commentators on Romans, Meyer and Cranfield are particularly useful for clarifying grammatical issues, especially within their historical exegetical context: Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*; Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889).

⁴ Examples from the latter category include whether ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν in Romans 1:4 represents Christ’s resurrecting *of* (other) dead people or his own resurrection *from* the dead (both of which events could indicate his divinity in different regards); whether the “for” in our confession that Christ died “for our sins” is merely causal—he died *because of* our sins—or also an expression of his dying in our

rendering of a conjunction or preposition.

2.1 Continuation or Contrast

Given the multiple kinds of connection that a conjunction can indicate,⁵ it is not surprising that the precise meaning of some conjunctions could be debated in certain contexts. Concerning Romans 2:1, for instance, Willet disputes the interpretation of Lyra and Tolet that Paul “useth here a transition” to shift from addressing Gentiles in chapter 1 to addressing Jews in chapter 2. “But the particle διὸ, wherefore, sheweth,” he argues, “that this is inferred out of that which went before, and so is a continuance of the same argument.”⁶ The conjunction here, in other words, serves not an adversative function (indicating a shift in the argument) but an illative function (drawing conclusions from what has just been stated). Rejecting such a clean break in Paul’s intended audience here, Willet adopts the opinion of Pareus, who maintained that, though the Jews were not excluded entirely, the Gentiles remained the primary addressees of chapter 2.⁷

place (it is both, Willet asserts); and whether διὰ in δι’ ἀκροβυστίας is better translated “*in* uncircumcision” or “*by* uncircumcision” (Willet prefers “*in*” because “*by*... were to give more vertue to uncircumcision, then to circumcision”: Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 42, 190, and 193).

⁵ Joseph Caryl’s 1658 Greek grammar presents eleven types of conjunctions: copulative, connexive or conditional, discretive, adversative, redditive (conveying a reply), disjunctive, causal, rational or collective (also called *illative* by other grammarians), dubitative, potential, and expletive (“which signifie nothing, only fill up a verse or sentence”: Caryl, *An English-Greek Grammar*, 44).

⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 101. Bear in mind that “wherefore” here is Willet’s translation of διὸ, and not a marker of his own concluding argument.

⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 102. A different argument concerning the meaning of διὸ arises in Willet’s Controversies section on Romans 14—even though the word itself does not appear in that chapter, but is drawn in through Lombard’s paralleling of Romans 14:9 (“For to this ende Christ both died, and rose again and revived, that [iv̄a] he might be Lord both of the dead, and quicke”) with Philippians 2:7-9. In the course of refuting Lombard’s argument (shared by the nonetheless “learned writer” Vermigli) that Romans 14:9 taught that Christ merited his own Lordship through his Passion, Willet challenges Lombard’s assumption that διὸ in the Philippians passage (“Wherefore [διὸ] God hathe also highly exalted him”) denotes a reward. Rather, the “word διὸ, therefore, doth not alwaies signifie the cause or merit, but the order also and sequele [sequence] of a thing.” Christ’s work, thus, *merits* only for “his members,” and each of these citations teaches only that his death led to his Lordship merely “because this was the way

Paul's famous self-examination in Romans 7 has inspired a similar dispute between whether a conjunction should be taken in a causal or an adversative sense, though here Willet breaks from his usual agreement with Pareus. Willet outlines a diversity of opinion regarding the interpretation of Romans 7:21 ("I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me"⁸), with the discrepancies hinging on how the word ὅτι is understood and whether the "law" (νόμος) signifies the *Mosaic* law or the law of the *flesh*. Pareus was one of a group of exegetes who read "law" positively to refer to the Mosaic law (thus connecting νόμον with καλόν and making the law of Moses responsible for Paul's will to do good), and ὅτι adversatively to mean "although"—so that Paul's meaning is something like: "Although evil is present with me, my study of the (Mosaic) law helps me still to will the good." Willet bases his refutation of all of the "expositions tending to the commendation of the law" (which include also that of his frequent adversary Bellarmine) on the way in which ὅτι connects the latter part of the verse: "to say with *Pareus*, that ὅτι, *because*, may be taken for κάπερ, *although*: or with *Faius*, for ἀλλὰ, *but*, or that [it] is superfluously added, it seemeth not to be so fit." With ὅτι understood causally, the more natural association is between νόμον and κακόν: "I find a law *that* evil is with me when I will the good." This reading Willet finds to be "most agreeable to the text," and it avoids crediting the Mosaic law with too much power to direct a wayward human will toward the good.⁹ Willet's mild disagreement here with his

and order appointed of God, whereby he should come to exercise his dominion" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 662-663).

⁸ Εὐρίσκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν, ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται.

⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 330. More subtle—and in this case also somewhat less significant—is the disagreement as to whether the compound form διότι in Romans 3:20 reasons causally forward (as an illative conjunction—"A, therefore B") or backwards (as a proper causal conjunction—"A because of B"). This issue arises in Willet's textual comments in his translation of chapter 3, where he

Reformed contemporaries Pareus and Faius is important to note; while drawing heavily on other Reformed writers (especially Pareus) in his commentaries, Willet also displays an independent mind and is not afraid to trust his own exegetical instincts over the conclusions of illustrious Reformed interpreters.

2.2 Original Sin and the ἐφ' ᾧ Debate

Among the linguistic debates concerning the text of Romans, few issues have inspired such heated dissention through the centuries as has the interpretation of ἐφ' ᾧ in “the uniquely significant”¹⁰ Romans 5:12. While Augustine’s *in quo* (“in whom”) reading that Willet strongly defends is “almost universally rejected”¹¹ by modern exegetes, this understanding had deep roots in the western church at the time of the Reformation.¹² As with many translation and interpretation issues, the proper understanding of ἐφ' ᾧ in this verse cannot be determined solely by an appeal to grammar—there being a “variety of possible nuances” conveyed by the use of ἐπί with the dative—and so the history of the

renders this verse: “Therefore (not *because*, L. B. *because that*, V. *for it is a conclusion inferred out of the former words*) by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight...for by the Law *commeth* the knowledge of sinne.” (L, B and V stand for the Latin Vulgate, the great English Bible, and the Vatablus edition, respectively). Willet does not elaborate on this point beyond this textual note—it being a matter more of grammatical than of theological controversy—though the proper logical progression is too important to Willet for him to omit the observation entirely: the inability of the Law to justify is the *conclusion drawn from* all being declared guilty by the Law (and thus also the culminating point of this section), and not vice-versa.

¹⁰ Robert Coogan, “The Pharisee Against the Hellenist: Edward Lee Versus Erasmus,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 476.

¹¹ Brian Vickers, “Grammar and Theology in the Interpretation of Romans 5:12,” *Trinity Journal* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 277.

¹² Cf. Coogan, “The Pharisee Against the Hellenist,” 476; Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, 276.

exegesis of Romans 5:12 involves “a mix of grammatical and theological discussion.”¹³ There was, in general, a division between interpretation in the Greek East, where we find an Adamic legacy of inherited *mortality* but not of congenital *guilt*, and the Latin West, where an Augustinian doctrine of original sin “came to be accepted as church dogma, to the exclusion of any alternative.”¹⁴ This theological division, however, is not matched by as strong of a *grammatical* East-West divide. While Willet concurs with both Augustine’s *in quo* reading and his theology of original sin (seeing Augustine’s grammatical move as a kind of safeguard for the doctrine), many prominent western theologians—as Calvin, Vermigli, and Bullinger—dissented from Augustine’s understanding of ἐφ’ ᾧ, even while accepting the broad pattern of his original sin doctrine.¹⁵

While space prohibits and a sufficient comprehension of Willet’s position does not require a comprehensive review of every interpretation of original sin, it will be

¹³ Vickers, “Grammar and Theology,” 275, 271. Henri Blocher, too—chiding those who have too easily dismissed an Augustinian reading—declares that “the case does not (contrary to a superficial understanding of the issues) rest on the rendering of the connecting words at the end of verse 12 for which Augustine finally settled,” adding that “none of the many rival solutions is unassailable” (Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997], 71). The history of the interpretation of this verse is further complicated by the varied use of terms even between the earliest Church Fathers and Augustine (Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002], 53). Cranfield, while dismissing Augustine’s grammatical argument, offers a helpful summary of the six main interpretations of Paul’s meaning here (Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, 274-281).

¹⁴ David Weaver, “From Paul to Augustine: Romans 5:12 in Early Christian Exegesis,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1983): 187-188. Weaver’s trio of essays in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, published between 1983 and 1985, are especially instructive in detailing the background of this exegetical issue within the Greek-speaking church: David Weaver, “The Exegesis of Romans 5:12 Among the Greek Fathers and its Implication for the Doctrine of Original Sin: the 5th to 12th Centuries, Part II,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1985), 133-159; David Weaver, “The Exegesis of Romans 5:12 Among the Greek Fathers and its Implication for the Doctrine of Original Sin: the 5th to 12th Centuries, Part III,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1985), 231-257. See also S. Lyonnet, “Le Sens de ἐφ’ ᾧ en Rom 5,12 et L’Exégèse des Pères Grecs,” *Biblica* 36, no. 4 (1955): 436-456.

¹⁵ Cf. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, 276: “We must of course distinguish between acceptance of Augustine’s general understanding of the thought of the clause and acceptance of his grammatical explanation of ‘in quo.’”

helpful here to lay out one possible framework for thinking about four main approaches to its transmission. First, theologians have described original sin as a responsibility either for Adam's personal sin or for one's own sinfulness. We can further divide the first group between those who claim that Adam's posterity was present seminally *in Adam* and so participated, in a way, in his primal sin (the "realist" view), and those who view him as our legal representative, making decisions on behalf of all who fall under his headship (the "federal" view).¹⁶ Those denying a direct imputation of the *guilt* of Adam's personal sin can also be subdivided, between those who believe that Adam's descendants inherit his tarnished human nature (the very possession of which leads ineluctably to the sin of concupiscence), and those who believe that we are born in a state of innocence but inevitably imitate Adam in our own way (which amounts to a denial of original sin in any proper sense).¹⁷ Given the complex nature of sin, these categories are, of course, not mutually exclusive. For instance, Berkhof finds in Augustine both a realistic conception of original sin and an emphasis on inherited corruption, while asserting that "he also comes very close to the idea that [all people] sinned in Adam as their representative"¹⁸

¹⁶ See, for instance, Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 241-243; Wiley, *Original Sin*, 52-53; Blocher, *Original Sin*, 71; Aaron Denlinger, "Calvin's Understanding of Adam's Relationship to His Posterity: Recent Assertions of the Reformer's 'Federalism' Evaluated," *Calvin Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (Nov. 2009): 228; George Park Fisher, "The Augustinian and Federal Theories of Original Sin Compared," *The New Englander* 27 (July 1868): 468-516; Stephen Strehle, *Calvinism, Federalism, and Scholasticism: A Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Covenant* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 1988).

¹⁷ On these views, cf. Denlinger, "Calvin's Understanding," 228, 237; Henri Rondet, *Original Sin: the Patristic and Theological Background*, trans. Cajetan Finegan (Shannon, Ireland: Ecclesia Press, 1972), 125, 129; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (240-241, 243); Wiley, *Original Sin*, 69-70. In modern terms, the transmission of a vitiated nature can be compared to recent research suggesting that one's experiences can be passed on genetically through one's RNA. See, for example, Dan Hurley, "Grandma's Experiences Leave a Mark on Your Genes," *Discover Magazine*, May 2013, <http://discovermagazine.com/2013/may/13-grandmas-experiences-leave-epigenetic-mark-on-your-genes>. Those presenting the Eastern understanding of an inherited mortality would fall into one of these latter two categories—an inherited corrupt nature or sin by imitation—depending on how the connection between mortality and sinfulness is expressed.

¹⁸ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 237.

(although a developed federal understanding of original sin did not develop until over a millennium later, in the post-Reformation period).¹⁹ Blocher notes that the Reformed tradition has highlighted the federal/judicial aspect (“we were ‘in him’ in the sense of being legally represented by him”), while qualifying that this tendency has not been to the exclusion of “the natural connection.”²⁰ And Willet himself, as we shall see, stresses that original sin refers not *solely* to Adam’s sin imputed to his progeny, but also to “a real and inherent corruption in the nature of man.”²¹

2.2.1 ἐφ’ ᾧ and Erasmus and Theodoret

Willet focuses his exegetical displeasure on Erasmus, whose rendering of ἐφ’ ᾧ *causally* to mean “because” he deems “rather to be disliked,” and he cites Augustine’s near-contemporary Theodoret as an earlier, and Calvin, Vermigli, Osiander, and “our English translations” as more recent examples of grammatical divergences from Augustine.²² In the initial 1516 edition of his *Novum Testamentum*, Erasmus had rejected the Vulgate’s *in quo* translation in favor of *in eo quod* (“in that which”),²³ adding in the notes the grammatical possibility of options that were even more clearly causal: *quatenus* (“in so far as”) or *quandoquidem* (“since”). In later editions he opted for *quatenus* in the

¹⁹ Lyle Bierma, “Covenant or Covenants in the Theology of Olevianus?,” *Calvin Theological Journal*, 22, no. 2 (Nov. 1987): 250; Richard A. Muller, “The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Orthodoxy: a Study in the Theology of Herman Witsius and Wilhelmus à Brakel,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 29, no. 1 (April 1994): 89.

²⁰ Blocher, *Original Sin*, 71-72.

²¹ Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 275.

²² Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 250.

²³ By this time, the expression could also simply mean “because” (Jozsef Herman, *Vulgar Latin*, trans. Roger Wright [University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2000], 92).

main text.²⁴ Erasmus expanded the arguments for his position in 1535, defending his interpretation against charges that his focus on our conformity to Adam and to Christ by *imitation*—rather than by inheritance and imputation—reeked of and aided the cause of Pelagianism.²⁵ Claiming the support of Origen, Ambrose,²⁶ Theophylact and Chrysostom, Erasmus argued that Augustine was the only Church Father to hold the extreme original sin position, and he only in his later years, during the Pelagian controversy.²⁷ Any association with Pelagius being toxic in the sixteenth century, Erasmus naturally asserts his condemnation of the soteriological arch-heretic and acknowledges “some original sin”—though characterizing it more as a natural *propensity* to sin than as a corruption of our nature in a full Augustinian sense.²⁸ Willet, not surprisingly, casts doubt on this professed opposition.²⁹ But regardless of whether this denunciation of Pelagius was more genuine or expedient, Erasmus’s positioning of himself *between* Augustine and Pelagius

²⁴ Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” 12.

²⁵ Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” 13; Carrington, “Erasmus’s Readings,” 16. Erasmus asks sardonically, “Will the Pelagians suddenly spring back to life because I have interpreted this one passage otherwise than did Augustine in his fight, when there are many other passages by which heretics can be more effectively refuted?” (*Annotations on Romans*, ed. Robert D. Sider, trans. John B. Payne et al., vol. 56 of *Collected Works of Erasmus* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994], 150-151).

²⁶ Actually Ambrosiaster. See Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” 8n41.

²⁷ Carrington, “Erasmus’s Readings,” 16, 17; Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” 13. On the development of Augustine’s understanding of original sin, see for example Wiley, *Original Sin*, 56-75. Erasmus also claimed the support of Jerome, although he knew that the commentary he was citing was written pseudonymously. He did not seem to know, however, that the actual author was Pelagius—a rather important point that had been suspected as early as Augustine (Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” 9n44, 13; Coogan, “The Pharisee Against the Hellenist,” 476; Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 250).

²⁸ Carrington, “Erasmus’s Readings,” 16, 17. Cf. my discussion of sin and concupiscence in relation to causality, V.2.4.

²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 250. Carrington takes Erasmus more at his word when he condemns Pelagianism and affirms some kind of original sin. He is not “dodging the issue,” she argues, when he claims that his contention is not with the existence of original sin but with whether Romans 5:12 teaches it. While recognizing that he did not “uphold a fully Augustinian doctrine of original sin,” Carrington writes that Erasmus’s qualm with the traditional Western approach to Romans 5:12 “reflects his belief that interpreting any passage from Scripture should reflect the context of the passage in relation to

in an attempt to temper what he viewed as Augustine's *overcorrection* of the Pelagian error helps us to see a "polemical chain" that forms the backbone of the history of the exegesis of this verse (and which is representative of other such chains winding through the exegetical history of other disputed verses). Andrew Willet is seeking to correct Erasmus, who was attempting to moderate Augustine, who was reacting against Pelagius, who—for his part—was unwilling to accept an inherently sinful human nature that could suggest a gnostic Manichean dualism.³⁰

Theodoret, who Willet claims had taken the error "yet further than Erasmus," interpreted Romans 5:12 in a way that was fairly representative of the Greek church as a whole (including—we shall see—those Fathers whom Willet cites as supporting the Augustinian view). Willet summarizes Theodoret's understanding that Adam's personal sin was not the *cause*, but the *occasion* of the introduction of sin into the human situation,³¹ and that our immediate inheritance from Adam is not sin per se, but *mortality*, which makes people "subject to perturbations."³² The connection, then, between Adam's sin and the sin of the rest of humanity was for him an indirect path traveling through the specter of death. Theodoret affirmed that in Adam's sin "both sin and death spread

the chapter and book in which it appears, and ultimately all of Scripture; interpretation should not be a mining of individual passages for doctrine" (Carrington, "Erasmus's Readings," 17). Indeed, few exegetes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would support non-contextual readings and "mining" Scripture for proof-texted doctrines.

³⁰ On Pelagius reacting against the Manichean worldview, see Weaver, "From Paul to Augustine," 200.

³¹ Cf. the section on Willet's use of the cause/occasion distinction, V.3.2.

³² Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 250. According to Theodoret, a mortal nature requires many physical things, the necessity of which "often provokes the passions to excess. And excess begets sins" (quoted in Weaver, "The Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Part II," 152). Part of his reasoning was that there will be no sin in the resurrection because we will then be *immortal*. And if immortality and sinlessness go hand in hand, it must be our mortality that inclines us to sin (Weaver, "Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Part II," 156).

throughout the race,” but his focus was on death, and especially death as the penalty for *personal* sin.³³ As with those Greek Fathers whom Willet claims in support of his own position, there is some ambiguity in Theodoret’s explication of ἐφ’ ᾧ. His interpretation encompasses the notion both of *inherited* mortality and of *individually-merited* mortality and, as with Paul himself, his meaning here cannot be determined from a bare grammatical analysis, but demands “reference to the more general tenor of his thinking.”³⁴ This characterizes much of the Greek commentary on Romans 5, in which the concept of “original sin” was discussed with less precision than in Western Latin commentaries,³⁵ due at least in part to a common tongue allowing a direct transference of Paul’s own terminological ambiguity.

2.2.2 ἐφ’ ᾧ and Other Reformed Theologians

While Willet portrays Erasmus and Theodoret as dancing on a slippery slope toward Pelagianism, his disagreement with Calvin and Vermigli is a more constrained matter focusing on whether the verse *in question* refers to original sin or actual sins and, thus, how the verse fits into the logical progression of Romans 5. In his comments on verse 5:12 (in the Questions section), Willet names Vermigli and Calvin among those proffering the less desirable reading, but does not present a specific critique of their exegesis. Explaining the following verse, though, he notes how each has misread the reference to sin that was in the world “unto the time of the law” because of a faulty reading of 5:12. In apparent agreement with Beza, Willet writes that Calvin “suspendeth

³³ Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II,” 152.

³⁴ Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II,” 153.

³⁵ Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II,” 159.

all this sentence by a parenthesis, which *Beza* misliketh: because it hath a very good coherence with the former verse,” and Vermigli argues that the reference is to *actual* sin that was present in the world prior to the written law (in violations of the conscience and the light of nature³⁶), but which was not at that time imputed.³⁷ To Willet, these explanations—treating 5:13 as either a loosely-connected aside or as a reference to sins against natural law—merely obscure the clear connection between original sin in 5:12 and pre-legal sin in 5:13.³⁸

That Willet’s dispute with these Reformed allies is not primarily an argument over the nature of original sin itself is evident by his appeal to Vermigli in six of his first eight Controversies in an extended thirteen-page section specifically refuting errors pertaining to original sin,³⁹ and his later citation of Calvin to argue that “sin” in Romans 7:8 refers to “the originall pravitie” within humanity that is “none other, but *natura corruptio*, the corruption of our nature.”⁴⁰ Regarding verse 5:12 specifically, however, Vermigli—having acknowledged that there is “no small controversie how it ought to be

³⁶ Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 113v.

³⁷ Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 251

³⁸ Willet muddies his own water a bit, however, when he *approves* of placing verses 13-17 within parentheses to account for the *grammatical* association between the “wherefore as” in verse 12 and the “likewise then” in verse 18: “but I rather with *Beza* and *Pareus* thinke, that the second part of the comparison is suspended by a long parenthesis in the words coming betweene unto the 18. and 19. verses, where the Apostle setteth downe both parts of the comparison” (Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 246). So Willet *both* (seemingly) *disapproves* of Calvin’s parentheses when considering the logical progression from verse 12 to 13 in Question 25 and (explicitly) expresses *approval* of the parentheses when trying to account for the awkward grammatical step between verses 12 and 13 in Question 17—and he claims *Beza* for each position! Calvin’s nineteenth-century translator and editor John Owen isolates Willet’s grammatical comment when he cites Willet as one who agreed with Calvin’s placement of vv. 13-17 within parentheses (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 199-200n1).

³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 271-283. He cites Vermigli positively in Controversies 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17.

⁴⁰ Willet, *Hexapla on Romans*, 321.

taken”—flatly denies the “in quo” reading of ἐφ’ ᾧ, claiming that Jerome “was deceived, which turned this sence thus. *In whom all men have sinned,*” and arguing that it should instead be taken as “a particule causall.”⁴¹ This rendering, to Vermigli, fits best both linguistically and contextually. Many of Paul’s hearers, he reasons, might have thought it “very sharpe and harde, that for the sinne only of the first man all men should dye,” and so Paul completes 5:12 with an assertion that all people have sinned on their own *as well*, leaving no room to question the justice of God’s death sentence.⁴² This was, however, not to the *exclusion* of original sin; Paul here “taketh sinne most amply, so that it comprehendeth both the roote, and all the fruites thereof.”⁴³ Calvin also defends a causal translation (*quandoquidem*) against those who would complain that “we are so lost through Adam’s sin, as though we perished through no fault of our own,” though his interpretation of what is meant by “all sinned” is somewhat closer to Willet’s sense of inherited sinfulness than to Vermigli’s emphasis on actual sins: “to sin in this case, is to become corrupt and vicious,” and even before this natural corruption begins to yield its “own fruits, [it] is yet sin before God, and deserves his vengeance.”⁴⁴ Willet’s treatment of Calvin’s and Vermigli’s readings of this passage shows, again, his independence as an exegete, even as he depicts a theological solidarity among the Reformed on the most

⁴¹ Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 112v-113r. Vermigli—siding explicitly with Erasmus—prefers “this conjunction causall, For” (in Vermigli’s original Latin, “*eo quod*”: Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 113v; Vermigli, *S. Pauli Apostoli ad Rom.*, 348).

⁴² Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 112v.

⁴³ I.e. both original and actual sin (Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 113r).

⁴⁴ Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 200-201. Vermigli likewise argues that natural corruption and concupiscence are real, and not merely potential, sins, affirming that “lust and pronesse to sinne [are] grafted in us all,” and that these “are also in very dede sinnes” (Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 113v).

central doctrines.⁴⁵

As for the English bibles printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only his hated Rheims New Testament and later editions of the Geneva Bible have Willet's preferred "in whom" reading; others contain some sort of causal rendering, as "forasmuch as" (early Geneva versions), "insomuche as" (the 1568 Bishops' Bible), or "for that" (the 1611 King James). The Geneva Bible translation was altered to read "in whom" in 1576 (New Testaments) and 1587 (complete bibles), to correspond with Laurence Tomson's addition of Beza's textual notes. Beza's note on "in whom" specifies "That is, in Adam," and his note on the verse as a whole reads: "But that this Law, was not that universal Lawe, and that that death did not procede from any actuall sinne of every one particularly, it appeareth hereby, that the very infantes which neither could ever know, nor transgresse that naturall Lawe, are not withstanding dead as well as Adam."⁴⁶

2.2.3 ἐφ' ᾧ and Willet's Appeal to Greek Commentators

The Greek commentators whom Willet cites in support of the "in whom" reading are especially interesting to consider, since three of them (Origen, Chrysostom and Theophylact) are also cited by Erasmus, and since they all present an interpretation similar to Theodoret's. As they were claimed by opposing sides, it is not surprising that—as with Theodoret—there is some ambiguity in the expressed positions of each of these

⁴⁵ Cf. section VII.3.2.

⁴⁶ *Geneva New Testament*, 1576 (with Beza notes), 241v. For more on Laurence Tomson's revision of the Geneva Bible, see the chapter in David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 348-357. We will see shortly how Willet also uses infants to develop a similar argument.

Greek exegetes.⁴⁷ Origen is perhaps the most curious of Willet's references in his arguments against Erasmus, given the Alexandrian's well-known influence on the "Prince of the Humanists,"⁴⁸ but it is also relatively easy to imagine how he could have been interpreted as supporting a form of original sin. First, the speculative nature of Origen's exegesis, in which he often offers multiple possible explanations, makes it possible for theological opponents to cite his authority on the same issue.⁴⁹ Willet's primary support for claiming Origen comes from the latter's use of an analogy that seems to lead toward a realist position. Having acknowledged Erasmus's appeal to Origen, Willet rebuts:

But Origen manifestly interpreteth the Apostle to speake of originall sinne: for he saith, as *Levi* was in Abraham's loynes when he payed tithes to *Melchisedeck*, *sic omnes homines erant in lumbis Ada, &c.* so all men that are borne were in the loynes of Adam, and when he was expelled out of Paradise, they were expelled with him, &c.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Consider the following assessments: "The expressed opinions of Origen on the question of the origin of sin are consistent with the cosmology developed in *On First Principles*, but are stated in traditional terms, which results in some ambiguity" (Weaver, "Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. I," 194); "In the present section [Origen] is somewhat ambivalent. He seems to allow the interpretation of *in quo* as a relative clause, i.e., "in whom," namely in Adam" (editor's note in Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 303n1); even Erasmus recognized ambiguity in Origen, stemming from both his own wording and from his translators: "From Origen, however, it is not so easy to gather what his view was, for he is, of himself, often slippery in argument, [and is so] especially since we have translated freely with many things added, removed, or changed" (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 142); "Unfortunately, one cannot tell precisely in what grammatical sense [Chrysostom] understood the phrase ἐφ' ᾧ" (Weaver, "Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II," 142); and Theophylact makes certain statements that "seem to be capable of an Augustinian interpretation" in suggesting Adam as the antecedent to ἐφ' ᾧ, but "his thinking is not so straightforward" as to lead to an Augustinian concept of original sin, as he goes on to describe this inheritance as one not of guilt, but of mortality (Weaver, "The Exegesis of Romans 5:12, part III," 248).

⁴⁸ See, for example, Payne, "Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans," 6-7; Kroeker, *Erasmus in the Footsteps of Paul*, 37; Rabil, *Erasmus and the New Testament*, 51-52n42, 105, 116; Christ-Von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, 49; Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, 46.

⁴⁹ Cf. Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, 44: "[Origen's] different approaches will allow later commentators to use his exegesis of this locus in different ways, as can be illustrated by comparing Augustine and Erasmus."

⁵⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 250. Thomas P. Scheck in his editorial notes on this passage in Origen acknowledges a "resemblance between the thoughts expressed here and later views developed by Ambrosiaster and Augustine" and concedes that "Origen may be attributed with passing down the

Still, despite his use of an image supporting a seminal connection and transmission of sin, Origen never explicitly connects this to vicarious *guilt*, focusing rather on inherited punishment and mortality (to say that all people “were expelled with Adam” is slightly different than saying that all bear the guilt of his action), and his broader context emphasizes personal responsibility for actual sins. Origen’s comments elsewhere about humans being born in a sinful state come within the context of his theory of the pre-temporal existence of souls. So, while appearing also in other places to anticipate an Augustinian realist view of original sin (insofar as each seeks to establish a physical or natural link between an actual sin and each individual’s inborn culpability), Origen differs by making individuals all the personal culprits of their *own* primal sins, rather than locating them seminally within Adam when *he* sinned.⁵¹ Just as significantly, Origen’s fourth-fifth century Latin translator Rufinus “tended to adjust Origen’s teachings in the direction of western orthodoxy,” including the ἐφ’ ᾧ in Romans 5:12, which he presented “as meaning ‘in whom,’ whereas [Origen] really understood it as meaning ‘since.’”⁵² As Willet quotes Origen in Latin, we can assume that he received his thought on original sin through Rufinus’s filter.

exegetical material for the doctrine of original sin,” while expressing agreement with the scholarly consensus that this resemblance does not lead Origen to an affirmation of inherited guilt (editor’s note in Origen, *Commentary on Romans, Books 1-5*, 311n69). Erasmus, commenting on this same passage from Origen, states that “these words seem to have in view original sin, although on closer inspection it appears otherwise,” and he goes on to explain that Origen was simply explaining here why Paul considers Adam, instead of Satan or Eve, to be the author of sin. Its propagation according to Origen, Erasmus insists, is by imitation (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 143-144). Willet objects to this logic, claiming that if sin’s propagation to humanity were solely by imitation, then Satan would be considered here the author of sin. The identification of *Adam* as sin’s entry point into the rest of humankind indicates to Willet that the connection is not by mere imitation but by natural propagation (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 246, 272).

⁵¹ Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. I,” 195-196; Jordan Cooper, “The Lutheran Doctrine of Original Sin in Light of Other Christian Traditions,” *Logia* 22, no. 4 (Reformation 2013): 13.

⁵² Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. I,” 196, 196n29.

We can find in Chrysostom, too, statements that could lead to opposing interpretations. He writes, for instance, that for one man to be “punished on account of another does not seem to be much in accordance with reason,” while asserting that “nothing is unreasonable in the fact that one committed sin and was made mortal, and that they who are from him are in the same condition.”⁵³ To one as Willet, who took the connection between mortality, punishment, and sin for granted,⁵⁴ Chrysostom’s distinction would be untenable; if death was the penalty for Adam’s guilt, then the passing on of that *mortal nature* would assume that the *guilt* also was passed along. This issue hinges on the broader anthropological question of how immortality is attributed to humanity. If immortality is seen as a supernatural gift that is *added to* the essential nature of humanity, then a congenital mortality can stem from sin and yet cease to be viewed as a punishment in each succeeding generation. If, however, the supernatural grace of immortality is considered to be an *essential* element of *true* (pre-fall) human nature, then the penal aspect is logically appropriated to each mortal individual. Chrysostom himself stops short of affirming inherited guilt, which would to him (as to Pelagius) suggest “the Manichean-sounding idea of an inherently evil nature.”⁵⁵ Adam’s progeny bear consequences from Adam’s sin, but not its guilt. Similarly, in the eleventh century Theophylact—who was influenced by Chrysostom⁵⁶—focused on inherited mortality. Although he—to Willet’s satisfaction—makes Adam the antecedent to the ἐφ’ ᾧ, he does

⁵³ Quoted in Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II,” 141. Cf. “But what means, ‘for that all have sinned?’ This; he having once fallen, even they that had not eaten of the tree did from him, all of them, become mortal” (Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 401 [Homily X]).

⁵⁴ See, for example, Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 249-251.

⁵⁵ Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II,” 141.

⁵⁶ Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. III,” 247; Payne, “Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans,” 9.

not develop this grammatical choice toward a theology of original sin, but focuses rather on mortality.⁵⁷ Thus, while Willet tries to establish broad historical support for his reading in both the western and eastern branches of the church, his strongest support from tradition is from Augustine; despite some ambiguity in its articulation, the general thrust of the Greek side was the same concept of inherited mortality that Willet condemned in Theodoret.⁵⁸

From a narrowly linguistic perspective, the possibility of Willet's Augustinian rendering of ἐφ' ᾧ depends on whether the preposition ἐπί can be taken to mean ἐν, and he provides only two debatable instances from Hebrews to argue that it can.⁵⁹ Willet offers as examples "Heb.9.17. ἐπὶ νεκροῖς, the testament is confirmed in the dead, *Beza*: and Heb.9.[10]. ἐπὶ βρώμασι, *in meates*."⁶⁰ The renderings that he cites, however, are rare in early English bibles, with only Wycliffe's translation and Rheims having "in" in both places, and the Geneva and King James having it in 9:17.⁶¹ Vermigli, in fact, had cited the *unlikelihood* of this usage (in "good authors," anyhow) in support of taking ἐφ' ᾧ in a *causal* sense: "Others thinke that ἐφ' ᾧ, ought to be referred unto Adam. But against these men is the signification of this preposition ἐπί, which when it is joyned with

⁵⁷ Weaver, "Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. III," 248-250. Photius too, whom Willet claims but Erasmus omits, lacks a clear formulation of inherited guilt in original sin: "Neither does he hold to an idea of a racial participation in the sin of Adam, his language at that point referring in fact to humanity's sinning with Adam, as partners, accomplices or collaborators through their own sins, not in him" (Weaver, "Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. III," 246-247).

⁵⁸ Weaver, "Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. II," 150.

⁵⁹ As we have seen, there was no unanimity even as to whether the two words ἐφ'/ἐπί and ᾧ should be taken as two separate words or as a single unit.

⁶⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 250. Beza's Latin rendering of Hebrews 9:17 translates the phrase: "Testamentum enim in mortuis ratum est..."

⁶¹ Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew's, the Great Bible, Taverner's, and the Bishops' Bible all have variations of "with meats" in Hebrews 9:10 and "when men are dead" in 9:17.

a dative case, as Erasmus sayth: is not amongst any good authors, founde to signifie all one with ἐν, that is, in.”⁶² Vermigli actually takes Erasmus’s grammatical assessment a hair beyond how Erasmus himself stated it. Erasmus does not say that no good author ever used ἐπί for ἐν, but that he had himself never encountered such usage: “Since, then, the use of Greek prepositions is so varied, I should not dare to assert that ἐπί is never found with the dative case when one thing is said to be in another, as a tree is in the seed; but I, at least, have not this far happened to come upon any such thing.” He goes on to claim that even if the “in whom” reading is granted, the passage can still be read as referring to imitative sin.⁶³

2.2.4 Original Sin and Related Theological Concerns

Many theological concerns connect to one’s understanding of original sin, and Willet attempts to toe a narrow line between several potential pitfalls; skewing the balance between actual sin and inherited guilt in either direction could lead to too narrow a conception of sin’s toxicity and questions about God’s justice.⁶⁴ Whereas actual sin consists of “such things as are said, done, or coveted against the law of God,” sin’s full power extends beyond the wayward will to encompass “any thing which is contrary to the

⁶² Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 112v.

⁶³ Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 141.

⁶⁴ Willet also attempts—with limited success—to communicate a moderate position on whether original sin is a substance or a privation. He refutes, on one hand, the suggestion of Flacius Illyricus that original sin is “a kind of substance,” reasoning that “God onely is the Creator of substances, and nature: but hee made not sinne,” but denies, on the other hand, the argument of “Bellarmine with other of the Romanists” that original sin is merely the privation of original justice, since this take poor account of the scriptural language of “an in-dwelling sinne” and “the bodie of death,” which language suggests that original sin does have “a kind of existence” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 274-275). While Willet himself does not make this connection, his suggestion of a non-substantial reality somewhere between privation and substance bears some similarity to the Reformed understanding of Christ’s “real presence” in the Eucharist.

law of God,” including “the naturall rebellion and resistance of the flesh.”⁶⁵ This conception of sin treats it as more than merely a broken rule; it functions as a kind of disease, or as a toxin that is noxious whether ingested intentionally or unintentionally.⁶⁶ And yet—since death is a *punishment* for sin—in order to stand with God’s justice, all who die (i.e. everyone) must also be *guilty* of sin.⁶⁷ Anyone who lives long enough will accrue plenty of sin of all kinds, but the death of infants (a tragic reality that Willet himself had experienced in his own family) evidenced to Willet a corrupt nature that precedes the committing of actual sins. “But the Apostle evidently sheweth,” he reasons, “that not onely death is entred into the world, but sinne also: for how could infants in the justice of God be subject unto death, if they were not also guilty of sinne.”⁶⁸ Willet’s logic here raises the question of whether imputed guilt or guiltless punishment would render God more “unjust.” While many critics of the notion of inherited guilt had argued that it was inconsistent with God’s justice,⁶⁹ Willet argues in essence that the alternative

⁶⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 275.

⁶⁶ Erasmus also describes sin as a kind of poison, and Carrington points out how this image can work against his emphasis on the propagation of sin by imitation (Carrington, “Erasmus’s Readings,” 15-16).

⁶⁷ Those opposed to the Augustinian teaching on original sin, naturally, understood the relationship between punishment and death differently. The Pelagians, for instance (as Willet reports their view), favored a view of death as a “defect of nature” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 272), and Erasmus drew a distinction between a physical and a spiritual death of infants (Erasmus, *Annotations on Romans*, 139).

⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 250-251. The example of infants—whether the disturbing incidences of infant mortality or the age-old sacramental practice of infant baptism—factored frequently into debates about original sin, since these infants represent a form of human nature that is minimally affected by experience. In addition to Beza (cited earlier) and Willet, we find, for example, Augustine reasoning “backwards” from the church’s practice of paedobaptism toward a theory of original sin (Wiley, *Original Sin*, 49-52) and Pelagians seeking to affirm the same practice while highlighting *other* benefits of baptism (i.e. besides forgiveness of sin), so as to avoid the suggestion of innate sinfulness (Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. I,” 201-202). Willet reasons not only from the death of infants, but from Christ’s death on behalf of all (including infants); if Christ died for babies, there must be some punishment (he reasons) that was due to them (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 280).

⁶⁹ Cf. Blocher, *Original Sin*, 121.

of an inherited penalty (apart from any guilt) would be a greater affront to justice.⁷⁰

Just as neglecting inherited guilt leads to theological problems, so does diminishing the role of a corrupted nature and its sinful fruit. Willet criticizes certain Roman Catholics (Pighius and Catharinus)⁷¹ who “too much extenuate [original sin], and allow it too little,” in focusing *solely* on the imputation of Adam’s guilt on his posterity. Pighius had argued that, in Willet’s words, original sin referred exclusively to Adam’s sin imputed to his posterity “because Adam in himselfe contained all mankind, and God made his covenant not onely with him, but with all his posteritie, being then in his loynes, and so his sinne is imputed unto them”⁷² (that is, a hybrid of the federal and realist models). This denial of any inherent corruption in original sin could falsely lead to a kind of Christian perfectionism⁷³ and would also go against divine justice: “if there were not in us originall sinne by nature of our owne, but onely Adams imputed, it would follow, that his posteritie should be punished not for their owne, but an others sinne: which were

⁷⁰ Turretin would make a similar argument about God’s justice in his defense of inherited guilt (in a federal sense); see Blocher, *Original Sin*, 73. Origen’s fallen pre-mundane souls were an attempt to avoid the injustice of the other two alternatives. Cf. Weaver, “Exegesis of Romans 5:12, Pt. I,” 196-197.

⁷¹ Denlinger demonstrates, though, that Pighius’s interpretation was not well received by Roman Catholics, and that Catharinus—whose views were markedly different—has been unfairly lumped together with Pighius (Denlinger, “Calvin’s Understanding,” 233). On Pighius and his debate with Calvin, see John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice Against Pighius*, ed. Anthony N. S. Lane, trans. G. I. Davies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996); Anthony N. S. Lane, “The Influence upon Calvin of his Debate with Pighius,” in *Auctoritas Patrum II: neue Beiträge zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15 und 16 Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz, Ger.: Philipp von Zabern, 1998), 125-139; Anthony N. S. Lane, “Albert Pighius’s Controversial Work on Original Sin,” *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 4 (Dec. 2000): 29-61; Irena Backus and Aza Goudriaan, “‘Semipelagianism’: The Origins of the Term and its Passage into the History of Heresy,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65, no. 1 (Jan. 2014): 31-33.

⁷² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 274-275.

⁷³ This Willet addresses while refuting the Pelagian/Papist claim that original sin is completely removed in baptism (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 274).

against the rule of Gods justice, *Martyr*.”⁷⁴ This is virtually the same complaint of those who denied original sin altogether. For Willet, the difference between God justly and unjustly punishing people for *another’s* sin hinged on whether that sin also corrupted the “heir’s” own nature. If it did not, punishment would be unjust; if it did, it would not only be just, but it would explain how infants could bear guilt (the guilt of congenital concupiscence) even before they commit actual sins.

Willet notes the division in Roman Catholic opinion on this issue, but he disapproves of the confutation offered by Bellarmine and Pererius, which merely “confute[s] one error by an other.” This line of response to Pighius was based on a faulty parallel with the “inherent justice” that is supposedly infused in the believer through Christ’s meritorious work; just as Christ makes the believer *truly just* (argue Bellarmine and Pererius), so Adam’s sin *truly corrupts* his descendants. But the parallelism between Adam’s legacy and Christ’s redemption, Willet counters, is not quite so simple and direct. The righteousness that is imputed to us through Christ corresponds to Adam’s imputed sin and guilt, but our additional “evilnes and pravity of nature procured by the transgression of Adam” finds no correspondence in our justification: “there is also in the faithfull an inherent righteousnes also, which is their holines and sanctification, but they are not thereby justified before God.”⁷⁵ Since the Adam/Christ parallel deals with our condemnation and redemption, forcing an element of our *sanctification* into service to try to demonstrate a truth about the damnable condition of fallen humanity merely confounds

⁷⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 275.

⁷⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 275.

the issue.⁷⁶

The translation and interpretation of ἐφ' ᾧ in Romans 5:12 illustrates the intricate interplay between linguistic and polemical concerns in the exegesis of Romans.⁷⁷ The text's bearing on original sin creates a veritable minefield for one as Willet, who carefully sidesteps readings that could lend support to a Pelagian works-righteousness, a Manichaean dualism, a traducian distancing of God from successive generations of souls, an Erasmian threat to Paul's Adam/Christ parallel, or a denial, à la Pighius, of personal responsibility. While he concedes that “we cannot give a sufficient reason of this, how originall sinne should be propagated”—averring simply that “it is enough for us that it is so”⁷⁸—Willet suggests that the safest course of interpretation follows Augustine's translation of ἐφ' ᾧ as “*in quo/ in whom*,” which he interprets to include both the realist conception of Adam's progeny sinning “*seminally*” in him⁷⁹ and the reality of individual souls being tarnished by an innate depravity. The characterization of the Reformed position as emphasizing inherited guilt through Adam's federal headship, to the *exclusion* of other understandings, thus misses much of the nuance of Reformed commentators like Willet. For instance, Jordan Cooper—while offering a generally fair picture of one strain

⁷⁶ I deal more extensively with Willet's arguments concerning justification and sanctification in chapter 5, in the section on confusion of cause and effect (section V.2).

⁷⁷ Contra Calvin's nineteenth-century editor John Owen's claim that the particles ἐφ' ᾧ “have been variously rendered, without much change in the meaning,” (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 201n1).

⁷⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 273.

⁷⁹ Despite the roots of English federalism within Cambridge Puritanism (Strehle, *Calvinism, Federalism, and Scholasticism*, 328-329), Willet leans toward a realist interpretation of what it means to sin “in” Adam (e.g. “And thus sinne entred into the world: first Adam sinned beeing in and a part of the world, and in him all mankind sinned, beeing then in his loynes,” Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 247). However, in spite of passages where Willet denies that original sin is “imputed onely” (e.g. his arguments against Pighius, p. 275), he never flatly denies the possibility of a federal theory of original sin—only a federal theory that is divorced from “a reall and inherent corruption” in human nature. Cf. Denlinger's critical response to suggestions of a federalist model in Calvin.

of Reformed thought on original sin—mentions Calvin’s rejection of the Augustinian realist view, but not the acceptance of other Reformed thinkers. His assessment, also, that, “In contrast to the later Reformed approach, which emphasized Adamic guilt in his representative role, Melancthon argued that guilt is due to the inheritance of a sin nature rather than the actual sin of Adam,” overlooks the presence of this emphasis also among many Reformed thinkers. His conclusion, then, that “while the other various traditions have valid concerns and thoughts on this issue, it is only the Lutheran tradition that retains a proper balance between these patristic ideas,” is not entirely fair to the breadth of the Reformed perspective on original sin.⁸⁰

2.3 “Believing” vs. “Believing in”

A misunderstanding of the Hebrew preposition בְּ (*beth*) in Exodus 14:31 lent faulty support, argued Willet and other Protestants, to the Roman Catholic invocation of saints. The Rhemist annotators had appealed to this verse to defend the practice in the context of Romans 10:14 (“How shall they call on him, in whom they have not beleeved...?”),⁸¹ which various Protestant writers had averred invalidated prayers to anyone but God. We can *believe* human witnesses, these Protestants had argued (that their testimony is true), but we are to believe *in* (and, therefore call upon) God alone. The Exodus passage (“they beleeved in בְּ God and in בְּ Moses”), Willet explains, offers no scriptural warrant for trusting in humans because the Hebrew case structure functions

⁸⁰ Cooper, “The Lutheran Doctrine of Original Sin,” 16, 18, 20.

⁸¹ The relevant portion of the Rheims annotation reads: “But if our adversaries thinke that we can not invoke [saints in heaven], because we can not beleeve in them: let them understand that the Scripture useth also this speech, to beleeve in men: and it is the very Hebrew phrase, which they should not be ignorant of that bragge thereof so much. *Exod. 14,31. They beleeved in God and in Moyses*” (Martin, *New Testament*, 409).

differently from that of Latin or Greek: “though the preposition (*beth*) which signifieth (in) be used, yet it is no more, then is expressed in the Latine phrase in the dative case”—a basic point of grammar that is translated properly and clearly communicated even in the Vulgate (“*crediderunt Deo & Mosi*”).⁸² The Israelites in the Exodus narrative do not, thus, put their trust *in* Moses, but rather believe *that* he is a true prophet of God.

Willet directs those desiring a more extended refutation of the Rhemists’ annotations on Romans 10:14 to the answer given by William Fulke. Fulke’s response to the Rhemists—published first in 1589, the year of his death and seven years after the publication of the Rheims New Testament—makes the same grammatical point, stating that the phrase in Exodus 14:31 should not be “translated with the Preposition that ruleth an Accusative or Ablative case, but with a Dative case,” and he mentions no fewer than three times that the Romanists’ *own* Latin Bible translates this correctly.⁸³ In his English rendering of the Latin version of Exodus 14:31 (and of a related construction in 2 Chronicles 20:20), Fulke attempts to avoid confusion by carefully distinguishing between *credere* with and without the added preposition by translating the former “to believe in” and the latter “to give credit to.” He also curtly dismisses the Rhemist citation of the fifth verse of Philemon⁸⁴—“where any man that is not obstinately blinde” can recognize that “faith” is linked to Christ, and “love” to the saints—and enlists a team of the early Church figures Cyprian, Eusebius, Rufinus, and Primasius (d. c. 560) to counter the Rhemist reference to the Creed’s stated belief *in* the holy Catholic Church and the claim

⁸² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 481.

⁸³ Fulke, *Text of the New Testament*, 254v.

⁸⁴ “...thy love and faith which thou hast toward our Lord Jesus, and unto all the Saints...” The Rhemish annotations on this verse also argue that faith and love appear together because *both* are necessary for justification. For Willet’s response to this popular Roman Catholic assertion, see section V.2.2.1.

that “the ancient fathers” read that article similarly to how the Roman Catholic church interpreted it.⁸⁵ In the usage of the Church Fathers who applied the Creed’s preposition “in/εις” to “the holy Catholic church,” Fulke explains, “to beleeve in the Church, was no more but to beleeve that there is a Catholike Church.”⁸⁶ He defends this assertion with lengthy quotations in which Eusebius and the fourth century Italian Rufinus make God the only appropriate object of (proper) “belief *in*.”⁸⁷ The Eusebius citation also refers to the parallel distinction between “believing” and “believing *in*” God, noting the familiar example of the devil’s impious “belief.”⁸⁸ “Therefore,” Willet’s predecessor in polemics concludes, “the Scripture useth no such speech, that can be translated in English” to

⁸⁵ The (Apostles’) Creed does not have a preposition immediately preceding the mention of the church, though the grammatical structure certainly implies that the “in” would distribute along with “I believe” to govern “the holy catholic Church” as well as “the Holy Spirit.” The Rhemist annotations claim that the Church Fathers read “indifferently, *I beleeve in the Catholike Church*, and, *I beleeve the Catholike Church...*” For our purposes, it will suffice to note Fulke’s position that those Fathers who used the first construction did not mean what was commonly conveyed by the preposition “in.” Interestingly, it is the *Latin* form of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed that—contrary to what we might expect given the present debate—lacks the preposition before the mention of the church (“*Et unam...ecclesiam*”) that is *present* in the *Greek* form (“εις μίαν...ἐκκλησίαν”). These creeds can be found in William A. Curtis, *A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith in Christendom and Beyond* (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1911), 64, 74-75.

⁸⁶ Fulke, *Text of the New Testament*, 254v.

⁸⁷ Rufinus is particularly appropriate to Fulke’s argument: “...but of creatures and mysteries, the Proposition In, is not added, that it should be said in the holy Church, but that we should beleeve that there is an holy Church, not as God, but as a Church gathered to God. And men should beleeve that there is remission of sinnes, not in the remission of sinnes, and they should beleeve the resurrection of the body, not in the resurrection of the body. *Therefore by this syllable of Preposition, the Creatour is distinguished from the creatures*, and things pertaining to God, from things belonging to men” (Fulke, *Text of the New Testament*, 254v; emphasis added).

⁸⁸ Eusebius states this distinction as: “to beleeve God, is to know naturally, but to beleeve in God, that is faithfully to seeke him,” (quoted in Fulke, *Text of the New Testament*, 254v). The meaning denoted by the preposition in Eusebius’s explanation, then, is consistent with Fulke’s broad argument (i.e., belief *in* is something stronger than mere “belief”), but it is the opposite of Fulke’s particular explanation of the credal expression where “belief *in*” can simply mean belief *that* something exists. Our modern usage tends to make a rule of what was in Fulke’s work the exception—“belief in God” now signals mere theism, while “believing God” designates the trust of a follower. Cf. Calvin’s use of Augustine’s threefold distinction between “*credere Deum* (believing that God exists), *credere Deo* (believing what God says), [and] *credere in Deum* (embracing God in knowledge and love),” as described in Barbara Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See: Calvin’s Doctrine of Faith in Its Exegetical Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13.

support the belief or trust *in* creatures that constitutes the basis for invoking the saints.⁸⁹

2.4 “Baptism in” vs. “Baptism into”

The preposition “in” factors into Willet’s argument also in his comments on Romans 6:3, where he insists that a correct reading hinges on the proper understanding of εἰς with the accusative in ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν as our being “baptized *into* Christ.” The Vulgate’s rendering as *in Christo* (“*in* Christ”)⁹⁰ misreads and tames Paul’s expression; “it is one thing to be baptized *in* Christ, an other *into* Christ.”⁹¹ Willet cites Lyra and the interlinear gloss as examples of the “in Christ” rendering leading to false interpretations of the phrase to mean merely baptism in Christ’s *faith*, or as *instituted* by him. Even some interpreters, though, who “follow the Greeke text, and read, *into* Christ” soften the language and interpret it to mean baptism “in the name of Christ” (Vermigli, Pareus, and Faius)⁹² or into Christ’s “mysticall bodie” (Erasmus; Willet objects: “but the Apostle speaketh of Christ himselfe,” while conceding “that they which are graft into

⁸⁹ Fulke, *Text of the New Testament*, 254v.

⁹⁰ As the Latin preposition *in* can mean both “in” (with the ablative) or “into” (with the accusative), Willet’s issue here is, properly, with the Vulgate’s translating the Greek accusative Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν as a Latin ablative, *Christo Jesu* (cf. Beza’s *in Christum Jesum*). Since the shift in cases affects the meaning of the preposition, though, I am including this translation issue in this section on prepositions. On the seventeenth-century understanding of this Latin preposition, cf. entry for “in” in *Riders Dictionarie* (London: Adam Islip for John Bill, 1626). The Rheims New Testament follows the Vulgate’s lead and translates this phrase “baptized in Christ Jesus.” While the Rhemist annotations on the verse give no hint of any exegetical tension between “in” and “into,” their description of this baptism as “the entrance to Christian religion” exemplifies the impersonal kind of reading that Willet was opposing. The Rhemist commentary on this verse does take one subtle jab at Protestant soteriology by stating that Paul would have “not onely faith to justifie, but the Sacraments also, and al Christian religion” (Martin, *New Testament*, 396-397).

⁹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 287.

⁹² Pareus interprets this verse in light of Acts 10:48, which specifies baptism as being in Christ’s *name*. His commentary on this verse does not mention a distinction between baptism *into* Christ and in his *name*, but rather focuses on how the expression does not exclude the other members of the trinity (Pareus, *Commentarius...ad Romanos*, 560-561).

Christ, are also members of his mysticall body”).⁹³ Among those interpreting the phrase with the “better” signification “that we are by baptisme incorporated into Christ,” Willet lists Calvin, Beza, and Tolet.⁹⁴

In reality, there is very little substantial difference on this issue between Willet and the different Protestants whom he seeks to correct—his disagreement with them being confined narrowly to the grammar of this one verse and not extending to any broader doctrinal divide concerning our union with Christ in baptism. His selective quotations serve here only to illustrate minor grammatical choices, obscuring somewhat some broader similarities among his sources. For instance, Calvin, who receives Willet’s approbation for writing that we are “really united to the body of Christ” and that through baptism “we may be one with him,” also draws from this verse that baptism is the means “by which we are initiated into [Christ’s] faith”—a description similar to the Lyra reading that Willet found wanting.⁹⁵ Likewise, while Vermigli is reprov’d for one element of his reading, his interpretation also includes language consonant with union with Christ: we “passe into Christ,” are “joynd together with him,” and “in baptism we are bound unto Christ.”⁹⁶ Calvin even explicitly communicated to Vermigli his agreement

⁹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 287. Willet does not spell out here what constitutes the distinction between baptism into Christ’s *mystical body* and Christ *himself*.

⁹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 287-288.

⁹⁵ Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 220.

⁹⁶ Vermigli, however, also employs a similitude that weakens the potential *unio cum Christo* overtones of the image of being “bound” to Christ, likening our being bound (*obstringimur*) to him to soldiers being bound (*obstringuntur*) to their captain, and characterizing the latter as a matter of vows and obedience. Vermigli’s language of “binding” in this context, then, is less one of being engrafted and more one of being “honor-bound” (Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 143v; Vermigli, *S. Pauli Apostoli ad Rom.*, 450).

with him regarding the nature of our union with Christ.⁹⁷ And, though Willet disapproves of Pareus's reading of 6:3 as baptism in Christ's *name* rather than into Christ *himself*, in his reading of union with Christ as a guiding motif of Romans 8 he "appears to borrow heavily" from Pareus⁹⁸ (as indeed he does in many other parts of the commentary, as well).

While Willet's insistence on maintaining the sense of baptism "into Christ" that is communicated by the Greek text of Romans 6:3 is not a characteristic Reformed emphasis, it is not difficult to imagine why the distinction might have seemed to him worthy of mention. The notion of a movement *into* Christ, as opposed to a mere loyalty to Christ or a sharing of his faith, clearly connects baptism to the Reformed theme of our *unio cum Christo*. And, while union with Christ had a long history in Roman Catholic thought, there it was seen as the "culmination of spiritual experience"—as the goal, rather than a driving force, of the Christian life.⁹⁹ For Protestants, this notion of a union with Christ that was not "the achievement of a few heroic souls but a divine gift received by all true Christians"¹⁰⁰ helped to show that Protestant theology did not neglect the personal, transformative element of the Christian life—that the charge that its emphasis on grace and faith made its conception of justification a mere "legal fiction" was

⁹⁷ Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 213-217. Contemporaries of Willet, too, tended to blend in their commentary on Romans 6:3 language that Willet would separate as either "in Christ" or "into Christ." Thomas Wilson, for example, describes "baptism into Christ" both in terms of Christ as a moral exemplar and with stronger *unio* terms like "linking" and "knitting" (Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 344-346).

⁹⁸ Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 227.

⁹⁹ R. Tudur Jones, "Union with Christ: the Existential Nerve of Puritan Piety," *Tyndale Bulletin* 41, no. 2 (1990): 191.

¹⁰⁰ Jones, "Union with Christ," 192.

unfounded.¹⁰¹ Indeed, Craig Carpenter notes that the idea of *unio cum Christo* provided Calvin with a defense against a wide range of Roman Catholic attacks: “To seemingly every objectionable point related to justification raised by Roman Catholics, from total depravity to the necessity of assurance, Calvin responds by developing his doctrine of union with Christ.”¹⁰² Thus, while Willet does not develop the theme of *unio cum Christo* extensively at this point, his insistence on maintaining language suggestive of *unio* in relation to *baptism* (the sacramental *beginning* of the Christian life) implicitly highlights the Protestant understanding of union with Christ as a divine *gift* (not a human achievement) and presents the transformative element of the Christian life as a matter of believers being fused into Christ, rather than being infused with their *own* righteousness.

2.5 Different Prepositions Used Indifferently

As careful as Willet is to delineate shades of meaning conveyed by different conjunctions and prepositions, he also at times accuses other exegetes of creating false distinctions in places where Paul uses various prepositions indifferently. These instances tend to involve a division drawn between different means of justification, with an

¹⁰¹ Craig B. Carpenter, “A Question of Union with Christ? Calvin and Trent on Justification,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 64, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 378. Moderately interesting side note: Carpenter was my preceptor for an MDiv class that I took on the exegesis of Romans at Princeton Theological Seminary.

¹⁰² Carpenter, “A Question of Union with Christ?,” 384. Critics such as J. V. Fesko and Jeong Koo Jeon have charged Carpenter with overemphasizing the centrality of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology. With reference to Trent, Fesko claims that Carpenter presents the concept as though Roman Catholics had no place for *unio* in their doctrine of justification: J. V. Fesko, *Beyond Calvin: Union with Christ and Justification in Early Modern Reformed Theology (1517-1700)* (Göttingen, Ger.: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 19-20, 217n40; Jeong Koo Jeon, *Covenant Theology and Justification by Faith: The Shepherd Controversy and its Impacts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 14n17. These criticisms, however, do not invalidate Carpenter’s point here that Calvin was able to use the Protestant affirmation of *unio cum Christo* to deflect various Roman Catholic attacks against the Protestant conception of justification.

opponent citing Paul's use of variant prepositions to justify a corresponding distinction within the doctrine itself. Concerning Romans 3:30, for instance—though he disapproves of Tremellius indifferently translating both ἐκ and διὰ as “through”¹⁰³—Willet insists that the expressions “of faith” and “through faith” are *used* to mean the same thing. He rebuts most forcefully Origen's (albeit creative) interpretation that the Jews (“the circumcision”) are said to be justified “of faith” because their process of justification begins with faith and reaches its perfection through good works, while the justifying path of the Gentiles (“the uncircumcision”) begins with their good deeds and is perfected through faith. Origen, for his part, was aware of the speculative nature of his suggestion, introducing it with the caveat, “although it is possible to see excessive curiosity in this, nevertheless...” However, he hazards this “excessive curiosity,” deeming it preferable to “casually pass[ing] over” Paul's prepositional variation; since Paul elsewhere chooses his prepositions “in a carefully considered fashion,” it seemed probable to him that here, too, the “alteration of prepositions...was not uttered by [Paul] purposelessly.”¹⁰⁴ Willet objects to Origen's insertion of works into the logic of the passage to explain Paul's choice of prepositions, arguing that this contradicts both the Apostle's clear meaning and Origen's own previous statement about the sufficiency of faith for justification.¹⁰⁵ Origen himself was attempting to defend Paul against those who accused the Apostle of “writing mutually contradictory statements.” Origen's own (apparent) contradiction can be

¹⁰³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 145.

¹⁰⁴ Origen, *Commentary on Romans, Books 1-5*, 233, 231 (3.11.1, 3.10.2). Willet disapprovingly mentions this interpretation of Origen again in the context of Romans 9:30-32, where he asserts that neither is there any distinction “between righteousness of the law, and by the law” (although Willet there seems accidentally to invert Paul's expression [νόμον δικαιοσύνης], even though he had translated this correctly as the law *of righteousness* in his translation of chapter 9: Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 429).

¹⁰⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 173.

explained largely by his different polemical context. While Willet was reading Romans 3 against the background of Roman Catholic justification doctrine, Origen was at this place opposing Marcion's rending of Jews from Gentiles, and the Old Testament God from the New Testament God. Thus, when Origen states that "the very same God justifies members of both peoples who believe, and this is based not upon the privilege of circumcision or uncircumcision but in consideration of faith alone," he is opposing the phrase "faith alone" not to *works* (as the Protestant movement would do), but to the notion of a *race-based* justification. This, to Origen, makes sense of the Apostle's statement in the following verse, 3:31, that *we* do not make the law void through *faith*. The "transient glory" of the law, Origen argues, may indeed be "set aside," yet not by faith or by an active disposal by any individual, but by its being "surpassed" by Christ's eternal glory.¹⁰⁶

Exegetes proposing what Willet deemed a "more reasonable difference" between the expressions ἐκ πίστεως and διὰ πίστεως include Gorrhan, Tolet, and Faius. Yet Gorrhan's distinction between Jews born within the covenant and Gentiles entering from without (akin to the distinction between infant and adult baptism) would require linking "of faith" to "the circumcision" instead of to "justified" (a move Willet deems untenable), and Tolet's concern to maintain "some difference" between Jews and Gentiles here to avoid "confound[ing]" the two is justified, though not as pertains justification. The Genevan Protestant Faius posits a distinction not between different means of justification, but between identity and means, so that "of faith" serves to characterize which members

¹⁰⁶ Origen, *Commentary on Romans, Books 1-5*, 230, 233-236 (3.10.1, 3.11.1-5). For more on Willet's complex relationship to Origen, including the impact of each exegete's polemical context, see section VII.2.1.3.

of *each* group are justified and “through faith” describes how that justification is effected. While the statement that those who are of faith are justified through faith is unobjectionable, Willet rejects this reading here, for then case Paul’s “sentence should be very imperfect.”¹⁰⁷

The best option, then, for a theologically consistent reading that avoids taking too many liberties with Paul’s syntax is to take the diverse prepositions in these constructions to “meaneth the same thing,” understanding “no difference between these two, to be justified *of faith*, and *through faith*.” Willet notes that this was the opinion also of Calvin, that Paul elsewhere uses the phrase ἐκ πίστεως in reference to the justification of *Gentiles*,¹⁰⁸ and that the Apostle uses the same two prepositions in Romans 11:36 in reference to God, “not insinuating by this diversity of phrase, any different thing in God.”¹⁰⁹ From these observations Willet concludes that neither is there any distinction between the means of justification of Jews and Gentiles.¹¹⁰

We find a similar argument in Willet’s discussion of the phrase “righteousness of

¹⁰⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 173. Willet does in other places, however, draw a similar distinction between the *identity* of a group and some *action* attributable to the group (cf. V.3.1). Here, however, he sees no theological necessity for such a distinction.

¹⁰⁸ He cites Galatians 4:7 in support of this point—a verse that is *consistent* with removing this distinction between Jew and Gentile, in referring to Gentiles as God’s children, though it lacks the phrase “of faith.” It seems likely that Willet intended to point to Galatians 3:8, where Paul indeed writes of Gentiles being justified “of faith”: “...ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός...”

¹⁰⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 174 (“...of him and through him [ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ] are all things...”). Origen had cited the same passage in support of *his* interpretation, arguing that—as the diversity of prepositions would be redundant were they used indifferently—Paul writes “of him” and “through him” to distinguish God’s creation from his providence (Origen, *Commentary on Romans, Books 1-5*, 231-232 [3.10.2-4]).

¹¹⁰ Willet also mentions here, as a point of added interest, Vermigli’s linking of this contemporary justification dispute to the older trinitarian controversy between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, in which the Greek church drew a “curious and nice distinction of these two prepositions” in reference to the procession of the Holy Spirit. By alluding to the *filioque* controversy, Vermigli had sought to bolster his argument with the weight of an earlier judgment made by the Western church. For Willet’s similar polemical use of earlier heresies, see section VI.2.

the law” in Romans 10:5. Here Willet cites a distinction drawn by Pererius, Stapleton, and Bellarmine between righteousness “of the law” and “by the law”—the first referring to “when God by his grace doth helpe us to fulfill the law” and the second to that “which a man doth of himselfe, without faith & grace, onely by the strength of free will.” It was only this second kind of *graceless* legalism (*iustitia ex lege*), argued Willet’s Roman Catholic foes, that Paul juxtaposes with the “righteousness of faith” in Romans 10:5-6; the righteousness “of the law” (*iustitia legis*), they insisted, was fully compatible with salvation by faith.¹¹¹ Willet counters that the particular preposition used to connect “righteousness” and “law” cannot alter the fundamental function of the law, which is not to justify. There is no difference between “the righteousnesse of the law, and by the law,” since “both of them have the same definition.” The same holds true for various other prepositions that Paul uses when writing of the law—these prepositional phrases, “in matter of justification are all one, and in effect the same: as that which [Paul] calleth the righteousnesse νόμου, of the law, Rom. 8.4. the same is ἐκ νόμου, by the law, c.10.5. διὰ νόμου, through the law, Gal. 2.21. ἐν νόμου, in the lawe, Gal. [3].11.”¹¹² The Roman Catholic interpretation of the expression “righteousness by the law” fails, moreover, since *any* attempt to be justified *apart from* God’s grace and gift of faith would be “no justice at all”—making the phrase a misnomer even within the (Semipelagian) Roman understanding.¹¹³ Willet acknowledges, however, that Augustine had made a similar distinction between righteousness “of the law” and “by the law.” While he dismisses this as “impertinent to this purpose” since Augustine did not argue that *either* of these could

¹¹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 478.

¹¹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 478.

¹¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 478-479.

justify, Willet's recognition of Augustine's usage shows at least a tacit acknowledgment that the word "righteousness" could be applied (even if imperfectly) to processes that fail to lead to any *true* righteousness.

The only true and proper "righteousness of the law," then, is "no otherwise fulfilled in us, then by faith in Christ"; Christ himself is the *sole* active agent in the righteousness effected by the fulfillment of the law. There is indeed an active role for Christians to play in being guided by the law, but this obedience comes in the context not of justification but of sanctification, and Scripture speaks of this not as a way "to fulfill or keep" the law, but as a way of life in which we "walke according to the law."¹¹⁴

The Rhemist annotators also make a preposition-based argument for a role for human merit in justification, arguing in Romans 8:18 that Protestants had twisted the meaning of the verse through the "heretical translation" of ἄξια...πρὸς as "worthy *of*" instead of "worthy *to*."¹¹⁵ Whereas their Protestant "Adversaries" had taken this to mean that our sufferings are not "worthy of" (i.e. able to *merit*) our glory, they argue that Paul is simply saying that our sufferings are not "worthy to" (i.e. equal in *magnitude* to) the glory that is (in some small way) merited by them. Willet's response resists a distinction of meaning between the two prepositional choices by nodding to the Rhemist annotators' grammatical point in his translation of Romans 8 (translating the phrase as "not answerable to") while maintaining the "worthy of" translation of the majority of English Protestant bibles in his Controversies section. He links the two translations by reasoning that "if the sufferings of this life are neither in quantitie nor qualitie proportionable to the

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 479.

¹¹⁵ Martin, *New Testament*, 402.

glorie, which shall be revealed, then can they not be meritorious; for betweene the merit and reward there must be a proportionable equalitie, and an equall proportion.”¹¹⁶ Willet, in essence, acknowledges that $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma$ is more naturally rendered as “to” here, while insisting that to say that our suffering is not equal *to* our glory means *also* that it is not worthy *of*, and cannot in any way merit, our glory. The shift in preposition here, then, indicates not opposing interpretations, but different aspects of the same truth.¹¹⁷

3. Willet’s Identification of Rhetorical Devices in Romans

Despite a preference for literal interpretation, Andrew Willet was not such a rigid literalist as to neglect rhetorical tropes and figures of speech in Romans that fit within a broadly conceived literal sense.¹¹⁸ The identification of these devices provided a tool for reconciling biblical texts that seemed to be at odds with theological conclusions drawn from a collation of other passages, which was especially useful in the post-Reformation era to counter the use of these troubling texts by Roman Catholic polemicists to refute Protestant doctrine. Arguing for Paul’s use of figurative language gave both Protestants and Roman Catholics, then, a measure of interpretive flexibility in drawing doctrines out of the epistle to the Romans. This works, too, against the charge of “proof-texting” levied against scholastic orthodoxy by John H. Hayes and others; the recognition that the

¹¹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 396.

¹¹⁷ The King James Version would break from a 75-year consensus of English Protestant bibles translating this as “not worthy of” by rendering it “not worthy to be compared with.” Cf. the discussion of other aspects of Willet’s disagreement with the Rhemist annotations on Romans 8:18 in II.3.2.3.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:449 on Willet’s leaning toward literal exegesis (more evident in his commentaries on the Old Testament, which holds the potential for more allegorical interpretation than does Paul’s straightforward epistolary form) and on the room within the literal sense for figurative exegesis.

language in many verses could be read in different ways *necessitated* reading these verses within their immediate and broader contexts.¹¹⁹

3.1 Synecdoche

Willet identifies synecdoche (that is, “when a part is put for the whole”)¹²⁰ in Romans more than he does any other rhetorical device, this accounting for nearly one-third of all his comments on Paul’s usage of particular rhetorical techniques.¹²¹ Several of these instances have to do with the relationship between body and soul, with each of these terms standing frequently as shorthand for the entire body-soul unity.¹²² The most interesting example of this from a polemical perspective comes in the context of the series of controversies drawn from Romans 5 dealing with original sin. Addressing “the manner how originall sinne is propagated, against the Pelagians, where it is disputed,

¹¹⁹ Cf. John H. Hayes and Frederick C. Prussner, *Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 14, 19 (cited in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:511-512). See also Muller’s refutation of Hayes and the proof-texting hypothesis in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:509-513 and Muller, *After Calvin*, 50-51, 177-178.

¹²⁰ This particular definition comes from Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 676. The way that Willet introduces these rhetorical devices also says something of his intended reader and how he expected his commentaries to be used. Nearly every time he argues for Paul’s use of synecdoche, for instance, Willet pauses to define the term. This suggests both that he (unsurprisingly) did not expect his audience to read through the commentary systematically, but rather to use it more as a reference tool, and that he did not assume that his readership would be solely an intellectual elite that had training in rhetoric. While his commentaries are dense, we need not conclude that they were “written only for a very learned audience,” contra Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution*, 12. Consider also that his *Synopsis Papismi*, which takes an even more “scholarly” approach than his commentaries, “was popular among both academics and laity” (Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, 91), and recall Patrides’s description of Willet’s work as “the plaine-mans [path]-way to heaven” (I.2.1, n.8).

¹²¹ The 1/3 figure is non-scientific. Willet discusses synecdoche, by my count, in seventeen different places in the Romans hexapla, while commenting on other rhetorical devices roughly thirty-five times.

¹²² Besides the following examples, instances of body-soul synecdoche that Willet points out include Romans 6:12, where “mortall bodie” includes both body and soul (p. 295), 7:25, where “minde” stands for *both* the mind and body of the regenerate (p. 334), the “bodies” of 12:1, which represent both body and soul (p. 536), and “everie soule” in 13:1, by which is understood the whole person (p. 578).

whether the soule be derived from the Parents,” Willet selectively identifies synecdoche in the process of delicately agreeing with the Pelagians’ anti-traducian position while more vehemently repudiating the conclusions they draw concerning original sin. The Pelagians, “to strengthen their error,” had denied the doctrine of original sin by arguing that sin resides in the soul, which is not passed down genetically from one’s parents.¹²³ In refuting this assertion, Willet refuses to adopt the opinion of Tertullian that “the soule of man is derived also *ex traduce*, as they tearme it,” arguing that only the *flesh* is mentioned in Eve’s generation from Adam, and “no mention is made of the soule and spirit of Eve.”¹²⁴ Yet when it says in Genesis 46:26 that “66 soules came out of the loines of Jacob,” this we must read as a synecdoche, the soul representing the whole person, “because of the unities of the person, and the neare conjunction of the soule and bodie, which is true onely in the one part, namely the bodie, which onely came out of the parents loynes.”¹²⁵ Willet’s identification of synecdoche in Genesis wants somewhat for consistency, his selective recognition of this trope aligning with his anti-traducian bent; so if “flesh” is said to be hereditarily begotten, it must be limited to flesh *alone*, but if “souls” are generated, the term is taken rhetorically to stand for the *body* in which the

¹²³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 272.

¹²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 273. Willet adds, citing chapter 10 of *De Genesis ad litteram*, that Augustine too “holdeth [the traducian view] probable.” While Augustine did at times seem to lean toward this interpretation, ultimately the lack of convincing scriptural evidence led him to take an agnostic position on the matter. Cf. Gerard J. P. O’Daly, “Augustine on the Origin of Souls,” in *Platonismus und Christentum: Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie*, ed. H. D. Blume and F. Mann (Münster, Ger.: Aschendorf, 1983), 184-191.

¹²⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 273. This understanding also allows Willet to approve of the title of θεοτοκός for Mary here. Referring to Christ’s mother as the “God bearer” need not imply that any of the divinity came from Mary. All that is communicated is that the divine and human elements had already formed a unity within Christ at the time that Mary bore him. Willet makes no mention of this at this place in the Genesis hexapla, where his focus is instead on reconciling the mention of 66 souls here with the 70 souls of Exodus 1 and the 75 souls in the LXX translation (Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesis, that is a Sixfold Commentarie Upon Genesis* [Cambridge: by John Legat, 1605], 426).

biologically inherited flesh and divinely created soul are united. Having dismissed the traducian approach to refuting the Pelagian rejection of original sin, Willet admits (as we saw earlier) that a confident account of how original sin is propagated may be beyond human capacity. He follows this acknowledgment, though, with an image from Lyra to depict how the process *might* take place: God creates and implants a soul, “concurring in that naturall act of carnall generation,” and the soul is immediately tainted by the sinful flesh, “as a good liquor is infected by the corruption of the vessell.”¹²⁶ In this manner Willet hopes to avoid both the traducian approach that distances God from the immediate creation of souls and the Pelagian view that frees souls from the taint of original sin, as well as the dangerous alternative of God creating souls in a sinful state “agreeable to their corrupt bodies,” which would make God responsible for sin.¹²⁷

Not surprisingly, Protestants and Roman Catholics interpreted references to “faith” in Romans differently, and each side made occasional use of synecdoche to expand a narrower conception of the term, as called for by context and theological commitments. When Paul writes in Romans 12:3 that God has given “to everie one the measure of faith,” Willet joins Vermigli in refusing the explanation given in the

¹²⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 273. The first example of “spirit” being used to mean “liquor” listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from 1612 (Ben Jonson in *Alchemist*), so it is possible that Willet was aware of a double entendre when he used Lyra’s image here (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “spirit”, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.oed.com>).

¹²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 272-273. Calvin seems less concerned with clearing God of moral culpability in his account of the propagation of original sin. In 3.23.7 of the *Institutes* he denies a natural basis for the passing down of the guilt of Adam’s sin, arguing that “it did not take place by reason of nature that, by the guilt of one parent, all were cut off from salvation [...] Scripture proclaims that all mortals were bound over to eternal death in the person of one man [cf. Rom. 5:12ff.]. Since this cannot be ascribed to nature, it is perfectly clear that it has come forth from the wonderful plan of God. It is utterly absurd that these good defenders of God’s righteousness hang perplexed upon a straw yet leap over high roofs! Again I ask: whence does it happen that Adam’s fall irremediably involved so many peoples, together with their infant offspring, in eternal death unless because it so pleased God?” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 955).

interlinear gloss that the reference is to *justifying* faith, since many who were *not* justified received gifts of many kinds from God. Instead, Willet approves both of Vermigli's explanation that "faith" stands here (by metonymy) for "the gifts of faith" and of Beza's reading, in which faith "comprehendeth by a *Synecdoche*, the knowledge of Christ, whereof the habite of justifying faith is a fruit and effect."¹²⁸ This broader reading, to Willet, better encompasses the various gifts (and degrees of gifting) that God grants "to everie one." When, two chapters later, Paul discusses the weak and strong "in faith," it is the immediate context of Paul's words that leads Willet to endorse Piscator's note that "here by faith we may understand the perswasion of the use of things indifferent, by a *synecdoche*, the whole beeing taken for a part."¹²⁹ Willet seems to connect this reading with the important distinction between a faith that is lacking due to obstinacy and one that is flawed by insufficient instruction—the Romans 14 example of divisions over adiaphora illustrating the (less serious) ignorance-based failing. All of this supplements Willet's central argument from Paul's words here that "there is great difference betweene a weake faith, and a false faith: for faith, though it be weake may justifie, so can not a false faith."¹³⁰

The Romanist attempt to expand faith by *synecdoche* to include a broader nexus of virtues, however, Willet dismisses based on his working definition of faith. Willet, citing Vermigli, denies that the faith that was imputed to Abraham as righteousness in Romans 4:3 could be "taken here by a *Synecdoche*, when one part is taken for all, as including workes." While this would seem an exegetical move similar to Willet's

¹²⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 542.

¹²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 626.

¹³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 626.

synecdochic treatment of faith elsewhere, here the reference is clearly to *justifying* faith, which in Protestant understanding is in its very nature independent of good works. And so, “faith cannot include that which it excludeth: if faith justifie without workes, then under workes, cannot faith be comprehended.”¹³¹

We will spend some time in chapter 5 both looking at the “golden chain” in Romans 8 (V.2.3.1) and considering the rhetorical inversion of cause and effect that Willet occasionally identifies throughout Romans (V.2.5). It is fitting here, though, to note an instance within that Romans 8 chain where Willet’s interpretation combines justification and sanctification—which he is normally very careful to keep distinct—through synecdoche. Addressing why Paul skips over sanctification in Romans 8:30—vaulting from justification directly to glorification—Willet explains that “sanctification must be understood, and it is here by a *synecdoche* included in justification, as the more principall.”¹³² While it might seem somewhat surprising that Willet would venture such a close association of sanctification with justification, given how adamantly he criticizes Roman Catholic exegetes for confusing the two elsewhere,¹³³ he reminds us among the moral observations drawn from Romans 8 (citing verse 8:1) of the organic connection between justification and sanctification: “Sanctification must not be severed from justification.”¹³⁴ The two are, in an almost Chalcedonian fashion, both necessarily distinguished and inseparable. Thus, while it may be a fine distinction, it is nonetheless

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 199.

¹³² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 381.

¹³³ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 93, 183, 217, 231, 306, 354, 390. On page 354, for instance, Willet disapproves of the “Papists...who make regeneration a part of justification.” The semantic difference between this and Willet’s claiming that sanctification is, by synecdoche, “included in justification” is quite fine.

¹³⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 402.

an essential one between *confusing* justification with sanctification, and rhetorically including sanctification within justification as its necessary effect.

3.2 Metonymy

A close rhetorical cousin of synecdoche, metonymy—which Willet defines as when the subject is put for the adjunct (as when the sign is given for the thing signified, or the effect for the cause)¹³⁵—also plays a significant role in Willet’s exegesis of Romans. As we will see in a later chapter,¹³⁶ a rhetorical device that *intentionally* inverts cause and effect also increases the complexity of those polemical debates involving the supposed *confusion* of cause and effect. The close association between metonymy and synecdoche is apparent in Willet’s occasional recognition of the two tropes operating in tandem. We have already seen the pairing in Willet’s interpretation of the “measure of faith” in Romans 12:3, which can either point forward (by metonymy) to the effects of faith, or backwards to represent (by synecdoche) the knowledge of Christ from which faith emerges. Part of the distinction, then, is a matter of perspective; with cause and effect, for example, if the two are viewed as different but related, they can be connected by metonymy, but if the effect is seen as being somehow included *within* the cause, the connection can properly be termed synecdoche. The same “double figure is to be admitted” also in reference to Paul’s serving God in his “minde” in 7:25, where the mind can by metonymy represent “the sanctitie and holines wrought in the minde by grace,” or by synecdoche the renewed mind standing in for the regenerate totality of mind *and*

¹³⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 536; 129-130; 541.

¹³⁶ See V.2.5.

body,¹³⁷ and in the mention of “your bodies” in 12:1, where the bodies can (by synecdoche) stand for the body-soul unity, or (by metonymy) the affections residing in the body.¹³⁸

The recognition of some instances of metonymy is a matter of common sense, as the literal meaning would create an absurdity. Such is the case, for instance, in Paul’s referring to Jews and Gentiles not as “the circumcised” and “the uncircumcised,” but as “the circumcision” (ἡ περιτομή) and “the uncircumcision” (ἡ ἀκροβυστία). Willet identifies these titles as examples of metonymy (the characteristic sign representing the people group), with little commentary or argument, the identification being unlikely to stir much controversy.¹³⁹ Other instances, if not necessarily involving matters of great controversy, are not as obviously identified. So, for example, regarding Paul’s statement in Romans 11:24 that the “gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” Willet cites a “strange interpretation” of Ambrose that strains to maintain a literal signification of “repentance” by referring the verse to those who were received into the church by baptism, “of whom such exact repentance is not required.” This understanding, however, fails by falsely assuming that anyone (of age) *could* receive baptism without repentance, by referring the repentance to *sins* rather than to gifts, and by making *humans* the subject of a “repentance” that is attributed by Paul to God. Since God, being perfect, cannot properly “repent,” however, the best interpretation is to discern here “a figure called a

¹³⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 334. Both of these readings, Willet argues, work against the opinion of the Romanists, who “will have the inner man to be the minde, and the sensuall part the flesh,” as though the mind were not also fallen, nor the body redeemed. Willet (perhaps surprisingly, given his penchant for connecting Roman Catholics to ancient heresies) does not explicitly make reference here to the Gnostic heresy.

¹³⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 536.

¹³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 680, 129.

metonymie, when the effect is taken for the cause, *repentance* here signifieth mutation and change, whereof repentance is the cause.”¹⁴⁰ Similarly, Ambrose and Origen both misread Paul’s speaking “by grace” in Romans 12:3, making the “grace” to refer to a particular divinely granted attribute of Paul’s, whether his eloquence or his wisdom. Rather, Willet argues (with Vermigli and Calvin) that the proper reference is, by metonymy, to Paul’s *apostleship*, so that “the Apostle ascribeth his calling unto grace, [and] he thereby both freeth himselfe from all ambition, that he intrudeth not himselfe, as also presseth his Apostolike authority, that they might more readily obey.”¹⁴¹ Again, Willet holds that overlooking Paul’s use of metonymy here leads one to miss some important nuances of his argument.

3.3 Metaphor

As was the case with synecdoche and metonymy, that Paul is using metaphor is beyond dispute in certain places—as when he describes abstract nouns substantively. Even in these cases, though, *how* exactly the metaphor is to be taken can be a matter that is open to some interpretation. When Paul admonishes the Romans, for example, to “put on the armour of light” in verse 13:12, it would strain the laws of logic and of physics to read the image as anything but a metaphor. Willet, thus, jumps right to the signification, explaining that the “metaphor noteth three things”: we must do good works with “diligence” (as armor covers the whole body, and not only one part), “with delight” (as there is “comelines in cloathing the body wherin we delight”), and with “constancie” (as

¹⁴⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 514.

¹⁴¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 541.

armor is not donned just for one brief moment).¹⁴² Willet also identifies Paul’s imagery of “night” and “day” in this verse as metaphor (the transition from night to day representing the present age, which is a mix of darkness and light). All of this comes under the question heading that purports to speak “of the literall sense” of this verse—indicating that the “literal” sense of a text was seen as being broad enough to comprehend tropes such as metaphor.¹⁴³

Other images in Romans are not as plainly metaphorical, and so require a greater measure of argumentation. Willet notes that, in seeking to understand what Paul means by the “sealing of the fruite” that he is delivering to the saints in Jerusalem (Romans 15:28), “some take it literally,” with the “seals” being official stamps indicating how much each church had contributed to the collection.¹⁴⁴ This overly literal reading, however, misses Paul’s point, as “the Apostle useth onely a metaphoricall speech” and means to convey “no more but this”: that he will faithfully deliver what had been entrusted to him.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, a failure to recognize the metaphorical nature of Paul’s language of “bear[ing] the infirmities” of the weak in 15:1 can minimize the true obligations of the strong—for “to beare βαζάζειν, is not onely to tolerate and support” the infirmities of the weak, but it is also “a metaphor taken from the fashion of building, where the pillars doe carrie the weight and burthen of the house”; and supporting the

¹⁴² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 597-598.

¹⁴³ On the breadth of the literal sense, see Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:469-482.

¹⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 699-700. Willet cites Hugo and the interlinear gloss as examples of the “some” holding this opinion. Note that even these exegetes who took the act of sealing “literally” understood the “fruite” (τὸν καρπὸν) to be a metaphor representing a *monetary* gift, and not some kind of first-century Harry and David gift basket.

¹⁴⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 700. The metaphor, Willet adds, was derived from the old practice of sealing letters that were committed to messengers.

weight of a house is surely a greater task than merely tolerating the foibles of a less-mature believer.¹⁴⁶ In addition to helping to reveal *new shades* of meaning in a text, at times properly identifying a metaphor could serve to *equate* the meanings of two texts the meanings of which were apparently disparate, as in Willet’s explanation of the different wordings of Isaiah 28:16 in the Hebrew and the LXX (“make hast[e]” vs. “be ashamed”). Willet explains that Paul’s quoting of the LXX over the original in Romans 9:33 is not an issue, as “there is no great difference in the sense: for that which the Prophet did expresse by a metaphor, the Septuagint doe translate properly.”¹⁴⁷

Touching a more significant polemical issue, Willet also attributed some of the Romanist confusion concerning the Eucharist to their misreading of a metaphor. Without citing any particular exegetes who had associated Romans 12:1 (“present your bodies a living sacrifice”) with the Eucharist, Willet maintains that “the Romanists would prove it out of this place” that this text shows that the Church is required to make a particular external sacrifice, which is best understood as the celebration of the Mass.¹⁴⁸ Willet responds to this line of argument by distinguishing between a *true* sacrifice (Christ on the cross) and “other sacrifices, not properly so called, but *metaphorically*; such are the spiritual sacrifices of Christians” of the sort described by Paul in 12:1. Further, the Mass

¹⁴⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 672.

¹⁴⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, p. 431. This is consistent with the broad pattern of how Willet explained instances where Paul quoted the LXX over the Hebrew, with the senses of the two being the same in these cases, even when the wording differed (cf. II.4.1).

¹⁴⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 571. This supposed reading is a bit far-fetched, given the clear reference in the verse to “your bodies,” and so the reasoning presented here may be more a product of Willet’s imagination than anything actually argued by a Roman Catholic exegete. While Rheims translates “sacrifice” as “host”—maintaining a close connection to the Vulgate’s *hostias*—which may perhaps hint at a connection to the Mass, the Rhemist annotators associated this verse with a willingness to suffer for Christ and an eagerness to perform good deeds, these being “compared to a sacrifice, which is an high service done to [God]” (Martin, *New Testament*, 413).

is not a sacrifice of *either* variety, but rather “a Sacrament, therefore no sacrifice: for a Sacrament is a representation of a thing absent, a sacrifice is an oblation of a thing present.”¹⁴⁹ The respective characteristics of sacraments and sacrifices, argues Willet, make the two mutually exclusive, and properly identifying the “sacrifice” in Romans 12:1 as a *metaphor* keeps the exegete from plundering the concrete elements from the realm of the sacraments in search of a physical sacrifice that we can offer to God.

Given the interpretive flexibility inherent in identifying and explaining certain metaphors, it is not surprising that Willet also rejects several of his opponents’ attributions of metaphor to various texts. Concerning Paul’s language of “redemption” in Romans 3:24-25, for instance, Willet insists against those who would tame the term by making it a mere metaphor that it “is not metaphorically so called; but it is a very true redemption: there beeing all things concurring in redemption: the captives, which are men, the redeemer Christ, the price his blood, and from whom we are redeemed, from Sathan, hell, and damnation.”¹⁵⁰ In the subsequent Controversies section, Willet connects this misunderstanding directly to the Socinians, whose understanding of salvation was incongruous with a redemption price. Here Willet argues “*against Socinus that Christ properly redeemed us by paying the ransome for us, and not metaphorically,*” explaining that simply because the language of redemption *could* be used metaphorically to exclude a literal payment (as in the Exodus 15:13 description of the exodus) does not mean that it should be read this way in every case.¹⁵¹ Willet also rejects the sixteenth-century Roman

¹⁴⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 571.

¹⁵⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 178.

¹⁵¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 188. Though the redemption itself is partly *from* Satan, Willet insists that the ransom price is paid *to God*: “There is a difference between corporall and spirituall bondage: for there the price is paid to the enemie, as to the great Turke, to get the captives out of his hand: but here

Catholic Oleaster's attempt to soften Moses' request in Exodus 32:31 that God blot him out of his book (which is raised as a parallel to Paul's similar expression in Romans 9:3) by making it a kind of metaphor, stating that "it is more then a metaphoricall speech, as is evident by the Lords answer."¹⁵²

3.4 *A Minori ad Maius*

Willet also frequently comments on Paul's use of *a minori ad maius* ("from the lesser to the greater") arguments, which Paul often marks clearly by such expressions as "how much more" (πόσῳ μᾶλλον). Many of these instances come in the context of Romans 11, where God's salvific work among the Jews and Gentiles broadly follows a "lesser to greater" pattern. Willet's emphasis on this *a minori* movement is evident in his repeated highlighting of the device in his presentation of the sum and parts of chapter 11: God's end regarding the Jews is "amplified...v. 12. by an argument from the lesse to the greater: that if the world gained so much by the rejection of the Jewes, much more by their conversion"; that the Gentiles ought not to boast is supported "by an argument from the greater to the lesse: if God spared not the naturall branches, much lesse the unnaturall, v. 19, 20, 21"; and Paul's hope for the conversion of the Jews "is amplified, by the efficient, the power of God, and by an argument from the lesse to the greater, v. 24."¹⁵³

the price is paid to God, not to deliver us from him, but to reconcile us unto him." And this ransom price (the blood of Christ) is required by God not because "God thirsted for the blood of his Sonne, but after mans salvation, *quia salus erat in sanguine*, because there was health in his blood" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 189, 190).

¹⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 411. While it may seem obvious to take God's response into consideration in determining the meaning of Moses' words, it is worth noting that context plays a significant role in Willet's interpretive method.

¹⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 488. The second of the three cited here is technically an argument *a maiori ad minus*, but the basic principle of argument by variation of degree is the same. Indeed,

Despite the grim warning culminating in verse 21's "*take heede*, [lest] he also spare not thee," Willet reads this section as a word of strong assurance, noting that its *a minori* logic implicitly rules out an alternate logical pattern of parallelism that would have dire consequences for Gentiles: since "the falling away of the Jewes was an occasion of the calling of the Gentiles: it might be objected, that the conversion of the Jewes might likewise be an occasion of the falling away of the Gentiles." Paul, however, rejects this implied possibility, and "he confirmeth his answer by an argument from the lesse to the greater."¹⁵⁴ God's having drawn Gentile faith from Jewish infidelity does not lead to the *converse* of Jewish conversion occasioning Gentile rejection; rather, if God can transform unfaithfulness into blessing, *how much more* can he draw good from faithfulness: "for there is a greater force in that which is good, then in that which is evill."¹⁵⁵

When Willet arrives at the Controversies section of Romans 11, he applies Paul's "lesser to greater" pattern to the prevailing theme of election by grace in order to defend a Reformed understanding of certainty and perseverance. Stapleton and Pererius had interpreted verse 11:29 ("the gifts and calling of God are without repentance") as referring solely to the general election of the Jewish nation—and the lack of "repentance," moreover, meaning not that God could not change his mind, but that he did not regret the initial act of electing the Jews. Willet's own preferred interpretation (which is consistent with "the judgement of *Tolet* a more worthie man, both for his judgement

the difference is largely semantic: "much lesse [will he spare] the unnaturall" could just as easily be expressed "how much more will he not spare the unnatural."

¹⁵⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 502. A similar argument can be found on p. 505.

¹⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 515.

and dignitie in the Papall Church”)¹⁵⁶ refutes this limitation on the scope of the constancy of God’s election. Though Paul does not employ his *a minori* reasoning himself in this verse, the “lesser to greater” spirit that pervades Romans 11 still informs Willet’s reading of this passage: “The argument followeth not, because the Apostle speaketh of a generall calling and adoption, therefore this sentence can not be applied unto particular election: nay it followeth more strongly; if the common adoption be immutable, much more the particular vocation of the elect.”¹⁵⁷ Since Willet considers particular election to hold greater weight than general election, it logically follows that if the latter is irrevocable, so must be the former.

Paul’s image of the potter and clay, also drawn from the Romans 9-11 unit (verse 9:21) illustrates the potential challenge in distinguishing similitudes from opposites. Absent a clear marker like “how much more,” a similitude cannot always be infallibly identified as such. “Lukewarm” and “scalding” can, for instance, be taken as two ways of describing heat, differing only by degree—or they can be used as opposites, as in Revelation 3:15-16, with one denoting an extreme and the other a passionless middle ground. Thus, when Jerome commented on the Romans 9 potter image, he erred—in Willet’s judgment—by making “this a dissimilitude rather than a similitude, in this sense: O man thinke not, that God hath made thee like a peice of clay, without any will or motion: for the clay cannot answer the potter any thing: but thou makest answer to God.”¹⁵⁸ Chrysostom correctly recognized the analogy as a similitude, but made the

¹⁵⁶ For more on Willet’s practice of pitting various Roman Catholic exegetes against one another, see VII.3.1.

¹⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 528.

¹⁵⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 423.

connection too limited. Erasmus, likewise, focused on the similarity between humans and the clay, though he restricted God's potter-like control to temporal, non-salvific matters.¹⁵⁹ The proper reading, Willet thus argues, is that "the Apostle in the enforcing of this similitude, reasoneth *à minori*, from the lesse to the greater, that if a potter have such power over his vessels which he maketh, God hath much more over the creature, to frame and fashion it, as it may best serve for his glorie."¹⁶⁰ The varied interpretations of this passage reflect each exegete's understanding of election, whether in seeking to defend the sovereignty of the human will, as Jerome and Erasmus, or in emphasizing God's sovereignty as Creator, as Willet and other Reformed readers.

Similarly implicit, though having more to do with ethics than polemics, are Paul's *a minori* arguments concerning the Christian's responsibility for the weak brethren in Romans 14-15. These exhortations draw on the moral implications of Christ's self-sacrifice and the natural preference for friends over enemies. Considering questions drawn from Romans 14, Willet applies *a minori* logic to Paul's reminder in verse 15 that Christ gave his life for the weak ("destroy not him with thy meate, for whom Christ died"). Willet draws on Chrysostom's "amplification" of this verse, summarizing his argument: "Christ refused not death for him, thou... wilt not for thy brothers cause, neglect thy meate: Christ died for his enemy, thou wilt not doe this for thy brother."¹⁶¹ Again, in the following question (in the context of refuting those—Chrysostom included—who read this verse as suggesting that those for whom Christ died truly could

¹⁵⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 423-424.

¹⁶⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 424. Willet does acknowledge that there *are* certain dissimilarities between a human and a lump of clay—including Jerome's point that "clay hath no motion or understanding, as man hath"—though he presents these as clearly subordinate to the primary similitude.

¹⁶¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 645.

be lost) Willet makes the “lesser to greater” progression more explicit: “if Christ gave his life to redeeme him, much more should we give a piece of flesh to help save him.”¹⁶² In the following chapter, Willet draws instead on the scriptural injunction to care for one’s enemies when he expounds on Paul’s verse 15:1 counsel that “we which are strong ought to beare the infirmities of the weake, and not to please our selves.” The reasoning, though, still follows the *a minori* pattern: “the law of God...prescribeth, that if our enemies asse should lie downe under his burthen, we should help him up, Deut. 22.4. how much more ought we to shew this compassion to our weake brother?”¹⁶³ In this instance Paul neither makes the *a minori* connection explicit nor even references the comparison to loving one’s enemies, but Willet draws these elements together through a collation of texts to express what he deems to be an implicit aspect of Paul’s argument.

3.4.1 A Minori Logic and Politics

There is much to be said about the various political ramifications of Romans 13, but we will limit ourselves here to *a minori* reasoning regarding magistrates as this was employed by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. In this context Willet first uses this type of argument to defend just war, claiming that Paul’s statement in 13:4 that the civil magistrate “beareth not the sword in vaine: for he is the Minister of God, and revenger

¹⁶² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 646. In the course of addressing this question, Willet makes use of the distinction between the “*sufficiencie*” and “*efficacie*” of Christ’s death, commenting that, as Christ “died sufficiently for all,” if this is all that is meant by “for whom Christ died,” then one of these *could* truly perish. But those for whom Christ died “effectually” cannot perish. For more on the distinction between the sufficiency and efficiency of Christ’s atoning work, see Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 75-78, 88-96. Willet additionally draws on the distinction between the visible and invisible Church, commenting that—because of our limited knowledge—“the Apostle speaketh not exactly and precisely of those, whom in deede Christ died for, but of such, as in our charitable opinion, are held to be of that number.”

¹⁶³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 673.

for wrath on him, that doth evill” puts it “out of doubt, that it is lawfull for the Magistrate to take in hand just and lawfull warre.”¹⁶⁴ After citing biblical examples of lawful use of force, Willet reasons from the (what he takes to be) more widely accepted role of the ruler protecting individuals to a defense of a broader use of force: “if it be the Magistrates office and party to defend every particular person from wrong, much more the whole people.”¹⁶⁵

Later in the chapter, amid several controversies dealing with “arguments against the Lordship peramount of the Pope above Kings and Princes,” Willet uses *a minori* logic to discredit the temporal ambitions of the papacy. He develops this argument in reference both to the power allotted to the apostles and to that assumed by Christ. Since Christ instructed his apostles (Matthew 20:25 and Luke 22:25) to lead as servants and not to “have dominion” in the manner of worldly kings, it follows that the apostles should not presume to rule over those same kings: “if no Lordly dominion be permitted them over others, much lesse over Princes.”¹⁶⁶ And so the Pope, claiming his authority through apostolic succession, could not then place himself above kings and princes. Similarly, in eschewing worldly ambition and identifying his own kingdom as being “not of this world,” Christ himself “by his owne example...confirmeth the same.” And Christ’s

¹⁶⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 587.

¹⁶⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 587-588. Of course, volumes have been filled with the further question of precisely what *constitutes* “just” warfare, and Willet cites a few instances that would meet his standards —when a country is invaded, when bound by a league to help an ally, or (a somewhat looser sanction) “in the quarrell of religion and defence of the truth.”

¹⁶⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 607. The exegetical basis for Willet’s disagreement with Bellarmine on this issue is rooted in the different terms that Matthew (κατακυριεύειν) and Luke (κυριεύειν) use to describe the manner of Gentile government. Neither Bellarmine nor Willet assumes a discrepancy between the evangelists’ meanings, but where Bellarmine emphasizes Matthew’s *κατα-* prefix to argue that in each case Jesus is forbidding only *tyrannical* rule, Willet argues that Matthew’s use of the compound form suggests nothing beyond Luke’s simple form, so that in each case “all kind of temporall rule is simply forbidden” the apostles.

example, likewise, bears on the power claims of the Pope: “If Christ then assumed not the person and office of a temporall Prince in earth, what warrant hath the Pope, who challengeth to be Christs Vicar in earth to arrogate more, then Christ himselfe tooke upon him.”¹⁶⁷ In each of these cases Willet’s argument relies on *a minori* logic rooted in the varied degree of a person’s dignity—if no dominion over *commoners*, much less over *princes*; if no worldly kingdom for *Christ*, surely not for one claiming to be his (mere) *representative*.

In his corresponding defense of the authority that civil magistrates have in ecclesiastical matters, Willet challenges a Roman Catholic attempt at *a minori* logic. Thomas Stapleton had reasoned that since princes could not perform the “lesser” tasks of preaching and administering the sacraments, neither could they do the “greater” task of governing the church.¹⁶⁸ Willet refutes this argument in two ways, both reframing the matter as a question of vocation and explaining that *a minori* logic does not operate as an absolute principle in every instance. First, Willet counters by arguing that pastoral tasks and church governance are “in divers respects both lesse and greater”—the first the greater in spiritual power and the latter in external authority. The civil magistrate does not perform ministerial duties only “because he is not thereunto called”; such vocational matters cannot be settled by simply referencing a hierarchy of roles, because these matters depend on God’s calling and distribution of gifts and tasks. Moreover, even if

¹⁶⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 607.

¹⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 611. Thomas Stapleton, *Principiorum fidei doctrinalium relectio scholastica* (Antwerp: Ioannem Keerbergium, 1596), 258: “Ergo non possunt iudicare de vera doctrina verbi, dare potestatem praedicandi verbum, dare potestatem administrandi Sacramenta, praescriberitus & ceremonias circa Sacramentorum administratione, aut ullo modo regere & dirigere Ecclesiam circa talia. Probatur consequentia, quia qui non potest quod minus est facere, nec quod maius est in eodem genere unquam poterit facere.”

preaching were deemed a lesser duty than governing, that alone would not disqualify the magistrate from having ecclesiastical functions, as it is not “alwaies true, he that can not doe the lesse, can not doe the greater.” Because some tasks are “not beseeming” a person of a certain nobility, one may be granted great responsibilities even while being barred from lesser duties—as (in Willet’s example) it is unfit for a prince to dig ditches, though he performs the much greater role of making laws.¹⁶⁹ Thus Willet rejects Stapleton’s use of “lesser to greater” reasoning on both logical and contextual grounds.

3.5 Other Rhetorical Devices

Several other rhetorical devices that Willet identifies in Romans do not occur frequently enough to warrant separate subsections, yet are worth mentioning to broaden our picture of the rhetorical instruments in Willet’s exegetical toolbox; among these devices we find hendiadys, prosopopoeia, and hypallage. While he does not use the technical term for the trope, Willet’s insistence in his explication of Romans 1:5 (“By whom we have received grace and Apostleship”) that Paul is not referring to separable entities clearly implies the use of hendiadys. Against exegetes like Theodoret and Tolet who read grace and apostleship as “two distinct things,” Willet argues that “the particle καὶ, *and*, is put by way of exposition, *grace*, that is *Apostleship*.”¹⁷⁰ This insistence that Paul’s καὶ denotes an explication rather than a separation (so that the phrase communicates something like “the grace *of* apostleship” or “gracious apostleship”) emphasizes that Paul’s vocation was not merely aided or amplified by grace, but that it

¹⁶⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 611.

¹⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 43. For a more detailed discussion of the theological interpretation of conjunctions, see section III.2.

was, through and through, a product of God’s unconstrained and gracious activity. Willet makes a similar rhetorical argument about the relationship between grace and *election* in Romans 11:5, though there the two terms are linked not by a conjunction but in a genitive construction (“ἐκλογὴν χάριτος”). Where certain Church Fathers like Chrysostom and Origen (“in his wandring speculation”) had sought here to draw a distinction between an election based on grace and one incorporating foresight of good works, Willet explains that *all* election is entirely of grace, noting that “here the Apostle useth an Hebraisme, the *election of grace*, for gracious election.”¹⁷¹

Paul’s reference in Romans 8:19-23 to all creation “groaning” under the burden of sin forces an interpretive decision regarding the nature of this groaning, which serves in turn to identify the “creatures” in question. Origen and Augustine, for instance, in reading this waiting and groaning in a more literal sense, were constrained to attribute it to *sensate* creatures—whether human beings (Augustine) or angels or preincarnate human souls (Origen).¹⁷² Willet, with Chrysostom and a host of others,¹⁷³ takes the groaning metaphorically and attributes it to insensate or senseless creatures, rejecting Augustine’s reading because humans are distinguished from these creatures by the “we also” in verse

¹⁷¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 492. Thomas Wilson also identifies this construction as a Hebraism, commenting that Paul’s expression tells us that “election unto eternall life proceedeth from the free favour and grace of God” (Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 867).

¹⁷² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 366.

¹⁷³ Cf. Pareus, *Ad Romanos*, 737: “In utroq; est prosopoeia seu fictio poetica. Tribuit huic universo & rebus brutis atque inanimis affectus humanos”; Dickson, *Exposition of All St. Pauls Epistles*, 20: “the whole frame of the world” here is “figuratively propounded”; Wilson, *A Commentarie upon... Romanes*, 583: “There is in this phrase both a Prosopoeia, and a Pleonasmus. For he putteth upon the creature the person of one who most desirously expecteth and looketh after some person or thing.” Additionally, Willet cites Irenaeus, Hilary, Tolet, Rollock, and Bucanus as holding to this interpretation.

23, and Origen’s speculations for obvious reasons.¹⁷⁴ Paul, Willet explains, is using the “figure called *prosopopeia* ascribing unto the unreasonable and senseless creatures, a kind of sense and feeling of their miserie, and longing desire to be eased from it.”¹⁷⁵ The recognition of this form of personification allows Willet to follow the logic of the passage, rather than beginning with the assumption of a literal groaning and then straining the logic in search of creatures capable of such longing. As such, it is a rare instance of Origen erring because of an *overly* literal interpretation.

Willet later identifies an instance of hypallage (“which is the putting of one word in an others case”) as part of a triple figure in verse 15:19; he terms Paul’s reference to Jerusalem and Illyricum a synecdoche—each “country” representing its citizens—and in Paul’s expression “I have replenished the Gospel” (πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) he notes both the use of metaphor (associating the act of “replenishing” or “filling” with the world of fishing) and hypallage, arguing that Paul is not claiming to have filled up the gospel (with the people), but to “have filled them with the Gospel.”¹⁷⁶ Whether metaphor

¹⁷⁴ Willet dismisses Origen here with a pun, commenting that his speculation about the referent of “vanitie...is vaine.” Origen’s suggestion was that preincarnate human souls were subject to vanity by being thrust into corruptible bodies (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 365-366). While too Platonized for Willet’s sensibilities, Origen’s interpretation shares a logic with Lyra’s image (III.3.1) offering a non-traducian explanation of the propagation of original sin; the main difference is that Origen’s untarnished souls existed from eternity, while Lyra’s were “made to order” by God at the time of their entry into bodies.

¹⁷⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 366. While claiming no certainty and presenting his position only as the “most probable,” Willet limits this metaphorical groaning (and literal next-world restoration)—to the chagrin of Don Bluth and other canine universalists—to inanimate elements of the created order. He gives five arguments for why “no living creatures...but onely man” will experience immortality, along with “the heavens and the earth, and the elements between them,” focusing on the eternal utility of each (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 371-373).

¹⁷⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 691. See III.3.1 and III.3.3 for Willet’s discussion of Paul’s use of synecdoche and metaphor in Romans. Pareus also identifies synecdoche and hypallage in this verse. Pareus, *Commentarius...ad Romanos*, 1617. Rollock makes the same inversion as Willet (taking the genitive *Evangelium* as though it were a dative, *Evangelio*), but without the technical label of “hypallage”: “Videtur dictum esse (im plevrim Evangelium Christi) pro (impleverim omnia loca Evangelio Christi)” (Rollock, *Analysis Dialectica...in...Romanos*, 307). So also the Dutch Annotations: “*I have fulfilled the Gospel of Christ.*” [that is, I have filled all those lands with the preaching and knowledge of the Gospel of

and synecdoche are identified in this verse has little theological significance,¹⁷⁷ but reading the expression “fill the gospel” as an hypallage does impact how Paul’s words are interpreted: namely, is the gospel conceived of as a kind of vessel to be filled, or as a kind of substance that fills its recipients? Willet’s preference for the latter conception seems to stem from a concern not to suggest that the gospel was somehow lacking apart from Paul’s evangelistic efforts—in response to a series of interpretations that focused on the perfection of Paul’s theology, Willet counters: “but [Paul] sheweth here onely the largenes and extent of his preaching, not the perfection of his doctrine.”¹⁷⁸ This reading of Paul’s words as a rhetorical inversion of subject and adjunct logically follows from his words in the preceding verse (“I dare not speake of any thing which Christ hath not wrought by me”), which Willet had explained as Paul attributing the full efficacy of his ministry to Christ.¹⁷⁹ Especially in light of this message in 15:18, taking 15:19 as an hypallage seems to be Willet’s way of emphasizing that the deficiency in need of remedy was in the people—not in the gospel.

Christ.]” (Theodore Haak, trans., *The Dutch Annotations Upon the whole Bible: Or, all the Holy Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament* [London: Henry Hills, for John Rothwell, Joshua Kirton, and Richard Tomlins, 1657]). Thomas Wilson’s interpretation combines a kind of hypallage (by inserting a “with,” so as to read “filled the gospel” as “filled *with* the gospel”) and a metonymy (interpreting “gospel” as “the faith of Christ” (Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 1223-1224).

¹⁷⁷ That the cities cited comprehended also the people living there could be taken for granted, even without considering this an instance of synecdoche—no one argues that Paul was preaching to the inanimate elements that made up the cities’ infrastructures (not even those elements personified as “groaning” for release from bondage); and if Paul intended *πεπληρωκέναι* as a fishing metaphor it would represent, as a matter of curiosity, a rare instance of Paul employing one of the very common images from the gospel narratives, but—again—the metaphor alone would not alter the plain meaning of Paul’s words.

¹⁷⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 691.

¹⁷⁹ (see IV.2.3).

4. Conclusion

Given the priority of the literal sense in Protestant orthodox exegesis, Andrew Willet's detailed attention to grammatical concerns as the foundation of his polemical interpretation of Romans comes as no surprise. In his disciplined hexapla form, he ensures that each chapter of his commentary begins with an analysis of questions and disputes arising from the linguistic elements of Paul's epistle. We have seen in this chapter how an exegetical choice like the meaning conveyed by a preposition or the identification of a rhetorical device can be intimately connected to the interpretation of a passage, both shaping an exegete's understanding and being influenced by that exegete's broader theological commitments. These linguistic arguments were common to both Reformed and Roman Catholic interpreters in the Post-Reformation period, so a polemical exegete like Willet had to rely on convincing contextual arguments and finely-tuned grammatical observations in order to make a persuasive case for his particular application of these methodological tools.

In his effort to refute interpretations that he deemed heterodox—or at least tending away from orthodoxy—Willet reasoned from prepositions to argue against the Roman Catholic invocation of saints, to intensify the union with Christ effected in baptism, and to counter an Erasmian reading that he feared could be used to support Pelagianism. We have also seen how his rhetorical arguments sought to protect the assurance and perseverance of the elect and the privileged place of faith in the economy of salvation.

This chapter has also helped demonstrate the importance of polemical context to understanding a position. This was especially evident in the polemical chain of

interpretations in Romans 5:12 and its connection to original sin doctrine. There we saw exegetes reacting to the dangerous implications of prior readings, and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors selectively citing a sometimes ambiguous tradition, in which a different polemical context had not demanded the same level of precision in defining the issue. The polemical demands of Willet's era created both a "common enemy" for Reformed exegetes that served as an organizing principle for the articulation of shared central concerns, and a need for a heightened precision of thought that at times revealed differing nuances within a broad Reformed tradition.¹⁸⁰ Significantly, however, Willet's focus on the papist enemy in no way diminishes or subverts his critical approach to the text and to other exegetes; his polemical hermeneutic is fully compatible with his commitment to textually faithful exegesis. When necessary he is willing to differ from fellow Reformed exegetes, and even to approve of valid interpretations given by his adversaries. This suggests a thoroughly *theological* basis for his anti-Catholic fervor; were his enmity more political, personal, or pathological, we would expect a more rigid allegiance to the Protestant party line. As it is, his anti-papist polemical lens guides and organizes—but does not replace—his careful exegetical work.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:64, on the role of polemics in increasing the specificity of an argument.

CHAPTER IV. CONFUSION OF CAUSES

1. Introduction

In addition to his prodigious talent as a textual scholar, Andrew Willet was well versed in Aristotelian philosophy. The curriculum when he was at Cambridge incorporated Aristotelian logic throughout.¹ Willet's first published work, *De aeminae natura* (1585), was an academic teaching manual on the soul that drew heavily from Aristotle—the “only work [of its kind] published in England during the sixteenth century.”² Thomas Fuller adds (in one of his few pieces of information not drawn from the biography by Peter Smith) that this work was preceded by a manuscript that Willet wrote at nineteen in which he defended “his Master *Aristotle*” against the Ramist William Temple.³ Given this familiarity with and respect for Aristotle, it is not surprising that Willet employs a modified Aristotelian causal model throughout the Romans hexapla as a tool for parsing precisely where his papist foes had gone astray in their formulations of different doctrines. In so doing, he appears to endorse Aristotle's principle that to “know”

¹ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 93, 96, 111; Paul R. Schaefer, “Protestant ‘Scholasticism’ at Elizabethan Cambridge: William Perkins and a Reformed Theology of the Heart,” in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, ed. Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark (Cumbria, UK: Paternost Press, 1999), 150-151. Cf. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:362.

² Charles B. Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983), 20n27. Schmitt describes the work as “largely, but by no means exclusively, Aristotelian in orientation,” and writes that Willet's various sources “indicate humanistic Aristotelianism of a distinctly northern Protestant flavour” (p. 70); Andrew Willet, *De animae natura et viribus quaestiones quaedam* (Cambridge: Thomas², 1585). Cf. also McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press*, vol. 1, 95.

³ Fuller, *Abel Redevivus*, 567. Fuller adds that he had seen a copy of this work, noting especially that it contained a dedicatory epistle, “as if he had intended it for the presse.” Per Muller, Ramism was not necessarily anti-Aristotelian, and many Ramists maintained various Aristotelian assumptions (Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:368).

something is to know its causes.⁴

While his background made him particularly conversant with Aristotelian logical tools, Willet's frequent use of a filtered and modified Aristotelianism reflects a common pattern among the Reformed orthodox of an "eclectic Christian Aristotelianism" assisting in their polemical need for increased precision of thought.⁵ It must be emphasized that the manner in which Willet applies these Aristotelian tools strongly contradicts the Rogers-McKim theory of a Protestant scholastic "reliance on Aristotelian syllogistic reasoning" in pursuit of a "rational defense of a settled deposit of doctrines" and which tended to "subject scriptural material to inappropriate Aristotelian or Cartesian modes of presentation."⁶ As we look at Willet's use of Aristotelian causal distinctions, we will see a consistent pattern of the Philosopher's tools serving as a subservient interpretive aid to the Apostle's theological message.⁷

2. Multiple Causality

Aristotle's model of fourfold causality, consisting of efficient, formal, material,

⁴ David Ross, *Aristotle*, 6th ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 74. Cf. also "Definitions and Aitia," in Marguerite Deslauriers, *Aristotle on Definition*, 81-112 (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2007); R. J. Hankinson, "Philosophy of Science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 109-139. Willet's frequent use of causal reasoning supports J. V. Fesko's contention (refuting Mark A. Garcia) that causal language in the early modern period was not unique to the Lutheran tradition (Fesko, *Beyond Calvin*, 38-39).

⁵ Cf. Muller, *After Calvin*, 35, 55-56. On early modern causality, cf. chapters 15-18 in Franco Burgersdijk, *Institutionum logicarum, libri duo* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1637); Franco Burgersdijk, *Monitio logica, or, An abstract and translation of Burgersdicius his logick* (London: for Ric. Cumberland, 1697).

⁶ Rogers and McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, 186.

⁷ Cf. especially Muller's pair of essays: Richard A. Muller, "Scholasticism, Reformation, Orthodoxy, and the Persistence of Christian Aristotelianism," *Trinity Journal* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 81-96; Richard A. Muller, "Reformation, Orthodoxy, 'Christian Aristotelianism,' and the Eclecticism of Early Modern Philosophy," *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 81, no. 3 (2001): 306-325.

and final causes, had a tremendous impact on medieval philosophy (especially in Aquinas's logic),⁸ and remained the standard causal lens for both the Reformers and the Protestant orthodox.⁹ Aristotle inherited the material and formal causes from the earlier Greek philosophical tradition and described these as, respectively, that out of which a thing is made, and the structure or pattern that makes it one thing rather than another. Whereas Plato had conceived of matter and form as each having an independent existence, for Aristotle the formal cause inhered as an active principle within material, sensible things.¹⁰ Aristotle additionally expanded the traditional two causes to include also the efficient cause (the agent that produces change) and the final cause (the purpose or end).¹¹ Aristotle held that none of the individual causes were sufficient to explain an effect and, in general, all four were necessary.¹² The various causes could, however, overlap with one another (as when the form in a natural thing also acts as the efficient and final cause, moving the entity towards its purpose),¹³ and one thing could function as

⁸ See Michael J. Dodds, "Causality in Aquinas," in *Unlocking Divine Action* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 11-44; Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 136-142; *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, s.v. "Aristotle in the Middle Ages." Cf. also "The Interpretation of Aristotle's Physics and the Science of Motion," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg, 521-536 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁹ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:367-369, 373. Cf. also *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Aristotelianism in the 17th Century."

¹⁰ Dodds, "Causality in Aquinas," 11-12, 15-27; Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 120; Ross, *Aristotle*, 74.

¹¹ Dodds, "Causality in Aquinas," 12, 28-33. Ross notes that the efficient and final are the two that fit best with our common modern conception of a "cause," matter and form seeming to us more as "static elements," (Ross, *Aristotle*, 75). In the movie *Happy Gilmore*, Happy draws on the logic of final causality when his putt misses the cup and he yells at his golf ball: "Why didn't you go home? That's your home! Are you too good for your home?!" (*Happy Gilmore*, directed by Dennis Dugan, Universal Pictures, 1996).

¹² Ross, *Aristotle*, 75.

¹³ Ross, *Aristotle*, 77; Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 124-125. Allen adds that

different kinds of causes depending on the perspective, as when a brick is viewed either as a form (the informed clay) or as matter (the material cause of a different end—say, a brick wall).¹⁴

The Protestant orthodox used the fourfold causality model as a means for structuring the discussion of an issue, taking the earlier Reformers' acceptance of the model and expanding its application into new debates.¹⁵ Muller's description of the loosely defined "Aristotelianism" that characterized much of the Reformed scholastic philosophical framework focuses on the issue of multiple causality: "a view of the universe that affirms both a primary and a secondary causality, that assumes the working of first and final causality through the means of instrumental, formal, and material causes, and that, using this paradigm, can explain various levels of necessary and contingent existence."¹⁶ This description accurately summarizes Willet's own use of Aristotle to structure his exegetically derived definitions into polemically-potent arguments.

2.1 Compatibility of Multiple Levels of Causality

At the most basic level, arguments based on multiple causality acknowledge that various levels of causation can coexist and together achieve an effect. Whereas the post-

"unlike Plato's Forms, Aristotle's forms have a built-in *telos* or end. Aristotle detects or specifies a form by means of ends or goals achieved," (p. 121). For natural things, this essentially reduces the causes to the material and the formal. Applying this concept to the Protestant critique of Roman Catholic soteriology, we might say that, by giving too much efficiency to faith (an instrumental cause often functioning like the formal), Roman Catholics were treating justification as a natural process.

In the theological application of Aristotle's causes, we might add, we still find overlap within the causes, as with theology itself, which has God as both the material and efficient cause—it is *God's* revelation of *himself* (Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:244).

¹⁴ Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 122.

¹⁵ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:238.

¹⁶ Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:372.

Enlightenment approaches to causal relationships would tend to account for an effect with relation to a single efficient cause, this older, broadly Aristotelian tradition recognized a plurality of reasons both for why an effect came about at all, and why it came about in one way rather than another. We will see that this distinction of causes is often used to explain the relationship between human and divine agency and to establish the proper balance between the extremes of Pelagianism and determinism. Other times, however, the distinction is more exemplary than effective. Willet cites Augustine's use of this argument to explain why Paul "distinguisheth the benefits of redemption" in Romans 4:25, with Christ's death causing our forgiveness and our justification stemming from Christ's resurrection.¹⁷ While Willet in this case is not entirely satisfied with Augustine's explanation, he agrees that the Apostle is "not really distinguishing them in the causes," but rather showing the complementary nature of Christ's passion and resurrection in working salvation for the elect. Since *both* of these cause *both* remission of sins and justification, their causality is "discerned, rather than distinguished."¹⁸ While this principle of multiple causality was commonplace in Willet's day, even in his age he still had to engage in debate over which causes conjoined in bringing about particular effects and which did not. We find this clarification, for instance, in the Controversies section of Romans 3, where Willet answers Pererius's argument that assurance cannot come from faith because it is properly wrought by a good conscience with the statement that "there may be divers causes of one and the same thing." Just because the *sun* gives off heat, he

¹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 217.

¹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 219. Related to this notion of an "exemplary cause" are Christ's *formal* prayers to the Father, which he made as an example to his followers, and God's complaining of sinners, which functions as a means by which they might be "pricked in heart" and brought to repentance (pp. 385, 444).

explains, does not mean that heat cannot also be generated by *fire*.¹⁹ Assurance, then, is sustained and increased by the conscience, but it is *born* of faith. Naturally, Roman Catholic polemicists frequently used the very same logical argument against Protestants with regard to faith's role in justification—that is, just because faith justifies does not mean that other graces do not contribute as well to justification. The difference here between Roman Catholics and Protestants, thus, is not strictly a matter of how each party understood multiple causality, but of how each applied the concept to support differing theological frameworks.

An issue in Romans 13 demonstrates more specifically the coexistence of primary and secondary causes. In the course of arguing that all earthly rulers have their power from God, Willet addresses the possible objection that magistrates are known rather to be appointed by *humans* by averring that “the second causes exclude not the first.” He goes on to illustrate this truth with a very Pauline image: “as the fruits of the earth are brought forth by the industrie and labour of man, yet cease they not to bee Gods gifts.”²⁰

In most cases secondary causes are *necessary*, even with God's primary causality infallibly operating. The Reformed scholastics assumed that God, as the primary cause, was ultimately responsible for all ontological motions,²¹ but they also acknowledged that God tended to work *through* the agency of secondary causes acting according to their natures. Willet sees this understanding reflected in Paul's request for prayer in Romans 15:30, concluding that “the meanes working under Gods providence are not to be

¹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 185.

²⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 581.

²¹ Here we see Aristotle's influence on Reformed scholasticism filtered through Aquinas, who held that all efficiency in the universe depended upon God's primary efficient causality. Cf. Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 139.

neglected.” Citing Origen, who “well observeth” this truth, Willet explains that Paul “knew praier to be necessarie, even in those things, which he knew would certenly come to passe.”²² In these sorts of situations, navigating between God’s primary causality and secondary human means requires avoiding the twin perils of relying entirely upon the means with a “carnall confidence,” and neglecting the means, which is “presumption and a tempting of God.”²³ Secondary causes assume a significant role also in situations that lack the certainty of a specific divine promise. When Paul expresses his hope of traveling to Spain in Romans 15, Willet interprets Paul’s “I trust” to mean that he “is not sure, but hopeth well.” While acknowledging that all things are ordered by God’s providence, Willet argues that Paul’s hope here falls short of assurance “in respect of the second causes; because he knew not how his navigation should fall out” regarding water currents and weather patterns.²⁴

The opening of Romans 12, where Paul “beseeches” his readers “by the mercie of God” to worship God properly, presents an opportunity to make a similar point in relation to evangelism and exhortation. Though our salvation is entirely attributable to God’s mercy, Willet remarks, Christians are not thereby released from their hortatory obligations, “because our salvation is not wrought without meanes, as preaching, admonition, exhortation, and such like: and therefore these means may be used, and yet

²² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 705.

²³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 705. As this chapter progresses, we will note how Willet works to keep this principle from representing a form of synergism.

²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 696. Leading into this assertion, Willet summarizes the arguments undergirding the “two famous opinions” concerning whether Paul ultimately made it to Spain—the one side reading Paul’s expressed intentions prophetically and as an absolute promise, and the other, which has Willet’s own sympathies, holding that verse 15:24 should be read as a conditional, and ultimately unfulfilled, hope (p. 694)

the foundation of Gods mercie in saving us, shall remaine unshaken.”²⁵ Again, these human actions may even be *necessary*, while in no way transferring any salvific efficiency from divine to human agency.

The relationship between primary and secondary causes, and especially the issue of overreliance on means, is at play also in Paul’s account of heathen worship in Romans 1. Willet dismisses as a “frivolous excuse”²⁶ the explanation offered by heathens that their worship of created objects was merely a way of worshiping God *in* those objects, and he presents Paul’s counterargument that they rather “changed the glorie of the incorruptible God, into the similitude of those things.”²⁷ The heathen, in other words, were guilty of confusing natural secondary causes with God’s primary causality. It is perhaps fitting, then, that God’s wrath against this ungodliness is revealed from heaven using natural means as a secondary cause. Willet offers as the “best sense” of Romans 1:18 the interpretation that “men should not thinke, these plagues sent upon the world, to be ordinarie and naturall, (though God therein may use naturall and secundarie causes)...but that they are inflicted of God.”²⁸ Just as the heathen had falsely worshiped the creation as the Creator, so one might falsely attribute the Creator’s punishments solely to random natural occurrences. This is not to suggest that *all* natural misfortunes are *necessarily* a divine punishment, but rather that one must not expect God’s wrath to come through *supernatural* means; “naturall and secundarie causes” are fully compatible

²⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 568.

²⁶ In the 1620 printing, Willet amends “frivolous excuse” to “frivolous cause”—one of very few editorial modifications between the 1611 and 1620 editions.

²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 72. Cf. section VI.2.4, where we consider in more depth Willet’s charge of the papists mimicking idolatrous heathen practices.

²⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 58.

with God's primary causality, both in providential care and in judgment.

2.2 Priority of the Efficient Cause

While Aristotle's fourfold model of causality gave explanatory primacy either (depending on the subject) to formal and material, or to final and formal causes,²⁹ theological employment of multiple causality gave pride of place to final and—especially—efficient causality.³⁰ Aristotle's understanding of the Unmoved Mover as a final—but not as an efficient—cause gave priority in his conception to the final over the efficient cause. As the causes were adapted to a Christian understanding of the world and the role of the Unmoved Mover shifted to the biblical God, the efficient cause took precedence (albeit without being divorced from final causality). The intermediate causes, as we'll see in the following section, were held to serve the others instrumentally and subserviently, being appointed by the efficient cause as a means of achieving the final. In this section we will consider the priority that Willet gives to efficient causality, with God acting as the efficient cause of nearly every good effect.

Following the logic of Paul's own usage, Willet tends to ascribe the efficient causality of good gifts and virtues to either a member of the Godhead or an attribute of God; in only of a handful of instances does he present a human efficient cause of a

²⁹ Andrea Falcon, "Aristotle on Causality," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), accessed September 5, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/aristotle-causality>. On the use of Aristotle more broadly in the Church of England, see Victor Lyle Dowdell, *Aristotle and Anglican Religious Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1942). Dowdell rightly observes that English divines have made extensive use of Aristotelian language and categories, though their church "has never been rigidly *confined* by any particular philosophy for very long" (p. 85).

³⁰ To use a house as an example, Aristotle would argue that the (teleological) need for a house and the (formal) design for how it would look would determine the appointment of the (efficient) builder. Christian use of the model, with a more personal and purposive deity, would take a broader perspective and consider the efficient cause not as mere "sweat labor," but as the One who determines originally that a house should be built.

positive end.³¹ Generally, these efficient causes are identified as God, the Spirit or Christ,³² a divine attribute such as God's power, commandment, or grace,³³ or a divine action, as his calling or his decree.³⁴ As such, the first cause, at the level of primary causality, understood as efficient, functions as a kind of field general, overseeing and directing the instrumental causes in the execution of its will. This kind of language is reflected in Willet's comments on Paul's statement in verse 11:11 that salvation came to the Gentiles through the falling of the Jews. Seeking to clarify that the stumbling of the Jews was not thus the principal *efficient* cause of the Gentiles' salvation, Willet explains here that "the efficient cause having expelled one forme, doth bring in another...so Gods providence as the cheife efficient cause, doth by occasion of that which is evill, bring forth that which is good."³⁵ In a later section we will look at this passage from the perspective of the confusion of an occasion with a principal efficiency. What is of interest in this context of multiple causality, though, is the active directing role of the efficient cause, which maneuvers—or even operates through—finite efficient as well as formal causes (be they good, evil, or neutral) to bring about a good end, without disrupting or

³¹ This occurs, to my count, only three times in the Romans hexapla. The first instance is among the doctrines elicited from Romans 11, where the restored human will is given as a subordinate efficient cause (following the primary "God mooving by his spirit") of good works (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 520). The second comes from a citation of Gorrhan, regarding the causes of a proper "spirituall sacrifice" in verse 12:1. Here the efficient is expressed "in this word *give up*, it must proceed from a true and sincere devotion" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 536). The final instance comes when Willet is setting forth the scope and parts of Romans 15. Here, drawing on verse 15:26, Willet writes that Paul identifies "their voluntarie contribution" as the efficient cause of the benevolence shown to the saints in Jerusalem (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 671). Had he been pressed on the matter, though, Willet's theological framework suggests that he would clarify that each of these human causes operated not autonomously, but through a higher, divine efficiency.

³² For example, Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24, 87, 118, 220, 388, 678, among many others; 130, 377; 53.

³³ Examples include Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 53; 718, 734; 146, 168, 177, and 256.

³⁴ As examples, Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 404; 443.

overriding the operation of any secondary efficiencies.³⁶

We see the primacy of the efficient cause also in its relationship to the cognate term “efficacy.” In his Questions section of Romans 10, Willet explains that, while faith has a causal role in salvation (as verse 10:9 clearly states), faith’s efficacy does not come from its own strength. The human element in faith “is not understood in regard of the beginning and efficient cause of faith: for man hath no more power to beleeve of himselfe then to doe good workes.” Since faith is an externally granted gift, and not an internally generated virtue, it is naturally subordinate to and derives its efficacy from the One who grants the gift:

Neither doth our salvation depend upon the force and efficacie of faith, but upon the worthines and vertue of Christ apprehended by faith: as when a sicke man walketh leaning upon his staffe, it is his staffe that stayeth him, not his hand, which only layeth hold upon the staffe.³⁷

Willet’s image here of Christ as the staff that provides the efficacy of salvation could misleadingly suggest a priority of the *material* cause (and, indeed, in some instances an efficient and material cause *could* overlap³⁸), but his linking of the staff image in this question to “the beginning and efficient cause of faith” and “God that worketh in us both

³⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 501.

³⁶ Because primary and secondary efficiencies can operate concurrently, the same event viewed as the effect of each, can also have different final causes. A classic statement of this principle comes from Joseph in Genesis 50:20 (“When yee thought evil against me, God disposed it to good”). Willet in the Doctrine elicited from this verse in the Genesis hexapla draws a natural parallel to Judas’s betrayal of Christ and explains that “here the preservation of the Church by Josephs captivitie, proceedeth from the goodnesse of God, not from any such intendment in the instrument,” (Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin*, 468). God and Joseph’s brothers operated from different final causes, which precludes the attribution of any good to the brothers’ actions and any evil to God’s.

³⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 461.

³⁸ As in, recall, the discipline of theology itself. We see this not infrequently in Willet, too, as in his interpretation of Romans 1:16, from which he gathers that Christ is both the efficient cause (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 53) and the material cause of salvation (p. 388).

the will and deed”³⁹ makes it clear that—though a material object—the staff here represents Christ’s *efficient* causality.

Thus, the primary efficient cause is reserved for God, and it presides over the other causes. In the specific case of saving grace, moreover, God is the *sole* efficient cause, given the inability of the human will. For a human agent, then, to assume this role in matters related to salvation is to usurp the divine prerogative and tread into dangerous Pelagian waters. We can see now how this hierarchical distinction of causes could be used polemically against theological opponents who ascribed to human agency the wrong kind of causality, while at the same time allowing Reformed theologians to avoid the other extreme of denying any kind of causal significance of faith in the economy of salvation. Commenting on Romans 3:24 (“justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”), Willet draws on the primacy of God as the efficient cause to refute what he considers to be heretical understandings of justification:

The efficient, which is the grace of God, that is, not the doctrine of the Gospel freely revealed, as the Pelagians understand it, nor the graces of the spirit infused, as the Romanists; but by the grace of God we understand, the free mercie and goodnesse of God toward humankind.⁴⁰

Here the hierarchy of causes provides Willet with the framework for countering Pelagian and Roman Catholic interpretations—not by denying outright that infused grace or the revelation of the gospel functions in justification,⁴¹ but by rejecting his opponents’

³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 461.

⁴⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 168. Commenting later on Romans 11:5-6, where Paul writes that the elect are saved by grace, and therefore not by works, Willet argues that the Roman conception of infused grace would contradict Paul’s plain meaning: “grace cannot be here understood, to be a thing infused into and inherent in man, as the Romanists, for then it were a worke” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 493).

⁴¹ For example, Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 267-268: “We graunt, that faith, hope, and charitie, are habites of the minde infused by the spirit, and permanent in the soule [...] But we denie, that by any such inherent habite we are made formally just: they are not causes of our justification, but rather

exaltation of these to the highest causal position.⁴² Similarly, Willet uses this distinction to counter Cajetan's insertion of merit into Romans 5:5 (which states that tribulation "worketh" in us patience). Willet explains that Paul uses the verb *κατεργάζεται* variously, not always indicating *primary* causality. Rather, "it is sometime ascribed unto the prin[ci]pall efficient cause, as unto God the author and worker of all good things in us...sometime to the second or next under working cause."⁴³ The suggestion that tribulation effects patience as its primary, efficient cause must be rejected on both theological grounds (as the afflictions would thus generate a kind of merit, which would redound to the afflicted) and experiential grounds (for in "the wicked" tribulation works not patience, but "impatience and despaire"). Instead, "tribulation worketh patience, not as the efficient cause, but as the organe and instrument, whereby the spirit worketh patience in us."⁴⁴ Again we see divine causation determining the good produced.⁴⁵

the fruits and effects."

⁴² The Council of Trent (sixth session, January 1547) also used multiple causality to explain the workings of justification (*Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H. J. Schroeder [Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1978], 33-34). Trent's final cause (the glory of God and Christ, and life everlasting) and meritorious cause (Christ) are similar to the divided final cause and the meritorious cause that Willet gives for justification on p. 168. The instrumental, formal, and efficient causes that Trent lays out differ more significantly from Willet's corresponding causes. Where Willet identified faith as the instrumental cause of justification (pp. 146, 168), Trent gives the sacrament of baptism ("without which no man was ever justified"). The formal cause (which Willet identifies variously—depending on Paul's wording in different contexts—as the remission of sins, without merit, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, by faith, and Christ's obedience; pp. 146, 168, 177, 237, 256) is defined in Trent as the justice of God that is infused in the believer: "not that by which He Himself is just, but that by which he makes us just." And the efficient cause—the focus of Willet's argument here—is given in the Tridentine decree as "the merciful God," though the added "who washes and sanctifies gratuitously" introduces sanctification into justification's efficient cause. Willet does not address Trent directly in this argument, although the issue of infused grace that Willet takes issue with is clearly present in the causes Trent asserts. Cf. also the Rhemist annotations on Romans 3:22, which refer to imputation as "a phantastical apprehension of that which is not" (Martin, *New Testament*, 390).

⁴³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 266. Note here Willet's explicit identification of the efficient as the chief among the various causes.

⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 267.

⁴⁵ While Willet's greater concern was the confusion of efficient with mediate causes, in at least

2.3 The Relativizing of Instrumental Causality

The logical complement of the priority of the efficient cause is the relativizing of secondary or instrumental causes. In this section we will consider how Willet both emphasizes the instrumental nature of human causes and condemns those who would diminish the full divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit by relegating their activity to merely instrumental causality.

Along with their commitment to ascribing the efficiency of one's own salvation to divine causality alone, the Reformed were likewise careful to avoid making ministers (including Paul) the efficient cause of *others'* salvation. We see this concern in Willet at places where Paul's language could suggest a human efficiency in evangelism. In his comments on Romans 11:14 ("If by any means I might provoke unto emulation and might save some of them"), Willet explains Paul's use of the first person subject here briefly, writing that "God is the efficient cause and author of salvation, but because the Ministers are the instruments, they are also said to save."⁴⁶ Willet expounds further on this idea in the context of Romans 15:18 ("I dare not speake of any thing which Christ hath not wrought by me"), where the proper interpretation hinges on the more nuanced matter of emphasis. Where Origen and Erasmus had placed the emphasis on the qualifier "by me," Willet argued that the proper emphasis should fall on "Christ." Paul's point was not "to shew by what instrument Christ wrought, as by him, not by others," but to say that

one case he corrects an exegete's confusion of efficient with final causality. We find this in the Questions section of Romans 11, regarding Christ's use of parables. Whereas Pighius had interpreted the "spirit of slumber" in verse 11:8 as the efficient cause of Christ's speaking in parables (i.e. because the Jews were blind, Jesus spoke in parables), Willet argued that the spirit of slumber was, in fact, the final cause of Christ's cryptic parables (making the Jews' blindness a punishment for their obstinacy): (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 496). In the next chapter we will consider the reasons for Willet's objection to Pighius on this issue (see V.2.1).

⁴⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 504.

his only achievements that he deemed worthy of sharing were those that *Christ* had accomplished through him.⁴⁷ This understanding of human agency in the ministry of the gospel holds true for all who are called to this office: “It is peculiar unto God to save, but the Lord communicateth this excellencie to the Ministers which are the instruments, to shew the necessitie of preaching, and the reverence thereunto belonging.”⁴⁸

Likewise, inanimate mediators of salvation such as Scripture possess merely instrumental causality. Willet makes this point in a comment on the pairing of verses 4 and 5 in Romans 15. In the first of these verses, Paul attributes “patience and comfort” to the scriptures, yet he proceeds in the second to refer to *God* as “the God of patience and consolation.” Willet explains that “the Apostle doth attribute the same effects unto God, patience and consolation, which before he gave unto the Scriptures, but in a diverse manner: for God is indeede the author of them.”⁴⁹ Though God is the actual author and giver of patience (as the efficient cause), Paul can also refer to the “patience and comfort of the Scriptures,” because God uses them as an instrumental cause, granting these gifts “together with, and by” them.⁵⁰ While the assumption is clear throughout that the instrumental causes operate in subservience to the efficient, and thus do not accrue merit, Willet does occasionally make the opposition of instrument to merit clear, as when he affirms the modern Lutherans who “somewhat refined” their teaching on election to state

⁴⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 689. In the Argument of chapter 15, too, Willet makes clear that the efficient cause of the efficacy of Paul’s apostleship is “the grace of Christ,” while the various signs and wonders were mere helping causes (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 671).

⁴⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 531. These words come from the Moral Observations of Romans 11, and are occasioned by Paul’s statement in verse 13: “I magnifie my ministrie.”

⁴⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 677.

⁵⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 677. Cf. also Romans 16:26, where Paul’s instrumental phrasing “by (διὰ) the Scriptures” guides Willet’s explanation that “here the efficient cause is showed, with the instrumentall meanes, the propheticall Scriptures” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 735).

that “faith is not the meritorious but the instrumentall cause of election.”⁵¹

This same principle of instrumental causes being subjugated to the efficient lies behind Willet’s accusations of trinitarian unorthodoxy against exegetes who relegated the work of Christ or the Spirit to mere instrumental causality. As one would expect, the Arians prove guilty of this charge regarding the Son’s role in creation. In their interpretation of Paul’s doxology at the close of Romans 11 (“of him, through him, and for him are all things”), the “*Arrians*, as *Theodoret* here testifieth, doe understand all this to bee spoken onely of God the Father, to confirme their heresie, in making the Sonne inferiour to the Father, and onely as the instrument, not the efficient cause of creation.”⁵² Willet refutes this interpretation by citing Paul’s application directly to Christ of a similar expression in 1 Corinthians 8.⁵³ Nicholas of Lyra, too, receives Willet’s disapprobation for interpreting the phrase “through Jesus Christ” in Romans 5:1 to mean that Christ functioned only instrumentally in effecting our peace: “Neither doe we understand by this phrase, that Christ in respect of his humanitie, was *instrumentum coniunctum*, a joynt instrument of this our peace, as *Lyranus*. But Christ is the true author and efficient cause of this our peace, as... fellow-worker with his Father.”⁵⁴ Again here, Willet refutes the disputed understanding not by criticizing his opponent’s linguistic skill in rendering the passage in question, but through appeal to other Scripture passages that express Christ’s

⁵¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 435; the implication being that a cause would not be both instrumental *and* meritorious.

⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 518.

⁵³ Note Willet’s use here of the analogy of Scripture, as well as his reliance on Theodoret as a secondary source (not at all surprising in this case, given the destruction of many primary Arian sources; cf. R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* [1988; repr., London: T&T Clark, 2005], 5-6).

⁵⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 237.

efficiency less ambiguously (including Ephesians 2:14, which directly equates Christ with and makes him the active agent of our peace). Willet likewise clarifies among the Romans 15 “Places of Doctrine” that Paul’s use of the preposition “through” with the Holy Spirit (in 15:13) does not suggest a merely instrumental causality, and he again defends his reading through a collation of texts:

[the word “through” does not imply] that the holy Ghost is the organe or instrument of God, but that there is one and the same power of God the Father, and of the holy Spirit: for the *Spirit distributeth to everie one as he will*, 1 Cor. 12:11. but this is a divine power, to give unto every one as he will.⁵⁵

While Christ and the Spirit may at times function *additionally* as instrumental causes,⁵⁶ their serving as active subjects of divine deeds indicates that to exclude them from the divine efficiency would be heretically to subordinate them within the Trinity.

2.4 Final Causality

Before looking in more detail at the specific roles played by the formal, material, and other instrumental causes, we will explore how Willet treats the (more important) final cause. In his comments on Paul’s assertion in Romans 10:4 that Christ is the “ende of the Law,” Willet presents four different ways that “the ende of a thing” may be taken: its final position in space or time, that which motivates its first movement, the goal it

⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 704. A similar argument concerns the use of prayer language by individual members of the Godhead—language which, as formal prayers would be “unmeete and not beseeming the divine majestie,” must thus be taken either as an example for the faithful to follow or as simply a way of describing the effects of each member’s efficacious activity (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 385).

⁵⁶ We’ve seen already that God is both the author and subject of theology, and that Christ is both the efficient and material cause of salvation. Additionally, Christ is presented as the material cause of the gospel and the “meritorious and working cause” of justification, his obedience is given as the formal cause of justification, and the formal cause of concord among believers is given as “according to Christ.” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24, 87, 734; 168; 256; 678).

strives toward, or its completion and perfection.⁵⁷ This awareness of the range of possible meanings of language pertaining to a thing's "end" is evident also in Willet's treatment of places where Paul's argument signals final causality.

As in the case of the efficient cause, Willet often notes a division in a thing's final causality, which is explained as differentiating a principal and a secondary end, a proper and an accidental end, or a God-oriented and a human-oriented end.⁵⁸ In many of these cases a primary end relates to God's glory, while a secondary end pertains to the human realm—as with good works, where God's glory, and not a "mercenary"⁵⁹ desire for reward, must be the "principall ende of [one's] well doing."⁶⁰ In the Doctrines section of chapter 5, Willet distinguishes between the "proper" use of the law (to make humans aware of their sin) and a "second and more principall end" —"that by the abounding of sinne, grace may more abound."⁶¹ Here the less principal end comes first in time, as a penultimate end, and serves the ultimate end instrumentally. Later, commenting on Romans 10, Willet concedes to his Romanist opponents Pererius and Stapleton that our obedience is "one of the endes of our coming to Christ," but denies that this obedience is the *primary* end, which he identifies here as being our justification by faith in Christ.⁶²

⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 456. In the context of Christ's being the end of the law, Willet prefers the second and fourth definitions. On various interpretations of Christ as the *telos* of the law, cf. Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, 113-120.

⁵⁸ This division into a twofold final cause was common to many Reformed orthodox systems (Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:245).

⁵⁹ Willet's spelling.

⁶⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 137.

⁶¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 265. This doctrine is occasioned by verse 5:20, where Paul states that the law came "that the offence should increase: but where sinne increased, grace abounded much more."

⁶² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 457-458.

This division and hierarchical arrangement of final causes allows Willet to skirt possible antinomian accusations, while avoiding contorting the *central* purpose of the gospel into a mere matter of ethics and human character.

The somewhat vexing description of Christ as a stumbling block in Romans 9:33 (alluding to imagery from Isaiah) presents an occasion for Willet to draw a rather stronger distinction between a principal and an accidental end. He explains that the stumbling itself is “the accidentall ende” of the stumbling stone, while the principal end is “the building and raising up of many by this stone.”⁶³ When mention of the Jews stumbling appears again in Romans 11:11, Willet subdivides this principal end as it pertains to Gentiles and to Jews: “here he sheweth a double end of their stumbling; one, that thereby salvation might come unto the Gentiles, the other, that by the calling of the Gentiles, the Jewes againe might be provoked and stirred up to beleeve in Christ.”⁶⁴ We find a similar situation in the hardening of Pharaoh, which Paul mentions in verse 9:17. Willet refutes Bellarmine’s charge that leading Protestants had made the hardening of Pharaoh a principal end of God’s activity, and that God orchestrated it with no regard for Pharaoh’s own sin. Neither Calvin nor Vermigli, Willet rebuts, “affirme that God raised up Pharaoh, to this ende to resist him, but the ende was the demonstration of Gods power, by his obstinacie and disobedience, which God procured not, but ordered it so, that his glorie and power might bee set forth by it.”⁶⁵ Read together with Willet’s other statements about God’s hardening activity and his interpretation of Christ’s role as a stumbling block, we can summarize his view on Pharaoh’s hardening by saying that this

⁶³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 430-431.

⁶⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 500.

⁶⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 419.

too was an “accidental end” that likewise served the principal end—the demonstration of God’s power—instrumentally.

Other times the dividing line in a double end falls between a thing’s impact on humans and how that impact redounds to God’s glory, with the latter’s priority an often-unstated assumption.⁶⁶ This distinction is drawn in relation to several divine actions, as—for example—justification, the final cause of which “in respect of us, is our salvation and justification: in respect of God, the manifestation of his righteousness to his glory.”⁶⁷ Likewise, the (fraternal) twin doctrines of election and reprobation each contain a double end, election serving both for the elect’s “happines” and God’s praise and glory, and reprobation serving the ends of “the just condemnation of the wicked, and the demonstration of the power of God.”⁶⁸ In both election and reprobation, Willet also differentiates between ends and effects—a distinction that we will consider further in the next chapter on confusion of cause and effect.⁶⁹

It is worth noting that an entity’s good end is not in every situation infallibly achieved, as even positive ends can be corrupted by sinful agents.⁷⁰ This principle is demonstrated perhaps most clearly in Romans 13, in relation to Paul’s statements regarding the role of power and of political leaders. Given that governors often reward evildoers and punish those who do good, many exegetes have wrestled with Paul’s

⁶⁶ A priority nonetheless clearly established by the broader theological context.

⁶⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 169.

⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 433.

⁶⁹ See V.2.1. In other places, however—as in the multiple causes of good works that Willet presents among the Romans 11 Doctrines (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 520), the “effects” are given *in place of* the ends, suggesting either that the two terms are being used synonymously here, or (less likely) that Willet believed no true “end” to be expressed by Paul in the passage cited.

⁷⁰ That is, unless the positive end is established through God’s *absolute* will.

seemingly naïve statement in verse 13:3 that those who perform good works will receive praise from the ruling authorities.⁷¹ Willet prefers the explanation (which bears some similarity to Augustine's) that Paul's reference is to power's absolute qualities, and not to the concrete circumstances in which it happens to be employed:

Wherefore I take this to be the better answer, that first the Apostle speaketh here, of the power it selfe, and of the true ende wherefore it was ordained, and not of the personall faults in those, that abuse this power: for if the good be not rewarded, as well as the evil punished, it is the fault of the governors.⁷²

The misuse of power, Willet argues, does not negate the good that inheres within God's gift of power; rather, it is necessary to "distinguish between the power it selfe and authoritie, which is ordained of God, to these ends." Moreover, he adds, even a bad ruler is preferable to anarchy, so that there is a net good even with those governors who most abuse their power—Paul's appeal to Caesar was, after all, to Nero.⁷³ Note, again, that Willet's preferred explanation relies on the language and logic of final causality, in describing how power's unambiguously good "true ende" may be abused.

Similarly, the final cause can determine the morality of a given action—that is, it is possible for identical actions to be considered either good or evil based on the

⁷¹ Willet catalogs specifically interpretations by Origen (said praise will come from God at the Judgment Day; Willet responds that Paul specifically refers to praise from the magistrate), Augustine (Paul intends to say that the righteous will be *worthy* of praise from rulers, regardless of whether they actually receive it), Gorrhan (the rulers will *either* actively give praise or, by withholding it, be the occasion of greater praise from God), Bucer (Paul is alluding to a particular custom among the Greeks and Romans), and Vermigli (the praise referred to is sometimes manifested by escaping punishment): (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 585).

⁷² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 585-586. While Willet does not cite him here, this is basically Calvin's view, as well: "But he speaks here of the true, and, as it were, of the native duty of the magistrate, from which however they who hold power often degenerate" (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 480). Willet adds to this the explanation propounded by Pareus and Bullinger that, since the ruler would be unable to praise every good subject directly, Paul's meaning must include situations where good subjects naturally enjoy the various benefits that a society and its laws offer to law-abiding citizens.

⁷³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 585.

intention.⁷⁴ This is due to the priority of the final cause in directing the means working to effect it;⁷⁵ since the various actions and events employed to bring about the appointed end are as foot soldiers carrying out a general's instructions, the moral status of these means hinges on the morality of that general's aims. So the final cause, which within itself may have a certain hierarchy of ends, together with the efficient cause determines the instrumental causes, the moral status of which derives from the more principal causes.

2.5 Formal, Material and Other Causes

The various instrumental and helping causes serve as intermediates through which the efficient cause effects the ends designated in the final cause. These subordinate causes may distinguish between various aspects of divine activity and, as they also form the realm in which human activity may play a role in the economy of salvation, they tend to be non-meritorious⁷⁶ and subject to human error. Willet frequently identifies the traditional Aristotelian formal and material causes, but also regularly supplements or substitutes these with causes designated as “meritorious,” “working,” “impulsive or motive,” or generically as “helping” or “instrumental,” as well as identifying among the causes in some cases the “subject,” “object,” “effect,” or “manner.” There are some obvious parallels and overlaps among these various causes: for instance, the “manner” resembles the formal cause, the “subject” and “object” often appear as subdivisions of the

⁷⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 388. This principle is still widely held today—as, for instance, a doctor wielding a needle is held to be morally quite different from a man on a subway sticking people with needles. In a later section, on Causation and Evil (IV.3.3), we will see how this idea informs Willet's explanation of why even pagan “good deeds” merit judgment.

⁷⁵ Cf. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

⁷⁶ The “meritorious cause” being an obvious exception. On subordinate causality, cf. Burgersdijk, *Monitio Logica*, 50-51 (*Institutionum logicarum*, 61-62).

material cause, all of the intermediate causes can fit in the category of “helping and instrumental,” and effects and final causes share some common features.

The formal causes that Willet discerns among Paul’s definitions have to do with patterns and forms of practice. For example, the formal cause of natural law as presented in Romans 2:15 is its agreement with God’s truth.⁷⁷ The formal cause of true prayer (8:27) is its being offered up “according to the will of God,”⁷⁸ and concord among believers (15:5) is formally “according to Christ.”⁷⁹ Often the formal cause identifies God’s particular activity, while the efficient cause points to broader aspects of God’s character, as his grace or faithfulness. So when Paul gives the causes of justification in 5:15-19, the efficient cause is the abundance of God’s grace, while the formal is Christ’s obedience.⁸⁰ This important distinction serves to root all of God’s activity in his unchanging nature, and to avoid false characterizations of a fickle or bloodthirsty deity who requires a checklist of deeds in order to *be* merciful and loving; the formal cause, in other words, *serves*—and does not *alter*—the efficient.

The “manner,” as Willet presents it, is sometimes described as a non-cause, and other times is listed *among* the causes. Responding to Haymo’s and Anselm’s argument from Romans 4:17 that God’s paternity promise to Abraham was caused by Abraham’s faith, Willet explains that this passage “rather sheweth the manner how, then the cause” of his being made the father of many nations.⁸¹ So “manner” in this case is an *alternative*

⁷⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 118.

⁷⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 377.

⁷⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 678.

⁸⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 256.

⁸¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 209. Manner and cause are opposed also in relation to our service to Christ (14:18) on p. 649 (on this passage, see my discussion of prepositions, section III.2).

to a “cause”—though, as human faith is in other passages presented as a formal or instrumental cause of divine actions,⁸² we can read this to mean that Willet is denying more particularly any *efficient* causality to faith. Elsewhere the manner is given among the various helping causes and is linked especially to the formal cause. Willet describes the graces of the Holy Spirit as being spiritual in “forme and manner,” without differentiating the two⁸³. In a doctrine elicited from Romans 3:21-25 Willet lists the manner between the “forme” and the “ende,” and it shares with the form an orientation to Christ’s blood: “The *forme* is the imputation and application of Christs righteousnesse, obtained by his obedience and blood... The manner is, through faith in his blood.”⁸⁴ In this usage the form and manner are as two sides of the same coin, with the form representing a divine action and the manner prescribing the proper human response to that action.⁸⁵

With the manner holding a position of subordinate causality that frequently incorporates the human element into God’s pattern of activity in the world, it also represents a factor through which human sinfulness is liable to corrupt the process. In matters that are in themselves either good or neutral, we may err in our manner of seeking or engaging with the thing. In prayer, for example (here Willet draws his example from Paul’s Romans 8:26 statement that we do not know how to pray as we ought), we may ask for a good thing, but with the wrong motivation or without the proper

⁸² E.g. 24, 146, 168 and 237.

⁸³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 648.

⁸⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 177.

⁸⁵ The manner is not, however, limited to the human element, as in 15:13, where the manner of God’s filling his people with graces is “by the power of the holy Ghost” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 684).

patience or faith.⁸⁶ Willet reads a similar situation in Paul’s partial praise of the Jews in the beginning of Romans 10. Paul affirms that the Jews “have the zeale of God,” but with the caveat that it is “not according to knowledge.” This scenario, too, Willet interprets as an error of manner: “because their zeale was a good thing in it selfe, and they failed in the manner onely, the Apostle so farre commendeth them.”⁸⁷ Christ’s Sermon on the Mount promise that those who seek will find assumes the condition that the seeking be done toward the true end (God’s glory) and in the proper manner (by faith).⁸⁸ In the same way, a false manner and end can corrupt heathen actions even when the deeds themselves conform to the law (“whatsoever is not of faith, is sinne,” Romans 14:23). When the heathen perform good deeds, it is not as though the *substance* of honoring one’s parents or providing for the needs of the poor has become suddenly sinful (as the Rhemist annotators accused Protestants of saying), but these actions are considered marked by sin “in respect of the manner and circumstances, because they were not directed to a right ende.”⁸⁹

The material cause, as the name denotes, tends to⁹⁰ refer to the physical element in a causal process—in cases of divine activity, then, either Christ, as the incarnate member of the Godhead, or some material element of the created world serving as a

⁸⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 375-376.

⁸⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 456.

⁸⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 493.

⁸⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 667.

⁹⁰ I am qualifying this fairly commonsense assertion because of a few places where Willet’s identification of a material cause is less concrete than might be expected. From Paul’s prayer in Romans 15:5 that “the God of patience and consolation give [the Romans], thet [they] be like minded one toward an other, according to Christ Jesus,” for example, where one might expect the material cause of concord among believers to be the believers themselves and the formal to be their being like-minded according to Christ, Willet finds both the material and the formal cause in the latter statement: “the *materiall* [cause], to

nexus for God’s action. In Willet’s commentary, Christ is given consistently as the material cause of the gospel, and is also presented as the material cause of salvation.⁹¹ From the creaturely realm, the bodies of the saints are the material cause of the spiritual sacrifice that Paul describes at the beginning of Romans 12, “certaine practicall principles” comprise the material cause of natural law, “all beleevers” are the material cause of justification,⁹² and so forth. Like the efficient and final causes, the material is occasionally subdivided—in Willet’s application, generally into subject and object. Thus, the “subject” of hope—for instance—is “the faithfull heart,” while its “object” is “things which are not seene.”⁹³ Also like the formal cause, people may err with regard to the material cause—otherwise neutral matters that are pursued in the wrong way involve a fault in manner, while “things in their nature evill” that should not be pursued at all accrue guilt through a fault in the matter itself (the material cause).⁹⁴

As noted above, Willet also drew on an assortment of causes developed in the

be like minded, the *formall*, according to Christ” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 678). While the more important identifications in this passage are of God as the efficient cause and the united praise of God (in 15:6) as the final, considering how Willet subdivides the intermediate causes can also provide general insight into how multiple causality was conceived of in this era.

Cf. also Ross’s clarification concerning the “materiality” of the material cause: “‘Matter’ is not for Aristotle a certain kind of thing, as we speak of matter in opposition to mind. It is a purely relative term—relative to form,” (Ross, *Aristotle*, 76).

⁹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24, 87, 734; 388.

⁹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 536, 118, 177.

⁹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 389.

⁹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 354. Willet’s language here of “things in their nature evill” appears to hedge close to the Gnostic idea of inherently evil matter that he condemns elsewhere (e.g. p. 524, see VI.2.2). The example that he offers—“the sinnefull workes of the flesh”—clarifies that his reference is not to bare material, but to those fleshly deeds already qualified as sinful. The implication is not (as Gnostic thought would have it) that matter can be inherently evil, but rather the tautological truth that evil deeds are evil. His purpose in this Question is not to lay out a metaphysical theory, but to explain the difference between erring according to matter and according to manner (i.e. by the material vs. the formal cause).

Peripatetic tradition after Aristotle for his analysis of Paul’s doctrinal definitions.⁹⁵ “True and lively prayer,” the efficient cause of which is the Holy Spirit, is aided by the sighing of the human heart as “the instrument and organe of the spirit,” and by the saints in general, as “the helping and underworking causes.”⁹⁶ Though God is the principal efficient cause of human good works, he effects these through various “helping causes” that form a major portion of the Church’s vocation: instruction, exhortation, enacted faith, and prayer.⁹⁷ In other places, even when he does not explicitly lay out a matrix of causes, Willet employs divisions that mirror the multiple causes he has elsewhere identified. Describing the stumbling stone of Romans 9:33, for example, he uses instead a set of (what we might term) “journalistic W’s” that correspond loosely to the traditional four Aristotelian causes: “who layeth” (efficient), “who was” the stone (material), “where laid” (formal), and “to what ende” (final).⁹⁸ Willet also occasionally lists various “effects” among the causes (which we will consider in depth below), and alongside the causes of hope he includes, as a kind of anti-cause, “the contrarie...[of] despaire, and diffidence.”⁹⁹ In all of these delineations of intermediate causes, Willet is—again—seeking to show that Paul’s definitions of Christian graces and doctrines in Romans incorporate (sometimes human) means in a way that invalidates Pelagianistic

⁹⁵ Willet’s cause-oriented interpretation of Paul’s words reflects the complexity of efficiency and, especially here, the multiplicity of finite, instrumental causes in bringing about specific effects. Burgersdijk, for instance, presents a fourfold division of the formal cause (material/immaterial; substantial/accidental; natural/artificial/ principal/disposing): (*Monitio Logica*, 56-57 [*Institutionum logicarum*, 66-68]), and divides the efficient cause eight ways, including free/necessary, next/remote, and principal/less principal: (*Monitio Logica*, 58-68 [*Institutionum logicarum*, 69-78]).

⁹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 377.

⁹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 520.

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 431.

⁹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 389.

interpretations.

3. Theological Application of Multiple Causality

3.1 Causes of the Gospel

Midway through his introductory overview of the entire epistle, Willet notes that Romans begins with a definition of the gospel (“it is the power of God to salvation to everie one that beleeveth,” verse 1:16), and he describes all that follows as the Apostle’s “amplyfying and tractation [i.e. handling or treatment] of this definition.”¹⁰⁰ Given the centrality of this definition, then, it is fitting that Willet discerns the multiple causes of the gospel in both chapter 1 and chapter 16 of Romans, as a kind of bookends to the epistle. Willet extracts these causes from 1:16 in three different places—in the Questions section of his introduction, and then again in both the Questions and Doctrines sections of chapter 1.¹⁰¹ His identification of the particular causes remains broadly the same between these three citations, with minor variations attributable to his varied use of sources and his broadening the scriptural citation in the chapter 1 Doctrines section to include verses 2, 4 and 5. Only the final cause (“to salvation”) is identical between the three lists, this being the least ambiguously expressed of the causes in 1:16.

We saw above in the section on the efficient cause that, in the analysis of grace and the gospel, this designation is given generally either to God or to a divine attribute. Here we find both of these, with Willet first (citing Gryneus) listing God,¹⁰² and later the

¹⁰⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24. “For the most perfect and artificiall [i.e. artful] Methode,” Willet adds approvingly, “is that which beginneth with the definition.”

¹⁰¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24, 53, and 87.

¹⁰² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 24.

power of God,¹⁰³ as the efficient. The formal cause also differs between these first two instances. In the Gryneus citation the formal cause contains both a human-oriented (“faith and beleefe”) and a God-oriented (“his efficacious power”) aspect, while the list given in Question 40 of chapter 1 presents only the human side (“to every one that beleeves”). This second list also neglects to offer a material cause (which in the other two places is given as Christ), though later in the same Question Willet states that “Christ is the efficient cause of salvation.”¹⁰⁴ So we see some variation in Willet’s treatment of the causes of the gospel as given in the very same verse, with God’s “power” acting in one place as the efficient itself and in another as a formal cause through which God’s efficiency works, and with Christ in one place presented as the material cause of the gospel, and in the other as the efficient cause of the salvation brought about by the gospel as its final cause.¹⁰⁵

In Willet’s recapitulation of these causes of the gospel as one of the Doctrines elicited from Romans 1, he supplements verse 16 with an added effect from verse 5, a new formal cause from verse 4, and an observation regarding the relationship between the two testaments from verse 2. Here, elaborating on the doctrine “of the Gospel, and the nature thereof,” Willet derives the formal cause from the fourth verse, presenting it as “the declaration and manifestation of [Christ] to be the Sonne of God.”¹⁰⁶ Though differing formally from the earlier expressions of this cause, its substance incorporates

¹⁰³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 53.

¹⁰⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 53.

¹⁰⁵ To further confuse matters, when Willet identifies the multiple causes of salvation as given in Romans 8:3, he cites God as the efficient cause and Christ as the material cause (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 388).

¹⁰⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 87.

elements of both the God-oriented aspect and the human-oriented aspect given earlier—God’s power being reflected in Christ’s divinity, and the declaration of the same being necessary for human faith. From verse 5 Willet draws the “effects” of the gospel, namely “obedience to the faith.”¹⁰⁷ And from Paul’s words in verse 1:2 that the gospel was “afore promised by [Christ’s] Prophets in the holy Scriptures,” Willet makes the important point that, though the circumstances change, there is a single gospel “promised” before Christ and “performed” in his coming, “one and the same in substance.”¹⁰⁸

When Willet revisits the definition of the gospel as found in Paul’s closing doxology in Romans 16:25-26 (“...according to my Gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ, by the revelation of the mysterie, along time kept secret: [But now is opened, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, at the commandment of the everlasting God for the obedience of faith, published among all nations.]”), the causes he discerns have changed somewhat from the opening chapter. These causes he lays out twice—first when giving the outline of the final chapter among the “Argument, methode, and parts,” and then again near the end of the Questions section. In the first presentation he gives the causes as: “the author and efficient, the commaundment of God; the instrument, the Scriptures of the Prophets; and the ende, for obedience of faith.”¹⁰⁹ In the following section, exegeting the same doxology, his causes more strictly follow the Aristotelian four:

There are foure parts of this description, containing the foure causes thereof. 1. The materiall cause, or object, which is Jesus Christ. 2. The forme, revealed now

¹⁰⁷ We will look in some depth in the next chapter at the relationship between cause and effect. Of special interest here is the occasional overlap of “effect” and “final cause.”

¹⁰⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 86-87. In the subsequent Controversies section, Willet uses this verse to rebut the Manicheans for their rejection of the Old Testament scriptures.

¹⁰⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 718.

by the Scriptures of the Prophets, before kept secret. 3. The author and efficient, at the commandment of God. 4. The end, for the obedience of the Gentiles.¹¹⁰

We can note several interesting variations between all of these different enumerations of gospel causes.¹¹¹ In the chapter 16 iterations we now have God's *commandment* as the efficient cause (an *action* of God, rather than a divine attribute or God himself), Willet's earlier observation from verse 1:2 regarding the continuity of the gospel between the Old and New Testaments finds parallels in an added instrumental cause (the writings of the prophets of old) and a new formal cause (the shift in *form* from hidden to revealed indicating again that the *substance* of the gospel has remained unchanged). Perhaps most significantly, the human obedience described in the first chapter as an *effect* of the gospel is in the final chapter given as the *end*, or final cause.¹¹²

We can make several observations based on the variations in Willet's identification of the causes of the gospel. First, the discernment of multiple causes was not intended to serve as a rigid classification, but as an interpretive device for explaining Paul's definitions. As such, there is a certain fluidity to and overlap among the identified causes. Related to this, we can observe that Willet's exegesis gives a clear priority to Paul's language over any externally imposed philosophical desire for systematic consistency. Also, given Willet's extensive use and citation of a broad range of other exegetes, it is reasonable to expect some variation in details that do not compromise his

¹¹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 734.

¹¹¹ Besides the more superficial variations, like the two different variant spellings of "commandment."

¹¹² It is worth noting (without deducing too much from it) that Willet narrows his expression of this end from "obedience of faith" (p. 718) to "obedience of the Gentiles" (p. 734). Nothing else that he writes here suggests in any way that Willet intends to exclude *Jews* from this obedience, so this variation is best explained as Willet's rendering Paul's τὰ ἔθνη in Romans 16:26 here by its more limited sense of "Gentiles," even though he *understands* the term (and expresses it in his translation of Romans 16) in its broader sense of "the nations."

central theological commitments. Finally, we see that—in addition to the hierarchy *between* causes (with priority given to the efficient and final cause)—we also occasionally find a hierarchy *within* individual causes. An efficient cause can refer to an agent (e.g. God) or to an agency *of* that agent (e.g. God’s power or commandment)—or, indeed, as we saw earlier, to a subordinate human efficient. And a final cause can contain degrees of “finality,” ranging from absolute ends (like God’s glory) to penultimate ends (like human obedience) that might in certain contexts be downgraded to mere “effects.”

3.2 Sacramental Causality

Causal distinctions also proved helpful for Willet in defining the proper Reformed understanding of the sacraments against the extreme positions of the Roman Catholics and Anabaptists. Paul’s description of circumcision as “the seale of the righteousness of faith” in Romans 4:11 informs Willet’s statements on the sacraments in general in his *Doctrines and Controversies* sections of chapter 4. His second Doctrine concerns the “nature and substance of the Sacraments” and includes Faius’s delineation of their causes:

So here are collected all the causes of the Sacraments: 1. The efficient cause and author is God onely, because he onely is able to give efficacie and vertue unto the sacraments, as God was the author of circumcision, so of all [the other] Sacraments both of the old and new Testament. 2. The materiall cause is the visible and externall signe. 3. The forme is the rite and manner of institution. 4. The end to seale unto us the promises of God for remission of our sinnes in Christ, *Faius pag. 238.*¹¹³

As we have seen in other cases, so here the identification of the efficient and end causes proves most important to Willet’s arguments regarding the sacraments. “God onely” (and

¹¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 220.

not the elements themselves, which serve as the material cause) is the efficient cause, and the end of the sacraments is “to seale” (not to save). So when Willet arrives again at this verse a few pages later among the Controversies, he uses this understanding to highlight “two errors [that] are to be taken heede of”: that of Roman Catholics who “ascribe...too much to the outward signe” (making the sign itself the efficient), and that of Anabaptists who make “them but bare signes” (in essence doing away with the end cause of sealing God’s promises, and making the sacraments ends unto themselves).¹¹⁴

In chapter 2, as well, Willet had drawn on Paul’s teaching on circumcision (2:25-29) to declaim his opponents’ sacramental theologies. Against the Roman Catholic teaching that the visible sacraments actively confer grace, Willet insists that “invisible things do not need visible, but the visible have need of the invisible,” so that in baptism, for example, “the water is the instrument of cleansing, but the efficient and working cause is the word.”¹¹⁵ It is noteworthy that Willet specifically identifies God’s “word” as the efficient here, and not simply “God,” as it asserts not merely the (commonsense) notion that God himself has a greater efficiency than the sacramental elements, but the distinctly Protestant understanding of God’s word of promise having a clear priority over the physical sacraments. In the Controversies section of Romans 9, Willet makes this point again through Paul’s words there about the priority of promise (word) over flesh and an analogy from Chrysostom. Chrysostom had likened Sarah’s womb to the water of baptism in that each apart from the power of God’s word of promise was barren. Willet connects this idea to Paul’s words in Ephesians 5:2[6] (“Cleansing it by the washing of

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 224.

¹¹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 141.

water thorough the word”) to argue that “the water cleanseth, but by the operation of the word.”¹¹⁶ Willet had also argued for the priority of word over sacrament from Paul’s definition of the gospel in Romans 1:16, which we looked at earlier; if the “gospel” was the power of God to salvation, then the implication was that the *sacraments* could *not* be the efficient cause of salvation. Roman Catholics, he thus argued, had misplaced their emphasis. The word preached does not serve merely to prepare for the salvific work of the sacraments; rather, the sacraments serve to “confirme and seale” the *word’s* function of begetting faith.¹¹⁷ Part of the issue here (which Willet acknowledges, even while dismissing the Roman Catholic position) had to do with how the word “gospel” itself was understood in the context of Romans 1:16. Roman Catholic theologians like Bellarmine took the term more broadly to include all aspects of Christ’s ministry, while Willet limited its meaning to the “preaching and publishing [of] the same.”

Romans 2:25-29 also provided Willet with ammunition against sacramental beliefs espoused in Anabaptist and Donatist thought. Without naming particular figures, Willet claims that “the Anabaptists” had used verses like 2:28, which states that *physical* circumcision does not make one truly a Jew, to reject all sacraments entirely. But in doing this, he argues, they ignore Paul’s previous statement (2:25) that “circumcision is profitable, if thou doe the Law.”¹¹⁸ The external elements of the sacraments lack value,

¹¹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 43[5]. Willet’s citation from Ephesians gives us a good example of his polemical hermeneutics at work. The preposition “through” (or “thorough,” in Willet’s spelling) does not lead unambiguously to Willet’s conclusion from this verse, but could just as easily signal a subordinate, instrumental agency. Indeed, if the water and word were reversed to read “Cleansing it by the word through the washing of water,” we can certainly imagine Willet using this verse to argue the word’s efficiency, acting through the instrumental agency of water (as a material or formal cause). Thus, we see Willet reading a verse that could grammatically be read otherwise through a particular hermeneutical lens to argue that it “overthroweth [the] opinion of the Romanists.”

¹¹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 92-93.

¹¹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 142.

he explains, only when they are divorced from the internal parts (as in Roman Catholic practice). Yet neither does the conditional “if thou doe the Law” support the reasoning of the “old Donatists, who measured the Sacraments by the worthinesse of the Minister.”¹¹⁹ Since human unbelief does not “make the faith of God without effect” (Romans 3:3), an unworthy minister cannot nullify the impact of a sacrament, which depends instead “upon the truth of God” for its “force and efficacie.”¹²⁰ Neither the presiding minister (contra the “old Donatists”) nor the elements themselves (contra the Roman Catholics) are the efficient cause of the sacraments, yet God—the true efficient—does work *through* the sacraments (contra the Anabaptists), so they should not be neglected.¹²¹

3.3 Causation and Evil

Willet’s application of multiple causality to matters of evil and sin is especially significant for our purposes, since the relationship between God and evil was one of the more heated polemical issues between Protestants and Roman Catholics. For Reformed polemicists this involved the delicate balance of affirming God’s sovereign rights and rule, without making him the *efficient* cause of anything unbefitting of his divine goodness. Thus, while we are accustomed to finding God designated as the sole efficient of all things good, we discover other efficient—working either alone or “synergistically” with God—as the motive causes of darker ends.

¹¹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 141.

¹²⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 176.

¹²¹ Willet later reaffirms the need for Christians to know the true efficient cause of the sacraments (in the course of arguing against the Roman Catholic insistence on administering the sacraments in “the latine tongue” with non-Latin speakers), causing the people to fall into superstition, their being “kept in ignorance [as to] the right use of the sacraments” by their being administered in “an unknowne tongue” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 301).

And so, beginning with the initial transgression, the efficient cause of original sin is identified as “the perversenes of Adams will.”¹²² Similarly, sin itself (especially when ingrained as habit) can function as the “efficient and mooving cause” of further sin, as Paul demonstrates in Romans 1.¹²³ The situation is a bit more complicated regarding death, with Pererius’s explanation that God “is not the efficient cause of death, which is a meere privation” lacking, to Willet’s judgment, adequate nuance. While not disagreeing with Pererius here absolutely, Willet argues that his “answer also is insufficient”:

“wherefore we answer further, that as God created light, darknes he created not, but disposed of it: so he made not death, but as it is a punishment: God, as a disposer rather, and a just judge, [than] an author, inflicteth it.”¹²⁴ This distinction between creating and disposing, between God as author and as judge, allows Willet to keep from making God the efficient cause of sin and death, while maintaining God’s sovereignty over all aspects of creation.

A similar distinction serves in the case of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, where God plays an active role in the hardening (as it is a punishment), though not in causing the justly punished wickedness in Pharaoh’s heart. Willet denies Pererius’s charge that Protestants made God “the efficient cause of stirring up the malice of Pharaoh,” averring: “farre be it from us to make God the author of evill, or the proper cause of any ones hardnesse of heart.”¹²⁵ Yet, while not the *efficient* cause of Pharaoh’s hard heart, neither was God causally divorced from the hardening entirely—a concept we will explore in

¹²² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 277 (citing Vermigli).

¹²³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 78.

¹²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 249.

¹²⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 419.

more depth, in relation to the hardness of the Jews' hearts, in the following chapter on cause and effect.¹²⁶

As we have seen, these distinctions determine how we understand God's relationship to sinful elements within the created order. Willet's own position is summed up by Hugo, who "well saith, that God ...by his invisible operation doth temper and order even wicked wills according to his owne mind, &c. yet God giveth unto evill and perverse wills, *non corruptionem sed ordinem*, not corruption but order."¹²⁷ God does not limit himself to sinless material when orchestrating his grand design, but neither is he responsible for the sinful substance itself of any material:

Now whereas the Apostle calleth as well the reprobate as the elect, the vessels of God, the one of his mercie, the other of his wrath; thereby we see, that God useth them both, as his instruments, though not in the same manner: for he po[u]reth of his grace into the vessels of mercy, and so maketh them fit instruments for himselfe; the other he useth also not by infusing that evilnes into them, which they have, but by moderating, ordering, and overruling the same, as it pleaseth him.¹²⁸

As this principle pertains to reprobation, then, God is *not* the efficient cause of the wickedness of the reprobate, but he *is* the efficient cause of the reprobation of the wicked.

¹²⁶ See V.2.1. Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree* (1986; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 67: "Nevertheless, even though God is not the efficient cause of sin, sin is within the bounds of the divine willing."

¹²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 421. Willet follows this quotation with Hugo's "similitude: like as when one is cast downe headlong, and is readie to fall, if one make a way seeing he must needes fall, that he tumble downe one way rather then an other, he in some sort may bee said to incline and make a way for him to fall: and yet causeth or procureth not, but onely disposeth his fall." Hugo's imagery brings to mind a famous fight that took place on October 11, 2003, during a playoff baseball game between the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox. When 72 year-old Yankees coach Don Zimmer angrily charged at 31 year-old Red Sox ace pitcher Pedro Martinez, Martinez threw Zimmer to the ground, earning widespread condemnation for what appeared to be elderly abuse. But a closer look at the tape showed that Martinez had largely allowed Zimmer's own momentum to carry him to the ground. Similarly, in Hugo's similitude God does not push peaceful bystanders to the ground, but directs the momentum generated by "wicked wills" in ways that serve his purposes (<https://m.mlb.com/video/v25536729/> [accessed November 15, 2014]).

¹²⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 426.

We will conclude this section with a look at the multiple causes of damnation that Willet identifies in a lengthy discussion on the decree of reprobation among the Romans 9 Controversies. Having identified opposing “rockes of offence”—that of foresight of sin being the *sole* cause of reprobation (which Willet claims would render God impotent),¹²⁹ and that of the decree of reprobation being *entirely* attributable to God’s will (which Willet allows would be technically within God’s right according to his absolute power)¹³⁰—Willet lays out a series of variations upon a “middle or meane way,” which attributes “the decree of reprobation partly to the will of God, as the efficient, partly to the foresight of sinne, as the material cause thereof.”¹³¹ This measured approach, which takes into consideration both human culpability through sin and God’s power and right as sovereign over all creation, Willet deems “the safest from any inconvenience, and the fittest to give satisfaction to the contrarie objections.”¹³² The logic of multiple causality provides a framework for fitting this “synergistic” effort together, as we see in the causes of damnation that Willet elicits from a definition of reprobation provided by “judicious Polanus”: “the efficient, is Gods decree and purpose, the materiall is sinne, the formall, the deniall of mercie, and the leaving them to themselves, the finall cause, is the setting forth of the justice of God.”¹³³ So God remains the guiding force behind the more

¹²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 438.

¹³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 442. Willet emphasizes a distinction between reprobation considered “absolutely” and “comparatively.” The first, which considers why reprobation itself exists has as a primary cause Adam’s voluntary original sin, while for the latter, which considers why one individual might be elect while another is left in reprobation, “no reason can be rendred, but Gods gracious and free purpose” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 442, 439).

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 440.

¹³² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 443. Cf. Calvin’s affirmation of a dual causality behind the perdition of the lost: “Accordingly, man falls according as God’s providence ordains, but he falls by his own fault” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 957 [3.23.8]).

significant causes, even while contributing none of the evil that, as the material cause, leaves the reprobate fully culpable for his own damnation, with no valid grievance against God.

4. Conclusion

As an exegetical tool providing categories for framing Paul's causal language in Romans, the Aristotelian fourfold causality gave Willet a vocabulary with which to refute various erroneous papist readings of the epistle. Roman Catholic and Protestant exegetes, equally familiar with Aristotelian logic, agreed on the compatibility of multiple levels of causality, but disagreed over how these various causes should be assigned. Willet argued that Roman Catholic exegetes interpreting Romans had confused the multiple causes of several key doctrines, generally by mistaking a subordinate, instrumental and *non-meritorious* cause (the material or formal) for the primary, efficient cause. Using this causal framework, Willet refuted papist interpretations, which in turn sharpened his articulation of his own Reformed understandings.

Overemphasis of a partial truth being the essence of heresy, Willet drew on the hierarchy of compatible causes to stake out theologically balanced positions. To *rely* on secondary causes was to place one's trust in created entities, yet to *neglect* secondary causes entirely was to test God. Regarding justification, Catholics erred by giving too much efficiency to faith and good works. Willet held that faith was indeed necessary, but only as it acted subordinately as an instrumental cause (whereas works are, properly, *effects*). To rebut the Roman Catholic accusation that the Reformed by their emphasis on

¹³³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 443.

divine sovereignty made God the author of sin, Willet divides the causes to affirm God's efficient causality in directing sin to good ends (thus guarding God's sovereignty and keeping from envisioning him as a weak or indifferent God of "mere permission"),¹³⁴ while making the sinful element itself the material cause (freeing God from charges of generating evil or of acting unjustly). Similarly, Willet explains the inherent sinfulness of heathen "good deeds" through a distinction between their material and formal causes—the material aspect of giving to the poor may be good, but the deficient formal cause (giving not out of love for God) designates the entire action as sin. Explaining sacramental causality, Willet refutes both Roman Catholic and Anabaptist extremes by arguing that *God*—not the elements themselves—is the efficient cause of the sacraments' efficacy, while the elements *do*— as instruments through which God works—provide a *material* causality. In each of these cases we find the Aristotelian fourfold causal model functioning not as a form of philosophical speculation, nor as a corrupting influence on the scriptural witness through an imposed, alien structure, but rather as an organizing, explanatory tool that for Willet served to clarify precisely where Roman Catholic exegetes had strayed from a faithful reading of Romans.

¹³⁴ Cf. Calvin's similar denial of any meaningful distinction between God's permission and will (Calvin, *Institutes*, 956-957 [3.23.8]).

CHAPTER V. CONFUSION OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

1. Introduction

While Willet frequently charged his theological opponents with misidentifying the particular multiple causes of an entity, condition or event, elsewhere he claimed not a confusion of different causes but of cause and effect—an argument sometimes only subtly distinct from the one drawing on multiple causality, due to close correspondence between an effect and a final cause. This confusion of cause and effect was certainly understandable, given the general acceptance that temporal order does not always indicate causal order,¹ the fact that an effect of *one* thing could in a causal chain serve as a cause of *another*,² and the possibility of an intentional inversion of cause and effect for rhetorical purposes.³ Arguing for rhetorical inversion in Romans also gave an exegete a considerable amount of interpretive flexibility, as he could base his argument not simply on the words actually used in the epistle, but on Paul's supposed *intention* in constructing a particular argument. Willet and his opponents agreed on the basic principle that no effect can precede its cause.⁴ The goal, then, was to establish a proper causal sequence, and to argue that the opponents had mistaken the order of and relationships within the

¹ See, for example, Roberts Sleigh Jr., Vere Chappell, and Michael Della Rocca, "Determinism and Human Freedom," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1201-1202; Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 210, 216, 223, 241.

² Though, while an effect of one thing could be a cause of a *different* thing, Willet notes that it is a logical fallacy to make an effect serve as its *own* cause. Since faith, for example, is an effect of election, it would be a form of circular reasoning to make faith a cause of election. This would in essence make faith "the cause of it selfe: and so also before it selfe" (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 437).

³ See, for example, Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 514, 541, and 542. For a broader discussion of other uses of metonymy, see my section on rhetorical devices in chapter 3 (III.3.2).

⁴ Cf. Burgersdijk: "Causa causato suo prior est natura & cognitione" (*Institutionum logicarum*, 60).

sequence. This chapter will consider how Willet addresses the relationship between cause and effect, focusing on the doctrinal ramifications of improperly establishing the sequence of cause to effect.

2. Confusion of Cause and Effect

2.1 Consequence or Final Cause

We noted in the last chapter that a final cause could be subdivided with reference to different subjects, and could be distinguished from consequences or effects. This flexibility further illustrates Willet's fidelity to the scriptural text and to his Reformed heritage, as well as his use of the highly developed description of kinds and levels of causality characteristic of the Peripatetic tradition in his day, and it enabled him to argue that certain apparently causal relationships were in fact incidental or accidental. With regard to the subdivision of a final cause, Willet would variously label a secondary end as a second final cause (to highlight God's purposiveness to multiple ends), or as an effect (to illustrate its subordinate position). So, as we saw in the final section of the last chapter, in Romans 3:25 Willet explains Paul's doctrine of justification by noting that "the end is the declaration of the righteousness of God by the forgiveness of sinnes...[and] the effect thereof is our reconciliation with God."⁵ Whereas in other places Willet makes it clear that human salvation is not merely an afterthought or unintended consequence of God's activity, here he emphasizes by his use of causal categories that the demonstration of God's glory is the *higher* end.

In other situations an "effect" could be more nearly a (mere) consequence, with

⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 177.

little or no intentional causation. This is the case, for example, in many instances of prophetic speech, wherein a prophet's words predict but do not cause an occurrence. Discussing Paul's reference to Isaiah in Romans 10:16 ("But they have not all harkened to the Gospel: for Esaias saith, Who hath beleevd our sayings?"), Willet accepts Tolet's note that the Latin *enim* ("for") can indicate the cause of the *speech* as well as the cause of the thing itself, but prefers here Vermigli's avoidance of any causal language at all: "the better answer is, that this particle (*for*) doth not shew the cause, but the consequence: for, not because the Prophet so said, did they not beleevd: but because they beleevd not, the Prophet so foretold."⁶ Neither Tolet nor Vermigli thought that Isaiah's words had caused Israel's less-than-universal belief, but Willet credits Vermigli with the "better answer," presumably for his expressing this in the language not of cause but of consequence. Yet, since the prophets spoke the very words of God, in some cases Willet allowed that a prophet's speech *could* function as an instrumental cause. Such was the case with Isaiah's warning quoted in Romans 11:7. Refuting Albert Pighius's assertion that Isaiah's words here were merely a prediction and no cause of the hardening of the Jews, Willet rebuts:

It followeth not: for even that word which Isay preached, did provoke the Jewes, and they were thereby further hardened: and though every prediction be not a cause of that which is to come, yet such predictions, as foretell of such things as the Lord himselfe will worke, as here the Prophet speaketh of the hardening of the heart, doe not onely shew the thing but expresse the cause also.⁷

Willet's interpretations of these two citations from Isaiah seem inconsistent and almost contradictory until we consider the extended context of Willet's disagreement with

⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 466.

⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 495.

Pighius. In order to free God from any charge of dealing unfairly with his people, Pighius had argued that God himself was in no way a cause of hardened hearts. Thus, according to Pighius, when God spoke through Isaiah of hardening and blinding people, these were not to be read actively as God's own doings, but as predictions of what God knew his obstinate people would do of their own accord.⁸ So in the first instance, in Romans 10:16, Willet was arguing that Isaiah himself was in no way a cause of the Jews' unbelief, while in the second case he was claiming that God's words (given through Isaiah) *did* play a causal role in the hardening of unbelieving Jews' hearts.

Other arguments within the same debate with Pighius regarding God's role in the hardening of hearts further illustrate the complex relationship between cause and consequence. Commenting on the "spirit of slumber" that God is said to send in Romans 11:8, Willet sought to avoid two extreme positions: that of Pighius, who by removing from God all responsibility for the hardening made God a weak bystander and falsified the clear word of Scripture,⁹ as well as that of the supralapsarians ("they which hold the absolute decree of reprobation") who "doe extenuate the power of God too much, and so doe ascribe too much unto God, in making him the principall cause of hardening of mens hearts."¹⁰ The proper moderating position for Willet, as we touched on also earlier in reference to Pharaoh's hardened heart, was one where God's actions in further hardening and blinding were performed as just punishments for the willful "blindnes and obstinacie of mans heart."¹¹ This blindness is thus, in different respects, both a cause and a

⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 495.

⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 496.

¹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 497. On Willet and infra- and supralapsarianism, see VI.2.1.4.

¹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 496.

consequence. Man's blinding of himself causes God's judgment, which then effects further blindness as the consequence of God's punishment. Pighius had used the example of one with "tender eyes" increasing his blindness by looking at the sun; no one would say (Pighius argued) that the sun caused the blindness—rather, "the fault is in the eyes."¹² Willet counters this example by writing that this "similitude maketh directly against [Pighius]: for though the first and principall fault be in the eyes, yet accidentally the brightnes of the Sunne doth increase the blindnes of the eyes."¹³ One is bound to err, Willet argues, when the hardness of heart is attributed entirely to a single cause. Multiple agents play a role: human corruption as the first cause, Satan as an instigator, and God as the just judge. Willet illustrates this point with the image of a blacksmith: "the corruption of mans heart is as the coale, that sendeth forth sparkes, Job 5:7. the devill bloweth and stirreth the coales, and kindleth the fire: God he smiteth as it were on the anvile, and frameth and disposeth every thing to his owne will."¹⁴ Willet's insistence that God actively hardens hearts, but only as a just *punishment* for sin, allows him to maintain a strong place for God's sovereignty while defending his Reformed predecessors against various Roman Catholic accusations, demonstrating for instance that Stapleton's charge that Calvin made God "the active cause of sinne" was "a meere slaunders."¹⁵

¹² It is inadvisable even for those with healthy eyes to stare at the sun.

¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 496.

¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 498. Again we see human corruption providing the material cause (in this case, the lump of coal).

¹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 497-498.

2.2 Cause versus Fruit

In his polemic against what many Reformed of his age considered to be a Semipelagian tendency in Roman Catholic hermeneutics, Willet frequently argued that his opponents had mistakenly identified the various fruits of justification as its causes. This error was generally expressed in Protestant circles as a confusion of justification and sanctification. In Willet's Romans commentary, for instance, we find him using this argument in reference to Paul's counsel in 6:13 not to "give your members as weapons of unrighteousness," refuting Bellarmine's suggestion that this "inherent justice" justifies us before God by explaining that "here the Apostle treateth not of justification, but of our sanctification, and mortification, which are necessary fruits of justification, and doe follow it; but they are not causes of our justification."¹⁶ Similarly, Willet uses Paul's teachings on righteousness in Romans 3 as an occasion to refute the Roman Catholic invention of a "second justification," in which humans increase God's initial justifying action by their own meritorious charitable works. "For that," writes Willet, "which they call the second justification, is nothing els but sanctification, which is the bringing forth of the fruits of holines after that we are justified by faith."¹⁷ Later, in the Controversies section of Romans 10, Willet uses the causal relationship between justification and sanctification to explain the distinction between the "righteousness of faith" and the "righteousness of the law," against those who like Stapleton had treated them as synonymous, as well as those who presented them as contraries: "the righteousnes of the law, doth necessarily follow and accompany faith, (though not to be justified by it) as

¹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 306.

¹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 183. Cf. also pp. 93, 138, 164, 197, and 201. Justification, in other words, is an instrumental cause—working through the operation of God's grace—of sanctification.

sanctification doth accompanie justification.” He also denies that the distinction between these two kinds of righteousness is merely *ratione, non re*, which Grynaeus had argued. This view treated them as two forms of the same species, differing not in substance but in the mind of the perceiver. Willet insisted, rather, that there was a real, extra-mental distinction between them, being as they differ in “forme, matter, qualitie, [and] subject.”¹⁸ He reiterates the nature of the relationship between the two in a summary statement at the end of the Controversy: “and so the justice of the law in our holinesse and sanctification doth followe necessarily our justification by faith.”¹⁹

It is interesting to note here that, at least in the Controversies section,²⁰ Willet makes the highly unusual move of associating Paul’s reference to the “righteousness of the law” *not* with a Mosaic form of righteousness antecedent to the advent of Christ or an impossible standard of conduct that drives us out of despair to Christ, but with the sanctification that *follows* justification by faith in Christ.²¹ By essentially defining the

¹⁸ For more on different kinds of scholastic distinctions, see Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), s.v. “distinctio.”

¹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 478.

²⁰ In the Questions and Doctrines sections, Willet follows the standard interpretation of the term, describing the law as a Schoolmaster that leads us to Christ, explaining that the promise of eternal life that the law offered was derailed by human sinfulness, and—as a Doctrine elicited from the text—delineating three differences between law and gospel (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 457-458, 474).

²¹ This reading differs from the two main interpretations of Romans 10:5 that Cranfield summarizes—the first and most common being a reference to an unattainable works-based righteousness that contrasts with the gift of righteousness by faith, and the second to the righteousness that Christ alone achieved by his perfect obedience to the law (Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, 521-522). Calvin had explained that Paul’s juxtaposition of the righteousness of the law and of faith was “to render it evident how much at variance is the righteousness of faith and that of works” (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 385). Vermigli emphasized the law’s role in leading one to Christ and warned against making the Schoolmaster the Father (Vermigli, *S. Paul to the Romanes*, 317v). Wilson identifies the phrase with the covenant of works (Wilson, *Commentarie upon Romanes*, 782), Parr describes the righteousness of the law as “uncertaine and impossible” (Parr, *A Plaine Exposition*, 259), and Dickson chides the Jews for “foolishly affect[ing] such a kind of righteousness” (Dickson, *An Exposition of All St. Pauls Epistles*, 26). Even the Rhemist annotations, while offering a synergistic form of justification and defining faith propositionally, oppose the two forms of righteousness, describing the righteousness of the law as the hope that the Jews

phrase in the Controversies section through the traditional Reformed “third use of the law,” Willet emphasizes the law’s essential goodness and the unity of God’s redemptive plan through time—the two “species” of righteousness (one imputed and the other inherent) are fully complementary, since the one leads necessarily to the other. And while the law itself indeed leads (indirectly, and “by an accident”) to the righteousness that is by faith, the *righteousness* of the law, Willet seems to argue, must properly describe the inherent righteousness that we *actually* attain (i.e. sanctification), and not a righteousness *distinct* from faith that has become for us, because of our sinful nature, a mere chimera. Willet refutes a similar argument from Augustine for failing to adequately separate our good works from justification. Describing what Paul means by the one who does the law “living” thereby, Augustine explained that “hee that hath obtained justification by faith, doth the righteousness of the law, and may live thereby: But,” Willet interjects, “this were to confound the law and the Gospel.”²² While this exchange from the Questions section seems to reject a view quite similar to the one Willet himself will put forth in the Controversies, what seems in Willet’s judgment to be missing is the explicit clarification that the just subsequently do and live by the righteousness of the law, “*though not to be justified by it.*”²³

In the Romans hexapla, as in his other works, Willet vehemently disputes the Roman Catholic charge that the Protestant insistence on justification by faith alone diminishes the importance of Christian ethics and necessarily leads to laxity in performing good deeds. His exegetical move concerning the “righteousness of the law”

expressed of attaining a righteous status “onely by the knowledge of the Law without the helpe or grace of Christ” (Martin, *New Testament*, 408).

²² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 458.

²³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 478; my emphasis.

demonstrates this argument already, and it is fitting to consider in more depth the theoretical basis for his defense of Protestant good works. In his reflections on Paul's designation of eternal life as "the gift of God" in Romans 6:23, Willet states that

Good workes are so farre from beeing meritorious causes of eternall life, that they are not alwaies and in all, *causa sine qua non*, the cause without the which we cannot attaine unto life, as in infants; and in them which are of yeares, though without good workes they cannot be saved, yet good workes are rather a beginning of eternall life, then the cause thereof.²⁴

The salvation of infants who die before they reach an age where they can perform any good works is evidence for Willet that works are not *absolutely* necessary for eternal life, and thus cannot be its cause. For those, however, who do have opportunity to manifest the fruit of their faith, good works are the expected outgrowth of the unmerited gift of grace—a natural characteristic of the eternal life that begins prior to their physical death, at the moment when they are justified. Thus, even the redeemed thief on the cross next to Christ was able to demonstrate good works as an outflow of his salvation in the short period he had before his death, when he "shewed his faith by his workes, in confessing his sinne, and honouring Christ."²⁵ The Protestant doctrine of justification, Willet insists, is fully compatible with a robust ethical emphasis: "we doe not separate works from faith, though wee exclude them from justification: faith which justifieth cannot be without workes, yet it justifieth without workes: it alone justifieth, yet it must not be alone."²⁶ Yet even these works of sanctification are considered good and "pleasing unto God" not by an intrinsic property in the acts themselves or in the manner in which they are offered,

²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 310.

²⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 200.

²⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 192.

but as an effect of God's acceptance of them.²⁷

2.2.1 Causality and the Theological Virtues

Willet's treatment of causality in relation to the virtues of faith, hope, and love can clarify for us the relationship between cause and fruit, and how these may be confused. Two primary concerns are evident in Willet's approach to these virtues. First, in order to protect the central position of justification by faith alone, he is careful to maintain the primacy of faith among the theological virtues. And second, to avoid any suggestion of Semipelagian soteriology, he reminds us that faith is itself an effect of election. This second concern we will develop in more detail in the following section, on election and foreknowledge.

In the comments on Romans 8:24 ("For by hope we are saved..."), the Rheims annotators took the occasion to argue for a salvific role for virtues other than faith:

That which in other places [Paul] attributeth to faith, is here attributed to hope, for whensoever there be many causes of one thing, the holy writers (as matter is ministred and occasion given by the doctrine then handled) sometimes referre it to one of the causes, sometime to an other: not by naming one alone, to exclude the other, as our Adversaries captiously and ignorantly do argue: but at divers times and in sundrie places to expresse that, which in every discourse could not, nor needed not to be uttered.²⁸

In similar fashion to how Willet would argue that multiple causes lay behind such effects as a hardened heart, so here the Roman Catholic Rhemist annotators had argued for a kind of causal synecdoche in Paul's language of justification, with varied virtues cited individually according to contextual needs, each representing the *entire network* of

²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 538.

²⁸ Martin, *New Testament*, 402.

justification's many causes. This denial of justification by *faith alone*—which we will recall Willet held to be, with election, one of the “two chiefe points” of Christianity²⁹—necessitated a defense of this important doctrine at this juncture in Willet's commentary. To allow a place for even so noble a virtue as hope *alongside* faith in causing our justification could open the gate for a Trojan horse of works-righteousness that would erode the theological foundation of the Protestant churches.

Willet dismisses the Rhemist interpretation of Romans 8:24 with diverse arguments. He begins by drawing a distinction between salvation and justification. “By being saved,” he explains, “the Apostle understandeth not to be justified, for our justification is presently had and possessed: but by salvation, he signifieth the perfection and accomplishment of our redemption and adoption in Christ.”³⁰ The division here parallels the distinction between justification and sanctification, with justification in each case being an accomplished fact, and sanctification and salvation denominating a process or destination. Adding to the potential for confusion, Willet acknowledges that “saved” *can* at times be used to mean “justified,” though in this case it is the Rhemist annotators who “would deceive us by the *homonymie*.” Yet even with this distinction between justification and salvation in mind, Willet rejects also what would seem to be the plain sense of Paul's words, denying that hope is the cause of *salvation*: “so that hope is not the cause of salvation, but it is as the way and meanes, whereby salvation begunne in us by faith, is brought unto perfection.” We can presume here that Willet's use of the definite article in “the cause” narrowly implies the *efficient* cause, as the reference to hope as “the

²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 8.

³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 396-397.

way and means” would certainly suggest *instrumental* causation. Finally, citing William Fulke and Vermigli, Willet uses an argument similar to the Rhemist synecdoche explanation, though in a way that guards the primacy of faith. When Paul writes of hope, Willet reasons, “we must understand the Apostle to speake of hope, as joyned with faith...And when as these things, as our justification, salvation, are ascribed to hope or charitie, we must so take it, that the manner of our justification is showed, not by the causes, but by the effects.”³¹ He goes on to liken hope and faith to a tree and its roots; just as a tree springs from its root system and cannot exist without it, so hope emerges from faith and cannot exist in isolation.

In his Controversies section on Romans 5, Willet similarly establishes faith’s priority over love in justification. Pererius had argued that Paul’s assertion that “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts” indicated an infused love that believers had for God that contributed to making them formally just in God’s judgment. Noting that this interpretation differed from those even of other notable Roman Catholics, Willet counters this reading on two points. First, where Pererius had taken ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ as an objective genitive—*our* love for God—Willet holds that arguments regarding any merit associated with our love here are “impertinent, because the Apostle treateth not here of the charitie or love, which is in man toward God, but of Gods love towards us.”³² Despite the purported impertinence of the debate, Willet girds his case with other arguments.

Acknowledging that the faithful *are* marked by infused and permanent virtues,

³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 397. We will consider the possibility of Paul’s intentional use of effects to represent a cause in the following section on metonymy (V.2.5).

³² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 267. Willet explains the reasoning for his preference of the subjective genitive in Romans 5:5 on pp. 240-241, siding with Chrysostom, Beza, and Pareus against Oecumenius, Anselm and Stapleton.

including—naturally—love for God, he explains that these attributes cannot contribute to our justification, as “all our righteousness is as a stained cloth...and therefore not able to justify us.” Our love for God, as our justification, is an effect of the efficient causality of God’s love for us.³³ Willet also affirms here a more general priority of faith over love. Pererius in his disputations on Romans 5 had cited 1 Corinthians 13, plus no less an authority than Augustine, to argue that love was the greatest of God’s gifts.³⁴ Against this absolute exaltation of love, Willet counters that “charitie is not simply the greatest of all other gifts, and absolutely preferred before faith,” but is the “greatest” virtue only with regard to its permanence. But apart from the consideration of duration, “faith is the greater...as it engendereth all other vertues.”³⁵ As to Pererius’s appeal to Augustine in this context, Willet points out in the Questions section that Augustine is not entirely consistent in how love is to be interpreted in Romans 5:5, so that “Augustine shall answer Augustine” to rebut those Roman Catholics who cited him on this issue.³⁶

Willet likewise subordinates confession (and other “works”) to faith in his discussion of the yoking of belief and confession in Romans 10:10, using a “ways and means” explanation similar to the one he uses to subordinate faith to election (see the section below). Responding to Bellarmine’s inference from this verse that confession

³³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 267-268.

³⁴ Pererius, *Disputationes super...Romanes*, 315.

³⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 267. Given Willet’s insistence that faith is the greatest of the virtues precisely because it engenders the others, his biographer Peter Smith’s passing comment positioning love as the fount of all virtues takes on an ironic character. In the midst of extolling Willet’s acts of love, Smith writes: “It may be expected that I should now at last speake of his other vertues ... but I have entred into this pleasant field of love, and I cannot leave it ... and this alone is able to produce the severall acts of everie vertue” (Smith, “The Life and Death of Andrew Willet,” sig.b4v). Smith thus justifies extending his praise of Willet’s works of love by attributing to love a characteristic that Willet explicitly denies it!

³⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 240. Willet himself, along with many Reformed exegetes, frequently cites the authority of Augustine. For more on Willet’s use of him and Chrysostom, see VII.2.1.2.

serves together with faith as a principal cause of salvation, Willet—after sending “*Bellarmino* to his auncient Cardinal *Tolet*” for a more sound reading—draws on Beza for “that rule in Logike, *causa causa, est causa causati*, the cause of the cause, is the cause of that which is caused by that cause.” Just as the first in a chain of dominoes is the true cause of the final domino’s fall, so faith is the cause of salvation, even though its causal chain runs *through* confession: for “faith is the cause also of confession, which is required, not as a cause, but *tanquam medium*, as a way and meane unto salvation.”³⁷

2.3 Election and Foreknowledge

As careful as Willet is to protect the privileged place of faith in Reformed justification against the incursion of works of Romanist soteriology, he has to strike a delicate balance to keep from making faith an efficient cause of justification, as in the Arminian exaltation of the human will. Faith holds the highest causal position within the hierarchy of faith, hope and love, Willet argues, but faith is itself an *effect* of God’s gracious election. Passages such as John 6:29 and Ephesians 2:8 make it clear that faith is not a human work, but a gift from God.³⁸ Thus, the argument that God’s election depends on his foresight of faith is “a vaine and absurd tautologie,” as God would merely be foreseeing the faith that he himself was going to grant.³⁹

One of Willet’s extended refutations of the notion that predestination depends upon God’s foresight of faith is occasioned by the interpretation of Romans 8:29 (“Those whome he knewe before he also predestinate...”) by Chrysostom, one of Willet’s most-

³⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 463.

³⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 399.

cited Church Fathers.⁴⁰ Chrysostom, followed by several other Greek exegetes and joined also by Latin expositors Ambrose and Jerome, as well as some sixteenth-century Lutherans, took this passage to mean that God elected those whom he knew would show themselves worthy to be called—if only, as in the case of the Lutherans, in view of foreknown faith.⁴¹ This same view was taught by a young Augustine (though he changed his opinion, “ingeniously confessing” the opposite view in his *Retractions*) and by the Rhemists (though the “most learned among” the Romanists, as Bellarmine and Pererius, agreed with Willet’s position).⁴²

As part of his refutation, Willet again draws here on the example of a child dying in infancy. Such a child’s election could not depend on foreseen good works, since these would never exist. And the suggestion that God in these cases would “see” instead the hypothetical good works that the child *would* have done had she survived is untenable, as the same logic could argue that one could be condemned for hypothetical future *evil* deeds, which Willet judges would “standeth not with the justice of God.”⁴³

It is necessary too, Willet argues, to “distinguish betweene the decree it selfe, and

⁴⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398. For an early expression of Willet’s views on predestination, see Andrew Willet, *De Praedestinatione Disputatio opposita Quibusdam, non Tantum è Pontificiis recentioribus; sed & è Protestantibus Transmarinis, quorum error in Ecclesiam Anglicanam infulere coeperat* (1594), in Matthew Hutton, et al. *Brevis et dilucida explicatio verae, certae & consolationis plenae doctrinae de Electione, Praedestinatione ac Reprobatione*, ed. Antoine Thysius (Amsterdam: Henricus Laurentius, 1613), 113-256.

⁴¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398. He also mentions several who propound this view in his treatment of this verse in the Questions section, pp. 378-379.

⁴² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

⁴³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398. This is essentially the plot of the 2002 Tom Cruise movie *Minority Report*. Cf. also Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 64: “Prescience or foreknowledge relates only to those things which shall come to pass (*quae futura sint*).”

the execution of the decree.”⁴⁴ This argument relies on the logic of causality, which we considered in the previous chapter. “First the end is propounded,” he explains, “then the means are thought of, as tending to that end.”⁴⁵ God’s decree of election points toward an end of human salvation, and faith is the predominant means that works to effect that end. It would be absurd to suggest that the appointed means were the ultimate cause of the end for which those same means were appointed. Willet elaborates on this notion in the Controversies section of the next chapter, Romans 9, with the example of a “nephew” (which he uses in the now obsolete sense of “grandson”⁴⁶): “the father is the cause of his son, and the son of the nephew, and yet the son is not the cause of the father; so election is the cause of faith, and faith of salvation: but it therefore followeth not that faith should be the cause of election.”⁴⁷ Such an argument, of course, is only possible with a proper distinction drawn between election and salvation. This distinction allows Willet to take Paul’s strongly predestinarian language in the heart of Romans 9 at its face value, yet without neglecting a role for faith in the economy of salvation. “Faith then in Christ is not the cause of election, but a meane subordinate to bring the elect unto salvation.”⁴⁸ Faith thus retains an *instrumental* (though not meritorious) causality with regard to the goal of salvation, while possessing no causality *at all* toward election.

⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 399. Cf. Dewey Wallace on the movement from election to effectual calling, in which “the grace of predestination was combined with the sense that something really happened for the believer at the time of actual belief and was shown to have happened by the resultant good works of sanctification” (Wallace, “Puritan Polemical Divinity,” 217).

⁴⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

⁴⁶ “nephew, n.” OED Online. June 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/126113?redirectedFrom=nephew>.

⁴⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 436.

⁴⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 436.

While Willet frequently cites election as the cause of many of the graces and virtues in a Christian's life, he does occasionally reach behind election to give *its* cause, which he denominates variously, depending on the language Paul uses in the particular context. This practice of allowing the scriptural context to provide differing names for the "first cause" of election was not uncommon among Reformed exegetes.⁴⁹ Most often Willet describes the cause of election as God's "good pleasure."⁵⁰ He associates this good pleasure with God's absolute will (when explaining the distinction between God's "effectuall calling" and his "calling not effectuall" in Romans 2)⁵¹, and, following Vermigli, with God's secret will (in the context of discussing God's hardening "whom he will" in Romans 9).⁵² Willet is careful to keep election separate from any suggestion of merit. Having cited interpretations by Socinus and Ostorodius that took Romans 9:18 (God "hath mercie on whom he will") as evidence that God's forgiveness does not require satisfaction by Christ, Willet responds by drawing distinctions between God's general and special mercy, and (again) between election and salvation. God does not require Christ's satisfaction in order to show mercy, as it is a quality and faculty that "is naturall in God, and absolute in him without any condition."⁵³ Thus, God extends his general gifts (sunshine, rain, and the like) to all of his creation, and also freely chooses to

⁴⁹ See, for example, Calvin's use of various terms for the cause of election, discussed in Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 173.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 104, 382, 422, and 449. Willet opposes Chrysostom's "strange opinion" that *no* cause of God's election is given in Scripture and that we should not be overcurious to know something that is "best knowne unto God" (pp. 414, 416). The logic of this seems similar to Willet's attribution of the cause to "the free purpose of God," but Willet rejects Chrysostom's agnosticism as an inadequate reading of the causes given in the text and, presumably, as leaving the door open to merit.

⁵¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 104.

⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 422.

⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 449.

bestow his special grace upon his elect. And so God's election is caused by "none other but onely the good pleasure of God, [requiring] no merit of any creature, no not of Christ himselfe."⁵⁴ The error of Socinus and Ostorodius (in this matter) was applying this understanding to God's temporal work of redemption. God's "first decree and purpose" to demonstrate mercy through election was rooted in his good pleasure alone, but the various means through which God effects this election have additional causes, including especially Christ's satisfaction, as it was God's will that this "should not be done without Christ." A proper trinitarian reading of Romans 9:18 further removes any wedge the heretics attempted to position between God's forgiveness and Christ's work of satisfaction: "therefore God forgiveth sinnes for his owne sake, because he forgiveth them for Christ, who is the Jehovah and eternall God, that forgiveth sinnes."⁵⁵ But if even the merit of *Christ's* work did not motivate God's purpose to elect some freely by his grace, it would be a blasphemous absurdity to presume that God's election could be caused by his foreknowledge of any human faith or works.

Particularly threatening to this understanding, as we saw earlier with Chrysostom's interpretation, were various passages that gave a foundational position to God's foresight or foreknowledge within the causality of salvation. Paul begins the "golden chain" of Romans 8:29-30, for instance, with: "those whom [God] knew before, he also predestinate to be like fashioned to the image of his Sonne..." Since God's prescience is listed before predestination, Willet must be careful to clarify that this is not a foreknowledge of any quality within the individuals elected, but references God's good

⁵⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 449. Other Reformed theologians, as Zacharias Ursinus, made similar statements about Christ's merit being an effect and not a cause of election (Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 109; Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 187).

⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 449.

pleasure: “first, there is the purpose of God in generall to glorifie his name in saving some. then he foreseeeth, liketh, and approoveth a certain number according to his good pleasure, whom he chooseth out, electeth, and separateth from the rest.”⁵⁶ Willet presents God’s foreknowledge as the cause of election also in the Doctrines section of Romans 11, in reference to the second verse of the chapter (“God hath not cast away his people, which hee knew before”). Here, drawing on 1 Peter 1:2 (“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God”), he explains: “and thus Gods foreknowledge differeth from election, as the cause from effect: for the love, acceptance, and approbation of God, is the cause of election.”⁵⁷ While Willet doesn’t state it explicitly in this context, clear statements elsewhere in the commentary necessitate that God’s “love, acceptance, and approbation” here be understood as stemming from God’s absolutely free purpose, and not from any “loveable” or “acceptable” qualities inherent in the elect themselves.⁵⁸

2.3.1 Positioning Election and Predestination within the Ordo Salutis

It is worth saying something here about Willet’s ordering of election and predestination, since it reveals two different working definitions of predestination within the Reformed theological camp. Muller notes that while some of the Reformed orthodox, as Herman Rennecherus, simply re-presented the elements given in Romans 8:28-30 (that is, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification) as

⁵⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 382. The argument that God’s foreknowledge here refers to a knowledge of his own good pleasure was common among Reformed exegetes. See, for example, Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 109.

⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 519.

⁵⁸ Cf. Willet’s assertion, discussed earlier, that even our works of sanctification are considered good and pleasing to God only as an *effect* of God’s acceptance of them.

the “golden chain” of salvation, many others additionally folded in aspects from Ephesians 1 to flesh out their chains.⁵⁹ Since Paul does not include “he elected” (ἐξελέξατο) in the list he gives in Romans 8:28-30, those wanting to incorporate the reference to election in Ephesians 1:4 into this model had to choose whether to add it before or after “he predestined” (προώρισεν), and this placement coincided with the exegete’s understanding of predestination—namely, whether it was a blanket term that included both election and reprobation, or a narrower term that was limited to the benefits associated with election.

Many continental Protestant scholastics used the term *praedestinatio* to include both *electio* and *reprobatio*.⁶⁰ Yet there were some, especially in the British context, who resisted this broader definition and tended, thus, to reverse the order of predestination and election. Willet’s contemporary Thomas Wilson, for instance, favored the narrower understanding of predestination in the 1616 second edition of his *A Christian Dictionary*, concluding this entry with: “So as predestination is of larger extent than election,⁶¹ though in Scripture it is not found to concern any other save the elect. But Scholasticall writers make it the general both to election and reprobation, as a decree of God which is touching the ends of both, which bee without end.”⁶² Wilson’s understanding of scriptural predestination as referring only to the elect is reflected in the order in which he lists the

⁵⁹ Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 195-196, 198-199.

⁶⁰ Cf. Muller, *Dictionary of Greek and Latin Theological Terms*, s.v. “praedestinatio”.

⁶¹ “Of larger extent” not in that it also includes reprobation, but because it “respecteth both the execution of Gods purpose, with the whole progresse of middle causes leading unto the end... & also the ends themselves, both life eternal of the elect, as the nearest end, & the glory of Gods mercy as the utmost end.”

⁶² Thomas Wilson, *A Christian Dictionary* (London: William Iaggard, 1612; second ed., 1616; third ed., 1622), 449. The first edition of *A Christian Dictionary*, published in 1612, defines predestination

causes of justification in commenting on verse 8:30 in his 1614 Romans commentary: “the true & proper causes [of justification] be Gods foreknowledge, election, predestination, & calling, Faith beeing but the Organ and helping cause (as I said before) verse 22.chap. 3.”⁶³

Elnathan Parr in his 1618 exposition of Romans 8-11 argued likewise against the common broader understanding of predestination: “Predestination is by Divines usually taken and used in their writings, for the whole counsell of God concerning the Elect and the Reprobate: and this they doe for plainnesse sake. Here [in Romans 8:29] it is used onely for Election: neither doe I observe it otherwaies used in the Scripture.”⁶⁴ Unlike Wilson, Parr does not apply his understanding of predestination to an extended list of salvation’s causes, preferring to limit his chain to the elements Paul cites in Romans 8:29-30.⁶⁵ William Cowper, writing in 1609, allows for both definitions of predestination, but limits its meaning in Romans 8 to the narrower reference, so that it “is no larger than Election.”⁶⁶ Indeed, in this context he treats election as the broader term, consisting of God’s foreknowledge and predestination. In his initial summary of Paul’s order, he substitutes election for these first two links: “this golden Chaine of our salvation reaches (so to speake it) from eternitie to eternitie; the beginning of it, albeit without beginning, is our Election; the end of it, albeit without end, is our Glorification...[connected by] the

similarly, but without the reference to the usage of the “Scholasticall writers.” See Wilson, *A Christian Dictionary* (1612), 370-371.

⁶³ Wilson, *Commentarie upon Romanes*, 629.

⁶⁴ Parr, *Plaine Exposition upon Romans*, 110. Cf. Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination*, 57-58.

⁶⁵ Parr, *Plaine Exposition upon Romans*, 116.

⁶⁶ Cowper, *Three Heavenly Treatises*, 365-366.

two middle linckes thereof, to wit, our Calling and Justification.”⁶⁷ He continues to break election down into the “two acts or preordinances (so to call them)” of foreknowledge (which “lookes to the person to be saved”) and predestination (which considers the “meanes whereby they are to be saved”), adding, however, that this distinction is made as a kind of didactic accommodation “for our capacitie,” as the two are, with relation to God, “one act without prioritie or posterioritie.”⁶⁸

Willet himself presents his ordering of the “Golden Chain” against the order given by Gulielmus Bucanus, basing his argument on the order in which Paul mentions the two in the first chapter of Ephesians and including a standard caveat on God and temporality:

Concerning election ἐκλογή, 1. Some thinke that it followeth predestination in order, in respect of us, for with God there is no distinction of time, and order in these things: as *Bucanus, loc. 36. quest. 3.* but it rather goeth before as the Apostle first saith, Ephes. [1.4]. *Hee chose or elected us in him, &c. that wee should be holy,* then he saith, v. 5. *Who predestinate us, &c.* and v. 11. *In whom also we were elected beeing predestinate:* for first the persons are elected, and then the thing is decreed, which is predestinate unto the elect, namely, eternall life, with such things as doe accompanie it.⁶⁹

Willet’s issue with Bucanus seems to stem from their different definitions of predestination (i.e., whether it serves as a narrow term applied to the elect, or as an

⁶⁷ Cowper, *Three Heavenly Treatises*, 362.

⁶⁸ Cowper, *Three Heavenly Treatises*, 364. This is an example of a *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*, or “distinction by reason of analysis.”

⁶⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 382. Willet’s assertion that “first the persons are elected, and then the thing is decreed, which is predestinate unto the elect, namely, eternal life,” might seem to contradict his principle that “first the end is propounded, then the meanes are thought of, as tending to that end” (p. 398), but we must remember that Willet is writing here not of a logical ordering of God’s decrees themselves, but of an order “in respect of us.”

On Bucanus, cf. Gulielmus Bucanus, *Institutiones theologicae, seu locorum communium Christianae religionis, ex Dei verbo, et praestantissimorum theologorum orthodoxo consensu expositorum* (Bern: Iohannes & Isaias Le Preux, 1605), 419; Gulielmus Bucanus, *Institutions of Christian Religion, framed out of Gods word, and the writings of the best Divines, methodically handled by Questions and Answers, fit for all such as desire to know, or practice the will of God*, trans. Robert Hill (London: George Snowdon, 1606), [426; misprinted as p. 430].

umbrella term encompassing both election and reprobation) and differing understandings of how Ephesians 1:4-5 relates to Romans 8:29-30. Bucanus argues that the terms “election” and “reprobation” can each be used two different ways—“properly,” as referring to the *ordo salutis* that humans experience, or “metonymically,” referring to God’s mysterious will, which Bucanus will clarify has no temporal order (all things being “present” to God). “It is to be noted,” Bucanus writes, “that election and reprobation are taken two waies. In deed they are properly referred to the condition of man alreadie created, and through his fall corrupted...”⁷⁰ Bucanus’s explanation of the “proper” sense of these terms thus establishes his infralapsarian position. But he soon continues:

But they are often used metonimically for the very decree of Election & Reprobation, which God hath decreed in himselfe, as Eph. 1.4. *He chose us in himselfe before the foundations of the worlde were layde, that wee might bee holy and blameless before him in love.* The mysterie whereof is hidden from us, although both of them are manifest to us in due time, by those causes, meanes or effects, which God hath expressed in his word.⁷¹

Bucanus seems to be saying, in essence, that since in Ephesians 1:4-5 Paul is referring to the *pactum salutis* and not the *ordo salutis*, it cannot simply blend in to the order given in Romans 8. For Willet, however, the one text can indeed inform the other.⁷²

Willet’s understanding of predestination, similarly to Wilson’s, encompasses both the end of salvation and the means by which it is accomplished, though Willet adds (further muddying the terminological waters) that “this part of predestination, which decreeth the meanes to bring the elect to salvation, is properly called ordination.” Thus,

⁷⁰ Bucanus, *Institutions of Christian Religion*, 424.

⁷¹ Bucanus, *Institutions of Christian Religion*, 425.

⁷² Willet and Bucanus ultimately end up with similar theologies of predestination, so that their differences are primarily a matter of terminology. On the *pactum salutis* (including the function of Ephesians 1:4-5 in the formulation of the doctrine), see Richard A. Muller, “Toward the *Pactum Salutis*: Locating the Origins of a Concept,” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 18 (2007): 11-65.

in Willet's summary statement on the order of the causes of salvation, election precedes predestination, as a winner might be selected in a contest before the prize itself is determined. He concludes:

This then is the order: first, there is the purpose of God in generall to glorifie his name in saving some. 2. then he foreseeeth, liketh, and approoveth a certaine number according to his good pleasure, whom he chooseth out, electeth, and separateth from the rest; then hee doth predestinate them unto everlasting life, and ordaineth the way and meanes, whereby they are brought unto life.⁷³

2.4 Sin and Concupiscence

We will consider the causality of sin and its relationship to concupiscence as a final illustration of the polemical use of cause and effect argumentation. Willet presents Bellarmine (in relation to Romans 6:12)⁷⁴ and Pererius (in the context of Romans 7:20)⁷⁵ as examples of Roman Catholics who denied that concupiscence could be considered sin. In places where Paul “directly calleth even concupiscence, wherewith hee is unwilling, sinne,” these Romanists argued that concupiscence “is called sinne, either because it is *effectus peccati*, the effect of sinne, as the writing is called the hand, because it was written with the hand: or because it bringeth forth sinne, as *frigus*, cold, is called *pigrum*, slothfull, because it maketh one so.”⁷⁶ Before we consider Willet's refutation of this interpretation, it is worth noting again how Roman Catholic polemicists in this age were employing forms of argumentation very similar to those of their Protestant counterparts.

⁷³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 382.

⁷⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 305.

⁷⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 345. Cf. David Sytsma's reference to Willet's argument for the sinfulness of concupiscence in David Sytsma, “The Logic of the Heart: Analyzing the Affections in Early Reformed Orthodoxy,” in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*, ed. Jordan J. Ballor, David S. Sytsma, and Jason Zuidema (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2013), 486.

⁷⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 345.

Just as Willet argued that Scripture passages that seemed to make, for instance, good works a cause of justification ought to be read as a rhetorical presentation of an effect for its cause, so Bellarmine and Pererius in this instance held that Paul's referring to concupiscence as "sin" did not equate the two, but highlighted the causal link between them.⁷⁷ In all of these cases, Reformed and Romanist exegetes alike read the texts through the lens of their own hermeneutical framework, each supporting their preferred readings with reference to supporting doctrines and *dicta probantia*.

In his Questions section of Romans 6, Willet explains that concupiscence can be taken to mean either inborn original sin or a particular "inward act of the minde, whereof there are three degrees"—the first motion of temptation, followed by a delight in and a consent to that motion. In the case of the warning in 6:12 not to let sin reign in the body, "that yee should obey it in the lusts,"⁷⁸ Paul "speaketh not of the first motion, which no man can helpe, but of the second and third, which by Gods grace may be staied, that a man neither delight in, or consent unto those evill motions, which arise in the mind."⁷⁹ Yet the limitation here to the second and third motions of concupiscence in no way excuses the sinfulness of its first motion, *despite* its being a motion "which no man can helpe"; it is the hortatory context of 6:12, and not a denial of the sinful nature of the first impulse of concupiscence, that excludes that aspect from consideration here. Willet makes this clear in his discussion of the same verse in his Controversies section, where he

⁷⁷ For more on Willet's use of metonymy, see section III.3.2, and for a more detailed consideration of the overlap between this device and Willet's arguments based on cause and effect confusion, see section V.2.5.

⁷⁸ In the Vulgate, "ut obediatis concupiscentiis eius."

⁷⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 295.

asserts that “all sinne is not voluntary,⁸⁰ for then originall corruption should not be sinne, which is even in children, which can give no consent.” It is not the consent of the will that makes something sinful, but its being “contrarie to the lawe of God.”⁸¹ Again, in the Controversies section on Romans 7, Willet draws on the Sermon on the Mount to show that the prohibition of “the very first motions” in Christ’s interpretation of the law “doth condemne the very appetite, which tickleth us, though it have not our consent.”⁸² The nature of sin, Willet insists, runs deeper than our external actions, and deeper even than the human will—which all the more impresses the need for God’s grace, and the inability of good works to justify. Willet also alludes in this context to the limitations of natural law:

[Paul’s] concupiscence tempted him even against his will: and whereas he saith, he had not knowne lust without the law, he meaneth the very first motions: for the second motions, which have the will concurring, as envie, hatred, and such like, many of the heathen, which knew not the lawe condemned by the light of nature as evill.⁸³

In distinguishing between the capacity of the light of nature to recognize the first and second motions of concupiscence, Willet presents the standard Reformed orthodox perspective on natural law, which lay somewhere between the Roman Catholic endorsement of natural law and the twentieth-century neoorthodox representation of the historical Reformed position as being one of absolute rejection.⁸⁴ Natural law had some

⁸⁰ By which he means not that all sin is involuntary, but that not all sin is voluntary.

⁸¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 305. It is enough, he adds, that Adam’s sin, as the root of original sin, was voluntary. This judgment differs from that of Calvin, who included Adam’s fall itself in the divine decree (see Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.23.7).

⁸² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 345-346.

⁸³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 344.

⁸⁴ For more on the Reformed perspective on natural revelation and natural law, see David C. Steinmetz, “Calvin and the Natural Knowledge of God,” in *Via Augustini: Augustine in the Later Middle*

utility in Reformed orthodox thought, though it was insufficient to address the thoroughgoing brokenness of the human condition.

While insisting that concupiscence itself was sin, and not merely its cause or effect, Willet acknowledged that a sin *could* at times be a cause or an effect of other sins (yet without ceasing itself to be sin). Presenting the Argument for Romans 1, he summarizes the middle of the chapter by explaining that the Gentiles’ “depravation of Gods worship, is expressed, in *the causes*, their unthankfulness, which brought forth vanitie of minde, and foolishnesse, v. 21. *the effect*, in worshipping corruptible things in stead of God, v. [23]. then the punishment followeth, they were given up to their hearts lusts, v. 24.”⁸⁵ Later, in his lengthy Questions section on Romans 1, he delineates more explicitly a four-fold distinction of sins: a sin may be additionally the cause of further sin (a scenario Willet illustrates with the example of one’s drunkenness leading to adultery), it may be both a cause and a punishment (as when, Willet explains, one is—as “punishment” for gluttony— given over to adultery, which in turn causes a murder to cover up the adultery), it may be a punishment but not a cause, or it may be simply a sin, and neither a cause nor a punishment (“as namely when any one repenteth of his sinne, and proceedeth no further”).⁸⁶ Thus, even when a sinful action is a cause of further sin or an effect of previous sin, it does not cease itself to be sin.

Ages, Renaissance and Reformation, ed. Heiko A. Oberman and Frank A. James III (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1991), 142-156; Stephen J. Grabill, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: a Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010); Jeffrey Mallinson, “The Uses and Abuses of Natural Revelation,” in *Faith, Reason, and Revelation in Theodore Beza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, 15-17.

⁸⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 31.

⁸⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 77. Willet’s example of a sin being a punishment but not a cause—“as murther here is the punishment of adulterie”—seems rather far-fetched (as committing murder would seem often to lead to subsequent sins), so I am relegating it to a footnote.

As with election and faith, Willet illustrates the relationship between concupiscence and sin with a familial example—though here he employs the image differently. While the first case relies on the logic of a man being a cause of his son but not of his father, in this instance the analogy draws from a grandfather, son, and grandson all being *men*, and from the grandfather being a remote cause of the grandson. Similarly, Willet explains, “it followeth not concupiscence bringeth forth sinne, therefore it is no sinne,” and concupiscence and enacted sin both lead to death—the first as “the remote cause” and the second as “the neerest cause.”⁸⁷ As the men in a family line are all (different) men, so concupiscence and the sinful actions it bears can all be sins (even if they are *different* sins); and merely being an extra generation removed from the grandson does not remove the grandfather from his progeny’s causal chain.

The strong Reformed emphasis on God’s sovereignty also invited Roman Catholic accusations that these theologians made God responsible for sin, so polemical responses typically included defenses that excused Reformed theology from the charge of making God the ultimate cause of sin and evil. Willet specifically cites Stapleton’s levying of this charge against Calvin (which we considered earlier in this chapter),⁸⁸ and the accusation against Bucer delivered by Pererius. Earlier we saw how Willet explained God’s (active) hardening of hearts as a just punishment, and additionally we have seen elements that contribute to Willet’s defense in his treatment of efficient and final causality, which established a middle ground between the extremes of viewing God as the

⁸⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 344. The co-functioning of near and remote causes to bring about a single effect is another example of the compatibility of multiple causes, discussed earlier (section IV.2.1).

⁸⁸ Section V.2.1.

principal cause of sin and as a passive bystander, so here we will focus on his counter-offensive in his response to Pererius.

Pererius's charge against Bucer comes in the context of Paul's discussion of evil rulers in Romans 13. Criticizing Bucer's assertion that even power that is abused is granted by God, Pererius had accused Protestants of thus imputing the guilt of that abuse of power to God himself, making him responsible for the evil.⁸⁹ Willet responds to this "meere slaunder" with a similar line of reasoning to that he used against the charges of Stapleton and Pighius, objecting that "the Romanists are rather guiltie [of making God the author of evil], that affirme God to be a permitter and sufferer of evill: for he which suffereth evill to be done, which he can hinder, must be accessarie unto it."⁹⁰ It is not, however, the idea of God permitting evil (*per se*) that Willet and the Reformed object to ("his permission we grant"), but rather the notion that this permission can be extended apart from God's (secret) will. A God, he argues, who is able to hinder an evil deed that defies his absolute will and fails to do so is implicated in the evil; perhaps counter-intuitively, an omnipotent God must then have "a further stroke in these actions, then by permission onely, and withholding of his grace"⁹¹ to avoid being implicated in the sinfulness of the action. Without claiming God as the principal cause of these evil actions, his permission must be seen as bound together with his secret will, either as a just punishment of prior sin, as a demonstration of his patience,⁹² as an opportunity for testing

⁸⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 419, 581-582.

⁹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 582. Those Protestants who argued that even evil rulers were established by God faced a special challenge when addressing papal power.

⁹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 74.

⁹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 73.

and refinement,⁹³ or in directing human sin towards various positive ends.

This last reason draws again on the logic of final causality. The first Doctrine that Willet elicits from Romans 8 concerns “how the same worke may be both good and sinnefull as it proceedeth from God, the devill, and man.” He cites as the particular source of this teaching verse 8:3, which implicates God in the death of his Son. Since God intended this for his glory and human salvation, it was not an evil action as it proceeded from him. But since Satan and humans carried out this death out of “envie and malice,” these evil ends made their actions sinful.⁹⁴ In a sense, God cannot be the author of evil because he has no evil intentions or ends. Willet is careful, though, to keep from suggesting that God’s own intermediate actions may be anything less than godly, even if they tend toward good ends—God is no Machiavellian: “although Gods judgements proceed with great reason and equitie; yet God doth not evill, that good may come thereof.”⁹⁵ God’s good works may be turned to evil ends by human wickedness, and evil human actions may be turned to good by God, but in each case no evil component can come from God’s hand. Nor can humans claim to be in the right when God turns their sins to a noble end. This matter arises in connection to Paul’s citation of Psalm 51 in Romans 3:4 (“That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and overcome, when thou judgest”). At issue is the causal orientation of the word “that” (ὅπως ἄν)—specifically whether the expression is to be taken in a purposive or in a temporal sense—leading to the question of “Whether a man may doe evill, and commit sinne to that ende to set forth

⁹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 677, 396.

⁹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 388, 419.

⁹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 516.

Gods justice.”⁹⁶ Willet’s preferred resolution comes from the Roman Catholic Pererius, who argued that David’s *own* end in sinning was not to express God’s justice, and so “this word *that*, doth not then shewe the cause, but the order rather and event of the thing.”⁹⁷ The “that” here is properly to be taken in a merely temporal sense—David sinned, and then God’s justice was displayed. If any causality exists between David’s own action and the “that,” Willet adds as a second interpretive option, this *purposive* “that” would have to reach before David’s reference to his sin in Psalm 51:4 to connect to his *confession* of that sin in the third verse.⁹⁸ Regardless of how the expression is taken, though, Willet is clear that turning evil to a good end is a prerogative unique to God.

2.5 Rhetorical Inversion of Cause and Effect

In chapter 3 we saw how Willet identified various rhetorical devices that Paul had used in composing Romans, and we considered how this identification comported with Willet’s theological framework and affected his interpretation of Paul’s meaning. Here we will look specifically at instances where Willet argues that Paul intentionally inverted a cause and an effect through the use of metonymy, and how this argument complicates Willet’s accusations of Roman Catholic *confusion* of cause and effect.

Some of these instances concern Paul’s frequent citation of the Old Testament from the Septuagint. We have seen already how Willet argued that Paul only did this

⁹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 153. For a more detailed discussion of the theological motivations and ramifications of the translation of conjunctions and prepositions, see section III.2.

⁹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 153. An obvious parallel can be seen here to Paul’s rhetorical question in Romans 6:1 (whether we should continue sinning in order to increase God’s grace), which we will look at below in connection with the confusion of cause and occasion (V.3.2).

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 153.

when the meaning of the Septuagint did not vary significantly from that of the original Hebrew. Occasionally Willet explained discrepancies between the two texts as minor rhetorical variations, differing as a cause from an effect. Recall the textual variation regarding Romans 9:33 (previously discussed in II.4.1), where Willet explains Paul's choice of the LXX version of Isaiah 28:16 ("shall not be ashamed") over the "original" ("shall not make hast[e]") by noting that those who act hastily or rashly inevitably end up being ashamed—so that the LXX gives the "consequent for the antecedent, and the effect for the cause."⁹⁹ Conversely, regarding another quotation of Isaiah (verse 59:20), Willet explains that the Septuagint translation (which speaks of God removing sin) presents the cause behind the effect given in the Hebrew (that of God's people turning from their sin). So when Paul uses the LXX phrasing of this passage in Romans 11:27, he is not diverging substantively from the sense of the Hebrew, but rather rising "higher to the very cause, which is the taking away of sinne: for none can turne away from sinne, unlesse they have first grace and remission of their sinnes."¹⁰⁰ Rather than treating the discrepancy between the Hebrew and Greek versions as a problem, Willet uses the variations as an opportunity to demonstrate the causal connection between God's forgiveness and human obedience—the first necessarily effecting the second.

In other places, Willet's assertions that Paul was communicating through metonymy had a more clearly polemical context. The conditional expression used in Romans 11:22 ("If thou continue in his bountifulnes"), for instance, had led exegetes like Chrysostom to emphasize here the role of human effort in following Christ, and the need

⁹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 431.

¹⁰⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 512.

for a human goodness that is worthy of the divine goodness. Willet responds to this line of thought by explaining that Paul's purpose is to exalt *God's*—not human—goodness, and he points to the reference to unbelief in the following verse to argue that *faith* is the true matter also of verse 22: “here rather the cause is taken for the effect, as the goodness of God, for faith which is wrought in us by the goodness and grace of God.” While he does not list any Roman Catholics here by name, the polemical background of his interpretation is clear from his insistence that this passage need not undermine a Reformed understanding of perseverance: “This neither sheweth, that it is in mans power to continue, for all is ascribed to the goodnesse and mercie of God: neither yet can it be hence gathered, that the elect may fall away, and not continue.”¹⁰¹ The conditional formulation, read especially in light of Paul's metonymic inversion, is not intended to convey a sense of either pride or doubt, but rather to stir up the elect to a greater dependence on God for their security.¹⁰²

We can now see that the way an exegete identified the relationship between a cause and an effect in Scripture was not a naked textual issue, but one that involved a host of hermeneutical presuppositions. This is not to suggest that either Romanist or Reformed exegetes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *twisted* the scriptures to fit within a rigid theological system, but to assert that each party made sense of seemingly disparate passages by reading them through a particular lens and interpreting them within a particular hermeneutical framework.

¹⁰¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 508.

¹⁰² Other examples of this kind of argumentation in Willet's Romans hexapla can be found in reference to verse 11:24 (where “repentance” signifies a change, as an effect for a cause, p. 514), 11:31 (where “your mercie” is put for “the mercie showed unto you,” as a cause for an effect, pp. 487, 515), and 12:3 (where the cause—“by grace”—is put for the effect—Paul's *calling*, which is “by grace,” and “faith” represents “the gifts and effects of faith,” the cause stated to express the effects, pp. 541-542).

3. Confusion of Cause with Identity or Occasion

Elsewhere in his Romans commentary, Andrew Willet claims that various of his opponents' theological errors were connected to their faulty attribution of causality to scriptural statements that had rather to do with the identity of the elect, or with the occasion or conditions associated with their calling and the outworking of their salvation. Exploring selected examples of this argument, we will again encounter elements of the analogy of Scripture (whether in efforts to harmonize Paul with James, or “for the full reconciling...of the Apostle to himself”¹⁰³), and we will revisit the distinction between primary and helping causes—with the latter, in a theatrical manner of speaking, “setting the stage” for the narrative action of the former. Additionally, we will see the important distinction drawn between the ontology and the epistemology of salvation—that is, how it is that the elect exist as saved individuals, as opposed to how we come to possess this knowledge.

3.1 Confusion of Cause and Identity

Given their consistent insistence on excluding human merit from the economy of salvation, how did the Reformed deal with passages like Romans 2:6 (“[God] will reward every man according to his workes”), which Romans Catholics like Tolet read in conjunction with Christ's teaching on the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25 as proof of a meritorious role for human works? Willet, citing his favorite contemporary exegete David Pareus, presents one approach to this question when he explains: “In that place, Matth. 25. it is showed, to whom, not for what the reward shall be given: good works are

¹⁰³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 166.

required as a condition in those, which are to be saved, not as a meritorious cause of their salvation.”¹⁰⁴ We should not be surprised that the faithful are marked by their good deeds, for God ordained this process of sanctification as a means of bringing the elect along the path of salvation. But, Willet emphasizes, presenting a certain way of life as a means of *identifying* those who are saved in no way suggests that those good works are the *cause* of their salvation. Regarding the language of Romans 2:6, Willet points out that the reward is granted “κατὰ τὰ ἔργα, *according to workes*, not διὰ τὰ ἔργα, *propter opera*, *for workes*: so that this sheweth the measure rather [than] the merit of workes.”¹⁰⁵

Willet uses the example of the shipwreck in Acts 27 to illustrate this distinction between the designation of causality and identity later in the commentary, in the Controversies section of Romans 10. Commenting on verse 10:13 (“For every one that calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”), Bellarmine had argued that this was evidence that justification was not by faith alone, since here Paul attributed salvation to calling out to God.¹⁰⁶ Willet responds to this interpretation by explaining that the invocation itself does not save, but rather shows “who they are that shall be saved,” since calling on God is an effect of faith, and “without faith there is no invocation.” He goes on to liken this scenario to Paul’s warning in Acts 27:31 that “except these abide in the shippe, ye cannot be safe.” Willet assumes here that, since the ship was still destroyed, we cannot read this passage to mean that those who survived the wreck were saved because of the shelter offered by the ship—“for the ship brake, and some were saved by

¹⁰⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 134.

¹⁰⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 134. For more on the theological importance of prepositions in Willet’s exegesis, see section III.2.

¹⁰⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 480.

swimming, some upon boards, and other peices of the ship.”¹⁰⁷ To Willet, the implication was clear that Paul’s designation of those who would “abide in the shippe” served to give the *identity* of those who would be spared, and not the *reason why* they would be saved.¹⁰⁸

This distinction between causality and identity serves Willet in his Romans commentary at places where salvation is associated with righteous living, being attributed to those who “walke not after the flesh” or who are “doers of the law.” Paul’s argument in Romans 2 proceeds from verse 6, cited above, to his warning in verse 13 against taking smug confidence in mere knowledge of the law: “For not the hearers of the law, are just with God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Since—as even Tolet had acknowledged—works done without faith are unable to justify, one who performs the works of the law must *already* have been justified (by faith); otherwise, he would be unable to do good works.¹⁰⁹ Thus, as in 2:6, “the Apostle then here sheweth, who shall be justified, not for what.”¹¹⁰ Again, in the first and fourth verses of Romans 8, the righteous are described by their *actions*, as those who “walke not after the flesh.” Willet counters

¹⁰⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 481.

¹⁰⁸ Willet’s reading of Acts 27:31 is basically in agreement with the one presented in the *English Annotations*, which noted here that Paul’s words did not imply that “the will of God, or his power to save, or the effect of his promise, depended on second causes,” but rather demonstrated that God ordains both the end and the means: Thomas Gataker, ed., *Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testament wherein the text is explained, doubts resolved, Scriptures paralleled and various readings observed by the joynt-labour of certain learned divines, thereunto appointed, and therein employed, as is expressed in the preface* (London: John Legatt and John Raworth, 1645), Acts 27:31, in loc. Hereafter cited as *English Annotations*. The Rhemist annotations, not surprisingly, read Paul’s warning differently, taking from it that “what providence, predestination, or foresight so ever God have of your salvation, you are not thereby constrained any way. you have free wil stil, and can not be saved (though you be predestinate) except you keepe Gods commaundements, repent you of your sinnes, beleve, live and die wel” (Martin, *New Testament*, 370).

¹⁰⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 138-139.

¹¹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 138.

Tolet, Bellarmine and Stapleton, who each argued that this shows that regeneration is a cause of justification, by distinguishing different elements within Paul's assertion: "here is an answer to two questions together: how we are justified, namely, by faith in Christ, and who are justified, they which bring forth good fruits." Or, as Beza had expressed the same truth, we see here both an internal (justification) and an external (sanctification) perspective.¹¹¹ And, while the identity of the righteous is known outwardly by active good works, verse 8:4 makes clear that the inward, *justifying* aspect is *passive*: "the Apostle saith not that they which walke after the spirit fulfill the law, but the lawe is fulfilled in them, that is, imputed unto them by faith in Christ."¹¹²

Willet draws on this distinction also when commenting on passages that affirm justification by faith, as a way of explaining the coherency of Paul's thought in light of verses like the ones discussed above. Among the questions he considers in Romans 3, Willet presents various "solutions" that had been proposed to deal with the tension between the declaration in 3:20 that "by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight" and the assertion about the "doers of the law" in 2:13. The ordinary gloss, for instance, had explained the pair of verses by drawing a distinction between the Ceremonial and Moral Law—the former being unable to save, but the latter retaining a justifying role. The "modern Papists" explain the apparent contradiction using the "Popish fiction of the first and second justification."¹¹³ Even Pareus's solution—that Paul is speaking in 2:13 "*ex hypothesi*, by way of supposition...that is, if any could keep and performe the law, they should thereby be justified"—while a "good distinction," is

¹¹¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 390.

¹¹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 392.

¹¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 163.

deemed by Willet here to be “not so fit.”¹¹⁴ The “best solution,” Willet reiterates, is that in Romans 3 Paul tells of the causes of justification, while in 2:13 he rather “sheweth who, and upon what condition men are justified, and who are not justified.”¹¹⁵ Romans 4:7 likewise offers an opportunity for Willet to teach this distinction. Roman Catholic exegetes had sought to balance this verse’s attribution of blessedness to the forgiveness of sin with other passages that “ascribeth beatitude to . . . innocencie of life,” and Willet deemed the responses offered by Calvin and Vermigli to be incomplete. Thus, he supplements his Reformed brethren’s replies with “the more full answer”: “that the Apostle here sheweth the cause and manner of our justification, which is by faith in Christ: but in other places it is onely declared, to whom this justification belongeth.”¹¹⁶ The delineation between cause and identity allows for a distinctly Protestant defense of justification by faith, and we find Willet employing its utility more frequently than even his fellow Reformed exegetes.

The distinction itself is a variation of the important division between the ontological and the epistemological elements of salvation, so that Roman Catholics and others exhibiting Semipelagian tendencies were held to be guilty not of a minor semantic error, but of inverting and misconstruing the very nature of salvific reality. The external elements serve a function in the *publication* of salvation—whether as a witness to others or as a “practical syllogism” undergirding one’s own assurance¹¹⁷—but not in *effecting*

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 164.

¹¹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 164.

¹¹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 221.

¹¹⁷ For a discussion of the “practical syllogism” in Reformed thought, see Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 244-276. Cf. also the discussions of assurance of salvation in II.3.1.2 and IV.2.1.

salvation itself. This same line of argument informed how many of the Reformed read Paul in conjunction with James: Paul addresses our justification before God by faith, while James writes of the *manifestation* and *declaration* of our justification before other humans through our works.¹¹⁸

3.2 Confusion of Cause and Occasion

While the distinction between cause and identity was normally drawn to keep from attributing any element of salvation to human activity, Willet's differentiation of cause from occasion was more often employed to avoid implicating God in evil deeds (even those that would ultimately be turned to good) or imbuing sin with any inherent tendency toward positive ends.¹¹⁹ Answering his own hypothetical question in Romans 6:1 ("Shall we continue in sinne, that grace may abound?"), Paul had sharply and pithily responded *μη γένοιτο* ("God forbid; let it not be") and explained that, being baptized into Christ's death, we are to be dead to sin. Willet's commentary on this passage elaborates Paul's answer in more philosophical terms. The "false teachers" who had occasioned Paul's query erred by taking "*non causam pro causa*, that which is not the cause for the cause: for the abounding of sinne, is not the cause of the abounding of grace...[rather,] the Apostles speach is to be understood *occasionaliter*, by way of occasion, and they take

¹¹⁸ See in Willet, for example: Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 188, 201.

¹¹⁹ Burgersdijk writes that the efficient cause is divided into the Principal and the less Principal; the less Principal subdivided into the Procatartical [that which excites the Principal cause to action externally], Proëgumenal [that which excites it to action internally], and the Instrumental; and the Procatartical further yet into Object, Occasion, Author, and Merit. "Occasion is the *Conveniency* of Time and Place *to act in*, which *it self* also has some Force of moving to Action...all these are *without the principal Cause*...Occasion is sometimes *taken* for Cause Meritorious. As when *an Injury committed or done* is said to be the *Occasion* of a *Fight*, or *War*, or *Slaughter*," (Burgersdijk, *Monitio Logica*, 63-64). In this sense, when Willet distinguishes between cause and occasion, he is arguing that his opponents have mistakenly identified a subordinate, less principal efficiency as a principal efficient cause.

it *causaliter*, by way of a cause.”¹²⁰ Willet cites both Augustine and Vermigli for variations of the similitude of disease and medicine, in which disease is merely the occasion, and not the cause, of the remedy. Additionally, he echoes Pareus’s assertion that human sin does not “in it selfe set forth the justice of God, but *ex accidente*, by an accident.”¹²¹

A parallel situation may be found in Romans 11 in the fall of the Jews, which—also “by an accident” (as opposed to by necessity or as a direct cause)—led to the introduction of Gentiles into the Church. Willet takes up the question of “how it standeth with Gods justice” for his chosen people to be cast off in order for “strangers” to enter the Church, and he determines that three conditions must exist in order for such an action to be deemed just: guilt in the excised party, lack of a bound necessity to maintain grace, and the tendency toward a greater good. As might be expected, all of these criteria are met in this situation, and Willet concludes his response by asserting that the casting off of the Jews was *properly* caused by their disobedience—the occasion of which God used for the salvation of the Gentiles:

Neither was their rejecting simply the cause of the calling of the Gentiles, but *ex accidente*, accidentally, as we say: it was properly the punishment of their infidelitie, and a demonstration of the justice of God: but God, that can turne evill unto good, did use this as an occasion to induce the Gentiles to beleeve.¹²²

The fall of the Jews, Willet explains, cannot be the proper cause of the Gentiles’ salvation, “for evil is not of it selfe the cause of that which is good: but God by his power draweth good out of evill.” The casting out of the Jews was not absolutely necessary for

¹²⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 286.

¹²¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 286.

¹²² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 503.

the calling of the Gentiles. Indeed, God could have called the two groups together had it pleased him to do so, and even apart from the Jews' incredulity Willet asserts that the Gentiles would have been called, "but not so quickly."¹²³ Whether in the case of sin magnifying God's grace or the unfaithfulness of the Jews hastening the calling of the Gentiles, Willet avoids ascribing any positive causality to evil by making these scenarios merely the occasions of God's saving activity.

Nor does Willet permit any negative causality to inhere within God's good gifts, with the same distinction between cause and occasion serving as well in this direction. This argument arises especially in relation to the Old Testament law, prompted by Paul's own language. Discussing Romans 7:8-13, Willet considers what is meant by sin's "taking occasion" by the law, noting three possible meanings of the Greek word ἄφορμῆ. He rejects the "proper" signification of "the opportunitie of doing a thing" because "there can be no op[p]ortunitie to doe evill"—by which he seems to mean that the language of "opportunity" would suggest too great a complicity of the law in sin's hijacking of it.¹²⁴ The other two meanings, though, Willet admits here: by "occasion" Paul means both "any circumstance or accident, whereby one is occasioned to doe anything" and "that which draweth a man from doing that he intended; as a rub [impediment] in ones way, turneth him beside the way." The definitions that Willet allows serve to underscore the pivotal idea, expressed as well by Calvin and Beza, that "the law indeed gave not occasion, but sinne tooke it."¹²⁵ The full weight of the blame lies with sin.¹²⁶ Thus, since the law is merely the occasion and not the cause of the increase of sin, its goodness is

¹²³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 501.

¹²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 321-322.

¹²⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 322.

vindicated against the Marcionites, Manicheans, and other rejecters of the Old Testament, who misread verses like Romans 4:15 (“Where no law is, there is no transgression”) to “thereby conclude that the law is the cause of transgression, and so condemne the law.”¹²⁷

3.3 Confusion of Cause and Conditions or Manner

In related fashion to his arguments concerning both occasion and identity, Willet also at times explained theological errors as stemming from the misattribution of causality to a set of conditions or a manner of action. So, responding to the possible objection in the Controversies section of Romans 8 that if good works cannot justify then their absence cannot condemn, he relies on the logic of sufficient and necessary conditions.¹²⁸ It is like, he explains, the relationship between food and health. A good diet is necessary, but not sufficient, to restore a sick man to wellness. The similitude must not be stretched too far, however, as a “good diet is an helping cause unto health, but good workes are no cause of salvation, but only a condition necessarily required and annexed.”¹²⁹ Again, as we saw in the earlier discussion of election and foreknowledge, the cause of a decree may differ greatly from the conditions necessary for its execution. No human element, for example, functions as a cause of God’s forgiveness, for “that which he requireth of us, is a condition to be performed by us, not the cause.”¹³⁰ But, lest

¹²⁶ Willet notes additionally that the law does not create sin but, by its prescriptive and prohibitive functions, makes sin known, which induces corrupt human nature to desire it. He likens this—in an analogy well-suited to a man who had fathered eighteen children—to the sun revealing “the beautie of a fayre woman, and then the lustfull eie is carried with a desire after her” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 322).

¹²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 231.

¹²⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 390-391.

¹²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 391.

¹³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 450.

his language here be taken to suggest a conditionality to salvation, wherein the elect—even if unable to *cause* their salvation can somehow *sabotage* it by failing in the associated required conditions—Willet makes clear also that *God provides* all of these required conditions:

...there are certaine conditions which doe accomanie or followe this free act of Gods love and mercie, for the effecting of the worke thereof, in the sanctification and glorification of the elect, which are these three, the ransome made by Christ, faith in the Redeemer, and our conversion and turning to God: which conditions God receiveth not of us, but conferreth upon us: the first without us, the other two he worketh in us, that all may be of grace.¹³¹

So the difference between Christ’s salvific work and the various conditions required to be “performed by us” is not that of a diverse efficient cause (tending toward some measure of synergism), but rather of a different *arena* in which God is acting—the one external and the other internal to the elect themselves.

Lastly, Willet on occasion clarified a position by differentiating between cause and manner—a distinction related, naturally, to the argument regarding identity (as the elect are identifiable by their manner of life), as well as to the third chapter’s discussion of the significance of prepositions. We find a fairly straightforward example in Romans 14:18 (“For whosoever in these things serveth Christ, is pleasing to God, and approved to men”). Explaining his rendering of ἐν τούτοις as “*in* these things” (opposing Beza, Vermigli and Erasmus, who read it as “*by* these things”¹³²), he notes that Paul “sheweth the manner how we serve Christ, not the cause.”¹³³ We see here again the interrelation

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 449.

¹³² That is, “*per haec*.” Erasmus, *Greek-Latin New Testament* (1519); Vermigli, *In Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos*, 596; Beza, *Novum Testamentum*, 250.

¹³³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 649. Cf. the earlier discussion of manner, which focused on how the manner could describe a subordinate cause (IV.2.5).

between translation and theology (though certainly Beza and Vermigli, at least, concurred theologically with Willet on this point, even if their prepositional use was not up to his standards of precision). Willet presents a similar argument concerning the role of good works in the context of Paul's Romans 12:13 counsel to provide for the needs of the saints. On this question Willet refutes Tolet's "very corrupt" insertion of merit into the passage (in the argument that those succoring suffering saints would share a portion of the merit accrued by those sufferings), conceding that "God indeede shall reward the works of charitie exercised upon the Saints," but with an important clarification that "good workes are not the cause of everlasting life, yet they are a rule, according to the which God will give everlasting life."¹³⁴ While in this context he simply assumes the difference between merit and reward, he does address this distinction in other places in the commentary. For example, in his doctrinal comment on Romans 2:11 (on how God is no respecter of persons) Willet asserts that "there are no merits or deserts which God respecteth in his election," while adding that "when God commeth to give the reward, then he distributeth unto every man according to their works." In the Controversies section of the same chapter in Romans, he comments in the context of 2:6 (considered earlier in this chapter) on the disproportionality between our reward and our works, and explains how the fact that good works are *profitable* does not imply that they are meritorious. And addressing a question on 11:6, he cites Origen and Vermigli on the association of rewards with works, explaining: "though the reward follow works, yet the merit of the worke is not the cause, but the grace and favour of God, which hath appointed such a way and order, that the faithfull, after they have wrought and laboured,

¹³⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 554-555.

should be rewarded.”¹³⁵

4. Conclusion

The variety of distinctions that can be made within the framework of the relationship between cause and effect gave the seventeenth-century exegete a means by which to critique unsatisfactory scriptural interpretations. Just as a theological opponent might seem to confuse the different causes of an effect, so he might falsely attribute causality to something that is better considered a fruit, occasion, or identity marker. Willet frequently draws on the logic of cause and effect in the Romans hexapla to undermine a Roman Catholic reading or to defend a maligned Reformed doctrine. The papists, he argued, wrongly lodged good works within justification instead of regarding them as part of sanctification—a necessary *effect* of justification. The Reformed account of God’s active hardening of hearts could be defended by viewing the hardening as caused by God, while also being—as a just punishment—an effect of human sin. The proper position of faith varied depending on the context—in justification it functions as a non-meritorious formal cause, while in election it is not a cause at all, but an effect.

Willet occasionally makes the particularly fine distinction between an effect and a final cause—sometimes even variously denominating the same thing each way in different contexts. This distinction allowed him to subordinate one cause to another, demonstrate a mixed causality, or deny causality entirely in a given context. In addition, arguing for the rhetorical inversion of cause and effect (a form of metonymy) in Romans provided Protestants and Roman Catholics alike with an extra degree of interpretive

¹³⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 131, 135, 493.

flexibility; even if the literal sense of a text suggested a causal role, an exegete could argue from a collation of other texts that the apparent causality was merely a rhetorical maneuver. The diverse ways in which Willet and other exegetes distinguished between cause and effect thus reveals a good deal about their differing hermeneutical lenses, theological commitments, and polemical aims.

CHAPTER VI. POLEMICAL USE OF HERESIES

1. Introduction

In 1607 the Roman Catholic polemicist Richard Broughton anonymously published the tract *The First Part of Protestant Proofes, for Catholikes Religion and Recusancy*, in which he cited passages from recent English Protestant divines (including several from Willet) that purportedly lent support to the verity of Roman Catholic doctrine.¹ One of his (more strained) arguments claimed that such Protestants as Wotton, Perkins, and Field had accepted that tradition and Scripture were to be held with equal authority. Since the church's tradition favored Roman Catholic theology, these Jacobean Protestants had all but conceded the truth of their opponents' doctrinal positions. Broughton's bold assertion that Protestant leaders had acknowledged the co-equal authority of tradition required some creative re-contextualizing of selected statements presented in his sources,² but neither were Protestant polemicists ready to allow his more sensible claim that the weight of tradition was on the Roman Catholic side.

¹ The majority of Broughton's citations come from the eleven English Protestants that he lists in the introductory epistle: (Matthew) Sutcliffe, (John) Dove, (Richard) Field, Willet, (Anthony) Wotton, (William) Middleton, King James, the Bishop of Winchester (Thomas Bilson), (William) Covell, (Richard) Parkes, and (Oliver) Ormerod ([Broughton], *The First Part of Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion*, sig.Aiiir).

Broughton's method of countering Protestants with their own was a common approach, and one that Willet made use of as well (as we will see in the examples below from the Romans hexapla). In *An Antilogie*, he had combined the main elements that we are considering in this chapter (papists as heretics, and as internally rent) in a single argument: "The Popish Priests call the Jesuites *Donatists*, revived *Arrians*: the Jesuites againe charge the Priests with *Anabaptisme*. Thus then we see by the confession of our adversaries themselves, who are the Atheists, Antichrists, damned crew, the Anabaptists, Arrians, Donatists of these dayes" (Willet, *An Antilogie*, 14).

² For example, Richard Field had addressed the hypothetical situation of there being a true deposit of unwritten apostolic teaching in order to make the point that it was not the act of writing that gave the scriptures their authenticity and authority: "All these [traditions] in their several kindes [Roman Catholics] make equall with the words, precepts, and doctrines of Christ, the Apostles, & Pastors of the Church left unto us in writing. Neither is there any reason why they should not so doe, if they could prove any such unwritten verities. For it is not the writing, that giveth things their authoritie, but the worth and credit of him that delivereth them, though but by word and lively voice onely. The onely doubt is, whether there be

The next two chapters will examine the polemical use of tradition in Willet's Romans hexapla and in the broader post-Reformation context. While Scripture was for Protestants the final arbiter in defining orthodoxy, in practice this affirmation could quickly arrive at a stalemate, with polemicists on every side staunchly asserting that their opponents were misreading the biblical text. Efforts to demonstrate continuity with early church tradition (whether the orthodoxy that was affirmed or the heresies condemned) provided a potential way around the impasse. Before engaging in the next chapter with Willet's claim on and appropriation of the Church Fathers, we will look here at his extensive polemical use of early church heresies.

2. Polemical Use of Older Heresies

Charges of heresy flew freely back and forth between Protestant and Roman Catholic polemicists from the Reformation period through the early years of the seventeenth century.³ While some more moderate critics, as Anthony Wotton and William Forbes, preferred to write of the Roman church and its distinctive doctrines as "erroneous" instead of as "heretical," the charge of heresy in early seventeenth-century

any such unwritten tradition or not" (Richard Field, *Of the Church* [London: Humfrey Lownes for Simon Waterson, 1606], 238). When he cites this passage, Broughton edits out Field's conditional statements to make him sound like a Catholic apologist: "There is no reason but these [unwritten traditions] should be equall with the Scriptures. For it is not the writing, that giveth these things their authority, but the worth and credit of him that delivereth them, though by word and lively voice only" ([Broughton], *Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion*, 25). Field, with justification, objects to the excision of his conditionals. In the appendix to the fifth book of *On the Church*, published four years after the first four, he likens the abuse of his words to a Roman Catholic being told that he could not err if he were pope and deducing from those words that he in fact could not err (Richard Field, *The Fifth Book of the Church* [London: Nicholas Okes for Simon Waterson, 1610], the third part of the appendix, 26). His acknowledgement that a true unwritten tradition is not inherently impossible, he explains, in no way infers that such a tradition in fact exists.

³ Cf. Milton's summary of English Protestant charges of heresy against the Roman church in *Catholic and Reformed*, 209-228.

England was “an entirely commonplace accusation.”⁴ Since heresy is understood as deviation from the orthodox teachings of the church (particularly as defined in the ecumenical councils), these accusations generally took the form of associating a modern opponent’s position with one from a previously condemned early church heretic.⁵ The polemical force of these accusations came from both the strength of the established connections and the sheer number of heretics one could claim as an opponent’s forebears, with lists commonly running to dozens or scores of heretics. Willet’s express aim in *Tetrastylon Papismi*, published first in 1593 and again with minor variations in 1599, was to defend Protestant doctrine from these false charges. He introduces a section titled “Heresies maintained and defended by Papists” by stating: “Our purpose is heere, as in the rest, to cleere and discharge both our selves and our cause, of and from those foule and false accusations of heresie, which our adversaries do blaspheme us withall.” After identifying Robert Bellarmine, with the twenty heresies he alleged against Protestants in “De notis verae Ecclesiae,”⁶ as the main Roman Catholic source for the section, Willet proceeds to lay out his approach: “We will then this do: first examine those poynts

⁴ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 210, 215, 209. To many of those who refrained from calling Rome a heretical church, the issue was with Catholics elevating *uncertain* opinions to the level of fundamental matters of faith (p. 216). In this perspective, a belief such as Purgatory should be treated neither as an essential dogma nor as a heretical idea, but simply as a matter of mere speculation.

⁵ Milton recounts the frequency of this accusation, while noting some disagreement (increasing in the decades following Willet’s death) over both the meaning of “heresy” and whether the Roman church was guilty of it. He cites the irenic (and aptly named) John Dove as one who insisted on a strict definition of heresy as a doctrine directly contradicting an article of faith, as determined by a General Council of the church. The latter requirement, especially, being impractical in the fragmented ecclesiological world of the seventeenth century, many polemicists sought to meet this criteria in a manner similar to what we find Willet attempting in this chapter: “The impugning of an article of faith by consequent was usually deemed sufficient for this charge to stick, while the need for a General Council’s censure for Rome’s errors was circumvented by the association of Rome’s errors with most of the heresies condemned in the General Councils of the primitive church” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 209); cf. Backus and Goudriaan, “Semipelagianism,” 44.

⁶ I.e., Book 4 of the first controversy in volume 2 of the *Disputationes*.

particularlie, which they object for heresie: and this being done, we will afterward requite them with as many hereticall opinions, as they have invented against us, but more justly, and with a good deale more truth.”⁷ Willet likens this approach to one falling into his own pit or a puff of breath blowing back in one’s face⁸ and, while promising to “requite [Bellarmine’s] kindenesse” with an equal “full score of heresies,” decides instead to add interest and double the Jesuit’s “kindness,” concluding after his counterattack: “And thus, I thinke, we have in some measure recompensed our adversaries courteous dealing, who so kindly upbrayde us with heresie, for Bellarmines twentie, I have payde him fortie.”⁹ This pattern of defending one’s own position against charges of heterodoxy and leveling back counterclaims of heresy also finds its way, naturally, into the polemical exegesis of biblical commentaries in this era. As we consider next how these charges functioned in Willet’s *Romans hexapla*, we will treat various heresies individually.

2.1 Pelagianism

Given Willet’s identification of justification and election as the central motifs of *Romans* (and, indeed, as the two chief points of Christian theology itself), it is hardly surprising that he finds regular opportunity in the *Romans hexapla* to assail Pelagian interpretations. More than any other individual heresy, Pelagianism offered Willet a useful counterpoint for framing an orthodox reading of *Romans* while providing a damning association that he could connect with modern adversaries who opposed a

⁷ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 90.

⁸ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 107, 115.

⁹ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 115.

monergistic Augustinian soteriology.¹⁰ Among these contemporary opponents, most of the criticism falls—as usual—on Roman Catholics, though Willet also includes some later-generation Lutherans, like Samuel Huber, in his rebuke. Had Willet lived past 1621, we surely would have seen the Laudians and the creeping Arminianism of the Anglican church receive more explicit attention in connection with the Pelagian heresy in later editions.¹¹

2.1.1 Pelagianism and Later Lutherans

Before considering the ways in which charges of Pelagianism (or, at times, “Semipelagianism”) functioned in the polemical exchanges between Reformed and Romanist combatants, we will look briefly at the Lutheran context. Samuel Huber (1547-1624) was a Lutheran convert from Calvinism who taught at Wittenberg for a period until his universalistic leanings and his understanding of free will were condemned by many of his fellow Lutherans, leading to his dismissal.¹² Willet condemns Huber and

¹⁰ Pelagianism was widely seen by English Protestants as a prominent heresy of the Medieval church (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 294). Cf. Oberman’s twentieth-century assessment of Pelagian tendencies in Medieval theologians such as Biel, Bonaventure, Occam, and Holcot throughout Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

¹¹ Again, the precise identification of opponents in this period is complicated by polemical rhetoric, as pejorative terms like “papist” and “Puritan” were often used broadly and imprecisely. For instance, while some—as Archbishop Whitgift—“limited the label of ‘popish’ to those who held communion with the Church of Rome,” many others had a tendency to “extend the label ‘popery’ to cover all non-Calvinist patterns of behaviour and belief” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 52). Willet himself seems to incline more toward the stricter usage of Whitgift. Consider, for example, the centrality of the Pope in the definition of “papist” that he gives in the preface to each edition of *Synopsis Papismi*: “Thus we see how a Papist and a Protestant are defined: A Papist is he that cleaveth to the Pope in Religion, and is obedient to him in all things: A Protestant is he, that professeth the Gospell of Jesus Christ, and hath renounced the jurisdiction of the sea of Rome, and the forced & unnaturall obedience to the Pope” (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1613], sig.B3v).

¹² Kenneth G. Appold, “Academic Life and Teaching in Post-Reformation Lutheranism,” in *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550-1675*, ed. Robert Kolb (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2008), 108.

likens his thought to Pelagianism in multiple places in the Romans hexapla, including verse 5:18 (“all men” are justified in Christ), where Huber’s arguments for the universality of grace cause him to join “the right hand of fellowship with the old Pelagians.”¹³ In *Synopsis Papismi*, Willet had also accused the Lutherans Jacobus Andreae and Neils Hemmingsen of Pelagianism.¹⁴ Luther himself escaped Willet’s accusations on this issue, with the devolution of Lutheran predestinarian thought occurring in later generations. Willet distinguishes, for example, between Luther and his “so called” followers in their responses to Erasmus’s contention that the election and reprobation of Jacob and Esau were merely temporal: “To these objections of Erasmus, Luther hath sufficiently made answer...much differing herein from the Lutherans so called in these times.”¹⁵ Accordingly, Anthony Milton states that “it was generally argued that Luther himself had not been at fault in such matters, but that it was the later, ‘more rigid’ Lutherans who were guilty of abandoning the orthodox teaching of their forebear on this point and of bringing in ‘a conditionate Predestination.’”¹⁶ He observes further that Willet even occasionally included the more-orthodox Lutherans within the category of “Reformed churches.”¹⁷

¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 260. See also pp. 280-281, 415, 437.

¹⁴ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 404. Cf. Giorgio Caravale, *The Italian Reformation Outside Italy: Francesco Pucci’s Heresy in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2015), which addresses Willet’s charge of Pelagianism against these figures, as well as against the variously heterodox Pucci (pp. 208-209).

¹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 415.

¹⁶ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 386. Dodds, too, describes the shift within Lutheranism away from Luther’s conception of predestination (Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, 112-113). On Luther’s own vigorous battle against Pelagian tendencies that he perceived in the sixteenth-century church, see Manfred Schulze, “Martin Luther and the Church Fathers,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. 2, *From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1997), 579-585.

¹⁷ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 394.

Milton is incorrect, however, when he writes that Willet moved away from his staunch opposition to universal grace in the Romans hexapla. Milton claims that “Willet also presents a modification of the doctrine of limited atonement, suggesting that God ‘would have all men to be saved’ and ‘offreth outward meanes unto all of their calling’ ([*Hexapla on Romans*], p. 451).¹⁸ This citation, though, leaves out critical qualifications (in addition to making use of the anachronistic and ambiguous term “limited atonement”). When Willet writes that God would have “all men to be saved,” he is simply quoting 1 Timothy 2:4. He proceeds to explain Paul’s expression in a manner fully consistent with his strict opposition to Huber: “God would *all men to be saved*, that is, not that God purposeth all to be saved, or giveth grace to all to be saved, but that there appeareth no let on Gods behalfe why all are not saved, either the creation considered, or Gods generall vocation: but man is the cause of his owne perdition or ruine.” Willet is not here hedging away from his criticism of universal grace, but explaining that one of its proponents’ favored *dicta probantia* serves merely to emphasize the reprobate’s responsibility for his own perdition.

2.1.2 Pelagianism and Justification

We would expect—and indeed we in large measure do find—that Roman Catholics accused of maintaining a Pelagian or Semipelagian soteriology would counter with charges of Protestants retreating *away* from good works so far in the other direction as to fall into antinomian errors.¹⁹ Yet, despite a near Protestant monopoly on anti-

¹⁸ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 414n128.

¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, this was a commonplace argument that Roman Catholics levied against their grace-obsessed Protestant foes, and many debates centered on whether a Catholic or a Protestant

Pelagian rhetoric, Catholics also turned this heresy itself around on their opponents.²⁰ Bellarmine, for instance, had argued that Calvin, Bucer and Zwingli had advocated certain Pelagian ideas. Willet relays this charge in *Tetrastylon Papismi*: “In the next place, the Jesuite laboreth by his cunning to intangle us with the heresies of the Pelagians, but he speedeth no better here, than he did in the rest.”²¹ Bellarmine’s accusation is built upon two connections that he tries to establish—one of which, Willet responds, misrepresents the Protestant position, while the other falsely attributes an Augustinian position to Pelagius. Bellarmine first claims that some Protestants, in Pelagian fashion,

conception of the place of good works led, in practice, to a higher level of morality. Cf. Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), 197. Pages 5-18 in [R. Broughton], *Apologiall Epistle* argue that Protestant moral laxity is caused by bad theology and disdain for the true Catholic church; cf. also the Rhemist annotations on James 2 (Martin, *New Testament*, 645-647). Recall that Willet himself offered a long list of good works performed by Protestants in London to counter the papist accusation that Protestant reliance on grace led them to neglect charitable deeds (see section I.3.1 in the Introduction). Radical reformers in Germany had also used the moral laxity argument against the Lutherans, as recounted in Harry Loewen, *Ink Against the Devil: Luther and His Opponents* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 2015), 144. Elnathan Parr (1614) responds to a similar objection concerning predestination—that being chosen by God apart from the foresight of any works would discourage a life of godliness (Elnathan Parr, *The Grounds of Divinitie* [London: N. O. for Samuel Man, 1614; London: Edward Griffin for Samuel Man, 1619], 248); cf. the discussion of Parr’s response in Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination*, 143-152.

Similar antinomian controversies erupted also as intra-confessional battles within the English Church. Cf. Stephen Hampton, “Richard Holdsworth and the Antinomian Controversy,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 62, no. 1 (April 2011): 218-250; David Parnham, “Motions of Law and Grace: the Puritan in the Antinomian,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 73-104; Tim Cooper, *Fear and Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: Richard Baxter and Antinomianism* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001); “Antinomianism in 17th-Century England,” in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, vol. 2, *Religion and Politics in 17th-Century England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 162-184; Gertrude Huehns, *Antinomianism in English History: With Special Reference to the Period 1640-1660* (London: The Cresset Press, 1951). On the parallel controversy in New England, see David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968).

²⁰ The assertion by Backus and Goudriaan that “Catholics could hardly accuse their predestination-focused Protestant adversaries of Pelagianism or Semipelagianism” is, thus, based more on what one might logically have expected than on an actual lack of such accusations (see Backus and Goudriaan, “Semipelagianism,” 44).

²¹ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 101.

deny that original sin remains in the faithful.²² His argument relies on the disagreement between Roman Catholics and Protestants over the salvific nature of the sacraments. He gives 4.15.20 of the *Institutes*, for example, as one of his citations. There Calvin argues against the practice of (emergency) lay baptism which, though attested from early in the church's history, "cannot, it appears to [him], be defended on sufficient grounds." From here he anticipates a response of concern for the salvation of the unbaptized child whose life is in peril: "But there is a danger that he who is sick may be deprived of the gift of regeneration if he decease without baptism! By no means. Our children, before they are born, God declares that he adopts for his own when he promises that he will be a God to us, and to our seed after us. In this promise their salvation is included. None will dare to offer such an insult to God as to deny that he is able to give effect to his promise. How much evil has been caused by the dogma, ill expounded, that baptism is necessary to salvation, few perceive, and therefore think caution the less necessary. For when the opinion prevails that all are lost who happen not to be dipped in water, our condition becomes worse than that of God's ancient people, as if his grace were more restrained than under the Law." Calvin is not denying here that original sin marks the children of believers—only that God is unable to redeem the child without the instrumental aid of water. The sacrament, Calvin argues, is the sign and seal of God's activity, not the necessary channel of God's grace. By reading Calvin's words with the assumption that baptism is an absolute necessity for removing the stain of original sin, Bellarmine "by his cunning" (to borrow Willet's apt phrase) is able to portray Calvin as teaching a Pelagian

²² Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 101. Bellarmine's accusation focuses on the children of believers: "Primò, non esse in hominibus peccatum originale, & praecipuè, in filiis fidelium," and is rooted in Protestant statements regarding baptism (Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationum...de Controversiis Christianae Fidei*, vol. 2 [Ingolstadt: Adam Sartorius, 1601], 241).

understanding of original sin as it pertains to children born into the church.

Without elaborating on precisely how Bellarmine misinterprets his sources, Willet accuses him of inconsistency and mendacity,²³ and counters that it is those Roman Catholics who deny that concupiscence is sin who come closer to a Pelagian original sin doctrine. Claiming agreement with Augustine, Willet explains the measured balance of the actual Protestant view: original sin “neither ruleth in the regenerate, nor yet is cleane extinguished.”²⁴ Secondly, Bellarmine argues that the Protestant notion of all sins being mortal sins agrees with a Pelagian denial of a mortal/venial distinction. Willet fully acknowledges that Protestants reject the distinction (as it pertains to the nature of sin itself), but he adds that in no place does Augustine hold such a teaching against the Pelagians—noting wryly, “if this were a point of Pelagianisme, [Augustine] was a Pelagian himself.”²⁵ Whether Pelagius believed that all sins were mortal is immaterial, since Augustine clearly taught this, making any overlap with a heterodox teacher purely incidental and in no way a mark of heresy. Willet does allow for a mortal/venial distinction, though the divide comes not in the nature of sin *in se*, but in its relation to repentance and God’s grace: “by repentance and confession sinnes are become venial.”²⁶

Moving on to Willet’s polemical use of the Pelagian heresy specifically in the Romans hexapla, we will begin by looking at a place where he develops the

²³ “...Bellarmine did not here remember that olde saying. *Mendacem oportet esse memorem*: A lyer had neede to have a good memorie: for a little before, *Hares.5*. he accuseth the Protestants, as if they should affirm, that sinne, even in the regenerate raigneth, and is active: but here to casteth upon us the cleane contrary opinion, that we should hold no originall sinne at all to remaine in the faithfull. See so well the Jesuit agreeth with himselfe” (Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* [1599], 101).

²⁴ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 101.

²⁵ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 101-102.

²⁶ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 102.

countercharge that we have just seen in *Tetrastylon Papismi* that many Romans Catholics deny that any original sin remains after baptism. This argument comes in the context of the Adam-Christ parallel in the second half of Romans 5. Willet links Catholics and Pelagians in his summary of one of the Controversies drawn from this passage, framing the issue “Against the Pelagians and Papists, that originall sinne is not taken away in baptisme.” The Pelagians had held that there was no original sin, “or at the least remaining” in the faithful after baptism. This, to Willet, reflected too narrow an understanding of original sin, which—as we saw in section V.2.4 on the relationship between sin and concupiscence—properly includes *both* guilt (which is removed in baptism) *and corruption* (which remains).²⁷ The papists acknowledged this post-baptism corruption, though they misconstrued its nature, viewing it “not as a fault, but as a punishment, and matter or occasion for the exercising of vertue.” Trent had declared that all that “hath the proper and true nature of sinne” was removed in baptism, and the Rhemists taught that baptized children were cleansed of both mortal and venial sin.²⁸ But, Willet asserts, pointing to Romans 7:7 (where lust is equated with sin), the vestigial corruption remaining after baptism “hath [itself] the verie nature of sinne,” so that the Roman Catholic invention of a residual corruption that was not judged as sinful does not

²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 274.

²⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 274. The decree from the fifth session of the Council of Trent (from June 1546), while condemning those who claim that “the transgression of Adam injured him alone and not his posterity,” continues to declare that “if anyone denies that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted, or says that the whole of that which belongs to the essence of sin is not taken away, but says that it is only canceled or not imputed, let him be anathema” (*Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 21, 23). Willet cites the Rhemist annotation on 1 John 1, which argues in part (citing *De Fide ad Petrum*), that “are excepted from this common rule of sinner [i.e. if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, 1 John 1:8], the children which be newly baptized and have not yet use of reason to sinne either mortally or venially” (Martin, *New Testament*, 676).

actually differ significantly from a Pelagian understanding of original sin.²⁹

The Apostle's declaration in the previous chapter of Romans (4:7) that "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sinnes are covered" occasions a related Controversy, in which the context expands from baptism specifically to the broader "justification of the faithfull." Here Willet addresses the Roman Catholic interpretation of this verse to mean that justification removes not only the *guilt* of sin, but "sinne it selfe," and the corresponding accusation that Protestants, conversely, teach that sins are not in *any* way removed "but remaine the same they were," only without being imputed.³⁰ This *supposed* Protestant understanding of justification had led Pererius to liken Protestants to the Pelagians, who denied that baptism affected the root of sin, holding that it served only to prune some of its branches. This characterization of the Protestant view, Willet counters, misrepresents their position and ignores the Protestant distinction between sin *dwelling* and sin *reigning* in the baptized Christian. Being justified is not a matter of bare non-imputation alone, but also represents a shift from being destitute of all holiness to living a life of holiness *mingled with* sin; this is the picture that Paul paints in Romans 7:20. Pererius's attempt to connect Protestants to the Pelagian tree inverted how his opponents would actually employ the image: when justified, Protestants maintain, the root of sin itself is indeed killed, but some of its sprigs remain during our life on earth. The language of *imputation* and *covering* that Paul uses in 4:7-8 implies not the immediate and utter removal of all traces of sin, but suggests rather that some vestige remains: "the very word it selfe of not imputing of sinne, presupposeth a beeing of

²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 274.

³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 222. We see this Catholic charge reflected in the Tridentine condemnation (quoted in n27) of those teaching the mere non-imputation of sin.

sinne...and that which is covered appeareth not, not because it is not, but because it is covered.”³¹ As he had in *Tetrastylon Papismi*, Willet here turns the accusation around on his Catholic foes—“the error of the Pelagians rather cleaveth unto the Romanists, then the Protestants...”—as evidenced in part by the papists extending the benefits of baptism only to sins previously committed.³² Willet also links Pelagians and Roman Catholics (though without equating them) as offering two different false efficient causes of justification in 3:24: “The efficient, which is the grace of God, that is, not the doctrine of the Gospel freely revealed, as the Pelagians understand it, nor the graces of the spirit infused, as the Romanists.”³³ While distinguishing between their particular errors here, Willet is clearly connecting the two as enemies of grace.

In fairness to his opponents, or perhaps to avoid the potential polemical pitfalls of

³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 222. Consider how the Rhemist annotations present the Protestant interpretation of these verses, interpreting Protestant non-imputation of sin to mean that the sin is not truly forgiven: “You may not gather (as the Heretikes doe) of these termes, *covered*, and *not imputed*, that the sinnes of men be never truly forgiven, but hidden only. for that derogateth much to the force of Christes blood and to the grace of God, by which our offences be truely remitted. He is the Lambe that *taketh away* the sinnes of the world, that *washeth*, and *blotteth out* our sinnes. therefore to cover them, or, not to impute them, is, not to charge us with our sinnes, because by remission they be cleane taken away: otherwise it were but a feined forgiveness” (Martin, *New Testament*, 392-393). Fulke’s response to this annotation begins by agreeing with the Rhemists’ words—knowing, of course, that the position attributed to the “heretikes” is a misrepresentation of a Protestant teaching— (“Gods curse light upon those heretikes, that say our sinnes are never truly forgiven, but onely hidden”), before explaining that the non-imputation of sin entails full and true forgiveness (Fulke, *Text of the New Testament*, 448).

³² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 222. The Catholic tradition did not generally hold, as Willet supposes, that baptism’s effects were strictly limited to the sins going before, but rather taught that *additional*, supplementary means were necessary *as well* for later sins. Cf. the Rhemist note on 1 John 1:7: “V. Bede saith, that Christs Passion doth not onely remit in Baptisme the sinnes before committed, but al other afterward also done by frailtie: yet so, if we use for the remission of them, such meanes as be requisite and as Christ hath appointed, whereof he reckoneth some” (Martin, *New Testament*, 676). The necessity of additional means, to Willet, was effectively the same as saying that baptism had *no* effect on those sins—in similar fashion to how the Rhemists considered the non-imputation of sins (without their complete removal) to be effectively the same as denying forgiveness altogether. In instances like these, polemicists on each side of the Catholic-Protestant divide prioritized what they took to be the logical ramifications of their opponents’ views over the opponents’ own articulation of their views.

³³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 168. On the multiple causes of justification, see sections IV.2.1 and IV.2.5.

hyperbolic comparisons, Willet does differentiate both between Roman Catholic and Pelagian dogma, and between different strains of Catholic thought.³⁴ Twice in the Romans hexapla Willet acknowledges the scholastic distinction between fulfilling the Law *quoad substantiam actus* and *quoad intentionem precipientis*—the first referring to obeying the substance of the Law itself, and the second to satisfying the intentions of the lawgiver.³⁵ Catholics making use of this distinction held that humans in the state of “pure nature” were capable of the first, “letter of the law” variety of obedience, but not of the latter—since, for one thing, the lawgiver stipulates that proper obedience to the Law is performed in a state of grace, making fulfillment *quoad intentionem precipientis* by definition an impossibility in an ungraced natural state.³⁶ Having expounded on Paul’s teaching in Romans 8:8 that those in the flesh cannot please God,³⁷ Willet applies this principle to refute Pelagian and papist errors: “And this doth manifestly convince the Pelagians of error, which hold that a naturall man might fulfill the law of God: and of the

³⁴ Distinguishing different views within the Roman Catholic tradition also contributed to Willet’s project of refuting Roman claims of catholicity by revealing fissures within the church’s supposed uniform doctrine. See section VII.3.1.

³⁵ On the distinction between *quoad substantiam actus* and *quoad intentionem precipientis* (or *legislatoris*), see Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 48, 156-162. Oberman explains this “well-known nominalistic distinction between the two aspects of the one act” in the context of Gabriel Biel’s thought and argues that it must be interpreted according to another distinction, between the *bonitas* (the basic goodness) and *dignitas* (the acceptability, requiring grace) of an act (pp. 162-163). Cf. also Denis R. Janz, *Luther and Late Medieval Nominalism: A Study in Theological Anthropology* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 21, 54-55, 84, 106-107, 119-120, 133, 137. Janz writes that, while most thirteenth-century theologians agreed that the Law could not be kept *quoad intentionem legislatoris*, some argued that it could be kept *quoad substantiam actus*. This was the early position of Thomas Aquinas, who believed that this natural obedience prepared one to receive the grace that would enable the fulfillment of the Law *quoad intentionem legislatoris*. Thomas’s later view was closer to Luther’s, maintaining that one could not fulfill the whole Law, in either fashion, without grace.

³⁶ Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 162.

³⁷ Cf. our earlier reflection (in section II.3.2.3) on Paul’s teaching regarding the flesh (i.e. natural human nature) in this same part of Romans 8. There we looked at the issue from a translation perspective, considering the different shades of meaning that Willet explains between viewing the flesh as “enmity towards” and “an enemy of” God.

Popish Schoolmen, who affirmed, that a man without grace might keep the law...in respect of the substance of the worke, though not...after the intention of the law.”³⁸

Willet similarly likens the two in a Controversy concerning Romans 5:20 (“the lawe entred, that the offence should abound”). Having explained the error of the Manichaeans, who argued from verses like this “against the law, as though it were evill,” Willet adds that the Pelagians do no better, erring in the opposite direction by attributing to the (inherently holy) Law too much power in making it “sufficient to salvation.” He proceeds to connect this misconception to the Roman scholastics: “The Popish schoolemen differed not much from this opinion, who held that a man by the strength of nature may keepe the precept of the lawe, *quoad substantiam operis*, in respect of the substance of the worke, but not, *quoad intentionem precipientis*, according to the intention of the lawgiver.”³⁹ The distinction, while mitigating their heresy somewhat, is not sufficient to free those Catholics appropriating this nominalist approach to the Law from the Pelagian label.⁴⁰ Paul’s personal testimony in Romans 7 shows us that not even a regenerate saint can keep the Law perfectly; and if not post-conversion Paul, surely not one yet mired in his natural condition (either according to the intention *or* the substance of the Law). Willet concludes this Controversy by driving home the blasphemous ramification of the Pelagian view: were the Law sufficient, “then Christ died in vaine.”⁴¹

³⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 355.

³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 282.

⁴⁰ Oberman, it should be noted, concurs with this assessment: “*It is therefore evident that Biel’s doctrine of justification is essentially Pelagian*”; “Our conclusion that nominalism has not been able to avoid a Pelagian position should not obscure the fact that nominalism was fully involved in the ongoing medieval search for the proper *interpretation* of Augustine” (Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 177, 427).

⁴¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 283.

Given the partial correspondence between Pelagian and Roman Catholic teaching on justification, Willet elsewhere employs the term “Semipelagian,”⁴² a common Reformed designation for Catholic theology.⁴³ Whereas the Pelagian position could do away with the internal influence of grace altogether, the Romanists proposed a synergistic blend of grace and human effort. Willet applies the epithet to the Catholics in the Controversies section of Romans 8, in reference to Paul’s statement in verse 26 that “we know not what to pray, as we ought.” If we cannot even *pray* properly, Willet comments, how much less are we capable of keeping the whole Law?⁴⁴ “And as these places [i.e. Romans 8:26 and Philippians 2:13] doe exclude this heresie of the Pelagians,” Willet continues, “who extoll the power of nature altogether; so also they overthrow the error of the *Semipelagians* the Papists, who joyne free will and grace as workes together.”⁴⁵ While not identical to the Pelagian understanding of justification, the Roman doctrine did not do enough to safeguard itself against the association; a Pelagian *element*

⁴² The moderated title “Semipelagian” was coined in the mid-sixteenth century, and only later used to describe synergistic views in the early church. Backus and Goudriaan argue that Beza was the first to use the expression, directing it against Roman Catholics in his 1556 New Testament annotations and in his lectures on Romans in the 1560s (Backus and Goudriaan, “Semipelagianism,” 35-40, 38). The designation was re-appropriated, they contend, by the Roman Catholic Nicholas Sander in 1571 and applied to the fifth-century Massilians (pp. 42-44).

⁴³ Anthony Milton, addressing predestination controversies, writes that “where anti-Calvinist divines were directly accused of Pelagianism, the Roman Church was distinguished from them, and seen instead as inclining more towards semi-Pelagianism.” He goes on to note the polemical element in this approach, in which Arminians were portrayed as being *even more heretical* than the hated Catholics (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 210-211). As we will see shortly, though, some Roman Catholics were still singled out for Pelagian-level predestination errors. Muller mentions also the term “Neo-Pelagians,” which was used when “precise terminology was necessary” (Muller, *After Calvin*, 53).

⁴⁴ In section III.3.4 we looked at Willet’s identification of Paul’s use of *a minori ad maius* (“from the less to the greater”) rhetorical arguments. Here and in the previous paragraph we see two more examples: if we cannot pray correctly, *how much more* are we incapable of obeying the Law; and if a regenerate apostle cannot obey perfectly, *how much more* is an unregenerate person incapable of such obedience.

⁴⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 397-398. Willet cites “Phil.1.13,” but the reference is clearly to the following chapter.

in the papist teaching was in Willet's judgment sufficient to earn the damning "Semipelagian" title.

2.1.3 Pelagianism and Election

In the Controversies section of Romans 9—the chapter where Paul begins his extended reflection on the mystery of election—Willet distinguishes between differing Roman Catholic perspectives on predestination, with only certain factions accused of reviving Pelagian predestination errors. Anthony Milton writes that most English Protestants did not view the Roman church as being fundamentally wrong on predestination, with its charges of Pelagianism or Semipelagianism stemming rather from Roman Catholic teachings on justification and assurance of salvation.⁴⁶ There was enough similarity between Reformed and (Dominican) Catholic views on predestination, Milton notes, that the Puritan Anthony Wotton was able to use this as an argument against the anti-Puritan Bishop Richard Montagu to show that the Reformed conception of predestination was no Puritan novelty.⁴⁷ Willet's comparison between "the Universalists" (i.e. proponents of universal grace) and the papists in the "fift absurditie" of the nineteenth general controversy of *Synopsis Papismi* supports Milton's basic argument here: "the Universalists herein are more erronious then the Papists: for they [the papists] confesse an absolute and determinate certaintie of our election before God, though they denie a full perswasion and assurance thereof unto men."⁴⁸ Willet held this moderated position to be the majority stance of the Roman Catholics.

⁴⁶ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 210-211.

⁴⁷ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 211.

⁴⁸ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 814.

Yet, while Rome may have “escaped [being associated with the Pelagian heresy] on the specific doctrine of predestination itself” in the judgment of most English Protestants,⁴⁹ Willet himself certainly deemed *some* Roman Catholics guilty on this count. Surveying a variety of opinions on the relationship between the decree and execution of election and reprobation, Willet reserves his harshest criticism for those who made the entire process of election to stem from human causes—namely “the Pelagians, and some of the Romanists, which hold, that both the decree of election is grounded upon the foresight of faith, and the good use of freewill, as also the execution of that decree in the giving of eternall life they will have procured by good works.”⁵⁰ Among these Romanists Willet includes the Rhemists and the Jesuit Martin Becanus (1563-1624), a contemporary of Willet’s teaching at the time in Mainz.⁵¹ Earlier in the same section he had similarly accused the sixteenth-century Dominican Ambrosius Catharinus (who held all people to be elect, though some absolutely and others conditionally) of propounding a

⁴⁹ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 211. Milton minimizes Willet’s association of certain Catholic factions with Pelagian predestination errors, quoting for instance a distinction that Willet draws between Pelagian and papist views on *reprobation* as though it were indicative of his assessment on *election* as well. Willet’s softer criticism of Roman Catholic teaching on reprobation, however, was likely due to the greater complexity of the issue, the inherent problems resident in a wide variety of views on reprobation, and—perhaps most significantly—the diversity of opinions espoused by eminent Protestants. He thus had to be careful not to unwittingly implicate a Protestant ally in the Pelagian heresy.

⁵⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 447.

⁵¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Martin Becanus”; As evidence of the Rhemists’ Pelagian understanding of election, Willet cites the interpretation of Hebrews 5. There the annotation on verse 9 (Christ “was made to all that obey him, cause of eternal salvation”), having explained the necessity of obeying the commandments in order to apply the benefits of Christ’s Passion, concludes: “Lastly, we note in the same wordes, that Christ appointeth not by his absolute and eternal election, men so to be partakers of the fruite of his redemption, without any condition or respect of their owne workes, obedience, or free will: but with the condition alwaies, if men wil obey him, and do that which he appointeth” (Martin, *New Testament*, 611). Cf. Willet’s distinction in *Synopsis Papismi* where, having found Bellarmine basically acceptable, he notes that “our whole busines is with the Rhemists” (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1600], 820; retained in the 1613 edition, p. 918).

Pelagian opinion.⁵² Other Romanists, however—while by no means free from error entirely—dissented from this particularly egregious position. Bellarmine, Tolet, and Pererius all proposed a different causal structure, and Thomas had affirmed that God was fully the cause of the *decree* of both election and reprobation, though he allowed for human causality in the execution of each.

2.1.4 Pelagianism and Reprobation

Among Protestants, “worthie Calvin, Beza, Martyr, with other of our learned new writers” rightly distinguish between the *execution* of each—with good works accruing no merit in the execution of election, but evil deeds justly earning damnation in the execution of reprobation—but make God fully the cause of the decree of both election and reprobation.⁵³ While this is not unlike the position Willet himself had staked earlier in *Synopsis Papismi*, by at least 1611 he preferred to emphasize the role of sin in reprobation to a greater degree. “The safer way,” he concludes, is to “hold a perpetuall difference betweene election and reprobation,” with the entire process of election caused by God’s free and sovereign will, and the reprobate’s “sinne and the foresight thereof” motivating both the decree and the actuality of their damnation.

Concerning the decree of reprobation, it has commonly been stated that Willet moved from a supralapsarian to a sublapsarian position.⁵⁴ While he certainly clarifies his

⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 438.

⁵³ Cf. the similar position of Ursinus, and the importance of distinguishing between reprobation (the decree) and damnation (the execution) in Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 186, 189.

⁵⁴ E.g. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 414-417; Anthony Milton, “‘Anglicanism’ by Stealth: The Career and Influence of John Overall,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, 174; Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, 143 (citing Milton); Pederson, “Andrew Willet and the *Synopsis Papismi*,” 135-137;

preference for the latter in the Romans hexapla more than he had in earlier works, even acknowledging a development in his stance (presenting the “safest” position in the Romans hexapla against “whatsoever [he had] before thought and written otherwise”),⁵⁵ the shift is not quite as dramatic as Anthony Milton—the primary exponent of this view—has made it seem. Milton argues that “the writings of Andrew Willet provide a striking example of [the] process of disengagement” from a “high Calvinist” position, “explicitly retract[ing] the supralapsarian position which he had maintained in his earlier work.” In a footnote, Milton specifies that Willet was “distancing himself from his own earlier position in *Synopsis* (1600),” where he had made use of a distinction of Junius regarding two degrees of reprobation (an absolute “decree of preterition,” in which God withholds his mercy, and a “decree of prescience,” in which God actively punishes on the basis of the foresight of sin). It is possible that Willet’s use of the supralapsarian Junius leads Milton to characterize Willet himself as a supralapsarian. However, Willet never uses Junius’s distinction in an explicitly supralapsarian manner. “Willet’s rethinking on this and related points,” Milton writes, “was enshrined in additions to the fourth edition of the *Synopsis* (1613), where he inserted two new paragraphs (p. 921) emphasizing the sublapsarian position, which replaced his earlier defence of irrespective reprobation

Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination*, 126-127. Throughout this section I will use the word “sublapsarian” to match Milton’s preferred terminology. I take the term to be synonymous with “infralapsarian.”

⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 443. Elnathan Parr mentions this development in the thought of Willet (who is, as Kranendonk notes, the only Englishman Parr cites in support of his infralapsarian position; Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination*, 127) in his 1619 expansion of *The Grounds of Divinity*: “Doctor Willet, a learned man of our own Country, after a great deale of paynes in searching into this point: having before published his opinion otherwise; doth at the last rest in this of the corrupted masse, as the most safe to answer all objections of adversaries, and as the undoubted truth” (Elnathan Parr, *The Grounds of Divinitie* [1619], 297). While acknowledging a shift in Willet’s favored view (which he learns of from Willet’s own words in the Romans hexapla), Parr does not indicate precisely in his testimony what he takes to have been Willet’s previous view.

which had made use of the example of Jacob and Esau (1600, p. 822).⁵⁶ Willet's shift, however, is not quite so stark, with strong qualifications of his (supposed) supralapsarianism already hedged in (and before) 1600 and remnants of this "high Calvinist" position still present in 1613. Pederson is more accurate when he claims that "Willet's revision and expansion of this issue [of double predestination] in the 1634 edition softens the [earlier] supralapsarian overtones," although Pederson's reference should be to the 1613 revision—the final 1634 printing being 13 years after Willet's death—and the passage that he cites from the 1634 *Synopsis* to demonstrate how "Willet's revision addresses the issue of reprobation in greater detail" first appears in the 1594 edition.⁵⁷

Already in the 1594 edition of *Synopsis Papismi* Willet appears unwilling to adopt a fully supralapsarian view, as he attempts to strike a balance between human and divine causality: "the decree of reprobation, as it dependeth not absolutely altogether upon God's will, without respect had unto the sinne and rebellion of the reprobate, so neither doth it spring onely from the foresight of sinne, as the *Rhemists* affirme, that God doth not reprobate any but for sinne." This reference to the foresight of sin in the decree of reprobation suggests that the object of this decree is *not* the unfallen, creatable beings that

⁵⁶ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 414, 414n127. Willet's use of Junius's distinction can be found on p. 822 of the 1600 edition of *Synopsis Papismi*, and summarized—with a recognition of the limits of the distinction—on pp. 440-441 of the Romans hexapla. Despite his diminished enthusiasm for this distinction, it is retained in the 1613 *Synopsis Papismi* (p. 920). In an added section on the following page of this later edition, he clearly frames it in a sublapsarian content: "So then mankinde being considered as all lost in *Adam*, the Lord out of his owne gracious will elected some out of this masse or lumpe of perdition, leaving the other, (here is the decree of *praeterition*, issuing forth of Gods will and counsell) those being left in their state of corruption, are fore-seene, in the consummation and accession of many other sinnes, and so are ordained to damnation (here is the decree issuing out of his prescience.)"

⁵⁷ Pederson, "Andrew Willet and the *Synopsis Papismi*," 136-137. The passage that Pederson quotes can be found on p. 920 of the 1613 and 1634 editions, p. 822 of the 1600 edition, and pp. 896-897 of the 1594 edition.

a fully supralapsarian position would assume.⁵⁸ Additionally, Willet distinguishes not just between the *execution* of election and reprobation, but between the *decree* of each, stating that “we must note the difference between the decree of election and reprobation: for men are elected without any foresight of their works, but they are not rejected without respect to their works.”⁵⁹ Were he advocating a supralapsarian view, we would expect more of a parallel here between the decrees of election and reprobation. In attempting a balance between God’s sovereignty and human culpability, Willet is largely following Bellarmine, who had argued that reprobation “is partly to be referred to the will of God, partly to the foresight of sinne: not wholly to either, but in part to both”—a position that Willet did “not much mislike.”⁶⁰

Moreover, many of the passages from the earlier editions that might seem to suggest a supralapsarian position are retained in the 1613 *Synopsis Papismi*. Having allowed that the execution of damnation is always carried out justly for sin, for instance, Willet adds: “but as for the decree and sentence of condemnation, it is no unjust thing for

⁵⁸ Cf. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, s.v. “supra lapsum.”

⁵⁹ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1594), 897.

⁶⁰ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1594), 894 (p. 820 in the 1600 edition and p. 918 in the 1613 edition). From early on Willet seems conflicted about Bellarmine’s distinction between negative and positive reprobation (which he associates explicitly with Junius’s preterition/prescience distinction, p. 897 of the 1594 *Synopsis*, and a separate passage on p. 921 of the 1613 *Synopsis*). While affirming that “here we do not much mislike the Jesuites opinion in this matter as agreeable to ours” and claiming that “a better answer can not bee found, then that which *Bellarmino* maketh,” he elsewhere in the same edition refers to Bellarmine’s negative/positive distinction as “another evasion” (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1594], 894, 895, 838). Already by this time the word “evasion” had the negative connotation of a “shuffling excuse” or “subterfuge,” so it is unlikely that Willet is using the word in any positive sense, as though to say “once again Bellarmine skillfully navigates through the waters of seemingly irresolvable theological tension to present a nuanced middle position” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “evasion”, accessed December 18, 2015, <http://www.oed.com>). One possible explanation for Willet’s mixed review of Bellarmine is that the passage where he praises the Jesuit’s distinction comes when he is emphasizing a difference between him and the Rhemists.

God, as it pleaseth him to dispose of his creature, whether to honour or dishonour.”⁶¹ This passage is retained in the 1613 edition, with the addition of a new concluding sentence that refines somewhat but certainly does not repudiate the argument.⁶² Again, distinguishing between the decree and execution of reprobation, Willet writes that “the evill workes then of wicked men, are not the onely cause of their rejection, which is an absolute acte of Gods own will, yet are they a just cause of their damnation.”⁶³ It is possible that Willet is simply inconsistent here—that his polemical aims nudge him towards seemingly contradictory affirmations. We must remember, though, that he is making use of and adapting several different pairs of distinctions that he has received from various authors; certain inconsistencies are to be expected simply because of his wide ranging sources. It is also possible that Willet resists being categorized neatly as either fully supralapsarian or sublapsarian, finding useful elements in each position.⁶⁴

Interpreting Willet’s statements on reprobation is also complicated by his distinction between *absolute* and *comparative* reprobation. Reprobation itself exists because of human sin, though the decision of *who* is elect and *who* is reprobate (out of the sinful mass of humanity) is without regard to sin, resting solely on the mystery of God’s will. Without this distinction, all humans would be justly and eternally condemned for

⁶¹ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1594), 895 and (1613), 919.

⁶² He adds in the later edition: “And yet God casteth off none, but justly, not onely in respect of his absolute right and power, which he hath over his creature, but in regard of them also that are cast off, all being lost in *Adam*.”

⁶³ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1594), 895 and (1613), 919.

⁶⁴ Cf. Muller’s observation concerning the “broader spectrum and...variety of Reformed thought beyond the simple (or perhaps simplistic) division of opinion between supralapsarians and infralapsarians...” (Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 131). Cf. also David Pareus, who Klaas Dijk argues “seeks a conciliatory position” between infra- and supralapsarianism (cited in Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination*, 126). Willet in the Romans hexapla partly agrees with and partly dissents from Pareus’s reasoning (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 439, 443).

their sin, or else particular condemnation would be based on a hierarchy of sinfulness, which would simply be a kind of negative Pelagianism.⁶⁵ Isolated from their context, some passages referring to *absolute* reprobation—focusing on the sinfulness of the human “mass of perdition”—can sound sublapsarian, while others dealing with *comparative* reprobation—focusing on how that mass is divided without regard to sin—can read as though strictly supralapsarian.

Willet’s acknowledged shift, then, should be seen not as a radical distancing from his earlier position, but as a relative move towards a more clearly expressed sublapsarian emphasis, in which Junius’s distinctions must be clarified by adding “further by way of explanation,” negative and positive reprobation are recognized as being “in effect...all one,” and where Willet “now [sees] no reason” not to endorse Augustine’s making “the Masse of damnation in *Adam* the object of Gods decree.”⁶⁶ If his early intention was to stand between supralapsarian and sublapsarian frameworks, his later recognition was that, based on his logical, theological, and polemical commitments, he was obliged to take a step towards sublapsarianism.

Given the intricate nature of reprobation—with the ramifications that different positions hold both for the doctrine of election and for God’s attributes, as well as the variety of stances within the Protestant world—we can see why Willet, while still describing the Pelagians as those “who utterly condemned the absolute decree of reprobation, without any respect of works,”⁶⁷ more frequently raises the charge of Pelagianism against errors concerning positive election. Notice too that, although

⁶⁵ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 439, 442.

⁶⁶ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 921.

⁶⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 438.

Willet expresses concern that the supralapsarian position's emphasis on God's absolute right makes God's justice to exceed his mercy (given the surplus of rejected people), he *does* affirm the distinction between God's absolute and "*moderate* or *subordinate*" right (*absolutum ius/ ordinatum ius*) and affirms that God is under no obligation to consider sin when he rejects people: "even without any respect unto sinne, no man could accuse or challenge God."⁶⁸ Willet's conclusions, then, are based primarily on how he has come to read the relevant biblical texts, and not on a belief that the opposing view would make God to be an unjust tyrant. This was an important disclaimer for him to make, given that such esteemed Reformed theologians as Beza, Junius and Perkins had affirmed the supralapsarian view.

2.2 Canonical Errors: Marcionism and Manichaeism

Willet's *Hexapla upon Romanes* is scattered with condemnations of the heresies of the Marcionites and Manichaeans.⁶⁹ When these heresies are connected to Rome the common error tends to concern the biblical canon. We find all three linked in a chapter 15 Controversy in which Willet applies verse 15:4 ("For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written afore for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope") to combat "the enemies and adversaries to the Scriptures." Willet identifies three groups of "heretikes" who abuse the scriptures in various ways:

⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 447, 442.

⁶⁹ Selected references to Marcion can be found on pp. 26, 90, 141, 180, 182, 231, 242, 262, and 708; the Manichaeans are referenced on pp. 231, 476, 497, 659, and 708. In at least two places (pp. 231 and 708) he treats the two together as deniers of the Old Testament. Calvin had linked the two heresies in the *Institutes* for their views regarding Christ's human nature (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.13.1-3).

the first are the Manichees and Marcionites, which condemne the bookes of Moses and the old Testament: the second the Libertines [among whom he later includes the Anabaptists], which doe cleave unto their fantasticall dreames, which they call revelations, and say the Scriptures are only for such as are weake: the third are the Romanists, which doe besides the Scriptures receive many traditions, which they call *verbum Dei non scriptum*, the word of God not written, which they make of equall authoritie with the Scriptures.⁷⁰

The authority of these Romanist unwritten traditions (which Willet designates as “Pharisaical leaven”) is implicitly diminished by Paul’s reference to things “written” in Romans 15:4—if that which was written was done so for our learning, then, conversely, “things...not written, are not for our learning, as having no certentie, nor foundation.” While the particular error is the opposite of that of the Marcionites and Manichaeans—one denying the written scriptures and the other elevating unwritten traditions—the common impiety is sufficient to Willet for them to be cast together as “enemies” of Scripture.⁷¹

In similar fashion, Willet interprets Paul’s statement in Romans 10:8 (“This is the word of faith, which we preach”) to imply a complete equation between the Apostle’s written and spoken message.⁷² Here also the introduction of unwritten traditions into the canon of authoritative teaching represents to Willet a familiar heretical move: “The Romanists then may be ashamed to flie unto that vile and base refuge of the old

⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 708.

⁷¹ Cf. Ariel Hessayon’s choice of Willet as an example of “Protestant objections to ‘traditions’ and unwritten ‘verities’ urged by the Church of Rome,” citing his denial in the Genesis hexapla of the legitimacy of Enoch’s extrabiblical prophecy (Ariel Hessayon, “Og King of Bashan, Enoch and the Books of Enoch: Extra-Canonical Texts and Interpretations of Genesis 6:1-4,” in *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*, ed. Ariel Hessayon and Nicholas Keene [Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006], 19-20). See also my discussion of Richard Field’s view of *hypothetical* unwritten truths (VI.1).

⁷² “The Apostle here sheweth that the Gospel which he preached was agreeable to the Scriptures, he preached no other thing, then he here writeth: and he writeth nothing but was consonant to the old Scriptures” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 476). In this interpretation Willet both rejects unwritten traditions and, in accordance with a major Reformed theme, affirms the unity of the message between the Old and New Testaments.

Manichees, to say, that the Apostles preached some things, and committed other to writing.” Willet in this instance draws a more direct parallel between the Romanists and the Manichaeans, with each group guilty of adding new revelations to the biblical foundation of their belief systems. Still, by attaching the labels “Marcionite” and “Manichaeon” to the Roman church when the predominant parallel concerns authority and canon, Willet manages to conjure indirectly an association with a whole range of other ancient heretical doctrines.

In selected places Willet does attempt also to implicate Roman Catholics directly in certain other heresies of Marcion and Mani.⁷³ We find an instance of this in the early pages of the commentary, in connection with Paul’s reference in the epistle’s prologue to Christ’s being “of the seede of David according to the flesh.” First using Paul’s words to refute the heretical Marcionite notion of Christ having “an invisible bodie, that could not be seene or touched, though it were present,”⁷⁴ he goes on to liken this error to the particular eucharistic metaphysics espoused by papists and Lutherans (though without naming them here explicitly): “from whose heresie they much differ not, which include the bodie of Christ in the sacrament, under the formes of bread and wine, neither giving unto it place, nor disposition of parts, nor making it visible or palpable.”⁷⁵ In his

⁷³ In addition, Willet at times accuses Romanists of heretical ideas commonly associated with Marcion, though without naming the earlier heretic by name. Drawing the implications of Paul’s reference to the common root of Israel and the church (11:7), for instance, Willet explains that this teaching “is contrarie to the doctrine of the Romanists, which denie that the Sacraments of the old Testament had the same spirituall substance, with the Sacraments of the new” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 525). This criticism of the false division of testaments seems to have the Marcionite denial of the Old Testament in the background.

⁷⁴ On this Marcionite concept, see Tertullian’s *On the Flesh of Christ*, ch. 11 and *Against Marcion*, bk. 1, ch. 16 [*Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 3 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 3:531-532, 282-283].

⁷⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 90. Calvin makes a similar comparison between Marcion and those supposing the ubiquity of Christ’s human nature in his explanation of the Lord’s Supper in 4.17 of the

comments on this verse in the Doctrines section, Willet explains somewhat more fully how this understanding of the “Ubiquitaries” is based on a mistaken conception of the communication of Christ’s human and divine attributes,⁷⁶ and in a separate Controversy he likens this Lutheran error also to the Nestorian heresy (returning upon the Lutherans a charge that they commonly levelled against the Reformed).⁷⁷ Despite the Reformed position on the *communicatio idiomatum*, with Christ’s divine and human natures united *in concreto* in the person of Christ, perhaps inclining more towards Nestorianism,⁷⁸ Willet nonetheless links the old heresy to the Lutherans—the one allowing “no communication at all” and the other “a confused commixtion.” Roman Catholics, for the most part, escaped being accused directly of resurrecting early church Christological and trinitarian heresies,⁷⁹ these charges being reserved primarily for Socinian foes.⁸⁰

Institutes. In his Romans commentary, though, Calvin makes no mention here (1:3) of Marcion or sacramental theology, with his only polemical application directed against “the impious raving of *Servetus*, who assigned flesh to Christ, composed of three untreated elements” (Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 44). William Sclater alludes to the Manichaean error in his comments on this verse, but focuses his critique on modern foes, since (following the advice of Hyperius) “a minister in his popular Sermons should content himselfe to deale against the errors raining for the present in the people, rather then by needlesse mention, of buried heresies, give them occasion to inquire into them.” He therefore, like Willet, applies Paul’s teaching against “our ubiquitous [who] have of late recalled, of these grosse heresies” (Sclater, *A Key to the Key of Scripture*, 21-22).

⁷⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 87. Cf. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 72-74 (s.v. “*communicatio idiomatum*”).

⁷⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 88.

⁷⁸ Cf. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 72-73 (s.v. “*communicatio idiomatum*”).

⁷⁹ Cf. Milton, summarizing Sutcliffe’s position: “...although papists varied from all the doctrines of the ancient church, they still retained an orthodox doctrine of the Trinity” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 176). Willet does once in the Romans hexapla connect the Nestorian heresy to Valla and Stapulensis, both Roman Catholics—albeit ones who helped lay the framework for Protestantism. Their interpretations of Romans 6:10, Willet claims, “would seeme to favour the Nestorian heresie, that divideth Christs person, to say that Christ died not, but his bodie died” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 292).

Bellarmino accused Protestants of Arianism (for rejecting unwritten traditions), Nestorianism (because of Beza’s early theology, which—Willet counters—he later modified), Eutychianism (because of Schwenckfeld; Willet’s response: “what have we to do with the Swinkfeldians, or the Ubiquitaries?”), and Sabellianism (because of Servetus—who, Willet objects, was justly dealt with by the more orthodox

Willet directly connects Roman Catholic dietary restrictions to the Manichaeian condemnation of eating flesh in a chapter 14 Controversy concerning fasting and abstinence from meat. Having opened the Controversy with a description of eight kinds of fasts—including both legitimate (e.g. those motivated by health issues, those prone to alcohol abuse abstaining from wine, “civil” fasts related to the management of the food supply [“as the Lenton fast is now kept in England”]), and a non-meritorious religious fast connected with fervent prayer) and false (e.g. the “hereticall fast” of the Manichaeians and Tatians that condemns certain foods as inherently evil, and the “superstitious abstinence of the Papists”). While in this enumeration distinguishing between the Manichaeian and papist views, in a later argument within the same Controversy Willet links the two, as both maintaining “the doctrine of Devils.” Bellarmine, he notes, had read Romans 14 as refuting such heretics as the Manichaeians, Tatians, and Encratites. But Willet extends this condemnation to include Bellarmine’s own tradition, even claiming that Paul is prophetically speaking about them directly:

The Apostle onely noteth not those heretickes, but even the Papists, which should forbid meates, for he prophecieth of the latter times: and not onely they which simply condemne meates, but doe place an holines in merite in some mea[t]es, rather then others, are these forbidders of meates: and how doe not they condemne meates, which thinke men to be polluted by them, and doe rather chuse to them away, then to eate them upon forbidden daies?⁸¹

Reformed). Despite few such accusations in the Romans hexapla, Willet did charge the Roman church in *Tetrastylon Papismi* with Apollinarianism (for arguing that Christ did not suffer in his soul), Arianism (for worshipping bread and wine, which are created substances), Nestorianism (for putting one Christ in heaven and another in the eucharistic elements), and Eutychianism (for transforming Christ’s human nature into bread and wine, which is worse even than to lose it in Christ’s divine nature): (Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi*, 94, 96, 102-104; 103, 110, 113). Cf. also the Christological errors that Willet addressed in *Synopsis Papismi* (summarized in I.3.1, n. 127).

⁸⁰ Some of Willet’s frequent arguments against the Socinians in the Romans hexapla can be found on pp. 26, 44, 92, 189-191, 231, 248, 268-271, 353, 434, 447-450, 679, and 707. On the Socinian threat in this period, see H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951).

⁸¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 659.

Despite the different stated aims of each fast, forbidding meat consumption on certain days while making the observation of that fast worthy of merit is no better in Willet's judgment than insulting the Creator as the Manichaeans did in supposing an inherent evil within elements of God's creation.

In chapter four we saw how issues of causality and evil factored into Post-Reformation polemics, with Roman Catholics arguing that Protestant theology ultimately made God the author of sin.⁸² Given this emphasis of the Roman offensive, it is not surprising that Roman Catholics also made use of the Manichaean heresy against Protestants.⁸³ Willet in *Tetrastylon Papismi* summarizes Bellarmine's comparison: the Manichaeans attributed the genesis of sin to an evil god; Protestants, then, are even worse, since they make *God himself* the origin of sin and evil.⁸⁴ Willet counters this charge by explaining that the Reformed do not deny that the human will is the cause of sin and that it freely chooses evil without any compulsion—it is toward *the good* only that the will is not free. Protestant accounts of the bondage of the human will, then, in no way insinuate that God is responsible for their sin. A second parallel proposed by Bellarmine—that Protestants, like the Manichaeans, condemn the Old Testament patriarchs—Willet both repudiates (Protestants neither reject the Old Testament *scriptures* like the Manichaeans, nor consider the patriarchs to be “wicked men, though

⁸² See section IV.3.3.

⁸³ Cf. Kam-lun Edwin Lee's argument that Augustine's doctrine of predestination retained essential vestiges of his earlier Manichaean predilections, which—by extension—would imply that Protestant reliance on Augustine also ushered in Manichaean influences into Protestant soteriology (Kam-lun Edwin Lee, “Augustine, Manichaeism and the Good” [PhD diss., St. Paul University, Ottawa, ON, 1996]).

⁸⁴ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 94-95; Bellarmine, *Disputationum...de Controversiis Christianae Fidei*, vol. 2, 237: “Hoc tamen est magis impius Cavinus Manichaeo, quòd Manichaeus Deo malo tribuat peccatorum originem, Calvinus Deo bono.”

we excuse not all their infirmities...we maintaine & defend the holy scriptures, and not the sinnes of men”) and turns around into a criticism of the Roman Catholic conception of the *limbus patrum*: “howsoever they magnifie their holy & vertuous lives, yet allow them no place in heaven till the comming of Christ, but thrust them downe into a place of darkenes, which they affirme to be a part and member of hell.”⁸⁵ The patriarchs are dishonored, Willet argues, not by forthrightly acknowledging the sinful portion of their human nature, but by lodging them in a hellish halfway house until the Second Coming.

2.3 Novatianism and Donatism

Protestant and Roman Catholic polemicists similarly exchanged accusations of Novatianism and Donatism, two early church heresies that limited the grace extended to lapsed believers who committed sins after the forgiveness of baptism. This charge tended to stem from differing perspectives on the Catholic sacrament of penance: while Protestants took the Roman Catholic requirement of penance as a limitation of the efficacy of baptism, Catholics interpreted the Protestant denial of penance as a restriction on post-baptismal means of grace. Bellarmine had likened Protestant teachings to each of these heresies: the rejection of penance, in Novatian fashion, limited the church’s forgiveness of sin, while narrowing the church to include only the elect was reminiscent of the Donatist rigorism in excluding from the church all who fell short of sainthood.⁸⁶ Willet responds to Bellarmine’s arguments by distinguishing between key elements of Novatian and Protestant understandings of forgiveness and by challenging Bellarmine’s

⁸⁵ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 95.

⁸⁶ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 93, 95; Bellarmine, *Disputationum...de Controversiis Christianae Fidei*, vol. 2, 236, 237-238.

definition of Donatism. In rejecting the sacrament of penance, Protestants in no way deny post-baptismal forgiveness to repentant sinners, for whom it is “never too late [to repent and return to God]...while they live here upon earth.” As with Bellarmine’s Pelagian charges, here again Willet casts his orthodoxy lot with Augustine, writing that if affirming only two sacraments makes one a heretic, “let Augustine beare us companie.” He also in his defense countercharges Roman Catholics of Novatianism (“yourselves and not we are the Novatians of this time”), citing the thirteenth-century Pope Alexander IV’s ill treatment of repentant heretics.⁸⁷ In response to the charge of Donatism, Willet draws on the distinction between the visible and invisible church, explaining that Protestants acknowledge (unlike the Donatists) that the *visible* church is composed of a mix of wheat and chaff, and that it is fully orthodox (as confessed even in Roman Catholic dogma) to hold that “the holy invisible Catholike Church” is made up only of the elect.⁸⁸

Paul’s reference in Romans 3:25 to God’s forgiveness of “sinnes which were past before” occasions a similar reference to the Novatian heresy in the Romans hexapla. The Novatians, Willet relays, had read this verse to mean that God only forgives sins committed prior to one’s calling and justification, while “denying all remedie unto sinnes committed afterward.” Willet rejects this reading on the basis both of its false implications for the power of Christ’s death and from the example of David, who committed his most egregious sins after his calling and was yet restored. He proceeds to connect this error to the corresponding Roman Catholic error: “*Catharinus* with other Romanists, understand likewise sinnes going before justification and baptisme: the rest

⁸⁷ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 93-94.

⁸⁸ Willet, *Tetrastylon Papismi* (1599), 95-96.

that follow after, they say must be purged by other meanes, as by repentance and satisfaction.” While not making post-baptismal sins unforgiveable like the Novatians, the Roman distinction between pre- and post-conversion sins, with the introduction of new means of forgiveness based on merit, suffices to link the two interpretations with the phrase “understand *likewise*.” When Willet comes around to presenting his own favored interpretation, his explanation does not limit, but expands, the power and extent of Christ’s forgiveness. By “sinnes that are past,” Paul means “not the sinnes going before baptisme, or justification, but the sinnes committed under the old Testament, to shew that there was no remission of sinnes from the beginning of the world, but by faith in Christ.” Not only is Christ’s forgiveness effective for sins committing after one’s justification, but it extends backwards, too, to the world’s beginning.⁸⁹

2.4 Atheism and Pagan Idolatry

Not every accusation of emulating notorious errors exchanged between Protestants and Roman Catholics concerned heterodox *Christian* doctrine, as each also leveled charges of reproducing the false ideologies of atheists and pagans. Matthew Kellison’s arguments in his 1603 anti-Protestant appeal to King James are representative of Roman Catholic use of this reasoning. The future leader of the college at Douai wrote that “the new religion” of the Protestants represented a form of atheism more sinister than the outright disavowal of God’s existence: these heretics dangerously positioned politics ahead of religion, denied the real presence of Christ in the sacrament in a way that could lead to questioning God’s existence altogether, taught a doctrine of predestination that

⁸⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 171. Note Willet’s Reformed emphasis, clearly expressed by Paul, on there being a *single* means of justification for Jew and Gentile alike (see below, VI.4).

made God the author of evil, and promoted doctrinal doubt⁹⁰ by rejecting the church's supreme authority to settle disputes.⁹¹ The very same year, Andrew Willet ridiculed Richard Broughton's claim to have confuted atheism, seeing that Papism itself inclined toward godlessness, as evidenced by several popes who had made deals with the devil and who had proven themselves to be "plaine Atheists."⁹²

More frequently Willet associates papist practices with pagan idolatry.⁹³ In *An Antilogie*, he suggests even that pagan rituals provide the very marrow of the Roman Catholic faith: "Concerning Heathenish paganisme, if Papists borrowed not much of their stuffe from thence, their religion would be left very beggerly and naked." He proceeds to defend this assertion by referencing their use of relics and images, the superstitious attitude toward certain days and seasons, and their understanding of the priesthood.⁹⁴ Several passages in Romans also prod Willet to make this comparison; the history of Rome itself, as a center of pagan learning in the ancient world, inspires such an

⁹⁰ N.B. William Hamlin suggests, based on the argumentation and vocabulary used in his 1585 treatise on the soul, that Willet was likely familiar through his studies at Cambridge with skeptical epistemology. The treatise "includes a chapter which asks 'Whether anything is comprehended with a certain mind?' Willet concludes that 'Nothing can be truly known or perceived without distortion,' going so far as to find Socrates 'worthy of rebuke, who claimed that he knew only this—that he knew nothing' (163). Such a pronouncement sounds uncannily akin to the Pyrrhonian view that Academic scepticism amounts to a form of negative dogmatism..." (William M. Hamlin, *Tragedy and Scepticism in Shakespeare's England* [Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005], 47). Willet would, however, likely distinguish between what can be known through the "nature and powers of the soul" (the subject of *De animae*) and what is knowable through faith by divine revelation.

⁹¹ Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 197-198. Tutino also cites Thomas Fitzherbert's argument that, as Protestants dealt with mere probability in the absence of definitive church proclamations, they were necessarily immersed in an uncertainty that could lead to atheism (p. 188n111); Matthew Kellison, *A Survey of the New Religion, Detecting Manie Grosse Absurdities which it Imphieth* (Doway: by Laurence Kellam, 1603).

⁹² Willet, *An Antilogie*, 60-61; Tutino uses Willet as an example of a Protestant argument of Roman Catholic doctrine "giving way to Atheism" (Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 102).

⁹³ On Protestant attacks on idolatry more broadly, see Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁹⁴ Willet, *An Antilogie*, 62.

association: faithful pastors who preach the true gospel “shall beare downe the superstitious idolatrie of the new Romanists, as the Apostles did the heathenish idolatrie of the old Romanists.”⁹⁵ These new Romanists seem to have adapted many of their customs from their heathen predecessors. Willet relays Haymo’s suggestion that the Latin words *hostia* and *victima* have their origins in the language of pagan sacrifice—the first referring to an offering made before fighting an enemy (*hostis*) and the second a sacrifice offered after a victory (*victoria*).⁹⁶ Whereas Paul instructs those who observe days to do so “to the Lord” (Romans 14:6), the Romanists assign days to their saints: “Christians are not to imitate Pagans in the rites of religion: but, in dedicating daies unto Saints, they imitate the Pagans apparently.” They dedicate these days not merely to honor the memory of these saints, but “to their worship, which is idolatrie,” and in so doing essentially mimic the former feasts to the pagan deities, “changing only the names.”⁹⁷

Not only do the papists dedicate days to the saints, but these “pseudo-Christians” also make images of the saints and “doe conforme themselves to the Gentiles, by whom imagerie was brought in.”⁹⁸ The pagans had deluded themselves in thinking that “they did not worship the image or idol, but the thing represented thereby,” and their use of images in worship went beyond even the command not to worship creatures, since creatures are

⁹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 471.

⁹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 535.

⁹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 661. Willet comments also on the pagan naming of days and months, agreeing with Vermigli’s judgment from Romans 11:4 (regarding not bowing the knee to Baal) that early Christians would have been wise to change these names, while noting that “nowe there is no such danger [of honoring pagan gods through the use of their names], as in the beginning, when Christians were newly converted from Pagan idolatrie” (p. 519).

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 95.

God's handiwork, while images are "the work of mans hands."⁹⁹ These are the very practices that Paul condemns in Romans 1. And yet, just as the first century pagans bowed their knee to Baal (Romans 11:4) and made idols their Lords, "so the superstitious Papists at this day, doe make the Saints and their images, their Lords and patrons."¹⁰⁰ In this regard, Roman Catholic worship was even more corrupted than that of "the Turkes [Muslims] and Jewes," who knew enough to avoid worshiping images.¹⁰¹ The idolatrous reverence for deceased saints, moreover, violates not only principles of worship, but the moral duties to one's neighbor, as well. Drawing on Pareus's insight into Romans 12:13 ("Communicating to the necessities of the Saints: following hospitalitie"), Willet remarks that "here we learne what the dutie is, which we should performe unto the Saints: not in carving and painting their images, when they are dead, but in succouring their necessities while they live." The Roman Catholic attempt to honor God and the saints through the use of images thus backfires doubly—for God is *dishonored* by the practice, nor does it aid in any way the living saints whom Christians are *actually* obligated to serve.¹⁰² Willet adds here that "hospitalitie was even commended among the heathen...[and so] much more should it be practised among Christians." This accentuates his criticism of the Roman Catholic conception of honoring the saints—as though to say, "Not only do the Papists imitate the heathen worship of images of the deceased, but in doing this they neglect to show to the living the hospitality that was expected even of the heathen."

⁹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 69 (commenting on 1:21) and 91 (commenting on 1:9 and tying in Matthew 4:10).

¹⁰⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 491.

¹⁰¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 95-96.

¹⁰² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 555.

3. Roman Catholics and Biblical Villains

3.1 The Pope as Antichrist

The identification of the pope as Antichrist had become a commonplace among the Reformed well before the turn of the seventeenth century. Popes were accused of being Antichrist already in the medieval period, though mostly by those whom the papacy had condemned as heretics.¹⁰³ While some used the appellation “just as a term of abuse to be hurled at anybody one disliked,” it was commonly understood that Antichrist was to be “a holder of political power, who persecutes God’s people.”¹⁰⁴ With the Reformation, the notion of the pope (and the institution of the papacy more broadly) as Antichrist was legitimated by the connection to established, state churches, so that the doctrine, “hitherto mostly associated with disreputable lower-class heretics, acquired a new respectability.” All of the leading Reformers concurred on the issue, whether Lutheran, Reformed, or radical.¹⁰⁵ In England, the work of Bucer and Foxe ensured that the doctrine had “a theoretical respectability” by the time of Elizabeth, and by the later sixteenth century simply questioning the association could lead one to be labeled a crypto-papist.¹⁰⁶ King James himself, as early as 1588, identified the pope as Antichrist

¹⁰³ Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 6.

¹⁰⁴ Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 3, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 9. Hill adds wryly that “naturally things seemed very different to Catholics.” Some Roman Catholics argued that Henry VIII or Elizabeth was Antichrist, but most held that Antichrist had not yet come. The consistent Protestant focus on the pope as Antichrist led some Roman Catholics to deflect the charge by arguing that Antichrist would be a Jew who would persuade other Jews that he was their long-awaited messiah—which argument, not surprisingly, “lent itself to anti-semitic overtones.” For Protestants, “despite occasional references to ‘Antichrist and his synagogue,’ the Jews play a much less sinister role,” (pp. 178-180).

¹⁰⁶ Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 11-13. Cf. Milton’s comment that the connection between the papacy and Antichrist had an “unchallenged orthodoxy and substantial doctrinal importance in the Elizabethan Church” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 93).

based on the papal claim to be able to depose kings.¹⁰⁷ While the doctrine was held by Puritans and non-Puritans alike,¹⁰⁸ Milton notes that it was particularly important for the former, who believed that “a heightened sense of the threat from the papal Antichrist was held to be one of the signs of election.”¹⁰⁹

Despite a flurry of publications between the 1590s and 1620s (the decades in which Willet flourished) that dealt specifically with the pope’s identity as Antichrist,¹¹⁰ the certainty of this thesis was beginning to be challenged. In 1599 John Overall suggested that Mohammad fit the description as well, so that he either alone or in combination with the pope could be Antichrist.¹¹¹ A few years after Willet’s death, Richard Montagu—emphasizing the great obscurity of biblical texts referring to Antichrist—issued the “first clear assault on the consensus in print,” and by the Laudian period the earlier orthodoxy was generally rejected.¹¹² Since the high point in the early Stuart period, both the linking of the pope with Antichrist and the general concern with

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, “The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I,” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 28; Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 20.

¹⁰⁸ Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 36.

¹¹⁰ Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 19.

¹¹¹ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 111. Hill writes that the association of Antichrist with a Turk was more popular in Mediterranean Christianity than it was in England, where Islam was less of a threat. One exception was the Greek Christopher Angelos, who came to Oxford after having been tortured by the Turks, and who accordingly had some personal motivation to believe that Mohammad was in fact Antichrist (Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 181-182). Earlier in the sixteenth century Oecolampadius, Viret, and Bullinger had all similarly advocated the idea of a “double Antichrist,” composed of the papacy and the Turks as twin enemies of Christ (Jan Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013], 32).

¹¹² Anthony Milton, “The Church of England, Rome and the True Church: the Demise of a Jacobean Consensus,” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 198.

Antichrist have waned; as Christopher Hill puts it, “his stock has slumped since the seventeenth century.”¹¹³

Willet was thus writing in a climate where the anti-papal emphasis of his corpus of work fit neatly with a Protestant consensus that the pope was the Antichrist warned of in Scripture. In *Synopsis Papismi* Willet devotes over thirty pages to issues concerning Antichrist, placing the discussion within “the fourth controversie, concerning the Bishop of Rome.”¹¹⁴ Willet subdivides the overarching question of “whether the Pope be that great adversarie unto Christ” into several issues, including the time of his coming, his name and signs of his identity, the seat of his power, the doctrine he will teach, the supposed miracles he will perform, and the wars and strife that he will instigate.¹¹⁵

Antichrist, Willet asserts, is not one individual (hence the general avoidance of a singular definite article), “as the Papists imagine, that the Popes might be disburdened and discharged of this name,” but rather designates “a whole bodie, tyrannie, or kingdome”—that is, the entire office of the papacy, together with the individual popes.¹¹⁶ The number of the beast, 666, not only corresponds to the Graecicized spelling of *Latinus* and the word “Rome” spelled in Hebrew, but reveals also “the time of Antichrist’s birth, namely, the yeere 666...about which yeere Pope *Vitilianus* composed the Latine Service, and

¹¹³ Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England*, 1. Hill notes further that, whereas related expressions such as “anti-Christian” when used in the modern period generally mean simply “hostile to Christianity,” in the seventeenth century they would more naturally have been read to mean “pertaining to Antichrist,” (pp. 1-2).

¹¹⁴ This section remained substantially the same through all of the editions of the *Synopsis*, so that it made up a decreasing proportion of the total work as the book expanded. By the 1613, 1614 and 1634 printings (pp. 222-256) this section comprised less than 3% of the total, while in the 1592 first edition (pp. 155-189) it made up nearly 6% of the total argument.

¹¹⁵ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 222.

¹¹⁶ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 222-223; Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Danielelem: that is, A Six-Fold Commentarie upon the most divine prophesie of Daniel* (Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1610), 440.

enjoyed all nations to use no other.”¹¹⁷ While Roman Catholics had argued that Antichrist would stand in open rebellion against Christ, Willet counters that—like all heretics—Antichrist will rather oppose Christ covertly, and “under pretence of religion take away all religion.” As with Judas, after all, “he is a greater enemy that pretendeth friendship.”¹¹⁸ Before concluding with a litany of scriptural “proofs”¹¹⁹ drawn primarily from Daniel 11 (which properly describes Antiochus Epiphanes, but also functions as a “type and figure” of Antichrist), the Ten Commandments, 2 Thessalonians 2, and various passages from Revelation (where Antichrist is given such names as “beast” and “the great whore”¹²⁰), Willet sums up what he deems to be an irrefutable conclusion:

That the Pope of Rome is very Antichrist, and that al the qualities and properties which the Scripture describeth Antichrist by, do fitly agree unto his person: and that we are not therefore to expect and looke for any other Antichrist: thus by testimonie of Scripture, and sufficient reasons deduced of the same, we trust it shall appeare to all men.¹²¹

In the Daniel hexapla, the entire Controversies section of chapter 11 is devoted to Antichrist (who is prefigured by the “vile person” of 11:21ff), with Willet reiterating many of his arguments from the *Synopsis*, but with a more extended comparison between

¹¹⁷ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 231. Elsewhere Willet points to a time a thousand years after Christ as the period when the Pope was revealed as Antichrist, suggesting a progressive fall into and revealing of this identity. Cf. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 247; Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 605.

¹¹⁸ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 239. Cf. Willet’s own assessment of Roman Catholics in England—that the “crypto-papists” or “church papists” were far more pernicious than the open recusants. Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 44; Anthony Milton, “A Qualified Intolerance: the Limits and Ambiguities of Early Stuart Anti-Catholicism,” in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Arthur E. Marotti (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 105; Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 99. See also Walsham, *Church Papists*.

¹¹⁹ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 247-252.

¹²⁰ On Willet designating Antichrist as “the great whore,” see Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 252; Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 608; Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 53-54.

¹²¹ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 247.

Antichrist and Antiochus Epiphanes.¹²²

The basis of the identification of the pope and his office with Antichrist tends to be for Willet more doctrinal than political—the pope takes upon himself Christ’s role of dealing with people’s sins, purporting to do this through invented doctrines, duties, and rituals.¹²³ Willet does, however (like James), further identify Antichrist by his lust for temporal power. The Roman Antichrist in his insatiable pride exalts himself above angels, emperors, and magistrates;¹²⁴ he “challengeth both swords” (i.e. both spiritual and material);¹²⁵ and he “usurpeth upon the nations and kingdomes of the world without any title.”¹²⁶ Indeed, this is the identifying mark of the Antichrist that Willet focuses on in the Romans hexapla. Antichrist is only named such in the Johannine epistles, so discovering him in other biblical books requires associating him with other titles, as the “beast” and “whore” of Revelation, the “vile person” of Daniel, and the “man of lawlessness” of 2 Thessalonians. Romans contains none of these figures, so Willet introduces Antichrist through the political window of chapter 13. The first three controversies in chapter 13, spanning eight pages, have to do with the pope, and in the second of those controversies—concerning whether the pope has a spiritual power over kings—Willet employs Paul’s teaching on civil power to show how the papacy’s temporal ambitions reveal its identity

¹²² Willet, *Hexapla in Danielelem*, 439-462. Calvin resists applying the Daniel prophecy to Antichrist, though he acknowledges that “the greater number [of Christian expositors] incline toward Antichrist as fulfilling the prophecy.” “Those who explain it of Antichrist,” Calvin writes, “have some colour of reason for their view, but there is no soundness in their conclusion” (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, vol. 2, trans. Thomas Myers [Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1853; reprint Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003], 338).

¹²³ See, for example, Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 242.

¹²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla in Danielelem*, 449-450; Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 248.

¹²⁵ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 256.

¹²⁶ Willet, *Hexapla in Danielelem*, 460.

as Antichrist:

the Pope beganne to discover himselfe to be Antichrist, in so abasing the Imperial power, and taking upon him to dispose of kingdome; as the Devill challenged to be Lord of the world, and to give the kingdomes thereof to whom he would: no better right hath the Pope the eldest sonne of Sathan to pull downe, and set up kings.¹²⁷

By way of Satan's ploy to tempt Jesus with political kingdoms in Matthew 4, Paul's warning that "whosoever...setteth himselfe against the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" becomes not a mere violation of the Law, but a defining characteristic of Satan's firstborn, the very Antichrist prophesied of in Scripture.

We can compare Willet's argument here with a similar argument presented by Thomas Wilson, who also reads the papal Antichrist into Romans 13, though in a slightly different manner. Wilson condemns the pope's setting of his own power above the secular powers ("under this pretext, that the soule is better then the body") in strong terms ("manifest and grosse wickednesse"),¹²⁸ but the characteristic that he presents here that reveals the pope as *Antichrist* is his presumption to command things that people are bound by conscience to obey:

These things serve to discover the intollerable pride of that man of sinne, the Pope of Rome, challenging to himselfe that which is peculiar unto God, even a Sovereigne rule over the conscience, which hee will have as much obliged unto his Ecclesiasticall Lawes, as unto Gods morall Precepts...But what is this, but to fulfill the prophesie of Antichrist by Saint *Paul*, 2 Thes.2,2. to sit in the Temple of God, as God? ... For the Conscience is Gods Temple, and subject unto none but to God...¹²⁹

While all three connect Romans 13 to the pope's identity as Antichrist, Willet's particular reasoning here is closer to King James's than to Wilson's; whereas Wilson's criteria is

¹²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 606.

¹²⁸ Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 1073-1074.

¹²⁹ Wilson, *A Commentarie upon...Romanes*, 1098.

rooted in the pope's exalting himself as a new Lawgiver who attempts to internally hijack the conscience, James and Willet each emphasize the external political aims of the papacy in presuming a hierarchical supremacy over secular rulers, thus assuming for himself God's role as the Kingmaker who can ordain and depose political rulers.

Other references to Antichrist in the Romans hexapla are less a matter of Paul's words in the epistle revealing the papal identity of Christ's archenemy than of the pope's pre-established identity as such highlighting the meaning of Paul's message. Discussing why the gospel was "kept secret" for so long (Romans 16:25), Willet attributes the timing to the mystery of God's will, but adds that the true gospel was subsequently re-hidden "so many yeares under the kingdome of Antichrist" as a punishment for the people's ingratitude.¹³⁰ In this likening of the pre-Reformation darkness to that which preceded Christ's first advent, the papal Antichrist takes on the instrumental role of God's scourge to punish his people, putting him in continuity with similar such figures from throughout God's history with his people. Elsewhere the pope's Antichristian demeanor offers a counterpoint to the positive message in Romans. Commenting on Paul's reference to the beauty of the feet of those who bring the gospel (10:15, where Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:7), Willet notes that this "maketh nothing at all to countenance the pride of the Romane Antichrist, who hath offered his feet to be kissed of Kings and Emperours." Besides this overly literal reading of a *figure* that the Apostle uses to depict the reverence due to preachers, Willet argues, the pope neither preaches the gospel nor uses his feet to spread what message he has; while the apostles *walked* from place to place spreading the gospel (making the beautiful feet a fitting figure), popes and cardinals "ride in state on their trapped horses" and do not preach, but rather *suppress* the gospel and persecute its

¹³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 741.

professors.¹³¹ In both of these cases, the text of Romans does not aid in discerning Antichrist’s identity, but is illuminated in some way by the assumption that the pope is Antichrist.

3.2 “Popish Jesuites, or Judasites Rather”

Willet was particularly fond of referring to Jesuits—whom he deemed unworthy of bearing the name of Jesus—as “Judasites.”¹³² This epithet made its way into several of his earlier works,¹³³ and appears multiple times in the later chapters of the Romans hexapla. The initial connection in the Romans hexapla comes in the context of verse 15:16, where Paul refers to his own ministering (ἱερουργοῦντα—“priestly service”) of the gospel and the offering (προσφορὰ) of the Gentiles. Noting that several leading Reformers had “fitly” applied these words against the Roman Catholic Mass, Willet explains that the “offering” Paul writes of is the *spiritual* sacrifice of the Gentiles’ obedience, so that the sacrifice offered by the “Popish Priests is farre unlike” that of the Apostle. As Pareus had argued, Paul “offereth up the Gentiles, but they presume to offer up Christ in sacrifice: so they are not *ministri Christi, sed mactatores*, not the Ministers of Christ, but the manslayers, not the imitators of Paul, but of Judas rather, that delivered

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 431. One shudders to imagine the harsh rebuke Willet would have had for a televangelist traveling by private luxury jet.

¹³² While the epithet “Judasite” is not unique to Willet, he is seen as a representative example of its use. Robert N. Watson, having mentioned Othello’s “Judas kiss” before he killed Desdemona, cites Willet along with Etienne Pasquier and Thomas Dekker as Protestants who linked Jesuits to Judas (Robert N. Watson, “Othello as Protestant Propaganda,” in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, ed. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 248, 256n64).

¹³³ E.g. Willet, *Catholicon*, sig.B5r; Willet, *An Antilogie*, sig.*4r, 61; Willet, *Ecclesia Triumphans*, 7; Willet, *Hexapla in Daniele*, 440.

up Christ to be slaine.”¹³⁴ This connection feeds into his use of the “Judasite” epithet-pun on the following page.

In verse 15:20 Paul explains his general practice of preaching where Christ had previously been unknown, so as to avoid building on another’s foundation. The Controversy inspired by this comment naturally concerns the Jesuits and their characteristic missionary work—or, as Willet terms it, “the idle boastings, and vaine glorious excursions of the Jesuites.” Claiming to apply the Apostle’s approach to missions, “the Popish Jesuites (or rather Judasites) doe boast of their conversion of the Indians, and preaching unto people that never heard before of Christ.” Jesuit missions, however, differ from Paul’s evangelization efforts in four significant ways: Paul was an Apostle and they are not; Paul was sent by Christ and the Jesuits “from Antichrist”; Paul preached gospel truth while they spread their own superstitious doctrine; and Paul converted nations and made the people God’s servants, but the Jesuits make their converts “the children of hell more then before.” Hence, in Willet’s judgment the name “Judasite” is more appropriate.¹³⁵

The alternate designation appears twice again in the following chapter, both in reference to verse 16:18. In the Questions section, Willet explains that the Jesuits meet all of the criteria that Paul has set forth for those false teachers who “deceive the hearts of the simple.” As he had in his demonstration that the pope was Antichrist, here again Willet assumes that only an irrational bias could keep one from seeing the situation his way and making the connection:

¹³⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 711.

¹³⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 712.

Let any indifferent man judge, if all these notes and markes of false teachers and seducers doe not adhere and cleave as fast as pitch unto the seducing Popish Jesuites, or Judasites rather... They pretend the name of Jesus, and call themselves by his name, yet their doctrine and practice showeth, that they are not the servants of Jesus.¹³⁶

Then, in a Controversy drawn from this verse, Willet focuses on one of the marks that Paul gives to describe the deceivers: they “serve their owne bellie.” Pointing out that the Rhemists had used this phrase against the Protestants,¹³⁷ Willet returns the accusation, claiming that it is “as cleare as the Sunne” that is condemns them instead. Willet’s evidence of the Jesuits’ greed, punctuated by connecting them to the villain who betrayed Jesus for money and who had embezzled from the disciples’ funds, is the extravagant budget of the Jesuit College in La Flèche, France:

Let that factious crue of those makebates [creators of discord], the trayterous Judasites rather then Jesuites speak, who in few yeares at *la-flesh* in Fraunce, beside the sumptuous building of their Colledge, which cost an 100.thousand crownes, bestowed as much in their revenue: a reasonable proportion to keepe a fat table, and to fill their bellies.¹³⁸

Given Paul’s description of these false teachers as divisive and heretical (16:17) and gluttonous (verse 18), Willet’s reference to the Jesuits as “Judasites” here serves to reinforce his depiction of this order as contentious lovers of money who are among those whom Paul warns the faithful to avoid.

¹³⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 730.

¹³⁷ Without giving particular examples, the Rhemist annotations here decry their opponents’ hypocrisy, claiming that they are “given to voluptuousnes” and that they “seeke but after their owne profite and pleasure” (Martin, *New Testament*, 423).

¹³⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 741. On the college at La Flèche, see section I.3 in the introductory chapter.

4. Willet, Roman Catholics, and Judaism

Willet in his life and work was deeply concerned about and engaged with Judaism and the Jewish people. Williamson calls him one of early seventeenth-century England's "leading philo-Semites."¹³⁹ While quite proficient in Greek, Willet's linguistic expertise was in Hebrew, and the majority of his exegetical work dealt with the Hebrew scriptures. His second published work was a 1590 treatise on the calling of the Jews, in which he expressed his hope and expectation that a majority of Jews would ultimately be converted to the Christian faith, while denying that the promised restoration of the Jewish people concerned a renewed Jewish political kingdom.¹⁴⁰

Mark Vessey states incorrectly that Willet was in favor of the creation of a restored Jewish nation in Israel-Palestine: "In 1590, Andrew Willet, one of the most respected and prolific theologians in Elizabethan England, became the first writer to propose the Restoration and establishment of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine—for which heretical view he was jailed and his book burned by the public hangman."¹⁴¹ For the first assertion Vessey cites *De Universali Iudaeorum Vocatione*, likely confusing for his own position an argument that Willet is refuting, or perhaps confusing Willet's position with that of Thomas Draxe. Vessey provides no documentation for the latter claim of imprisonment and book-burning, though it is plausible that he is conflating a misreading of the 1590 work with Willet's brief 1618 house arrest for his opposition to the Spanish

¹³⁹ Williamson, "An Empire to End Empire," 242. Later in the seventeenth century, the Lutheran Wittenberg professor Abraham Calov accused Willet of Judaizing tendencies in his reading of Leviticus (Elliott, *Engaging Leviticus*, 66).

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Willet, *De Universali et Novissima Iudaeorum Vocatione, Secundum Apertissimam Divi Pauli prophetiam, in ultimis hisce diebus praestanda Liber unus* (Cambridge: Johannis Legati, 1590).

¹⁴¹ Mark Vessey, *The Calling of the Nations: Exegesis, Ethnography, and Empire in a Biblical-historic Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 70.

Match, and perhaps also (given David Pareus's influence on Willet) with the burning of Pareus's work.¹⁴² Willet's position is quite the opposite of how Vessey presents it; indeed, as Franz Kobler notes, Willet in the same work denounces Francis Kett and Solomon Molcho for "indulg[ing] in the heresy of the belief in the return of the Israelites too much."¹⁴³

Willet's later commentaries continued to emphasize that the hope of the Jewish people was not for a physical, earthly kingdom, but was rather the same Christ-centered hope of eternal salvation that Gentile Christians enjoyed.¹⁴⁴ Willet's expectation of the

¹⁴² On Draxe's likely use of Willet and his difference from Willet concerning Israel's earthly restoration, see Franz Kobler, "Sir Henry Finch (1558-1625) and the First English Advocates of the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine," in *The Jewish Historical Society of England, Transactions: Sessions 1945-1951*, vol. 16 (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1952), 106.

¹⁴³ Franz Kobler, *The Vision was There: A History of the British Movement for the Restoration* (World Jewish Congress, British Section, 1956), 15; Willet, *De Universali Iudaeorum Vocatione*, 3-4. Andrew Crome states correctly that Willet did not advocate for or expect the restoration of the nation of Israel, but when he explains Willet's position via a passage from *Synopsis Papismi* ("When scripture promised the 'rest of Canaan' he noted in *Synopsis Papismi*, it was talking spiritually of 'the Kingdom of God.' This was the true sense of these promises."), he bifurcates Willet's reading too strongly, as though he rejected a literal sense altogether (Andrew Crome, *The Restoration of the Jews: Early Modern Hermeneutics, Eschatology, and National Identity in the Works of Thomas Brightman* [Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2014], 49). In the passage Crome cites, Willet is arguing against Bellarmine's assertion that there are multiple senses of the "rest in Canaan"—both a literal and a spiritual meaning. But Willet does not deny a literal meaning—only that it is a *separate* meaning. The literal and spiritual readings are, rather, diverse applications of a single sense: "there is one whole sense, that as they for their Idolatrie were deprived of the land of promise, so wee should take heede least by our disobedience we lose the hope of the kingdome of heaven. So wee conclude that those are not divers senses, but one sense diversly applied" (Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* [1600], 34). Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 143-144; Jeanne Shami, "Donne, Anti-Jewish Rhetoric and the English Church in 1621," in *Tradition, Heterodoxy and Religious Culture: Judaism and Christianity in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Chanita Goodblatt and Howard Kreisel (Beer-Sheva, Israel: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2006), 33n12.

¹⁴⁴ We see this emphasis conveyed, for instance, in the 1605 Genesis hexapla. Willet notes that when God promises the land to Abraham's "seed for ever," "this word in the hebrew, *gnolam*, which the Septuagint translatheth by the word *αἰών*, *ever*: doth not alwaies in scripture signifie an everlasting time without ende," and—after surveying a range of proposed interpretations—explains that the literal application of the land promise was conditional upon the Israelites' obedience and, since they failed, "God was no longer tied to his promise." Additionally, in an application confirmed by Paul's explication in Galatians, the land is "promised spiritually, but the seede literally for Christ." The promise of Canaan, then, ultimately refers to "the celestiall Canaan," and is directed to "Christians the spirituall seed of Christ" (Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin*, 156-157). In the 1610 Daniel hexapla, Willet reiterates his central claim from 1590, that Israel's promised "deliverance" means that "the greater part shall be converted and beleewe" (Willet, *Hexapla in Danielem*, 469).

conversion of a majority of Jews to Christ found expression in his personal life, as well, as we see in a curious account that Peter Smith relays as an example of Willet's famous and sometimes-exploited hospitality. Smith tells of "a certain Jew" from Venice who came through Barley en route to Cambridge, whom Dr. Willet invited into his home.¹⁴⁵ The two discussed Scripture for about a month, and Willet found the young man's company "verie delightfull" and hoped to "bee able to help forward that good worke" of the calling and conversion of the Jews. Through Willet's "enucleating the prophecies concerning Christ," the man claimed that his blindness was removed and confessed his faith in Christ. Before he could be baptized, though, "our Jew vanished, and was run away; nor did he ever returne to give thanks for all the courtesies received from our reverend Doctor." While Willet was undoubtedly hurt and disappointed by this betrayal, his own explanation for the man's absconding was likely more charitable (and less bigoted) than that of Smith, who lamented: "But such is the obstinacie of that Nation, and such their perfidious disposition and dissimulation."¹⁴⁶ Smith follows this story with a similar account of "another hypocriticall Impostor," a Roman Catholic who feigned conversion to Protestantism while taking advantage of Willet's generous hospitality, only to disappear right before he was to take his first Protestant communion.¹⁴⁷

Smith's parallel accounts of Willet's encounters with the Venetian Jew and the

¹⁴⁵ James Shapiro identifies Willet's visitor as Jacob Barnet and adds some other details of his life, drawn from Anthony Wood's *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*. Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, 163-164. On Barnet, see also Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, "I have always loved the Holy Tongue": *Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011). Grafton and Weinberg give an account of Barnet and his studies with Casaubon (pp. 257-280), including in their account Willet's encounter with Barnet (pp. 257-259).

¹⁴⁶ Smith, "The Life and Death of Andrew Willet," sig.cr-cv.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, "The Life and Death of Andrew Willet," sig.cv-c2r.

Roman Catholic fit a pattern of association between Jews and papists that was common in Protestant literature in this period.¹⁴⁸ And, indeed, Willet himself frequently links the two groups. In his anti-papist polemic in the Romans hexapla, Jews serve two primary, related functions: as with the heretics condemned by the early church, the Jewish practices that are criticized in Scripture function as a point of association for denouncing modern Roman Catholic practices; and further, since the present-day papists are doing things that brought condemnation upon the ancestors of their Jewish peers, these behaviors are inhibiting their conversion.

The core similarity that Willet identifies between Jews and papists is their common superstitious adherence to food prohibitions and the celebration of special days. In the first century this superstitious behavior was pardonable as a “weakness,” as Paul calls it in Romans 15, but over time it had become hardened into a pernicious obstinacy. Resolving the tension between Paul’s instruction in Romans 15:2 that one should “please his neighbour” and his teaching elsewhere (as Galatians 1:10) that we should *not* seek to please humans, Willet points out Paul’s emphasis in Romans that this should be done only when it is edifying to the neighbor; but *over*-accommodating another’s weakness to the point that it becomes in them an ingrained habit is not edifying: “if their infirmities

¹⁴⁸ E.g. Shapiro, after giving an account of Catholics accusing Protestants of “Judaizing,” adds that “Protestants were no less inclined to accuse their [Catholic] foes of exhibiting Jewish tendencies, and there was a steady stream of polemic in Reformation Europe to this effect, typified by comments like the marginal gloss to Luther’s commentary on Galatians, that the ‘Papists are our Jews which molest us no less than the Jews did Paul.’” Shapiro follows the example of Luther with connections that Willet draws in *Synopsis Papismi* (Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, 21-22). Cf. also Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin Luther’s Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 27. Roman Catholics and Protestants also exchanged accusations of tending toward Islam (Shapiro, 138; Willet himself claimed that “Mahometanisme...hath great affinitie with Papisme,” in *An Antilogie*, p. 61), and there were also intra-confessional charges of Judaizing between Protestants, as John Howson’s contention that the Geneva Bible’s notes agreed with the Arians or Jews for not glossing every supposed reference to the Trinity or Christ’s divinity (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 433), and the Lutheran Hunnius’s polemic against Calvin. Cf. G. Sujin Pak, *The Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates over the Messianic Psalms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

degenerate into stubbornenes, we must support them no longer: as the Jewes or Papists, are not now to be counted weake, and to be borne with in their superstitious observation of meates and dayes, for now they erre of obstinacie, not of infirmitie.”¹⁴⁹ Willet makes similar comparisons in the context of Romans 14. In a doctrine drawn from Paul’s teaching in 14:14 that nothing is “uncleane in it selfe,” Willet refers to Roman Catholic religious food prohibitions as “superstitious, and inclining to Judaisme.”¹⁵⁰ Then, in the first controversy of the chapter (in which he also likens the Romanists to the Manichaeans), Willet compares the various rules of the “false and Antichristian Church” to the “superstitious decrees of the Pharisies” of which Christ and the Apostles disapproved. He goes on to connect these superstitious customs to the larger issue of freedom in Christ: “that which infringeth Christian libertie, and bringeth us to more then¹⁵¹ a Jewish bondage, it is no part of Gods worship under the new Testament, but such is this canonicall abstinence.”¹⁵² The superstitious observance of false and legalistic rituals was not merely unenlightened or unedifying, but put Christian liberty itself in peril.

Elsewhere Willet likens the succession of bishops to the succession of high priests, commenting that the merely external continuity of such a succession, without the continuation of true doctrine, does not prove its legitimacy.¹⁵³ And at times the

¹⁴⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 674. He credits Pareus with this observation.

¹⁵⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 657.

¹⁵¹ The Roman Catholic infringement on Christian liberty goes beyond Jewish bondage, Willet asserts, because while the Jews fasted once a year, the papists required it twice a week, plus during Lent.

¹⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 658-659.

¹⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 433 (commenting on Romans 9:5). Not dissimilar was Luther’s labeling of the papacy as “Jewish” because of its emphasis on external uniformity, which he judged to be akin to the external political kingdom that the Jews expected from their messiah (Gritsch,

connection serves more as a mild pejorative, as when he refers to the Roman Catholic “synagogue.”¹⁵⁴ Regarding idolatry, Willet has a much harsher condemnation of the papists than of the Jews, with modern-day Jews culpable primarily of guilt by association with Roman Catholics. The Jews themselves, though having been periodically guilty of it in ages past, tended to avoid idolatry. Willet articulates this against the theory of the early third-century Latin father Hippolytus that “the Jewes at the first shall be most addicted to Antichrist.”¹⁵⁵ This notion Willet judges to be among “humane fansies” concerning the Jews and the latter days, and he dismisses the theory because it is “unlike that the Jewes, which are no idolaters to this day should cleave unto Antichrist, that shall bee, and now is a manifest idolater.”¹⁵⁶ The current connection that Jews had to idolatry was, rather, through their use of secondhand Roman Catholic instruments that were tainted by their idolatrous use by the papists. Willet draws this rather remarkable association when explaining what was the “sacrilege” that the Jews were guilty of in Romans 2:22. Having denied that this sacrilege was overt idolatry, since—again—the Jews after returning from captivity generally avoided this particular error (“excepting some in the time of the Macchabees, who for feare were compelled to worship idols”), Willet concludes that the sacrilege referred instead to a kind of “covetousnes,” in which the

Martin Luther’s Anti-Semitism, 58). Cf. Willet’s own criticism of the purely external front of “unity” pretended by the papists, section VII.3.1.

¹⁵⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 590. Cf. Joseph Hall’s reference to Rome as an “antichristian Synagogue” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 137).

¹⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 510. It was a popular belief in the later Middle Ages, too, that the first followers of Antichrist would be Jews. Oberman describes a “horribly unambiguous picture book for illiterates” from 1480 called *The Antichrist* that depicts Jews hailing the figure with shouts of “Yea, God hath come!” (Heiko A. Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*, tr. by James I. Porter [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 42).

¹⁵⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 510.

Jews used implements of idolatrous origin that should have been destroyed, “as the manner of the Jewes is at this day, to buy chalices and other implements, which are stolne out of the idolatrous Church of the Romanists: this is called sacriledge, because such things were dedicate to idolatry, no man was to convers to his owne use.”¹⁵⁷ Notice that the guilt of the Jews in this account is *not* for stealing or receiving items from a Christian church (which was a common anti-Semitic claim, often made in conjunction with accusations of desecrating the host),¹⁵⁸ but rather for using items that bore the taint of papist idolatry.¹⁵⁹

Because of their engagement in practices that are plainly prohibited in the Old Testament, Roman Catholics sully the name of Christianity (which name they falsely assume), and impede the conversion of the Jews.¹⁶⁰ As a moral observation drawn from Paul’s words in Romans 11:28 that the Jews are beloved for the sake of the fathers, Willet (following Beza) teaches that Christians ought to pray for their conversion, and neither despise them, nor “by our superstitious usages, and corrupt manners to hinder

¹⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 125.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, 93-95; Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 97-99. Magna Teter describes accounts from early eighteenth-century Poland: “in court records from the same period, Jews appear as liquidators of stolen Church objects and as thieves...In 1750, in Mohilev, when a Christian was accused of stealing Church property, Jews appeared in the background as receivers of the stolen goods” (Magna Teter, *Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 114).

¹⁵⁹ On Willet’s likening Roman Catholics to Jews (and suggesting that the papist errors are more egregious), see also Lindsay Kaplan, ed. *The Merchant of Venice: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Bedford, 2002), 244-245, 270.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Martin Luther, who in his 1520 “Lectures on Psalms,” warned that the hatred and persecution of Jews by “pseudo-Christians” acted as an impediment to Jewish conversion. While Luther, who himself made some rather uncharitable comments about the Jews, blames anti-Semitic attitudes among professing Christians for hindering Jewish conversions, Willet blames the bad example set by papists. The expectations of the two figures differ, as well; while Willet anticipated a large-scale conversion of the Jews, Luther had been less sanguine about how many would come to Christ (Gritsch, *Martin Luther’s Anti-Semitism*, 55).

their calling, for the which the Papists, and carnall professors have much to answer to God.”¹⁶¹ Since the Jews trace their lineage back to the Old Testament fathers, Christians should hope for and labor toward their conversion to Christ, avoiding attitudes of anti-Semitism or neglect, while taking care not to repel them by setting a negative example. Concerning the other side of the Romans 11:28 antinomy—that the Jews are “enemies for your sake” in relation to the Gospel—Willet positively cites Tolet’s emphasis on their being enemies *for the sake* of the Gentiles: “that you might be called, not otherwise.”¹⁶² This argues against anti-Semitism all the more, especially when Willet reads the “enemies” and the “beloved” as diverse subjects among the Jews—“they are enemies in respect of those which beleeve not, and beloved, that is, such as in time to come shall be converted to the faith again.”¹⁶³

We find a more extended depiction of this hindrance in a Controversy based on Romans 10:21, by way of a fourth-hand interpretation of Paul’s source text. Whereas Paul applies the Prophet’s reference to “a rebellious people” in Isaiah 65:2 to Israel, Willet relays that Vermigli, drawing from [Sebastian] Münster, tells how “a certaine Rabbin among the Jewes” had applied the appellation to Gentiles who professed to be Christians while participating in pagan rituals—by which, Willet clarifies, “he meaneth the Papists, which have their altars, whereon they sacrifice, and doe visit the sepulchres

¹⁶¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 531.

¹⁶² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 513.

¹⁶³ Though Willet’s reluctance to admit a “contrary” or paradox here (“they which according to election are beloved of God, are never enemies”) seems to ignore Paul’s teaching in Romans 5:10 that *we* were God’s enemies when we were reconciled to him, and Willet’s own distinction between the reconcilability of an “enemy” and “enmity” (see II.3.2.3), his division of subjects emphasizes the impropriety of all anti-Semitism. Even those Jews who will never believe, Willet argues, are “enemies” *for your sake*, as part of the process of the extended call to the Gentiles, and “not otherwise.”

of the dead, and worship their reliques.” Though Willet rejects this certain rabbi’s application of Isaiah’s words to Gentiles, since the context of God continually reaching out to this group clearly indicates that this particular obstinacy belongs to the Jews, he takes this false interpretation as evidence against the damaging Roman Catholic witness:

It may be a shame unto those, which call themselves Christians to give such offence to the Jewes, as to pollute themselves with those things, which the Prophet directly enveigheth against: when shall we look to have the Jewes converted to the Christian faith, when they find idolatrie, and other superstitions practised among Christians, for the which their forefathers were punished.¹⁶⁴

The papists’ emulation of certain Jewish errors was, Willet argued, in one sense more harmful than their revival of various ancient heresies, because this association had an injurious effect on present-day Jews. By committing the same sins that the Jews knew from their own history would incite God’s wrath, the papists obstructed the process of Jewish conversion—the great event that Paul longs for in Romans, and which was a concern of Willet’s through his entire ministry.

5. Conclusion

Throughout the Romans hexapla, the association between Roman Catholic doctrines and ancient heresies serves Willet as a hermeneutical guide for interpreting Paul’s message, even as the sometimes tenuous string connecting text, heresy, and papist practice allows Willet to use his exegesis polemically against the Roman Catholic enemy. The project of implicating an ideological foe in notorious heresies—a method common to each side of the Reformation divide—was intended to bolster the claim that the opposition was misappropriating a biblical text, and controversialists pointed both to the

¹⁶⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 483.

qualitative strength of the established connection and the quantitative accumulation of distinct heresies.

Given the centrality of the doctrines of justification and election both to the Protestant/Roman Catholic rift and to the scope of the epistle to the Romans itself, the Pelagian heresy predominates in Willet's arguments. Willet maintains that Rome's system of merits and the emphasis of many Romanists on the positive capabilities of human free will summon the specter of the old Pelagians, and he holds also that Protestant charity and piety—far from being hindered by the emphasis on justification by faith and the Reformed belief in utterly gracious predestination—greatly exceed Roman Catholic morality. A variety of other heresies also prove useful, as we find Willet attaching Roman Catholic canonical errors to the Marcionites and Manichaeans (artfully associating the papists also with various unrelated errors), and carefully connecting the Roman church to the Novatian and Donatist heresies while (as we will see examples of in the following chapter) hedging himself against a dogmatic and ecclesiastical rigorism that could open the Protestants themselves up to charges of Donatism. Additionally, Willet connects Roman Catholics to the errors of atheists, pagans, and Jews, and to the infamous biblical figures of Antichrist and Judas. As exemplars pre-dating the patristic period, these associations allow Willet to draw the authoritative condemnation from a higher source than even esteemed Church Fathers, as he cites Jesus himself and apostolic witnesses against Roman Catholic heterodoxy. Neither Judas nor Antichrist (or any of his aliases) appear directly in the text of Romans, but Willet draws them into his exegesis by way of Paul's warnings against attributes and actions commonly associated with them—lust for power, killing Jesus, teaching false doctrine, greed.

Cumulatively, these many associations both focus the doctrines and uses that Willet elicits from the text of Romans, and heighten the sense of danger posed by the papists, now seen as the aggregate of the most despicable biblical figures and the hated heretics who labored to derail the early Christian movement. In the next chapter, we will shift our attention within Willet's polemical use of tradition to his assertion that the orthodox early church exegetes validate Protestant doctrine, and consider how this appeal to tradition, together with the manifest internal divisions within the Roman Catholic world, argued for the Protestant claim to catholicity.

CHAPTER VII. CATHOLICITY AND THE POLEMICAL USE OF THE FATHERS

1. Introduction

The same year that King James came to the English throne, Willet penned his *Antilogie* as a response to the 1601 *Apologcall Epistle*, an earlier anonymously published polemical offering by the author of *Protestant Proofes*, Richard Broughton.¹ As part of his refutation, Willet objected to the author's claim that the Church Fathers supported Roman Catholic positions, noting that he had himself in his own works drawn enough support from the Fathers to fill "not much lesse then two reames of paper," and making the double claim that Protestants taught the same faith as the Church Fathers and that these early theologians had condemned positions currently held by the Roman church:

The same faith and religion which I defend, is taught and confirmed by those holy Hebrewes and Greeke Scriptures; and in the more substantiall points, by those Historians, Councels, Fathers that lived within 5. or 6. hundred yeares after Christ; and in many points, by them that followed after: and the profession of Papists by the same condemned.²

Having explored in the previous chapter the parallels between heresies the Church Fathers condemned and Roman Catholic teachings, we will now consider Willet's appeal

¹ On this exchange, see section I.3.1.

² Willet, *Antilogie*, 263. Broughton quotes this passage in *Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion* (p. 32), and Willet—surely because of Broughton's general pattern in this treatise of attempting to cite Protestants in favor of Roman Catholic positions—misinterprets the quotation as an effort to claim that Willet admitted that the Church Fathers supported the Catholics (Willet, *Loidoromastix*, sig. ¶¶¶¶¶3, recto: "Who but this lawlesse disputer would inferre hereupon, that even by the Protestants own testimonie, the Fathers and Councels make for the Romish religion?"). Broughton's intention in this particular citation was, however, only to show that Protestants claimed the Fathers *for themselves* but ignored them when a patristic interpretation contradicted a Protestant position. Men such as Willet quoted the "great and glorious speeches of the Fathers. But when these men are either to answer those primative Fathers, cited for [the Roman Catholic] cause; or stand upon their testimony in particuler for themselves, *the case is altered...*" ([Broughton], *Protestants Proofes*, 33).

to the broad consonance of the Fathers' teachings with Reformed theology.³ Additionally, we will look in this chapter at how Willet emphasizes the internal divisions among Roman Catholics in an effort to discredit their claim of teaching an internally coherent and consistent doctrine.

Protestant biblical commentators had to strike a delicate balance in their positive appropriation of the exegetical tradition. On one hand, they aggressively opposed the Roman Catholic equation of the authority of Scripture and Tradition, asserting the absolute priority of Scripture (the *sola scriptura* principle). Yet, on the other hand, they were compelled to demonstrate a continuity with the main doctrines affirmed by the historical church, this being a critical move in proving the catholicity of Protestants as the true manifestation of the visible church. To fortify internal evidence based on textual,

³ On the reception history of the Fathers in England, see Jean-Louis Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*; various essays in Irena Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. 2, *From the Carolingians to the Maurists*; Irena Backus, "Calvin and the Greek Fathers," in *Continuity and Change: the Harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History: Essays Presented to Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Robert J. Bast and Andrew C. Gow (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 2000), 253-276; Irena Backus, "The Early Church in the Renaissance and Reformation," in *Early Christianity: Origins and Evolution to AD 600: in Honour of W. H. C. Frend*, ed. Ian Hazlett (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 291-303; Robert Dodaro and Michael Questier, "Strategies in Jacobean Polemic: The Use and Abuse of St Augustine in English Theological Controversy," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44, no. 3 (July 1993): 432-449; John K. Luoma, "Who Owns the Fathers? Hooker and Cartwright on the Authority of the Primitive Church," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 8, no. 3 (October 1977): 45-59; H. R. McAdoo, "The Appeal to Antiquity," in *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), 316-414; Thomas M. Parker, "The Rediscovery of the Fathers in the Seventeenth-Century Anglican Tradition," in *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, ed. John Coulson and A. M. Allchin (London: Sheed & Ward, 1967), 31-49; S. L. Greenslade, *The English Reformers and the Fathers of the Church: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 10 May 1960* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960); Henry Chadwick, "Tradition, Fathers and Councils," in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 91-104; D. W. Dockrill, "The Fathers and the Theology of the Cambridge Platonists," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 17, pt. 1, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), 427-439.

On broader Protestant use of the Fathers, cf. also Schulze, "Martin Luther and the Church Fathers"; Johannes Van Oort, "John Calvin and the Church Fathers," in Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, 661-700; Byung Soo Han, *Symphonia Catholica: The Merger of Patristic and Contemporary Sources in the Theological Method of Amandus Polanus (1561-1610)* (Göttingen, Ger.: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); John L. Thompson, "Reformer of Exegesis? Calvin's Unpaid Debt to Origen," in *Calvin—Saint or Sinner?*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Tübingen, Ger.: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 113-141.

translation, and grammatical arguments, rhetorical devices, and the proper identification of distinctions in causality, the polemicist could—in addition to connecting opponents with heresies long ago condemned—attempt to align his own reading with interpretations by Church Fathers long accepted as authorities, in order to lay a stronger claim to the orthodoxy and catholicity of his positions. In other words, while the orthodoxy of Reformed doctrine and the catholicity of Protestantism were *grounded* entirely on their agreement with *scriptural* teachings, demonstrating the additional agreement with the broader church’s tradition was useful as an apologetic and polemical tool for *validating* these claims.⁴

English Protestants in the early seventeenth century took a particular interest in seeking to claim the patristic tradition as their own: “In the Jacobean period, the appeal to the Fathers of the early church became increasingly widespread and intensive among divines of varied doctrinal hue.”⁵ With criticism of the Church Fathers by an earlier generation of polemicists (as William Fulke) occasionally backfiring against the Protestant claim to antiquity and catholicity, early Stuart Protestants recognized to a greater degree the value of appropriating this early tradition to bolster its own cause, though with “a certain caution” and “varying degrees of enthusiasm.”⁶ Despite this caution and the requisite care to distinguish between Scripture as the norm for theology

⁴ Cf. This distinction between the internal basis and external validation is similar to Willet’s resolution of the apparent contradiction between the theology of justification presented by Paul and by James, whereby Paul describes how we are justified before God and James explains how this justification is demonstrated to other people. E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 188, 201, 239-240.

⁵ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 273. Cf. Muller, *After Calvin*, 52-53. Quantin relays the impression in seventeenth-century France that the Church of England had greater regard for the Fathers than did continental Protestants; in practice, however, he notes that each side of the channel treated the Fathers similarly (Jean-Louis Quantin, “The Fathers in Seventeenth Century Anglican Theology,” in Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, 987, 990).

⁶ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 273-274. Milton adds that stricter Calvinists tended to be among the more hesitant to appeal to tradition, even that of the early Church Fathers.

and tradition as a subordinate authority, the Protestant orthodox acknowledged the importance of the Church Fathers for showing their own orthodox lineage and proving that they were not the schismatic element; their use of the Fathers was “the direct outgrowth of the great Reformers’ assumption that the Reformation was the catholic church, that Rome had fallen away, and that the best of the tradition not only could be appropriated by, but belonged by right to, the Reformation and its descendants.”⁷

Willet finds warrant for the Protestant break from Rome in Romans 16:17. There Paul warns against dissention, but advises the church to avoid those who cause this strife and who stray from Paul’s teaching. “This,” he writes, “doth justifie the departure of the Protestants from the Church of Rome, because it is a false and Antichristian Church; and hath fallen away, and plaid the Apostata from the faith of Christ: and therefore we are to leave them: according to S. Paul’s rule” in Titus 3:11.⁸ The mere fact, that is, that the Protestants were the ones to break away does not make them the schismatics; Paul’s own counsel shows that it is those who cause dissention by teaching false doctrine who bear the blame for a schism. In defining the unity and catholicity of the true church, Willet (with other Protestants) thus subordinates all other criteria to doctrinal orthodoxy.

2. Claiming the Church Fathers

Willet was a favorite target of *Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion*, and Broughton took full advantage of the various intra-Protestant quarrels that Willet had (notwithstanding his pleas for and claims of Protestant harmony) engaged in. In a chapter arguing that the testimony of the Church Fathers supported Roman Catholic doctrine,

⁷ Muller, *After Calvin*, 53.

⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 741.

Broughton sought to prove that Willet, “the great professor of Divinity, who hath taken so solemne an oath before, that the Fathers be for his cause,” in fact denounced and misrepresented those Fathers. Following his general pattern in the treatise, Broughton relied on a Protestant voice to argue his point, this time drawing on Richard Parkes, who had written two tracts against Willet concerning the Creed’s reference to Christ’s descent into hell.⁹ Due to a printer’s delay in publishing *Loidoromastix*—his response to Parkes’s second attack—Willet was able to prefix to that work a brief rebuttal to Broughton’s recently published *Protestant Proofes*. Here, noting the bias of Broughton’s source (“...and all this he taketh for truth upon an adversarie, and evill willers report...”), Willet defends his claim on the Church Fathers against Broughton’s accusation “that I condemne all the ancient Fathers for dreamers: that I condemne all learned & godly Divines: that I falsely corrupt, translate, injuriously handle, abuse the Fathers: that I straungely pervert, belie, deprave, abuse the Scriptures.” In response to this particular charge from Broughton, Willet directs the reader to a final section of his defense against Parkes, the source of the original accusation: “All which slaunderous accusations are, I trust, sufficiently answered in this defense, unto the which, the Table annexed in the ende of the booke, may direct the Reader, that desireth further to be satisfied.”¹⁰

Willet had previously, in a new preface to the 1600 edition of *Synopsis Papismi*, emphasized the need for further academic work in patristics by Reformed scholars,

⁹ [Broughton], *Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion*, 35. On Parkes and his exchange with Willet, see I.3.1.

¹⁰ “Further Advertisements to the Reader,” in Willet, *Loidoromastix*, sig. ¶¶¶¶¶1v. The section to which Willet refers the reader first offers a defense against the charge that Willet “falsified” the Greek Fathers Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, and Chrysostom, the Latin Fathers Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, and the 12th-century Bernard (pp. 137-158). Then, in a “recrimination,” Willet turns the accusation around on Parkes (the “Replyer”), arguing that *he* had in fact “falsified” Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, as well as Ignatius, Tertullian, and Rufinus (pp. 158-176).

arguing that reclaiming patristic commentaries from the clutches of the Roman Catholic church would both edify Protestants and severely weaken Rome's polemical position.¹¹ And indeed, as early as the first edition of *Synopsis Papismi* in 1592 Willet was already well aware of the polemical importance of demonstrating patristic support for Protestant theology: "...you [papists] have nothing to do with the Church, which was propagated in the Apostles time, nor for the space of five or six hundred yeares after Christ: it was not your Church, for the most of your heresies are more lately sprung up then so."¹² Willet, with other English Protestants, realized that an effective way to undercut the Roman Catholic appeal to a millennium of continuous practice and (purportedly) consistent doctrine was to reach behind these centuries to connect the Protestant church to an even earlier period and its more pristine beliefs and interpretations.¹³

Yet for all the rhetoric about how patristic theology tended to support Protestant doctrine and, accordingly, the Protestant claim to continuity with the historic church, the actual appropriation of particular patristic readings of Romans was often more complicated; as Jean-Louis Quantin has put it, "Antiquity proved a Pandora's box."¹⁴ Although Protestants viewed the Church Fathers as representing a purer form of doctrine before the gradual decline of the medieval period, they were still subject to error.

Attempting to appropriate patristic support for the catholicity of Protestant doctrine while

¹¹ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 14-15, citing Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), sig.B3r-v. An even more ambitious patristic reclamation project was undertaken by Thomas James, the first librarian of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, who focused his work on correcting Roman Catholic corruptions of the Fathers (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 33, 273). Cf. Quantin, "The Fathers in Seventeenth Century Anglican Theology," 999-1000.

¹² Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1592), 58.

¹³ Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 272-273; Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 83; Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1592), sig.Br.

¹⁴ Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 407.

refuting the Roman Catholic claims for the authority of tradition was a difficult balancing act.¹⁵ At times Willet is compelled to defend the (proto-Protestant) orthodoxy of the Church Fathers by asserting that a statement has been taken out of context. Thus, when Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Jerome—inspired by Paul’s praise in Romans 1:8—laud the inviolable faith of the Roman church, they do not mean that the faith of the church in Rome can *never* become corrupt, nor are they referring to the faith as practiced in Willet’s day. And again, the importance that Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Augustine ascribe to the succession of bishops does not validate the leadership of the popish church, since the basic concern of these Fathers is the continuity of sound doctrine.¹⁶ However—his appeals to the authority of the Fathers and his defense of some of their questionable opinions notwithstanding—Willet also (as had Fulke) frequently dissents from their interpretations when he finds them to be inconsistent with his own scriptural exegesis.¹⁷ A few times he even sides with modern papists *against* patristic interpretations.¹⁸

¹⁵ Cf. Muller’s discussion of this dynamic in Muller, *After Calvin*, 52-53. Cf. also Tossanus’s book on the Fathers: Daniel Tossanus, *Synopsis de Patribus, sive Praecipuis et Vetustioribus Ecclesiae Doctoribus, nec non de Scholasticis* (Heidelberg, 1603).

¹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 90, 433.

¹⁷ Some of their stranger readings Willet works to explain as false attributions or scribal errors. A distinction between justification and remission of sins made in a commentary attributed to Ambrose, for instance, suggests that he was not the true author: “This one place doth give just occasion of suspition, that those commentaries were not composed by *Ambrose*,” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 218). Heterodox ideas in a commentary under Jerome’s name lead Willet to concur with the long-established theory that it was actually Pelagius’s work (pp. 250, 256, 272, 516). Augustine’s supposed claim that *pater* was a Latin word points to a likely scribal error: “*Augustine* could not be ignorant, that S. Paul wrot not in the Latine, and therefore that place in *Augustine* is most like to have beene mistaken by the writers, and such as copied it out,” (p. 339). Muller notes that Willet similarly questioned the authorship of a work attributed to Augustine because in it Melchizedek was identified as the Holy Spirit (Muller, *After Calvin*, 169-170).

¹⁸ As, for instance, when he agrees with Tolet and Pererius against the “very erroneous interpretation” of the Greek Fathers Chrysostom, Origen, Theodoret, and Oecumenius that reads foreseen faith into Romans 8:28, and when Tolet “well refuseth” the “mixed interpretation” of 14:3 put forth by Chrysostom, who identifies those whom God has “received” to converted Gentiles. In this instance, however, Willet also disagrees later with Tolet, who identifies instead converted Jews. Willet, siding with Calvin and others (including Origen) against the overly narrow readings of Chrysostom and Tolet, takes Paul to be referring here indifferently to both groups (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 378, 629).

Willet occasionally reminds the reader of the freedom that he has, as one whose highest commitment is to scriptural fidelity, to break from the Fathers. The divine authority of Scripture differs categorically from the interpretive assistance offered by patristic exegesis: “those auncient fathers, though they were excellent men, yet were but men...this is no note, to derogate from the credit of the fathers: but to shew a difference between their writings and the holy Scriptures: which are free from the least error of forgetfulnesse.”¹⁹ Refuting a papist objection to Romans 4:23 that the laity should be guided by the Fathers rather than by Scripture itself, Willet reiterates Scripture’s absolute priority:

Nay, the sense of the Scripture is most safely taken from the Scripture, which is the best interpreter of it selfe...The Fathers and expositors are to be heard, and consulted with so farre foorth as they agree with the Scripture: but the sense of the Scripture must not depend upon their fancies, which have no warrant by Scripture.²⁰

In another place, he recalls that papist writers have asserted the same right to dissent from the Fathers, claiming that he has “as great libertie to refuse” Origen’s endorsement of counsels of perfection as Pererius had to disagree with Chrysostom’s teaching on the Virgin Mary.²¹

Felicity Heal, however, overstates the effect of Willet’s subordination of the Christian tradition to Scripture when she claims that “Andrew Willet insisted that there

¹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 56. This observation is inspired by “a slip” of Chrysostom, who mistakenly attributed the quotation in Romans 1:17 to Zephaniah instead of to Habakkuk.

²⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 230. Cf. Kellison’s 1603 argument that by seeking to establish their Protestant faith “on bare scripture,” the Reformers have flung “the gate open unto all heretikes and heresies,” (Kellison, *A Survey of the New Religion*, 29; he defends the claim in pp. 29-62).

²¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 180.

was no need to understand the church through time: the appeal to Scripture sufficed.”²² Willet’s insistence on the absolute priority of Scripture did not (as the present chapter argues) *negate* all significance of the church’s temporal continuity, especially with the patristic period. Heal cites Willet’s rebuttal in the 1592 *Synopsis Papismi* of Bellarmine’s identification of six notes of the true church, these being “antiquitie, universalitie, succession, unitie, the power of miracles, the gift of prophesie.”²³ While Willet does attack the significance that Bellarmine places on antiquity, already in this first edition he refuses to state that a harmony with early church doctrine is therefore unimportant: “But (alacke) sillie men they must come short of our Saviour Christs and the Apostles time, by five or six hundred yeares, for the most of the opinions, which they now hold.”²⁴ While still denying the absolute authority of tradition, Willet finds it important to point out that papist doctrine does not comport with that of the earliest centuries of the church. In each of the three successive editions of *Synopsis Papismi*, Willet adds to this section and further nuances his meaning—a development that corresponds with his increased emphasis on the Fathers and his recognition of the polemical value of patristic formulations. In the 1594 revision he clarifies earlier assertions, as that the true church is not “to be discerned, by custome or number of yeares, but by that truth, which was taught and preached by our blessed Saviour, and his Apostles,” with more measured statements

²² Heal, “Appropriating History,” 111.

²³ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1592), 55. Heal cites pp. 55-57, which comprises Willet’s full response to Bellarmine’s first note.

²⁴ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1592), 55. Willet’s restriction of the Fathers’ authority to the initial five to six centuries of the church followed a standard Protestant timeline. John Jewel in 1559 drew the line of orthodoxy at six centuries; James I would set it at five (Quantin, “The Fathers in Seventeenth Century Anglican Theology,” 989).

like: “antiquitie therefore is nothing worth unlesse it be joyned with veritie.”²⁵ The “unless” now makes it clear that tradition *has* (an albeit conditional) value. By 1600 he does not deny that antiquity is *a* mark of the true church, but he qualifies it as “no *sufficient* mark of the church.”²⁶ And in the 1613 edition, he states fully the position that is evident in the Romans hexapla: “Whereas then we here joyne in issue with our adversaries in these two points, that neither antiquitie is alwaies a sure note of the Church, and that antiquitie for the most and chieftest points of their doctrine is not on their side.”²⁷ We will see both of these elements in Willet’s use of the complex mass of patristic witnesses—denying their absolute authority, even while insisting on Protestant continuity with the best of the early church’s tradition.²⁸

2.1. Willet’s Appeal to Patristic Interpretation of Romans

Before considering those places where reference to the authority of the Church Fathers required a disclaimer, though, we will look at some places where Willet’s

²⁵ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1594), 84. On the following page he adds: “Moreover of our church have been the Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs and Confessors of Christ, that have been at all times, and in all ages persecuted for the testimonie of the word of God. But for the upholding of your church, what antiquitie can ye shewe?”, explicitly connecting the Protestant church to the temporal line of true belief.

²⁶ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1600), 64; emphasis added.

²⁷ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 78.

²⁸ For an overview of patristic interpretation of Romans, see Kathy L. Gaca and L. L. Welborn, eds., *Early Patristic Readings of Romans*, Romans Through History and Cultures Series (New York: T&T Clark, 2005); Daniel Patte and Eugene TeSelle, eds., *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation*, Romans Through History and Cultures Series (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002); Gerald Bray, ed. *Romans*, vol. 6 in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Peter Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 4 (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983); Paula Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans; Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

rhetoric of patristic support matched his actual use of early church tradition.²⁹ From Paul's affirmation in Romans 3:10 that "there is none that is righteous," Willet refutes the Roman Catholic notion of Mary's sinlessness. After relaying the interpretations of Chrysostom, Origen, and Augustine—all of whom in various contexts contended that Mary was indeed marked by sin—Willet comments that Pererius, "refusing the judgement of these Fathers," doggedly maintains that Mary was entirely free from all sin for her entire life. Fully cognizant of his divergence from these Fathers, Pererius is even "bold to say" that Chrysostom "exceeded the bounds of veritie and pietie" for attributing any blemish to Mary's character. While leaning on the respected authority of these Fathers to chide Pererius for his brazen opinion, Willet does not rest his argument on their credentials alone. Not only does Pererius make Chrysostom "and other auncient writers liers, but Christ himselfe, and his Blessed mother" also testify in Scripture to her sinfulness; otherwise Jesus would not have reproved her in John 2:4 ("Woman, what have I to doe with thee?"), and Mary in the Magnificat would not have referred to God as "my Saviour"—a title that expresses a need of redemption from sin.³⁰

Later in chapter 3, Willet directs the patristic witness against a "malitious cavill of the Rhemists," who had accused Protestants of soteriological novelty by inserting the word "only" into their doctrine of justification by faith.³¹ Taking up this issue in the

²⁹ Nearly a century after Willet's death, the British Divine John Edwards (1637-1716) named him among six earlier Protestants who had, with some success, used the Church Fathers polemically against the papists. He questioned, however, the value of this approach, seeing as "the Fathers do often contradict one another, and sometimes they favour, yea plainly assert the Doctrines of the Church of Rome," (Quatin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 407).

³⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 179.

³¹ The Rhemist annotations on this verse argue that Paul by the expression "without workes" excludes only the works of the Law performed before conversion, and not the many works of Christian virtue that follow thereupon. These important deeds "the Adversaries would exclude by foisting in the terme, only," (Martin, *New Testament*, 390).

context of Romans 3:28, Willet presents a long list of figures from the early church (many taken from Fulke) who had long before expressed a doctrine of justification by faith *alone*: Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Augustine, Nazianzen, Basil, and Rufinus. This was not, then, a fringe belief in the church's early centuries. Willet's list both evidences a factual error in the Rhemist annotations—the sixteenth-century Protestants did not “foist” in the term “only”—and overwhelms the Rhemist opposition to the truth of the doctrine with the cumulative weight of the majority patristic witness. Further, he explains that places where the Fathers *appear* to reject the “faith only” doctrine refer not to the justifying role of faith, but to a “solitarie faith” that is rent from the necessary effect of a godly life.³²

We find another lengthy list of patristic support in chapter 13 among the Controversies concerning papal power and the papacy's falsely asserted primacy over princes. Countering Bellarmine's contention that Christ's words to the apostles in Matthew 20:25 and Luke 22:25³³ do not prohibit them from all forms of temporal rule but only from ruling in an unlawful or tyrannical fashion, Willet writes that “this hath beene the consonant doctrine of the auncient Fathers, that the Ecclesiasticall Pastors should not arrogate to themselves any temporall or civill Dominion.”³⁴ So again Willet argues his case drawing on various biblical verses from different contexts and the “consonant

³² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 187-188.

³³ “The kings of the nations have dominion over them...but it shall not be so with you...” Willet also in this Controversy cites such verses as John 18:36, where Christ says that his kingdom is not of this world, and 2 Timothy 2:[4], where Paul warns about getting wrapped up in worldly affairs.

³⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 607. He substantiates his claim with brief quotations from Tertullian, Hilary, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and (moving to the medieval period) Bernard.

doctrine” of the Church Fathers.³⁵ While the Fathers were fallible, their concurrence on a particular issue makes for a compelling argument, and forces a tremendous burden of proof on any dissenting opinion.³⁶

2.1.1 Divisions Among the Fathers

Attempts to appeal to the Fathers, as we have already noted, were complicated by the diversity of interpretations that had been put forth in the early church. There was “no such thing as an authoritative consensus of the Fathers,”³⁷ and very few doctrines and concepts boasted univocal patristic support.³⁸ This diversity, of course, complicated Roman Catholic claims to the tradition, as well. Where feasible, Willet attempts to reconcile differing early church perspectives. He notes in his biographical sketch of Paul

³⁵ On certain matters of adiaphora, Willet avoided unnecessarily highlighting an opinion differing from the Fathers. Robert West lists Willet among a group of Protestants who were reticent to make a definitive statement on whether angels have bodies, not wanting to contradict those Fathers who asserted that they did (West, *Milton and the Angels*, 54).

³⁶ We might add, with minimal commentary, that Willet also chastises Pererius for following the chronology of Paul’s martyrdom given by later historians, rather than the timeline presented by Eusebius and Jerome (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 11). Willet devotes many of the Questions in an introductory chapter discussing background issues regarding Paul and Romans to chronological matters. Some of Willet’s chronological concerns are spelled out more explicitly than others—the timing of Peter’s presence in Rome (and whether he was ever there at all!) has a bearing, for example, on the Roman Catholic church’s claim to the primacy of the Roman see (see p. 743). Willet is less clear about the relevance of the timing of Paul’s death (his preferred date is only a year later than the one Pererius suggests). Part of his concern is surely granting a high level of authority to the Church Fathers. Others who proposed a particular date for Paul’s death were concerned with such matters as ensuring sufficient time for Paul to have traveled to Spain (a question Willet addresses, pp. 694-695, though considering it “a matter of no great moment”) or (for those favoring instead an earlier date) wanting for Paul’s martyrdom to have been immediately before Nero’s death, so as to make the latter an evidence of divine punishment. See George Ogg, *The Chronology of the Life of Paul* (London: Epworth Press, 1968), 194-200.

³⁷ Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 397.

³⁸ Cf. William Chillingworth’s 1638 rant on the fractured (and therefore unstable as an extrabiblical source of authority) witness of the Church Fathers and the church’s tradition in general: “...there are Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves ... Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found,” quoted in Quantin, “The Fathers in Seventeenth Century Anglican Theology,” 992; John Rainolds in 1584 called patristic doctrinal consensus “a Phoenix, [which] never will be found,” quoted in Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 401.

early in the Romans hexapla, for instance, that Augustine and Chrysostom had disagreed over whether Paul was of noble birth. Augustine, based on Paul's mention of fleshly confidence in Philippians 3:[4], inferred that Paul must have been of noble birth; Chrysostom, however, "seemeth to be of the contrarie opinion," as evidenced by his blue-collar tent making background and suggested by his statement in 1 Corinthians 1:[26] that not many of noble birth were called. Despite his acknowledgment of the Fathers' fallibility and this being a matter of minimal theological import, Willet nevertheless offers an explanation that encompasses both of the opposing patristic views:

The resolution is this, that though S. Paul were not noble according to the Romane estimation of nobilitie, beeing of an handicraft, which suited not with nobilitie among the Romanes; yet among the Jewes he was not of unnoble birth: who counted nobilitie by the noblenes of the tribe, and the antiquitie of the family.

Depending on the context, both Augustine and Chrysostom are correct: just as Joseph, as a carpenter descended from David's royal blood, was of mixed nobility, so Paul, as a tent maker from the esteemed tribe of Benjamin, could be rightly considered to have come from either noble or humble roots.³⁹ Through this distinction Willet manages to affirm each of the Fathers, while also removing a potential doubt about Scripture passages that may seem to lead in opposite directions.

More difficult to reconcile is an old controversy between Augustine and Jerome regarding whether Paul's reproach of Peter recounted in Galatians 2 was justified.

Specifically, the debate concerns whether Paul in the opening verses of Romans 15 violated his own counsel about food laws and bearing with the infirmities of the weak.⁴⁰

³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 11.

⁴⁰Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 demonstrate well the substance of this debate. Willet leaves this reference out of his summary, though it is cited in the exchange between Augustine and Jerome; see Augustine's 397 letter to Jerome (Letter XL) in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1892), 273. Since

Willet provides answers to six arguments that Jerome presented in Peter's defense (claiming that he was either unjustly reprimanded or that it was a staged, didactic conflict to provide a memorable lesson for those witnessing it). To Jerome's argument that κατὰ πρόσωπον can mean "in show" as well as "to his face," Willet replies that this meaning is not used in Scripture.⁴¹ To Jerome's point that Peter, as an apostle filled with the Spirit's guidance, could not err in a point of doctrine, Willet counters that his error here is not in doctrine but in practice. Most to our point in this section, where Jerome cites for his opinion the authority of the earlier Fathers Didymus, Origen, and Eusebius, Willet balances the scales by adding Cyprian, Ambrose, and Tertullian to Augustine's side (though "above all these" Willet places the authority of Paul himself). In this case, a simple appeal to the later Fathers merely pits Augustine against Jerome, and the further appeal to even earlier Fathers still results in a stalemate. Willet concludes that Augustine's arguments are more sound, and he allows those arguments to stand on their own, without added commentary, as the final counterargument to Jerome.⁴²

Two Greek Fathers are divided over whether the "love of God shed abroad in our hearts" in Romans 5:5 refers actively to God's love for us or passively for our love of God. Oecumenius reads the phrase actively and refers it to the believer's love for God. The logic of this view—which Stapleton also propounds, alleging Augustine as additional

Paul himself has admitted to an evangelistic strategy of becoming "all things to all people," the argument would go, could Peter not claim the same practice when he alters his dining patterns because of the presence of the Jewish Christians?

⁴¹Liddell and Scott list "mask" as a possible (if less common) meaning of πρόσωπον, so that the word could function similarly to ὑποκριτής, conveying acting or pretending (*A Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968], s.vv. "πρόσωπον," "ὑποκρισία"). Willet's response on this point is, of course, rather circular—arguing that a word cannot have a particular meaning in Scripture because that word in Scripture does not have that particular meaning.

⁴²Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 706-707.

support—is that this love is in *our* hearts, so it must be *our* love. Willet’s response aims to relegate Oecumenius to a minority position among the Fathers. First, “against *Oecumenius* we set *Chrysostome* an other Greeke Father, who understandeth the Apostle to speake of the love of God toward us.” Having evened the Greek tally, Willet adds: “*Augustine* shall answer *Augustine*, who elsewhere interpreteth this place of the love of God toward us.” In this instance, Willet does not suggest that Augustine was inconsistent or changed his mind on the issue, but that his aggregate comments on this verse make it clear that God’s love for us is absolutely primary, and the source of our love for God. After summarizing the exegetical arguments of various Protestant voices, Willet again turns to “the consonant exposition of many of the Fathers”—not only Chrysostom, but Jerome, Ambrose, Theophylact, Theodoret, and the early-fifth century poet Sedulius as well, all stand with Willet against Oecumenius and Stapleton in taking the phrase passively as God’s love.⁴³

Willet’s having Augustine answer Augustine on the identification of the “love of God” reveals another aspect of the complexity of appealing to patristic authority: not only do the Fathers often differ from *one another*, but occasionally *individual* Church Fathers are either ambiguous in their interpretations or change their mind over time. Nor can one simply isolate their early or mature thought as the true representation of their views—

⁴³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 240-241. With respect to the same phrase in Romans 8:39, Willet acknowledges that “most of the Greeke and Latine expositors” (including Oecumenius, Theophylact, Origen, Augustine, Ambrose, and—this time—even Chrysostom) take the “love of God” actively as our love for God. Here Willet makes no excuses for the Fathers, openly disagreeing with their judgment: “but it is better referred unto the passive love, wherewith we are beloved of God.” The passive reading, Willet argues, fits better with Paul’s scope, its “placement” *in* Christ Jesus implies that it is *God’s* active love, and our love is too fickle to be the firm and unshakeable love that the Apostle is describing (p. 385). Cf. Richard Hays’s classic study on the grammatically parallel expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ in Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

while “Tertullian in his old age fell into the heresie of Montanus, and therefore much is not to be ascribed to his judgement concerning” infant baptism,⁴⁴ Augustine famously and openly “retracted” many of his original interpretations.⁴⁵ Willet mentions several of these retractions as they pertain to the interpretation of Romans. Concerning the status of the speaker in Romans 7, Augustine “changed his minde, upon better reasons” and decided that these were the words of a regenerate person (though he limited the sinful impulse in the passage to “the first motions onely of concupiscence”).⁴⁶ His retraction is more thorough in the alteration of his reading of Romans 8:29, where he moves from conceiving of predestination on the basis of foreseen faith, to “ingeniously confessing” that a truly gracious election must reject even that condition.⁴⁷ Neither was Chrysostom entirely self-consistent. In a Controversy on verse 10:20 in which Willet uses the statement “I was found of them, that sought me not” to refute the notion of preparatory works that make one more fit to be called, Chrysostom appears as both a positive and negative example. Willet cites him first as affirming that “Gods grace wrought all” in conversion, but adds “yet afterward, forgetting himselfe,” Chrysostom writes that those who were called did provide their own ability to apprehend and acknowledge that which

⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 303.

⁴⁵ Cf. the oft-noted observation that the Protestant Reformers tended to favor Augustine’s later works, while Roman Catholic theologians inclined toward his earlier works. E.g., in Mary Arshagouni Papazian, “The Augustinian Donne: How a ‘Second S. Augustine’?,” in *John Donne and the Protestant Reformation: New Perspectives*, ed. Mary Arshagouni Papazian (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 67.

⁴⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 335.

⁴⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398. Willet notes that Augustine’s early position was sound enough to deny the merit of foreseen *works*, but still flawed in supposing the merit of foreseen *faith*. Augustine’s correction of his position on this matter comes up again in the chapter 9 Controversies (p. 435; mistakenly printed as a second p. 433).

was revealed to them.⁴⁸ These instances of self-contradiction or retraction emphasize all the more the unreliability of tradition as an absolute norm, yet without diminishing the authority of these authors to naught in the cases where their interpretations reflected the best reading of Scripture.

2.1.2 Augustine and Chrysostom

As their many citations above reflect, Augustine and Chrysostom each figure heavily in Willet's appropriation of the tradition of the early church.⁴⁹ We have already seen multiple times in this and previous chapters how Willet held up Augustine as a standard of orthodoxy: Augustine's reading of Romans 5:12 is significant in Willet's conception of original sin (despite the majority of the Reformed rejecting his grammatical argument), Augustine affirmed justification by faith alone and that Mary had a sin nature, his infralapsarian "mass of perdition" understanding of reprobation wins Willet over, and his anti-Pelagian writings provide ammunition against Roman Catholic teachings on merit.⁵⁰ His esteem for Augustine was sufficiently evident for Joad Raymond to comment

⁴⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 483. Cf. the twentieth century debate between Brunner and Barth, which addresses a similar issue—namely whether the ability to receive divine revelation is a surviving capability of the tainted *imago dei*, or a capability that God must grant as part of the revelation itself (Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth*, trans. Peter Fraenkel [1946; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002]).

⁴⁹ These figures were frequently cited and well regarded broadly within the Protestant world. On the use of Augustine and Chrysostom by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestants, see Arnoud S. Q. Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: the Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe, 1500-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Schulze, "Martin Luther and the Church Fathers," 573-579; Quantin, *The Church of England and Christian Antiquity*, 397; John R. Walchenbach, *John Calvin as Biblical Commentator: An Investigation into Calvin's Use of John Chrysostom as an Exegetical Tutor* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010); John L. Thompson, "Calvin as a Biblical Interpreter," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 63-64.

⁵⁰ Willet cites Augustine on the doctrine of sin (original sin, and the relationship between sin and grace) also on pp. 255, 286, and 442-443, and on predestination without foresight also on pp. 418, 523.

that “Willet, true to form, brings Augustine to his defence” in arguing against petitioning angels for their prayers.⁵¹ In the last chapter we saw how Augustine’s orthodoxy was such a given that Willet could defend Protestants against charges of heresy by simply pointing out the absurdity of thereby implicating Augustine in the same heresy.

Instances where Willet disagrees with Augustine, while rare and concerning relatively minor issues, are not non-existent. One of the more significant disagreements is already alluded to above. Having changed his mind to affirm that the speaker in Romans 7 is Paul himself in his redeemed state, Augustine “verie well interpreteth” the words οὐ γινώσκω in verse 15 to mean “*non approbo, non consentio*, I approve not, consent not”—attributing the phrase to Paul’s *will*, rather than to the understanding, as Origen and Chrysostom had done. “But yet,” Willet continues, Augustine “understandeth the Apostle onely to speake of the first motions of concupiscence, which have not the consent of the minde.”⁵² This caveat seems to Willet to be “no fit exposition,” and he bases his objection to Augustine’s limitation primarily on the experience of godly people failing not only in their desires, but in actually *doing* things that they know are wrong. Willet does limit the extent of these misdeeds, though; Paul is not here referring to “grosse sins” like David’s adultery, since in those cases there is no resistance of the will

Additional positive citations of Augustine include his teaching on the nature of true prayer, his opposition to astrology, and his perspective on Old Testament ceremonies (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 389, 435, 629).

⁵¹ Raymond, *Milton’s Angels*, 60.

⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 327. This discussion comes in the context of the Question of “How the Apostle saith, he is carnall and sold under sinne, v. 17.” The allusion to this issue above is from a later Question, “Of that famous question, whether S. Paul doe speake in his owne person, or of an other here in this 7. chapter” (p. 335).

at all, the perpetrator “for the time” being completely given over to the deed.⁵³

In other places, Willet argues that Augustine has misread the Apostle’s syntax, context, or scope. In Romans 1:21-22, for example, Willet takes Paul’s reference to the futile thinking, darkened minds, and foolishness of the Gentiles to be essentially three ways of saying the same thing, while Augustine “somewhat curiously distinguisheth” between them. This is not a fatal error, but since Willet finds no textual basis for the delineation that Augustine lays out, he judges that the description “is better referred generally” to their sin-damaged minds.⁵⁴ In 3:21 Willet adopts Beza’s criticism of Augustine for connecting the adverbial phrase “without the law” to “righteousnesse” instead of to “manifested,” making the full phrase read not “the righteousnesse of God is made manifest without the Law,” but “righteousnesse without the Law is made manifest.”⁵⁵ “In this transposing of the words,” Willet writes, “the sense is much altered.” Augustine’s syntax obscures Paul’s basic point, that while the Law reveals our sinfulness, it is not the Law’s function to teach faith.⁵⁶

Augustine “hath a strange interpretation” of Romans 14:5, where he takes “he that regardeth the day” to refer to humans judging other humans based on how righteous they appear on a given day. The one who “esteemeth every day alike” in this reading is God, who judges the heart and not a person’s day-to-day performance. But this, as the context

⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 327. The qualifying “for the time” is important, as it keeps Willet from contradicting here his belief in the perseverance of the saints.

⁵⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 69.

⁵⁵ The syntax in Greek reads: χωρις νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται. Meyer, like Willet, argues for χωρις νόμου to be connected to πεφανέρωται, explaining this placement on the basis of a parallel structure with the latter half of verse 20. Just as the knowledge of sin [comes; the verb is implied] through the Law, so the reference to the Law in verse 21 must connect to the verb there (Meyer, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 129).

⁵⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 166.

shows, confuses subjects, since the reference in the following verse to the observance of these days “to the Lord” makes it clear that *humans* are the consistent subject in verse 5.⁵⁷ And, while Augustine is the most significant patristic authority legitimizing the Reformed polemic against works-based justification, Willet objects to his interpretation of Romans 2:13, a key justification verse (“Not the hearers of the law, but the doers shall be justified”), as his reading “seemeth not to be agreeable unto the scope of the Apostle.” Augustine takes the statement to mean that one must be made just by God before being able to keep the Law. Willet agrees with the theology of this statement, but he sees it as reversing Paul’s purpose; the Apostle is not here teaching how it is possible to keep the Law, but using obedience to the Law as a marker to identify *who* is justified.⁵⁸ Again, the issues that Willet raises with Augustine’s (later) interpretation of Romans are matters of exegetical minutiae, not bearing on significant doctrinal issues, and certainly not diminishing the support that he offers Protestants on the two key doctrines of justification and predestination.

John Walchenbach’s study of John Calvin’s use of John Chrysostom concludes with an unexpected observation on Calvin’s appropriation of his most frequently cited and often-praised Church Father:

It was to our surprise that Calvin, while he would consult Chrysostom frequently as a historical authority, rarely entered into the theological and especially ethical implications of Chrysostom’s thought. Ethical implications were avoided because

⁵⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 632.

⁵⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 138. Cf. Willet’s arguments concerning the confusion of cause and identity in section V.3.1. Willet shows his general approval of the *content* of Augustine’s interpretation (if not its correspondence to Paul’s scope) by using the same logic to explain why this verse does not support justification by works—since one must *be* just *already* in order to act justly, one cannot *become* just *by* acting justly. Augustine’s reading, then, while not the Apostle’s meaning in this verse, has polemical value in disputing theologically unsound interpretations of the verse.

Chrysostom founded his patterns of behavior on principles too closely allied with the doctrine of works-righteousness.⁵⁹

Willet's positive use of Chrysostom is starkly different from this description of Calvin's use, with Chrysostom serving for Willet—theological qualms notwithstanding—as the supreme model for discerning the moral uses of a scriptural text. Chrysostom is cited in twenty-six of Willet's 124 moral observations throughout the sixteen chapters of Romans—nearly as many times as all other Christian expositors combined. Chrysostom's moral uses predominate especially in the final five chapters, which Willet labels on the hexapla's title page as “belonging to Exhortation,” appearing in over forty percent of Willet's individual moral observations and accounting for over eighty percent of the citations of Christian authors.⁶⁰

The high regard that Willet holds for Chrysostom's ability to cull the practical applications out of Romans is attested to both in particular moral uses and in Willet's general approach to moving from doctrinal formulation to practical piety. At the outset of the hexapla Willet establishes Chrysostom as an exemplar for recognizing the ethical utility of all of Romans, and commenting on the closing words of the letter, Willet highlights his reading of Paul's expression “for the obedience of faith”: “*Chrysostome*

⁵⁹ Walchenbach, *John Calvin as Biblical Commentator*, 164. Van Oort and Thompson each also acknowledge a discrepancy between Calvin's admiration of Chrysostom as an expositor of Scripture and his generally negative citations of him in his own exegetical works (Johannes Van Oort, “John Calvin and the Church Fathers,” 691-692; Thompson, “Calvin's Unpaid Debt to Origen,” 119-121).

⁶⁰ Through the first eleven chapters Chrysostom shares the honor of most “moral use” citations with Origen, which is somewhat ironic, since at the outset Willet opposes Chrysostom to Origen regarding the practical applicability of the early chapters of Romans. In the lone Observation given in the “Morall observations out of the whole Epistle,” Willet claims that “*Origen* onely commendeth the reading of the latter part of the Epistle, from c. 12. to the ende: the other part, he thinketh not to be so necessarie, as handling onely questions about the ceremonies of the Law.” He continues to state his preference for Chrysostom, who affirms the broad utility of the entire epistle (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 28). Given his understanding of how each Father views the moral function of Romans, it is strange that Willet cites each equally in the Moral Observations of the early chapters, while having a great preponderance of Chrysostom citations in the corresponding sections of the latter chapters.

observeth here, *fides obedientiam exigit, non curiositatem*, faith exacteth obedience, not curiositie.”⁶¹ In a chapter 13 Question on what it means to “put on” Christ (v. 14), Willet again turns to Chrysostom to explain the broad relationship between faith in Christ and the virtuous life. The one who “puts on” Christ, Chrysostom taught, also puts on every virtue; that is, it is not our imitation of Christ’s virtues that is counted as “putting on” Christ, but our union with him that makes a virtuous life possible.⁶² Willet prefers Chrysostom’s expression of this principle to Origen’s, which he suggests could be read as moving in the opposite direction.⁶³ His turn to Chrysostom on this point shows, too, that Willet did not share with Calvin the same level of concern regarding any works-righteousness tendencies in Chrysostom. The individual moral uses that Willet gleans from Chrysostom are often presented with glowing praise for his insight and an acknowledgment of Willet’s degree of dependence on him. We see both of these elements, for instance, at the close of a lengthy Moral Observation drawn from verse 15:24: “Thus excellently *Chrysostome*, according to his manner doth followe this morall which I have abridged.”⁶⁴ Chrysostom’s moral uses cover a wide range of virtues and

⁶¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 28, 736. The summary Moral Observation on the entire book of Romans (entitled: “Of the singular profit that may arise by reading of this Epistle to the Romanes”) concludes also with a glowing reference to Chrysostom: “It shall be profitable for every Christian likewise to follow the same godly use, especially to acquaint themselves with the divine writings of S. Paul: and every one may say with *Chrysostome, gaudeo equidem, quod spiritualis illa tuba frui datum sit*, I am glad, that I may enjoy that spirituall trumpet, &c.”

⁶² Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 518 (Homily XXIV): “He gives us the Lord Himself for a garment, the King Himself: for he that is clad with Him, hath absolutely all virtue.”

⁶³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 599. Cf. Origen, *Commentary on Romans, Books 6-10*, 233 (9.35.34).

⁶⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 716. This particular Moral Observation includes the sage advice that one should not enter into the ministry as impulsively as one might run “unto a faire.”

vices, from warnings against pride, fornication, and ignorance,⁶⁵ to inducements to show hospitality, to practice kindness towards one's enemies, and to foster a loving relationship between a pastor and his flock.⁶⁶ Nowhere among the Moral Observations does Willet express concern about Chrysostom's applications stemming from a works-based justification, though he does at one point comment that Chrysostom's teaching that one may satisfy the flesh only to the extent of meeting basic necessities "seemeth...somewhat too strict and austere."⁶⁷

When forced by his own reading of Scripture to oppose Chrysostom, Willet remains generally respectful, though the doctrines are of more weight than those he objects to in Augustine. Faced with an ambiguous point within one of Chrysostom's statements, Willet explains a way that it can be read as orthodox. Writing against the power of free will in his comments on Romans 11:4, Willet notes:

Chrysostomes speech, that God saveth onely those which are willing, if it be understood with these two cautions, that this willingnes is wrought by grace, and yet beeing so wrought, it is no cause of justification, may safely be received: for true it is; that none are saved against their wil: But yet God *ex nolentibus volentes facit*, of unwilling maketh them willing; if *Chrysostome* be otherwise understood, as ascribing here strength to mans freewill, it is a great error.⁶⁸

While not stating outright that Chrysostom's opinion is sound (as he does when defending his view of original sin against the Pelagians, who "did him wrong to make

⁶⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 575; 622-623; 669.

⁶⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 576; 714; 716.

⁶⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 623. Most of Willet's use of Chrysostom draws on his moral applications, though he does cite him selectively in support of various more theologically oriented doctrines. We have already seen that Willet refused to let the Pelagians claim Chrysostom for their view of original sin (section III.2.2.3), and Willet appeals to his reading of Romans 5:2 to support the perseverance of the saints (p. 238). Additionally, Willet cites his authority for subjects such as the nature of Abraham's faith (p. 213), the function of the Law as it pertains to salvation (p. 458), the role of the magistrate (p. 586), and the place of Rome among the churches (pp. 727-728).

⁶⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 523.

him an author of their opinion”),⁶⁹ Willet is careful to provide the necessary caveats that could at least in theory make Chrysostom’s maxim a true saying.

Others of Chrysostom’s interpretations are more difficult to defend, and Willet must oppose him more definitively. In his exposition of Romans 8:29, Chrysostom leads a whole team of Greek exegetes astray by making God’s predestination contingent upon his foresight of human worthiness.⁷⁰ Other places it is his agreement with Origen that seems to cause Chrysostom to teach heterodox views on election and free will. The two Greeks both misread Romans 8:33 (“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods chosen?”) to imply that God’s election takes into consideration the inherent integrity of a given soul. Trying to understand the difficult affirmation of God’s absolute sovereignty in verse 9:18 (“[God] hath mercie on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth”), each wrongly places the words in the mouth of one voicing an objection to Paul. And similarly, both Origen and Chrysostom argue that the vessels of wrath and of mercy in verse 9:21 have each prepared *themselves* to be accounted as such.⁷¹ These errors (generally of election rather than of justification) are not insignificant, yet Willet corrects them dispassionately, reserving his polemical venom for those Roman Catholics who propose a similar doctrine of election based on the foresight of merit.

Another set of Chrysostom’s interpretations of Romans that Willet rejects

⁶⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 261.

⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

⁷¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 384, 420, 426. While doctrinal alignment with Origen is often risky, on at least two occasions Willet prefers Origen’s interpretation to Chrysostom’s. One instance is a grammatical point in verse 15:7, where Willet argues that “to the glorie of God” should go with “as Christ received us” (as Origen), rather than with “receive ye one an other” (as Chrysostom) (p. 679). And Origen’s reading of 16:19-20 more clearly affirms that all that we have is from God by grace, whereas Chrysostom’s “daungerous” reading suggests that we have something of our own to offer to God (p. 732).

concerns the limited blessings that he assigns to the Jews, and particularly to those who lived before Christ.⁷² Chrysostom had argued that, since circumcision was given to mere infants, it did not have any spiritual effect. Willet rejects this argument by paralleling the situation (in typical Reformed fashion) to baptism: since the baptism of infants has a spiritual use and not merely a ceremonial or identity-marking use, then so must have circumcision.⁷³ In verse 8:15 Chrysostom has “many strange assertions” concerning Paul’s reference to the “spirit of bondage,” arguing that the Jews under the Law did not have the Spirit and had been promised only temporal blessings. This notion Willet counters with the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit working through the prophets and by explaining that spiritual graces were hidden beneath the physical rites and spiritual promises lodged under the temporal ones.⁷⁴ In a similar vein, Willet reads Chrysostom’s comments on Romans 9:6 (“for all, which are of Israel, are not Israel”) as an argument that Gentiles alone are now the “true Israel.”⁷⁵ Rejecting also the opposite attribution to

⁷² Eric Gritsch, who considers Chrysostom the “most radical anti-Semite among the church fathers,” would likely attribute these interpretations to that sentiment (Gritsch, *Martin Luther’s Anti-Semitism*, 17). Gritsch does not, however, substantiate his assertion, so it is difficult to know whether he would consider Chrysostom’s perspective on the spiritual condition of Old Testament figures as stemming from, or as evidence of, anti-Semitic views. Others—notably Robert Wilken—have questioned the common labeling of Chrysostom as an anti-Semite, arguing for a more nuanced interpretation of his various statements within the context of the religious pluralism of fourth century Antioch, efforts to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and Judaizing tendencies of many in his congregation. See Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Cf. also Lee Martin McDonald, “Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,” in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 215-252.

⁷³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 226.

⁷⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 358.

⁷⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 413. Whether this is actually Chrysostom’s argument is debatable. Willet does not provide a citation for Chrysostom’s “application to the Gentiles,” but his reading appears to derive from passages such as: “But the new thing is, that when all were unworthy, the Gentiles were saved alone...when this has been shown, there is at the same time demonstrated the fact that the promises were all fulfilled. And to point this out he said, ‘For they are not all Israel that are of Israel’” (Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 463-464 [Homily XVI]). It is perhaps Chrysostom’s reference to the promises having been fulfilled already that seems to Willet to cut off hope for ethnic Israel. Elsewhere

ethnic Jews alone, Willet himself argues that “under the name of the true Israel of God, the Apostle comprehendeth those which did imitate the faith of Abraham, whether they were of the flesh and carnall generation of Abraham, or not.”⁷⁶ Willet’s concern to clarify these matters of contention is consistent with both his interest in the calling of the Jews and his emphasis on the unity of God’s purpose through the two testaments.⁷⁷

2.1.3 *The Curious Place of Origen*

Willet’s interest in Origen is evident from the first pages of each of his commentaries, where the title pays homage to the great Alexandrian’s method. And, indeed, Origen’s interpretations—both in support of and as a foil for Reformed readings—pervade the Romans hexapla.⁷⁸ Willet is somewhat inconsistent in his guidelines for how Origen should be used by contemporary theologians. After listing the various errors that Origen commits in his reading of Romans 11:26, where he writes of a

in the same homily, however, Chrysostom seems to include believing Jews in the promise. For example, “For every one... whether Jew, or Grecian, or Scythian, or Thracian, or whatsoever else he may be, will, if he believes, enjoy the privilege of great boldness,” (that boldness being previously identified as a gift that comes through faith) (p. 471). That Chrysostom sometimes used the term “Gentile” to mean “Christian” (an observation notes by Tonia) certainly does not help the clarity of the matter. Tonia reads Chrysostom to be claiming that the promises to “Israel” pertain to all who believe, whether Gentile or Jew, which is precisely Willet’s position, as well (Demetrios E. Tonia, *Abraham in the Works of John Chrysostom* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014], 133, 136).

⁷⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 414.

⁷⁷ Cf. his extended confutation of Parkes on the idea of *Limbus Patrum* and the notion that Christ’s work on the cross was not sufficient for the Old Testament patriarchs (addressed briefly in section I.3.1).

⁷⁸ Broader Protestant opinion of Origen was also mixed, though mostly negative. Luther, Melancthon, and Beza were all quite critical, while others as Martin Chemnitz and Richard Montagu held him in higher regard. Thompson argues that Calvin’s stated criticism of Origen’s exegesis is more a rhetorical opposition than an actual repudiation, since in practice Calvin’s own exegetical method shares much with Origen’s (Schulze, “Martin Luther and the Church Fathers,” 615-620; Thomas P. Scheck, “Justification by Faith Alone in Origen’s *Commentary on Romans* and its Reception During the Reformation Era,” in *Origeniana Octava: Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27-31 August 2001*, ed. Lorenzo Perrone (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2003), 1285, 1287, 1287n61; Thompson, “Calvin’s Unpaid Debt to Origen,” 113-141).

purgative function of hell, Willet cautions that Roman Catholics cannot use Origen in defense of their own Purgatory doctrine without allowing in also his wider range of eschatological heresies:

If now the Papists will make Origen one of their patrons of Purgatory, as he is one of the most auncient that maketh mention thereof, they must also subscribe unto these errors, which I thinke they will be ashamed of: for to embrace his invention, and yet to refuse his sense, is not reasonable.⁷⁹

As one who made extensive use of Origen both as a positive authority and as an example of wildly heretical imaginings, Willet seems here to establish a double standard for appeals to his works. Surely he would counter that this situation with the papists differed in that Origen's errors were an integral component of the very doctrine the papists were adopting, but still this requirement he imposes on the Roman Catholics seems to invalidate his own use of Origen and to contradict his advocacy of Jerome's method of taking Origen's best interpretations while leaving the worst.⁸⁰

Despite Origen's sometimes overly creative approach to interpreting the Bible, Willet seems generally to admire his devotion to the task, praising him for being "so diligent a searcher of the Scriptures."⁸¹ This same diligence leads Origen also to offer many profitable moral uses of Romans. Willet's most concentrated selection of Origen's moral applications comes in chapter 6, where half of his eight Moral Observations are of Origenian origin. Here we learn from Origen that "newnesse of life" (v.4) must be renewed daily in order to remain "new," that obedience "from the heart" (v. 17) is something different than a verbal confession or outward show, that our zeal for God

⁷⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 527-528.

⁸⁰ Willet, *Hexapla in Genesin*, sig. ¶4r.

⁸¹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 158.

should match the zeal that we once had for sin (v. 19), and that we should examine every action that we perform to determine whether the deed was serving sin or righteousness (v.21).⁸² As we saw with Chrysostom, the issues that Willet has with Origen theologically do not invalidate his many profitable lessons concerning Christian virtue.

Origen also has value for Willet as a skilled refuter of second-century heresies, especially the Marcionite rejection of the Old Testament. Explaining his own transition from Old Testament to New Testament commentary in the opening paragraph of his dedicatory address to James, Willet cites Origen (his first citation in the entire work) in defense of the unity of the testaments:

Origen well-observeth, that this was S. Peters error, when he would have had three tabernacles, for Christ, Moses, and Elias... There is the same substance of both, and one truth: both the Prophets and Apostles were ministers of the same house, wherein are diverse mansions: the one shewing us onely (as it were) the neather roomes, the other bring us into the upper chamber, where Christ eate his passeover with his disciples.⁸³

From Paul's words in 4:23 that Abraham's experience was not recorded "for him onely" Origen "observeth well" that everything that is written of the patriarchs' lives is for our benefit.⁸⁴ Besides these general affirmations of the unity of the testaments and the value of the Hebrew scriptures, virtually every direct reference to Marcion's heresy is met with Origen's rebuttal (which is not entirely surprising, since Marcion's own thought is only accessible through the anti-Marcion works of the Fathers). The Marcionites' condemnation of circumcision as abuse is "sufficiently answered by *Origen*"; Origen "answereth well" the Marcionite conclusion from 3:20 that the Law is evil, and "taketh

⁸² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 310.

⁸³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, sig. ¶3r.

⁸⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 215.

away [their] cavill” concerning v. 24; in verse 4:24 he “doth thus returne this their collection upon themselves”; and so forth.⁸⁵ Willet draws on Origen’s affirmation that Christ is not “after” but “of the father” to refute the Socinians,⁸⁶ and he later presents Origen again to “refell” (by way of the engrafted olive branches in 11:17) the “hereticall paradox” of the Gnostic Valentinus that some things are inherently and irredeemably evil and others by nature permanently good.⁸⁷

Yet, even more than nearly all of the other Church Fathers, Origen was a mixed bag. In the last example above, for instance, he “confuteth one error by an other.” In his initial resistance to Valentinus, “*Origen* proceedeth well: but after going about to shew the cause, whence it commeth, that some trees are good, some bad, he falleth into errors himselfe,” having to do with the power of human free will.⁸⁸ This pattern of Origen “proceeding well” to a point repeats in many parts of the Romans hexapla. Salient arguments concerning the unity of God’s purpose between the two testaments are spoiled by undue curiosity.⁸⁹ Origen’s insightful observation on the kinds of trials Paul lists in 8:38-39 is paired with a false suggestion that Paul’s confidence is wavering; in his “wittie discourse” on Judgment Day drawn from 14:19, “wherein some things he saith well, and he misseth as his manner is in other”; and regarding the distinction between clean and unclean meats in verse 14:14, he is wrong to imply that holiness is a property that can be infused in an item, but he “well observeth” that the eucharistic elements “are not

⁸⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 141, 180, 182, 231. Cf. also 621, 708.

⁸⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 434.

⁸⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 524.

⁸⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 524.

⁸⁹ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 203, 259.

sanctified by the prayer of every one, but of them which lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting, which prayed in faith.”⁹⁰

Many of Origen’s errors involve excessive speculation, leading to interpretations ranging from “vaine” to “dangerous and violent.” Paul’s comment in verse 1:8 that “the whole world” is aware of the Romans’ faith leads Origen to contemplate the angels in heaven rejoicing—one of his many references to angels⁹¹—which exposition Willet rejects as “savour[ing] of his accustomed curious speculations.”⁹² Origen’s distinction between being “called by grace” and “called by election of grace” arises from his mere “wandring speculation,” and in his suggestion from 11:13 of a heavenly apostleship, “Origen falleth into his fantasticall speculations of the next world, as thought [they] should need any ministrie of the word or Apostleship there.”⁹³ Potentially more damaging are his “dangerous kind of allegorizing” in making the tribute owed in 13:7 a payment due to “ministring spirits” because of our carnal sins, and his “dangerous and violent expositions” from verse 8:27, including distinguishing between Christ dying for the ungodly and the Spirit praying for the godly.⁹⁴ In his worst exegetical moments Origen “did too much Platonize,” and “playeth the Philosopher, rather then the Divine.”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 387, 637, 643. Willet’s endorsement of the last observation is strange, since it seems to endorse the Donatist heresy.

⁹¹ Other places where Willet criticizes Origen for running to “his usuall speculations of Angels” include *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 61, 161, 509, and 722.

⁹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 45.

⁹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 492, 504.

⁹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 504, 327.

⁹⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 435 (misprinted as a second p. 433; on his theory of preexistent souls, in the context of Romans 9) and 525 (arguing in 11:17 that humans by their own free will can make themselves good branches).

In the context of anti-Roman polemics, Origen's most serious offense came in his doctrine of justification.⁹⁶ We have made reference already to his error regarding free will in his response to Valentinus. In addition, he comes near to the Pelagian heresy in various places, as when he argues that the sins in Romans 4:7 are "covered" by the good works of the sinners. Willet acknowledges that his sometimes-authority Origen "concurrith with the Romanists, or they rather with him," but both "pervert the Apostles sense."⁹⁷ Later, Willet warns that Origen's explanation of Paul's union with Christ language in 6:3-5 as merely an inducement to follow Christ's example "is dangerous, because of the error of the Pelagians, who thinke that our conformitie with Christ, ariseth of our imitation of him."⁹⁸ Like the papists, Origen also is prone to confusing justification and sanctification. Willet notes an "oversight" in Origen's exegesis of Romans 8:1 ("Now then there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, which walke not after the flesh, but after the spirit"). Origen had mistakenly read chapter 7 according to a too-neat division between the obedient human spirit and the sinful flesh (a hint, perhaps, of Gnostic influence), so that verse 8:1 referred to the overcoming of the spirit and the perfection of the Christian. By proposing the possibility of perfection in this life, though, Origen "confoundeth justification and sanctification." Despite being "wholly graft" into Christ (the accomplished fact of justification), "some infirmities of the flesh" linger through this life (the process of being sanctified).⁹⁹ None of these theological errors, however, are so

⁹⁶ On Protestant views on Origen's doctrine of justification, see Scheck, "Justification by Faith Alone"; Thomas P. Scheck, *Origen and the History of Justification: The Legacy of Origen's Commentary on Romans* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

⁹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 223.

⁹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 288.

⁹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 390.

severe as to render Origen a (pre-Nicene) “heretic,” nor to nullify his usefulness in eliciting correct doctrine and morals from Romans.

3. Protestantism as the True Catholic Church

As we have seen throughout, the Protestant orthodox categorically rejected the Roman church’s claim to catholicity and, accordingly, its self-designation as the “Catholic Church.” Willet evidences this concern throughout his career, as in the quotation from Augustine’s *De Vera Religione* on the title page of every edition of *Synopsis Papismi* that charges the “true Catholike Church” with the “reforming of heretikes, and bringing home againe schismatikes.” While Willet generally uses the alternate label “papist” (a term he defends in the preface to *Synopsis Papismi*),¹⁰⁰ he also on occasion plays around with the name “Catholic”—similarly to how he modifies the name “Jesuit”—as in *An Antilogie*, where he refers to “their Cacolike religion.”¹⁰¹ This play on words adjusts the name using the Greek word κακός (bad),¹⁰² and also seems to indicate the harsh cry of a crow, as Willet proceeds to liken his foe’s confidence in his popish doctrine to a crow who finds her own feathers the most beautiful. A major aim of Willet’s polemic was to demonstrate that Protestants were not a schismatic deviation from Christian orthodoxy, but the repristination of the historic faith after a period of defilement—they were “Reformed Catholics.” In addition to his frequent appeals to the Fathers intended to demonstrate the catholicity of Protestant doctrine by its consonance

¹⁰⁰ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1592), B2r. Here he argues that they have no basis for objecting to this name, seeing as they are “pinned upon the Popes sleeve for their faith and Religion.”

¹⁰¹ Willet, *Antilogie*, 60.

¹⁰² *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Cacolike, Cacoleek”, accessed December 18, 2015, <http://www.oed.com>.

with Christians from a more pristine time, Willet in the 1613 *Synopsis Papismi* explicitly turns also to the witness of eastern and southern Christians, the more to emphasize the discrepancies between the supposedly “Catholic” church and the teachings from world Christianity. He highlights this further anti-papist witness by adding to the *Synopsis Papismi* title page in 1613 that in his book the papists are confuted not only by Scripture and the Fathers, but by “the consent of all Christian Churches in the world,” later specifying that he has “adjoyned the consent, of the East, and South Churches.”¹⁰³

As unity and catholicity are confessed in the Creed as notes of the Christian church,¹⁰⁴ this project of arguing the legitimacy of Protestantism could be advanced by asserting the disharmony of Roman dogma with other expressions of world Christianity, and highlighting internal doctrinal rifts between various Roman Catholic theologians while minimizing the importance of apparent ideological divisions within the fractured

¹⁰³ Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), sig.B4r. Willet’s words here directly contradict Robert Smith’s contention that Willet rejected eastern Christian sources outright. Smith writes: “Despite his broad openness to hermeneutical sources developed by fellow western Protestants, Willet fully dismisses eastern Christians, whose failure to defend their lands against Muslim civil rule has left them deserving of their minority status. For Willet and for other English Protestants, theopolitical hegemony was a sign of God’s favor; living as a minority, especially within an Islamic world, could not be understood as anything but a curse. Proto-Puritan Jews, the Kings of the East, would glorify God by organizing militarily against Muslims and Catholics to extend Protestant hegemony on a global scale” (Smith, *The Roots of Christian Zionism*, 80). Smith seems to base this interpretation entirely on a statement that Willet makes in the Romans hexapla (p. 704) that interprets the spread of Islam in the East as a punishment for the ingratitude of Christians there. The suggestion that Willet therefore dismissed eastern Christians in the Levant entirely, however, reads too much into his words, as evidenced by his additions to the *Synopsis* two years later; nor do I find any evidence of Willet advocating for a military offensive against Muslims and Catholics.

Cf. Milton’s comments on early Stuart views on the Eastern churches, for which he includes Willet as an example: “the Jacobean period witnessed a concerted effort by many divines to claim fellowship with the Eastern churches which had never fallen under the direct control of the Latin Church. This enabled Protestants to present themselves, not as a group dividing from the Roman Church, but as part of the universal church, from which Rome had divided herself,” (Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 379-380).

¹⁰⁴ Protestant divines qualified these notes of the church more so than did their Roman Catholic counterparts, however, noting that people could be unified in evil too, and that false doctrine could be widespread; in other words, the true church is one, but not all unified entities are the true church. The Protestant marks of the church were generally given as true doctrine preached and the sacraments rightly administered (and sometimes the sound practice of discipline). Cf. H. F. Woodhouse, *The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology, 1547-1603* (London: SPCK, 1954), 60-61.

Protestant world. Willet had good company in this enterprise, as many of his Reformed peers similarly objected to the Roman claim of catholicity. Milton cites Abbot and Sutcliffe as two other English Protestants who were vocal in their opposition to Rome's claiming the name "Catholic." He describes also some of the challenges that arose as Protestants tried to re-appropriate the title: "the term 'Catholic Church' was bedevilled by the same sort of semantic confusion that accompanied all Protestant discussions of the church during this period."¹⁰⁵

3.1 Divisions Among Roman Catholics

As we have seen, part of Willet's express purpose in his commentaries was to summarize and synthesize the interpretive work of a host of prior biblical commentators.

¹⁰⁵ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 150-151. On Calvin's claim on catholicity, see Anthony N. S. Lane, "John Calvin: Catholic Theologian," *Ecclesiology* 6 (2010): 290-314. Sutcliffe also drew attention to Roman Catholic divisions (Tutino, *Law and Conscience*, 203). Cf. also John Jewel, *An Apologie or aunswer in defence of the Church of England, concerninge the state of Religion used in the same* (London: I. R., 1562); John Jewel, *A Replie unto M. Hardinges Answere: By perusinge whereof the discrete, and diligent Reader may easily see, the weake, and unstable groundes of the Romaine Religion, whiche of late hath bene accompted Catholique* (London: Henry Wykes, 1565); William Perkins, *A Reformed Catholike: or, A declaration showing how neere we may come to the present Church of Rome in sundrie points of religion: and wherein we must for ever depart from them: with An advertisement to all favourers of the Romane religion is against the catholike principles and grounds of the catechisme* (Cambridge: John Legat, 1597); Thomas Morton, *A Catholike Appeale for Protestants, Out of the confessions of the Romane Doctors; particularly answering the mis-named Catholike Apologie for the Romane faith, out of the Protestants: Manifesting the Antiquitie of our Religion, and falsifying all scrupulous Objections which have bene urged against it* (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1609).

George Tavad's 1964 study of Anglicanism, *The Quest for Catholicity*, seeks ultimately to "contribute to a better climate for Anglican-Catholic relationships and to a continuing theological conversation between the Anglican communion and what [he believes] to be simply the Catholic Church" (George H. Tavad, *The Quest for Catholicity: A Study in Anglicanism* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1964], vii-viii), and so he consciously focuses on those figures in the Church of England's history whose conception of the church's catholicity was broad enough to promise a measure of ecumenical rapprochement. The only representative of the narrower (anti-Roman Catholic) understanding of catholicity that Tavad considers is Archbishop Cranmer (whom he contrasts with Stephen Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, in an opening chapter). Given Tavad's own Roman Catholicism and his stated unifying aim of the book, it is not surprising that he views Cranmer's understanding of catholicity as having been corrupted by his polemical commitments (p. 15). A similar irenic approach was undertaken from the Anglican side by H. Edward Symonds in *The Council of Trent and Anglican Formularies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). Symonds, inspired by the call to Christian unity at the sixth Lambeth Conference of 1920, focuses on points of agreement between the canons of Trent and Anglican teaching.

When citing Roman Catholic exegetes, he rarely misses an opportunity to indicate where one papist contradicted another, thus demonstrating that their appeal to the uniformity of their doctrine was illegitimate. What unity there was among the self-proclaimed Catholics, Willet argued, was external and superficial. As Pellican had pointed out, Paul's hope in Romans 15:6 is for the church to praise God as with a single mouth and mind—not merely “with roaring and singing,” as in Papist worship, where “there is a consent onely of voice without any agreement in heart.”¹⁰⁶

Most of the divisions in Roman Catholic interpretation that Willet exploits in the Romans hexapla concern justification and election—the same two doctrines that he had identified at the outset as “the two chiefe points of Christian religion.”¹⁰⁷ Not only, then, do the Roman Catholics differ from *Protestants* on the most essential issues, but they cannot agree on them amongst themselves.¹⁰⁸ Willet maintains a fairly clear hierarchy of Roman Catholic exegetes, which is reflected in the writers he tends to side with when discrepancies emerge. Among Roman Catholics active since the Reformation, Tolet receives the most favorable treatment from Willet. He is “a more worthie man [than Pererius or Stapleton], both for his judgement and dignitie in the Papall Church,”¹⁰⁹ when Bellarmine errs Willet corrects him by sending him “to his auncient *Tolet*,”¹¹⁰ and—

¹⁰⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 678.

¹⁰⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ This project of pitting papist against papist was paralleled on the Roman Catholic side by such works as Broughton's *Protestants Proofes, for Catholikes Religion*, which we have already discussed, in that each side attempted to use the words of some of their opponents to counter the views of others on that side.

¹⁰⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 528.

¹¹⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 463.

while he certainly does not *always* meet with Willet's approbation¹¹¹—Tolet is positioned frequently as the advocate of the better of the papist positions. At the other extreme, the Rhemist annotators are consistently portrayed as the worst exegetes that the Roman church can offer. Regarding predestination, the “most learned” among the modern papists (as Bellarmine and Pererius) affirm election by grace, whereas “our Rhemists are more grosse in this point”;¹¹² they are the “unkind countrey men” of the English Protestants and are—in an alliterative jibe—“cunning karors for their kitchen” (which is to say that they serve their bellies and not God);¹¹³ and, as we saw earlier, they are the papist faction that is most directly implicated in the Pelagian error.¹¹⁴ Thomas Stapleton falls marginally above the Rhemists, and the rest of the modern Catholics fit in somewhere in between him and Tolet. Among late medieval Roman Catholics, Thomas Aquinas is cited the most frequently, and mostly positively. In general, Willet writes approvingly of Thomas regarding justification,¹¹⁵ while criticizing him on assurance of salvation and for attributing too much to human free will in salvation.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Willet calls Tolet “that rayling taxer” for considering godly Whitaker a heretic (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 25), and at times he dismisses his interpretations as “verie nice and curious,” “very corrupt,” or as “[foisting] in one of his Popish drugs” (pp. 200, 554, 266). Often Willet presents Tolet's individual views as insightful, but corrupted: concerning God's wrath in 1:18 Tolet “reasoneth well,” but is still “deceived” in part (p. 58); on the Jews' being provoked to follow the lead of the Gentiles in 11:11 errs by leaving God out of the equation, but makes a good linguistic observation about the verse from Deuteronomy that Paul is alluding to (p. 502); and on the “powers that be” being ordained by God, Tolet's interpretation begins well, “but this that is well said, he corrupteth with a dramme of his Popish dregges” by rooting all ecclesiastical power not in Christ, but in Peter (p. 580).

¹¹² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

¹¹³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 741.

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 447; cf. section VI.2.1.

¹¹⁵ E.g. Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 93, 177, 267, 396.

¹¹⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 393; 418. On Thomas's reputation among English Protestant thinkers in the seventeenth century, see John K. Ryan, *The Reputation of St. Thomas Aquinas Among English Protestant Thinkers of the Seventeenth Century* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of

As a central theme of Romans, and one of the most contested issues between Protestants and Roman Catholics, the doctrine of justification is the focus of many of the intra-Catholic disputes Willet identifies. Tolet and Thomas come nearest to the Protestant view. In his comments on Romans 2:13, where Paul says that the “doers of the law” will be justified, Tolet mentions an “exposition of some ... Catholikes” who refer this teaching to a kind of civil righteousness that is attainable even by nonbelievers. He rejects this suggestion, though, taking Paul to mean perfect righteousness before God.¹¹⁷ Bellarmine had read Paul’s statement in 10:10 that “with the heart man beleeveth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation” to mean that faith alone could not effect salvation, but that “the confession of the mouth, and other works” were also necessary. Here Willet sends Bellarmine to Tolet to learn that the public confession of faith, while necessary, is not a cause but a necessary effect of justification.¹¹⁸ Nor is justifying faith itself in any way meritorious. Willet again opposes Tolet to Bellarmine on this matter, based on their respective readings of verse 4:22 (“Therefore it was imputed to [Abraham] for righteousness”). Bellarmine, in a “sophisticall collection” on this verse, had argued that it showed that Abraham’s faith contained a sort of merit (*merito fidei*). Willet’s refutation of Bellarmine’s interpretation concludes with the words of Tolet, who—Willet points out—shares with Bellarmine not

America Press, 1948). Ryan shows how various English Protestants, including James, Lancelot Andrewes, and Joseph Hall, used Thomas in anti-Roman polemics, especially against Bellarmine (pp. 23-34). Across various professions and political leanings, Ryan (himself an unapologetic fan of Thomas) concludes, these Protestants—while not always agreeing with him—“recognized [Aquinas] as the greatest of the schoolmen and as a rule...referred to [him] with the respect that his greatness inspires” (p. 118). A generation after Willet, John Owen also showed a particular liking for Thomas, drawing on him frequently for various distinctions, anti-Pelagian arguments, and his conception of the relationship between God and creation (Trueman, *John Owen*, 22-23, 26, 57-60).

¹¹⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 137.

¹¹⁸ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 463. Cf. section V.2.

just a broad papist faith, but a common order and rank, as well: “I will here oppose against *Bellarmino*, the judgement of Tolet, and so set one Jesuite against another, and a Cardinall against his fellow.” Concerning this passage, Tolet “ingeniously” denies that any human merit is involved and explains that Paul’s words simply indicate that God accepted Abraham’s faith (of itself unworthy) as righteousness.¹¹⁹

On the issue of a first and second justification, which we earlier encountered in chapter 5, Willet includes Tolet (along with Pererius) among the “moderne Papists” whom he criticizes for teaching this “Popish fiction” as a way of reconciling Romans 2:13 (the doers of the Law are justified) and 3:20 (no one is justified by the works of the Law).¹²⁰ Of those making this false distinction (treating sanctification as a second justification), however, Pererius’s application is more incorrect than Tolet’s. When Pererius connects Romans 4:3-5 to Abraham’s *second* justification, so that Abraham is able to merit an increase in his righteousness before God,¹²¹ Willet “here oppose[s] against *Pererius*, one of his owne order, namely *Tolet*,” who reads this text together with James 2:23 to argue that the reference is to Abraham’s *first* justification; James connects this same act of believing to Abraham’s becoming God’s friend—which happens at the first justification.¹²² Willet also turns to Thomas Aquinas and his followers to counter Pererius’s understanding of justification. Pererius had similarly distinguished between a

¹¹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 230.

¹²⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 163.

¹²¹ Pererius’s logic, as Willet presents it, is that simply believing that God would give him progeny is not the kind of faith that would lead to Abraham’s justification. Thus, he must have *already* experienced his first justification, so that the reference here is to a second justification (being a deepening of the first). Believing God’s promise that he would have children, while not the kind of belief that would establish Abraham’s right relationship with God, was nonetheless a good act that increased his righteous standing.

¹²² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 197.

first (by faith) and second (by works) justification in his reading of Romans 1:17 (“the just by faith shall live”): Paul attributes justification to faith here because faith is the root and beginning of justification—not because it is the *sole* cause of the entire justification process. Yet, Willet corrects him, Paul also says that God’s justice is revealed from faith *to faith*, so that “faith is the beginning and end of this justice: there is no time, wherein salvation is given unto any but by faith, as *Thomas* expoundeth.”¹²³ Willet later appeals to Thomistic interpretation to contradict Pererius’s assertion from verse 5:5 that “the love of God...shedde abroad in our hearts” indicates that a developed habit of charity contributes to our being made formally just before God. This idea, Willet notes, goes against the interpretations of Cajetan, Scotus, and Biel, but he turns to Thomas’s disciples for a more specific rebuttal: “The *Thomists* are herein contrarie to the Jesuite, who affirm that *gratia gratum facitus*, grace which maketh us acceptable to God, is in respect of charitie, as the soule is to the powers and faculties which proceede from it.” It is God’s love in Christ that is the efficient cause of the believer’s Spirit-infused habit of charity, so that love as a human virtue in no way contributes to justification.¹²⁴

Pererius fares better in Willet’s exposition of Roman Catholic views on election; concerning this doctrine Pererius consistently represents the most-sound papist perspective, while the Rhemists bring up the heretical rear.¹²⁵ We have already encountered the division between the Pelagian position of the Rhemists, who make

¹²³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 93. Willet refers the reader back to a quotation from Thomas in Question 44 (though he mistakenly puts Q. 42): “*nullo tempore cuiquam, nisi per fidem salus contigit...* at no time salvation was attained unto by any but by faith” (p. 55).

¹²⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 267.

¹²⁵ In an early Controversy on Romans 1:1, though, it is Tolet again whom Willet uses against the Rhemist position. Origen had interpreted Paul’s having been “set apart for the Gospel” to mean that God foresaw the diligence that the Apostle would have in spreading the good news. While the Rhemist

human works the first cause of election, and Pererius, Tolet, Bellarmine, and Thomas, who interpret Romans 9:11 correctly and affirm God as election’s first cause.¹²⁶ Similarly, “the moderne Papists are not...all of one opinion” concerning the meaning of Romans 8:29 (“Those whome [God] knewe before he also predestinate”). The “more grosse” understanding of the Rhemists (which Willet again draws from their annotations on Hebrews 5) interprets God’s foreknowledge as an awareness of future good works, but the “most learned among” the Roman Catholics—as Pererius and Bellarmine—affirm that election is solely by grace, before any good works are foreseen.¹²⁷ In an earlier Question based on the same verse, Willet prefers Pererius’s conception of God’s prescience even to that of Tolet. Willet there notes that Paul does not use the word προῆδος, but προέγνω—so that his meaning is not a *mere* foreknowledge, but rather a “foreacknowledging, which is a knowledg with approbation.”¹²⁸ This is how Reformed giants Vermigli, Bullinger, and Pareus had read this verse, and it is also the understanding of Pererius. In his agreement with the Protestants on this point, Pererius “crosseth the judgement of his fellow Jesuite *Tolet*, who denieth, that this word doth belong at all unto *approbation* and *dilection*, which are the acts of the will, but onely unto

annotators make no mention of this interpretation at this place, Willet connects them to Origen’s reading through their notes on Hebrews 5: “the same is the opinion of the Rhemists, who affirme, that Christ doth not appoint any by his absolute election, without respect unto their workes: *annot. Hebr.5.sect.9.*” (see note 50 in this chapter). This position is confuted by Tolet—“champion of their owne”—who cites Galatians 1:15 to maintain that Paul’s calling was nowise connected to any foreseen works (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 88).

¹²⁶ (see section VI.2.1.3). Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 447; cf. pp. 435-437.

¹²⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 398.

¹²⁸ Προῆδος (or προεῖδος) would, in an etymological sense, indicate *foreseeing*, while προέγνω would communicate *foreknowing*. Willet thus connects what is commonly meant by “foreknowledge” with the literal compound “fore-sight,” and takes the literal “fore-knowledge” to mean what would be considered “prior acknowledgement.”

the knowledge in the understanding.”¹²⁹ Tolet’s explanation of the role of God’s foreknowledge in election, then, is sufficiently sound to rebut the Rhemist position, though less satisfactory than that of Pererius, whose interpretation more carefully roots election entirely in God’s good pleasure.

Willet again employs Pererius, Bellarmine, and Thomas against a papist imposition of works into predestination in a chapter 9 Controversy concerning election to glory. This time the opponent is Thomas Stapleton, who had applied Paul’s golden chain from verse 8:30 to his words on election in the middle of the ninth chapter to argue that Paul is there referring only to a preliminary election to grace; since justification precedes glorification in Paul’s concatenation, Stapleton reasoned, they must each have a different causality.¹³⁰ Interestingly, Calvin had in the *Institutes* leveled this very same charge against Thomas Aquinas: “He maintains that the elect are in a manner predestinated to glory on account of their merits, because God predestines to give them the grace by which they merit glory.”¹³¹ Willet, however, cites Aquinas *against* Stapleton, writing that “*Thomas* in his commentarie denieth, that *praescientia meritorum*, the foresight of merits is the cause of predestination to glorie.”¹³² While Willet’s dissent from Calvin’s judgment of Aquinas here is merely implied, Charles Raith II has detailed how Calvin

¹²⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 379. Cf. my earlier discussion (section II.3.2.1) of the relationship between the intellect and will in the Romans hexapla.

¹³⁰ Stapleton, in his comments following 9:11-13, writes: “Therefore the near and closest cause of glorification according to the purpose of God (for concerning so great [a matter] the Apostle here speaks) is justification by faith itself and good works.” [“*Propinqua igitur & proxima causa glorificationis secundum propositum Dei (nam de tali Apostolus ibi loquitur) est ipsa justificatio per fidem & bona opera...*”] (Thoma Stapletona, *Antidota Apostolica Contra Nostri Temporis Haereses...In Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos* [Antwerp: Ioannem Keerbergium, 1595], 524); referenced in Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 437.

¹³¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 943 (3.22.9).

¹³² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 437.

judges Thomas wrongly on this issue.¹³³ Willet focuses on how “other Romanists herein dissent from *Stapleton*” and concur with the Protestant interpretation of the golden chain—that “justification goeth before glorification, not as an efficient, or meritorious cause, but as a meane appointed of God to that ende.”¹³⁴ By combining justification by faith (God’s election to grace) with good works and making *these* together the efficient cause of election to glory, Stapleton had falsely discerned the causes of glory and distanced God himself from the efficient causality of salvation in a manner that even his fellow papists could recognize was theologically unsound.¹³⁵ Willet elsewhere, by way of a somewhat ambiguous citation, seems to implicate Aquinas in the heresy of foreseen merit: “the like glosse [of Ambrose] *Thomas* maketh mention of in his *Commentarie*, *I will have mercie on him, quem dignum praenouero misericordia, whome I foresawe to bee worthy of mercie*. But this is not agreeable to the Apostles minde.”¹³⁶ While this reference to Aquinas’s comment on verse 9:18 appears at first to concur with Calvin’s judgment of Thomas,¹³⁷ Willet’s later vindication of Thomas’s interpretation indicates that the mere fact that Thomas “maketh mention” of Ambrose is not intended to express

¹³³ See Charles Raith II, “Calvin’s Critique of Merit, and Why Aquinas (Mostly) Agrees,” *Pro Ecclesia* 20, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 135-166. E.g., “In fact, however, Aquinas seems to be equally dismissive of the very position rejected by Calvin. Calvin’s interpretation of Aquinas is the target of Aquinas’s own criticism in ST I, q. 23, a. 5...” (p. 157). Cf. also Charles Raith II, “Aquinas and Calvin on Merit, Part II: Condignity and Participation,” *Pro Ecclesia* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 195-210, and Raith II’s recent book, *Aquinas and Calvin on Romans: God’s Justification and Our Participation*.

¹³⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 437.

¹³⁵ Cf. section V.2.3.1 on the “golden chain,” and section IV.2 on the confusion of causes in salvation.

¹³⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 416. Willet proceeds to present Tolet and Pererius in opposition to this view.

¹³⁷ Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, 943 (3.22.9): “Nor let us be detained by the subtlety of Thomas, that the foreknowledge of merit is the cause of predestination, not, indeed, in respect of the predestinating act, but that on our part it may in some sense be so called, namely, in respect of a particular estimate of

Thomas's approval of Ambrose's "farre wide" reading.¹³⁸

As stated earlier, a greater gulf existed between Romanists and Protestants on the issue of assurance (and the related matter of perseverance) than on their respective theologies of election. Still, just as some papists were more wrong on election than others, so—Willet held—were some more sound than others on assurance. The assurance of salvation was to Willet a doctrine of supreme importance; responding to Stapleton's statement on Romans 4:3 that Abraham's faith did not include his assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, but only a general belief in the tenets of "the Catholike faith," Willet quips:

if they hold the hope, and assurance of remission of sinnes to be no part of the Catholike faith, as indeede the Papists doe not make it, let them keepe such Catholike faith to themselves: we will none of it: what comfort can one have in that faith, which can not assure him of Gods favour and of the remission of his sinnes?¹³⁹

Yet, despite his blanket statement about "the Papists" here, Willet does find glimmers of

predestination...But were we to make a trial of subtlety, it would not be difficult to refute the sophistry of Thomas." Thomas's mention of this interpretation may well be why Calvin read him this way.

¹³⁸ Willet does explicitly dissent from Thomas on the role of free will in salvation. In a Question based on verse 9:16, Willet includes him among the number "of the Romanists, that will not have mans free will utterly excluded in the worke of salvation," since Thomas had made God's grace merely the "*agens principale*, the principall agent" in salvation, while reserving a secondary role for human free will. In this matter, Willet thus "preferre[s]...the judgement of *Tolet* and *Bellarmino* before other Romanists," because they more strictly attributed God's calling in this verse to God's will and mercy alone (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 418).

Cf. the description of Thomas's view presented by Raith, who instead uses Thomas's emphasis on the *primacy* of God's will to exonerate him from Calvin's more stinging accusations: "All the more, Aquinas maintains that God's grace is the 'principal' cause and human willing the 'subsequent cause.' The principal agent in the meritorious act is God's grace, and this means for Aquinas that the action is attributed 'more' to God than to human free will. We are far from Pighius's understanding of merit that emphasizes meriting being placed in 'our own strength,' that is, as Calvin claims of Pighius, when a 'tiny part' is granted to the grace of God but 'the greater role' is claimed for the human actor. In fact, Aquinas acknowledges that although it is true that the act in a sense 'depends on man's will or exertion,' it is 'offensive to pious ears' to speak of the act in this way" (Raith, "Calvin's Critique of Merit," 159-160). Notice how Calvin's misreading of Thomas leads Raith to connect Calvin's criticism of Thomas with his censure of Pighius, so that the very same distinction of Thomas's that Willet denounces functions for Raith as evidence of a certain harmony between Thomas and Calvin.

¹³⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 198.

orthodox thought among Romanists on this point, which function also as additional fissures in their professedly uniform doctrine. In a Controversy drawn from Romans 8:16 (“The same spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”) on the certainty of salvation, Willet—having already disputed the skepticism of Thomas and Pererius¹⁴⁰—adds that “some of the Romanists do not much differ from us in this point of the certaintie of salvation: as *Perer*, *disput.9.*¹⁴¹ alleadgeth *Vega*, and *Riccardus* [Ruardus] *Tapperus*, who affirm, that a man may be so certaine of grace...that he may be without all feare and doubting.”¹⁴² Among the chapter 11 Controversies, Willet seeks to prove “That the certentie and assurance of salvation is proved by this saying of the Apostle, v. 29. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*” Stapleton and Pererius had denied that this truism could be applied to the election of individuals; this teaching, they held, concerned the *general* calling of the Jews, and the “without repentance” meant not that God’s gifts could not be lost, but that were they to be so, God would not repent of having first given them. Here again Willet turns to Tolet: “I preferre herein the judgement of *Tolet* a more worthie man,” who explained that God did not

¹⁴⁰ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 393-395.

¹⁴¹ Benedicti Pererii, *Disputationes super Epistoli beati Pauli ad Romanos* (Lyon: Horatii Cardon, 1604), 490-491.

¹⁴² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 395. Andreas de Vega (1498-1549), a Franciscan from the University of Salamanca—where Tolet would also study and teach for a year—was a representative at the Council of Trent, contributing especially to the discussions on the scriptural canon and debating (Tolet’s teacher) de Soto on the doctrine of justification. Ruard Tapper (1487-1559), who taught at the University of Louvain in his native Belgium, also took part at Trent, focusing on the doctrine of penance. He was also a leader of the Inquisition in the Low Countries (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.vv. “Andreas de Vega,” “Ruard Tapper”). Joseph Hall (1574-1656), in an undated sermon on 2 Peter 1:10 entitled “Good Security,” similarly cited Vega and Tapper on assurance: “our Romish Divines are generally too strait-laced; yielding yet a theological certainty, which goes far, but not home: although some of them are more liberal; as Catharinus, Vega...Tapperus, and Pererius following them, which grant that some holy men, out of the feeling and experience of the power of God’s Spirit in them, may, without any special revelation, grow to a great height of assurance...” (*The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God, Joseph Hall, DD*, ed. Josiah Pratt [London: C. Whittingham, 1808]).

repent of his gifts “because whome God once decreed to bestow them upon, he forsaketh not.”¹⁴³ Tolet’s recognition of the personal aspect of this promise, referring it not to a vague general intention but to God’s providential care for his own, brought his conception of certainty and perseverance closer to the Reformed position.

By highlighting these various differences of interpretation of major doctrines among significant Roman Catholic expositors, Willet sought to undermine their claim of catholicity and internal unity. Emphasizing that these divisions were not only between the many sects within Roman Catholicism or between popular piety and the educated clergy, but even between respected members of the same order and leaders of identical rank, Willet demonstrated that a frequent charge that papists delivered against the upstart Protestants could more accurately be used against Rome itself.

3.2 Minimizing Protestant Differences

The Rhemist annotations on Romans 11 had applied God’s reassurance to Elijah (that seven thousand hidden faithful remained) to ridicule the disparate pockets of Protestant sects. Protestants were incorrect to argue from this passage for the hiddenness of the true church, as “it were an hard matter to proove, that Luther had 7.thousand of his opinion, or seven, that were in all points, of the same beleefe.”¹⁴⁴ Willet replies that absolute uniformity of doctrine has never been a requisite characteristic of the true

¹⁴³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 528.

¹⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 522; quoting from Martin, *New Testament*, 411. Richard Broughton, in *An Apologicall Letter*, also uses Protestant division into sects as evidence against the movement’s veracity. He writes that within nine years of Luther’s break from the church seventy-seven sects had already emerged, and claims—citing the calculation of Caspar Vlenbergius (Kaspar Ulenberg)—that there are now “two hundred and three score knowne sects”—thirty-seven of which Broughton lists by name ([R. Broughton], *Apologicall Letter*, 7).

Christian church, and that the many divisions within the Roman church open Catholics up to the very same charge: “that is but a simple evasion,” he writes,” that in all points they were not of the same beleefe: it was sufficient that they agreed in the cheife points of their profession”; and, moreover, within the Roman church itself “much difference there is in opinion, betweene the *Scotists* and *Thomists*, *Dominicans* and *Franciscans*, *Jesuites* and *Priests*, and yet I thinke they hold them all very sound members of their Church.”¹⁴⁵ This emphasis on agreement in the “cheife points” covering over smaller differences of opinion was true of the Church Fathers,¹⁴⁶ and it was true even in Paul’s day—Willet infers from Paul’s warning to “marke those which cause divisions” (16:17) that there *were* already differences of opinion in that early church, and “yet they ceased not to bee a church.”¹⁴⁷ Too strict an insistence on uniformity in adiaphora would, moreover, expose a church to charges of Donatism.¹⁴⁸

This emphasis on a general agreement in essentials is reflected also in the way in which Willet addresses selected interpretive differences between Reformed exegetes; this is broadly true of his treatment of Protestants generally, though, as we have seen, some of

¹⁴⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 522. Cf. also Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 711-712. Willet had taken the same point to a comical extreme in *A Catholicon*, where he enumerates some of the “sundrie orders” of papist sects: “Monkes, Nunnes, Hermites, Anchorites, Friers, blacke, gray, white, blewe, and I knowe not of what coloures, nor of howe many orders, Augustines, Benedicts, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carthusians, Capo[u]chians, Carmelites, Brigets order, barefoote friers, Caelestines, Hieronomites, Charterhouse monkes, with a great number more” (Willet, *Catholicon*, 213). Cloistered monastics are, in a sense, doubly guilty of denying the church’s catholicity, as they are both divided into orders and separated from the rest of civilization itself. Willet makes this point in the first Controversy drawn from chapter 16. While Phoebe is commended for her service to the church, cloistered nuns “serve not the church, beeing sequestred from the publike companie and societie of men,” (Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 740).

¹⁴⁶ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 522.

¹⁴⁷ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 739. Willet concludes from this observation: “then neither can the Romanists condemne the Church of Protestants for their divisions, which do more abound themselves, nor the schismatikes for the same cause to refuse our Church, in which they themselves have made the rent.”

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 151n90.

the interpretations put forth by later Lutherans and many of the “fantasticall and brainsicke”¹⁴⁹ opinions of the Anabaptists go beyond the pale of orthodoxy. Willet was all too aware of the dangers of public intra-confessional battles, since these “brotherly dissensions” provided Romanists with fodder for their anti-Protestant polemics. Willet had warned of this in the preface to *Loidoromastix*, his 1607 response to Richard Parkes,¹⁵⁰ and William Barlow, dean of Chester, had criticized Willet himself for fomenting division in the English church by means of *Limbomastix*, his 1604 attack on Parkes.¹⁵¹ Thus, when Willet disagrees with a fellow Reformed exegete’s interpretation of Romans, he tends to express his dissent in softer terms that minimize the significance of the division: the reason given by Calvin and Pareus for Paul’s quotation of David in verse 3:4 “should not seeme to be much pertinent to S. Paul’s purpose”; Pareus’s explanation of verse 25 later in the chapter “seemeth not to be so proper here”; Vermigli on the content of Abraham’s belief in 4:3 is not “wrong,” but “unsufficient”; when Calvin, Bucer, and Pareus refer to God’s absolute power in relation to reprobation, Willet balances their view with a “more safe” alternative; Faius’s description of the “deepnesse of the riches” of God in 11:33 is merely “too general”; and when Vermigli and Calvin offer differing accounts of the nature of the blessedness Paul writes of in 4:7, their interpretations are not opposed to each other, but are both simply too particular, and Willet encompasses elements of each account in “the more full answer.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 615.

¹⁵⁰ “Further Advertisements to the Reader,” in Willet, *Loidoromastix*, sig.¶¶¶¶¶3, recto-verso.

¹⁵¹ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 23.

¹⁵² Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 152, 170, 198, 442, 516, 221. Cf. Muller’s note on Willet “quietly” disagreeing with Calvin concerning the identity of Melchizedek (Muller, *After Calvin*, 170). Raymond also addresses Willet’s tendency to understate Protestant divisions, writing that “Protestants were

This method of attempting to reconcile conflicting Reformed interpretations occurs several times throughout the Romans hexapla. Concerning the doctrine of reprobation, Willet is careful not to dismiss outright the minority interpretation of “the same lump” in verse 9:21 that is given by Beza and Faius. “The most [following Augustine] doe understand the masse of corruption,” but Beza and his associate Faius “refuseth this interpretation,” understanding the lump to be rather “the first creation of man out of the dust.” Willet, by taking Paul’s image as an illustration not of what God actually *does* but of what would be within his *right* to do, affirms both readings: “But I thinke, that by this masse we may more safely understand, generally, the same originall and beginning of man, whether in the creation, before sinne yet entred, or in his corrupt state.” By framing the matter differently, Willet manages to emphasize aspects of each interpretation that he finds useful, and to bring the disparate interpretations of Beza and Faius, and figures like Vermigli and Pareus, into a harmony: “so God out of the same masse or matter, whether it be considered in mans creation or transgression, may diversly dispose of his creatures, they having all one and the same beginning, as the vessels out of the same clay.”¹⁵³

Calvin and Vermigli had argued different meanings of Paul’s counsel in 12:17 not to return evil for evil. Calvin, while acknowledging that “this differs but little from what shortly after follows” in verse 19—where Paul forbids revenge—draws a subtle distinction. It is possible, Calvin explained, to return evil for evil “when there is no open

more divided [concerning angelology, and especially guardian angels] than Willet cared to admit,” even as he exaggerated the differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant views on angels (Raymond, *Milton’s Angels*, 56, 247-248).

¹⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 425. When considering how God actually *does* act, again, Willet aligns himself more strongly with the Augustinian position (p. 433); Cf. Willet, *Synopsis Papismi* (1613), 921.

revenge,” as when one fails to help someone who had earlier refused to offer their assistance.¹⁵⁴ “But *Martyr* misliketh this,” Willet notes, and argued instead that Paul was simply reiterating the same exact teaching in different words—returning evil for evil is the very definition of revenge. The difference here between Calvin and Vermigli is extremely minor—mainly a matter of semantics—and it neither involves a major theological doctrine nor alters *in practice* the nature of a Christian response to enemies. Yet, as was his instinct with the Fathers, Willet still finds it necessary to reconcile the two interpretations: “but this difference between them may be soone taken away; for *Calvin* saith onely *without manifest revenge*: there may be a revenge in all kind of retaliation: but in some the revenge is more manifest, then in other.”¹⁵⁵ The effect of this kind of harmonization is a portrayal of a Protestant church whose leaders (especially those in the ranks of the Reformed) differed from one another in relatively insignificant, and often reconcilable ways, in contrast to a papist church whose major thinkers were divided on significant doctrinal matters. In the battle over which side could lay claim to catholicity, Willet argued, the evidence from internally consistent doctrine favored the Protestants.

4. Conclusion

As Willet, with other Protestant polemicists, found it useful to connect Roman Catholic doctrine to heresies condemned by the early church, so he sought also to claim the orthodox strain of the patristic era for the Protestant side. This project, which he shared with many other leading Jacobean Church of England divines, proved more complicated, however, than attaching the fetters of heresy to papist ankles. While both

¹⁵⁴ Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 471.

¹⁵⁵ Willet, *Hexapla upon Romanes*, 562.

Roman Catholics and Protestants had to deal with a diverse tradition that sometimes supported and sometimes contradicted their own doctrine, Protestants had the added challenge of balancing the appeal to the authority of the Fathers with the subordinate position that they gave to church tradition. In addition to using the broad concurrence of the Fathers with Protestant theology as evidence of the catholicity of the Protestant tradition, Willet throughout the *Romans* hexapla points out places where divisions between Roman Catholics—and even among those in the same papist sects—fractured the veneer of their self-titled “Catholic” identity.

Willet’s polemical appropriation of tradition—declaring modern papists guilty by their association with ancient heretics and disputing Roman Catholic readings of *Romans* by means of orthodox patristic interpretation—adds another layer to the polemical hermeneutic that he uses to interpret *Romans*. The troublesome exegesis of the Roman foe, read in correlation with the church’s exegetical legacy (both orthodox and heterodox) helped to frame Willet’s own exposition of the epistle that “beateth downe all both olde and new heresies.” Again, though, this interpretive lens did not supplant or corrupt his careful exegesis of the *Romans* text, but rather helped to shape what he found in it.

CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to assertions in earlier scholarship that suggest that Andrew Willet's move from his early focus on anti-Catholic controversial literature to his later concentration on biblical commentary was an abandonment of theological polemics, Willet's 1611 *Hexapla upon Romanes* evidences throughout the influence of his earlier polemical work. This polemical hermeneutic that Willet uses to govern his exegesis functions to identify what needs to be said about a given text and how that message should be framed. We see evidence, too, of a kind of polemical hermeneutical circle, in which Willet's opposition to Roman doctrine is based on his reading of the biblical witness, and the Roman Catholic errors serve in turn to sharpen his presentation of Paul's message in Romans. As such, the heresies that Willet attributes to papist exegetes function both negatively (*this is not* the nature of faith; *this is not* a cause of justification; good works *cannot* be directed toward *this* end) and positively (in clarifying the requisite distinctions in the positive presentation of Reformed doctrine and application). While this anti-Catholic emphasis was widespread among Willet's fellow English divines, his particular polemical background and carefully organized method make him a prime specimen in which to observe the impact of polemics on exegesis.

As one of the more gifted textual scholars in Jacobean England, Willet's detail-oriented and disciplined exegesis is evident throughout his commentary—in his analysis of textual variants, his nuanced understanding of the koine Greek vocabulary and usage (in addition to the occasional opportunity for him to draw on his even greater mastery of Hebrew), his attention to the function of prepositions and conjunctions, his knowledge of causal logic, and his awareness of an extraordinarily wide range of previous exegetical

work on Romans. His deep understanding of the history and mechanics of the text gives him the independence to disagree with various interpretations by noted Reformed theologians and to concur at times with readings by Roman Catholics (if, sometimes, largely to point out a division within the purportedly uniform “Catholic” doctrine). Because of his rigorous method and his fidelity to the Scriptural text (in its *textus receptus* form), Willet’s polemical hermeneutic can focus his interpretation without compromising his exegesis.

Willet’s exegetical moves also help show how polemical context focuses biblical interpretation—the distinctions that are drawn, the doctrinal elements that are highlighted, how one doctrine influences another, and so forth. While sharing similar theological commitments, for example, with John Calvin, Willet’s exegesis is shaped differently because of the need to respond to foes like Robert Bellarmine, who was barely twenty when Calvin died; and while drawing extensively on continental peers like David Pareus, the different polemical needs in the English context (particularly the local influence there of the Rheims New Testament annotations) occasionally guide him to different observations or articulations.

Viewing Willet’s biblical commentaries as a form of anti-Catholic polemic also argues against Álvarez-Recio’s claim that his period saw a sharp decline in theological polemics in England. Willet’s desire for the English Church was not mere uniformity, but a doctrinal conformity rooted in orthodox Reformed doctrine. Thus, he can sympathize with doctrinally sound separatists (even as he urges them to participate in the established church’s worship), and fully support episcopal polity (so long as the doctrinal course pursued is sufficiently Reformed). Moreover, his freedom to agree and disagree with

various exegetes across party lines demonstrates his primary concern for doctrine. Also working against Álvarez-Recio's notion that later anti-Catholic polemics were based on political reasons and anti-Spanish biases is the fact that the favorite Roman Catholic exegete of Willet (who was imprisoned because of his opposition to the Spanish Match) was Francisco Tolet—a Spaniard!

This dissertation has demonstrated through an analysis of Willet's Romans hexapla that he approached the text through a polemical hermeneutic, framing his arguments and doctrines against the negative relief of false, primarily Roman Catholic, doctrine. We have seen how his facility with a wide range of humanist and scholastic exegetical tools (a set of tools that he shared with his opponents) served to highlight doctrinal errors drawn from the Romans text. A dependence on the Vulgate contributed to papist errors regarding assurance, the will, and God's law. Mistaken understandings of doctrines such as original sin, justification by faith, and union with Christ, Willet argues, were supported by grammatical errors. The wrong concatenation of causes could twist one's understanding of the sacraments, sanctification, and sin. And the theological heritage of the early church could provide a touchpoint for condemning Roman Catholic readings and for affirming Protestant understandings. All of these arguments fit together in Willet's aim of ridding England of the anti-gospel papist menace by refuting the worst elements of Rome's exegesis; affirming the scriptural basis of Reformed distinctives like justification by faith alone, election by God's good pleasure, the assurance of salvation, and charitable works motivated by gratitude and impelled by God's spirit; discrediting the Roman Catholic claim to catholicity while arguing that *it* was the schismatic element; and demonstrating that Protestants were the true, Reformed catholic church.

APPENDIX

PROPOSITIONS FOR ORAL DEFENSE

- 1) Andrew Willet's shift from the polemical genre to biblical commentary did not represent an abandonment of polemics, as he transferred to his exegesis a clear polemical lens; this polemical hermeneutic helped him to sharpen his expression of positive doctrine against the relief of Roman Catholic errors.
- 2) Willet's hexapla method was a unique way of organizing and presenting exegetical insights that tended to be standard for his tradition.
- 3) Seventeenth-century Protestant and Roman Catholic biblical commentators utilized many of the same humanist and scholastic exegetical tools, arriving at different conclusions because of their differing hermeneutical frameworks.
- 4) The Rhemist annotations provided an added focus for English Protestant polemics that distinguished them from continental Protestant polemics.
- 5) The argument that Willet made a striking shift from a supralapsarian to a sublapsarian/infralapsarian position has been overstated.
- 6) Willet claims broad patristic support for Protestant doctrine, but has a far more complicated relationship with the Fathers when considering their actual exegesis.
- 7) Jonathan Edwards's cessationism was not merely derived from his conception of redemption history, but had also a firm exegetical basis.
- 8) Martin Luther's and John Calvin's interpretations of Paul's reference to "baptism for the dead" in 1 Corinthians 15:29 help to reveal distinctive emphases of their baptismal theologies.
- 9) Precisely in Friedrich Nietzsche's disgust for Christianity, Karl Barth realized that Nietzsche understood Christian anthropology better than did many modern theologians.
- 10) Seventeenth-century advocates of both heliocentrism and geocentrism used Scripture, scientific observations, and philosophy to defend their respective positions.
- 11) The model of redemption that Athanasius describes in *On the Incarnation of the Word* has the benefit of offering a strong connection between our salvation and Christ's incarnation.

- 12) Traditional Reformed amillennialism better accounts for the full scriptural picture of eschatology than does the more-popularized premillennial dispensationalist “rapture” theology.
- 13) The Reformed doctrine of election affirms the gospel and God’s grace in a way that is impossible for theologies that give a greater efficiency to human will in salvation.
- 14) There is no bench on the side of the Thames.

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